

Greenwich Historical Society *Newsletter*

Upcoming Exhibition

RADICAL POTS & COOPERATIVE HANDS

Katherine Choy and Clay Art Center

**OCTOBER 18, 2023 -
 FEBRUARY 4, 2024**



Exhibition Programs & Events

- 10/26 Lecture and Demonstration:
 Wheel-Throwing in the Style of
 Katherine Choy
- 11/2 Hands-On Workshop: Building
 Clay Forms
- 1/18 Lecture: *Katherine Choy, Radical
 Potter* with Mel Buchanan,
 RosaMary Curator of Decorative
 Arts and Design, New Orleans
 Museum of Art
- 1/25 Coffee with the Curator Tour
 of Exhibition with Greenwich
 Historical Society Curator
 Maggie Dimock

Ceramic workshops and demonstrations are presented at the Greenwich Historical Society in partnership with Clay Art Center

In the late spring of 1957, Chinese-born ceramic artist Katherine Choy (1927-1958) arrived in Port Chester, New York, with a goal of establishing the “Clay Art Center for Advanced Study in Ceramics and Sculpture,” later known as simply Clay Art Center. Choy was an accomplished artist of mounting national reputation who developed her unique approach to ceramic art as a student at Mills College in Oakland, California, and a graduate fellow at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. She had spent the previous five years as head ceramic instructor at Newcomb College in New Orleans.



Clay Art Center Co-Founders Henry Okamoto and Katherine Choy, ca. 1955-57.
Courtesy Clay Art Center Archives

With the support of friend and collaborator Henry Okamoto (1922-1988), a ceramic artist from Lodi, California, who beginning in the early 1950s was based in Cos Cob, Connecticut, Choy’s vision for Clay Art Center came to life as one of the first studio spaces dedicated solely to the study and practice of ceramic art in the United States.

Sadly, only a year after founding Clay Art Center, Choy died unexpectedly at the young age of 30. Okamoto remained

dedicated to keeping the Center running in fulfillment of her vision. Today, more than 65 years later, Clay Art Center endures as a nationally known, vibrant nonprofit art center dedicated to the advancement and practice of ceramic art. Meanwhile, Choy’s boundary-pushing sculptural ceramic vessels are experiencing a resurgence in interest, and her ceramic pieces can be found in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Newark Museum of Art, and the Museum of Arts and Design.

In October the Greenwich Historical Society will present *Radical Pots & Cooperative Hands: Katherine Choy and Clay Art Center*. Featuring a wealth of ceramic pots and vessels on loan from Clay Art Center’s collections, many created by Choy in her final years, the exhibition will also present never-before seen historic photographs, letters, and other illuminating material from Clay Art Center’s archives that tell a poignant and captivating story of a group of young artists finding fertile ground for creative work in Port Chester and neighboring Greenwich, Connecticut.



Katherine Choy at the Wheel, 1952-57.
*Courtesy Clay Art Center Archives
 Photo Credit: Jack Robinson*

Welcome new staff members

Dina Fleischmann

Director of Development



Dina has been successful in cultivating relationships for leading nonprofits for over 25 years. Her career engagements include United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, American Symphony Orchestra, Westport Country Playhouse, Fairfield Museum and consulting projects for a variety of area arts and humanities organizations. Most recently, she served as the Major Gifts Officer for Jewish Senior Services in Bridgeport. Dina is delighted to join the development team to support the work of the Greenwich Historical Society.

Gail Luciano

Bookkeeper



Gail recently relocated to her native Westchester County, New York, from South Florida, where she resided for over 37 years working as an Accountant in Senior Living and Healthcare. Her interests include reading historical novels and enjoying outdoor activities. She looks forward to rediscovering the Northeast and the changing of the seasons.

Message from Our Director



As we look forward to cooler temperatures and the glow of autumn foliage, the invigorating energy of the season signals transition – whether it be a return to familiar routines or embarking on new endeavors. Our upcoming exhibition, *Radical Pots & Cooperative Hands: Katherine Choy and Clay Art Center*, opening October 18, features the dynamic, genre-defining ceramic works of Clay Art Center’s co-founder, presented alongside photographs and archival material telling the story of

this groundbreaking cooperative studio in Port Chester and its remarkable presence in the mid-century artistic community of New York and southeastern Connecticut. It is exciting to make this story and so many other aspects of local history accessible to our community, and we are grateful for the support of our members and generous donors who make this season’s vast array of programs and events possible.

Debra Mecky

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

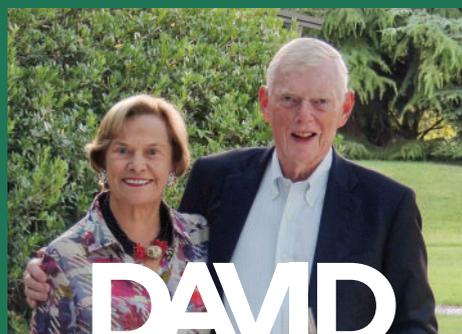
2023 Annual Meeting Greenwich Landmarks Presentation David Ogilvy Preservation Award

Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at Belle Haven Club



2023 Greenwich Landmarks Presentation

This year, in conjunction with our *SPORTS! More Than Just a Game* exhibition, the Greenwich Historical Society will recognize local properties and landmarks related to athletics or bearing relevance to sports history.



**DAVID
OGILVY**
PRESERVATION AWARD

Debbie and Russ Reynolds

Debbie and Russ Reynolds are this year’s David Ogilvy Preservation Award honorees, in recognition of their contribution to local history and preservation efforts, including the establishment of the Stanwich Local Historic District, the preservation of family cemeteries, and the restoration of their historic Taconic Road home, originally the Stanwich Parsonage, built in 1848.

Treasures from the Museum Collection: Ceramics by Leon Volkmar

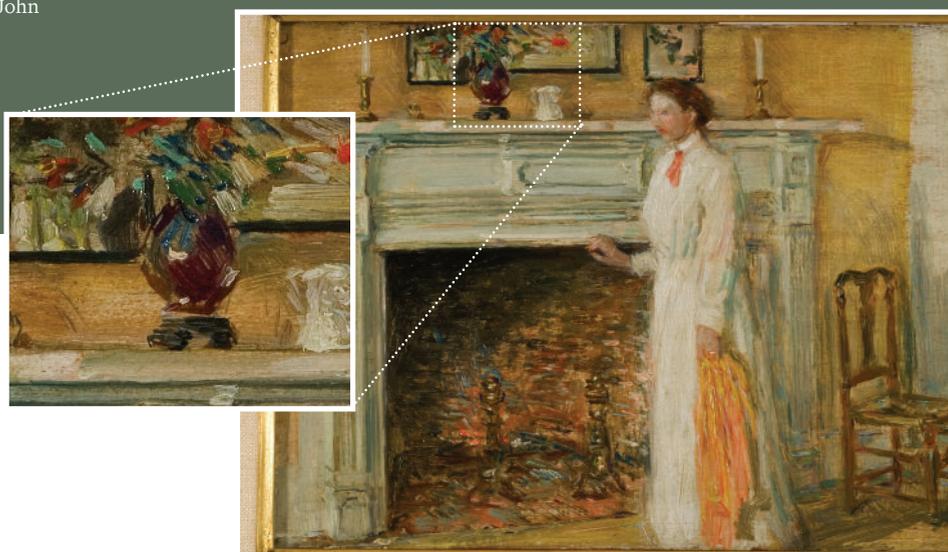
Coinciding with the exhibition *Radical Pots & Cooperative Hands: Katherine Choy and Clay Art Center*, beginning this fall visitors to the Greenwich Historical Society's Permanent Collections Gallery will be able to view a complementary installation of ceramic vessels by artist Leon Gambetta Volkmar (1879-1959).



Leon Gambetta Volkmar, Vase, ca. 1924-30.
Greenwich Historical Society, Gift of John
and Henrietta Volkmar.

Working out of Bedford, New York, at a pottery studio he named Durant Kilns, Volkmar produced artistic clay vessels with vibrant glaze surfaces inspired by ancient Egyptian and Persian wares. Volkmar was a friend of artist Elmer Livingston MacRae, and in the 1910s and '20s his distinctive vases could often be seen in the Bush-Holley House, forming the base for floral arrangements designed by Constant Holley MacRae.

Volkmar's distinctive vessels were frequently present in works by artists of the Cos Cob art colony. In the small oil painting *The Mantel Piece* (1912), now part of the Greenwich Historical Society Museum Collection, painter Childe Hassam depicted his wife, Maude Hassam, standing in the first-floor bedroom of the Bush-Holley House. A striking aubergine vase by Volkmar is visible on the fireplace mantel, holding an arrangement of orange flowers.



Childe Hassam, *The Mantel Piece*, 1912.
Oil on cigar box lid. 7 ¼ x 10 ¼ inches.
Greenwich Historical Society, Museum
Purchase with Donor Funds.



Good to Great Grant

We are the grateful recipient of a Good to Great 2.0 Grant of \$418,057 to fund critical environmental upgrades for the National Historic Landmark Bush-Holley House. Co-administered by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and CT Humanities, the grant will support a comprehensive series of upgrades to the Bush-Holley House's climate control systems, ensuring the continued stewardship

of its historic furnishings and original artworks, which include original paintings, prints and drawings by nationally recognized American Impressionist artists such as Childe Hassam and Elmer Livingston MacRae, and bringing the visitor experience to a modern standard of comfort.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

AWARD DINNER
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12
BELLE HAVEN CLUB

2023 Awardee: Allan Houston

In conjunction with our recent exhibition, *Sports! More Than Just a Game*, we will honor NBA legend Allan Houston with the History in the Making Award in recognition of his philanthropic contributions to Greenwich and beyond, and his commitment to ensuring a future that offers generations to come opportunities to make our world at large a better place. Houston, his wife Tamara and their seven children have been area residents for over two decades. He has supported Greenwich youth organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club and Kids in Crisis, whose services extend to surrounding



communities in Stamford and New York and across the country. A consummate athlete, Houston is a two-time NBA All-star with a 12-year playing tenure with the Detroit Pistons and New York Knicks and was a member of the gold-medal winning U.S. Men's Basketball team at the 2000 Summer Olympics. His impact extends beyond the court through

the Allan Houston Legacy Foundation and the FISLL Project, which serves underserved youth, families and communities nationwide through strategic partnerships, coaching clinics and fatherhood and family programming. Houston is the ninth recipient of the award, which was established in 2003 to recognize individuals from our community who are the history makers of our own time. Former awardees include Barbara and Ray Dalio, who will present this year's award, Indra Nooyi, Derek Boothby, Thomas Foley, Curt Welling, Marie and Charlene Von Saher and Lewis Lehrman.

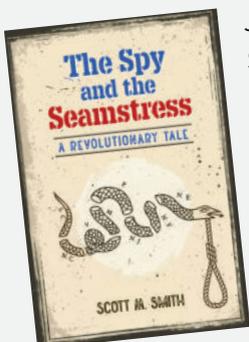


Pictured: Greenwich Historical Society Trustee Cynthia Chang, Terry Lowe / Greenwich High School, Angela Tamaro / Greenwich Academy, Bill Smith / Greenwich Youth Water Polo, Katie Johnson / Greenwich Academy, Jim Stephens / Brunswick School, Pat Coleman / Greenwich Youth Lacrosse, Nick Cavatara / Greenwich YWCA, Sarah Hill / Sacred Heart Greenwich, and Donna deVarona. **Not pictured:** Steve Lapham / Greenwich High School, Jack Jepson / Greenwich Country Day School (posthumous)

Behind Every Great Athlete Is a Great Coach

At a lively reception on June 7, featuring a vintage Walter's Hot Dog truck, we announced and congratulated 10 beloved Greenwich scholastic and club coaches nominated to receive awards for excellence in influencing the lives of student-athletes. The **Sports Coach Awards** will be presented at the History in the Making Award Dinner by Olympic Hall of Famer and Greenwich resident Donna deVarona.

Author Talk with Scott Smith TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 6:00-7:30 PM



Join us for an exploration of *The Spy and the Seamstress* with author Scott Smith and learn more about the extraordinary life of Connecticut Patriot and Revolutionary spy Nathan Hale. In this work of meticulously researched historical content packed with action, suspense and romance – some of which takes place in colonial Greenwich – Smith captures the essence of a pivotal time in our nation's founding with a fresh, thought-provoking perspective. *The Spy and the Seamstress* unearths centuries-old correspondence, diaries, and maps to portray this tumult in rich detail. Smith's presentation will also highlight events in his own life including the creative dynamics and the research process that contribute to his writing.



TALK WITH Q+A WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A BOOK SIGNING IN THE LOBBY.



Fall Calendar of Events



September

- 6 Morning Market Talk: Meaningful Connection Experience with Soul Camp Creative + Tavern Garden Market
- 7 Architecture of the Gilded Age | A Book Talk with Phillip James Dodd
- 9 Discover Greenwich Walking Tour: Greenwich Point
- 13 Breaking Barriers: The Negro Leagues and “The Other Boys of Summer” at YWCA Greenwich
- 20 Morning Market Talk: Celebrating the Autumn Equinox with Heaven to Earth Astrology + Tavern Garden Market
- 20 2023 Annual Meeting, Greenwich Landmarks and David Ogilvy Preservation Award at Belle Haven Club
- 21 Artful Arrangements: Dazzling Dahlias and Country Garden Glamour
- 26 The Magical Gardens of Bunny Mellon at Greenwich Botanical Center

October

- 4 Morning Market Talk: The Power of Our Home & Wellness Connection with Krista Fox + Tavern Garden Market
- 4 Create in the Barn: Jams/ Curds/ Chutneys with Country House Cuisine
- 7 Fall Scarecrow Festival
- 12 History in the Making Award Dinner at Belle Haven Club
- 18 Morning Market Talk: Fall Fermentation | *Nourish* with Terry Waters + Tavern Garden Market
- 19 Create in the Barn: Succulent Garden with Mod Pots and Plants
- 21 Discover Greenwich Walking Tour: Tomac Cemetery
- 24 *The Spy and the Seamstress* Book Talk with Scott Smith

SCARECROW CONTEST
FOOD



FALL SCARECROW
FESTIVAL CRAFTS LIVE MUSIC
OCTOBER 7, 2023
11:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.



5TH ANNUAL
**Festival of
Tabletop Trees**
December 6-9

Holiday Festival
Saturday, December 9

November

- 9 Story Barn: “Life Imitates Art” with Bonnie Levison
- 16 Building Home: A Look at the Free Black Communities of Fairfield County
- 16 Create in the Barn: Thanksgiving Tablescape with Abilis

December

- 7 Create in the Barn: Holiday Boxwood Centerpiece with Abilis
- 6-7 Holiday Boutique at Greenwich Country Club
- 6-9 Festival of Tabletop Trees
- 9 Holiday Festival
- 12 Artful Arrangements: Holiday Winter White



To learn more and register for programs and events, visit greenwichhistory.org



Join or Renew Today!

Member benefits include invitations to exclusive events, free admission to summer concerts, program discounts and 10% off at the Museum Store.

greenwichhistory.org/membership



Museum Store

Browse our latest arrivals featuring autumn-themed items and holiday decor. Linger to enjoy a complimentary beverage in the Artist’s Café.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

September 4, October 9, November 23
December 25 and January 1

OFFICE, MUSEUM STORE AND CAFÉ

Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday, 12:00–4:00 p.m.

MUSEUM GALLERIES

Wednesday–Sunday, 12:00–4:00 p.m.

SITE RENTALS

Email dsuozzo@greenwichhistory.org
for inquiries or event bookings.

BUSH-HOLLEY HOUSE

Wednesday–Sunday, 12:00 p.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.
Tours last 45 minutes. Call for reservations.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

By appointment

ADMISSION

\$10 adults, \$8 seniors

FREE: Youth under 12, members, active
military/Blue Star.
FREE for all every Wednesday.

GROUP TOURS

Available on request.

Visit all 21 museums on the Connecticut Art Trail
for \$35. Buy a passport at the museum lobby desk
or at ctarttrail.org.

*We work to preserve and interpret Greenwich history to strengthen the community's
connection to our past, to each other and to our future.*

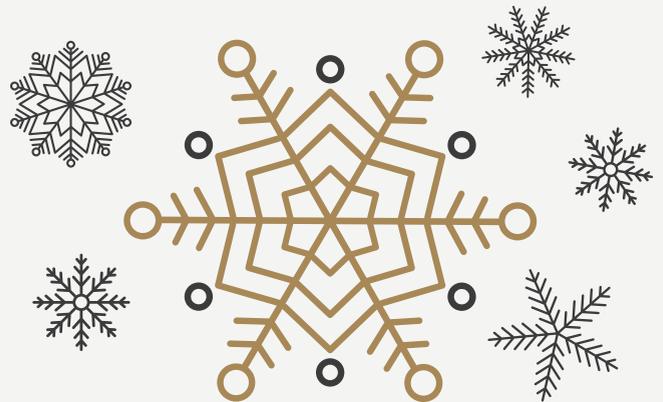
Site Rentals

MEETINGS | WEDDINGS | SPECIAL EVENTS

The perfect setting for your
special event!

Contact Dsuozzo@greenwichhistory.org for more info

SAVE THE DATE



HOLIDAY
Boutique

GREENWICH COUNTRY CLUB
DECEMBER 6, 5:30PM–8:00PM
DECEMBER 7, 9:30AM–4:30PM