

Worcester Art Museum Continues Partnerships with 9 Colleges and Universities, Serving Over 35,000 Students Annually as City-Wide Hub for Interdisciplinary Learning

Longstanding Collaborations Include Augmented Reality Innovation, a Student-Run Podcast, a Book of Essays, and the Most Significant Art Research Library in Central Massachusetts



Worcester, MA—September 1, 2022—Central to the Worcester Art Museum’s (WAM) mission are its collaborations with many of the city’s colleges and universities, serving over 35,000 students annually. The Museum uses its renowned collection of art to support the colleges’ curricula and engage students, faculty, and staff in planning and implementing projects that benefit all audiences. The Museum’s collaborations with Clark University, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Worcester State University include: the development and presentation of exhibitions; courses at schools that make use of the Museum’s galleries and artworks; internships that provide opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in the museum field; free museum admission for students; and fundamental services, such as the partnership between the Museum and the College of the Holy Cross to maintain WAM’s art research library.

“It our aim to become a shared art museum for all colleges and universities in town,” said Matthias Waschek, the Jean and Myles McDonough Director of the Worcester Art Museum. “These collaborations, with Clark University, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Worcester State University, are just one way we are working to fulfill our commitment to engage Museum visitors in new ways both onsite and in the digital realm. The Worcester area is fortunate to be home to an extensive network of schools, and the Museum is likewise fortunate to be able to regularly partner with them in ways that benefit our communities.”

Partnership with Worcester State University

WAM began working with Worcester State University (WSU) in 2012 when the Museum formalized its partnership with the public university to provide students, faculty, and staff free access to the Museum. Since then, hundreds of students have used the Museum as a classroom to develop understandings of visual art, philosophy, social history, and the science of communication, among other fields.

Most recently, WSU and WAM have come together to produce a new book published in May, *Beyond the Frame: Celebrating a Partnership in Public Education and the Arts*. This collection of twelve essays brings together nationally recognized novelists, poets, and journalists, addressing a wide selection of works in the Museum's collection. Among the works of art from WAM's collection considered in these essays are the medieval Chapter House from the Benedictine Priory of Saint John at Le Bas-Nueil; the portraits of John and Elizabeth Freake and their baby Mary, exceptional examples of early American painting; and Faith Ringgold's *Picasso's Studio*, a striking re-envisioning of Picasso's use of African motifs.

Partnership with Worcester Polytechnic Institute

WAM offers a new way for audiences to engage with art through a partnership with the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). WPI students designed an app that uses augmented reality (AR) technology to allow visitors to WAM's new exhibition, *Jewels of the Nile: Ancient Egyptian Treasures from the Worcester Art Museum*, to use in-gallery tablets to virtually "try on" featured jewelry and save photos of themselves. In addition to the app, the collaboration also includes 3D-printed replicas of objects in the exhibition for visitors to touch and see details up close.

Partnership with Clark University

Recent partnerships with Clark University have included the development of exhibitions and creating content for new platforms. In February 2022, Clark University professor Toby Sisson and WAM curator of prints, drawings and photographs, Nancy Burns co-curated *Us Them We | Race Ethnicity Identity*. They led a course that invited students to create their own works in response to artworks featured in the exhibition. The students' works were displayed in an installation adjacent to the exhibition.

In the fall of 2021, Kristina Wilson, professor of art history at Clark University, taught a course titled "Art, the Public, and Worcester's Cultural Institutions," in which students researched works in the Museum's collection to create content for a new podcast. "WAM x University" launched in the spring of 2022 and is available for streaming on Spotify. Its success has opened the door for future classes and other colleges and universities to contribute new seasons, as an ongoing project for students to present research in new forms.

Partnership with the College of the Holy Cross

In 2001, WAM formalized an association with the College of the Holy Cross to jointly manage the Museum's Library. Created in 1909, the Museum's Library is the most significant collection of art reference material in central Massachusetts and is a valuable resource for scholars, regional faculty, students, artists, docents, Museum staff, and the public alike. The collaboration with Holy Cross takes advantage of both the school's own strong art reference collection and its library management infrastructure, making the Museum's collection accessible through inter-library loans and other means.

This collaboration will continue when the Library opens in its new two-level, 3,400-square-foot space in the Museum's Higgins Education Wing later in 2022.

About the Worcester Art Museum

The Worcester Art Museum creates transformative programs and exhibitions, drawing on its exceptional collection of art. Dating from 3,000 BCE to the present, these works provide the foundation for a focus on audience engagement, connecting visitors of all ages and abilities with inspiring art and demonstrating its enduring relevance to daily life. Creative initiatives—including pioneering collaborative programs with local schools, fresh approaches to exhibition design and in-gallery teaching, and a long history of studio class instruction—offer opportunities for diverse audiences to experience art and learn both from and with artists. For more information about the Worcester Art Museum, visit worchesterart.org.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$18 for adults, \$14 for seniors 65+ and for college students with ID. Admission is free for Museum Members, children ages 0-17, and students of Anna Maria College, Assumption University, Bancroft School, Clark University, College of the Holy Cross, MCPHS University, Quinsigamond Community College, Saint John's High School, The T.E.C. Schools, Worcester Academy, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Worcester State University. On the first Sunday of each month, admission is free for everyone. Museum parking is free. Tickets may be purchased in advance at worchesterart.org.

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