

# Greenwich Historical Society

Explore our colorful past



news+programs

january | february 2017

## GREENWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is dedicated to promoting Greenwich's unique and colorful past. Our collections actively chronicle the life of our town for future generations, our programs and exhibitions help people of all ages better understand their connection to history, and our preservation efforts safeguard an architectural heritage that includes the National Historic Landmark Bush-Holley House, the site of the Cos Cob art colony.

## BUSH-HOLLEY HISTORIC SITE

is a member of the Connecticut Art Trail, a partnership of 18 world-class museums and historic sites across the state. Discover collections rich in New England history and culture and view artwork from one of the earliest American Impressionist art colonies.

## HOURS

### Storehouse Gallery

Open Wednesday through Sunday,  
12–4 pm

### Docent-led Tours of Bush-Holley House

Saturday and Sunday,  
1, 2 and 3 pm and by appointment

### Curator's Eye Tours

Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday at 12:15 pm

### Library and Archives

Wednesdays, 10 am–12:30 pm  
and 1 pm–4 pm, or by appointment

## ADMISSION

\$10 for adults

\$8 for seniors and students

Always free to members and  
children under 18.

Free to all visitors the first Wednesday  
of each month.

## CONTACT US

Greenwich Historical Society

39 Strickland Road

Cos Cob, CT 06807

203-869-6899

[www.greenwichhistory.org/contact](http://www.greenwichhistory.org/contact)

## DIRECTIONS

Off I-95 at Exit 4.

Details at [www.greenwichhistory.org/visit](http://www.greenwichhistory.org/visit)

## Greenwich Historical Society to Enhance Its Contribution to the Cultural Life of the Community Through Ambitious Campus Transformation



**O**n November 11, the Greenwich Historical Society formally announced to the public its **Reimagine the Greenwich Historical Society Campaign**, a bold and ambitious initiative that will dramatically transform the National Historic Landmark Bush-Holley House campus, expand and provide better access to its facilities and enrich its education and preservation programs. The plan will enable us to advance our mission by making a greater contribution to the cultural life of Greenwich and surrounding areas, while ensuring preservation of our historic buildings and grounds for the future.

The Historical Society began this \$18.5 million capital campaign in 2015 with three main goals: raise the funds necessary for the campus transformation; expand its exhibitions, educational programs and historic preservation initiatives; and increase its endowment. Having successfully raised \$10 million in the initial quiet phase, the Historical Society is now entering the

public stage of the campaign to raise the additional \$8.5 million required to fund the campus improvements, programmatic transformation and endowment. Anonymous donors have agreed to match dollar for dollar the first \$6.75 million. Construction on the building will begin in 2017.

“The Reimagine the Greenwich Historical Society Campaign offers a unique opportunity to secure and enhance the Historical Society's future, placing it at the forefront of the nation's historical institutions,” says Peter Malkin, Campaign Chairman. “The extraordinary dollar-for-dollar matching gift from anonymous donors gives us a wonderful assist in achieving the crucial support we need to realize the Historical Society's vision for a dynamic campus that will place Greenwich's story indelibly within the broader context of American history, while providing an all-important bridge to the future for generations to come.”

Senator Richard Blumenthal and Cynthia M. Blumenthal, State Senator Scott Frantz and

*continues*

*We're saving a seat for you.* **Meet Designer Mark Sikes**



**J**oin us for *A Night of Beauty* with celebrated interior designer Mark D. Sikes, who will share his design philosophy, field questions and talk about the inspiration and creative process behind his sumptuous new book *Beautiful* (Rizzoli).

Sikes is known for designing fresh, sophisticated, all-American spaces that perfectly balance beauty and function. Building on two decades in visual merchandising and marketing, in 2012, Sikes parlayed his talent for creating exceptional environments into a highly successful design firm. His work has since graced top shelter magazines from *Architectural Digest* to *Veranda*, and

he designs for clients across the country. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to meet a talent who has made a rapid and impressive ascent on the design scene.

Want to hear more from Mark? Purchase a patron ticket to share an intimate supper with the designer following the event.

Thursday, February 9, 2017  
6:00 to 8:00 pm

The Field Club of Greenwich  
276 Lake Avenue, Greenwich

All proceeds support the Greenwich Historical Society's education and preservation programs. For tickets contact [kdorsey@greenwichhistory.org](mailto:kdorsey@greenwichhistory.org) or visit our website.



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FAIRFIELD COUNTY  
**LOOK**

**Greenwich Historical Society to Enhance Its Contribution to the Cultural Life of the Community Through Ambitious Campus Transformation**

*continued from front page*

Icy Frantz and First Selectman Peter Tesesi and Jill Tesesi are serving as the honorary campaign leadership. The Campaign Committee includes Bruce Dixon, Haley Elminger, Suzanne Frank, Robert Getz, Barbara MacDonald, Deborah Royce, John Townsend and Hugh Vanderbilt Jr. and is working with Koszyn & Company, a prominent campaign consulting firm that has executed numerous capital campaigns with cultural and educational institutions, including Columbia Uni-

*Capital Campaign Committee Members (left to right): Peter Malkin, Chairman; Suzanne Frank; Barbara MacDonald and Robert Getz*



versity, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the University Club of New York.

The award-winning historic preservation architectural firm of David Scott Parker Architects has developed a visionary plan that includes new state-of-the-art galleries and archives, more than doubled parking and improved accessibility for all, including an elevator. The new building will have two state-of-the-art exhibition and orientation spaces to showcase the permanent art and history collections, as well as loans from museums and private collections, and public archives for researchers, students and archives volunteers to process and preserve collections.

A historic building that was once the Railroad Hotel and later Toby's Tavern will be restored to its appearance at the height of the Cos Cob art colony at the turn of the 20th century. It will offer a museum shop and new Artists Café, exhibition space for community artists, meeting space and storage for permanent collections. The current exhibition space in the adjoining 1805 Storehouse will be renovated to accommodate Historical Society staff offices. Landscaping restored to the Cos Cob art colony era will provide more green space for outdoor events and children's programs.

The reimagined campus will enable more dynamic programming and innovative

experiences for bringing Greenwich's history alive to a larger audience. Humanities themes that address Greenwich's rich cultural legacy and character will be available onsite and through interactive digital technologies, mobile devices and social media platforms. Selections from the Society's unique collections, containing more than 40,000 archival materials that document Greenwich's rich cultural heritage, will be digitized to permit off-site access.

"New technologies will enable us to expand our outreach significantly and create more participatory learning experiences for people of all ages," says Debra Mecky, Greenwich Historical Society Executive Director. "We are confident this will encourage greater appreciation for our town's vibrant history and more active involvement in preserving its rich legacy."

We invite you to support the Capital Campaign so that together we may achieve our mission and long-term vision for preserving and presenting Greenwich history and art in a dynamic site dedicated to lifetime learning.

For information about how to contribute, please contact Katrina Dorsey, Greenwich Historical Society Director of Development, at 203-869-6899, ext. 15, or by email: [kdorsey@greenwichhistory.org](mailto:kdorsey@greenwichhistory.org). To learn more, visit [www.greenwichhistory.org/challenge](http://www.greenwichhistory.org/challenge).

## Greenwich History Lecture: **The Setons: Artists, Authors, Individuals**

**W**e are extremely pleased to be hosting two lectures by Lucinda MacKethan on the subject of the Seton family—father Ernest Thompson Seton (author, wildlife artist and founder of the Woodcraft Indians and Campfire Girls, precursors to the Boy and Girl Scouts of America), mother Grace Gallatin Seton (author, suffragist and WWI motor unit organizer) and daughter, celebrated novelist Anya Seton. MacKethan has been researching and publishing articles about the Setons for years, making extensive use of our archives, and is now working on a full-length biography of author Anya Seton.

The first lecture, “The Seton Houses: Organizing a Family Biography,” will explore the social as well as personal and artistic motivations of the famous Seton family. MacKethan will give a virtual tour of the five houses that they built between 1900 and 1951, four of which claimed Greenwich addresses. Ernest Thompson Seton built his last residence, Seton Castle, on the outskirts

of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Through these homes, we can track the course of the Setons’ lives as successful writers, prominent American personalities and as a complex and broken family.

The second lecture, “Fathers, Mothers, Daughters: A View of Anya Seton’s Family Through Her Novels,” examines autobiographical elements in Anya’s fiction, especially as she cast interactions with her famous parents into the fictional lives of some of her important characters. Discussion will include five novels written between 1941 and 1972 that offer perhaps the most intriguing presentations of her own evolving sense of self.

A professor of English at NC State University for close to 40 years, Lucinda MacKethan, now retired, has authored three books on Southern literature and many articles on American women writers. She is senior consultant of scribblingwomen.org, a series of radio plays based on American women’s short stories, and was a fellow at the National Humanities Center, where she now produces online materials for teachers.

*The Seton Houses: Organizing a Family Biography: Thursday, January 26, 7:00 to 8:00 pm*

*Fathers, Mothers, Daughters: A View of Anya Seton’s Family Through Her Novels: Friday, January 27, 2:00 to 3:00 pm*

*Each lecture: Members: \$10; nonmembers: \$15*

*Reservations required. Both lectures will take place in the Vanderbilt Education Center. Doors open 30 minutes before the lecture.*



*The Seton Family, 1908. Photo by Jessie Tarbox Beals, the first published female photojournalist in the United States.*

### for kids

## Summer Fun for Kids

**S**tart planning summer fun right now for your children or visiting grandchildren. Our unique History and Art Camp uses the National Historic Landmark Bush-Holley Historic Site and its staff, collections and archives to offer second-through seventh-graders a highly interactive



summer experience with a wide variety of activities hard to match anywhere else.

The first week immerses campers in the life of New England colonists during the American Revolution, while the second week explores the Cos Cob art colony and its relationship to Impressionist artwork that was inspired by the local landscape.

A field trip and a family reception to showcase what campers have learned and created round out the weekly schedule. The program is staffed by experienced educators and counselors dedicated to providing a lively and enriching camp experience. Additional activities are led by professional artists and historical reenactors.

*Members can register early for reduced rates. For dates and details and to register, visit [www.greenwichhistory.org/camp](http://www.greenwichhistory.org/camp).*

## Executive Director Debra Mecky Interviewed About Humanities Cuts

**E**xecutive Director Debra Mecky and Central CT State University historian Matt Warshauer recently met for an hour-long interview on WPKN 89.5FM’s *Spotlight in Arts & Culture* program to discuss the importance of the humanities and the impact of Governor Malloy’s recent cut of ALL funding for cultural programming by history museums and historic sites. Over 5,000 organizations across the state will be affected.

To hear a podcast visit: <https://soundcloud.com/wpkn895/humanities>.

Visit our new blog at [greenwichhistory.org/blog](http://greenwichhistory.org/blog) and follow us on:



39 Strickland Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807

## Save the Dates:

### Thursday, January 26

*The Seton Houses: Organizing a Family Biography*

### Friday, January 27

*Fathers, Mothers, Daughters: A View of Anya Seton's Family Through Her Novels*

### February 1–28

*In Their Footsteps: Deborah Bonnell Paints Weir Farm*

### February 8

Member Appreciation Breakfast

### February 9

*A Night of Beauty* with Mark D. Sikes

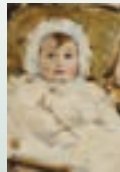
### February 26

Sushi and Sake

### February 26

*An Eye to the East: The Inspiration of Japan Closes*

*The Greenwich Historical Society chronicles the past, but the future is in your hands. Please remember us in your estate plan so that future generations may continue to explore the ongoing story of our community.*



## news

### Greenwich Historical Society Receives State Grant

Governor Dannel Malloy, pictured at the State Capitol with State Representative Livvy Floren and Greenwich Historical Society Executive Director Debra Mecky, recently announced the award of \$250,000 by the Urban Bond Commission for parking lot expansion at Bush-Holley Historic Site.



### In Their Footsteps: Deborah Bonnell Paints Weir Farm

SELECTED WORKS PAINTED AS THE  
2016 ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

*Storehouse Gallery, February 1–28, 2107*

*Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 4:00*

*You are cordially invited to a public opening reception on Wednesday, February 1, 6:00 to 8:00 pm*

### Calling All Members

Save the date for our second annual Member Appreciation Breakfast on Wednesday, February 8, 9–10:30 am in the Vanderbilt Education Center. Be the first to learn about exciting new developments at the Historical Society! If you're not a member, consider signing up today either online at [www.greenwichhistory.org/membership](http://www.greenwichhistory.org/membership) or by calling Membership Manager Suzanne Flinn at 203-869-6899, ext. 14.



# JAPANANISM

By Christine Heyworth

This rather unusual term lies at the heart of the intriguing current exhibit at the Greenwich Historical Society, *An Eye to the East: The Inspiration of Japan*. First coined by the French as “japonisme,” the word came into use after U.S. Navy Commodore Matthew C. Perry negotiated a treaty with Japan in 1854 that opened up that country in the Far East to the West. Europeans were the first to take advantage of the new trade opportunities with Japan while the Americans were embroiled in a civil war at home. Evidence of the newfound fascination with Japanese art can be seen in the Expositions in London (1862), Paris (1867) and Vienna (1873). Among the offerings were books, plays, music, greeting cards and silver objects. It was not until the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, followed by the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, that most Americans came face to face with Japanese culture, including a reproduction of a Japanese tea house and garden in Chicago. Their response, like that of the Europeans, was overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

To be exact, however, it wasn’t only the artifacts of Japan that intrigued Europeans and Americans. Prior to Perry’s game-changing treaty, Westerners had developed an interest in Chinese art and fine products from other parts of Asia, such as India, Turkey and Persia. As Susan Larkin points out in her article “Japanism in the Cos Cob Art Colony” in the March 2001 edition of *Antiques*, importers in London, Paris and New York sold objects from disparate parts of Asia along with those from Japan. Japanism, then, was broader in its inception than one might surmise from the word

*Genjiro Yeto with other kimono-clad art students, ca. 1897. Collection of the Greenwich Historical Society, William E. Finch, Jr. Archives, Holley-MacRae family papers.*



*Fan with scene of two women in kimonos, 1900-1930, paper and wood. Courtesy of the Litchfield Historical Society.*

itself, although over the last decades of the 19th century, the focus on the unique wonders of Japanese culture and its incorporation in American paintings, homes and gardens sharpened and deepened.

How does it come to be a preoccupation of our local artists colony in Cos Cob during its heyday from 1890 to 1920? American Impressionist artist John H. Twachtman played a sig-

*Utagawa Hiroshige, Ryôgoku in the Eastern Capital, from the series Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, 1858, woodblock print. Lent by the Art Museum, University of Saint Joseph, Bequest of the Reverend John J. Kelley, 1966.1.555.*



nificant role in this movement. A sojourn in Paris in the 1880s exposed him to the influence of Japanese art in the paintings of both the French Impressionists and his own countryman, James McNeill Whistler.

Once back in the U.S., Twachtman, along with fellow artists

Theodore Robinson and J. Alden Weir, attended exhibitions on Japanese art, bought Japanese prints and discussed their merits, and then incorporated elements of Japanese composition and technique into their own works. As Larkin points out in her aforementioned article, these artists borrowed features of *Ukiyo-e*, Japanese woodblock prints, from masters like Hokusai and Hiroshige, such as the prominent foreground element, detailed distance, horizontal bands and asymmetrical designs. Childe Hassam, another member of the art colony, was also influenced by Japanese woodblock

prints and incorporated “Oriental props”—like the kimono-clad woman so prominent in his “Bowl of Goldfish” from 1912—in other paintings and prints he produced.

*Childe Hassam, The White Mantel, 1915, etching. Collection of the Greenwich Historical Society, purchased with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Hugh B. Vanderbilt.*





*Elmer Livingston MacRae, Morning Glories, 1904, watercolor on rice paper with mica. Collection of the Greenwich Historical Society, Gift of Bush-Holley Art Group.*

Japanese visitors as well as local residents were instrumental in expanding the artists' understanding of Japan. The most important was Genjiro Yeto, who came

to the U.S. in about 1891 and studied at the Art Students League from 1894 to 1899. He became a member of Twachtman's Cos Cob summer class in 1896 and was a boarder at the Holley House for extended periods of time until 1901. There he became close friends of artist Elmer MacRae and his wife Constant Holley. Elmer incorporated woodcut prints, origami birds and flower arrangements in his art studio and spent hours watching Yeto at work. Constant was known to be a gardener and flower arranger, but she attributed her love of arranging flowers to a Japanese gentleman staying at her home. (Almost certainly this must be Yeto.) Two Japanese silk importers, Rioichiro Arai and Yasukata Murai, built adjacent homes on Glen Avon Road in Riverside in 1893 and joined the Riverside Yacht Club, both just across the Mianus River from the Holley House. The Arai women taught Constant Holley *ikebana*, the art of Japanese flower arrangement, and she, in turn, instructed other Greenwich women.

Mention has been made of the Japanese kimono, a piece of clothing much admired. Used as a dressing gown or lounging robe,

*Genjiro Yeto, Blue Morning Glory, 1915, ink and gouache. Collection of the Greenwich Historical Society, Gift of Yukiko Tanaka in memory of her grandfather Genjiro Yeto/Kataoka.*



it became a very popular element in the American wardrobe. Susan Larkin writes that Sears, Roebuck and Company sold ready-made kimonos in their catalogue. Fans and parasols also became fashionable. Paper lanterns often festooned the porch of Bush-Holley House, giving it an Oriental aura. Collectible items such as porcelain bowls and mugs and Japanese illustrated books were popular objects to have in one's home. Japonism also spilled outside the house into gardens with footbridges, ponds, lanterns and gates. Twachtman built a wooden footbridge over Horseneck Brook, which ran through his property, and planted willow trees on the banks.

*An Eye to the East* shows the progression from the 1854 treaty through the international expositions into the 20th century and allows the visitor to appreciate the striking woodblock prints of Hiroshige and Hokusai that were collected by J. Alden Weir and other Cos Cob artists. The influence of these woodblock designers can also be seen in the paintings of Twachtman, Weir, Hassam, Kerr Eby, and Robert Lewis Reid. Genjiro Yeto's influence is plainly visible in ink drawings, watercolors and book illustrations, some of which are recent donations by his granddaughter, Yukiko Tanaka, in his memory. ■

## SUSHI & SAKE TASTING

As the sun sets on *An Eye to the East*, our final exhibition-related program will explore two quintessential elements of Japanese cuisine: sushi and sake. Chef Sam Takahashi, owner of Hajime Japanese Restaurant in Harrison, NY, will discuss the history of sushi (it's been around for 10 centuries!) and demonstrate how it's made, while distributor Takuya Shimomura will focus on the lore surrounding sake, a traditional wine made from fermented rice. All participants will have the opportunity to sample a variety of sushi and sake and learn to make a sushi roll.

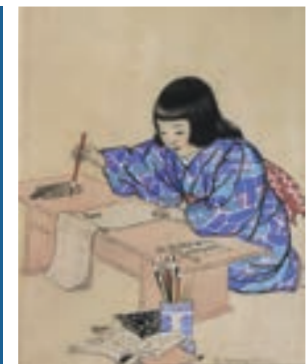
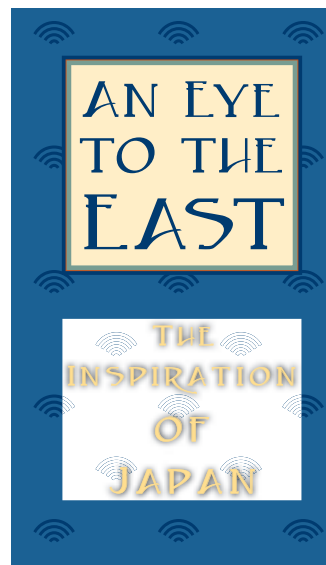
Sunday, February 26, 2017, 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Vanderbilt Education Center

Seating is limited and reservations are required.

Members: \$30; nonmembers: \$45

Admission to the Storehouse Gallery and Bush-Holley House included in the ticket.



NOW THROUGH  
FEBRUARY 26  
2017

## SAYONARA!

*An Eye to the East: The Inspiration of Japan* closes on February 26, 2017. Plan to visit this fascinating exhibition with a unique Greenwich connection before it closes.

The Storehouse Gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 4:00 pm