



Springfield Art Museum
Acquisition and Exhibition
Committee Meeting

February 6, 2026

10:30 AM

Pool Art Center Conference Room
Drury University
940 N Clay Ave.
Springfield, MO 65802

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Review Acquisition Proposals**
 - 2.1. Local Artist Purchases
- 3. Recommendations for Acquisition**
 - 3.1. Vote on each group of objects above to either recommend for acquisition to SAM Board or not recommend.
- 4. Adjournment**

In accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, if you need special accommodations when attending any City meeting, please notify the City Clerk's Office at 417-864-1651 as soon as possible to ensure our ability to accommodate your needs.

Proposed Acquisitions | Winter 2026

Curatorial Recommendations

Proposed Acquisitions: Local Artist Purchases (6)



ART OF THE MIDWEST:

Various artists

Julie Blackmon



Julie Blackmon, *Floating*, 2024, pigment ink print, 36 x 46.3 inches.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Julie Blackmon (American, b. 1966) was born and raised in Springfield, Missouri. Her precisely choreographed photographs explore domestic life in various states of child-provoked disarray. Partly inspired by the work of 17th century Dutch painters like Vermeer and Jan Steen—whose hectic depictions of families at home produced the phrase “a Jan Steen household”—Blackmon draws on the lives of her own family and those of her sprawling extended family and neighbors to move beyond the documentary to explore the surreal, imagined, and mythic elements of everyday life.

Seeming at once both contemporary and timeless, Blackmon’s beautifully lit environments are often inspired by classical paintings but verge on the fantastic. Her photographs present a world where children reign supreme and parents, when visible, appear caught in a dreamland, disconnected from the chaos around them. Blackmon’s child-focused narratives recall such fanciful tales as *Alice in Wonderland* or *Peter Pan* as the mundane, in these images, becomes transcendent.

Blackmon says, “I have an idea of what I want, but I also let certain moments happen. There may be a documentary quality to my work, but I do not make documents. I work like a fiction writer. I create an imaginary world that is fun to step into; it feels like play when I do this.”

Blackmon’s work is held in numerous permanent collections both nationally and internationally including the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; Musée Français de la Photographie, Bièvres, France; and the Walt Disney Corporation among many others.

The Museum mounted a solo exhibition of Blackmon’s works in 2013 titled, *The Power of Now and Other Tales from Home*, and has seven works by the artist in the collection.

ABOUT THE WORK:

In photography, there is no script. The script is written by the viewer...because you only have the moment that happened before and the moment that happened after. So, whoever is viewing it has to fill in the blanks and they write the narrative.
—Julie Blackmon

Floating is from Blackmon’s more recent river series, a group of works featuring family and friends on the water photographed near her cabin on the Finley River. The beautiful reflections of the clouds in the water take center stage while three swimsuit-clad figures float aimlessly in a small boat. This familiar scene could be found on nearly any body of water in the Ozarks in late August.

For those of us who live in Springfield, Blackmon’s work has become a touchstone for how we might feel about the town where we live and work. We see familiar shops, streets, and faces (our neighbors, our local grocery, or the Finley River) in the background and at once are both grounded in the familiar and transported as our familiar world is made magical through her eye. As Blackmon has said, Springfield is a “generic town with a generic name, in the middle of the country, in the middle of nowhere,”ⁱ but her work asks us to focus on and consider the specifics of that which makes our town (Springfield) unique and also that which makes our town universal.

AUTHENTICITY/CONDITION: Authentic. Excellent condition.

PROVENANCE: Created by the artist in 2024; on hold at Haw Contemporary, Kansas City, MO

PROPOSED STORAGE LOCATION: Upper Vault 4: Rack 30 A

METHOD OF ACQUISITION: Museum Acquisition Fund [\$15,000]

Significance of the objects to the collection: The Museum has seven photographs by Blackmon in the collection. However, six of those were all gifted in 2009 and the remaining work was gifted to the Museum by the artist at the close of her solo exhibition in 2013. Therefore, the Museum has not added any recent work by the artist to the collection in over a dozen years. Adding this work will continue to develop the

Museum's collection of work by Blackmon who is arguably the most well-known contemporary Springfield artist currently working today [See related work on the next page].

Additionally, this work adds a contemporary landscape photograph to the collection of our local waterways, an area of the collection that is thematically deep beginning with the Museum's very first purchase of Tom Barnett's painting of a swimming hole titled *A June Day* [See related work].

This work fits firmly within the Museum Collection Plan in the following areas:

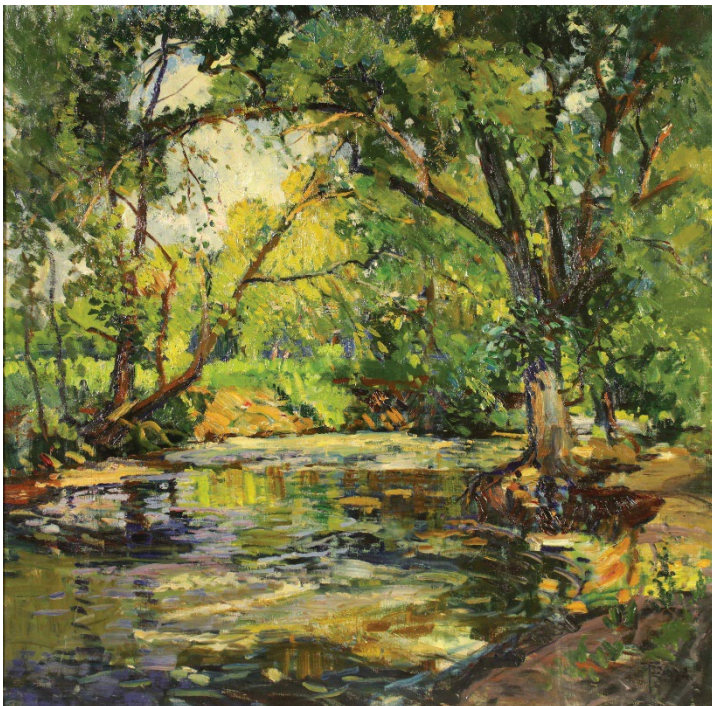
Art of the Midwest [Intellectual Framework #2/Priorities for Acquisition #2].

Related work in the Museum's collection:



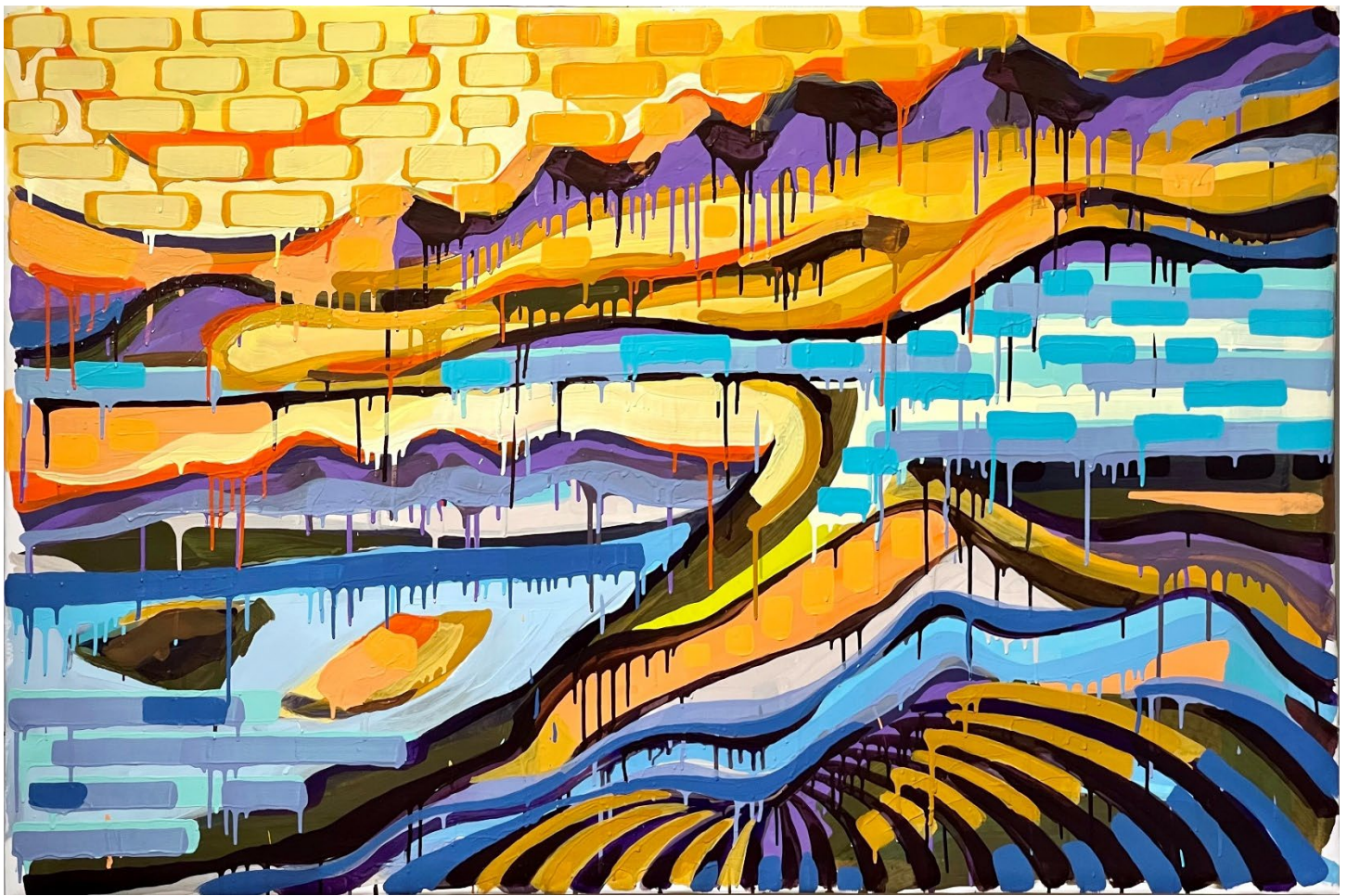
Above left: Julie Blackmon, *Portrait*, 2009, c-print mounted on gator board. SAM 2013.7

Above right: Julie Blackmon, *Candy*, 2008, c-print on paper. SAM 2009.39.3



Left: Tom Barnett, *A June Day*, 1924, oil on canvas. SAM 1928.4

Todd Lowery



Todd Lowery, *Dusk Upon the Shores*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 44 x 66 inches.



Todd Lowery, *Aegeus Waits*, 2025, watercolor on paper, 18 x 24 inches.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Todd Lowery (American, b. 1964) is a painter and multidisciplinary artist. His work considers the experiential and psychological qualities of place and place-making and has been widely shown in solo and group exhibitions, including the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation and the Phoenix Gallery in Athens; the McGill Galleries in Montréal; IsNotGallery in Nicosia; Galleri S in Östersund; the Arnados Cultural Center in Tinos; and Raum Für Drastische Maßnahmen in Berlin.

Lowery's work is included in numerous private and public collections both nationally and internationally. He is a Professor of Design and Fine Arts at Drury University, and a regular visiting artist for the Phoenix Athens Residency Program. His work has been selected for exhibition at the Springfield Art Museum in several annual *Watercolor USA* shows.

AUTHENTICITY/CONDITION: Authentic. Condition Excellent.

PROVENANCE: *Dusk Upon the Shores* was created in 2023 and included in the exhibition *Diatopos* held at the Pool Art Center Gallery, Drury University, Springfield, 2024. *Aegeus Waits* was created in 2025; currently in the collection of the artist.

PROPOSED STORAGE LOCATION: Upper Vault 4: Rack 12 A

METHOD OF ACQUISITION: Museum Acquisition Fund (\$3,500 for *Dusk Upon the Shores*; \$640 for *Aegeus Waits*) \$4,140 total

ABOUT THE WORKS:

Both of these works are from Lowery's "Diatopos Series." The *Diatopos* series (2022–present) draws upon memories of the eastern Mediterranean, layering paint to materialize aspects of natural and human-built structures, psychological associations, and remembered physical sensations. Hovering between depiction and abstraction, these paintings remain in an ambiguous state, allowing them to resonate as specific yet shifting places—simultaneously present and elusive.

Lowery says *"My work explores the experiential and psychological dimensions of place and place-making. I am fascinated by the ways in which sensory and cognitive elements, filtered by recollection, coalesce in our minds to form our understanding of distinct locations—and how painting can function to (re)present as locus, locale, and place.*

*Since 2007, my home-base has been divided between the American Midwest (Missouri) and the Petralona neighborhood of Athens, Greece. My work reflects this dual existence, exploring bilocation and transcending distance through painting's unique ability to both **be**—as a sensory object in physical space—and **transport**—as a mental and emotional space.*

*I see my paintings as "**experience maps**," interpreting moments within spaces, places, and time. Through the interplay of barriers, boundaries, lines, and layered histories, these works evoke the spatial, cultural, and socio-urban forces that shape our sense of place."*

Both of these works deal with grief in one form or another. *Dusk Upon the Shores* was painted two weeks before Lowery's father died; his grief is embedded in the deeper color palette. *Aegeus Waits* is concerned with the story of Aegeus as he watched from the shoreline looking for a white sail as the ships came in, which would be a sign that his son, Theseus. Unfortunately, Theseus failed to raise the white sail and so Aegeus, filled with grief, flung himself into the sea (into what is now called the Aegean Sea). The spiraling forms in the water and the sky might be read as expressions of the feeling of grief as we spiral into and out of sadness.

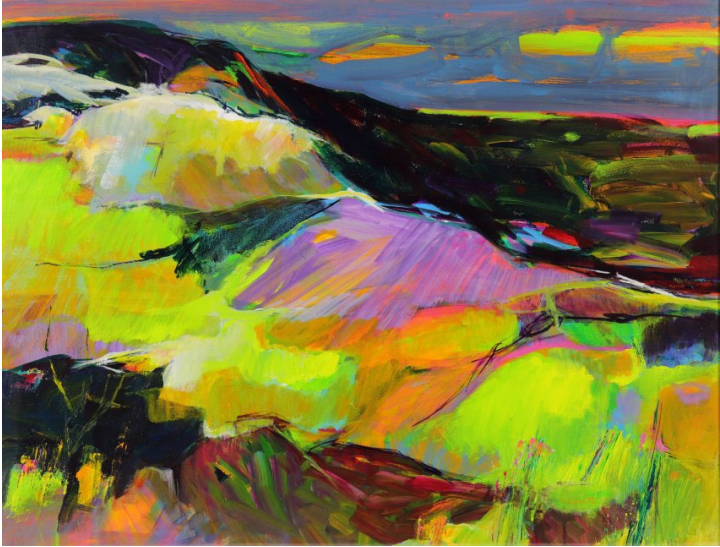
The Museum has no work by this artist in the collection.

Significance of the object to the collection: The addition of these works would add a new Springfield-based artist to the Museum's strong collection of local and regional artists, reflecting the visual concerns and interests of our local, contemporary art scene [see related work on next page]. Additionally, both works would add to the Museum's extensive collection of landscape paintings as well as contemporary watermedia. As an artist living in both the American Midwest and in Europe, this work also provides an American Midwestern perspective on the landscape of Athens and creates underlying connections between the two locales through the artist's practice.

This work fits within the SAM Collection Plan:

Contemporary American Watermedia and Art of the Midwest [Intellectual Framework #1 & #2/ Priorities for Acquisition #1 & #2;].

Related work in the Museum's collection:



Above, left: Ruth Selwitz, *Fantasyscape*, 1967, acrylic on paperboard. SAM 1967.19. Above, right: Deborah Weisel, *Landscape*, n.d., watercolor on paper. SAM 1951.060

Sarah Williams



Sarah Williams, *Wood Street*, 2022, oil on board, 11.5 x 29.5 inches.



Sarah Williams, *Alley*, 2025, oil on paper, 7 x 15 inches.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Sarah Williams (American, b. 1984) is deeply influenced by her upbringing in north Missouri. Her work examines the shifting landscape of rural communities and the layered histories they hold. What began as a way to ease the artist's own sense of homesickness after leaving her childhood town has grown into an exploration of memory, place, and belonging. Each painting serves as a kind of souvenir of the structures, streets, and scenes most familiar to her, now marked by change.

With the attentive eye of being both a native and a visitor, Williams captures the quiet persistence of the rural Midwest while also bearing witness to its transformations. Storefronts once central to her hometown now stand empty, and landmarks that once felt permanent show signs of entropy. Yet Williams' work is not simply elegiac, her paintings are an inquiry into how places shape us, how disappearance can carry meaning, and how cycles of change might be understood differently by those who remain and those who return. Through her luminous canvases, she invites viewers to reflect on their own ideas of home, memory,

and the landscapes that define them.

Williams notes, "Strong emotions can be prompted by a place. Over time, ways of life shape and define the people and the spaces in which they live. I am drawn to areas and structures that show character acquired from the history and memory of the people that formed that environment."

Williams is a professor of art at Missouri State University and has exhibited her work widely. She is represented by Talley Dunn Gallery in Dallas; Moody Gallery in Houston; and Andrea Schwartz Gallery in San Francisco.

AUTHENTICITY/CONDITION: Authentic. Condition Excellent.

PROVENANCE: *Wood Street*: created in 2022; included in solo exhibit "Pretty Rural" at Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA in March 2023; currently in artist's collection. *Alley*: created in 2025 as a sketch, in artist's collection.

PROPOSED STORAGE LOCATION: Upper Vault 4: Rack 12 A; Upper Vault 1: Flat File A: Drawer 8

METHOD OF ACQUISITION: Museum Acquisition Fund (\$3,500.00 for *Wood Street*; \$1,300.00 for *Alley*) \$4,800 total

ABOUT THE WORKS:

"In this new body of work, I continue to use my paintings to honor my own regional history which I will always tie to my upbringing in north Missouri."
– Sarah Williams

Wood Street is a moody nighttime scene depicting several homes located along Wood Street in Williams' hometown of Brookfield, Missouri. Williams' deft use of light and saturated color creates a quiet vista onto the back and side views of this small neighborhood. The glowing backyard light mimics the moon as it dispenses harsh contrasting light to the immediate outbuildings and softer, more diffuse light on the backs of neighboring structures. Although tied to a very specific place, this scene could be found in nearly any town in America and in particular, nearly any town in the Midwest. The specific housing vernacular is hyper-Midwestern and the associated outbuildings reflect the more rural nature of this small Midwestern town.

This specific home is about a block or so from the house where Williams grew up. She is very familiar with the home, even though she does not know who currently lives there. As a child, her parents would often send her or her sister to the local butcher to pick up meat for dinner. She would walk by this house on the way there and back.

Williams has noted that this work was one of the earliest where she began to shift from looking at just the house or structure to also including the environment around it. Her work has continued to shift gradually towards this viewpoint, a 'yard-scape' if you will.

Alley is a very new work on paper created as an 'experiment' to work out new ideas on composition. It reflects Williams' continued and more recent interest in the environment surrounding the built structures of her hometown as evidenced by the grouping of trees placed front and center. In this work, the houses are only visible through the 'screen' of the trees, as background to nature. Adding this work to the

collection allows us to see the artist's working process – how she formulates new ideas and new compositions – as well as how her technique translates to paper (her finished pieces are nearly always on panel or canvas).

The Museum has no work by this artist in the collection.

Significance of the object to the collection: The addition of these works would add a new local, contemporary artist to the Museum's strong collection of local and regional work. It would also add to the Museum's deep and rich collection of landscape paintings, with a particular addition to landscapes featuring scenes from the Midwest, and Missouri in particular. The inclusion of the 'sketch' or 'experiment' would also add to the Museum's collection of preliminary drawings, paintings, and maquettes – a subset of the larger collection that reflect the process of making art.

This work fits within the SAM Collection Plan:

Art of the Midwest [Intellectual Framework #2/ Priorities for Acquisition #4].

Related work in the Museum's collection:



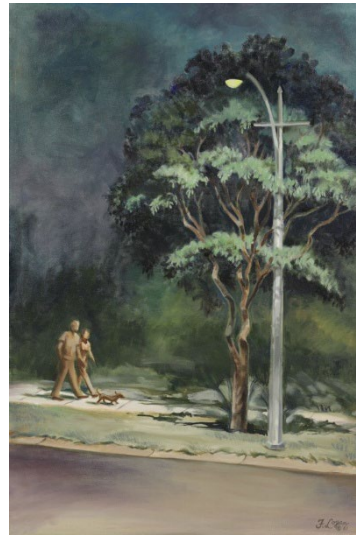
Above, left: Mary Kathryn Boswell, *Pole Beans and Hollyhocks*, c. 1940, watercolor on paper. SAM 1940.2



Above, right: Henry Gasser, *Winter Pathway*, c. 1945, watercolor on paper. SAM 1945.02



Above, left: Robert E. Smith, *2419 South Marlan Avenue*, n.d., oil on canvas. SAM 202.3.24



Above, right: Frieda Logan, *Summer Night*, 1981, oil on canvas. SAM 2004.01.01

Bobby Ross



Bobby Ross, *Flip Side*, 1997, oil on linen, 39 x 42 inches.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Bobby Ross (American) has been living and painting in Springfield since 2012. His work is inspired by the techniques of the great Renaissance masters and are noted for their meticulous detail and magical realism. Ross' paintings are incredibly time-consuming to create, involving multiple layers. He says, "Contradiction is the principal theme in my work. Good battles evil; harmony dances with discord; truth confronts lies. Questions posed are not answered."

Ross has exhibited widely throughout the United States in both solo and group shows. He has taught painting, drawing, and design at the Maryland Institute College of Art, Drake University, Carnegie Mellon University, Ohio University, and the Universities of Kentucky, Arizona, and Nevada-Reno. Ross has been awarded The Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant for Painting and the National Endowment for the Arts Award in Painting. His work is in the collections of Peter and Eileen Norton, Michael Eisner, Charles Sims, Marti Koplin, Neil Ovsey, and the Oklahoma State Museum of Art.

The artist currently resides in Springfield, Missouri, where he continues to work on paintings and drawings that present contemporary narratives and question social attitudes.

AUTHENTICITY/CONDITION: Authentic. Condition Excellent.

PROVENANCE: Created in 1997; currently in the collection of the artist.

PROPOSED STORAGE LOCATION: Upper Vault 4: Rack 12 A

METHOD OF ACQUISITION: Museum Acquisition Fund (\$6,750)

ABOUT THE WORK:

I employ an illusionistic narrative form to convey my ideas. The images are compiled in an additive process analogous to collage, unplanned yet reconciled to an internal logic. - Bobby Ross

Flip Side follows Ross' primary concerns regarding contradictions. The central image features two figures fighting in a pixelated representation, recalling early video games like *Street Fighter*, while the side bar includes a filmstrip-like scroll of pop culture imagery including a portrait of cartoon character Donald Duck, whose shoulders are populated by his own angel and demon in conversation with each other. The references to television abound with screens, cords, and pixelation throughout. Yet, Ross leaves his commentary open-ended for the viewer to determine the meanings. He notes, "Life demands great efforts, discipline, honesty, and sacrifice. Making art is the theater in which I struggle to act this out."

Significance of the object to the collection: The addition of this work would add a new local, contemporary artist to the Museum's strong collection of local and regional work. Ross' work has the ability to engage in conversation with other works in the collection that comment on, investigate, and interpret popular culture and technology [see related works].

This work fits within the SAM Collection Plan:

Art of the Midwest [Intellectual Framework #2/ Priorities for Acquisition #2].

Related work in the Museum's collection:



Above, left: Kent Addison, *On Target with Jan van Eyck* #2172, 2009, watercolor on paper. SAM 2010.13

Right: Mark Messersmith, *Travelers*, 2021, oil on canvas with carved wooden accents. SAM 2022.8ab

