

The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly

VOLUME XLI
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CLOSE TO HOME: Architectural and Personal Papers of James Gallier and Son

25TH ANNUAL BILL RUSSELL LECTURE



Jelly Roll Morton; between 1930 and 1950; oil painting; by Lester E. Simmons; acquisition made possible by the Boyd Cruise Fund, 2010.0096.7

Lineages

featuring *Alluvium Ensemble*

410 Chartres Street

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 • 6–7 p.m.

For the 25th annual Bill Russell Lecture, The Historic New Orleans Collection presents “Lineages,” a melodic conversation featuring the New Orleans–based music and arts collective Alluvium Ensemble. Mending musical performance with conversation, this annotated concert will explore different musical relationships throughout New Orleans history, featuring scored arrangements alongside improvisations inspired by materials found within THNOC’s William Russell Jazz Collection. A show-and-tell of musical items from THNOC’s holdings rounds out the evening.

Formed in 2021, Alluvium Ensemble provides community concerts, installations, and special events to the New Orleans area. Led by artistic director B.K.Zervigón, Alluvium brings together five generations of New Orleans artists as well as an eclectic mix of musicians from across the world.

**Tickets are \$20, \$5 for students with ID. Registration is required.
To register, visit my.hnoc.org.**

SPONSORED BY THE DERBES FOUNDATION



Branford Marsalis, Harry Connick Jr., and Moses Hogan at a benefit for the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA); 1989; gelatin silver print; by Darlene Hingle Olivo, photographer; 2018.0555.24

For a full calendar of events, visit my.hnoc.org.

EXHIBITIONS

All are free unless otherwise noted.

CURRENT

A Mystic Brotherhood: Fraternal Orders of New Orleans

Through May 10, 2024

520 Royal Street

Media partnership provided by WWL-TV.

Mystery and Benevolence: Masonic and Odd Fellows Folk Art

Through May 10, 2024

520 Royal Street

Organized by the American Folk Art Museum, New York, from the Kendra and Allan Daniel Collection and toured by International Arts @ Artists, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the 2024 Bienville Circle. Media partnership provided by WWL-TV.

UPCOMING

Unknown Sitters

April 5–October 6, 2024

520 Royal Street

Media partnership provided by The Times-Picayune | NOLA.com and WVUE-FOX 8.

A Vanishing Bounty: Louisiana’s Coastal Environment and Culture

Opening June 2024

520 Royal Street

Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration

July 19, 2024–January 19, 2025

520 Royal Street

CONTINUING

French Quarter Galleries

520 Royal Street

GENERAL HOURS

520 Royal Street

Tricentennial Wing, French Quarter Galleries, and The Shop

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

410 Chartres Street

Williams Research Center

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Appointments are encouraged. Please email reference@hnoc.org or call (504) 523-4662.



ON THE COVER

Untitled sketch of buildings and small bridge

1842; graphite on paper

by James Gallier Sr.

acquisition made possible by Ann M. Masson,
MSS 1059.2.6



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The preservation of historic architecture has always been at the core of our mission at The Historic New Orleans Collection, as best exemplified by the French Quarter buildings we occupy. However, historic preservation is only one part of our mission.

I am constantly reminded that preservation and stewardship are intertwined. For example, when I read this issue's Acquisition Spotlight on the Gallier Family Collection, a monumental addition to our holdings related to architectural history, I am reminded of our current major preservation projects: the December purchase of the former home of K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen on Chartres Street, and our effort to restore and renew our original buildings at 533 Royal Street. Multiple local outlets reported on these initiatives, because the architectural fabric of our city is treasured evidence of its history and culture. The Gallier papers are but one example of THNOC holdings that document the built environment of New Orleans—from sherds used by Indigenous peoples before the founding of the city to images, documents, and artifacts that show how our region developed across the centuries. We were able to acquire the Gallier papers thanks to a generous gift from fellow preservationist Ann M. Masson. Had it not been for her generosity, this precious group of archival materials, kept intact by the Gallier family for generations, would have been separated and dispersed.

Curator Eric Seifert's article about our upcoming exhibition *Captive State* reminds me that stewardship is also intertwined with community engagement. In development since 2018, *Captive State* is the product of many voices and perspectives on our history. Creating exhibitions through partnerships is how we bring new audiences to our spaces and invite them to find relevance in what we do.

Historic preservation in the French Quarter today is about ensuring that more of the district's millions of visitors (including us locals) have experiences based in history, culture, and education. To accomplish this, our historic buildings need to be accessible to great numbers of people, and great numbers of people need to want to visit them. This is why in late February we welcomed new NOPD Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick to visit THNOC together with colleagues from other member museums of the French Quarter Museum Association. I'm always proud to show our abiding commitment to presenting a holistic view of the French Quarter, one rooted in history. —DANIEL HAMMER

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Recent Additions



Creating *Captive State*

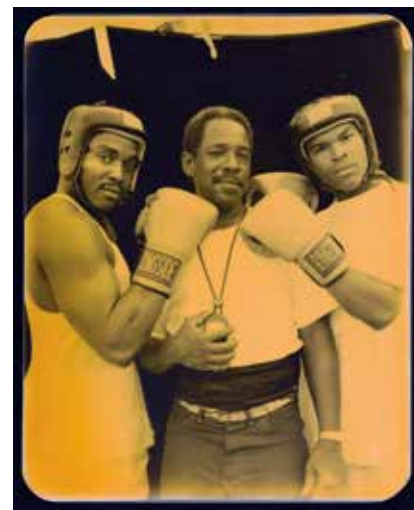
Curators turned to experts with experience inside and outside of the system for THNOC’s upcoming exhibition on the history of incarceration. Curator/Historian Eric Seifert reflects on the yearslong collaboration.

“A couple of them I know,” Anthony Hingle Jr. said as he pored over the images of incarcerated people spread across a worktable in The Collection’s vault. “Some are dead, though; some are home; and some are still incarcerated.”

Hingle was one of six advisory board members invited to join THNOC staff in reviewing Deborah Luster’s photographic series *One Big Self: Prisoners of Louisiana*, which will be featured in the upcoming exhibition *Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration*. Luster’s series of about 250 portraits, taken from 1998 to 2002, depicts incarcerated men and women in attire and poses of their choosing—in work clothes, dressed up for Halloween, with musical instruments or crafts, with friends, or in the fields. After a few minutes of quiet observation by the group in the vault, Hingle began recognizing people he knew from his time spent at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, where he was incarcerated for more than three decades. The moment served as a reminder of the humanity and proximity of those affected by incarceration and reinforced the importance of the advisory board—whose members are bringing a range of practical, experiential, and academic knowledge of the carceral system in New Orleans and Louisiana to the development of *Captive State*.

I began working on the exhibition with fellow project curator Kevin T. Harrell in 2018, building knowledge of the subject and THNOC’s holdings related to it. This work quickly expanded to meeting with experts, visiting local jails and prisons—some still operating, others defunct—and digging in repositories for relevant objects and stories. As our research progressed, we desired to work more closely with people whose knowledge and experience could complement that of THNOC’s staff, leading to the formation of the advisory board. The resulting group includes academic experts John Bardes of Louisiana State University and Andrea Armstrong of Loyola University’s College of Law; community organizer and crime survivor advocate Katie Hunter-Lowrey from the Promise of Justice Initiative; the executive director of Innocence Project New Orleans, Jee Park; and formerly incarcerated criminal legal reform advocates Montrell Carmouche of Operation Restoration and Hingle, who now works for Voice of the Experienced (VOTE) and is an ambassador for the Visiting Room Project, an archive of video testimonials from people serving life sentences without parole in Louisiana.

Working with outside experts is nothing new for THNOC. Recent exhibitions such as *Dancing in the Streets: Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs of New Orleans*, *Making Mardi Gras*, and *The Trail They Blazed* all benefited from significant outreach and close work with



A. Advisory board member Anthony Hingle Jr. points out people he recognizes in Deborah Luster’s *One Big Self: Prisoners of Louisiana*, a series of 250 portraits of people incarcerated in Louisiana. Luster photographed the subjects onsite at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (more commonly known as Angola) and other prisons in the state.

B. **Boxers with Trainer**, from *One Big Self* 1999; silver emulsion on aluminum by Deborah Luster, photographer acquisition made possible by the Laussat Society, 2023.0146.1.129

EXHIBITION

Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration

July 19, 2024–January 19, 2025

520 Royal Street

Free



C. Culinary Arts, from *One Big Self*

1999; silver emulsion on aluminum
by Deborah Luster, photographer
acquisition made possible by the Laussat Society,
2023.0146.1.g1

advisors. For *Captive State*, the scope of this work has increased. Since October 2022, THNOC staff have held regular meetings with the advisory board to discuss all aspects of exhibition production, from object installation design to storytelling. These in-depth dialogues have provided us with invaluable insights.

This type of collaboration and outreach is expanding across the museum field, and for good reason. With content experts and local community members on board, museums can provide their audiences with more relevant exhibitions. This is particularly important for *Captive State*, a show designed to give historical context to the contemporary phenomenon of mass incarceration, which impacts the daily lives of so many New Orleanians, Louisianians, and Americans. These experts are being compensated for their time—and working with them will help us tell this story in ways that are humane, fact based, and informed by lived experiences.

“Our advisory board is not simply a placeholder, but meaningfully contributes to and refines the hard work by THNOC staff,” says Armstrong, who recently received a MacArthur

Foundation fellowship for her incarceration-law scholarship.

Armstrong sparked a thoughtful discussion about *One Big Self* during the viewing with staff. Luster’s portraits are printed on five-by-four-inch aluminum plates that include personal information provided by each sitter on the opposite side. They’re meant to be stored together in a metal cabinet, and visitors are encouraged to open it like a card catalog to pull out, touch, and engage with the individual plates. Seeing the images all spread out together, though, left a deep impression on the group in the vault. “The idea that these are in solid steel drawers hidden from public view, but in order to view them, you have to do some work around that—that seems important to convey in some way,” Armstrong said at the worktable. “At the same time, what’s amazing seeing them laid out like this all together is not seeing them in isolation. The variety of people, expression, and space is a little overwhelming, but in a good way.”

Our exhibition team left the meeting with new ideas and perspectives on the artwork. This has often been the case in working with the advisory board. Questions and discussions lead to new perspectives and ideas, expanding our understanding of an object or an exhibition theme.

Displaying a large, three-dimensional, interactive artwork such as *One Big Self* is challenging for many reasons—not least of which is the subject matter itself. There are ethical concerns regarding the humanity of the subjects, who may have limited control over the

presentation of their own likenesses, as well as the possible trauma of displaying images of people who have committed serious and violent crimes for survivors who may visit the exhibition. These questions—determining how and why to display images depicting incarceration—quickly spiral out to even more difficult ones: how and why to interpret the history of incarceration at all?

According to the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research at the University of London, the United States imprisons more of its citizens than any country in the world, at a rate higher than nearly every other country in the world. Louisiana is at the center of this story. “Louisiana remains the incarceration capital of our country,” says Park, who leads the Innocence Project New Orleans, which has freed or exonerated dozens of innocent Louisianans since its founding in 2001. “More of our citizens come into contact with the criminal legal system and are imprisoned than any other state per capita. As such, this exhibition is not only timely but critical in educating Louisianans on how we got here, why we remain here, and what we can be doing to build a future that is no longer reliant on the criminal legal system to address poverty, educational failings and gaps, mental illness, addiction, food scarcity, and housing inequities.”

Louisiana’s unique position as a carceral leader extends beyond the number of people behind bars. For centuries, the state has innovated methods of control exerted by the legal and carceral systems, including but not limited to chain gangs and forced farm labor—both extensions of slavery-era practices. *Captive State* lays bare these connections between slavery and modern incarceration. The project looks back over the long sweep of the last three hundred years of Louisiana history to try and better understand how the state became one of the most incarcerated places in the world. There’s not one single, simple answer, but rather a connected braid of factors that have impacted carceral rates and policies over time. The historical connections between slavery and mass incarceration influence a number of social and civic issues in our city, state, and country today, which Bardes identifies as “some of the most vital ethical and public policy issues of our age.”

Having advisors such as Bardes, an award-winning scholar of policing and

D. **Annette Rose**, from *One Big Self*
1999; silver emulsion on aluminum
by Deborah Luster, photographer
acquisition made possible by the Laussat Society,
2023.0146.1.178





E. THNOC curators and members of the *Captive State* advisory board (left–right): Montrell Carmouche, Curator/Historian Eric Seiferth, Associate Curator Libby Neidenbach; Andrea Armstrong, Katie Hunter-Lowrey, Jee Park, Collections Cataloger Kevin T. Harrell, Curatorial Cataloger Katherine Jolliff Dunn, Dominique Dollenmayer, and Anthony Hingle Jr.

incarceration in the South, and Armstrong, a national expert on the laws that have built the US carceral system, has augmented the rigorous research we’ve done to unravel this story. We’ve also benefited greatly from the diversity of perspectives within the group and their collective commitment to engage in productive dialogue with THNOC staff.

A significant question discussed across multiple advisory board meetings was how to coalesce all these narrative threads into an exhibition title that clearly conveyed the difficult subject matter while encouraging potentially reluctant visitors to engage with it. Brainstorms produced dozens of key words and phrases that stoked wide-ranging discussions about language, sensitivity, and the goals of the show. Words like “punishment” and “chains” stood out to some members of the group for accurately conveying the harm inflicted by the carceral system and its connections to slavery, while others found them to be potentially callous—particularly if viewed in contexts such as advertisements. The word “carceral” itself, commonly used in academic contexts, was debated and ultimately deemed too inaccessible for lay audiences. Words evolved into titles and subtitles curated by our team that were further adapted via discussion. Only at the very end of the final meeting on the title did the group arrive at the word “captivity,” and ultimately the title *Captive State*, which landed in the right spot for everyone, aptly describing both the individual experience of incarceration and the ways in which the system limits progress in the state of Louisiana.

“During my 32 years of incarceration, most of that time was spent at Angola, living, witnessing, and experiencing the harsh, dehumanizing nature of captivity,” Hingle says. “It is important to share these perspectives and experiences with the community.”

Months later, while working on the exhibition layout and design, our staff came back to the question of how to display as many of the *One Big Self* portraits as possible while also allowing visitors the opportunity to engage with them behind the steel drawers. The answer, inspired directly by Armstrong’s feedback in June, was to do both. We will display all of the portraits together on a wall—similar to how they were viewed by the advisory board in the vault—while facsimiles will be inserted into the drawer, allowing visitors to engage with each image and the transcriptions on the back, as the artist intended. This workflow has become typical as input from our advisory board impacts design decisions and ultimately the in-gallery visitor experience. In July, when the exhibition opens, visitors will finally get to experience the end product of this yearslong process, which we hope inspires conversation based in historical fact about incarceration in our shared communities today.

“The Historic New Orleans Collection included the narratives and voices of people like me in the creation of the exhibit,” says Carmouche, who was incarcerated for nearly 20 years, “and I know it will impact each of its visitors when it opens.” —ERIC SEIFERTH



OFF-SITE

In the Drink

Our roundup of holdings that have appeared outside The Collection, either on loan to other institutions or in noteworthy media projects



The **New Orleans Museum of Art** has borrowed 10 objects from THNOC's holdings for its exhibition *Rebellious Spirits: Prohibition and Resistance in the South*, on view through January 5, 2025.

Pine Cliff Root Beer label

between 1900 and 1929
by Walle and Co.
1981.333.5

Security Brewing Co. advertisement

1912
by Wolf and Co.
83-65-L.32

"Temperance, Success and Prosperity" pledge card

between 1884 and 1887
2017.0181.129



THNOC provided an image of Huey "Piano" Smith to the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** for use in their induction ceremony on November 3, 2023, at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Smith, who died last February, appeared in the In Memoriam reel. The ceremony aired on ABC and is available to stream on Hulu and Disney+.

Huey Smith at Tipitina's

1978
photograph by Michael P. Smith © THNOC, 2007.0103.2.326



NBC Nightly News requested a series of images for use in a segment on OperaCréole's planned 2025 production of Edmond Dédé's *Morgiane*; ou, *Le sultan d'Ispahan*.

French Opera House

between 1885 and 1900; hand-colored glass slide gift of Mr. and Mrs. Elvert M. Cormack, 1981.290.34

Les variétés du Carnaval, op. 23

1875
by Basile Barès
gift of Boyd Cruise, 86-1605-RL



Member of Howard Society treating a yellow fever victim
1957
by Leonard Victor Huber
1974.25.11.128

THNOC provided images for use in **WYES-TV's** hourlong documentary *They Swung Their Picks: The Irish and the New Basin Canal*.



The New Canal, New Orleans, LA
ca. 1905
by The Rotograph Company
1991.125.4



A. Heather Green (center) speaks to staff in the WRC reading room at the start of a vault tour in November.

B. Vasser Howorth consults some manuscript items housed in a Hollinger box.



ON THE JOB

Heather Green and Vasser Howorth

POSITIONS: Green, head of reader services, on staff since 2015; Howorth, head of technical services, on staff since 2013

ASSIGNMENT: Demystify the Williams Research Center

When the two of us stepped into our new managerial positions last spring, we were lucky to have a history of working together at the Williams Research Center (WRC). Our camaraderie has served us well as our departments—Technical Services and Reader Services—pull together to provide top-notch care for our collections, our visitors, and our colleagues.

Before an item can be displayed in an exhibition, featured in a First Draft article, or accessed in the reading room, we have to know what it is and where it's stored. The role of the Technical Services department is to process, arrange, and describe everything that THNOC acquires—from singular items like a painting or a Mardi Gras favor to large collections of family papers and ephemera.

Depending on the size and nature of a collection, an acquisition may take anywhere from a day to several years to be fully processed, cataloged, and made available to the public. Processing involves marking items with the correct accession numbers, housing them in acid-free archival containers for long-term preservation, and finding appropriate locations for them in our vault storage. Some archival collections arrive at our institution with a logical internal order, but for many collections a cataloger will need to spend weeks—or even months, depending on the size—examining the contents to determine an arrangement that makes sense. The cataloger will then begin descriptive work, assigning collection themes, appropriate subject headings, and other details to make the collection findable in our online public access catalog, which we lovingly refer to as the OPAC.

After an item has moved through Technical Services, then what? Does it live on a shelf, waiting to be placed in an exhibition, or, even worse, in a box, never to be seen again? No, not at all. Once an item is fully cataloged, its record—and in some cases, a digital surrogate—can be accessed via the OPAC, available online at catalog.hnoc.org. And for those students, teachers, and researchers who want to get a closer look? That's where the reading room comes in.

The reading room is located on the second floor of the WRC. We are free and open to the public Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. We differ from public and academic libraries in that our holdings are part of a museum collection: materials do not circulate, and patrons are not allowed to browse the stacks. However, you don't have to make an appointment to stop in and see us, and you don't need to whisper when you're in

STAFF NEWS

New Hires

Mandi Cambre, director of development. **Shawn Gilbert**, security officer. **Chantell Nabonne**, education specialist. **Jose Sierra**, sales associate.

Title Changes

Vicki Moppert is now sales lead. **Libby Neidenbach**, associate curator.

Publications

Collections Cataloger **Kevin T. Harrell** reviewed Caryn Cossé Bell's book *Creole New Orleans in the Revolutionary Atlantic, 1775–1877* for the *Journal of Southern History*.

Visitor Services Assistant **Winston Ho** was quoted in a *Wall Street Journal* article about the “New Orleans–style” chicken wings available in China.

Director of Institutional Advancement **Heather L. Hodges** wrote a review of the book *Drayton Hall Stories: A Place and Its People* for the November 2023 issue of the journal *The Public Historian*.

THNOC's 2003 publication *Charting Louisiana: Five Hundred Years of Maps* has entered a third printing. A perennial favorite for readers of all ages, this richly illustrated, large-format book traces the history of Louisiana through cartography.



Speaking Engagements

Senior Reference Associate **Robert Ticknor** and Manager of Programs **Amy Dailey Williams** spoke on a panel about museum inclusivity at the Southeastern Museum Conference's annual meeting in November.

In January, Ticknor presented on THNOC's exhibition *Notre-Dame de Paris: The Augmented Exhibition* as part of the American Historical Association's annual conference.



the building! The reading room houses library books and pamphlets, several public-access computers with microfilm readers, and friendly staff who can provide research advice and direction to both in-person and remote patrons. We welcome researchers at every stage of resource finding and skill level, including K–12 and university students.

But the reading room is not just for visitors. We also provide research assistance for THNOC staff projects, exhibitions, and publications. And, as we soon discovered, many of our THNOC colleagues were unaware of aspects of the work we do—which is why we thought a staff tour of the WRC might be welcome.

Developed with the assistance of Curator of Rare Books Nina Bozak, these tours took small groups of staff through the reading room, Technical Services workspace, and four floors of vault space. We provided overviews of the different positions in each WRC department; gave a primer on how to access collections and utilize the reading room; defined various terms used in the cataloging process; explained the differences between rare and nonrare library materials; and discussed how collection materials are stored and organized in the vaults. We also got to highlight a few of our favorite items, including a book of poetry by Charles Bukowski published in 1963 by Loujon Press, various types of wooden duck decoys, and records from Bill Russell's American Music label.

We initially thought the tours would last about an hour, but with so much great information to share, they ballooned to an hour and a half. We will continue to offer these tours for staff as long as there is interest.

While security concerns prevent us from ushering visitors into our vaults, we promise a warm welcome when you visit, whether in person or online. Working together, we continue to celebrate our region's rich history and culture. —HEATHER GREEN AND VASSER HOWORTH



INTERN SPOTLIGHT

Jane Hill

PLACEMENT: Photographic Preservation and Collections Management Project

SEASON: Fall 2023 and Spring 2024

Jane Hill comes to us from the University of New Orleans, where she is currently an art history major. Inspired by modern expressionists such as George Condo, Karel Appel, and Philip Guston, Hill has made her mark on The Collection with her passion for art and eye for detail. Working with Cataloger Catie Sampson and Associate Curator Mallory Taylor, Hill has been processing and cataloging photographic prints from the Harold Baquet Archive.

“Having zero experience with photography preservation and processing, I was inundated with insightful commentary about the history of photography and the development of its processes,” Hill says. “THNOC felt different in comparison to other museums I’ve worked with. Everyone I met was kind and genuine in ways I had not previously experienced. I found myself in conversations with artists like me who try to better understand the depths of New

Orleans’s rich history and how it should be told.”

Sampson, who guided Hill through the Baquet Archive, praised Hill’s inquisitive nature and strong work habits. “Not only has Jane excelled in a variety of project tasks over the course of her internship, but she’s thoughtful and methodical in her contributions, is engaging and curious about our collections, and brings a positive attitude to every interaction.”

Outside of THNOC and her studies, Hill served as assistant curator of the exhibition *Haiti-Louisiana: Tides of Freedom*, recently on view at the Historic BK House and Gardens. She plans to continue her work in the museum field after graduation. “It is my dream to open my own art space and gallery where musicians and artists can work on their fine art or music and have the chance for their work to be displayed for everyone to see.” —MOLLY REID CLEAVER

A. Jane Hill reviews negatives from the Harold Baquet Archive in THNOC’s film vault.

B. Cataloger Catie Sampson guided Hill through her work processing and cataloging items from THNOC’s photographic holdings.





(Left–right) Freddi Evans, Olga Smoak, Monique Moss, and Patricia Aulestia at THNOC’s 2018 event “In the Spotlight: Stories of Performance Dance in Early New Orleans”

FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

Olga Smoak

Jackson Society member Olga Smoak was born in Panama City, Panama, and her love of that city’s 500-year history has shaped the trajectory of her life. Olga developed a profound connection to her roots when she delved into her ancestry, revealing a lineage spanning Panama’s 18th and 19th centuries. Preserving history and culture became a defining aspect of her philanthropy, especially when she found a kindred spirit in her husband, James Smoak.

Originally from Charleston, South Carolina, a place enriched with English and Huguenot French influences, James shared Olga’s deep appreciation for history. Together, they chose New Orleans, with its Latin American and French history, as their permanent home. “New Orleans is, in a way, a perfect city for us,” she says. Olga’s interest in travel, Latin American culture, and dance has drawn her to The Collection for more than half a century.

In the mid-1960s, the Smoaks settled in the French Quarter and in the years ahead immersed themselves in The Historic New Orleans Collection. This haven of discovery became a springboard for the couple’s shared passion: collecting lithographs. They used The Collection’s resources to research potential acquisitions. Olga’s bond with The Collection deepened as she forged a lasting friendship with John H. Lawrence, who became not only a long-time curator at The Collection but also one of her neighbors.

As the years unfolded, Olga’s life became further entwined with The Collection as she pursued her lifelong interest in ballet. In 2000 she curated the first New Orleans International Ballet Conference symposium, “Dancing Through History,” which explored the Ballet Russe of Monte Carlo. Drawing attendees from 35 different countries to lectures at THNOC and events

across town, the conference relied heavily on Collection holdings. In 2003, Olga continued to collaborate with THNOC, successfully persuading Lawrence to incorporate a historical perspective on ballet during the celebration of the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase.

In 2018 she worked with THNOC Curator of Rare Books Nina Bozak to organize “In the Spotlight: Stories of Performance Dance in Early New Orleans,” a daylong symposium at the Williams Research Center. Olga contributed a talk titled “The Romantic Period in Ballet and the Visit of Fanny Elssler in New Orleans,” on the local appearance of a 19th-century Viennese ballerina.

Beyond organizing events, Olga has also assumed the role of an unofficial ambassador, weaving threads among the many cultures represented by The Collection. “Every time anybody came [to visit] we always brought them there,” she says. Aware of the Cuban heritage of one close friend, the vice president of the New Orleans International Ballet Conference, she made sure to introduce her to The Collection’s programming on Cuban themes.

The invisible strings connecting Olga and The Collection became evident once more when Alfred E. Lemmon orchestrated a performance of Latin American music featuring a performer from Cuba. This performer had previously triumphed in the Panama International Piano Competition—an event coincidentally organized by one of Olga’s cousins. As it happened, Lemmon was also a neighbor of the Smoaks. “It was like a big, happy family,” Olga says.

Amid personal challenges, particularly her husband’s recent illness, Olga remains an unwavering advocate for THNOC, recommending it to anyone with an interest in history. Calling New Orleans “the first place in the United States that was really multicultural,” she emphasizes that the city’s Spanish and French heritage resonates deeply with many who find solace within The Collection.

Olga’s story reminds us that, within the soul of New Orleans, The Collection is more than just a repository of papers and artifacts—it is a living testament to the threads that bind us all. —SARAH DRAGO

DONORS

October–December 2023

The Historic New Orleans Collection is honored to recognize and thank the following individuals and organizations for their financial and material donations.

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Bookplates

Donations are used to purchase books that will be marked with a commemorative bookplate.

Kristin Maseman in honor of Michaelyn and Donald Boesch—*Building on the Past: Saving Historic New Orleans*, by Susan Langenhennig, John Pope, and Danielle Del Sol, photography by Chris Granger (New Orleans: Preservation Resource Center, 2019), 2019.0459

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BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

There has never been a better time to join The Historic New Orleans Collection. All THNOC members enjoy the following benefits for one full year:

- a 10 percent discount at The Shop at The Collection and The Café at The Collection
- exclusive invitations to opening receptions for new exhibitions
- early registration privileges for THNOC events
- a subscription to *The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly*
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Members at the Merieult level and above receive benefits from the **North American Reciprocal Museum Program** at more than 1,200 member institutions across the US, Canada, and Latin America. For more information, visit www.narmassociation.org.

HOW TO JOIN

Visit www.hnoc.org and click the **Support Us** link, or complete and return the enclosed envelope.

For more information about membership levels, please contact THNOC's development office at (504) 598-7172 or visit www.hnoc.org/support/membership.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Founder Individual \$45
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Full membership benefits

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Merieult \$100

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(ages 21–45)

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The Caillot Circle is generously sponsored by New Orleans Auction Galleries.

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- invitation to annual gala evening and private patron event
- three additional guest admissions for exhibition opening receptions

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- NARM benefits at more than 1,200 member institutions
- private, guided tours of THNOC collections and exhibitions (by appointment)
- special members-only experiences
- invitation to annual gala evening and private patron event
- annual recognition as sponsors of a premier exhibition
- three additional guest admissions for exhibition opening receptions



A

For Twelfth Night, January 6, THNOC kicked off the Carnival season with festivities and special visitors. The evening reached its climax as **Caillot Circle** members—and special guests including New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell and the Hon. Rodolphe Sambou, consul general of France in New Orleans—celebrated with a champagne toast at the parade of the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc.



B

A. Partygoers toast the revelers below from the balcony of THNOC's Perrilliat House.

B. Justin Smith and Emily Hijar dance in the Perrilliat House courtyard as part of the festivities.

ON THE SCENE

Knightly News and Daily Papers



A

In preparation for the 2025 exhibition **Making It Home: From Vietnam to New Orleans**, Visitor Services Assistant Winston Ho led THNOC staff on a tour of Vietnamese cultural sites in New Orleans East.



B

A. Locations included the Hung Vuong shrine, Mary Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church, and the VEGGI Farmers Cooperative.
B. Winston Ho, Khai Nguyen, and Tap Bui

On February 27, President/CEO Daniel Hammer was awarded the rank of Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the **French Ministry of Culture**. This honor was given in recognition of his and THNOC's years of work in support of French culture in Louisiana.

C. Daniel Hammer with Leona Tate and Laurent Bili, French ambassador to the United States



C

THNOC's education department held its annual **Chess Fest** on November 4. Attendees created DIY chessboards and played in a chess tournament.

G. Participants played "human chess" on a giant chessboard.

H. Lucas Hammer with Education and Outreach Specialist Kendric Perkins



G



H



D

A December 10 concert at St. Louis Cathedral, "**Festive Favorites: A Celebration of Community Music Making**," showcased the talents of the New Orleans Concert Band.

D. A full house at St. Louis Cathedral
E. Special guest Norman Robinson narrated "The Night Before Christmas."
F. Dr. Charles Taylor, music director of the New Orleans Concert Band



E



F



In January, **Washington Mardi Gras** celebrations brought the Big Easy's festive energy to the nation's capital.

L. THNOC board member Mayra Pineda, President/CEO Daniel Hammer, the Hon. Rodolphe Sambou, consul general of France in Louisiana, and Greg Lambousy, director of the New Orleans Jazz Museum



The 2024 **History Symposium**, held February 24, explored the transformative role newspapers have played in Louisiana history.



On January 10, The Collection hosted a meeting in advance of the group's annual conference in New Orleans in October.

I. Chehana Samarawickreme, Walt Leger, and Renee Kuhlman

J. James Rolf and Nicole Hobson-Morris

K. Curator Howard Margot with Jason Strada



New Orleans's new police chief, **Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick**, visited The Collection on February 27.

M. Chief Kirkpatrick explores the interactive map of the French Quarter in the 520 Royal Street welcome center.



N. This year's symposium, "Above the Fold: The History of Newspapers in Louisiana," sold out quickly.

O. Stacy Grabert and Gordon Russell

P. Michael Tisserand and Jack Davis

Q. Mark Charles Roudané, Melissa Perrett Cook, and Family Historian Jari C. Honora

R. Terry Bacquet and Dr. Michael Ross

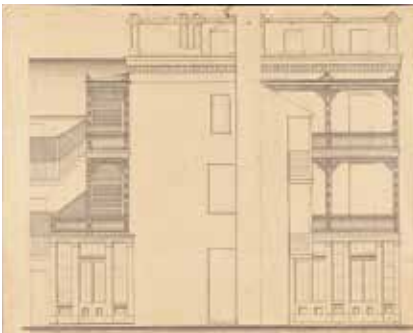
S. Dr. Shearon Roberts, a professor at Xavier University, presented on the history of Black newspapers.

ACQUISITIONS

Related Holdings



Transverse section of St. Patrick's Church
1837
by James Gallier Sr. and Charles Bingley Dakin
gift of Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth McLeod Jr. in
memory of the Gallier and Capdevielle families,
2008.0087.68

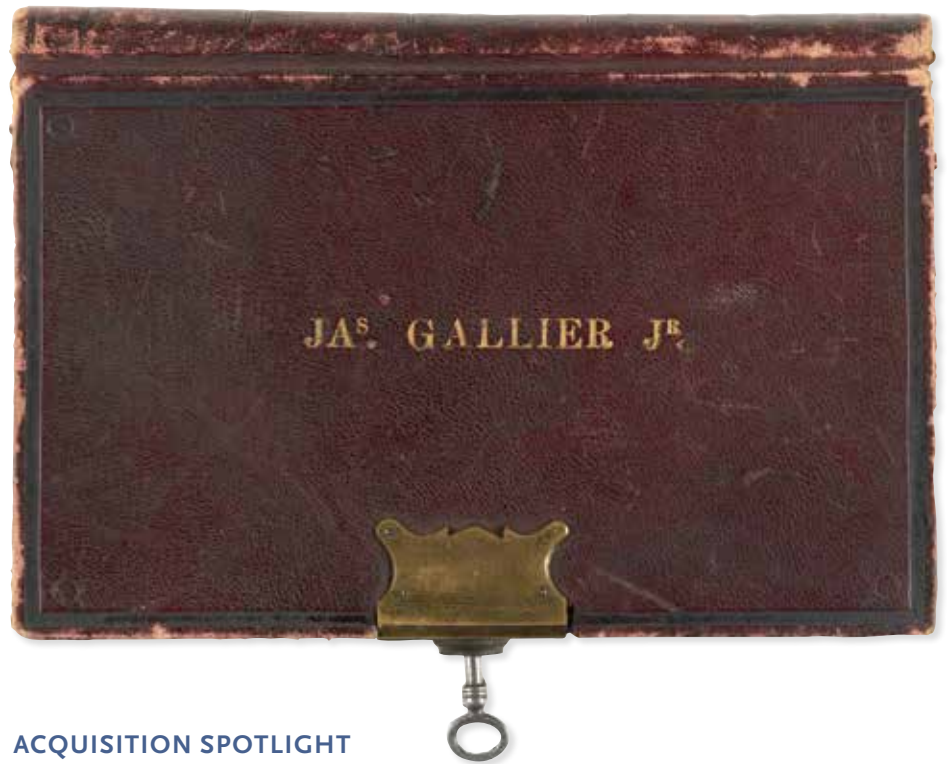


**Detail elevations of three-story house at
906 Esplanade Ave.**
between 1859 and 1868
by Gallier and Esterbrook
*The L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams
Founders Collection, 1951.16.20 i,ii*



Postcard view of French Opera House
between 1920 and 1925
by Curt Teich and Co.
gift of Boyd Cruise, 1958.85.132

Collections items featured in Acquisitions might not be immediately available to view online or in the Williams Research Center reading room. Researchers can inquire about availability by emailing reference@hnoc.org.



ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT

A Strong Foundation

Gallier Family Collection

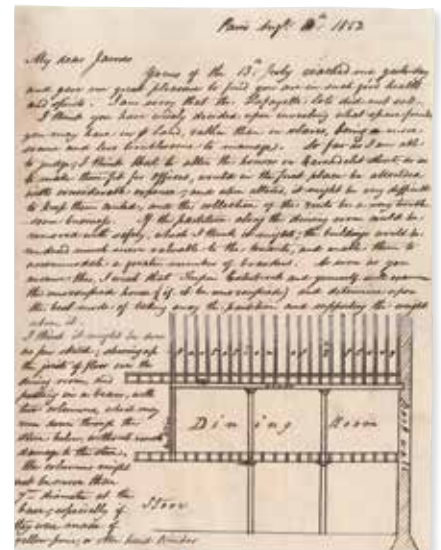
acquisition made possible by Ann M. Masson, 2021.0120, MSS 1059

A treasure trove of vignettes of family and daily life from two of the most influential architects of 19th-century New Orleans, the Gallier Family Collection was recently acquired from the heirs of the late Dr. Kenneth McLeod Jr., who was the great-great-great grandson of James Gallier Sr.

James Gallier Sr. (1798–1866) designed many structures, including Gallier Hall, the St. Charles Hotel, and the Second Christ Church Cathedral. His son James Gallier Jr. (1827–1868) is noted for the French Opera House, the Gallier House on Royal Street, and the Leeds Iron Foundry (now the Preservation Resource Center) on Tchoupitoulas Street. The two men had a profound influence on the built environment of the city during this period.

The family's papers (1833–1885) include substantial correspondence between father and son, revealing insights into their personal and professional relationships. The papers are a rich source on the social history of that time and on slavery and the labor of Black New Orleanians. The collection also includes drawings, sketchbooks, ledgers, and account books, as well as a large group of early photographs and later photographic albums.

A large letter book includes dozens of letters written in the 1850s to Gallier Jr. by his father, who was traveling abroad at the time. In one notable letter, Gallier Sr. offers advice on remodeling a commercial building into



a residential one, providing a sketch of where columns and beams should be placed to maintain structural integrity.

Also present are several letters Gallier Jr. wrote to Aglaé Villavaso in the months before their marriage. One undated letter appears to have been written on or shortly after the day of their engagement and hand delivered. He writes effusively of his love for her and gratitude that she has chosen him, saying, “It shall be the study of my life to show that I am worthy of your love and that you have not chosen me undeservedly.”

In the year following their marriage, Gallier Jr. kept an account book that provides a revealing snapshot of the couple’s life in the spring of 1853. He maintains a detailed record of his weekly spending, including expenses like “fruit for Aglaé,” “opera tickets,” “sundries for the house,” and “card playing at Villavaso’s.”

A series of photographs from this archive offers a compelling window into early photography, including a daguerreotype of the organ at St. Patrick’s Cathedral that is now the earliest photographic object in THNOC’s holdings. A tintype depicts Gallier Jr.’s three daughters sitting with a Black woman who was likely enslaved by Gallier and probably served as a nursemaid to the girls. This image provides further insight into the daily life of the young Gallier family.

—MARK CAVE AND VASSER HOWORTH



RECENT ADDITIONS

Epistolary Sisters, Abominable Poetry, and a Lasting Gift

Postcards sent to Ursuline nuns

gift of Mark H. Cotten, 2022.0182

Discovered at an estate sale by the donor, this small group of postcards reflects the relationships that the Ursuline sisters had with their family members, fellow religious orders, and the young women they educated. The postcards, written in French and English, are dated between 1909 and 1937. The majority were addressed to Mother St. Stanislaus (1850–1944), born Adele Labarthe, who served four terms as Mother Superior of the Ursuline Convent and taught music to generations of students over the course of 70 years. Other recipients include Mother St. Croix, Mother St. Raphael, Mother St. Rose of Texas, and four different members of the Rivet family who served in the Ursuline order in New Orleans: Mother Mary Claire, Mother St. Charles, Mother St. Xavier, and Mother St. Pierre. The postcards demonstrate the Rivet family’s multigenerational commitment to the Ursulines; by 1964 seven different members of the family had joined the order.

One particularly charming postcard was written by young Mildred Cobb (1909–1997) while on holiday in Covington. Her short missive, which was sent to Mother St. Xavier Rivet (1862–1940), is written in French and remarks that she is “finally in the country” where “the air is cool and the swimming very agreeable.” Another postcard, dated December 1912, was written by 19-year-old Ada Lorio and addressed to Mother St. Stanislaus with a short note indicating her presence in New Orleans and her intention to visit soon. Lorio (1893–1919) was a native of Pointe Coupee Parish; she became an Ursuline novice in 1914 and afterward was known as Sister St. Vincent de Paul. She would also be the recipient of one of these postcards in 1915, written by an uncle who was hospitalized at the Hotel Dieu, with a request that she pray for him. The most modern postcard in the group, dated August 1937, was written in French by Marie de Chantal (1896–1958), an Ursuline sister who educated young women for 41 years, to Mother Mary Claire Rivet (1889–1965), wishing her good health and asking for her prayers. —AIMEE EVERRETT





Bob Kaufman broadside poems

2023.0215.1.1–3

Known as the Black American Rimbaud, poet Bob Kaufman (1925–1986) grew up in the Seventh Ward of New Orleans, one of several children of Joseph Kaufman and Lillian Vigne. He joined the US Merchant Marine in 1942 and, after his last voyage, in 1949, studied at the New School in New York. Kaufman moved to San Francisco in 1958 and quickly became entrenched in the San Francisco poetry renaissance based in the North Beach neighborhood. In 1959, he cofounded the literary magazine *Beatitude*, known for publishing writers such as Richard Brautigan and Michael McClure who were overlooked by more established outlets.

Though Kaufman published the work of other poets, little of his own poetry made it into print. Kaufman considered his work, often inspired by jazz, to be part of an oral tradition, and he rarely wrote anything down. The Historic New Orleans Collection recently acquired three of his earliest published poems. “Abomunist Manifesto” (1959) is a humorous and irreverent take on political proclamations that declares itself “the first and last word from the abominable snowmen of modern poetry.” Kaufman describes “Second April” (1959) as “an autobiographical journey springing out of the blind conjunction of such events as the Christ’s April crucifixion, death and resurrection by A-bomb, and the author’s own birth.” Finally, “Does the Secret Mind Whisper?” (1960) was an atmospheric part of a novel-in-progress “in which the ‘characters’ are to appear—and disappear.” The novel was never published.

The three poems were published individually by City Lights, founded by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. They were all printed by

Troubadour Press in editions of 1,000 copies in a unique format: each is approximately 3 feet long and 8 inches wide, though the poems accordion-fold to a reasonable pamphlet size. These poems precede other Kaufman works by five years: *Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness* (New Directions, 1965), *Golden Sardine* (City Lights, 1967), and *The Ancient Rain: Poems 1956–1978* (New Directions, 1981) were his only books published in his lifetime. —NINA BOZAK

Laura Simon Nelson Collection additions
gift of Laura Simon Nelson, 2022.0038, 2023.0040, and forthcoming

The Louisiana art world lost one of its brightest lights last November with the death of Laura Simon Nelson at nearly 100 years old. A Baton Rouge native, Nelson was dedicated to her faith, children, and collection of Louisiana art. As a young mother, she fell in love with the work of William and Ellsworth Woodward, professors at the art schools of Tulane University and Newcomb College. She collected many of their original drawings, as well as etchings from William’s son Carl Woodward.

Following the Woodwards’ passion for art, education, and preservation, Nelson and her then-husband, Dr. James Nelson, sought to acquire art made in Louisiana and to foster the careers of local artists. Now, thanks to their efforts, many of those artists—including Robert Rucker, Laurence Christie Edwardson, and Wayman Elbridge Adams—are represented in major collections. Most of all, Nelson collected with her heart. She sought pieces that sang to her, whether in antique shops, in attics, or on the fences of Jackson Square.

Nelson entrusted her collection of over 500 pieces of fine and decorative arts to

The Historic New Orleans Collection, putting them on long-term loan to the institution in 1995, and she made annual gifts of artworks to join our permanent holdings. Her final gift, totaling 78 works, will come from her estate this year. Among the Laura Simon Nelson Collection are some of THNOC’s greatest treasures, including Ellsworth Woodward’s *Backyard in Covington*. The collection also includes some lovely mysteries, such as an untitled portrait of a woman wearing spectacles, which will be on view this spring and summer in the exhibition *Unknown Sitters*. Nelson’s collection of Newcomb pottery became the foundation of THNOC’s substantial holdings related to craft from Newcomb College.

The works and records of Nelson’s collection have inspired scholarship in Louisiana art, adding to documentation of portraiture, landscapes, and artistic styles practiced in the state. Nelson believed that art was for everyone and sought to share her collection as a document of humans’ creative genius. The Historic New Orleans Collection is honored to have been entrusted with this mission through her collection. —LYDIA BLACKMORE



Laura Simon Nelson
1971; oil painting
by Laurence Christie Edwardson
gift of Laura Simon Nelson, 1996.122.4

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Jessica Dorman

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The Historic New Orleans Collection is a nonprofit institution dedicated to the stewardship of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South. Founded in 1966 through the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, The Collection operates as a museum, research center, and publisher in the heart of the French Quarter.



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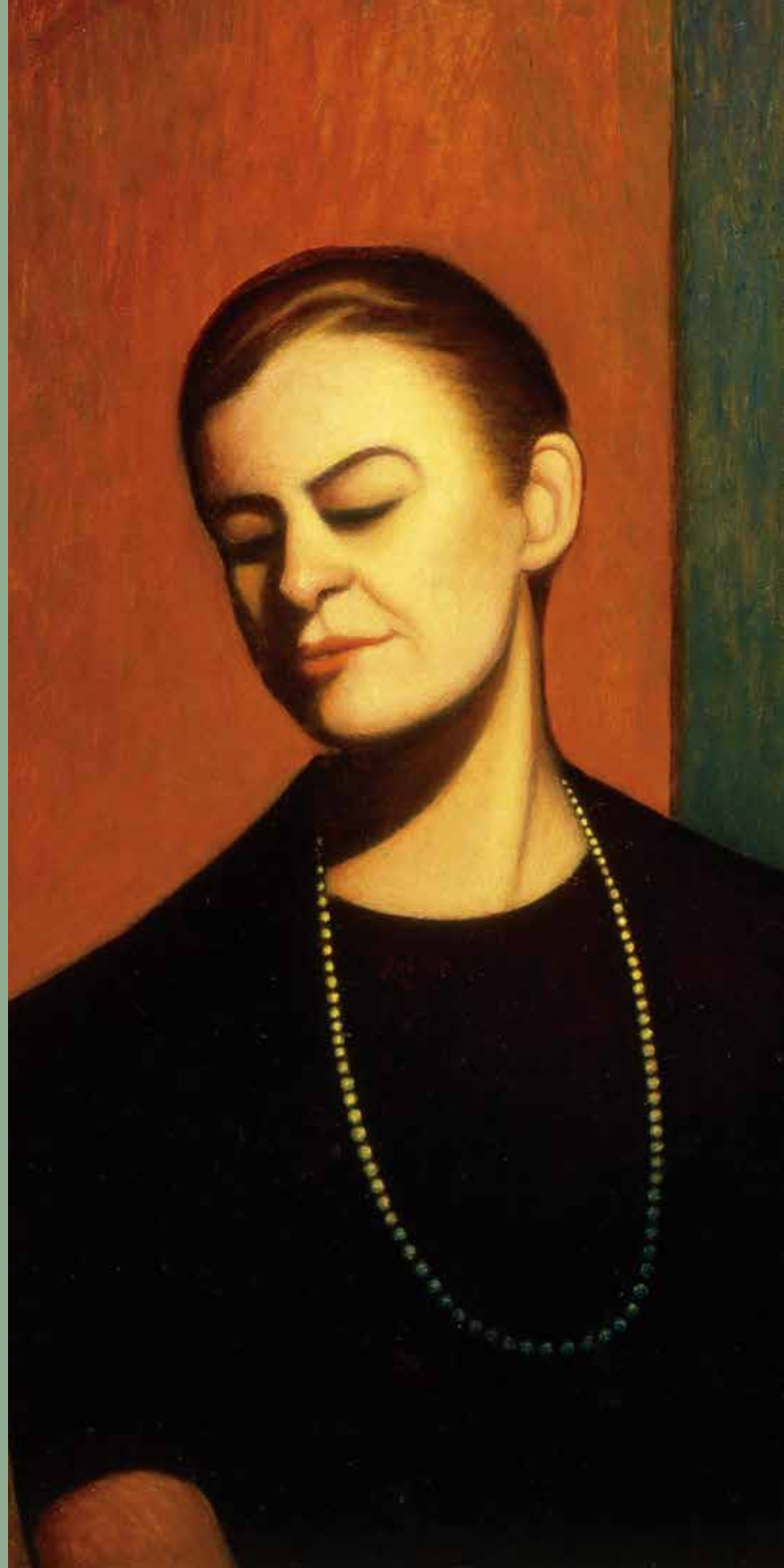
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