

# The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

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**VIEUX CARRÉ VISION:** 520 Royal Street Opens









## ON THE COVER

The newly expanded Historic New Orleans Collection: A) 533 Royal Street, home of the Williams Residence and Louisiana History Galleries; B) 410 Chartres Street, the Williams Research Center; C) 610 Toulouse Street, home to THNOC's publications, marketing, and education departments; and D) the new exhibition center at 520 Royal Street, comprising the Seignouret-Brulatour Building and Tricentennial Wing. photo credit: © 2019 Jackson Hill

## FROM THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

After six years of intensive planning, archaeological exploration, and construction work, as well as countless staff hours, our new exhibition center at 520 Royal Street is now open to the public, marking the latest chapter in The Historic New Orleans Collection's 53-year romance with the French Quarter. Our original complex across the street at 533 Royal, anchored by the historic Merieult House, remains home to the Williams Residence and Louisiana History Galleries. Nearby, at 410 Chartres Street, the Williams Research Center (WRC) continues to serve all manner of scholars and visitors while hosting lectures, events, and exhibitions. But the heart of our exhibition program now shifts to the new facility, a 36,000-square-foot expansion comprising two main structures—the fully restored 1816 Seignouret-Brulatour Building and the purpose-built Tricentennial Wing. The Brulatour courtyard, made iconic by former occupants WDSU-TV and the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans, is flanked by two historic service wings that now house an expanded Shop at The Collection and our first-ever museum café, Café Cour.

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This exhibition center is a dream come true for our institution and, with its blend of old and new construction, a symbol of our commitment to both historic preservation and perennial reinvention.

The vision of our founders, L. Kemper and Leila Williams, laid the foundation of 520 Royal Street. Dedicated preservationists, they recognized the cultural value of the French Quarter at a time when its architectural heritage was under threat. Their purchase of the 1792 Merieult House, in 1938, and their subsequent outreach and philanthropic efforts helped recast the Vieux Carré as one of America's preeminent residential and historic neighborhoods.

The success of the 20th-century preservation movement, however, has led to a new threat: overcrowding and overuse related to tourism now endanger the neighborhood's historic fabric. Without a concerted effort to make the French Quarter known not simply as a place to party but also as a place to learn, this remarkable area could cease to be a meaningful historic resource.

The preservation of the French Quarter continues to be a part of our mission, but we've grown far beyond the imagination of two individuals: from our early operation—a 15-person staff, reading room, offices, galleries, and collections storage, all housed at 533 Royal Street—we've become a team of more than 130 people who produce exhibitions, books, symposia, lectures, concerts, and more, all the while making our vast collection of materials available to the public year-round. Thanks to generous donors who have not only given objects, books, and papers but also established acquisition funds, we have been able to continually grow our collections, and the WRC serves nearly 3,000 researchers and institutions annually, as well as many thousands of unique visitors to our online catalog and research tools.

Now, our new facility allows us to significantly increase the scale and accessibility of our exhibitions. As we were reminded last year with the record crowds that visited 533 Royal to view our tricentennial exhibition, *New Orleans, the Founding Era*, there are limitations that come with hosting exhibitions in historic spaces. The warren of small rooms was pushed to capacity by the hundreds of daily visitors. And, while old buildings can be adapted to accommodate the conditions and specifications attached to exhibiting collections materials, they were not designed for that purpose—and the adaptations invariably present challenges. The Tricentennial Wing, a spacious three-story structure, is designed specifically to host large-scale museum exhibitions, featuring dynamic walls that conceal gigantic doors for loading items seamlessly, as well as state-of-the-art lighting, specialized climate control, and thoughtfully conceived layout features that ensure ease of use by our staff for years to come. Together, the Tricentennial Wing and Seignouret-Brulatour Building allow us to host multiple changing exhibitions at any given time, as well as a continuing show about the history of the French Quarter. Interactive technological features, such as virtual-reality goggles stationed at different locations, enhance the visitor experience. By expanding our capacity to provide historical engagement for people in the French Quarter, we hope to further the sustainability of this remarkable neighborhood.





Growing our audience is but one part of our larger mission—to be a critical resource for the study and understanding of this place we call home. We seek to make our history a cornerstone of identity that is accessible and important to everyone. Those of us who are residents have all sorts of different definitions of the French Quarter—some favorable, some not. Our new exhibition center is designed to educate and inspire visitors to embrace the responsibilities of citizenship through pride of place.

Finally, though the new exhibition center is currently the star of the hour, this landmark represents so much more than a brick-and-mortar expansion. Our educational outreach efforts are stronger than ever: last year we hosted over 100 school and teacher groups for field trips and workshops, and, for the first time, we now have a dedicated learning area for families and children, in the new center's Education Galleries. We have grown our publications program exponentially. We've taken these steps, and others, to increase the extent to which our collections and knowledge are available to the public. The future beckons. Join us as we make history, together.

—PRISCILLA LAWRENCE AND DANIEL HAMMER







520 ROYAL STREET

## From Purchase to Punch List

To the public, the front facade of 520 Royal Street has been shuttered or covered in scaffolding for much of the past three years. Behind the scenes, though, THNOC and its team of architects, engineers, and contractors have been hard at work building the new exhibition center. The road to this landmark \$38 million project has been a long one; here's a look at its progress over the years.

IMAGES BY THNOC PHOTOGRAPHERS KEELY MERRITT, MELISSA CARRIER, AND TERE KIRKLAND



# 2006

**THNOC buys the property** at 520 Royal Street. It includes the historic Seignouret-Brulattour Building, two historic service buildings, the Brulattour courtyard, and two rear structures from the mid-20th century that will be demolished to make way for the new Tricentennial Wing.



# 2013

**The exploratory phase begins.** Architects at Waggonner and Ball share ideas with THNOC, and selective demolition work is done to study structural issues and aspects related to historic preservation.

## April

The **Aeolian organ** installed by former owner William Ratcliffe Irby in the early 20th century is deinstalled, to be sent to Holtkamp Organ Company in Cleveland for repair.



## June 2013–April 2015

Over a series of phases, Earth Search Inc. conducts **archaeological research** on the site, which reveals a 19th-century well in the courtyard; glass, metal, and pottery shards; and animal bones.



# 2014

**Conservation work begins**, as preservation experts at Cypress Building Conservation identify materials, paint colors, and paint composition used on the original Seignouret-Brulattour Building. Later, in 2018, Decorative Arts Curator Lydia Blackmore and an intern conduct a study of historic wallpapers removed during this phase.



**August**

**Structural repair work begins.** This important phase addresses subsidence in the Seignouret-Brulatour Building and sees the removal of a concrete terrace that had added an unsustainable load to several walls, causing them to buckle.



2015



**Fall**

Throughout the historic structures, old wooden headers are replaced with steel, and **new foundation-grade beams** are poured.



**January**

A monumental **masonry-repair effort begins**, with masons from Bywater Woodworks replacing every bad brick in the historic structures. All old mortar is cleared out up to two inches deep and replaced with new.

2016



**July**

A rear warehouse and an office building, both built by WDSU in the mid-20th century, are **demolished** to make way for the purpose-built Tricentennial Wing.



## August

With the Seignouret-Brulatour Building and historic service wings now structurally sound, **restoration work and new construction begin.**

In September, new auger-cast piles, made of poured concrete reinforced with steel, are put in the ground for the Tricentennial Wing.



# 2017

## December 2016–June 2017

Using a combination of steel framing and concrete masonry units (CMUs), the **builders frame the Tricentennial Wing.**

## Spring–Summer

**Interior framing and new conduit** go up in the Seignouret-Brulatour Building.



## August

Scaffolding is removed from the **newly restored front facade of 520 Royal Street.** The ochre hue of the stucco was selected based on conservation research into the original colors and materials used on the Seignouret-Brulatour Building.



## Fall

Restoration of the **historic staircase in the Seignouret-Brulatour Building,** sponsored by the 2017 Laussat Society and Bienville Circle, is complete.





**March**

In celebration of New Orleans's 300th birthday, THNOC briefly opens the Brulatour courtyard to the public as part of its **tricentennial block party**.

# 2018



**June**

**HVAC units arrive** by crane-assisted delivery.

**June**

**"Closing in the building" is finished**, meaning that the entire building envelope—roof, windows, walls—is complete.

**Fall**

**Interior finishing work continues**, as flooring, gallery walls, and lighting and plumbing fixtures are installed.



**Winter**

Workers install **cabinetry and other special finishes**, such as the Tricentennial Wing's "ship's hull" wall feature.

**December**

Installation of the newly restored **Aeolian organ** begins.

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# 2019

**March**

THNOC receives its official **certificate of occupancy**. The move-in and exhibition-installation processes can now begin!







# Tour de Force

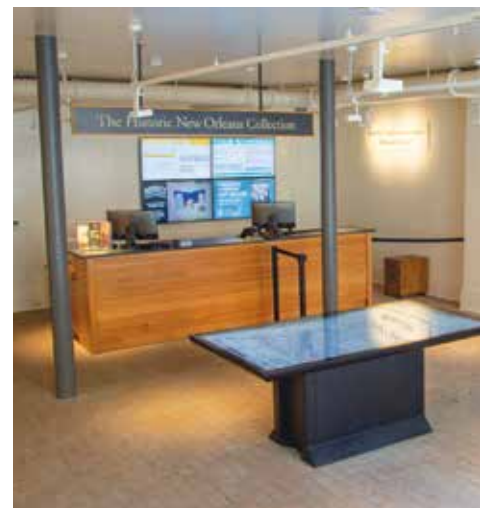
The Collection's new exhibition center is open and ready for exploration! Take a look at all that awaits behind the sunny facade of 520 Royal Street.

## A. Patrick F. Taylor Foundation Welcome Center

Your first stop for ticketing and information, the welcome center features French Quarter at Your Fingertips, an interactive station made possible by Ann M. Masson in memory of her husband, Frank W. Masson. This "smart table" is stocked with information about New Orleans architecture, historical maps of the French Quarter, and self-guided tours. Behind the welcome center, lockers offer guests a place to stash bags and other gear as needed.

## B. The Shop at The Collection

THNOC's popular shop has expanded into a new, 2,000-square-foot space brimming with custom-designed features. Visitors can browse ready-to-frame prints, locally made jewelry and accessories, housewares and décor, books, and more (see the related story on page 30).







### C. Brulatour Courtyard

The iconic Brulatour courtyard is well known to longtime viewers of WDSU-TV, which occupied the property for decades and used the courtyard as a visual calling card. A historic well on the site, uncovered in an archaeological dig commissioned by THNOC and restored thanks to the Azby Fund, is covered in clear glass for visitors to walk over and observe. The courtyard also has outdoor seating for the café.

### D. Café Cour

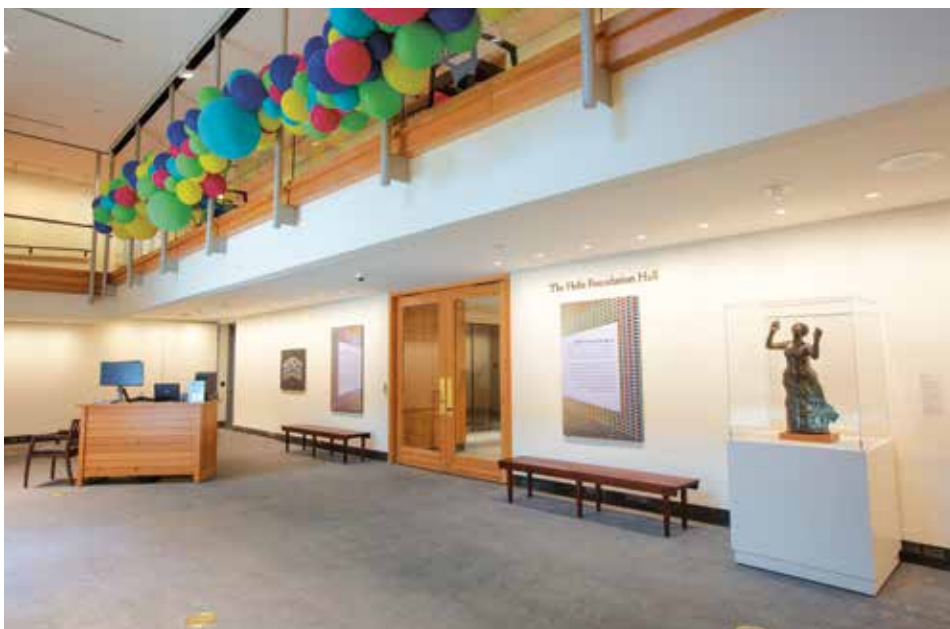
The Collection's first-ever museum café offers an array of soups, salads, sandwiches, and hot and cold entrées, as well as espresso and pastries. Vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options abound, and the dishes are inspired by New Orleans's many culinary influences, from the tuna-based riff on a muffuletta to the Vietnamese chicken salad and Haitian red bean soup.

### E. The Helis Foundation Hall

The grand entryway to the Tricentennial Wing, this airy two-story atrium will function as a party and programming space for lectures and events. Anchored this spring and summer by a sculpture of Mahalia Jackson, by the artist Elizabeth Catlett, the hall also has a ticketing and information booth.

### F. Art of the City

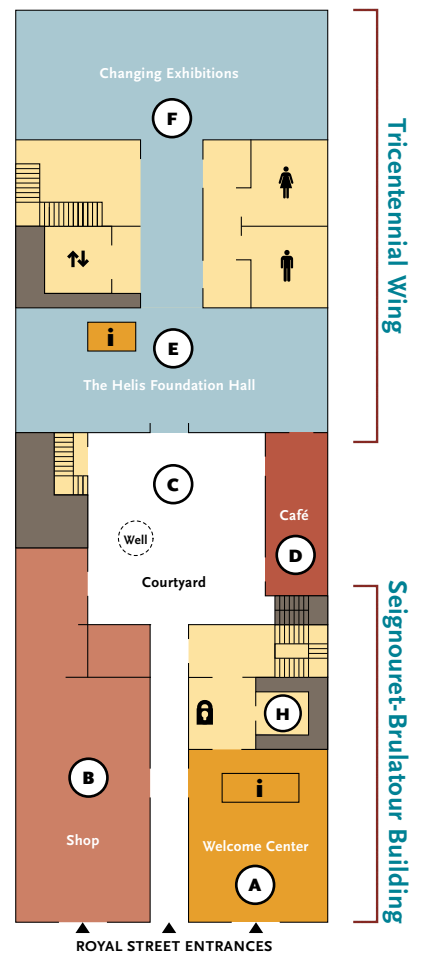
Inaugurating all three floors of the Tricentennial Wing's galleries for changing exhibitions, *Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina*, presented by The Helis Foundation, brings together the most comprehensive display of contemporary art The Collection has ever mounted. The show runs through October (see the related story on page 18).







Floor 1





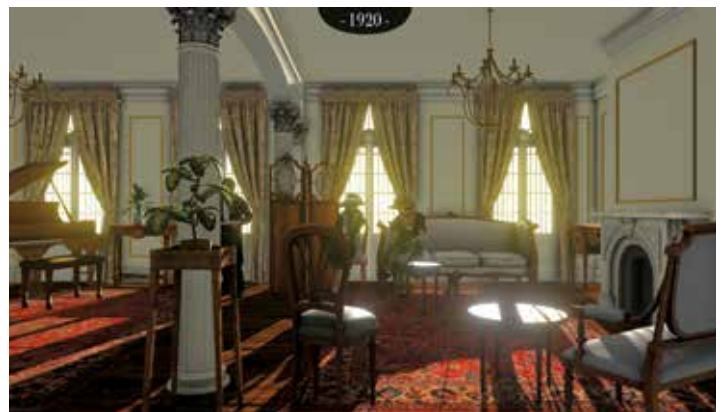


### G. Education Galleries

Children and families can explore French Quarter history using all five senses: touch a tanned deer skin, smell different scents associated with the Vieux Carré over time (see the related story on page 28), view enlarged images from THNOC's holdings, and watch/listen to film clips and educational videos.

### H. Elevator Experience

As the Seignouret-Brulatour Building's elevator travels from floor to floor, an augmented-reality experience, designed by artists Xiao Xiao and Alan Kwan, imagines how the rooms of the building were used at different points in history.







### I. Office Space

THNOC's growing visitor services and shop staff have a new base of operations in the Seignouret-Brulatour Building.

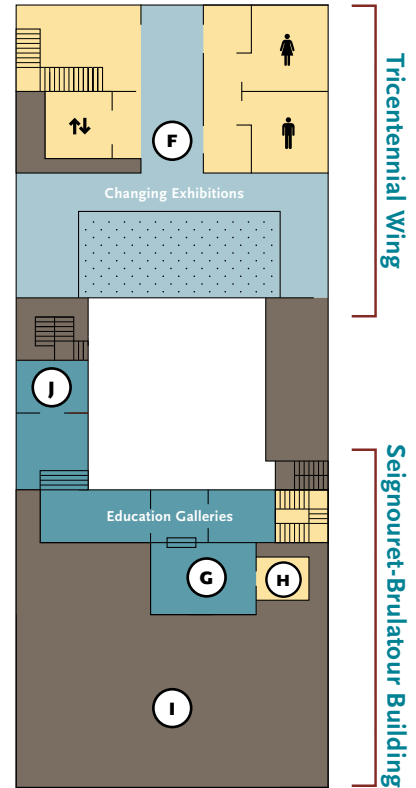
### J. Virtual Reality Stations

A 21st-century spin on overlook binoculars, these VR goggles depict the Brulatour courtyard below at different points in time (see the related story on page 29).

### K. Organ Room

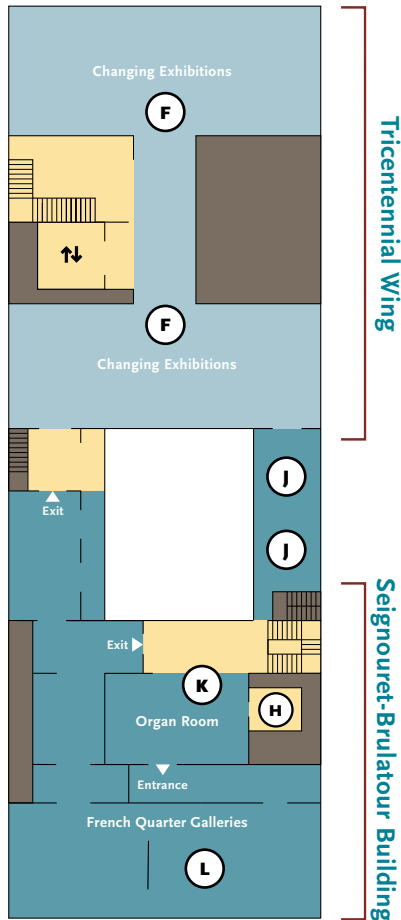
First installed in the early 20th century by the tobacco baron and banker William Ratcliffe Irby, a fully restored Aeolian organ is the centerpiece of this captivating entryway to the French Quarter Galleries. The instrument, known generally as a residence organ, with self-playing capability, will be featured in periodic demonstrations, special events, and recitals. With its lavish decorative screens and finishes, the room also includes information about the history of the Seignouret-Brulatour Building and The Collection's commitment to historic preservation.

### Floor 2





Floor 3



L. French Quarter Galleries

Anchoring the Seignouret-Brulatour Building, this exhibition serves as the Vieux Carré's only major, ongoing display about the history of the French Quarter (see the related story on page 22).





# In Good Hands

Renovating a 200-year-old building, erecting a new three-story structure, and making it all worthy of a world-class museum required the years-long work of more than a hundred building-arts professionals and other specialists. Working from plans by Waggoner and Ball, general contractor Bywater Woodworks oversaw a large crew of builders to make THNOC's new exhibition center a reality. Here, in thanks for their service, we introduce some of them to you.



A. Sylvia Thompson-Dias and Carmen Maher, decorative artists, Sylvia T. Designs

B. Barry J. Siegel, president, Bywater Woodworks

C. Barry Nicholson, superintendent, Bywater Woodworks

D. Debra Lombard, LEED and construction administrator, Bywater Woodworks

E. Eddie Mejia, supervisor, Bywater Woodworks

F. Ryan Shaner, lead project manager, Bywater Woodworks

G. Calvin Cooper, mason, Bywater Woodworks

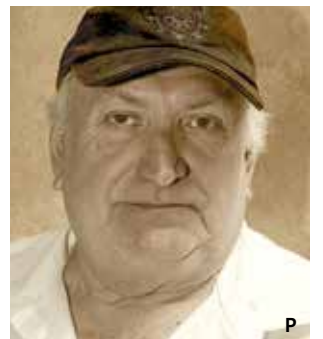
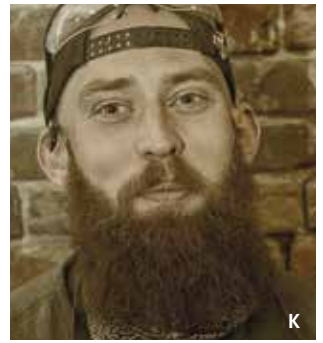
H. Oscar M. Gwin III, project manager, Construction Strategies LLC; Jonah Berman, commissioning engineer, Thompson Building Energy Solutions LLC; and Michael Cohn, chief financial officer, THNOC





## 520 ROYAL STREET

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I. Jeffrey M. Porée, master plasterer, and John Porée, manager, Jeff Porée Plastering LLC

J. Charley Dawson, hardware specialist, Crescent Door and Hardware

K. Patrick Murphy, woodworker, Bywater Woodworks

L. William Mullany, project manager, Bywater Woodworks

M. Russ Conlin, console maker, Holtkamp Organ Company

N. Guadalupe "Lupe" Gonzalez, mason, Bywater Woodworks

O. Jason Rando, head carpenter, Bywater Woodworks

P. Manuel Rodriguez, painter, Bywater Woodworks

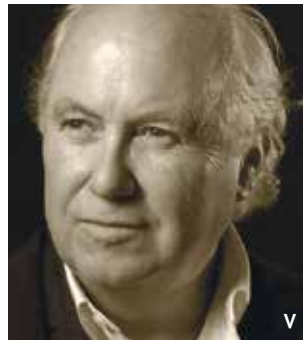
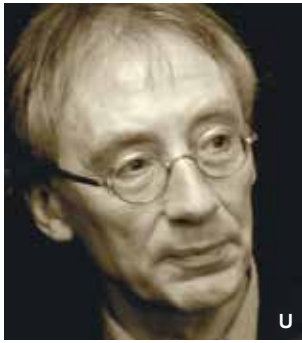
Q. Shawn Henderson, plumbing and electrical provider, Gootee Construction

R. Shane Mason, plumbing and electrical provider, Gootee Construction

S. Ross and Mark Elias, father-and-son woodworkers, Quality Custom Woodwork







T. Michael Godzinski, archaeologist and architectural historian, Earth Search Inc.

U. J. David Waggoner III, principal architect, Waggoner and Ball

V. F. Macnaughton Ball Jr., principal architect, Waggoner and Ball

W. Brian Swanner and Sarah Weinkauf, architects, Waggoner and Ball

X. John Goodin, MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) engineer, TLC Engineering Solutions

Y. Steve Pinto, MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) engineer, TLC Engineering Solutions

Z. Michael Shoriak, architectural conservator, Cypress Building Conservation

AA. Courtney Williams, architectural conservator, Cypress Building Conservation

BB. Wayne Zuccarello, master stair builder, Zuccarello Custom Woodworks LLC







A

**EXHIBITION**

***Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina*, presented by The Helis Foundation**

520 Royal Street

Through October 6

Free

A. ***Loungers—New Orleans Athletic Club, 1994***  
 ca. 2004; chromogenic color print  
 by William Greiner  
 © William Greiner, 2016.0468

# Fresh Perspectives

*Art of the City* takes viewers through the multifaceted landscape of postmodern New Orleans art.

“For the first time in history, the majority of the world’s population lives in urban communities,” the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego observed with its 2010 exhibition *Viva la Revolución: A Dialogue with the Urban Landscape*. “The city itself, its buildings, vehicles, people, and advertisements, are not only the surface where the art is applied. The city fuels the practice.”

The New Orleans urban landscape similarly animates and contextualizes *Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina*, presented by The Helis Foundation. This collection of art and artists illustrates the city’s multilayered character and confirms its significance as an incubator of cultural diversity.

*Art of the City* focuses loosely on the period from the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition through the present—a vital yet turbulent era in the life of the Big Easy. The design of the world’s fair and the art it exhibited fit into the postmodern movement of the day, which



rejected established styles and cultural norms and embraced a diversity of perspectives and forms. The convergence of these ideas and this international event in New Orleans left a lasting imprint on the city and its artists. Krista Jurisich's *Cityscape* was completed three years after the fair, to commemorate the redevelopment of the Poydras Street business corridor. Its electric, graphically pulsating view of downtown captures the post-modern focus on transition and permutation.

The exhibition's other temporal bookend is the aftermath of what is often called "The Storm," the 2005 levee breaches and flooding following Hurricane Katrina. This season of loss and rebuilding can be seen in works such as *Things That Float* (2011; seen in foreground of top image, page 11), Rontherin Ratliff's mixed-media installation that tells his family's Katrina story through salvaged building materials, scraps of flood-damaged furniture, and family photographs. In *Fats Got Out* (2009), painter Gina Phillips comments on the story of Fats Domino being airlifted to safety from his flooded Lower Ninth Ward home: depicting the legendary R&B singer and pianist levitating above



**B. *Cityscape***  
1987; gouache on paper  
by Krista Jurisich  
gift of Judith L. Jurisich, 2017.0021

**C. *Fats Got Out***  
2009; fabric, thread, and acrylic paint on canvas  
by Gina Phillips  
courtesy of Luis Cruz Azaceta and Sharon Jacques

**D. *Baby Shoes***  
ca. 1970; lace (needlework), acrylic (plastic), leather, metal  
by George Febres  
The George Febres Collection of Louisiana Art, gift of Dr. Jerah Johnson, 1996.78.1.10





E. *Spring Willows*

1995; oil on canvas  
by Simon Gunning  
gift of Edgar J. Bullard III, 2014.0375

the Industrial Canal in splendor, she renders him a mythical hero, rather than a Katrina victim. As expressed in these examples and many more, New Orleans has proven resilient, in no small part because of its ascending—and still incubating—ecosystem of culture and arts.

*Art of the City* is inspired by the ever-evolving patchwork of neighborhoods, architecture, cuisines, and music that history has wrought here. I was honored to have been invited by THNOC President/CEO Priscilla Lawrence to work with her as guest curator of the show, joining her and her dedicated, thoughtful, and ever-patient staff. Lawrence and I worked to assemble an idiosyncratic mix of interpretations reflecting the urban geography of New Orleans, often described as the most European and soulful of American cities. The artists have been moved by the city’s patina, its inhabitants, and their own individual passions. Their work details the mundane and the mysterious, sometimes in the form of a caress—as in *Spring Willows* (1995), Simon Gunning’s rendering of a New Orleans neighborhood scene—and other times a caution. No doubt, there has been a rush to document what at times feels fleeting, threatened, eroding.

Walking through the galleries may feel more like a stroll along the bumpy, bending paths of this sinking sanctuary. Our bedrock comes in the form of squishy soils chock-full of ritual and relic. Here, time and experience are especially layered. We can’t help but move in circles, looking backward as well as forward. Voyages in time—real time, memory, dream, myth—are immersive, compelling simultaneous readings of nonsynchronous stories that

coexist and collide. Prosperity and loss blur together: oil booms and oil spills, championships and scandals, high rises and empty lots.

Many of the works on display in *Art of the City* are drawn from the holdings of The Historic New Orleans Collection and capture nuances of this special place and time. The exhibition showcases work by contemporary artists with New Orleans roots as well as a sampling from deeply invested visiting artists and newcomers. Beyond the gallery walls, the New Orleans landscape has been enhanced by the peppering of public art over the last three decades. Whether permanent or ephemeral, these installations have woven indelible patterns into the fabric of the city (“the upholstered sewer,” according to Mark Twain). A map on the first floor of the exhibition spotlights a selection of these multidisciplinary works.

Programming is another integral component of *Art of the City*: film screenings, live performances, workshops, tours, dialogues, and more broaden its scope. These programs began at the start of 2018 with an installation of synchronized bells in the French Quarter, by Zarouhie Abdalian, and also included a bike tour that explored notable architecture and art along the historic portage route from the Mississippi River to Bayou St. John. In 2019, programming continues with artist conversations held inside the exhibition and at other public locations. From the postmodernism associated with the ’84 world’s fair to the work that has emerged in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the art of New Orleans has been inextricable from its history. As New Orleans enters its fourth century, *Art of the City* represents the diverse chorus of voices that has long distinguished this city and will shape its future. —JAN GILBERT







F

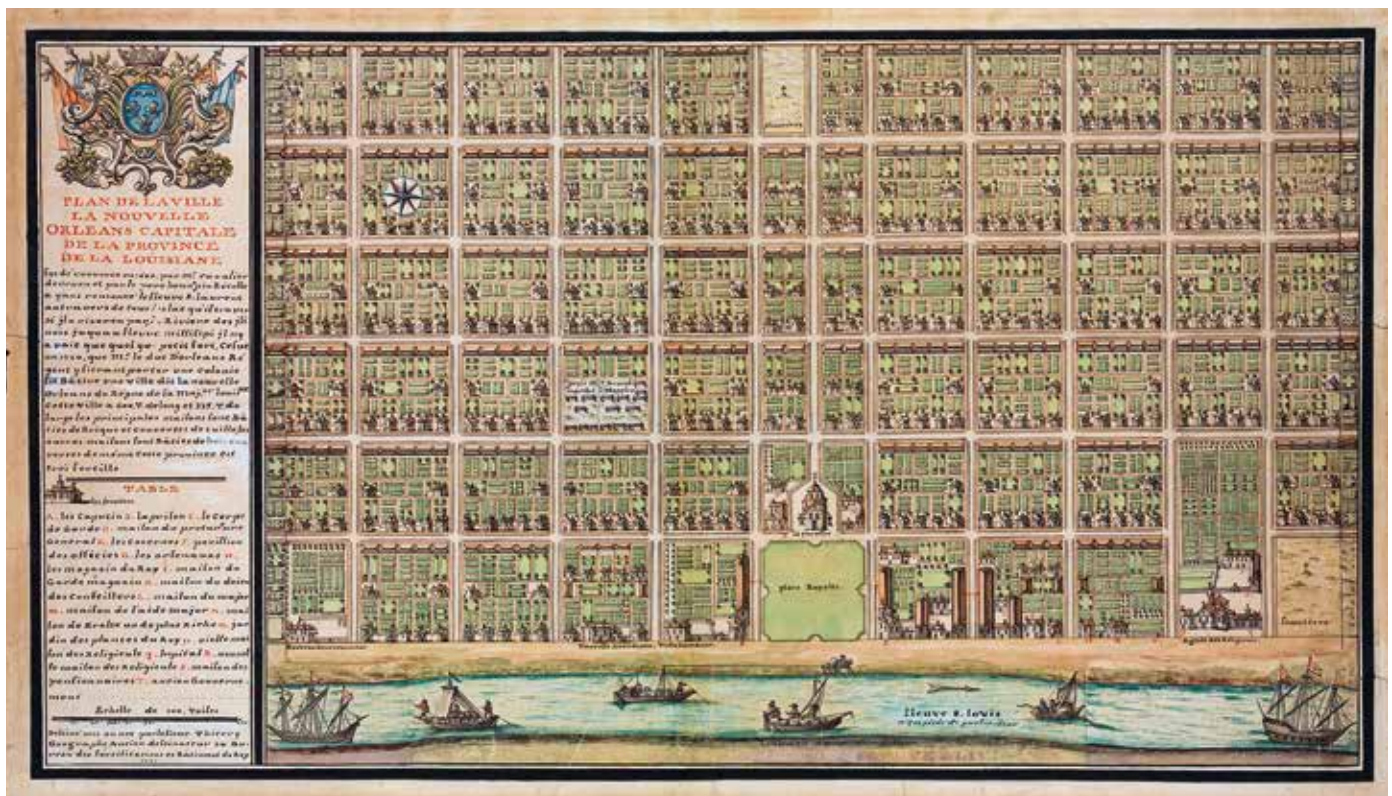


G

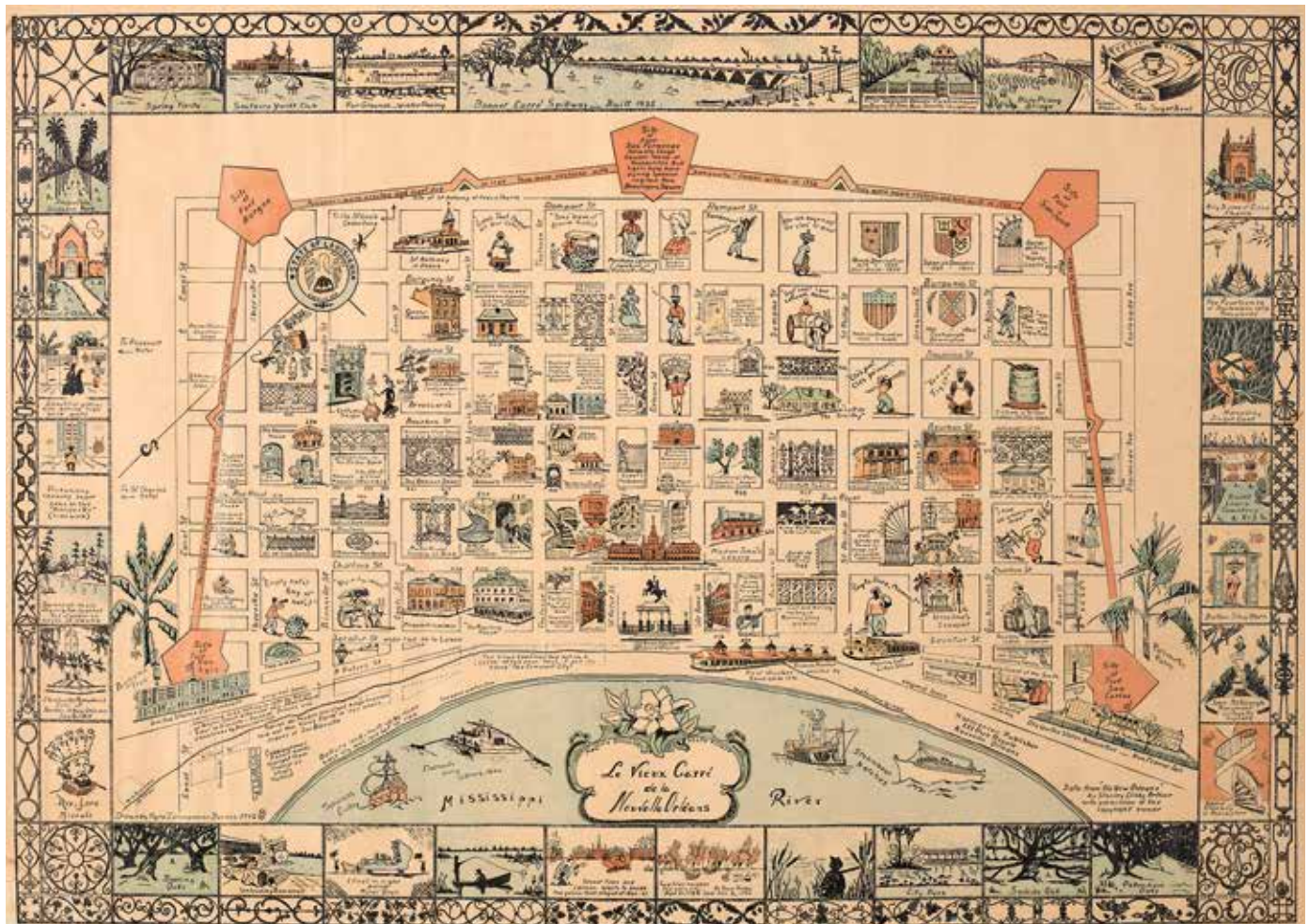
**F. *Burning Orchid Nightclub***  
 1984; oil on linen  
 by Douglas Bourgeois  
 gift of Dr. Jerah Johnson, 2012.0299

**G. *2520 Deslondes Street***  
 2005; Fujicolor Crystal Archive print  
 mounted to Dibond aluminum  
 by Robert Polidori  
 © Robert Polidori, 2008.0090.1





A



B



# Hidden in Plain Sight

The French Quarter is New Orleans's oldest neighborhood and most beloved attraction. Now, THNOC has a dedicated exhibition exploring its history.

Despite its status as a prime destination for locals and nearly every visitor to New Orleans, the French Quarter has lacked a large-scale public exhibition addressing the district's rich, complex, and fascinating history—until now. In opening its new exhibition center at 520 Royal Street, THNOC has simultaneously identified and rectified a condition that was hiding in plain sight, that of the French Quarter's omnipresent yet under-exhibited history.

More than three years ago, The Collection's staff of curators, catalogers, librarians, and reference specialists plunged into the entirety of French Quarter history, with the aim of creating a wide-ranging, adaptable exhibition centered on broad themes therein. To assist in crafting a narrative for the show, THNOC engaged Guy Vadeboncoeur, former director of the Stewart Museum in Montreal and a respected museum consultant, whose work has been showcased in Canada and France.

Over a series of visits, Vadeboncoeur provided a neutral sounding board for the curators at THNOC, proposing ways to tighten and connect the exhibition's narrative threads and flow. The team settled on a series of topics that make up the newly unveiled French Quarter Galleries: the street grid, transportation, commerce, populations, visual art and literature, communications, and music and performing arts. An immersive, 17-minute audiovisual experience capturing the French Quarter at night gets a dedicated room with seating. Visitors touring these galleries can engage with over 200 original historical items of all types, as well as digital features offering additional information about and videos related to the items on display.

To give the lay of the land, so to speak, maps of the Vieux Carré from the last 300 years introduce visitors to the exhibition, showing its evolution from Enlightenment-era "ideal city" to one of the world's most popular tourist destinations. A dynamic word

## CONTINUING EXHIBITION

### French Quarter Galleries

520 Royal Street

Free

**A. *Plan de la Ville La Nouvelle-Orléans Capitale de la Province de la Louisiane***

1755; ink and watercolor on paper

by Thierry

*The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams Founders Collection, 1939.8*

**B. *Tourist map of the French Quarter***

1942

by Myra Zimmerman Barnes

*gift of Marjorie D. La Salle, 2011.0094.1*

**C. *The Great Mississippi Steamboat Race***

undated reproduction of 1870 lithograph

by Currier & Ives

*1974.25.30.776*

**D. *New Orleans and Carrollton Railroad Company streetcar ticket***

between 1835 and 1850

*gift of Harold Schilke, 1959.80.1*

**E. *The Desire streetcar on Bourbon Street***

ca. 1945; gelatin silver print

by Charles L. Franck Photographers

*The Charles L. Franck Studio Collection, 1979.89.7500*



C

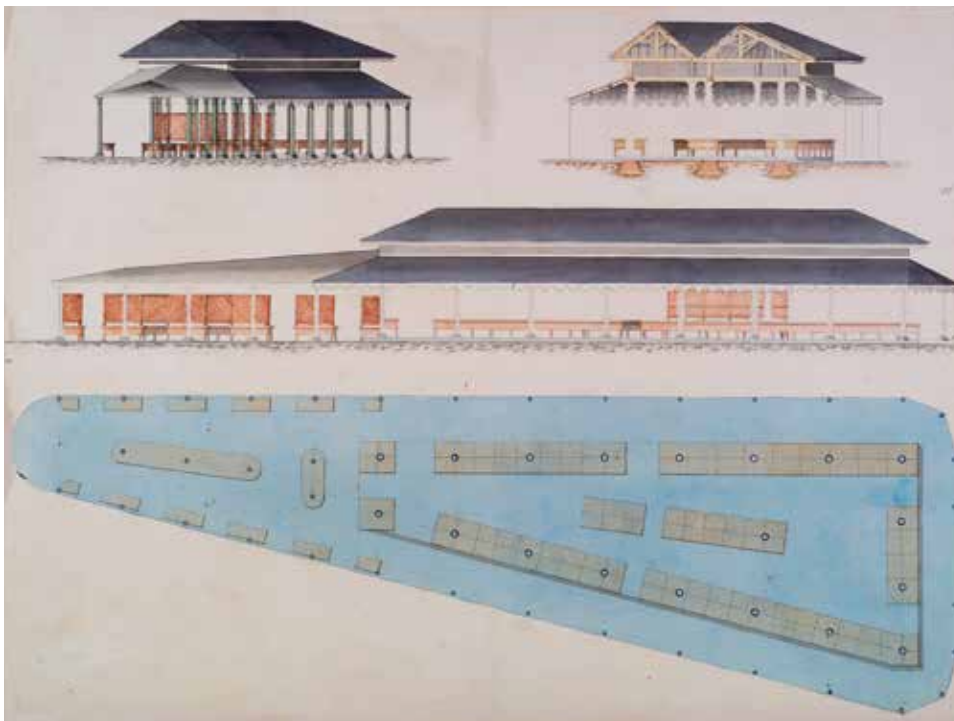


D



E





**F. Plan, section, and elevation of the fruit market at the French Market**

1871; ink and watercolor on paper  
by William H. Bell  
*The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams Founders Collection, 1950.5.100 i-iv*

**G. Cafe Lafitte advertisement**

block print  
by Eugenia and Bob Riley  
from *The Bachelor in New Orleans: A Handbook for Unattached Gentlemen and Ladies of Spirit Visiting or Resident in the Paris of America* (New Orleans: Bob Riley Studios, 1942)  
78-322-RL

**H. Femme et Fille**

engraving  
by Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz  
from *Histoire de la Louisiane*, vol. 2 (Paris: de Bure, l'aîné; la veuve Delaguette; et Lambert, 1758)  
1980.205.3

**I. Gay Fest Parade poster**

June 1981  
gift of an anonymous donor, 1981.225.6



cloud projection, titled *Murmural*, by Xiao Xiao and Don Derek Haddad, shifts its content in response to visitor activity, providing a real-time look at how people are engaging with the material. The next gallery presents artifacts and ephemera related to modes of transportation, from grand steamboats—the floating palaces of their day—to the city’s iconic streetcars and the proposed but never-built Riverfront Expressway. In the commerce gallery, the business life of the Quarter unfolds over time, as the ubiquitous horror of the antebellum slave trade gives way to an economy grounded in tourism. This section also explores the Vieux Carré’s role as a retail destination, encompassing purveyors of furniture and household goods, foodstuffs in its famed public markets, and beloved restaurants and bars.







**J. Armoire**  
between 1800 and 1825; mahogany, cypress, mahogany veneer, brass  
attributed to François Seignouret (New Orleans)  
gift of John Geiser III in memory of Marjorie Peirce Geiser and John Geiser Jr., 2009.0027

**K. Fragment of a Corinthian capital from the St. Louis Hotel**  
ca. 1843; cypress  
1997.20.6

**L. Printing blocks for the *Outsider*, nos. 2, 3, and 4**  
between 1961 and 1963; wood  
by Loujon Press  
gift of Edwin J. Blair, 2006.0104.1

M. Visitors take in ***The French Quarter by Night***, an immersive audiovisual experience developed by writers and producers Michelle Benoit and Glen Pitre of Côte Blanche Productions.

Visitors will learn about the different populations of the Vieux Carré, from the Native peoples who first occupied this territory to the colonizers, enslaved people, and immigrants who came here in waves over the centuries. Eighteenth-century depictions of Native Americans, 19th-century portraits of free people of color, and 20th-century ephemera related to the French Quarter’s LGBT+ community illuminate the diversity of the French Quarter’s ethnic, social, and economic profile.

The visual centerpiece of the arts section is a magnificent armoire reflecting the French Quarter’s long history of creative expression. The neighborhood’s renowned architectural beauty is captured in views of the old Merchants’ Exchange, sketch plans of townhouses, and fragments of original decorative iron- and woodwork. Particularly in the 20th century, when it became a fertile outpost of bohemia, the Vieux Carré has inspired countless works of visual art and literature, seen in objects such as printing blocks from the avant-garde literary magazine the *Outsider*.

The outlier of the exhibition presents a 17-minute, immersive experience centered on the French Quarter at night. Surrounding the visitor are projections on every wall that blend digital animation, historical recreations, archival footage, and contemporary video content, accompanied by music, sound effects, and voices. Upon exiting this theater, the visitor







**N. Still from “Chase, the Artist and Cartoonist”**  
 between 1964 and 1966; 16mm color video  
 by Joe Budde  
*gift of Sue Budde in memory of her husband,  
 Joe Budde, 2007.0357.4.29*



**O. WNOE-AM promotional pamphlet**  
 December 21, 1958  
 98-030-RL

**P. Trumpet owned by New Orleans jazzman and bandleader Percy Humphrey**  
 ca. 1936; brass  
 by F. E. Olds  
*gift of Charles W. Johnson Jr., 2016.0482.1.3*

**Q. Costume for Rigobert from *Les Mousquetaires au couvent*: *Opéra-comique en 3 actes*, designed for the 2013–15 co-production by the Théâtre national de l’Opéra Comique, Opéra de Lausanne, and Opéra de Toulon Provence Méditerranée**  
 2018; velvet, poplin, felt, cotton, leather, dyed paper fabric, braids, ostrich feathers, Louis XVI period shoes  
 by Vanessa Sannino, costume designer;  
 Théâtre national de l’Opéra Comique workshop, maker

enters a gallery focused on newspapers, radio, and television operations that have called the French Quarter home. One notable portion features a selection of televised editorial cartoons by John Churchill Chase for WDSU-TV, broadcast in the 1970s, and two editorials from WWL-TV’s Phil Johnson, which first aired in the 1960s.

In closing, the exhibition surveys music and performing arts, covering the music of indigenous peoples, sacred music, opera, jazz, and other popular genres, as well as identifying important performance venues in the Vieux Carré.

The 300-year history of the French Quarter will always be too dense, nuanced, and diverse to capture in one exhibition, but the French Quarter Galleries do not aim for completion. Rather, the exhibition and its many thematic avenues are designed to spark interest in the actual, living neighborhood just steps away. The hope is that when visitors leave 520 Royal Street and step onto the sidewalk, they will engage more deeply with the area’s history, and, in the process, discover new aspects of both it and themselves.

—JOHN H. LAWRENCE





OFF-SITE

# Purchased Lives Travels North

Our roundup of holdings that have appeared outside The Collection, either on loan to other institutions or in noteworthy media projects.



THNOC's 2015 exhibition *Purchased Lives* is now a traveling show, recently taking up residence at the **Illinois Holocaust Museum** to acclaim. In response to the show's February opening, *Chicago Tribune* columnist Steve Johnson wrote that the survey of the domestic slave trade "has dozens of ways to break your heart and dozens more to boil your blood." The exhibition will remain at the museum through August 25.



### Freedman's Home

between 1865 and 1872; albumen stereograph  
by Samuel Tobias Blessing, photographer  
1997.101 i,ii

### Slave Pen, Alexandria, Va.

number 2297, from the series *War Views: The War for the Union*  
between 1861 and 1865; albumen stereograph  
by Brady and Co., photographer; E. & H. T. Anthony and Co., publisher  
2016.0115.3

### Rebecca, Augusta and Rosa. Slave Children from New Orleans

1863; albumen carte de visite  
by Myron H. Kimball, photographer  
1992.68.3

Seven artworks are currently on loan to the **Mississippi Museum of Art** in Jackson for inclusion in *A Closer Look: Silhouette Artists in Antebellum Mississippi*, on view through August 25.

### Silhouette of Duncan Stewart, first lieutenant governor of Mississippi

1840; collage  
by William Henry Brown  
gift of Mrs. Earl McGowin, Mrs. Fort Pipes Jr., Mrs. William Vaughey, and Mrs. Edmund Wingfield, 1986.110.11



### Silhouette of member of first Mississippi legislature

1840; collage  
by William Henry Brown  
gift of Mrs. Earl McGowin, Mrs. Fort Pipes Jr., Mrs. William Vaughey, and Mrs. Edmund Wingfield, 1986.110.2



The **High Museum of Art** in Atlanta has borrowed 10 photographs for its exhibition *Strange Light: The Photography of Clarence John Laughlin*, on view through November 10.

### The Murderous Buttons

1981; composite gelatin silver print from negatives made in 1938  
by Clarence John Laughlin  
*The Clarence John Laughlin Archive at THNOC*, 1981.247.1.2364

### The Still Music of a Face, Number One

1941; gelatin silver print  
by Clarence John Laughlin  
*The Clarence John Laughlin Archive at THNOC*, 1981.247.1.618

### The Cave of Eyes

between 1943 and 1945; Eastman Wash-Off Relief photoprint  
by Clarence John Laughlin  
*The Clarence John Laughlin Archive at THNOC*, 1981.247.2.5







ON THE JOB

# Jenny Schwartzberg

**POSITION:** Curator of education, on staff since 2015

**ASSIGNMENT:** Design an interactive display of historic French Quarter scents for the Education Galleries

From the start, Daphne L. Derven, our former curator of education, and I knew that we wanted sensory interaction to be a prominent part of the visitor experience in the new Education Galleries. Finding ways to incorporate sight, sound, and touch was relatively easy: we quickly decided to include enlarged reproductions of photographs and other visuals, on-demand videos on iPads around the galleries, and a touchable tanned deer hide. Figuring out a smell-based activity didn't come as quickly to us. It was on a trip to Denver that I visited the History Colorado Center and was thrilled to find scents incorporated into an exhibition on the state's history.

History Colorado staff put us in touch with Lorane Wasserman at Escential Resources FX; she responded by sending us a list of hundreds of scents that included the good (spiced apple cider, Christmas tree, popcorn—with or without butter), the bad (jet fuel, stinky cheese, burnt electrical wire), and the just plain weird (chili dog, cemetery dirt, volcano). We ordered more than a dozen samples evoking the geography, flora and fauna, and culture of early New Orleans. We then narrowed the pool down to six scents—including swamp, magnolia, and barnyard—that comprise the display. Even before the opening of the new exhibition center, we found ways to use the scents. At the block party THNOC hosted as part of the city's tricentennial celebrations in March 2018, we challenged visitors to play "Guess That Smell"—and most averaged below 50 percent!

Each scent is paired with an image from THNOC's holdings and a sentence or two about the aroma's historical and cultural significance. The tubes in which the scent pellets are stored have release buttons that allow visitors to get a quick sniff, while preserving the pungency of the pellets so that they will last for several months or more. (We will replenish our supply when the potency fades.) Now, the only challenge left is to figure out a taste-based activity. If anyone has ideas, please contact me!

—JENNY SCHWARTZBERG





## ON THE JOB

# Howard Margot

**POSITION:** Curator, on staff since 2006

**ASSIGNMENT:** Research the history of the Brulatour courtyard for a new virtual reality feature

One of the innovative technologies employed in THNOC's new exhibition center is virtual reality (VR) imaging, which, via three sets of binoculars, will allow visitors a glimpse of the Brulatour courtyard as it might have appeared in 1820, 1880, 1920, and 1960. Working with VR developers Alan Kwan and Xiao Xiao, I provided historical background research on the changes in the courtyard's features over time, examining both physical and documentary evidence to assemble the components of these windows onto the past.

A notarial act of sale from 1814 states that the property originally included a main house fronting Royal Street and, in the rear, two service buildings flanking a central courtyard, all dating to perhaps the late 1790s. A second act of sale from 1816 confirms the purchase of the property by furniture maker and wine importer François Seignouret, who tore down the original main house and erected the handsome three-story structure that remains on Royal Street today, anchoring the new complex. By examining an 1817 act of servitude recording a transaction between Seignouret and his neighbor Felix Arnaud, I learned that Seignouret added onto the St. Louis service building, extending it toward the front of the property.

I also examined the findings from an archaeological dig conducted on the property in 2013–15, which revealed the locations of a large cistern and well in the courtyard. The VR developers and I concluded that an outhouse would have been at the far back of the property, based on dozens of contemporaneous surveyors' plans that, understandably, always placed privies as far away from the main house as possible. Those features are all depicted in the 1820 VR view. The report from the dig also explained why, today, the St. Louis service building's lower windowsill rests at a curious height, only a few inches above the

flagstones: the courtyard's surface rose over the centuries as owners laid new paving atop old—the original layer of bricks was, sensibly, two feet below the sill. Viewers can see the difference in the 1820 and 1880 scenes.

For the 1880 view, the designers incorporated information about two important changes to the property. In 1822, Seignouret commissioned a new Toulouse Street–side service wing, this one with three levels and featuring the staircase later made iconic by the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans in the 1920s and '30s. Sometime before 1880, a warehouse was added at the rear of the lot. It was torn down in 1960, under WDSU's ownership, and is now the site of the exhibition center's Tricentennial Wing. —HOWARD MARGOT



The 1820 view of a service building in the Brulatour courtyard (top) shows a cistern and one-story building. In the 1880 view (bottom), the cistern has been removed, a new, two-story service building has replaced the original, and a warehouse has gone up at the rear.







ON THE JOB

Michelle Gaynor

**POSITION:** Manager of retail operations, on staff since 2006

**ASSIGNMENT:** Plan for The Shop at the Collection's move into its new, 2,000-square-foot home at 520 Royal Street

Gathering ideas for the new Shop—for my team and me, this has been a priority for more than five years, and now, our work has paid off.

Early on, I was able to sit down with the architects at Waggoner and Ball to discuss my priorities for the space. I came prepared: I had put together a look book of ideas, based on all my travels to other museum stores. So I was able to present a wish list, to show them visually all the things I wanted for our shop. As a result, I got most of what I asked for.

For example, one of the things I really liked in the look book was from the Taschen bookstore in Los Angeles, which has a print room on the second floor. And now, we too have a print room, featuring our Michael P. Smith reproductions from Request a Print. It's between the main shop area and the courtyard, and it will also serve as a multipurpose space. When we have book-related events, we can use that room for signings, to give them a special dedicated area.

Another source of inspiration was the Dallas Market Center, a wholesale market where I get a lot of merchandise for The Shop. They had a farmhouse table in a set-off area set up with books, and I loved

the display. As a result, The Shop now has a dedicated book area, its own separate section in the back, away from the flow of traffic—because people who like to look at books like to linger. And, we have a large farmhouse table. We have so many heavy coffee table books, like *Charting Louisiana: Five Hundred Years of Maps* and *Furnishing Louisiana: Creole and Acadian Furniture, 1735–1835*, that aren't easy to pick up and page through while holding, so now they are laid on the table and easy to browse.

I'm also excited about the cash register area. Anybody who's been in the old Shop is familiar with that little teeny-tiny sales counter. For the new Shop, we put a lot of thought into the point-of-sale experience for customers. There's a place for them to put their things down, an extra register to speed things along, and easily accessed drawers for tissue paper. It's just really functional and beautiful.

Finally, the new Shop isn't so customized that it can't grow and change as we need it to. That was one of the most important things to me and Cat Conner, assistant manager of retail operations—the ability to evolve. For us, this is our dream shop.

—MICHELLE GAYNOR



## STAFF NEWS

### New Staff

Danielle Adomaitis, Olivia Barnard, Xiomara Blanco, Madeline Drace, Sean Duplantier, Kelly Hamilton, Jasmine Malone, Ian McCormick, Elizabeth Neidenbach, James Reeves, Lily Stanford, and Douane Waples, visitor services assistants.

Jonas Austin III, security officer.

Giovanni Diaz Bonis, maintenance assistant.

Karen Burrows and Robert Early, security dispatchers. Kelley Hines, assistant registrar. Bentley James, security officer. Gregory Johnson, maintenance assistant. Sean Johnson, security officer. Michael McManus, security dispatcher. Tracy Norwood, sales associate.

Monique Kennedy, Scott Pointer, Sharacus Rankins, Lauren Schnell, Sarah Senette, and Holly Wilson, volunteers.

### Changes

A number of staff received promotions and title changes in March. Monika M. Cantin and Rachel Ford, associate registrars. Mary M. Garsaud, senior editor. Heather N. Green, reference associate. Eli A. Haddow, marketing associate. Kevin T. Harrell, cataloger. Volney Hill, major gifts and stewardship officer. Vasser Howorth, cataloger. Siobhán McKiernan, associate editor. Anne Robichaux, constituent relationship management specialist. Eric Seiferth, curator. Heather M. Szafran, reference associate. Nick Weldon, associate editor.

### In the Community

Lydia Blackmore, decorative arts curator, spoke at the Colonial Williamsburg Antiques Forum in February, presenting the lecture “A Gumbo of Goods: The Consumer World of Old New Orleans.”

In March Sarah Duggan, CIS coordinator and research curator, gave a presentation on Alabama decorative arts for the welcome reception of the Wilcox Historical Society Tour of Homes in Camden, Alabama.

Kent Woynowski, digital assets manager, was an instructor in an all-day workshop on digital preservation at the Lafayette Science Museum as part of the Library of Congress’s Digital Preservation Outreach and Education program.



Members of the Caillot Circle view the Joan Mitchell Center on Bayou Road as part of the Portage Bike Roll, a program of *Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina*, presented by The Helis Foundation.

# Become a Member

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

All members of The Collection enjoy the following benefits for one full year:

- complimentary admission to all permanent tours and rotating exhibitions
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- a 10 percent discount at The Shop at The Collection
- a subscription to *The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly*

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- private, guided tours (by appointment)
- free admission to all evening lectures
- invitation to annual gala

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Members at the Caillot, Merieult, Mahalia, Jackson, Laussat, and Bienville levels receive reciprocal benefits at other leading museums through the North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) program. These benefits include free member admission, discounts on concert and lecture tickets, and discounts at the shops of participating museums. Visit [www.narmassociation.org](http://www.narmassociation.org) for more information.



FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

## With Sincere Thanks

With the opening of The Collection's new exhibition center, The Historic New Orleans Collection offers its heartfelt gratitude to those who helped make this dream become a reality. Without the generosity of our dedicated capital-campaign donors, none of this would be possible. Thank you.

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Kyla M. Titus	Mary Ann Wegmann			
Susan A. Titus	Faith and Rick Weidenhaft			
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	Betty A. Wilson			
	Edie and John M. Wilson			

### Tribute Gifts

#### Tribute gifts are given in memory or in honor of a loved one.

Dr. Judith Barnes-Cochran in memory of William "Bill" L. Rosenbaum  
 David Briggs and Mark Romig in memory of Jerry E. Romig  
 Leslie and William Capo in memory of Lissa Christine Capo  
 Sherry L. Chavers in memory of Karl F. Holzmuller  
 Fern and Hersh Cohen in honor of Fred Smith  
 Dr. Jean Cohen in memory of William "Bill" L. Rosenbaum  
 Louise B. Fallis in honor of Dorothy Weisler  
 Nell H. Figge in memory of Paul M. Haygood  
 Victor M. Hernandez in honor of Carina Gleason  
 Dianne Huber in memory of William "Bill" L. Rosenbaum  
 Susan Kierr and Ellen Kierr Stein and their families in memory of J. N. and Raymond Kierr  
 Dr. Barry J. Leader and Charlotte Estopinal in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick N. Estopinal Jr.  
 Jack Mashburn Jr. in memory of Jack Mashburn Sr.  
 Metairie Woman's Club in honor of Alfred E. Lemmon  
 Miami Corporation in honor of G. Charles "Chuck" Lapeyre  
 Mintz and Mintz Realty in memory of William "Bill" L. Rosenbaum  
 Princeton University Class of 1972 in honor of Prof. Sean Wilentz  
 Virginia Wellborn Ramsey in memory of Samuel Colvin Wellborn  
 Hal C. Reed in honor of Patricia Brady  
 John Shelton Reed in memory of Dale Volberg Reed  
 Meryl S. Rosofsky in honor of Daphne L. Derven  
 Matthew Thurlow in memory of Paul M. Haygood  
 Tim Trapolin in memory of Jerrye Louise Baehr Martin  
 Catherine Whitney in honor of Daniel Webster Whitney IV  
 Thomas J. Wieckowski in honor of Heather N. Green  
 Stacey Zaleski in memory of William "Bill" L. Rosenbaum

### Bookplates

#### Donations are used to purchase books that will be marked with a commemorative bookplate.

James Cambias in memory of Leslie B. Cambias—*From Paris to Peoria: How European Piano Virtuosos Brought Classical Music to the American Heartland* by R. Allen Lott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)  
 The board of directors and staff of The Historic New Orleans Collection in memory of Jerrye Louise Baehr Martin—*Orchestrating the Nation: The Nineteenth-Century American Symphonic Enterprise* by Douglas W. Shadle (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016)  
 The board of directors and staff of The Historic New Orleans Collection in memory of Yvette Loury Rosen—*John James Audubon: The Nature of the American Woodsman* by Gregory Nobles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017)  
 The board of directors and staff of The Historic New Orleans Collection in memory of Frances "Fran" Gable Villere—*Painting by Heart: The Life and Art of Clementine Hunter, Louisiana Folk Artist* by Shelby R. Gilley (Baton Rouge: St. Emma Press, 2000)



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## ON THE SCENE

# Opening Week Excitement

The first week of April was a momentous one in the life of The Historic New Orleans Collection, as 520 Royal Street opened to the public and was feted with a number of events. Tuesday, April 2, marked the **opening gala sponsored by JPMorgan Chase and Co.**, with additional support from Waggonner and Ball, for donors to THNOC's capital campaign and other special guests.

A. Marla Garvey, Michael Garvey, Drew Jardine, and Katie LeGardeur

B. Robert Cangelosi and Ann M. Masson

C. THNOC board vice chair John Kallenborn addresses the crowd, accompanied by THNOC President/CEO Priscilla Lawrence

D. Tim Trapolin with Ellen and F. Macnaughton Ball Jr.

E. Christine and Price LeBlanc with Solange Coustaux

F. (front row, left–right) Crickett Lapeyre, Patti Lapeyre, Amy Lapeyre Gui, Lucy Lapeyre, Lisa Lapeyre, Amy Lapeyre, and Robert Lapeyre Jr.; (back row, left–right) Bob McCleskey, Monique Lapeyre McCleskey, Robert Lapeyre, Andrew Lapeyre, and G. Charles Lapeyre

G. Kevin McCaffrey, Jan Gilbert, and Krista Jurisich

H. Kathy and Robert Zetzmann

I. The board of The Historic New Orleans Collection: G. Charles Lapeyre, E. Alexandra Stafford, Hilton S. Bell, Drew Jardine, Bonnie Boyd, John Kallenborn, Lisa H. Wilson, and John E. Walker



# COMMUNITY

## ON THE SCENE

On Friday, April 5, THNOC celebrated the opening of the new exhibition center's first changing exhibition, **Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina**, presented by **The Helis Foundation**.

A. Director of Museum Programs John H. Lawrence, Xiao Xiao, Björn Sparrman, and Alan Kwan

B. Leah Glade, Klara Hammer, Vice President/Deputy Director Daniel Hammer, Diane Freedman, and Natan D. Gessler

C. Artist Max Bernardi stands next to her painting *Ernie K-Doe*.

D. Sesthasak Boonchai and Stephanie deWolfe

E. Elizabeth Shannon and Shawne Major

F. Jessie Haynes, managing director of The Helis Foundation, with Mara Karlin

G. David Kerstein, president of The Helis Foundation and Helis Oil and Gas Co., gives the opening remarks, accompanied by THNOC President/CEO Priscilla Lawrence.

H. Lin Emery with *Art of the City* guest curator Jan Gilbert

I. Robin Reynolds and Sue Davies

J. Leonard Smith III with Pam and Michael Cohn

K. Rontherin Ratliff, Willie Birch, and Ana Hernandez

L. Jeanne Nathan, Robert Tannen, and Cheron Brylski chat next to the statue of Ernie K-Doe on display in *Art of the City*.

M. Assistant Registrar Kelley Hines, Dustin Farris, and Kheri Phillip

N. Dara Bram and Jakob Rosenzweig



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## ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT

# Ready for Royal Street

As part of the preparations for the new exhibition center, THNOC acquired many items to help populate the shows now on view. Here is a sampling of the treasures to be found at the newly expanded Historic New Orleans Collection.



**Marie Finhold Streetcar Collection**  
gift of Stephen J. Stegemeyer, 2010.0255

Light rail in the Crescent City dates to 1830, when the Pontchartrain Railroad Company received a charter for the first passenger rail system to shuttle people from the foot of Elysian Fields Avenue to the lakefront faubourg of Milneburg. The first cars were horse-drawn, but by 1832 the steam-powered “Smokey Mary” was also in operation, earning its nickname from the soot it belched all over passengers’ (and onlookers’) clothing. This rail line created an economic boom for the small Milneburg community, which became a resort destination for residents and tourists alike.

The rail system that became the St. Charles Avenue streetcar line began running in 1835, again by horse-drawn carriage, and originally connected New Orleans to the resort district of Carrollton. Commuter streetcars took some time in gaining popularity; by the outbreak of the Civil War there were only four lines operating. By 1926, however, the city of New Orleans had 26 streetcar lines running on 221 miles

of track. This was the peak year for public transportation in New Orleans, with electrified passenger cars transporting 148 million passengers annually.

In March 2008 the Marie Finhold Streetcar Collection was donated to THNOC by her nephew, Stephen J. Stegemeyer. Finhold was employed as a streetcar operator at the age of 19 during World War II. After the war ended she joined the Franciscan Order and became a missionary, providing aid to communities in Latin America. Upon her return to the United States, she resumed her station as a streetcar operator, eventually becoming known as the “Flying Nun” of the St. Charles line. This collection includes pieces of streetcars and related objects, including front fascia, bench seats, and an operator pedestal, along with issued equipment—hats, badges, ticket punchers, and more—for the operators themselves. Finhold was an avid collector of all things related to streetcars and kept ticket punches, change machines, operator badges, caps, watches, route maps, and many other items that wonderfully preserve the history of public transit in New Orleans. —MATT FARAH



## **Black River Country**

ca. 1927; oil on canvas

by Alexander John Drysdale

acquisition made possible by the Laussat Society, 2018.0513.2

Alexander John Drysdale (1870–1934) is known for his misty, tonalist Louisiana scenes. Inspired by the state’s wetlands, Drysdale “drifted along the bayous in a boat,” according to biographer Howard A. Buechner, “a mustached figure in old clothes, puffing his pipe, and finding inspiration in Barataria, Teche, Chef Menteur, and Black River.” This *demilune* (half moon) painting, *Black River Country*, is typical of his canvases. Between 1910 and 1916 Drysdale developed the technique for which he is remembered today: thinning his oil paints with kerosene or coal oil in what he termed “a watercolor technique applied to oil.” Drysdale lined up his canvases and first painted in the sky, after which he delineated land areas with quickly rendered brushstrokes to represent swamp grasses and marsh flowers. His impressionistic landscapes frequently feature a single moss-draped oak tree, but *Black River Country* depicts a pair of oaks flanked by a cypress.

THNOC acquired *Black River Country* to install in a place of prominence in the Seignouret-Brulatour Building, because Drysdale has a strong connection to the painting’s new home. He was a member of the Arts and Crafts Club of New Orleans, which incorporated in 1922. Banker and philanthropist William Ratcliffe Irby, who owned the building at the time, renovated it for the club’s use as part of his commitment “to great charitable efforts and to the use of his large fortune for the benefit of his fellow citizens,” according to an obituary of the benefactor. He also purchased a number of Vieux Carré properties to save them from demolition. At the time of his death, in 1926, Irby was remodeling the upper part of the building with the intention of moving there. Among the fittings Irby installed was a \$20,000 pipe organ.

Historical photographs show a landscape hanging in Irby’s organ room. Accordingly, The Collection looked to landscapes when selecting an artwork for the newly restored



The Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation

# The Historic New Orleans Collection

MUSEUM • RESEARCH CENTER • PUBLISHER

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## FROM THE SHOP

.....



## Bigger and better

Your favorite French Quarter gift shop has moved to a bigger space and is now ready for visitors! The Shop at The Collection welcomes you to its new location at 520 Royal Street. The 2,000-square-foot space boasts dozens of carefully-thought-out features, such as a vanity area for trying on jewelry, a greatly expanded books section, a selection of vinyl records focused on New Orleans and Louisiana artists, and a dedicated room for The Shop's popular ready-to-frame reproduction prints by photographer Michael P. Smith. Shop staff have curated new product lines, from West African baskets to clothing and jewelry inspired by patterns found in THNOC's historic buildings. Come in and see what's new!

.....  
**The Shop**  
**at The Collection**  
THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

520 Royal Street, in the French Quarter  
Tuesday–Saturday: 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
Sunday: 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
(504) 598-7147

Shop online at [www.hnoc.org/shop](http://www.hnoc.org/shop)



space, and Drysdale was chosen for his prominence among Louisiana landscape artists of Irby's period. *Black River Country* belongs to a 22-painting series commissioned in 1927 for and subsequently exhibited at the D. H. Holmes Department Store on Canal Street. The installation of Drysdale's vintage landscape in this room, made possible by the Laussat Society, is an ideal representation of Irby's contribution to the reclamation of the historic structures of the French Quarter, particularly the Seignouret-Brulatour Building. —JUDITH H. BONNER

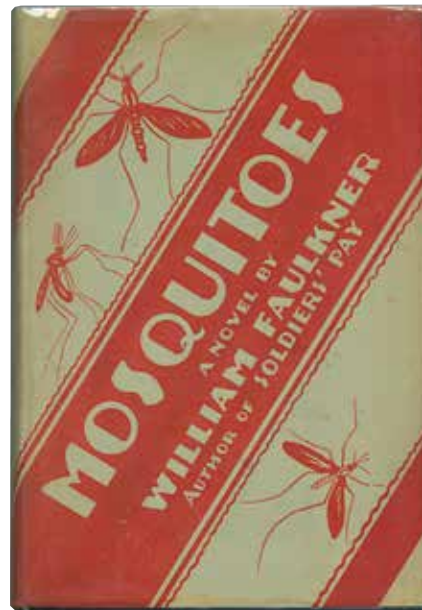
**Mosquitoes**

by William Faulkner  
New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927  
2016.0200

*Mosquitoes* (1927), William Faulkner's second published novel, following *Soldiers' Pay* (1926), reflects his experiences in New Orleans's bohemian art and literary scene of the 1920s. Faulkner had grown up in Oxford, Mississippi; served briefly in World War I; enrolled—but never finished—at the University of Mississippi after the war; and worked for a short while in New York, where he met Elizabeth Prall, who became the third wife of acclaimed writer Sherwood Anderson. The Andersons moved to the French Quarter, and Faulkner, 27 and an aspiring poet, looked them up when he arrived in New Orleans early in 1925. He and Sherwood Anderson immediately developed a rapport, with the established

author of the classic American short story cycle *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) sharing literary advice and steering Faulkner from poetry to fiction. Anderson furthered Faulkner's literary ambitions by recommending the manuscript of *Soldiers' Pay* to his own publisher in New York, Horace Liveright, of Boni and Liveright.

Faulkner met artist William Spratling, a neighbor of the Andersons, and soon moved into Spratling's apartment, which was a popular French Quarter gathering spot among the creative class. Faulkner and Spratling collaborated on a series of captioned caricatures of these talented locals, published in December 1926 as *Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles: A Gallery of Contemporary New*



*Orleans*. Several of the “famous Creoles” had participated in a nautical jaunt across Lake Pontchartrain to Mandeville, organized by Anderson in March 1925. The party was plagued by engine trouble, stormy weather, and mosquitoes, and it became the basis for Faulkner's next novel, in which he described his fellow travelers under fictitious names. Contemporaries familiar with some of the personages in *Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles* recognized Faulkner's characters in *Mosquitoes*—sometimes to their chagrin.

Faulkner returned to Mississippi following the release of *Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles* and before *Mosquitoes* was published. He had lived in New Orleans for less than 16 months and would never call it home again. This first edition of *Mosquitoes* features its original red and cream book jacket, laid out in a bold art deco design. —PAMELA D. ARCENEUX

**J. & J. W. Meeks dresser**  
between 1836 and 1839; mahogany, pine, glass, brass, paper  
by J. & J. W. Meeks, manufacturer and retailer (New York and New Orleans)  
acquisition made possible by the Clarisse Claiborne Grima Fund, 2016.0292

This stately dresser is the second piece of furniture acquired by THNOC in the past five years bearing a paper label from the Chartres Street warerooms of J. & J. W. Meeks, prominent New York furniture manufacturers. Known for producing fine furniture in neoclassical styles, the Meeks family, headed by Joseph Meeks Sr., was selling furniture directly to the New Orleans market by 1822. Joseph's sons, John and Joseph W., took over the business after their father's death in 1836. Another son, Theodore Meeks, was dispatched to New Orleans to run the retail outlet on Chartres Street. Although that store closed in 1839, Theodore remained in New Orleans, serving as an agent for his family company in addition to operating the Verandah Hotel. Later in life, he was unanimously elected mayor of the suburb of Carrollton.





Meeks furniture was elegant, stylish, and expensive. It could be found in upper-class homes across the country and was especially popular in the Greek Revival plantation houses of the Gulf South. The Meeks outlet on Chartres Street brought this fine furniture directly to wealthy southern customers. In addition, the shop outfitted steamboats and other prominent public spaces—such as the first St. Charles Hotel, upon its opening in 1837—with fashionable furnishings. This dresser, with three large drawers, a narrower drawer hidden in the undulating molding at the top, and a mirror supported between two pillars, would have been a sought-after addition to a bedroom or dressing room in an urban or rural home.

The paper label in the top drawer of this dresser is in good condition and is very rare. The firm's name, New York address, and Chartres Street location indicate that the label and the dresser date between 1836 and 1839. Finding original labels on antique furniture is exciting and uncommon; only half a dozen of these labels from the Meeks store on Chartres Street are known to exist.

Of the six, The Historic New Orleans Collection now owns two, one attached to this dresser and the other associated with a green velvet-covered sofa (2014.0381) on display in the Louisiana History Galleries. —LYDIA BLACKMORE

**“The Fat Man” / “Detroit City Blues”**  
 by Fats Domino  
 Imperial Records, 1949 (recording);  
 1950 (release)  
 gift of Timothy Bollinger, 2018.0140

In the late 1940s, as New Orleans rhythm and blues was beginning to coalesce, Antoine “Fats” Domino Jr. was himself starting out as a performer, playing a regular gig at the Hideaway Club in the Ninth Ward. During these years, Domino’s cousin, banjo player Harrison Verret, was instrumental in nurturing the young musician’s natural talent. Verret was a successful musician in his own right, playing with Oscar “Papa” Celestin’s band as well as performing periodically with barrelhouse pianist Kid Stormy Weather. Among the songs in Kid Stormy’s repertoire was “Junker Blues,” which fellow New Orleanian piano player Champion Jack Dupree had recorded for the OKeh label in 1941. Domino took to the song as well and incorporated it into his act at the Hideaway.

In 1949 Dave Bartholomew, the venerable bandleader and A&R man for Imperial Records, visited the Hideaway with label owner Lew Chudd to scout the young Domino. Not surprisingly, they liked what they heard, quickly signed him



to a contract, and got him into Cosimo Matassa’s J&M Studios on Rampart Street at the edge of the French Quarter. That session produced Domino’s first hit, “The Fat Man,” which reached number two on the *Billboard* R&B chart and number one on the local charts. The record continued to sell over the next few years, topping the one million mark in 1953, and is considered to be one of the first rock and roll songs. A cleaned-up version of “Junker Blues,” Domino’s hit stripped that song of its drug references and added a rollicking beat and a full-band sound designed to appeal to a wider audience. Bartholomew rounded out the session with musicians from his own band, one of the best in the city at the time, including Earl Palmer on drums and Red Tyler on saxophone. Over the next decade, Domino, Bartholomew and his band, and Matassa recorded a string of national hits that would come to define the local rhythm and blues sound and influence the development of rock and roll around the world. —ERIC SEIFERTH

**7:28AM August 30, 2005.**  
 2005; dye sublimation print on  
 aluminum  
 by Neil Alexander  
 gift of the artist, 2017.0253

The morning after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, Neil Alexander left his Tchoupitoulas Street home with a friend who had ridden out the storm with Alexander and his family, to attempt to check on the friend’s house in Lakeview. Alexander’s house, situated on the high ground near the river, had escaped major damage, but most of the rest of the city, he soon realized, had fared far worse. They drove Alexander’s Subaru Outback onto Interstate 10, and as they passed above Tulane Avenue, they encountered the scene depicted in *7:28AM August 30, 2005*, which is featured in THNOC’s new exhibition *Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina*, presented by The Helis Foundation. “At that axis, at the conclusion of Highway 61, you can see right into the city,” Alexander said. “The whole tableau



caught my eye. I was still processing it, but as a photographer, capturing that moment was kind of instinctive.”

Alexander has lived in New Orleans for more than four decades, working as an architectural photographer and documentary filmmaker. Since first arriving on a cross-country road trip and deciding to leave his native Pennsylvania behind, Alexander has spent most of his life capturing the culture of New Orleans. Aware that he was fortunate to have been able to shelter in place safely during the storm, Alexander grabbed his Canon digital camera and a 200 mm lens as

he left his house that morning, because he “thought that was my mission as a filmmaker and photographer, to document the city.”

Alexander is one of dozens of contemporary artists whose work makes up *Art of the City*, which debuted with the April opening of The Collection’s new exhibition center. “I’m honored to be in the company of so many amazing artists,” Alexander said. “We’re all responding to the emotional quality of the city, no matter what our medium is, no matter what our technique is. Mine happens to be a camera and lens.” —NICK WELDON

## The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

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Keely Merritt

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Alison Cody Design

The Historic New Orleans Collection is a nonprofit institution dedicated to preserving the distinctive history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South. Founded in 1966 through the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, The Collection operates as a museum, research center, and publisher in the heart of the French Quarter.



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## EVENT CALENDAR

For more information on any of the following events, please email [events@hnoc.org](mailto:events@hnoc.org).

### “THE STEEL DRUMS OF NEW ORLEANS”

The US Navy Steel Band, founded in 1957, moved from its original headquarters in Puerto Rico to New Orleans in 1973, where it became an integral part of the local music scene. Although the group disbanded in 1999, many former members remain active performers in New Orleans; under the direction of Andrew R. Martin, they will present an evening of music showcasing the steel drum repertoire.

**Wednesday, June 5, 6 p.m.**

410 Chartres Street

\$10 admission; \$5 for THNOC members; free for members of the Caillot Circle, Jackson Society, Laussat Society, and Bienville Circle. Reservations required; visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org) or call (504) 598-7146.

### 2019 NEW ORLEANS ANTIQUES FORUM

At this year's forum, “Fancy Footwork,” participants will “take steps” to explore such topics as the depiction of animals in the decorative arts, the stylized feet of furniture and silver, the conservation of Dorothy's famous ruby slippers, and more.

**August 1–4**

410 Chartres Street

Pricing varies. Registration opens June 10; visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org) or call (504) 598-7146.

### “JOSEPH FORTUNÉ MEYER: MASTER CRAFTSMAN OF THE NEWCOMB POTTERY”

The life and career of an extraordinary ceramicist comes alive in this lecture by Decorative Arts Curator Lydia Blackmore.

**Saturday, August 17, 10 a.m.**

533 Royal Street

Free; open to THNOC members only.

Reservations encouraged; visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org) or call (504) 598-7146.

The following programming for *Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina* is presented **free of charge** through the generous support of The Helis Foundation. The location for all events is 520 Royal Street, unless otherwise noted. For **reservations**, visit [my.hnoc.org](http://my.hnoc.org) or call (504) 598-7146.

### ART OF THE CITY BOOK CLUB

Susan Larson hosts a monthly conversation with authors, artists, and audience members.

**Wednesdays, 6–7:30 p.m.**

**June 26**, with Anne Gisleson and Michael Deas: *The Futilitarians: Our Year of Thinking, Drinking, Grieving, and Reading*

**July 17**, with Rebecca Snedeker: *Unfathomable City: A New Orleans Atlas*

**August 28**, with Zachary Lazar and Deborah Luster: *Vengeance: A Novel*

### STOOP STORIES

Inspired by the kind of neighborly conversations held on front porch stoops throughout the city, this drop-in series invites visitors to stop by the galleries to meet and talk with some of the artists featured in *Art of the City*. Please visit [www.hnoc.org](http://www.hnoc.org) for a full schedule and lineup of artists.

**Saturdays, May 11, June 15, July 20, August 24, and September 14, 1–4 p.m.**

### ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

As part of the *Art of the City* experience, THNOC Oral Historian Mark Cave is interviewing all of the living artists featured in the exhibition. Two of those artists—Robert Tannen and Willie Birch—will sit down with Cave for a public conversation.

**Saturday, July 13, 1–4 p.m.**

### “MUSIC OF THE CITY: CONTEMPORARY PIANO MUSIC FROM NEW ORLEANS”

Pianist Peter Collins performs work by local composers including Ellis Marsalis, Roger Dickerson, Jay Weigel, Steven Danker, and others.

**Wednesday, August 14, 6–7:30 p.m.**

410 Chartres Street

## EXHIBITIONS & TOURS

All exhibitions are free unless otherwise noted.

### CURRENT

**New Orleans Medley: Sounds of the City**

Through August 4  
410 Chartres Street

**Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina**,

presented by The Helis Foundation  
Through October 6  
520 Royal Street

### CONTINUING

**Louisiana History Galleries**

533 Royal Street

**French Quarter Galleries**

520 Royal Street

**Education Galleries**

520 Royal Street

**Williams Residence Tour**

**Architecture and Courtyard Tour**

533 Royal Street

Tuesday–Saturday, 10 and 11 a.m., 2 and 3 p.m.

Sunday, 11 a.m., 2 and 3 p.m.

\$5 admission; free for THNOC members

*Groups of five or more should call (504) 598-7145 to make reservations.*

*Educational tours for school groups are available free of charge; please contact Jenny Schwartzberg, curator of education, at (504) 556-7661 or [jennifers@hnoc.org](mailto:jennifers@hnoc.org).*

### UPCOMING

**Enigmatic Stream: Industrial Landscapes of the Lower Mississippi River**

Opening September 17

520 Royal Street

**Nihon no Omokage—Seeking an Open Life: Collodion Photographs in the Footsteps of Lafcadio Hearn**

Opening October 10

410 Chartres Street

**Gaston de Pontalba's New Orleans, 1848–1851**

Opening October 29

520 Royal Street

**Crescent City Sport**

Opening November 19

520 Royal Street

## GENERAL HOURS

### 533 ROYAL STREET

Williams Residence and Louisiana History Galleries

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

### 520 ROYAL STREET

Seignouret-Brulatour Building and Tricentennial Wing

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

### 410 CHARTRES STREET

Williams Research Center and Boyd Cruise Gallery

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.