

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALBANY INSTITUTE LAUNCHES 2026 WITH TWO MAJOR EXHIBITIONS SHOWCASING THE
LEGACIES OF INFLUENTIAL YET UNDERRECOGNIZED AMERICAN WOMEN ARTISTS



Blanche Lazzell (1878–1956), *Planes II*, printed 1952, color woodblock print, 14 x 12 in. Art Museum of West Virginia University Collection, gift of Harvey D. Peyton.



Julia McEntee Dillon (1834–1919), *Bouquet in Chinese Jar*, oil on canvas, c. 1910. Friends of Historic Kingston.

ALBANY, NY—The Albany Institute of History & Art will open its 2026 season with two monographic exhibitions: *Blanche Lazzell: Becoming an American Modernist*, opening January 31, 2026, and *A Life in Bloom: The Floral Paintings of Julia McEntee Dillon*, opening February 14, 2026.

Blanche Lazzell: Becoming an American Modernist surveys the pioneering artist's lifelong pursuit of translating Modernism into an American art form and celebrates her largely unsung achievements in championing abstraction in the United

States through painting and printmaking. Celebrated for her masterful white-line woodblock prints, Blanche Lazzell (1878–1956) considered herself a painter first and foremost—from her early days studying in West Virginia, New York, and Paris, through Depression-era Federal Art Projects, and as a longtime resident of Provincetown's vibrant art colony.

Born and raised in the small community of Maidsville, West Virginia, Lazzell graduated from West Virginia University with a degree in fine arts in 1905. Seeking further instruction, she first enrolled in the Art Students League in New York City, she worked in Woodstock, New York, at the Byrdcliffe Artist's Colony, and then went on two extensive trips to Europe. There she immersed herself in the studios of avant-garde artists who explored abstraction through the new movements of Fauvism and Cubism. Lazzell embraced these influences in her own work, creating some of the first non-objective prints and paintings seen in America. She eventually settled in the artist colony of Provincetown, Massachusetts, where she worked with Hans Hofmann, co-founded the Provincetown Printers, and became a leading figure in white-line color woodblock printmaking.

Including more than 50 paintings, prints, and unique works on paper drawn primarily from the Art Museum of West Virginia University's permanent collection and supported by Art Bridges, the exhibition centers on a suite of large-scale abstract paintings Lazzell made in the 1920s that were among the most ambitious paintings for any American at the time. These paintings—amalgams of the European avant-garde worked through an American idiom—are even more remarkable for being created by a female artist from West Virginia driven by a singular devotion to modernist principles. Related sections of the exhibition showcase Lazzell's winding paths through abstraction, realism, process, and media, which build an artistic context around the abstractions of the 1920s and demonstrate the centrality of these paintings to her professional career and personal trajectory.

Presented concurrently with *Blanche Lazzell: Becoming an American Modernist* is *A Life in Bloom: The Floral Paintings of Julia McEntee Dillon*, a focused monographic exhibition that presents the career of one of the most admired yet underrecognized American painters of the nineteenth century. During her lifetime, Julia McEntee Dillon (1834–1919) was regarded as “the greatest living flower painter” in the United States, praised for works that were described as “brilliant in hues, admirably drawn, and composed with a fine appreciation of the effect of large masses of colors.”

Born near Kingston, New York, Dillon developed her artistic practice within a vibrant regional network of artists and patrons. She worked in the studio of her cousin, Hudson River School painter Jervis McEntee. Dillon elevated floral painting into a sophisticated and expressive form—creating compositions featuring peonies, roses, and chrysanthemums so vividly rendered that critics remarked they “almost seem to have an odor in them.” Bringing together thirty-two paintings from public and private collections, *A Life in Bloom* offers one of the most comprehensive presentations of Dillon's work.

“Together, *Blanche Lazzell: Becoming an American Modernist* and *A Life in Bloom: The Floral Paintings of Julia McEntee Dillon* allow us to reconsider the contributions of two remarkable artists whose achievements were widely admired in their own time yet have too often been overlooked in the broader narrative of American art history,” says Kayla Carlsen, Executive Director of the Albany Institute of History & Art. “We are proud to be among the museums nationwide presenting *Becoming an American Modernist* and deeply grateful to our regional partners whose generosity made this long-overdue exhibition of Julia McEntee Dillon possible. These exhibitions reflect our commitment to celebrating the art, history, and culture of the Hudson Valley and expanding how stories of American art are told.”

For more information, visit albanyinstitute.org.

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ABOUT THE ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

Founded in 1791, the Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Its collections document the Hudson Valley as a crossroads of culture, influencing the art and history of the region, the state, and the nation. With more than 25,000 objects in the collection and one million documents in the research library, it is a resource for the region. Permanent exhibitions include one of the largest collections of Hudson River School paintings, a history of Ancient Egypt, and other fine art, ceramics, and furniture, as well as rotating temporary exhibitions.

ABOUT ART BRIDGES FOUNDATION

Art Bridges Foundation is the vision of philanthropist and arts patron Alice Walton. Founded in 2017, Art Bridges creates and supports projects that share works of American art with communities across the United States and its territories. Art Bridges partners with a growing network of over 300 museums—impacting 25 million people nationwide—to provide financial and strategic support for exhibitions, collection loans, and programs designed to educate, inspire, and deepen engagement with local communities. The Art Bridges Collection represents an expanding vision of American art from the 19th century to present day and encompasses multiple media and voices. For more information, visit artbridgesfoundation.org.

Blanche Lazzell: Becoming an American Modernist

January 31-August 2, 2026

The following images may be used by the media solely for purposes of publicity related to the exhibition at the Albany Institute of History & Art. Images may not be altered and must be accompanied by the captions noted below. Access image files via [Dropbox](#).

Please contact Marisa Espe, Director of Communications, at espem@albanyinstitute.org or 518-463-4478 x408 for all media-related inquiries.



Blanche Lazzell (1878-1956), *Hollyhock*, 1917, oil on canvas, 25 5/8 x 18 1/8 in. Art Museum of West Virginia University Collection, gift of Nancy Watkins in memory of James F. McKinley and Nancy W. McKinley.



Blanche Lazzell (1878-1956), *Church Around the Corner*, 1949, oil on canvas, 28 x 36 3/16 in. Art Museum of West Virginia University Collection, acquired through Frances Sellers.



Blanche Lazzell (1878-1956), *Painting X*, 1927, oil on canvas, 50 3/16 x 36 1/8 in. Art Museum of West Virginia University Collection.



Blanche Lazzell (1878-1956), *The White Petunia*, block cut 1932, printed 1954, color woodblock print, 14 1/2 x 12 5/8 in. Art Museum of West Virginia University Collection, gift of James C. and Janet G. Reed.



Blanche Lazzell (1878-1956), *Planes II*, printed 1952, color woodblock print, 14 x 12 in. Art Museum of West Virginia University Collection, gift of Harvey D. Peyton.

A Life in Bloom: The Floral Paintings of Julia McEntee Dillon

February 14–July 26, 2026

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Julia McEntee Dillon (1834–1919), *Bouquet in Chinese Jar*, oil on canvas, c. 1910. Friends of Historic Kingston.



Julia McEntee Dillon (1834–1919), *Chrysanthemums in Chinese Tureen*, oil on canvas, c. 1910. Albany Institute of History & Art Purchase, Marjorie and Richard Rockwell Fund, 2023.2



Julia McEntee Dillon (1834–1919), *Pink Roses*, oil on canvas, c. 1890. Ulster County Historical Society.



Julia McEntee Dillon (1834–1919), *Roses in Pottery Vase*, oil on canvas, c. 1910. Private Collection.



Julia McEntee Dillon (1834–1919), *Pink Peonies and Roses*, pastel on paper laid on canvas, 1885, Ulster County Historical Society.