Celebrate! At Your Tweed . . .

Summer is already on the horizon for the beautiful Northland, and it is exciting to be planning for in-person events for fall 2021, when we will reopen to celebrate together.

Museums are platforms, not just for facilitating difficult discussions, but also for coming together around common interests and goals despite age, origins, and cultures. They are platforms for celebrating our togetherness, our desire to be curious, tolerant, and respectful of one another through our willingness to learn about cross-cultural issues through the power of the arts. Museum must teach and include all. Programming must be served to the needs of its communities. Social justice is and has been central to museum programming for decades. Without it, a museum cannot reach all communities nor have a positive impact within these communities.

Museums also have a diverse staff to ensure that the dialogue starts internally at the organization’s core, and programming must be organized from-for our underrepresented populations to ensure durable change.

My goal is to work with our communities to lead museums to a better place. This has been a decadeslong commitment, based in part on my origins, past experiences, and a belief that a museum can only matter to/in communities if we work together.

We need your input in order to give a voice and a space to those of you within our communities who may not have been heard previously or may not have made your voice heard through the arts at the Tweed. The Tweed is here for all communities. While our post-pandemic world will certainly look and feel different, everyone here at the Tweed has been working tirelessly to ensure that we come back stronger and better, more resilient, and open to our communities. I cannot thank my staff enough for all their hard work during the past months. You will be impressed. Your Tweed will not just simply be back this fall. We were always there for you. Our newest exhibitions, the virtual programs, including virtual tours, will remain to extend our presence to you online through our redesigned website.

This newsletter gives just a glimpse of Tweed’s virtual spring programs (realized through our new 3D camera) from our celebration of Black History Month to student virtual events, virtual teacher orientation, and a virtual essay reading by award-winning writer and poet Steve Aoki in Las Vegas. The students emulated the writings of award-winning Pulitzer poet Julie Gard, whose collection of poetry was showcased or that have been showcased by Sister Mary Charlie McGough in 1928. (The book won a Newbery Honor in 1929.)

Creating Something New
Sarah Brown ’23
Tweed Museum of Art Intern

As an intern for the Tweed, I created a radio show, working with cameras that capture spaces in 3D and talking to interesting people in order to help tell their stories. One such person is Dr. David Beard, a professor at UMD who teaches WRIT 2506, Writing of Studies. This spring semester, the Tweed showed artwork by female artists to the students of Dr. Beard’s class. They created their own ekphrastic poetry, inspired by Julie Gard’s book Scrap. Dr. Louise Nevelson. “Ekphrastic poetry is poetry that takes, at its starting point, a visual,” explained Dr. Beard. Each student in the class used a work of art as inspiration for their poem. “In the same way that in Julie Gard’s book Scrap, she takes the art and the artist as the starting point for her own creativity, the Tweed made it possible for students to explore art and artists from its collection, to produce their own poetry going in their own unique and powerful creative directions,” said Dr. Beard. Working with the museum has given me the opportunity to host my own show about the arts, to talk and inspect pieces up close. This unique space creates new learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff, both inside and outside the classroom. The space can also be used for meetings, studying, and community events.

Furthermore, there are multiple exhibits that showcased or that have been showcased at the Tweed. For example, the exhibit The Last Campaign of Robert F. Kennedy brought to light the importance of voting. Also the exhibit Creating Apart focused on current world events, such as the global pandemic and social issues, while highlighting the work of local artists in the Northland. The Tweed’s continued resiliency during a time of uncertainty has been quite remarkable. I believe art has the power to shake us into revelation, bearing us from our default mode of seeing and understanding.

Therefore, I continue to be an advocate for the Tweed, and it is an honor to serve in my capacity as a board member.

Students in Writing
Studiecs Create around Tweed Collections
David E. Beard
Professor of Rhetoric, Department of English, Linguistics, and Writing Studies, University of Minnesota Duluth

In spring 2021 students enrolled in the gateway course to the writing studies major explored ekphrastic writing (writing inspired by visual images) through the collections of the Tweed. The students emulated the writings of award-winning Duluth poet Julie Gard, whose collection of poetry was showcased by sculptor Louise Nevelson, called Scrap, they read. In that collection Gard researches the life of Nevelson, responds critically to her work, and creates poems that speak to the experience of artists, women, and mothers. Following Gard’s example, Tweed staff assembled works by women in the Tweed collection from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. “I’m a feminist,” I said. I was amazed, as I am often by the diversity of medium, the diversity of subject, and the diversity of creators, nationally and internationally, in the Tweed’s collection. The students were initially a bit overwhelmed.

Students were given three weeks to review the list. Some immediately went to the subject of the work. Else Wissel by Sister Mary Charles McCough was an immediate favorite because the subject was familiar. Jessica Chiu’s Steve Aoki in Las Vegas was chosen not just because the student was interested in Ojib culture, but also because we were all sentimental about the times when we could all get together and dance, pre-COVID-19. Other works were selected because the artists were just as famous as the subject. Andy Warhol by Annie Leibovitz opens doors to reflecting on two of the greatest artists of the last century.

Closest to my own heart was the selection of Spinning Wheel by Wanda Gág, who is thoroughly Minnesotan (raised in New Ulm) and a storyteller as well as an artist. Millions of Cats is a picture book both written and illustrated by Gág in 1928. (The book won a Newbery Honor award in 1929.) We read a local author, and we ended by reflecting on a regional author, too.

Students chose between poem or prose-poem as a form, writing poems about the artist’s biography, the art style, and the subject of the work, some of which were shared with the campus community at a reading in the Department of English, Linguistics, and Writing Studies.

Thoughts from a Student Advisory Board Member
Abdulla Ali ’21
Tweed Museum of Art Advisory Board Member

I am a senior at UMD, studying political science and economics, with a minor in African American studies. Currently, I also have the privilege of serving as the secretary for the Tweed Advisory Board, bringing forth student perspectives and representing the student voice. During my tenure as a board member, I have gained vast knowledge in museum management and the impact that the Tweed has on our community and our students. As an academic museum, the Tweed provides a unique opportunity to engage with students and provide patrons of the arts with opportunities to indulge. As a student, I believe it’s important that we deepen and expand the hands-on experiences provided by the Tweed for our students.

Over the past year, the Tweed has been transformed. The new study room, which was implemented over the summer and fall, now serves as a hands-on learning environment, allowing students to physically engage with artwork and inspect pieces up close. The unique space creates new learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff, both inside and outside the classroom. The space can also be used for meetings, studying, and community events.

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Craig Amundsen
You may have noticed there is a new sculpture on campus in front of the library. It was installed in November 2020 after a lengthy and meticulous process of conservation. The sculpture is named Sky, by the artist Georgette Sosin, and it is forty years old. Its previous home was in downtown Saint Paul, and its presence at UMD was made possible with funding support from the Tweed Museum of Art’s Gilmore Fund and the family of the artist.

To understand this work of public art, it helps to remember the cultural context in which it was made. Claes Oldenburg unveiled his forty-five-foot-high Clothespin sculpture in Philadelphia in 1976, the same year that America celebrated its bicentennial. Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980. Georgette Sosin completed her Sky sculpture in 1981, the same year that Richard Serra installed his 120-foot long Tilted Arc in New York City. Maya Lin finished the almost 212-foot-long Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1982. The public art movement was just beginning to thrive, having been initiated in 1969 with Alexander Calder’s forty-three-foot-tall La Grande Vitesse in Grand Rapids.

Calder’s forty-three-foot-tall sculpture is named Sky, installed in November 2020 in front of the library. It was a new sculpture on campus and its presence at UMD home was in downtown Saint Paul, and its presence at UMD was made possible with funding support from the Tweed Museum of Art’s Gilmore Fund and the family of the artist.

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American public art tended to be monumental in scale.

Going against that trend, Sosin’s Sky is human scale. Her sculpture is a mere twelve feet tall mounted on a five-foot-high base to draw the observer’s attention to the sky above. It was originally made to sit on the river bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in downtown Saint Paul.

Today Sky is located on the UMD campus, high on a hill above Lake Superior. What a life this sculpture has had—the Mississippi River and now Lake Superior as its foil to the sky above. Visit the sculpture when you can. Walk around it and imagine the artist’s intentions. See how she gave the aluminum used to sculpt her artwork such energy, through form and surface, with a presence much larger than its physical scale.

The perception of the sky may be changed.

Craig Amundsen is the Public Art Coordinator for the University of Minnesota. He has directed more than thirty new conservation projects in his fifteen years at the University. He began the conservation and restoration work on the Georgette Sosin Sky sculpture in 1999.

Heid E. Erdrich grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota, and is Ojibwe enrolled at Turtle Mountain. Her new poetry collection, Little Big Turtle, won a National Poetry Series award in 2019 and was published by Penguin in 2020. She edited the 2018 anthology New Poets of Native Nations, which won an American Book Award. Her work has won numerous awards, including a Native Arts and Cultures Foundation Fellowship and two Minnesota Book Awards for poetry. Heid teaches in the low-residency MFA creative writing program of Augsburg University. She is the 2021 Glasgow (virtual) Visiting Professor at Washington and Lee University.

For thirty-five years it occupied the south end of Kellogg Plaza, a place that affords a view of the river valley and the downtown skyline at the same time. It was an impressive site. Her art was in a very public place where it was seen every day. Instead of attracting attention to its size, her sculpture paints to the endless sky.

Sky was of its time. It was produced at the intersection between modernism and postmodernism. It is a shining example of modern abstract art; it also invites observers to be more aware of their surroundings. Sosin recognized that her art would impact those who encounter it on a daily basis and that it may alter the observer’s perception of the sky and perhaps of themselves. This makes it both public art and postmodern. Sosin wanted her artwork to be about the observer’s experience. She was also ahead of her time in revisiting modernism’s ideas of form and context. She was working with a subject larger than life. She was doing something meaningful.

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The Art of Carl Gawboy
While planning his retrospective, artist Carl Gawboy asked if the Tweed could contact award-winning Ojibwe author Heid E. Erdrich to write an essay about his work as she had done back in 2007 for his exhibition at the Ancient Traders Gallery in Minneapolis. The following is an excerpt from her essay about the Tweed exhibition A Life Well-Painted: The Art of Carl Gawboy, which was on display until May 16, 2021.

There’s often a similar sense of delight in how Gawboy paints. A detail is included that might not match a presumed image of the traditional life of Ojibwe people. It might make us curious about how a cardboard box or a pel or shawl or hatchet is meaningful in a cabin scene. The details of Gawboy’s paintings help us understand the practical nature of life for the Ojibwe in northern Minnesota. These paintings tell us that Ojibwe life was, and I would say is, often lived where necessary created much of what might now be thought of as tradition.

That Carl Gawboy’s paintings can make an ethnographic point is not a new thought to me or others who know his work. He has said his work continues in the line of nineteenth-century artist Eastman Johnson, who sought to create a study of everyday Ojibwe life in his art. But for Gawboy, these images come from a life lived as an Ojibwe man and within the finish-archishnae family of his birth. More than Eastman Johnson, the personal nature, the emotional intimacy of Gawboy’s work shines through, and nowhere more so than in the painting in this exhibit that most moves me, Jim and Bessie Planning Their Day. This painting, which Gawboy completed in the 1990s, depicts the artist’s grandparents in 1918. In it, they are at the shore near their home, facing the entrance to Rainy Lake. The scene is lovely, the waters inviting, the natural world abundant around the two people. But it is the attitude of the couple that moves me, their inclination toward one another, and the companionship in that moment alone—a moment we can only imagine as fleeting as a day of hard work about to begin.

Heid E. Erdrich grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota, and is Ojibwe enrolled at Turtle Mountain. Her new poetry collection, Little Big Turtle, won a National Poetry Series award in 2019 and was published by Penguin in 2020. She edited the 2018 anthology New Poets of Native Nations, which won an American Book Award. Her work has won numerous awards, including a Native Arts and Cultures Foundation Fellowship and two Minnesota Book Awards for poetry. Heid teaches in the low-residency MFA creative writing program of Augsburg University. She is the 2021 Glasgow (virtual) Visiting Professor at Washington and Lee University.
**Recent Acquisitions**

Karissa White Isaacs, PhD
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe

In the fall of 2020, the Tweed began the process of purchasing sculptures from Indigenous artists Jeffrey Gibson and Preston Singletary. Gibson’s work as a multimedia sculptor and a painter combines the cultural and artistic traditions of his Cherokee and Choctaw heritage with themes from popular and queer culture, Indigenous history, contemporary social narratives, identity, colonialism, powwow and street/club culture, and consumerism. In Preston Singletary’s thirty-plus years as an artist, he has successfully merged European glass blowing traditions and Northwest Native art. His artwork features themes of transformation, animal spirits, and shamanism through elegant, blown-glass forms and sand-carved Tlingit designs.

Although the Tweed has primarily collected art from Great Lakes and Eastern Woodlands Native peoples, we have been expanding the contemporary Indigenous art collection to other North American regions. Since 2016 staff had been considering the purchase of sculptures by Gibson and Singletary, whose works are held by the Whitney Museum, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Seattle Art Museum, and other distinguished museums. These purchases are significant for the Tweed because they represent strong contemporary works by two renowned Indigenous artists who have won numerous prestigious awards over the years. Audiences will learn more about these artists’ backgrounds, their different art forms, and what the works convey about Indigenous issues, such as identity, culture, history, and sense of place/environment. Like other contemporary works in the museum’s permanent collection, these sculptures lead to questions about the definition of Indigenous art for faculty, students, and others to contemplate. We were very excited to showcase these remarkable artworks in the museum’s main gallery throughout the spring semester as our most Recent Acquisitions purchased through the Marguerite L. Gilmore Charitable Foundation Fund.

**Exhibition Highlights—Native Regalia**

The term regalia refers to the clothing Native people wear for ceremonies, powwows, and other special events. While ceremonies and the idea of social gatherings in the form of today’s powwow have existed for centuries, there are several fundamental dance categories, each with its own style of regalia, such as women’s jingle dress and men’s traditional. All the works in the display illustrated some of what has been worn in different eras and generations. At powwows, Native people dance with immense pride because our regalia represents our cultures and communities as well as our personal identities. It is a joyous occasion to be in one’s own individual style of regalia, and there is always an appreciation for every single piece.

Many of the collection regalia items are from the Richard E. and Dorothy Rawlings Nelson Collection of American Indian Art donated by Dick Nelson in 2007. The Nelsons acquired a significant collection of contemporary and historical art by Native artists over a period of thirty years, and the gift from Dick Nelson included works predominantly made by Great Lakes Native peoples. In recent years, the Tweed purchased works from esteemed Fond du Lac Ojibwe artist/curator/educator Wendy Savage and her sister, Dr. Lisa Savage. More specifically, the display highlights beaded gloves, dance aprons, jewelry, several moccasins, including a pair by Joe Savage, a beaded shirt, a yoke, a sash woven by Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe elder Dennis White, and beaded bags by Marcie McIntire and Delina White. Cree artist Chholing Taha’s intricately embroidered shawl consists of Dupioni silk, Italian wools, Swarovski crystals, and elk teeth.

While many of the works are from the Great Lakes region, a few others are inspired by the Plains region, such as Mel Losh’s War Shirt, which the Tweed purchased in 2019 from the Leech Lake Ojibwe artist. For more than forty years, Losh has developed himself as a master of porcupine quillwork and beadwork. He has taught numerous workshops enabling students of all ages to learn the art forms of quillwork and beadwork. His work has been included in the Minnesota Historical Society’s Mille Lacs Museum, the Plains Art Museum, and the Smithsonian. The Tweed Museum is grateful to feature these historical and contemporary artworks in conversation with one another.
Events for The Tweed Museum Spring 2021

January 29
Music Student Performance
An event of student musicians performing works from classes as well as original pieces.

February 23
Black History Month Tweed Event
An event of panelists discussing their musical performance, Caspa, as well as the contexts behind it.

March 18
Pictionary Game Night!
An event of virtual Pictionary games with prizes for the winners.

April 15
Chess Tournament!
An event for chess players!

May 6
Senior Party!
An event of mocktail making recipes! Everyone can make mocktails together to celebrate graduation!

May 11
Regalia and Gawboy: A Teacher’s Spring Event
A Virtual Essay Reading by Heid E. Erdrich
May 21
Mocktails together to celebrate graduation!

Exhibitions/Spring 2021

A Life Well-Painted: The Art of Carl Gawboy | Special Exhibition Gallery
This retrospective of Bois Forte Anishinaabe and Finnish artist Carl Gawboy presented works of art that span over fifty years. The exhibition featured many watercolors (Gawboy’s preferred medium), but also acrylic paintings and relief sculptures. His meticulously painted artworks depict Anishinaabe cultural activities, legends, fond memories of rural farm life, and his family and friends. Carl Gawboy, who graduated from UMD in 1965, has significantly influenced the Twin Ports community, not only as a talented and treasured artist, but also as a teacher, storyteller, family man, and friend.

Adam Swanson Mural Project | Main Gallery
The Tweed teamed with artist Adam Swanson on a mural project intended to increase art engagement with UMD students. Students were involved in the design of the four-panel mural and had the opportunity to participate in the painting of the mural. The project took place in the newly designated contemporary artist section of the Tweed’s main gallery. A presentation by Swanson on his work, as well as class visits, was included.

Annual Student Exhibition (ASE 2020): Our Stories | Balcony Gallery
UMD’s Department of Art & Design offered this juried exhibition of UMD student work at the Tweed Museum of Art and online. Our Stories exhibited the works of art selected by members of the campus community to receive awards and highlighted all the works selected for inclusion by the jurors. This year’s jurors were painter Ricky Alman and Julia Zeltser, founding partner and creative director at Hyperakt.

Creating Apart: Local Artists Respond to a Global Pandemic | Court Gallery
Through a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) CARES Cultural Organizations grant, the Tweed hosted a new exhibition as part of a larger project titled Stories of Wisdom from Bodies in Separation (SWaBS): Archiving the Coronavirus Pandemic through the Lens of Humanities, organized by UMD professors David Beard and Devalenee Dass. This exhibition, guest curated by Anne Dugan, showcased the responses of featured artists Ivy Vainio, Moira Villiard, Sarah Brokke, and Karen Savage Blue. A documentary by local filmmaker Mike Scholtz explored the virtual experiments undertaken by some of these artists as well as Joe Klander and Brian Barber.

Glassworks from the Collection of Don and Carol Wilken | Features Niche
In 2002 the Tweed presented the exhibition Contemporary Studio Glass from the Collection of Don and Carol Wilken. The exhibition introduced thirty-five glassworks created by prominent national and international glass artists, some of which they donated to complement the Tweed’s modest collection of glassworks acquired in previous years. The Wilkens donated a total of twenty-eight works. This display featured some of the best from their collection.

Native Regalia Past & Present | Nelson Display Case
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Senior Student Exhibitions | Student Exhibition Gallery
Due to the current circumstances tied to the COVID-19 pandemic, students in the Department of Art & Design in the College of Liberal Arts at UMD offered both virtual and in-person senior exhibitions at the Tweed. For more information on the exhibition schedule visit https://cla.d.umn.edu/departments/department-art-design/sr-show-2.

Recordings are available at https://www.d.umn.edu/tma/.

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We're doing our part to keep everyone safe and slow the spread of COVID-19 while still providing great art experiences. Here's what you can expect from your Tweed visit:

—Masks are mandatory. Everyone is required to wear a cloth face mask while in the museum. If you don't have one, we will provide you with one.

—Clean hands. Everyone must either sanitize or wash their hands upon entering and leaving the Tweed. Sanitizing stations are by the entrance and exit. The bathrooms are on the lower level. Please remember to wash your hands with soap and water for twenty seconds.

—Maintain social distancing. Everyone must maintain six feet of physical distance. If you are in a group of four or fewer, you may stay together in that group but maintain distance from others.

The exhibitions are designed to assist with maintaining physical distance. There will also be signage to help you navigate your visit. Tweed staff are available to answer your questions or provide help as needed.

We are very happy to reopen our doors and share wonderful art experiences with everyone. We believe art enriches our lives and helps us thrive. By following these safety measures, we hope everyone will stay safe to enjoy art and life.

Stay well and safe.