

# EXHIBITIONS

NEW EXHIBITION

## The Four Elements of Leigh Li-Yun Wen

JANUARY 29 – JUNE 19, 2022

The four elements of western cosmology—earth, air, fire, water—are the subjects of artist Leigh Li-Yun Wen's work. Whether paintings, prints, or ceramics, Wen's art expresses her personal and cultural histories. Having grown up on the island of Taiwan, she possesses a deep affinity for the elemental power of water and the forces of nature. As a Taiwanese-American artist who has lived in both Taiwan and America, she feels the ebb and flow of competing cultures. The ancient philosophies of her homeland, which teach self-discipline and selflessness, collide and mingle with Western notions of ego, alienation, and desire.



*Mid Summer Morning Glim V, Leigh Li-Yun Wen, 2019, oil on linen, 200 x 335 cm, collection of the artist*

Wen's working method is a process of subtraction from darkness to light. "I carve into the paint with a stylus to bring forth the individual lines that are the central motif of my work," she notes. These lines flow across the canvas in rhythms and frequencies that create depths and swells on the painted surface. Something of the self is lost in the resulting tangle and then regained, only to be lost again. Simplicity and harmony exist within the chaos of the world.

Color is used to expand the emotional range in Wen's work: "My palette is drawn not from appearances but from the lyric and psychic necessities of my art." The uniformity of line, from edge to edge and painting to painting, implies suppression of the artist's hand in favor of objectivity learned from nature. In spite of this, her work remains deeply autobiographical.

Born in Taipei, Taiwan, Leigh Li-Yun Wen is a Taiwanese-American artist who resides in New York City. She received her MFA from the State University of New York at Albany in 1994 and served as a cultural ambassador envoy during the Clinton, Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations. She has exhibited in 18 American embassies, consulates, and other government institutions located in countries such as Jordan, Malaysia, Singapore, Namibia, Botswana, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Denmark, and Poland. Wen was awarded a 1997 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, and honored to be the artist of New York State by The New York State Legislature. And, in 2000, she was honored with both New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship and The Helena Rubinstein Fellowship. In 2001, she won the Lorenzo de Medici Award in Florence Biennale. In addition, Wen was awarded Artist Grants by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation in 1999 and 2005, and was invited by then-First Lady Laura Bush and Secretary of State Mr. Colin Powell to visit the White House in 2005. A frequent nominee to a select list of 60 U.S. artists invited to the White House's annual arts and culture reception, Wen is an artist who is held in high esteem across not just the U.S. but also international curatorial and collectors' circles for her achievements and the unique character of her work. Her works have been included in many private and public museum collections, such as permanent collections at the U.S. Embassy in Barbados and the American Institute in Taiwan.



*Artist Leigh Li-Yun Wen*

*Thank you to our exhibition sponsors*



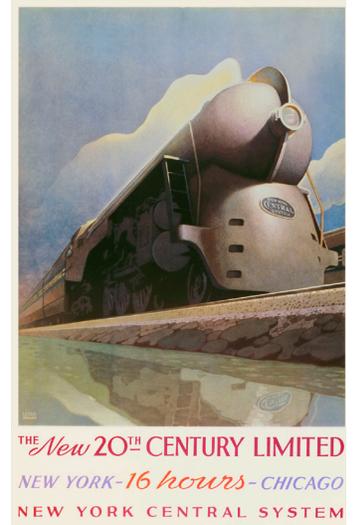
This exhibition is presented by the Taipei Cultural Center in New York, Ministry of Culture, Republic of China (Taiwan). Leading support has been provided by Omni Development Company, Inc., the Taiwanese American Cultural Society of the Capital District, Dorice Brickman, Mr. Alan P. Goldberg, Vicary and Peter Thomas, and Mr. Daniel L. Wulff. Major support is provided by Eleanor Holbriiter Nasner and Margaret F. Holbriiter, Mr. Edward Swyer, and Chet and Karen Opalka.

# EXHIBITIONS

## Romancing the Rails: Train Travel in the 1920s and 1930s THROUGH FEBRUARY 27, 2022

The 1920s and 1930s were a kind of golden age for rail travel in the U.S., a period when railroads were portrayed as modern amenities that carried passengers to romantic getaways in luxury and comfort. Yet the story of railroads and rail travel during the period is much more complex, involving talented individuals, hardworking people, engineering accomplishments, celebrations, and momentous events. *Romancing the Rails* features objects and library materials from the Albany Institute's railroad collections, including rare photographs, posters, locomotive models, and objects designed for New York Central's 20th Century Limited that debuted in 1938 and ran from New York City to Chicago in sixteen hours.

Thank you to our exhibition sponsors | William H. Harris & Holly A. Katz, Alan P. Goldberg, Mr. & Mrs. John Walsh, III, and Elizabeth A. Lee



*The New 20th Century Limited*, from original painting by Leslie Ragan (1897-1972), lithograph by Latham Litho. Co., Long Island City, NY, 1938, photolithograph, gift of the New York Central Railroad, 1959.130.168



## Joan Steiner's Look Alikes® NOVEMBER 26, 2021 – FEBRUARY 27, 2022

These miniature scenes offer fun for all ages. The more you look, the more you see! A selection of the popular miniature dioramas by the award-winning illustrator Joan Steiner are once again on display at different locations throughout the museum. These meticulously crafted scenes were created from everyday objects and edible treats, and photographed for Steiner's Look-Alikes® books, first published in 1998.

## What's New in the Library? NOW ON VIEW IN ATRIUM-LEVEL LIBRARY CASES

There's a new exhibition on view in the special cases outside the Albany Institute's Library. Titled "What's New in the Library?," it showcases an interesting selection of materials recently added to the Library collection.

Some of the items on display include:

- papers and photographs from the Sarkis Mahigian Family Papers, gift of Lisa Mahigian Howard, whose grandfather escaped the Armenian Genocide in 1909 and eventually established the Chicago Market in Albany
- selections from the Frank C. Simpson collection of ephemera related to Frank C. Simpson and his wife Wilhelmina Bright Simpson, who were both prominent members of Albany's African American community
- business records, including some from the Kenmore Hotel dating to the 1920s and 1930s, which are part of a larger collection recently donated by Pulitzer Prize winning author William Kennedy
- books, including a copy of the 1969 children's book *Brown is a Beautiful Color* written by Jean Carey Bond and illustrated by Troy artist Barbara Zuber (1926-2019)



Detail of Illustration from *Brown is a Beautiful Color* (1969) written by Jean Carey Bond and illustrated by Troy resident Barbara Zuber

# A FOND FAREWELL

## Tom Nelson, Museum Renaissance Man, Retires

Tom Nelson joined the staff of the Albany Institute of History & Art in 1982 and enjoyed a 39-year career at the museum before officially retiring at the end of 2021. Norman Rice hired Tom upon his graduation from State University of New York, New Paltz with an BFA concentration in painting. Since then, Tom has designed and installed almost 400 art and history exhibitions on subjects ranging from motorcycles to 17th century Dutch paintings to Tiffany lamps. Tom consistently received high praise for his innovative and clever exhibition designs and graphic design work. Tom has designed over 30 publications for the museum and curated contemporary landscape exhibitions and exhibitions drawn from the museum's collections. Tom also purchased the museum's first computer in 1984 (a Mac512) and, soon after, the first scanner and digital camera, which opened the use of digitization for exhibition purposes.



Tom will be missed by staff and visitors alike, and is often referred to as a Renaissance man because of his intellectual curiosity, broad range of interests, and areas of expertise. Tom curated an exhibition *The Temple of Fancy: Pease's Great Variety Store*, which highlighted his discovery of the printing of America's first Christmas card right here in Albany as well as the first commercial use of Santa Claus as an advertising icon (*Albany Argus*, December 1841). Tom also curated an exhibition and wrote a book on the 19th century Albany composer, George William Warren. Tom has also organized traveling exhibitions, including the 1985 exhibition *The New Response: Contemporary Painters of the Hudson River*, which first opened at the Albany Institute, and then showed at both Vassar College and the Armory Gallery in New York City's Central Park. He curated exhibitions for a variety of institutions in the Hudson Valley, such as *In the Spirit of Thomas Cole: Contemporary Landscape Painting* for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. He is the author of several articles and exhibition catalogs.

While he worked behind the scenes, his exhibition designs have defined the face of museum exhibitions for decades. Reflecting on his career, Tom says: "Exhibitions are among the most labor-intensive things museums do, they cross several disciplines: aesthetics, the sciences, physics, metallurgy, environmental and material science, lighting technology, security, conservation, etc. I will miss the people at the Institute, but I won't miss the work we accomplished with such a small staff."

As a landscape artist, Tom's work has been included in over 100 exhibits at museums and galleries around New York State and elsewhere. Inspired by 19th century American landscape painters, Tom is best known for his views of Albany, the Hudson Valley, Maine, and California. *Enjoy your well-deserved retirement, Tom!*



*View of Coxsackie, Tom Nelson, 1988, oil on masonite, ht. 8 1/16" x w. 18 1/4", Albany Institute of History & Art, gift of Matthew Bender IV, 1989.5*

## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

MARCH 26 – OCTOBER 23, 2022

**You Are Here: Mapping Our World**

JULY 16 – DECEMBER 31, 2022

**Jan Brett: Stories Near and Far**

*Organized by the Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA*

AUGUST 6 – DECEMBER 31, 2022

**New American Scenery: The Art of Paul Scott**

NOVEMBER 12, 2022 – FEBRUARY 4, 2023

**Gordon Parks: I, too, am America**

*Gordon Parks: I, too, am America is organized by the Ulrich Museum of Art at Wichita State University and curated by Dr. Ksenya Gurshtein. All images courtesy and copyright of the Gordon Parks Foundation.*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*\*At this time, program attendees age 18+ participating in registered events listed below that are noted with an asterisk (\*) will be required to wear masks AND provide proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Proof of vaccination includes: a vaccination card, a photo of a vaccination card, the New York State Excelsior Pass or Excelsior Pass Plus, or if you received your vaccination in another state, that state's equivalent passport. Please visit our website for any updates.*

## FEBRUARY

### FILM & DISCUSSION

#### **Conversations of Freedom\***

Saturday, February 5, 2PM | Registration required\*

*\$10 non-members (includes museum admission);*

*Free for members (\$10 suggested donation)*

In 1925, Pullman Porters were organized into the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. This was the first African American labor union that was recognized by the American Federation of Labor. The union was led by activist A. Philip Randolph.

*Conversations of Freedom* is a living theatrical historical play that explores the role played by key individuals to bring about this victory. This recorded performance features actors Amelia



Paul, Kim Wafer, and Donald Hyman and poetry by Penny Meacham with film production by Collaborative Studios. Join us for the film debut as well as a short talk and Q&A with the writer/director of the production, Donald Hyman.

Thanks to our partner in this program, Collaborative Studios, this program will also be featured in a hybrid fashion and if participants prefer, they may tune in virtually from home rather than attend onsite. Register online at [www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org).

*This program is currently scheduled to be hosted onsite and will follow any updates in the museum's COVID-19 safety precautions. If necessary, the event may be converted to a live virtual livestream.*

**collaborative** Presented in partnership with  
STUDIOS Collaborative Studios

### PRESENTATION

#### **The Art of Leigh Li-Yun Wen\***

Sunday, February 6, 2PM | Registration required\*

*\$10 per person (includes museum admission)*

Leigh Li-Yun Wen, Artist

Artist Leigh Li-Yun Wen will discuss the inspiration behind her interest in the four elements – earth, air, fire, and water in her work, as well as her creative process, working methods and media, and challenges associated with producing large-scale work. Space is limited. Register online.

### EXHIBITION OPENING

#### **The Four Elements of Leigh Li-Yun Wen\***

Monday, February 7, 5:30-7:30PM | *\$15 per person*

Registration required\*

Join us to celebrate the opening of our newest exhibition *The Four Elements of Leigh Li-Yun Wen*. Mix and mingle with the artist and enjoy a special treat to bring home. RSVP online or call Sarah Kirby at (518) 463-4478 ext. 414 or email [kirbys@albanyinstitute.org](mailto:kirbys@albanyinstitute.org). RSVP by Monday, January 31, 2022.

*To ensure the safety of our guests, masks and proof of vaccination are required. Proof of vaccination includes: a vaccination card, a photo of a vaccination card, the New York State Excelsior Pass or Excelsior Pass Plus, or if you received your vaccination in another state, that state's equivalent passport. Please visit our website for any updates.*



*Peony 26, Leigh Li-Yun Wen, 2020, oil on linen, 166 x 177 cm, collection of the artist*

## ONGOING | ART FOR ALL: ART TO GO ACTIVITY SETS | February Project: Boats! Paint & Stencils

Projects change monthly | *Included with admission* | Program runs October–May during regular museum admission hours

*Art for All: Art to Go!* activity sets can be picked up at the Admission Desk and both children and adults are invited to participate.

Instructions are included with the materials. In February, we will take inspiration from the work of artist Leigh Li-Yun Wen and use stencils of sailboats to experiment in paint.



*Untitled VI, Leigh Li-Yun Wen, 1997, oil on canvas, 84 H x 168 W, Albany Institute of History & Art, 1998 Exhibition by Artists of the Mohawk Hudson Region Purchase Prize, 1998.16*

VIRTUAL ART DU JOUR

**Untitled VI by Leigh Li-Yun Wen**

Wednesday, February 9, 1PM | \$10 suggested donation

Take a break! This virtual program features a relaxed, explorative discussion of *Untitled VI* by Leigh Li-Yun Wen. The guided discussion will be approximately 30–45 minutes, perfect for a break from your busy day at work or at home. No background in art is required to enjoy this program, but reservations are required. Register online.

SECOND SATURDAY DROP-IN ART MAKING

**Boats! Paint & Stencils**

Saturday, February 12, 10AM–4:30PM | *Included with admission*

Discover Leigh Li-Yun Wen’s artwork on view in the museum galleries, including expressive paintings with silhouettes of sailboats. Then, create your own painted boat silhouettes using paper stencils.



 Sponsored in part by Stewart's Shops

**Drop-In Art Making Opportunities**

All ages are invited to get creative with us at the museum! Our hands-on art programs take place in the museum’s large multi-purpose room which provides ample space to spread out, socially distance, and be creative. Details available on our website: [www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org).

 Family Art Making projects are sponsored in part by Stewart's Shops.

PARTNER PROGRAM

**Musicians of Ma'alwyck In Recital\***

Saturday, February 19, 5PM | Registration required\*

Tickets: \$40 (available at [www.musiciansofmaalwyck.org](http://www.musiciansofmaalwyck.org))



Musicians of Ma'alwyck, professional chamber music ensemble in residence at the Schuyler Mansion New York State Historic Site, is joined by baritone Charles Eaton and frequent collaborator Max Caplan for a recital at the Albany Institute of History & Art. Mr. Eaton who has performed with Glimmerglass Opera, the Minnesota Opera, and New York City Opera, and recent top-prize winner in the prestigious Lotte Lenya Competition, will perform a program of music by Gerald Finzi and Kurt Weill, as well as the world premiere of a new aria by Max Caplan. The recital is dedicated to the late Norman Rice, director emeritus of the Albany Institute of History & Art.

*This partner program follows the current performing arts Covid-19 precautions, which include both wearing masks and proof of vaccination. Event updates will be listed on their website.*



FEDERAL HOLIDAY DROP-IN ART MAKING

**Boats! Paint & Stencils**

Monday, February 21, 10AM–4:30PM | *Included with admission*

Discover Leigh Li-Yun Wen’s artwork on view in the museum galleries, including expressive paintings with silhouettes of sailboats. Then, create your own painted boat silhouettes using paper stencils.

 Sponsored in part by Stewart's Shops

PRESENTATION

**Designed for Travel: Railroad Posters in the Collection of the Albany Institute\***

Sunday, February 27, 2PM | Registration required\*

\$10 per person (includes museum admission)

W. Douglas McCombs, Chief Curator

Doug McCombs, curator of the exhibition *Romancing the Rails: Train Travel in the 1920s and 1930s*, will look at posters from New York Central and other railroads to show how rail lines adapted new technologies and new messages to market their transportation services. Space is limited. Register online.

# MUSEUM NEWS

## Grant Funding Supports New Initiative: The Albany African American History Project

The Albany Institute of History & Art is pleased to announce the *Albany African American History Project*, a museum-wide initiative that will review and assess the museum's collections to develop a strategic collecting plan to enhance the Institute's African American collections; present exhibitions, public programs, workshops, and lectures about Albany's African American history; and build collaborations between the museum and our community. A key director for this project will be Lacey Wilson, the museum's new grant-funded Public Historian for the Albany African American History Project. Lacey will begin work at the Albany Institute in February 2022 and we will profile her in an upcoming newsletter. The *Albany African American History Project* is generously supported by the Carl E. Touhey Foundation.

In conjunction with this initiative, the Albany Institute applied for and was awarded \$37,801 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to expand access to diverse digital resources on the museum's website. The project, which is part of the 2021 American Rescue Plan grant award program [ARPML-250769-OMLS-22], is titled "Albany African American History Project: Access to Digital Resources Part 1." The Albany Institute will create an online resource of one hundred digitized items from the museum's collection exploring the Black experience in Albany, New York, from 1650 to 1877. The project team, which includes historian Tricia Barbagallo, will identify, contextualize, digitize, and upload collection items highlighting Albany's African American history as the first part of the much larger *Albany African American History Project*, which seeks to expand scholarship and research about African American lives in Albany during this period. In addition, the project will pair seasoned museum professionals with emerging museum and library/archives professionals in a collaborative mentorship model to grow the pipeline of underrepresented professionals in the museum field. In alignment with the goals of the grant program, the project will help with COVID-19 pandemic recovery by creating more online research resources, building staff capacity through mentorship, and establishing a framework for future online projects. You can learn more about IMLS and their programs online at: [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov).



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## Over 200 Archival Collection Finding Aids Available through Empire Archival Discovery Cooperative



Over the past year, the Albany Institute has been adding archival finding aids to the online repository called the Empire Archival Discovery Cooperative (Empire ADC). As of the end of 2021, the Albany Institute had added over 200 collection finding aids to this remarkable resource.

What is a finding aid? A finding aid provides information about a collection's creation, context, size, topics, and materials. This information can assist researchers in determining if a collection will help them with their research and, on Empire ADC, the finding aids are searchable! Empire ADC helps connect researchers with physical archival materials in repositories across New York State. New York State's cultural, historical, and educational institutions, like the Albany Institute, are home to archival, special, and historical collections that document a wide range of topics, people, and organizations. Collections may range in size from one item to many boxes of items.

The Albany Institute of History & Art Library is a non-circulating research library with collections related to the art, history, and culture of the upper Hudson Valley of New York. Collections include manuscript materials, photographs, maps, rare books, and other collections dating from the seventeenth century to the present. The collections included on the Empire ADC website ([www.empireadc.org](http://www.empireadc.org)) are listed with information such as: collection abstract, number of boxes, language, scope/content, biographical/historical information, container lists, and indexed subjects, names, and places. Start your search by clicking on "Search & Browse" and then "Repositories". (Albany Institute is near the top of the list!)

# ART AT HOME



## GUIDED PAINTING ART KIT

### Sunset Scenery

\$25 non-members; \$20 members

Program kit sales begin February 1

Are you looking to get creative on your own time? Try our Guided Painting Art Kit and create a lovely sunset scene inspired by artist Bill Sullivan's *Twilight at Olan* (1996). The Guided Painting Art Kit includes a canvas, paint, brushes, and both a video tutorial and a printed project outline. Kits may be purchased online and picked up at the museum during regular admission hours. Learn more and make your purchase on our website: [www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org).

# THANK YOU

## Thank You to Our Work of Art Sponsors and Supporters

On Wednesday, November 3, 2021, the Albany Institute of History & Art hosted *Work of Art*, an event honoring retiring executive director Tammis K. Groft.

We would like to extend our thanks to our co-chairs of the event, Michael and Lynette Tucker, as well as all of our generous sponsors and guests. It was wonderful to gather in person to celebrate both Tammis and our region's contemporary artists. Thank you for your continued support!

If you would like to make a donation to the Albany Institute in honor of Tammis Groft, please contact Ellie Burhans by email at [burhans@albanyinstitute.org](mailto:burhans@albanyinstitute.org) or (518) 463-4478 ext. 402.



# SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2022

## Remembering Norman Rice

A special event at the Albany Institute of History & Art

MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2022

## Annual Meeting of the Membership

FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2022

## 2022 Museum Gala

SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2022 | 11AM

## Funeral Service for Norman Rice

Cathedral of All Saints, 62 South Swan Street, Albany



BROWN | WEINRAUB



# ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

125 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12210  
(518) 463-4478 | [www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org)

## Galleries & Shop

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	10AM–5PM
Thursday	10AM–5PM
Friday	10AM–5PM
Saturday	10AM–5PM
Sunday	12PM–5PM

## Cafe

*The Museum Cafe is temporarily closed.*

## Library & Archives

*The Library and Archives are open by appointment only.*

## Admission

Members free | Adults \$10 | Seniors (62+) \$8 | Students with ID \$8  
Children 6-12 \$6 | Under 6 Free | *Admission discount information online*  
Advance ticket information is available on our website.

*Season exhibition and program support is provided by Phoebe Powell Bender, Mr. and Mrs. George R. Hearst III, Charles M. Liddle III, Lois and David Swawite, the Carl E. Touhey Foundation, Inc., and Candace K. Weir.*



This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services [ARPM-250769-OMLS-22].



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ALBANY INSTITUTE  
OF HISTORY & ART  
WINTER 2022

