

## Dear Friends,

We can all agree the most valuable part of the oldest Museum dedicated to American Art in the nation is its people. NBMAA Members, supporters, visitors, volunteers, Trustees, and staff bring the Museum's objects to life through learning and accessibility. As we conclude a blockbuster summer of engagement that included *Walter Wick: Hidden Wonders!*, I reflect on the myriad touch points along the visitor journey for the thousands who experienced the Museum in the past few months. Sponsor and funder generosity, curatorial and education expertise, marketing efforts, and visitor services hospitality worked in harmony to generate robust, multigenerational visitation.



We will carry this spirit of connecting the public to the evolving story of what it means to be American into the presentation of an exciting lineup of new fall and winter exhibitions. *Anila Quayyum Agha: Illuminations* and *Women Reframe American Landscape*, along with the continuation of stunning shows like *Ellen Carey: Struck by Light* and *Shaker Masterworks: Mount Lebanon, NY*, will be complimented by a truly diverse array of related programming teed up by the Education team.

While we celebrate our talented staff, I am excited to report three significant developments for the Museum's leadership team. Debra Holcomb joins as the Museum's new Director of Development. A seasoned fundraising leader, Debra's expertise in major gifts, planned giving, campaign development, and strategic planning align with the NBMAA's mission and aspirational goals. Stephanie Heydt has been appointed Director of Collections and Exhibitions and will join the Museum in early November. Stephanie is a nationally-respected curator of American Art who brings more than 25 years of experience in the field. And finally, I am thrilled to report that Kathy Butler will be staying with the NBMAA for one more year as Director of Engagement and Learning after fulfilling a year in that role as interim. We are so grateful for Kathy's expertise and dedication to the Museum.

Our most important fundraising function of the year is just days away. The 21st Annual Art Party of the Year is shaping up to be a blast and I hope to see many of you there. This year's event honors the incredible commitment and patronage of Trustee Emeritus David Polk, celebrates 120 years of collecting art at the Museum that began with John Butler Talcott's seminal gift, and is inspired by *Ellen Carey: Struck by Light*. If you can't join us in person on October 21, we invite you to participate in our auction or make a Gala donation at [artpartyoftheyear.org](http://artpartyoftheyear.org).

Finally, I join the entire Museum community in mourning the loss—and celebrating the life of—longtime supporter and Trustee Emeritus Christine Shivery (1948 - 2023), who passed on June 14. A Trustee for a decade, generous NBMAA donor, and talented artist in her own right, Chris left a lifelong legacy through her generosity, service, and friendship to the New Britain Museum of American Art.

Thank you all for your unwavering support of the New Britain Museum of American Art. Enjoy this magnificent New England autumn and see you at the Museum soon.

Warm Regards,  
Brett Abbott  
Director and CEO