

A black and white photograph of a woman with short hair and glasses, wearing a polka-dot dress. She is holding a large, round broom in front of her. In the background, an American flag is visible, with the stars and stripes clearly shown. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

DES
MOINES
ART
CENTER

SEP
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DEC
2021

After a frenetic and productive summer, the Art Center is gearing up for an adventurous and busy fall. Justin Favela's exhibition, *Central American*, continues to enthrall visitors with his take on the traditional Mexican piñata, artworks in our permanent collection, as well as Iowa's own taco pizza. Featuring literally miles of cut tissue paper glued to the walls of the Meredith Gallery, this project has received extremely positive response, and we have extended the exhibition into the winter 2021–2022. Please stop by if you have not seen it and, if you have, come again.

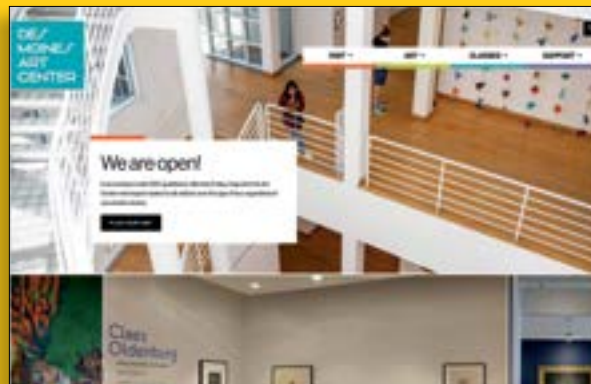
After a near capacity summer, our studio and education departments will again have much to offer this fall. Studio classes in an array of media are available for all age groups. Along with a variety of other educational programs, the American artist Theaster Gates will give the 2021 Fingerman Lecture this fall. This lecture will be the 31st in the series supported by the generosity of Lou and Lois Fingerman.

In addition, our Art Access program is moving forward through partnerships with more than 30 social-service and community organizations using art as the catalyst for self-discovery and the development of life skills. These important programs help to connect with and add impact in the community in multiple ways.

Our recent art acquisitions continue to add artworks to the permanent collections that reflect our diverse community—the work of Black, Latinx, LGBTQ+, and Indigenous artists—including our cover image, *American Gothic, Washington D.C.*, 1942, by photographer Gordon Parks.

Please visit us soon and explore all that your Art Center has to offer.

JEFF FLEMING | DIRECTOR



THE ART CENTER IS PLEASED TO INTRODUCE OUR NEW WEBSITE

The new site has the same web address, and features new and improved functionality to become a member, register for an event, or plan your visit.

Explore the new desmoinesartcenter.org today!

JUSTIN FAVELA

CENTRAL AMERICAN

Across the Anna K. Meredith Gallery and into the atrium of the Meier building, Justin Favela has created a journey for visitors with tissue paper and cardboard, using giant sculptures of food and re-creations of works in the Art Center's collection. In bright colors and a pinata-like surface, Favela takes us from the Midwest to the tropics.

Beginning with a wall-sized version of Grant Wood's painting *The Birthplace of Herbert Hoover*, Favela's imagery moves through farm scenes and giant vegetables, passing through Winslow Homer's *Banana Tree — Nassau* and Carlos Mérida's *Mayan Travelers Walking* along the way. Walt Kuhn's *Green Bananas* pairs with an epic taco pizza — an original Iowa food — which stands alongside rows of corn

and falls from the ceiling in a witty cascade of toppings. These visual treats celebrate Iowa's identity as well as that of the artist.

The subtitle, *Central American*, contains multiple meanings, suggesting Favela's Guatemalan heritage, Iowa's place in the middle of the United States, and the strong presence of Central Americans in our state and within the agricultural industry on which our economy depends. Joyful and humorous, this work leads us to consider the land we come from, the culture and history even the most humble food item can carry, and lets us see the familiar in an entirely new way.

The Art Center and the artist wish to thank all the staff and volunteers who helped construct this exhibition.

BELOW AND PAGES 4–5, DETAILS Justin Favela (American, born 1986) / **CENTRAL AMERICAN** 2021
Paper and glue / Anna K. Meredith Gallery, Des Moines Art Center / Photo: Brittany Brooke Crow, Des Moines







Justin Favela (American, born 1986)
FLOOR TACO PIZZA 2021
Paper, mixed media, and glue / 18 feet diameter

OPPOSITE
TACO PIZZA SLICE CHANDELIER 2021
Paper, mixed media, and glue
75 1/2 x 108 inches, with topping dimensions variable

Photos: Brittany Brooke Crow, Des Moines

NEW ARTWORK ADDED TO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

Larassa Kabel's *Maquette of Black Crown*, 2020, is a smaller version of her large public sculpture at 42nd Street and Ingersoll in Des Moines. This two-headed stag with large, intertwining antlers was inspired by an Iranian Iron Age sculpture in the Menil collection in Houston. The work reinterprets that form using the fallow deer as a source. Fallow deer are hunted worldwide for trophies; people seem to love this deer so much they kill them to hold on to them. Kabel maintains that they are essentially loved to death. With their beauty and grace, Kabel has often used deer as a representation of innocence in her work. The two heads here embody love and loss, as the artist believes love is always accompanied by the fear of losing it. One deer's head has pointed alert ears, indicating a deer that is alive and vital, while the other head has ears that are drooping as if dead. Funds provided by the Sharon Simmons Art Acquisition Fund made this purchase possible.

Truman Lowe's *Canoe Form 2*, 1990, is a beautiful example of the artist's melding of a Minimalist aesthetic with materials and iconography from his Indigenous heritage. Born and raised in Wisconsin, Lowe was an important activist, teacher, and curator as well as a sculptor and printmaker. Canoe imagery was critical to his art, suggesting both vehicle and vessel, male and female, and ancient and contemporary. This work is made from willow saplings, a traditional material for the Winnebago people as well one that Lowe used often in his art. The purchase of this work was made possible with funds from the Keith Shaver bequest.

Laura Aguilar was a self-taught photographer whose images focused on portraiture and self-portraiture. As a Latina lesbian who also faced multiple health issues throughout her life, Aguilar's art gave voice to people marginalized from society, including herself. Her photographs, such as *Grounded #109*, 2018, celebrate the obese female form (often her own body), questioning the white male gaze in art history and playing with notions of abstraction and landscape. *Grounded #109* suggests nature as a welcoming place for bodies rejected by mainstream culture. Aguilar was an extremely revolutionary figure who died during the exhibition tour of her first solo exhibition. The purchase

of this work was made possible with funds from the Ellen and Jim Hubbell Photography Acquisition Fund.

Louis Fratino's oil on canvas, entitled *Swift and Mosquito*, 2020, entered the collections as a gift from Ryan Murphy. Fratino uses Modernist formal techniques inspired by Picasso and Matisse to capture elements of contemporary life. He often focuses on domestic life and spaces but has also turned his eye to traditional painting genres such as landscape and still life. This work, with its dramatic close-up of a flying bird, is a nod to American Modernists like Arthur Dove and Georgia O'Keeffe. The painting shows Fratino's masterful use of color and texture with paint.

The Art Center purchased two drawings on paper by **Olivia Valentine** with funds from the Keith Shaver Bequest. *Interruptions (Cortez Sunrise)* 2020 and *Interruptions (Jetty Study)*, 2020, featured in *Iowa Artists 2021*, were inspired by photos captured on walks using various features of the artist's cell phone camera. The shadow patterns were then rendered in watercolor and drawing, created over a grid-like background inspired by the cards used to make tapestry patterns. Valentine is a multimedia artist who incorporates photography, painting, and textile processes into her work.

Sandra Shannonhouse gifted a major work by **Robert Arneson**, entitled *Impression of the Artist as an Incorporeal Witness to the Center of the Universe*, 1979, in memory of Jim Demetron and in honor of John and Mary Pappajohn. Arneson was a major figure of the California-based Funk Art movement, and his innovative work in ceramics helped move that media to the forefront of contemporary art. Humorous portraiture and self-portraiture are common in his work, as seen in this monumental ceramic floor sculpture. The central figure references not only the artist, who was nearing the end of his battle with cancer, but Leonardo da Vinci's iconic *Vitruvian Man* drawing. While the Art Center owns prints and drawings, and another ceramic work by the artist, this piece is a substantial and important work in the scope of Arneson's career and a significant addition to our collections.

Stacy Polydorán has gifted an acrylic on paper, entitled *Crew Dark*, 1985, by **William Wiley** in memory of Jim Demetron. Wiley is one of the most well-known



TOP
Larassa Kabel (American, born 1970)
The Black Crown of Recurring Loss Maquette, 2020
Bronze
11 1/2 x 11 1/4 x 6 3/4 inches
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Sharon Simmons Art Acquisitions Fund, 2021.16

Robert Carston Arneson (American, 1930–1992)
Impression of the Artist as an Incorporeal Witness to the Center of the Universe, 1979
Glazed ceramic / 114 inches
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections;
Gift of Sandra Shannonhouse in memory of Jim Demetron and in honor of John and Mary Pappajohn, 2021.5.a-ww

artists associated with the California Funk Art movement. While the art world of the 1960s was embracing formalist theory and Minimalism, Wiley and his colleagues, including Robert Arneson, ignored this and created work that pokes fun at the glamour of the art world and the concept of the artist with a capital "A." Beginning in the 1980s, Wiley began to create paintings, drawings, and sculptures with allusions to specific concerns he had about politics. *Crew Dark* is an example of this. The work is playful and busy, traits that are typical of Wiley's style.

Larry and Rita Sibrack have gifted a major sculpture by **Lauren Fensterstock** to the Art Center. Fensterstock is an artist, educator, and curator based in Maine. Her work deals in connections between nature and craft, past and present, and excess versus minimalism. In recent years, she has created sculptures of objects such as mirrors and cabinets covered in shells and stalagmite formations, mimicking the decorative grottos found in Baroque architecture. The works are then layered in black rubber, obscuring detail, and making the work seem a bit foreboding as well as more modern. *Scrying 1*, 2017, is from a series containing scrying mirrors, believed in folklore to show the future. The black mirror here is also inspired by 18th-century "Claude mirrors," used by tourists to make landscapes look like picturesque paintings. Fensterstock's work was included in the exhibition *Ruptures* at the Art Center and has been exhibited widely around the globe.

The Art Center has purchased two photographs by **Gordon Parks** with funds from the Ellen and Jim Hubbell Photography Acquisition Fund. Parks is one of the most influential figures in 20th-century American Art. A self-taught photographer born in Kansas, Parks became an apprentice to Roy Stryker in the early 1940s and joined his group of Farm Securities Administration photographers alongside Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and others. During this time, Parks created *American Gothic, Washington D.C.*, 1942, which would become his signature image (on the cover). The title is inspired by Grant Wood's *American Gothic*. The woman in the photo, Ella Watson, worked in the government building in which the FSA was headquartered. During WWII, Parks worked as an official war photographer,

and then moved on to a long stint at *LIFE* magazine, becoming a sought-after fashion and portrait artist. He also continued making images of civil right figures and protests. *Untitled, Harlem*, 1963, was taken at a protest involving police violence and serves as an example of this body of work. These are the first works by Parks to enter the collections.

The Art Center has purchased the drawing entitled *Hermano y Hermanas*, ca. 1935, by **Alfredo Ramos Martínez** with funds provided by the Kyle and Sharon Krause Family Art Acquisition Fund. Martínez is one of the most distinguished Latin American artists of the twentieth century and is considered by many art historians to be the founder of Mexican Modernism. Martínez's artistic philosophy was extremely progressive at the time. He had strong disregard for academic tradition and encouraged students to depict everyday scenes of Mexico. Martínez moved from Mexico City to Los Angeles in 1930, where he began to produce pictures that brought together elements of European Modernism with pre-Columbian and Indigenous Mexican art, like *Hermano y Hermanas*. His work was the subject of the solo exhibition *Picturing Mexico: Alfredo Ramos Martínez* at the Nevada Museum of Art in 2014. His work was also included in the recent exhibitions *Paint the Revolution: Mexican Modernism, 1910–1950*, organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2016, and *Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art*, at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2020. This is the first work to enter our collections by Martínez and the first early-twentieth century painting by a Mexican Modernist.

TOP
 Laura Aguilar, American, 1959–2018
Grounded #109, 2006–2007, printed 2018
 Archival pigment print
 Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Ellen and Jim Hubbell Photography Acquisition Fund, 2021.15

BOTTOM
 Alfredo Ramos Martínez (Mexican, 1871–1946)
Hermano y Hermanas (Brother and Sisters) ca. 1935
 Tempera on board / 17 x 20 1/2 inches
 Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Kyle and Sharon Krause Family Art Acquisition Fund, 2021.10



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When you leave a legacy gift to the Art Center, you support the next generation of art lovers and empower us to create engaging opportunities for years to come. Planned gifts may be as simple as including the Art Center as a beneficiary in your will or life insurance policy. Gifts can also include IRA rollovers, charitable gift annuities, and real estate. Planned giving allows you to connect your legacy with ours and use your success to keep the arts alive. Reach out to Director of Development Tiffany Nagel Spinner at 515.271.0338 or tspinner@desmoinesartcenter.org to learn more about how to make a lasting impact at the Art Center.



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EACH THURSDAY FROM 11 AM TO 6:45 PM

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Studio and virtual art classes and workshops are available for students of all ages. Members receive 20% discounts on classes and workshops. Join today!

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The sculpture park is open daily from sunrise to midnight. Free admission.

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All photos in this issue are by Rich Sanders, Des Moines, unless otherwise noted.

ON THE COVER

Gordon Parks (American, 1912–2006)
American Gothic, Washington, D.C., 1942
Gelatin silver print
Image: 12 3/4 × 8 7/8 inches
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections;
Purchased with funds from the Ellen and Jim
Hubbell Photography Acquisition Fund, 2021.9

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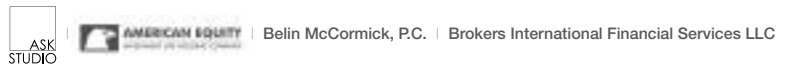
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