



**A&H**  **ART & HISTORY MUSEUMS**  
MAITLAND

# PERSPECTIVES

*Quarterly stories for A&H members & donors*

**Winter 2021 Newsletter**      Volume I | Issue 4

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# Dear Friend of the A&H,

We enjoyed seeing so many of you at the Victor Bokas exhibition opening on October 7th. The rain did not stop many new and returning visitors, both friends of the A&H and friends of Victor.

**I'm happy to let you know about another benefit for A&H members!** The A&H now has a **reciprocal partnership with the Polk Museum of Art at Florida Southern College**. While admission to that museum is always free, they are offering **current A&H members \$5 off any purchase in their museum store**. (You must show your current membership card.) If you're in the Lakeland area, be sure to stop by this Smithsonian-affiliate museum.



Some upcoming exhibitions at the Polk Museum of Art ►  
*When We Were Young: Children and Animals in Art from the Golisano Children's Museum of Naples*  
*Finding Meaning Within: The Photography of John Pinderhughes*  
Both on view November 13, 2021 through January 30, 2022

And, Florida Southern College's main campus (located 2 blocks south of the Polk Museum) is a National Historic Landmark, designated in 2012. Did you know that the campus is the largest single-site collection of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture in the world? The Orlando area has so many wonderful cultural places to visit, but I do like to take some short trips to Lakeland, Tampa, Gainesville and other areas too!



John Pinderhughes, *Untitled*, from the 'Harlem Portraits' Series



Philip Morsberger, *Ode to Flossie*, oil on canvas, 36"x24", 2011.

**There are so many benefits to being an A&H member!** Please consider renewing or joining today if you're not a current member. And as always, please reach out if I can be of service in any way!

Sincerely,  
Jessi VanPelt

Advancement Manager (and art & history super fan!)  
407-539-2181 x 260 / [jvanpelt@artandhistory.org](mailto:jvanpelt@artandhistory.org)

P.S. My earrings pictured were made in our Art School's new Sculpture workshop! There's a 1-day workshop using pre-made molds of Art Center-inspired relief sculptures, and a 2-day workshop where you carve your own mold design.



## Trivia Night for Trains, Planes, and Automobiles: Moving Maitland

Join us on Wednesday, December 1 for transportation trivia (history & pop culture), other games, nostalgic prizes, retro snacks & drinks, a look at the *Moving Maitland* exhibition, and more!

**Family-friendly: 6:30-7:00pm**

**Adults: 7:30-8:30pm**

**History Museum open: 6:30-9:00pm**

FREE event! (Suggested donation \$5-10)

Tickets at: [artandhistory.org/events](http://artandhistory.org/events)

**Event sponsored by Holler Hyundai**

**Contributors to this issue of Perspectives:** Becky Bruni, Airam Dato-on, Danielle Thomas, Jessi VanPelt, and Randall Webster

**On the cover:** painting by new Artist-in-Action MJ Torrecampo. We have enjoyed watching MJ paint several small works in the garden & in the doorway of her studio (Studio 13) during the first few weeks of her studio residency, and are pleased to share one of those here, featuring our "Sunflower Gate" that's just outside her studio.

### SAVE THE DATE FOR:

**Florida Byways by J. Andre Smith and the Bok Fellows**  
(History Museum) - opens January 21

**Alfred Hair and The Highwaymen** (Art Center) - opens February 4

# Current Exhibitions

## Randall Webster reflects on working with Victor Bokas to create A&H's latest art exhibition:

Victor's art is a joy to experience and learn about, from his 60 collages that are jam packed with treasured memories, to the 38 abstract palm tree paintings that fill the main gallery. Even when he is tackling a difficult subject matter like the Covid shut down and grief from great personal loss, he does it with color and style.

Victor and I first started talking about this exhibition last year when he was working with Que Throm to design the catalog for the Cicero Greathouse exhibition. But plans didn't really come together until last February when Victor started telling me about his latest series of 60 collages that he created for his 60th birthday, and a series of abstract palm trees that he had been working on at his mother's house in the Florida panhandle during the Covid-19 shut down. I knew right then it was time for us to host Victor's third exhibition here at the Art Center.

The whimsy of the first gallery, with rotating giant View Master slide and 3D digital collages, masks the serious underlying reference to the pandemic and the need for all of us to don a face covering. Here, classical Greek statues wear snorkel masks and diving helmets. Victor likens walking through the large main gallery with abstract palm trees exhibited edge to edge to the experience of driving down a Florida highway along the coast as miles of palm trees zip

by in a blur. The journey continues at the end of the gallery with a wall of brightly painted bird cages festooned with colorful florals. But within these elegant prisons are some of our memories of missed experiences and altered dreams caused by the pandemic.

Next we are treated to a visual feast of 60 small collages. Each one filled with precious memories and hidden references that help to celebrate Victor's 60 years. Just before the opening, Victor's mother told the story of toddler Victor who had been left alone in the living room with a piece of paper and crayons. An excited young Victor gleefully invited his mother to view his work, which could not be contained by any sheet of paper, his new masterpiece enthusiastically leapt off the page and enhanced the surrounding floor. Victor's art has never been limited by a single canvas or sheet of paper; why make one painting when you can make 38?! Victor's exhibition is a celebration of his positive outlook and enthusiasm, something that we can all use right now.

**The exhibition continues through January 23, 2022.**



*Victor Bokas with his mother Aspasia and sister Sonthe*

## Volunteer Spotlight: Dorman Financial Management



Thanks to A&H Board of Directors member Jim Dorman and his team at Dorman Financial Management for getting our Chapel & Courtyard beautifully cleaned in September!

## Weddings at A&H



*Dalhousie Wedding 2.12.21- Emely Williams Photography*

*Want to see LOTS more wedding photos and other photoshoots on campus? We have a new Instagram page just for that! Find us @events\_at\_ahmaitland*

# Preservation Spotlight: Meet Prajakta

A&H is excited to announce that we're partnering with UCF again this Fall to host an intern from the US/ ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites) program. Prajakta Deshpande, a preservationist from India, is onsite for 10 weeks, and working with staff to develop a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the historical Research Studio grounds. Prajakta is the second US/ICOMOS intern to work on the site, and her efforts will be integral to planning for future preservation efforts. We sat down with Prajakta to learn more about her background and her work at A&H:

## Q1 How long have you been studying preservation?

While I briefly studied historic preservation during my bachelors degree, post graduation, I started working as a Junior Architect at a Conservation based office - Vikas Dilawari Architects in Mumbai, India to get acquainted with the field. Most of what I have learnt so far comes from these two and a half years of working on several public, religious, institutional buildings. To widen my knowledge further, I went on to pursue a Master's degree in Conservation from the University of York, interned for a short period and gathered lots of perspectives in the field. So I would say, I have been really getting the grip of preservation for over 5 years now.

## Q2 Why did you decide to go into this field?

I grew up in a heritage house in my hometown, Belgaum and was always fascinated with the buildings in my neighborhood. But to be honest, I got into the field with a complete different idea of preservation; one which was a romanticized version of converting historic villas into fancy holiday resorts or adapting old structures to aesthetically nice looking spaces. But as I started delving more into the subject and understanding the politics of the field, its impact on our well beings and surroundings and the lack of patronage to heritage, I made my decision firm on working in this field.

## Q3 You've worked on sites in your home country of India, the UK, and now in the southern US. How does preservation differ in each country?

While the approach to preservation of historic sites in the three countries is guided by international standards set through various charters, the context in which the preservation takes place has been of specific interest to me. The extent of legal protection by the state to its heritage is well established in the UK with a wide coverage of sites, grading system, guidelines for individual, cluster and urban conservation while it

is still in its infancy in India. A large portion of modest heritage in India and in the US remains unlisted, unprotected. The US has pioneered in scientific research towards preservation of various materials which has contributed greatly to the scholarship of conservation.



## Q4 What do you feel makes the Art Center/former Research Studio unique as a historical site?

The value of the Art Center, I believe, is not just in the physical fabric of the campus but is in the spirit with which André set this up and in the fact that the Art centre has been able to keep that legacy alive. The Art Center, I would say, is a culmination of André's thoughts beautifully translated into experiential spaces. While the carved cement tiles bring uniqueness to the site, the process that has led to this final product through experiments and collaborations is more intriguing to me. And I feel that these stories, André's experiences with life should be out in the public domain for a wider community to appreciate and cherish.

## Q5 What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the site?

According to me, the biggest challenge is to find skilled craftsman working in the premise of concrete conservation to preserve the works of André which are showing signs of distress. Another challenge is to dare to replicate André's works. The works are so spontaneous in nature and abstract that any attempt to replicate it as per the usual conservation guidelines might do injustice to his legacy. Arriving at a philosophy to retain the significance of the site is the most tricky, I would say.

## Q6 Do you have a favorite spot or artwork on the site?

I love the Annie Russell courtyard. It is so well placed within the campus and has a very calming impact on your mind.



## Preservation Spotlight continued

### 07 What are you enjoying most about working on the site?

Do sunsets at Lake Sybelia count? I love the fact that I get to see the most gorgeous sunsets after work! The site and the conservation issues are challenging and is letting me go deeper into understanding concrete structures and their preservation. I am also enjoying being a part of various activities happening on site and meeting lovely artists.

### 08 What's next for you after you return to India?

I am trying to set up an Architecture practice in my hometown focusing on encouraging public and private owners to retain, restore their old structures sensitively. I am also trying to create awareness programs through social media platforms (Instagram & Facebook - Heritage of Belgaum) and engage in a dialogue with various stakeholders to make more people aware of their surrounding heritage and take action!

## Victor Bokas took us on a bold & colorful journey on October 7!



John Holley



Patrick Terry, A&H Board President, with friends Kinley and Sabrina



Boris Garbe & Maxine Earhart



Diana Ngai & Zack Cole



Weldon & Richlin Ryan



Victor Bokas with Jeanie & Scott Redmon and friend



Hellenic Dance Troupe



Roger Gibson, Barbara Widerman and Victor



Wendy Wallenberg & Katie Johnston

Many thanks to John Holley Music, Athena Roasted Chicken, Scotchie's Custom Cakes, and the Hellenic Dance Troupe from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church for their partnerships on this event!

# Welcome 2021-2022 Artists-in Action!

The A&H is once again humming with excitement! Four new Artists-in-Action moved into their studios at the end of September, filling the campus with blank canvases and new life. Our Artist-in-Action program honors the Maitland Art Center's history as the "Research Studio," an artist colony created by J. André Smith. In its heyday in the 1940s and 50s, the Research Studio welcomed luminaries such as Milton Avery, Doris Lee, and Ralston Crawford. Then in 2010, our historic gates re-opened to established and emerging Central Florida-based artists looking for studio space and a one-of-a-kind experience.

Now in its 12th year, the AiA program has generated another impressive stable of artists ready to share their voices and art with us. This year we have reinstated open studio hours, where visitors can interact with our AiAs and see their process and newest works. Several of our AiAs are interested in hosting public workshops and other outreach events. Stay tuned as we announce these exciting opportunities throughout the year!

## Leo Cordovi

Leo Cordovi is a contemporary landscape painter born in Havana, Cuba. A recent graduate of the University of Central Florida, he is eager to grow his artistic career. Cordovi's artistic style focuses on blurring the line between naturalism and abstraction



through large-scale landscapes. His massive canvases serve as a portal, inviting viewers to be transported to places he describes as "not anchored to any specific time or space, where the unbroken continuity of nature wraps everything that surrounds us." Cordovi prefers to work with acrylic paint, a flexible medium conducive to his use of expressive marks and layering of colors. With the incredible natural environment of the A&H campus, he will have no shortage of inspiration!



Cordovi was drawn to the AiA program and the opportunity to engage with not only fellow artists but also the surrounding community. As a bilingual artist, he hopes to facilitate engagement and inclusivity of Spanish-speaking members of the community. Cordovi will be sharing a studio space with frequent collaborator and fellow AiA, Mår Martinez.

## Damon DeWitt

Contemporary painter and visual arts educator Damon DeWitt has returned to the A&H campus for another year! DeWitt grew up in the Orlando area and after a several year departure is based once again in the area, working, creating, and raising a family. His body of work ranges from small-scale canvases to large-scale wall murals. His experimental style refuses to stay rooted in any defined category, but instead evolves to best serve each work's artistic purpose and meaning.



In 2017, DeWitt garnered national attention when his "Dads of Democracy" series of 45 (now 46) oil on canvas portraits of every U.S. president was displayed during the grand opening of Washington D.C.'s first winery. We are very excited to see what his next project will be!



## Audrey Hope

Artist Audrey Hope, an inquisitive spirit and intrepid researcher, boldly creates works she describes as "between installation and sculpture." Hope draws inspiration from the contradictions, discordance, and irony she encounters in both natural and built environments. Her preferred medium is found materials she can repurpose

and recontextualize. Objects like plastic trinkets, silk flowers, glitter, and pop tabs are combined with moss, seeds, shells, and sticks to create what Hope calls “a glitchy space of seductive grotesquery,” that simultaneously attracts and repels viewers.

Hope moved to the greater Orlando area in June 2020 to teach sculpture at Rollins College.

She is excited to immerse herself deeper into the local arts community. She plans to use her time at the A&H to develop her latest project that emerged from a study of a collection of stones called “The Walk of Fame” at Rollins College. We are excited to see this planned series develop into fully realized artworks!



## Mär Martinez

Mär Martinez is an interdisciplinary artist specializing in sculptural painting, a unique artistic form in which the two-dimensional nature of painting is disrupted by the third dimension of sculpture. This technique perfectly complements Martinez’s artistic focus on dissecting dominance, aggression, and power dynamics in society.

Martinez examines these concepts through the lens of a culturally-enforced binary system. The result is a powerful body



of work that literally jumps off the walls on which it hangs. Describing the meaningful impact of her artistic process, she said, “I physically cut my figures out to mimic the reduction of figures to objects...the violent act of stripping figures from their context mimics how power can be given and taken away.”

Martinez is excited by the prospect of having long-term studio access where she can meditate on her work and create without spatial limitation. She is also very keen to interact with visitors and artists at the A&H, including her AiA studio-mate and frequent collaborator, Leo Cordovi.

## MJ Torrecampo

After earning an MFA from the New York Academy of Art in 2020, painter MJ Torrecampo has returned to the Central Florida arts community.

Her current work explores and questions how close social relationships are maintained with a focus on simultaneous feelings of unity and division. Torrecampo was born into Filipino culture but grew up in American culture. Using her personal memories and experience balancing these two cultures, she creates works that are both compassionate and familiar. Torrecampo described her artistic process, “by recollecting and reconstructing memories I’ve initially filtered as customary, I create scenes that are warm and harmonious, but laced with details that suggest an underlying tension and uncertainty - a sense of belonging and not belonging.” Her expressive use of color and gentle brushwork draw viewers to approach the painting. But the small, thoughtfully placed details push them to truly engage with its subjects.



Torrecampo is looking forward to the opportunity to grow as an artist outside of the academic setting. She hopes to foster engagement with the local community, specifically with fellow immigrants.





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DATED MATERIAL  
PLEASE EXPEDITE

# Winter 2021 Newsletter

## Upcoming at A&H

### November

- 3 | Artist Talk with Victor Bokas
- 11 | Architecture Tour (10:30-11:15am)  
Architecture Talk by preservation intern Prajakta Deshpande (11:15)
- 12-14 | Rotary Art Festival at Lake Lily (Kids Zone presented by A&H Museums - Nov. 13)
- 17 | Artist Talk with Artist-in-Action Mär Martinez
- 25-26 | Closed for Thanksgiving

### December

- 1 | Trivia Night for History Museums exhibition *Trains, Planes and Automobiles: Moving Maitland* (6:30-9:00)
- 9 | Gallery Art Tour (10:30-11:15am)
- 23 | Campus Architectural Tour
- 24-25 | Closed for Christmas
- 31 | Closed for New Years Observed

### January

- 1 | Closed for New Years Day
- 9 | *Moving Maitland* closes in Maitland History Museum
- 10 | Art School - Winter session begins
- 13 | Gallery Art Tour (10:30-11:15am)
- 15 | Family Day (details TBD)
- 21 | *Florida Byways* by J. Andre Smith and the Bok Fellows opens in Maitland History Museum
- 23 | *Victor Bokas: A Bold & Colorful Journey* closes in Maitland Art Center
- 27 | Campus Architectural Tour (10:30-11:15am)

*Advance registration required for many events. Please visit our website to register and to discover even more events: [artandhistory.org/events](http://artandhistory.org/events)*