

SUNLETTER

THE PEOPLE, EVENTS, & EXHIBITS OF THE GRACE HUDSON MUSEUM

SUMMER 2021 Volume 30, No. 2

Grace Hudson's Ongoing Relevancy



Above: *Ma-tu*, 1912, by Grace Hudson (numbered oil 414). Here Grace meticulously depicts the regalia of a Pomo doctor. The person portrayed is Pomo elder John Scott.

On May 6, Karen Holmes, our recently retired curator and Carpenter-Hudson family historian, led a virtual tour of the Museum's Hart Gallery, devoted to the artworks of Grace Carpenter Hudson. In the final few minutes of her tour, Karen addressed the issue of Grace's relevancy. Her comments went far beyond the aesthetics and subject matter of a late 19th/early 20th century painter to topical issues that swirl around us today. They also get to the heart of the Grace Hudson Museum's interpretive philosophy, and the important role museums play in broader cultural and civic discourse. I felt so strongly about it that I asked Karen if we could excerpt that final section of her tour to share with our Sunletter readers. She happily agreed.

– David Burton, Director

Let's address the question of Grace's relevancy today. I think we can all agree that this past year has shown that racism is alive and well in the United States, that people of color continue to be discriminated against and victimized, and that there are increasing pressures for social change. This affects many institutions in the country, including museums. There is a push in museums and history-based organizations to embed the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) in the way they present their collections and tell the stories associated with their mission. How does the way the Grace Hudson Museum tells Grace's story stand up to that goal? To play devil's advocate, why should we care about a dead white woman from the 19th century, or her husband, whom one could say by today's standards had a paternalistic relationship with the Pomo people—the very people whose culture fueled the Hudsons' successful careers?

To begin with, I firmly believe that you cannot judge the behavior of people in the past by today's standards. Though you can judge them on the grounds of their respect for basic human dignity and welfare. The Carpenters and Hudsons for their time actually treated their Pomo friends and acquaintances much more humanely than many others did, maintaining lifelong relationships with them and aiding them in various ways. And they truly admired the artistry of the Pomo peoples. The staff at the Museum "embeds" the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access into the exhibition spaces by not only telling the stories of the Carpenter/Hudson families, but also discussing the culture and lives of the Pomo peoples upon whom they built their

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The Museum Is Open!



Current Exhibit: *Postcards from Mecca*, through Sunday, August 22, 2021



Sun House Guild

**GRACE HUDSON
MUSEUM & Sun House**

For current hours and admission fees,
please call or visit our website:

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(707) 467-2836

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Art Comes Back to Life

After a year being closed and waiting to see what would happen next, we suddenly have a lot to do!

First up: Please come to our garden party! Plans are well underway for an upcoming summer event, *A Corner in the Gardens: A Fundraiser for the Corner Gallery and Grace Hudson Museum*. On Saturday July 10 we'll gather in the Wild Gardens to reaffirm the vitality of Ukiah's arts community. Several artists will be working plein-air style throughout the late afternoon. Guests can enjoy appetizers catered by Beth Keiffer and her team, along with cold beverages; chat with artists as they create artwork inspired by the setting; try your luck in a wine pull where for \$20 you might go home with something very special; groove to music of Ukiah's popular BP3 (some of you might know them as the Back Porch Trio); and bid for artwork created that afternoon in a silent auction! Our plein-air artists will complete and polish their pieces in their studios, then deliver them to the winning bidders.

We'll gather in the garden from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., to take advantage of the cooling evening air, and still make it home in time for dinner! Tickets are \$50 per person, and we are offering a special \$35 ticket price for attendees age 35 and under. I want to thank my colleagues on the Sun House Guild Board and the Board of Art Center Ukiah for all their efforts in imagining and organizing this event.

Meanwhile, the Gift Shop is replenishing its offerings (and having a sale!), and we'll be adding some new items in the coming weeks. Please note that although the Museum is open to visitors from Wednesday through Sunday, the Gift Shop hours are limited to Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. through June. We will add hours as returning volunteers can be scheduled. If you have an interest in volunteering a few hours a month, please contact Barbie Blake, our Gift Shop Committee Chair, at beblake@hotmail.com, for more information. With thanks to all for your ongoing support,

– Toni Wheeler, *Sun House Guild President*

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in memory of Norma Sack

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in memory of Margaret Parducci



A Corner in the Gardens:

A Fundraiser for the Corner Gallery and Grace Hudson Museum

Saturday, July 10 * 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

with Live Music by BP3

Hors d'Oeuvres * A Complimentary Beverage * Cash Bar * Wine Pull

Plein-air Art created during the event will be available for auction

Tickets \$50 per person * \$35 for ages 35 and under

Purchase online at www.gracehudsonmuseum.org

Or by phone at (707) 467-2836

Admission limited to 60 guests

Huge Thanks to our Lead and Participating Sponsors



Grace Hudson's Ongoing Relevancy (continued from Page 1)

lifework. This is apparent in the Museum's J. Ralph and Lois Stone Gallery dedicated to Pomoan basketry, and in the Museum's Wild Gardens that feature the native plants used by local indigenous people for food, basketry, and regalia materials, and that showcase Pomoan land management techniques. Without the interest that the Carpenters and Hudsons took in Pomo culture, this museum would not exist to tell the stories of all the people involved in those stories. That alone makes Grace Hudson relevant to today's concerns.

But beyond that, Grace is important in American art history. Not only was she an excellent artist and technician, but she made a living as a professional artist at a time when very few women did, as their role was considered to be in the home; additionally, she was a good businesswoman, which is not always true of artists. Significantly, she is one of the very few women artists in the country with a museum devoted to her work.

Her family members also took part in many important moments in U.S. History—from the Carpenter family's arrival in Massachusetts 18 years after that of the Pilgrims, to Grace's grandmother Clarina Nichols campaigning for women's rights in the 1850s with her personal friend Susan B. Anthony and other major women's rights activists, to Grace's father Aurelius who literally fought alongside John Brown to ensure that Kansas Territory entered the Union as a state free from slavery. Telling their stories is telling the story of the development of the United States, which is important for all of us to process to understand how we got to where we are today.

In closing, I would say that we cannot right the wrongs of the past unless we know what those wrongs were and remember them and learn from them; we cannot treat others with dignity without appreciating their culture; and in an increasingly mean-spirited world, we need to celebrate artistry, humanity, and positive achievement to feed our souls. These are the concerns of today, and the stories of Grace and her family and the Pomo peoples that are told in this museum are relevant to those concerns.



This detail of a display case in the Hart Gallery includes a version of *National Thorn* on an opal plaque. The original painting, which hangs in the Hart Gallery, was Grace's first numbered oil, dating to 1891. The opal plaque is from 1893.

New President's Circle

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30 Years On, Our Fall Exhibition

Thirty years ago, three artists approached the Grace Hudson Museum, wanting to mount an exhibition of their own artwork. A few years before, the Museum had expanded from being solely located in Grace Hudson's home—the Sun House—to having a dedicated building that included collections vaults, offices, and an exhibition gallery, the latter ostensibly to display Grace Hudson's artwork and other items in a growing collection.

There was much deliberation. A temporary exhibition would mean that most of Grace's paintings would have to come off the walls. But it also offered new opportunities for the Museum. In the end, the show idea was approved and the artists and staff moved forward with creating a plan. When it opened, *An Association of 3: Liden, Magruder, & Knight* was an instant hit! The first exhibit that did not feature Grace Hudson's work, it paved the way for future temporary shows, many featuring contemporary artists of Mendocino County.

The three artists were Tom Liden, Mac Magruder, and Wayne Knight. All art school graduates, they enjoyed discussing art together. They would regularly pile into a car and head to the Bay Area where they would visit galleries and museums, talking about what they saw over dinner and heading home with inspiration for their own art making. *An Association of 3* featured Tom's photography, Mac's ceramic-based sculptures, and Wayne's large-scale portraits while highlighting their camaraderie and friendship.

In 1996, they returned to the Museum with a second show, *Color, Clay, and Cambodia: Liden, Magruder, & Knight*. This time, Mac featured fantastical sculptures, such as a bull twisted into a tornado, inspired by his life as a cattle and lamb rancher. Tom's photography explored form and color in new ways—one piece featured a pear balanced on



The three artists in front of their 1996 exhibition, *Color, Clay, & Cambodia*. Left to right, Mac Magruder, Wayne Knight, and Tom Liden.

a red-orange line. And Wayne's work reflected his travels in Cambodia. Painting on the move, his portraits became less formal and he started producing landscapes.

In our fall exhibition, *30 Years On: Liden, Magruder, & Knight*, opening September 11, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of that first show and the creative paths of all three artists. The process has involved meeting with Mac at his family ranch to see his new sculptures in progress and talking with Tom at his home resplendent with his favorite photography. Unfortunately, Wayne passed in 2009. Looking through his work with his widow, Karen, and speaking to friends and family has been a process of discovery and I am incredibly grateful to everyone who has shared memories of his art and life.

Although our exhibit space has expanded since our first Liden, Magruder, & Knight presentation, it isn't large enough for us to do a true retrospective of their full body of work. What we will do is more along the lines of a reflection, featuring select pieces from the past alongside more recent and new works, to explore their diverse and sometimes parallel artistic journeys.

— Alyssa Boge,

Curator of Education & Exhibits



Tri-fold exhibit announcement for *An Association of 3*, from 1991. From top to bottom, artworks by Magruder, Liden, and Knight.



Sun House Guild

GRACE HUDSON MUSEUM

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Upcoming Programs

*Additional information on these and other Museum programs can be found on
the Museum's web site at gracehudsonmuseum.org/.*

Thursday, July 15, 7:00–8:00 p.m. ‡ Virtual program

Kim Stringfellow and the Mojave Project

Photographer, artist, and scholar, Kim Stringfellow joins us virtually to
discuss her latest effort in exploring the physical, geological, and cultural
landscape of desert lands. You'll never again look at a desert the same way.

Saturday, July 24, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. ‡ Outdoor in person

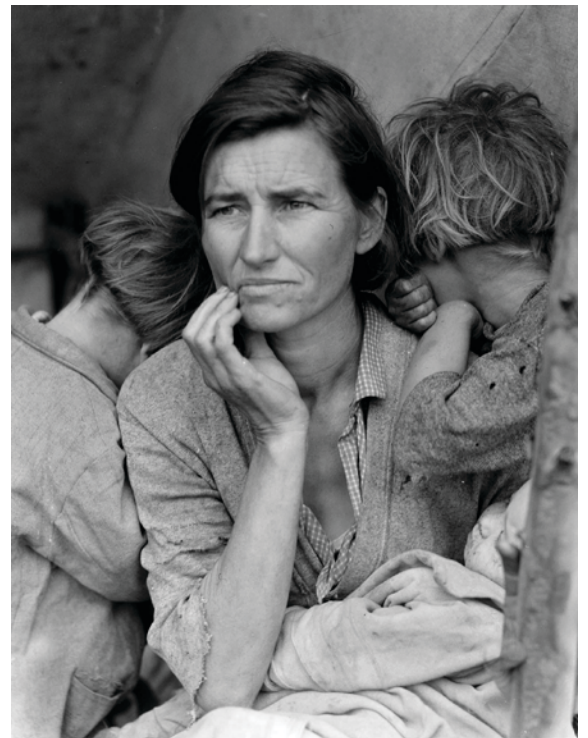
Magical Manzanita

Corine Pearce, cultural educator, basket weaver, and herbalist of Redwood
Valley Rancheria, will share cultural knowledge about the uses of the
manzanita plant while guiding activities in making manzanita cider, tea,
and poison oak remedy.

Thursday, August 12, 7:00–8:00 p.m. ‡ Virtual program

The Artistry of Dorothea Lange

Oakland Museum of California Curator Drew Johnson gives a virtual
illustrated talk on the life and artistry of Dorothea Lange, one of the most
significant photographers of the 20th century.



*Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California, 1936 by Dorothea Lange.
Arguably her most recognizable photo.*