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Calendar of Events May 1942

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COMMUNITY ART PROJECT



CALENDAR
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ART EVENTS

MAY
1942

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“ — BUT IT ISN'T ART!”



THE statement has been made so often that we are tempted to make the flippant reply, "What is Art after all?" (The uppercase A is dedicated to those who insist on it.)

South County Museum, fortunately, doesn't have to answer that question. Very few of the thousands of objects which it has acquired since its founding in 1933 were meant to be artistic.

South County Museum aims to provide a vivid and interesting background for the life of old-time Rhode Island by exhibiting in a suitable setting the utensils, tools, machines and instruments which were commonly found in homes, shops, mills, or on farms and ships. At the Museum one can quite literally follow a man from the cradle to the grave, for it contains cradles and nursing-bottles at one extreme and coffins and a hearse at the other. It is difficult to think of any human activity that is neglected.

It was a full and fascinating life, for the Colony of Rhode Island was as nearly self-sufficient as any area of its size could be. Probably no comparable region had a wider variety of trades and industries. It isn't easy for us to realize, even in this day of war-torn economy, how complete a culture these early Rhode Islanders were able to create for themselves out of the wilderness. They could count on little aid from outside, but they made the best of the scanty materials at hand.

Wood, luckily, was plentiful. Bogs furnished iron. Lime was quarried or burned from shells.

There was good clay for bricks and pottery. They had an abundance of stone. Other raw materials were grown — wool, flax, hemp, corn, cattle, fruits and vegetables. They built houses and mills. Churches generally came later in this colony. And long before they realized it, they had artists.

The Townsends and Goddards made fine furniture. Peter Harrison and Joseph Brown were first-rate architects. Casey and Vernon were silversmiths. John Smibert even painted portraits. We know now that these men were artists, but their contemporaries classed them as artisans and craftsmen.

But for every man whom we can name (and we can name many more), there were a dozen who were anonymous. We know them solely by their works — the shipwright who built a graceful sloop; the blacksmith who wrought andirons and hinges; the cooper who made a tight milk-pail; the harness-maker; the carriage- and sign-painter; the potter; the weaver — all the host of workers who founded a unique and distinctive culture in the lands that rimmed our Bay — not forgetting the housewife, who turned home-making into one of the higher arts.

Their tools and utensils and products form the collection at South County Museum. It isn't just a dead collection. Nearly everything works. If you care to, you may sit down and spin a hank of yarn or weave a yard of cloth. You may grind corn into meal or dip candles. You may make a

horse-shoe or ride a sledge behind as fine a yoke of oxen as you are likely to encounter.

Maybe it isn't art — but who are we to say? The very artlessness of many of these objects is the finest kind of art, for it is based on a thorough knowledge of the materials used and respect for the role the product had to serve. We may dub these "primitive", but an unconscious sense of form and fitness and an instinctive creative skill shine through their roughness.

A Rhode Island Windsor chair is the apotheosis of functionalism. The combination of hard and soft woods may distress the purist, but it is light and comfortable and it pleases the eye. Notice how the turning of the legs reduces the weight without weakening a joint. Look for signs of wear and see how well the maker has anticipated them with his lathe-work. No artist designed the curves of an ox-yoke in his studio, nor did a designer plan the sweep of a scythe's snath on his drawing-board.

There is rarely any attempt at decoration that is not an integral part of the structure, but when ornament is used it is handled with skill and restraint.

South County Museum has a story to tell to artists as well as to historians.

The Museum is about 18 miles south of Providence on Quaker Lane (Route 2) in North Kingstown. It is open every afternoon, except Mondays, from June 1 to October 1.

ALBERT E. LOWNES.

EXHIBITIONS OUTSIDE OF RHODE ISLAND

Boston, Mass., Museum of Fine Arts

May—Exhibition of paintings by contemporary American Artists.

To June 14—Exhibition of American Rooms in Miniature by Mrs. James Ward Thorne.

Boston, Mass., The Guild of Boston Artists, 162 Newbury Street

To May 28—Exhibition of paintings by Alphonse J. Shelton.

May 1-May 30—Spring exhibition by members of the Guild.

Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University

May—Designs for the Theatre in Modern Times.

Suggestions for War-Time Exhibitions.

Indian Sculpture.

Indian Paintings of the 16th and 18th centuries.

Loan collection of English silver, 18th century.

Special study exhibitions of Classical Art; 17th century painting in Southern Europe; American and European contemporary sculpture.

Clinton, Mass., Pinecrest

May 12-May 14—1 P. M. to 8 P. M.—Exhibition of hooked rugs by Caroline Cleaves Saunders. For transportation reservations, phone PI 2632 or the American Homemakers, Inc.

Pittsfield, Mass., The Berkshire Museum

May—Exhibition of paintings by Henry M. Seaver of Pittsfield. Review, Museum's Collections.

Springfield, Mass., The Springfield Museum of Fine Arts

May 3-May 31—Spring purchase exhibition of thirty paintings by thirty contemporary American artists. Painting chosen by popularity vote to be chosen for Museum collection.

Wellesley, Mass., Wellesley College Art Museum

To May 6—Exhibition of water colors by Paul S. Sample.

New Haven, Conn., Yale Art Gallery

To June 14—Our Navy in Action.

May 1-May 17—Photographs of Murals and sculpture from the Public Buildings Administration.

May 20-May 27—Water colors by students of Herbert Gute.

May 1-May 31—East Indian textiles of the 19th century.

New York, N. Y., The Museum of Modern Art

May 13-May 31—Members' Children's Art Work.

May 20-June 21—New Acquisitions, Armed Services Fund Exhibition.

To July 19—War Time Housing, New Acquisitions.

Films shown daily at 4 P. M. in Museum Auditorium and at 2 and 4 P. M. Sundays.

EXHIBITIONS IN RHODE ISLAND

Providence Art Club

To May 10—Exhibition of paintings and drawings by lay members of the club.

May 12-May 24—Thirteenth members exhibition.

May 26 on—Annual summer exhibition.

John Hay Library, Brown University

May—Exhibition of propaganda material. Exhibition of Dorr War manuscripts.

Armour Gallery

May—Etchings by modern masters.

Faunce House, Brown University

May 1-May 15—Wooden house in America from the Museum of Modern Art.

May 16 on—Exhibition by students at Brown University.

Tilden-Thurber Gallery

May 1-May 14—Exhibition of old Rhode Island prints.

School Gallery, Rhode Island School of Design

May 18-May 29—Exhibition of work done by freshmen students.

Museum, Rhode Island School of Design

May 13-June 1—Exhibition of work done by students.

American Homemakers, Inc., 42 Weybosset Street

May 19-May 22—Annual exhibition of class work.

CALENDAR OF ART EVENTS

Sunday, May 3

Choral program in connection with National Music Week. Sayles Hall, Brown University, 4 P. M.

Monday, May 4

Basement Studio Group: Poetry reading by five group members. Music. Tea. 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Wednesday, May 6

Miscellaneous musical program in connection with National Music Week. Rhode Island School of Design Auditorium, 8:15 P. M.

Thursday, May 7

"Youth on the Air". Sponsored by the Parents' League of Providence. WPRO, 4:15 P. M. (Every Thursday).

Junior Night program in connection with National Music Week. Gilbert Stuart Junior High School, 8 P. M.

Sunday, May 10

Concert by St. Dunstan's Choristers. Museum, Rhode Island School of Design, 3:30 P. M.

**"Something Old—Something New", a Museum educational program correlating art to the Theatre, presents the students of the Rhode Island School of Design in a comedy of Old Mexico, "The Red Velvet Goat", by Josephine Niggli of the University of South Carolina. Rhode Island School of Design Auditorium, 4:30 P. M.

Monday, May 11

Basement Studio Group: "The Professor's Dilemma", four act comedy, acted in costume. Tea. 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Tuesday, May 12

*Flower Show under the auspices of the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs. Providence Plantations Club Auditorium, 1:30 to 9:30 P. M.

Friday, May 15

Ivy Day exercises, Alumnae Hall, Pembroke College, 11 A. M. [Open to the public].

Orchestral concert, Middle Campus, Brown University, 3:30 P. M.

"Under the Elms" exercises, Middle Campus, Brown University, 4 P. M. [Open to the Public].

*Class Night Dance for graduates, parents, friends and Alumni of Brown University, Sayles Hall, Brown University, 9 P. M.

Saturday, May 16

Fiftieth anniversary convocation in honor of the establishment of Pembroke College. First Baptist Meeting House, 10:30 A. M.

*Fiftieth annual dinner of the Alumnae Association of Brown University. Alumnae Hall, Pembroke College, 7 P. M.

Sunday, May 17

Brown University Baccalaureate exercises. First Baptist Meeting House, 3 P. M. [Open to the public after 2:45 P. M.]

President's reception. Sayles Hall, Brown University, 4:30 to 6 P. M.

Monday, May 18

174th Annual Commencement of Brown University. Academic procession starts on Middle Campus at 9 A. M. Exercises of graduating classes at First Baptist Meeting House, 10 A. M.

*Dartmouth—Brown Baseball Game, Aldrich Field, 4 P. M.

*The Players present "Personal Appearance". Barker Playhouse on Benefit Street, 8:30 P. M.

**"Hell's-a-poppin", Metropolitan Theatre, 8:30 P. M.

Basement Studio Group: Dramatic reading of a modern drama. Tea. 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Tuesday, May 19

*The Players present "Personal Appearance". Barker Playhouse on Benefit Street, 8:30 P. M.

**"Hell's-a-poppin", Metropolitan Theatre, Matinee, 2:30 P. M.; Evening, 8:30 P. M.

Wednesday, May 20

Annual Commencement exercises of the Rhode Island School of Design. School Auditorium on Market Square, 10:30 A. M.

*The Players present "Personal Appearance". Barker Playhouse on Benefit Street, 8:30 P. M.

Thursday, May 21

*The Players present "Personal Appearance". Barker Playhouse on Benefit Street, 8:30 P. M.

Friday, May 22

*The Players present "Personal Appearance". Barker Playhouse on Benefit Street, 8:30 P. M.

Concert by the Choirs of Rhode Island State College and Connecticut University, Prof. Lee McCauley, conducting, accompanied by the Rhode Island WPA Symphony Orchestra. "Judas Maccabeus" by Handel. Edwards Hall, Kingston, 8 P. M. [Concert being given in connection with 50th anniversary of the State College].

Concert in connection with the New England School Music Festival Association, sponsored by the Providence School Department, with out-of-town groups participating. Hope High School, 8:15 P. M.

Saturday, May 23

Parade and mass bands in connection with the New England School Music Festival Association, sponsored by the Providence School Department. Brown University Stadium, 2 P. M.

Monday, May 25

Basement Studio Group: Dramatic reading of "When We Dead Awaken" by Henrik Ibsen. Tea. 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

*Admission charged.