

MUSEUM OF ART

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Forty Years of Work Celebrated in *Drawing Out of Line*

Pat Steir (American, b. 1938), a major figure in American art since the 1970s, has created some of the most ambitious and challenging drawings of the late 20th century. On February 19, the Museum opens *Pat Steir: Drawing Out of Line* in the Chace Center special-exhibition galleries. Organized by Jan Howard, the Museum's Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, and independent curator Susan Harris, the exhibition will present 40 years of Steir's work in a survey that focuses on her exploration of the vocabulary of drawing.

Drawing Out of Line concentrates on five distinct bodies of Steir's work: minimal and intimate word/image drawings (1970–74), serial investigations of line (1975–76), heroically scaled wave drawings (1983–86), waterfall drawings (1991), and a dramatic new series featuring broad, gestural marks that sometimes serve as a backdrop for delicate pastel grids (2007–08). As a whole, the exhibition fills 6,000 square feet of gallery space within the Chace Center and includes some 50 drawings on paper which are dramatically varied in scale, from smaller works to compositions up to 21 feet long. "Drawing is at the heart of everything she does—she is also a painter, printmaker, and poet—and her lifelong investigation of the vocabulary, history, and meaning behind mark-making makes The RISD Museum an ideal place to present the first retrospective look at her drawings in 25 years," said Jan Howard.

Visitors entering the main exhibition space will first encounter Steir's quiet, early works. Having written poetry before learning to paint, Steir considers drawing and writing as one and the same. In 1975, Steir narrowed her research



Pat Steir, *The Austria Group. No. 2, 1991.*

Purchased with funds from the Paula and Leonard Granoff Fund and Donald Stanon. © Pat Steir.

to focus on art itself, first making drawings in geometric and serial formats, exploring the parameters of a mark with a drawn frame. For a time her drawing investigations took place only in prints; the exhibition includes a selection of etching and aquatints from the related portfolio *Drawing Lesson, Part 1, Line* (1978), which refer to artists she admires, including Rembrandt, Sol LeWitt, and Van Gogh.

In her large wave drawings, Steir challenges the conventional notions of drawing in both scale and ambition. To create *Untitled* (1985, from the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, NY), which measures 5 feet by more than 14 feet, Steir stapled sheets of rolled paper to her studio wall and composed with the movement of her entire body. The resulting circular

forms correspond to the reach of her arm, yet she was also inspired by images of waves by Hokusai, Courbet, and Turner. Steir has also explored the imagery of the waterfall with remarkable invention and emotional intensity.

The entry gallery at the top of the Chace Center escalator will be covered with the wall drawing *Self-Portrait: An Installation*, a work inspired by Renaissance and Baroque drawing manuals. Steir, working with her assistant and 12 RISD students, will create the drawing beginning February 2, and over the approximately two weeks it will take to complete, the public will have the rare opportunity to watch the drawing in process.

Pat Steir: *Drawing Out of Line* opens February 19.

OF NOTE



Above: Workers move the sarcophagus from the Roger Williams Park Museum of Natural History to The RISD Museum.



Dear Members:

We are honored to present the drawings of Pat Steir in the Chace Center galleries this winter! Steir brings us the poetic language of line, from tiny marks to sweeping gestural waves. Witness the artist in action in early February, assisted by RISD students, as they cover the walls in one gallery with drawings, and don't miss the special members' opening party on February 27. A series of artist conversations—with artist Julie Mehretu, with print publisher Kathan Brown, and with exhibition co-curators Jan Howard and Susan Harris—illuminate Steir's remarkable career.

Winter winds may be whistling outside, but in the Asian Textiles Gallery, colorful butterflies take flight in *Queen of the Insects: The Art of the Butterfly*, while in the Porcelain Gallery dramatic waterfalls shimmer in British watercolors. Come in from the cold, bring your friends, and enjoy an evening of music on March 12, or a discussion with Nato Thompson, Mark Tribe, and Patricia Phillips on March 21. There's so much to see; I look forward to meeting you in the galleries!

Best wishes,

Ann S. Woolsey

Ann Woolsey, Interim Director

Poetry at the Museum

Two upcoming events at the Museum celebrate the work of famous poets. The 15th Annual Langston Hughes Poetry Reading will be held on Sunday, February 7th, at 1pm, with guest reader Jamele Adams. (For more information, see Events.) And on Sunday, April 25th at 2:30pm, join us in the Chace Gallery, where Anne Waldman reads her poems related to the work of Pat Steir and other visual artists.

New Education Department Staff

The RISD Museum recently hired two staff members in the Education Department. **Mariani Lefas-Tetenes** has taken the position of educator for school and teacher programs, having already served an important role in developing the Museum's successful program *Dig the Museum! Building Cultural Connections*, launched in 2007. Prior to working as a museum educator, she taught art history and worked in curatorial, conservation, education, and editorial capacities for arts organizations including the Jewish Museum, the Grey Art Gallery at New York University, and the New York Historical Society. Mariani holds a BA from Indiana University in art history and philosophy, an MA in art history and criticism from SUNY Stony Brook, and is pursuing a PhD in art history at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

Aja Blanc has joined the Museum as the assistant educator for family and youth programs. Aja has an MA in teaching and learning in art and design from RISD and has worked as a museum educator at the Yale University Art Gallery for the past five years, leading the development of programs for Yale undergraduates. Prior to working at Yale, Aja served as an educator at the MFA Boston, the Bellevue Arts Museum, and the Seattle Art Museum. As a working artist engaged in the creative process, she is an active advocate for museum education, community participation, and the arts.



Mariani Lefas-Tetenes



Aja Blanc

Third-Century Sarcophagus Transferred

On Wednesday, December 16, a massive marble sarcophagus was transported from the Roger Williams Park Museum of Natural History and Planetarium to The RISD Museum of Art. The 3,500-pound sarcophagus—a marble form prepared in the early 3rd century CE with inserted ancient columns and later carving—was given to the Museum of Natural History by Mrs. R. H. I. Goddard in 1904. Now focused on the natural sciences, the Museum of Natural History offered the sarcophagus on long-term loan to The RISD Museum, where it will be interpreted in the context of other works of art from Ancient Rome and Greece. After the sarcophagus is cleaned and stabilized by RISD Museum conservators, it will be installed in the Museum's ancient art galleries, which re-open this fall after a nine-month renovation.

Radeke Society Day Trip to New York

On April 10, join RISD Museum curator Jan Howard for a trip to Chelsea, Manhattan's arts district and home to more than 370 art galleries. The first stop is the home of interior designer Glenn Gissler (1984, RISD Museum Board of Governors) and his wife, curator Susan Harris, who with their daughter live with an extensive collection of modern and contemporary art. After lunch, there's a private reception at one of Chelsea's hottest contemporary art galleries and a visit to Pat Steir's studio with some time for gallery hopping. Fee to cover transportation and lunch. For more info, contact Kristen Powich at 401 454-6321.



Recent Acquisition

Pat Steir

The Burial Mound at Stonehenge, 1973

Graphite, ink wash, and dye
19 x 24 in.

Purchased in honor of Hope Alswang, Director of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 2005-09; accessioned by the 2009-10 Fine Arts Committee; Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 2009.83 © Pat Steir

Pat Steir has always thought of her work as relating to humankind's urge to communicate, even from its earliest history. That idea is referred to in the title of this work, *Burial Mound at Stonehenge*, a loosely drawn invented landscape in graphite and watercolor juxtaposed with a formal grid of the Palmer method "push-pull" script, which she learned in penmanship lessons at school. Many of Steir's drawings are driven by a notion her father instilled in her, one that can be traced to the Renaissance: "If you can learn to write, you can learn to draw." By balancing the use of script and image in this work, she directly responds to this axiom and alludes to how we all learn to leave our mark in the world, just like the builders of Stonehenge.

The drawing, featured in *Pat Steir: Drawing Out of Line*, was acquired for The RISD Museum's collection in honor of Hope Alswang, who served as director from 2005 to 2009. Committed to raising the profile of exemplary women artists, Alswang enthusiastically supported the Steir exhibition from its inception.

EXHIBITIONS

EVENTS

opening this winter

The Primacy of Paper: Recent Works from the Collection

Opened FRI JAN 15

Linda and Vincent Buonanno Works on Paper Gallery

Contemporary drawings and prints can function as key components of an artist's practice, and in recent years, works on paper have come to challenge the primacy of painting and sculpture. This selection, intended to complement the exhibition *Pat Steir: Drawing Out of Line*, features recent works by Shahzia Sikander, Julie Mehretu (MFA 1997), Kiki Smith, Sol LeWitt, and others for whom the act and process of drawing plays a key role in the creation or rejection of meaning.

Presence through Process

Opened FRI JAN 15

Bill and Nancy Tsiras Gallery in Honor of Aaron Siskind

The desire to depict the perceptual and physical experience of the human body, rather than merely its appearance, can serve as a catalyst for photographic experimentation. This exhibition presents works by Emmet Gowin, Vik Muniz, Frederick Sommer, Lesley Dill, and other artists exploring the poetics and politics of the human figure. Featured is a cross-section of photographic processes from the latter half of the 20th century, from camera manipulation to more direct registers of presence.

Pat Steir: Drawing Out of Line

Opens FRI FEB 19

Pat Steir has been a major figure in American art since the 1970s, creating some of the most ambitious and challenging drawings of the late 20th century. *Drawing Out of Line* presents 40 years of her work, focusing on her exploration of the vocabulary of drawing. Introduced with a recreation of her wall drawing *Self-Portrait: An Installation*, first created for the New Museum in New York in 1987, this survey presents her drawings on paper, which are dramatically varied in scale, in relation to her paintings and prints. Support has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts; Cheim & Read, New York; Paula and Leonard Granoff; and an anonymous donor. The Providence Tourism Council is supporting a free community day featuring The Big Draw, to be held at the Museum in April.

Sitings 2010: Museum as Action

FRI FEB 26 through SUN JUN 3

Sitings 2010: Museum as Action is a competition that invites student responses to the Museum's architectural idiosyncracies, collection, and habits of visitation. This year's winning artists are Celeste Wilson (BFA 2010), for her installation *Untitled* in the Associates' Bridge, and Lee Johnson and Benjamin Peterson (both MFA 2011), for their installation *Column* in the Salter Media Gallery. New York-based artist Spencer Finch (MFA 1989) juried the competition. *Sitings* is funded by the Artist's Development Fund of the Rhode Island Foundation.

The Figure: Contemporary Works from the Collection

Opens FRI MAR 12

The human figure, one of the oldest motifs in the history of art, seems to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration for contemporary artists. The theme is presented here in a range of mediums and approaches, including painting, printmaking, sculpture, video, and needlework. Some artists represented in the exhibition use themselves as subject matter while others work with live models, photographs, or personal memory as a starting point. The selection of objects includes a number of recent acquisitions that are being exhibited at the Museum for the first time, including works by Tom Friedman, Tracey Emin, Keith Coventry, Judy Glantzman, Tyan Trecartin/Lizzie Fitch, Allison Newsome, and Grayson Perry, among others.

currently on view

Queen of the Insects: The Art of the Butterfly

Through SUN MAY 9

Always fashionable, the butterfly motif has adorned a wide variety of objects, from porcelain and prints to jewelry and textiles. Objects from the Museum's costume and textiles collections—including a luminous 19th-century Chinese hand-painted summer robe, a ca. 1905 embroidered silk gown from the famed Japanese retailer Iida Takashimaya, and a gossamer 1970s printed chiffon dress designed by Hanae Mori—serve to illustrate the universal impulse to capture the fleeting art of the butterfly. Juxtaposed with its usage in Western design, the traditional symbolism of the butterfly in Asian art will be explored and decoded as a design inspiration and as a material in itself.

Rapid Gestures: Waterfalls in British Romantic Art

Through SUN JUN 6

Rapid Gestures: Waterfalls in British Romantic Art showcases the variety of materials, colors, lines, and brushstrokes artists used to portray these boisterous features of the natural world. Drawn from the Museum's rich collection of 18th- and 19th-century British watercolors and sketches, this exhibition offers the rare opportunity to compare works by J. M. W. Turner, including his magnificent *Dazio Grande* (1843), with depictions by contemporaries such as John Ruskin, John Constable, Edward Lear, and John Robert Cozens.

Mountains and Rivers: Scenic Views of Japan

Through SAT JUL 31

Beginning in the early 19th century, landscape evolved into a popular theme in Japanese printmaking. This subject matter, drawn from older painting traditions, was transferred to the medium of woodblock printing, where richer, more innovative thematic content appeared. This exhibition will highlight depictions of famous places (*meisho*), including selections from the Museum's complete set of Hiroshige's *Tyūkaidō* (Eastern Sea Route) prints and Hokusai's series of the "Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji."

closing soon

Nature/Artifice: Contemporary Works from the Collection

Through SUN FEB 28

Avish Khebrehzadeh: Backyard and other stories

Through SUN MAR 28

Carey Young: Uncertain Contracts

Through SUN APR 18



Above: Chinese, sleeve band (detail), 19th century. On view in *Queen of the Insects*. Gift of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich.

seminars + lectures

To register or for more information, contact Deb Clemons at 401 454-6530 or dclemons@risd.edu.

SAT FEB 13 | 10am - 5pm

Power Drawing: Professional Development

This one-day workshop for cultural educators, community organizers, and teachers shares plans for making drawing a medium for learning across a variety of settings. Led by Eileen Adams, director of the Campaign for Drawing, the workshop will explore the concepts of gesture, line, copying, and self-portraiture. Fee; pre-registration required.

SUN FEB 14, MAR 14, APR 11, + MAY 16 | 2:30 - 4pm

A Grand Tour: Introduction to Art History II 17th Century-Contemporary Art

Explore the history of art, from the 17th century to the present day, in the galleries of The RISD Museum with specialist curators. Each of the four sessions will include a discussion of major artists and primary texts. Pre-registration required. Members, \$180; non-members, \$220.

TUE MAR 9 | 1pm

Tuesday Talks Series: Museum as Muse

Held in conjunction with the exhibitions *Queen of the Insects* and *Designing Tradition*, this series explores how work of the past generates new work. Joan Morris merges painting, printing, gilding, and shaped-resist dyeing in her work, while artist Jane Masters uses traditional embroidery and wallpaper patterns as her inspiration. Fee: free to members; \$15 per lecture, non-members (\$35 for the 3-lecture series). Other dates for the series are April 13 + May 18.

THURS APR 15, MAY 20, + JUN 17 | 5:30 - 7pm

Paintings and Pages: A Gallery Book Group

Zola and Manet, Byron and Delacroix, Thackeray and Firth. Make connections between great novels and stunning paintings in this gallery book group. Participants read an assigned text and explore the intersections of novels and paintings in lively discussions led by Brown professor Rhoda Flaxman. We will consider not only similarities and differences in content (what is depicted), but also in form (how it is expressed). Members, \$120; non-members, \$200; fee does not include books. Space is limited, pre-registration is required.

> Unless otherwise noted, all lectures take place in the **Michael P. Metcalf Auditorium, Chace Center**, and are free to the public.

adult programs

feb

SUN FEB 7 | 1pm

15th Annual Langston Hughes Community Poetry Reading

Celebrate the life and work of this cultural icon and writer. Guest reader Jamele Adams, poet and associate dean of student life at Brandeis University, gives a special presentation. Jazz music by Daniel Ian Smith accompanies the readings, which are followed by a reception. This program is presented in coordination with Anne Edmonds Clanton.

THURS FEB 18 | free admission 5 - 9pm

Member preview day for Pat Steir: Drawing Out of Line, 10am - 9pm

Screening: Networks 2009 Portraits, 6 - 8pm,
Networks 2009 films showcase the work of selected contemporary Rhode Island visual artists. This is an ongoing project that supports and documents artists, and was developed by Dr. Joseph Chazan and Umberto Crenca of AS220.

Wed FEB 24 | 2pm | Danforth Lecture Hall

Artist Lecture: Providence to Prudence: Art Expressions in Clay

Ceramic artist and sculptor Allison Newsome discusses how her work addresses issues of the environment and human interaction. She currently teaches at Harvard University and the Boston Museum School for the Arts. This lecture is presented by the Pottery and Porcelain Club.

SAT FEB 27

Opening Celebration for Pat Steir: Drawing Out of Line, with special gallery talk for Radeke Society members

A significant figure in American art since the 1970s, Pat Steir is known for her ambitious and challenging drawings, inspired by her lifelong investigation of the vocabulary and history of mark-making. This exhibition is the first retrospective look at her work in 25 years. For more information about the Radeke Society, please contact Kristen Powich at 401 454-6321.

SUN FEB 28 | 2pm

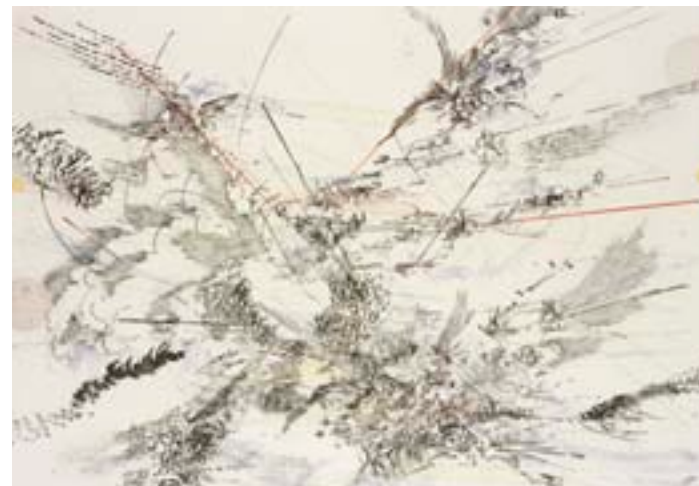
Art Shots: From Converted Barns to Museum Galleries: Experimentation and Development in 20th-Century Art

These engaging gallery talks focus on individual works of art from the perspective of student artists and art historians. This discussion is led by Brown University students Reina Shibata and Montana Blanco. Meet in the Chace Center lobby.

SUN FEB 28 | 2:30pm

Drawing Lessons #1: Pat Steir and Kathan Brown

Pat Steir joins in conversation with Kathan Brown, founding director of San Francisco's Crown Point Press, where Steir has made prints since 1977. RISD Museum curator Jan Howard moderates this discussion about how prints took on the role of drawings for Steir. Co-sponsored by RISD's Printmaking Department.



Julie Mehretu (MFA 1997), *Local Calm*, 2005. On view in *The Primacy of Paper*. Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund. © Julie Mehretu.

mar

SUN MAR 7 | 2pm

Art Shots: Presence through Process

Diverse photographic processes from the latter half of the 20th century capture the poetics and politics of the human figure. Brown University's Mazie Harris and RISD's Isaac Wingfield (MFA 2010), student curators of this exhibit, discuss conceptual and technical strategies used by the artists. Meet in Chace Center lobby.

THURS MAR 11 | 5:30pm

Gallery Talk: Drawing Out of Line

Independent curator Susan Harris and RISD Museum Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Jan Howard discuss the exhibition in the galleries.

THURS MAR 11 | 6:30pm

Drawing Lessons #2: Pat Steir and Julie Mehretu

Pat Steir and Julie Mehretu (MFA 1997) will discuss how drawing became the basis of their work in all media. Susan Harris, co-curator for *Pat Steir: Drawing Out of Line*, will moderate the conversation, with a special focus on issues specific to women artists of their respective generations. Co-sponsored by the Painting departments at Brown University and RISD and the Foundation Studies Division at RISD. Fee: \$5, members; \$10, non-members. Advance tickets can be purchased by contacting Visitor Services at 401 709-8402.

FRI MAR 12 | 5:30 - 8:30pm

Music Friday

Listen to the Occidental Gypsy Jazz Quartet swing to music by masters of the style, including Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli. View the special exhibition *Pat Steir: Drawing out of Line* and enjoy music, refreshments, and a cash bar in the Main Gallery. Enter through the Chace Center. Admission is \$5, members; \$10, non-members. Attendees must be over 21.

SUN MAR 14 | 2pm

New Member Orientation

We invite members to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity to enrich your Museum experience! Enjoy an afternoon reception followed by a brief tour of key objects with one of our renowned curators. This event is open to all Museum members. For more information, please contact Kristen Powich at 401 454-6321.

THURS MAR 18

Gallery Night

A free city-wide art evening, Third Thursday of the month, 5 - 9pm
Join a conversation with a curator and artist. Take gallery exploration into your own hands. Enjoy live music with wine at our cash bar. Exercise your artistic potential with optional coaching. Watch award-winning independent documentaries and shorts focused on art and culture.

Sitings 2010: Museum as Action, 5 - 9pm

Remarks at 7:30pm, gather in the Chace gallery, 3rd floor
Celebrate the winning entries by Lee Johnson and Benjamin Peterson (both MFA 2011) and Celeste Wilson (BFA 2010) for the annual *Sitings* competition juried by Spencer Finch (MFA 1989).

Music in the Main Gallery: Steve DeConti, jazz guitarist, 6:30 - 8pm

SUN MAR 21 | 2pm

Art Shots: Reflections: Looking Back at Portraiture through the Ages

These engaging gallery talks focus on individual works of art from the perspective of student artists and art historians. This discussion is led by Brown University student Megan Boomer and RISD's Marlene Frontera (BFA 2010). Meet in the Chace Center lobby.

SUN MAR 21 | 2:30pm

Uncertain Contracts: Nato Thompson, Mark Tribe, and Patricia Phillips in Conversation

On the occasion of the exhibition *Carey Young: Uncertain Contracts*, chief curator of Creative Time Nato Thompson presents highlights of his curatorial work, followed by responses from and conversation with artist and Brown professor Mark Tribe and RISD's dean of graduate studies, Patricia Phillips. Co-sponsored by Graduate Studies, RISD.

WED MAR 24 | 2pm | Danforth Lecture Hall

Lecture: Commentaries in Clay, Staffordshire Figures, 1810-35

Myrna Schkolne was first introduced to ceramic collectibles as a child living in England and a hobby became a lifelong passion. In 2006 she published *People, Pastimes, Passions and Pleasures: Staffordshire Figures 1810-1835*. This lecture is presented by the Pottery and Porcelain Club.



Ann Agee, *Woman with Camera and Pink Skirt*, 1998. On view in *The Figure*.

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund. © Ann Agee.



Matteo Thun, *Passerina Noctua* teapot, 1981-84. Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund.

family programs

Free-For-All Saturday

Gallery explorations, hands-on art workshops, performances, and film screenings offer engaging ways for children and adults to discover art and design in RISD Museum's collection and special exhibitions. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Held the last Saturday of the month, free all day.

SAT + SUN FEB 13 + 14

Providence Children's Film Festival

On Presidents' Day weekend, The RISD Museum plays host to the first annual Providence Children's Film Festival, with independent and international films, animations, and filmmaker presentations and related activities and workshops. Additional screenings will take place at the Cable Car Cinema, 204 S. Main St. Visit www.providencechildrensfilmfestival.org for more info.

SAT FEB 27 | 1 - 4pm

Animate This!

Explore different animation techniques, from early silhouette animation to computer-generated imagery, and bring your own character to life.

SAT MAR 27 | 1 - 4pm

Everyday Marvels

Most of the objects that we use in our daily lives have been designed by someone. Many we take for granted. In this session, we explore revolutionary objects that have changed the way we interact with the world around us. Come be an inventor and designer!

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RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

224 Benefit Street
Providence
Rhode Island
02903-2723



The RISD Museum receives partial support for programs and activities through an Institutional Support Grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts.

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Permit No. 408

welcome new members!

SEP | OCT 2009

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Ruth K. Rosenberg
Shirah Rubin

Japanese, *stencil* (detail),
19th century. On view in
Queen of Insects.
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke.

Larry Schmidt + Cynthia Naturale
Richard Schultz + Jennifer Paredes
Mr. + Mrs. Stephen Schweich
Beni Seballos + Eric Goldlust
Charna Sherman
Christine Stinson
Carolyn Testa
Mr. + Mrs. Ladd Thorne
Anne Webb
Marshall B. Williams
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general information

Hours

Tues.-Sun., 10am-5pm; third
Thurs. monthly 5-9pm. Closed the
month of August, New Year's Day,
Independence Day, Thanksgiving
Day, and Christmas Day.

Admission

Members, free; adults, \$10; senior
citizens (62 years and older), \$7;
youths (ages 5-18), \$3; children
under 5, free; college students
(w/valid ID), \$3. Free to all: third
Thurs. monthly 5-9pm, and the
last Sat. of the month (except
Dec.). Pay-what-you-wish:
Every Sun. 10am-1pm.

Information

Tel: 401 454-6500
Fax: 401 454-6556
Web site: www.risdmuseum.org
Email: museum@risd.edu
Enter through the Chace Center
at 20 N. Main Street.

Access

Please call 401 454-6534
(TTY 800 745-5555)
if you need assistance to
participate in Museum tours
or programs. The Museum
is ♿ accessible.

Parking

The Metropark lot at the
corner of North Main and
Steeple Streets offers
discounted parking to
Museum visitors. Validate
your parking coupon at the
Museum's front desk. RISD
lots are available after 5pm
weekdays and on weekends.