

Bringing Art to Life

THE
art
CONNECTION

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Massasoit's Open Museum Is Thriving

by **ROLAND BLANCHETTE**, Social Science Department Chair, Massasoit Community College

In 2009, my colleague Rachel Hirst and I, members of Massasoit Community College's Academic Development Committee, applied to receive art from The Art Connection. We received 19 works and installed them in the Administration Building and the Student Center. The artwork looked great, and we constantly heard compliments from the community.

“The collection has inspired our entire community, and the effect has been transcendent.”

After a year, we were eager to reapply. In summer 2011, we got an additional 25 original works of art, placed in six academic buildings: Business, Science, Technology, Fine Arts, Humanities, and Liberal Arts. Massasoit's collection of fine art from The Art Connection has reached a critical mass where students are now paying attention to what is on the walls.

As Rachel and I walked the halls deciding where to hang art our standing joke was “so many walls, so few paintings”, so we decided to expand the project, and I solicited the artists among school faculty and staff. The collection quickly grew, appearing from

studios of Massasoit employees and from campus storage. One staff member painted a work specifically for the collection. A student from the Visual Arts Program donated something, too.

Thanks to The Art Connection, art is integrated into the landscape of the school. What a pleasant experience to stand in the hallway and watch students pause to look at art. Now called *Massasoit's Open Museum*, the collection has inspired our entire community, and the effect has been transcendent. Teaching and learning is happening in a place where beauty is part of the experience. There is art in every hallway; over 70 works and more to come, and yet, I walk through the halls and see empty spaces where a painting ought to be... so many walls, so few paintings.

We are working to place QR codes (Quick Response, a matrix barcode) beside each artwork. Viewers with smartphones can scan QRs and see a brief narrative about each work. Massasoit's Open Museum is thriving.



John Guthrie, “Crush”, acrylic on paper, one of the works of art placed at Massasoit Community College in Brockton in 2011.

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THE MASTHEAD features “You Are The Blueprint of My Heart. Front Royal, VA.” by Gretchen Ann Graham. The photograph, a gift from the artist, was selected by Toward Independent Living & Learning (TILL), Inc, a non-profit in Watertown that offers innovative services for all ages and abilities. This environment helps individuals maximize their potential for personal growth and independent living.

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The Art Connection is a nonprofit organization that expands public access to visual art by placing the work of donor artists and collectors on the walls of community service organizations. Since its inception in 1995, this unique gifting program has supported over 300 agencies in their personal selection of over 5,100 pieces by more than 350 artists and collectors. Within these healing environments, the original works of art provide welcome opportunities for reflection, inspiration, comfort, and hope. Copyright © 2011 by The Art Connection, Inc. We welcome your contributions and comments.

This program is supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and several generous foundations and individuals.



Old Friends

Recently old friends have been on my mind. From attending my reunion this summer to having my closest friend from college visit, it has been a pleasure to recall memories from long ago. The same is true of art acquired upon embarking on my career and recently moving these “old art friends” I still own from that period. But what of those who don’t have the luxury of acquiring original art and living with favorites for a lifetime? It seems to me The Art Connection can help with that. As generous donating artists provide their work to recipient organizations, original art becomes part of the fabric of schools, residential centers, senior housing, homeless shelters, and a variety of other nonprofit settings. Paintings, photographs, and a host of different media now occupy public settings that are home to people from all walks of life. Testimonials from clients in these environments speak to the art on the walls, both newly acquired and “old friends” donated when The Art Connection was still in its infancy. We hear from many who describe the power of art and how it speaks to clients and staff alike. One of the most moving personal impact statements I have heard spoke of a piece by our founder and its role as a conversation starter between family members that was long overdue:

“Both times when I was arrested, my mom would never come to visit me. She’d always send someone else to pay my bail and see where I was. But she came here, and she saw this painting [“Difficult Decision” by artist Fay Chandler] and then she came back the next week. She sat at the table, and just looked at that painting. And we talked. I was shocked. I still can’t believe it.”

- Wanda, resident, McGrath House

I feel certain that Wanda now considers Fay’s painting an old friend, and I wouldn’t be surprised if her mother did too! The painting illustrating this report is by David Kupferman who now lives in



Mary Raz, a friend (left), with Susan Collings, pictured in front of “JH 2-3”, donated by David Kupferman, currently awaiting placement.

Iowa. For David, both Boston and The Art Connection are old friends, and each time he visits, he brings additional art to donate. What a wonderful way to celebrate an important friendship!

The Art Connection recently was awarded an anonymous grant for capital purchases. The day the request was written the thermometer topped 100 degrees and getting the art stored in our office cooled was a top priority. Our volunteer graphic designer was finding her computer sluggish as she designed the educational placards describing our agency collections. Hence, the grant included replacement computers along with the air conditioners. Finally, we hoped to reincarnate that old friend of ours – The Art Connection Framing Fund – so its inclusion in the capital grant made sense. To our delight, my old friend – an anonymous foundation – came through as it had when I first wrote and received grants for two previous nonprofits dating back to 1988.

Relationships with old friends are often the ones that bear the richest fruit, and we are happy to report it is no different for The Art Connection.

*- Susan Collings
Executive Director*

The Power to Transform

by **JANET SHAPERO**, Artist

For me, the creation of artwork is a spiritual as well as a physical, emotional, intellectual and aesthetic process. I believe that art has the power to transform – not only the artist – but also the environment and society. For this reason, I have chosen to donate artwork through The Art Connection.

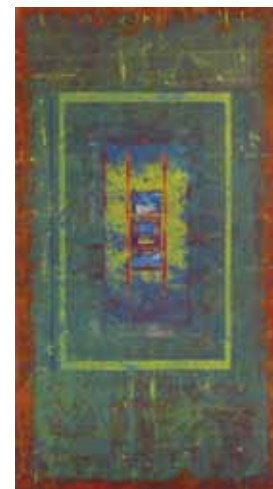
When I first learned of The Art Connection, I was delighted to have found an organization that served as a link between artists and non-profit organizations. Over the past several years it has been my great pleasure to see my artwork installed in environments where the work has the opportunity of truly making a difference in people's lives.

It is particularly gratifying to have had my work selected to be in the collection of Homeless Services through the Boston Public Health Commission on Long Island in the Boston Harbor. I have long been concerned with issues related to homelessness in our society as can clearly be seen in my early drawings, sculptures and film. In fact the characters in my 3-D animation of the 70's – *Dead End* – were based on individuals that I interviewed and drew at one of Boston's earliest shelters, the Pine Street Inn. Presently I serve on a Human Rights Committee that works to protect the rights of individuals in numerous sheltered environments in the Greater Boston Area.

This past year I had the pleasure of visiting Long Island to meet the people involved in the SOAR (Stability, Opportunity, Achievement, and Recovery) program, to see the site, and to deliver my artwork in person. It was a very meaningful visit. The two particular pieces of mine that had been chosen – "Waterfront Collage" and "Volcanic Spirit" – clearly resonate with the site and its history. I am grateful to be able to participate in a meaningful way in the SOAR program.



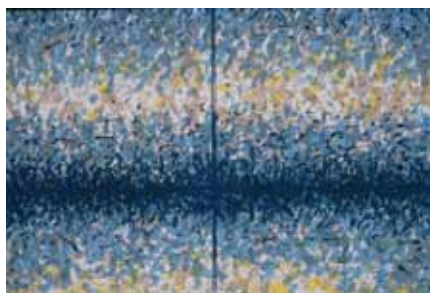
Janet Shapero's, "Volcanic Spirit", rete-chromes on flat metal rods also placed at BPHC.



Janet Shapero's, "Waterfront Collage", rete-chromes on flat metal rods placed at Boston Public Health Commission – Project SOAR.

Recent Art Selections . . .

Ken Beck, "Harbor Memories", lithograph, selected by Travelers Aid Family Services in Boston, a nonprofit serving individuals in transition.



Chalda Maloff, "Aquamarine", digital painting, selected by Spectrum Adult Day Health Center, a nonprofit substance abuse and mental health provider in North Andover.



Stephanie Warburg, "May Day", an oil painting selected by Cambridge Health Alliance - Somerville Hospital.



Frances K. Grossman, "Franconia Notch", oil on cotton canvas, selected by Adolescent Consultation Services in Cambridge, providing comprehensive diagnostic and therapeutic services to court-involved youth and their families.

...cover story continued

There is a completed inventory, an illustrated brochure, and a walking guide is in the works.

The college community has been enthusiastic about the project and plans to reapply for a third and final placement from The Art Connection. I feel like this is more than collaboration, the relationship between Massasoit and The Art Connection has become a bond of friendship that has had a tremendous impact on our campus and is one of the best things that has happened here in years.



Massasoit is developing QRs so viewers can see a brief narrative about each work. (Left) the QR for Suzanne Hodes' "Train Journey" and (right) Jo Ann Rothschild's "Tudor St. Meets Queretaro".



At the Massasoit Community College reception (left to right): Jacqueline Volpe (Massasoit staff and art donor), Linda M. Balzotti (Mayor of Brockton), Rolly Blanchette, Jo Ann Rothschild (donating artist and new board member), and Ginny Zanger (donating artist).

Work by New Art Donors!



Lily Miao, "Boston Common in Summer", oil painting, selected by Spectrum Adult Day Health Center in North Andover.



Patty Saunders, "Calla Lillies", photograph on canvas, placed at the Central Boston Elder Services, Inc. in Boston.



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"Harvest Pumpkin", photograph by Rebecca Brown, placed at TILL, Watertown.

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