



Massillon Museum

February 18 through May 23, 2017



Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception • Massillon Museum

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



Enclosed you will find the following information
about the Massillon Museum's spring exhibition,
Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception

Main Exhibition News Release
Exhibition Fact Sheet
Thumbnail Prints of Photographic Images with Identification
Massillon Museum Calendar of Events, February 18 through May 23

Exhibition Opening Release
"Do the Mu" Workshop with David McDowell Release
"Fundamentals of Reading Braille" with Erin Byrne Release
Mark Andres "Painting with Light" Photography Workshop Release
Brown Bag Lunch—*Blind Spot* Release

Sponsor Information
Classic Interactions / Soundscape Explanation

Curator, Co-curator, and Intern Bio Sheets
Tactile Model Artist and Logo Designer Bio Sheets
Cleveland Institute of Music Student Composers Bio Sheet

Massillon Museum Fact Sheet
Massillon Museum Quarterly Calendar

ON THE FLASH DRIVE:
Photographic Images from the Exhibition
Word Files of the Releases
Photographic Images Curators, Interns, and Partners
Massillon Museum Logo
Collaborator and Sponsor Logos

Follow-up releases will be emailed to you closer to each event.

We look forward to your help with the promotion of this groundbreaking exhibition
and we hope you'll join us for the exhibition opening, for some of the events,
or simply for a visit to the Museum sometime soon.

***Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* • Massillon Museum**

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



News Release: *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception*

The Massillon Museum's *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* exhibition will be a compilation of more than a dozen components with the hope of reaching persons with low vision and blindness as well as sighted patrons.

The free public exhibition opening will be held Saturday, February 18, 2017, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. The event will include refreshments inspired by paintings in the exhibition and a performance of specially commissioned music at 4:00 p.m. Persons with blindness and low vision and their guests will be welcomed at 1:30 p.m. The Massillon Museum members' preview will begin at 2:00 p.m. No reservations will be necessary. The exhibition will continue through May 23, 2017.

Blind Spot is based on ten abstract paintings from the Massillon Museum's permanent collection. Each painting will be accompanied by a small-scale, three-dimensional aluminum model and a braille label, which all visitors will be invited to touch. Large-print labels will also be displayed.

Ten abstract paintings from the Massillon Museum permanent collection

Artists include Richard Andres, David Appleman, Julius Faysash, Clare Ferriter, Richard Florsheim, Sherri Hornbrook, Leo Thomas Kissell, Walter Quirt, and Theodoros Stamos (represented by two paintings).

Large-print labels

High-contrast, large-print labels affixed to the wall at appropriate heights throughout the exhibition will help visitors with low vision enjoy the paintings.

Braille labels

Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Cincinnati, Ohio, will produce exhibition labels in braille.

Tactile gallery maps

Gallery maps with raised information, also provided by Clovernook Center, will help guests with low vision and blindness navigate through the exhibition independently.

An aluminum tactile model of each painting

Canton artist David McDowell has created a three-dimensional aluminum tactile model of each artwork. Visitors will be able to feel the shapes in the paintings.

- more -

An iPad touchscreen soundscape app for each painting

Classic Interactions has created an app for each painting with audible descriptions of the artwork, and sounds inspired by the painting. These sounds were developed with help from Barry Stirbens and Jan Stirbens, both of whom have congenital blindness. The Philomatheon Society of the Blind provided tactile stickers to adhere to the iPads to help patrons with blindness locate the audible home screen buttons.

Tactile response artworks created by students

Students at the Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Cincinnati, Ohio, will create ceramic sculptures based on their responses to soundscapes described by co-curators Barry Stirbens and Jan Stirbens, and developed into apps by Classic Interactions to audibly describe the visual paintings.

Accessible exhibition design

Carpet donated by Fred's Carpets in Canton will help patrons who use canes to locate interactive stations.

Low-vision simulator goggles

Sighted patrons may borrow goggles that replicate central scotomas (blind spots) so they can experience the exhibition from the perspective of a person with age-related macular degeneration (AMD)—the leading cause of low vision in the developed world.

Tours

Accessible tours of the entire Museum are available upon request. Advance reservations are required.

Braille workshop

Erin Byrne will offer a four-session "Fundamentals of Reading Braille" workshop on Saturdays, April 22 and 29, May 6 and 13, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Sponsored by the Philomatheon Society of the Blind, the workshop is free, but pre-registration is required.

Performance of music commissioned for the exhibition opening

At the exhibition opening—Saturday, February 18, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.—a Canton Symphony Orchestra quartet will perform three compositions inspired by three paintings in the exhibition. Students in the Cleveland Institute of Music's Composer Fellowship composed the pieces.

Do the Mu

David McDowell, who created the tactile models for the exhibition, will lead the free monthly Do the Mu workshop on Saturday, March 4, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. Participants in the intergenerational drop-in workshop will create tactile sculptures based on MassMu's abstract painting collection.

Brown Bag Lunch

The free monthly event will feature a panel discussion with *Blind Spot* developers—curator Heather Haden, co-curator Barry Stirbens, and artist David McDowell—on Tuesday, May 23, 12:10 to 12:50 p.m.

Photography Workshop

Mark Andres, son of Richard Andres, whose painting *Carnival IV* is in the exhibition, will lead a photography workshop for persons of all vision levels on Saturday, May 20. Andres founded Seeing with Photography Collective, a collective of photographers who are blind or have low vision that has exhibited work around the world.

Performance of original music composed for *Blind Spot*

The Canton Symphony Orchestra will perform music by Alex Cooke, Joseph Tolonen, and Qingye Wu, students in the Cleveland Institute of Arts Composer Fellowship. The compositions were inspired by paintings in the *Blind Spot* exhibition.

The Massillon Museum and museums internationally have begun designing exhibitions more universally to advocate for enhanced arts access, especially following the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 2015. *Blind Spot* is a concerted effort by the Massillon Museum to address access for as many audiences as possible.

The concept of this exhibition has been germinating in Massillon Museum Curator Heather Haden's mind for a number of years. "In 2011, in advance of starting a curatorial internship at the Massillon Museum, I attended the *Faces of Rural America* exhibition," said Museum Curator Heather Haden. "Our current director, then-curator, Alexandra Nicholis Coon, had commissioned four local artists to each translate a photograph into a tactile model with braille. At the time I encountered *Faces of Rural America*, I was reading, for leisure, Vladimir Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark*, a work of fiction about an art critic who goes blind in a terrible car accident. Simultaneously, I was a masters student of art history at Kent State focusing on the history of abstract painting and I thought to myself, if I were to lose my sight, how could I possibly enjoy abstract art?"

Haden received a grant through the Ohio Arts Council to attend the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability conference in Pittsburgh in August 2016 to support exhibition development.

Blind Spot sponsors include Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Philomatheon Society of the Blind, and Fred's Carpets. The Massillon Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council and ArtsinStark. Yund's Carwash and Detail, Bates Printing, MCTV, Cyrus Custom Framing, The Dell Group, Farmers National Bank, Bonnie's Engravers Gallery and Signs, Massillon Development Foundation, and the Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce helped provide exhibition support through corporate membership.

The Massillon Museum is located at 121 Lincoln Way East in downtown Massillon. Free parking is available on adjacent streets and in nearby city lots. The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday 9:30 to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. For more information, call 330-833-4061 or visit massillonmuseum.org.

Media Contacts:

Alexandra Nicholis Coon, Massillon Museum Executive Director - 330.833.4061 x111
Heather Haden, Massillon Museum Curator - 330.833.4061 x112
Margy Vogt, Massillon Museum Public Relations Coordinator - 330.844.1525

- end -



Blind Spot Exhibition Fact Sheet

Exhibition	<i>Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception</i>		
Dates	February 18 through May 23, 2017		
Location	Massillon Museum • 121 Lincoln Way East • Downtown Massillon		
Exhibition Summary	<i>Blind Spot</i> features ten abstract paintings from the Massillon Museum collection, each translated into a sonic iPad touch-screen app. Tactile models along with typewritten and braille labels accompany each painting. Accessible exhibit design and complementary events enhance the experience for visitors of all vision levels.		
Museum Contact	Heather Haden, Massillon Museum Curator		
Contact Info	Phone: 330.833.4061 x112 • hhaden@massillonmuseum.org • massillonmuseum.org		
Exhibition Opening	Saturday, February 18 • 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. 1:30 p.m. Preview for patrons with vision impairments • 2:00 p.m. Preview for MassMu members		
Regular Hours	Tuesday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Sunday, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. (Closed Mondays and major holidays)		
Admission	Free		
Parking	Free on adjacent streets and in nearby city lots		
Tours	Available for groups with advance reservations (no charge)		
Exhibition Co-Curators	Heather Haden, Massillon Museum Curator Barry Stirbens and Jan Stirbens, Exhibition Co-curators		
Exhibition Sponsors	Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired Philomatheon Society of the Blind Fred's Carpets		
Operating Support	Ohio Arts Council ArtsinStark		
Corporate Sponsors	Cyrus Custom Framing Yund's Carwash and Detail The Dell Group Bonnie's Engravers Gallery MCTV	Bates Printing Massillon Development Foundation Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce Farmers National Bank	
Exhibition Components	Ten abstract paintings, each with aluminum tactile models and touchscreen soundscapes Large-print and braille labels Tactile gallery maps and accessible exhibit design Response artworks by visually impaired students Three original musical compositions in response to three paintings (during the exhibition opening) Low-vision simulator goggles Accessible tours of all MassMu exhibitions on request Six complementary events/educational opportunities		
Painters Represented	Richard Andres David Appleman Julius Faysash	Clare Ferriter Richard Florsheim Sherri Hornbrook	Leo Thomas Kissell Walter Quirt Theodoros Stamos (two paintings)
Tactile Model Artist	David McDowell		
Complementary Events	February 18 (3:00–5:00 pm): Free exhibition opening with Canton Symphony Orchestra quartet March 4 (12:00–2:00 pm): Free "Do the Mu" workshop with David McDowell April 22 (3:00–4:00): Four-week "Fundamentals of Reading Braille" workshop begins May 20 (10:00 am–3:00 pm): "Painting with Light" workshop with Mark Andres May 23 (12:10–12:50 pm): Free Brown Bag Lunch— <i>Blind Spot</i> Panel Discussion Canton Symphony Orchestra performance of Cleveland Institute of Music compositions: TBA (Fall)		



Paintings in the Exhibition
(Find high-resolution files
on the enclosed flash drive)



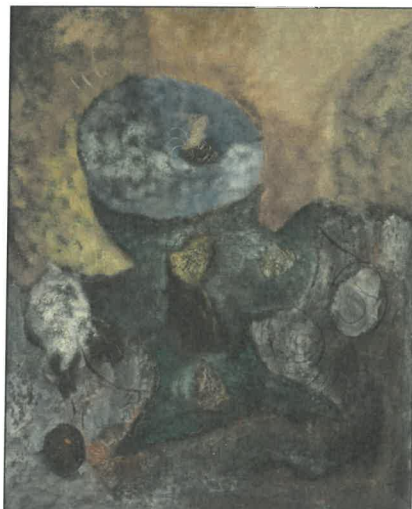
David Appleman (b. 1943)

Earth Four
Oil on canvas
1968

68.131

Sample Tactile Model (far left)

An aluminum tactile model by David McDowell accompanies each painting in the exhibition.



Theodoros Stamos (1922–1997)

Ancestral Spectre
Oil on composition board
1950

Gift of Benjamin Weiss
56.44



Walter Quirt (1902–1968)

Abstraction
Oil on canvas
1956

Gift of Benjamin Weiss
56.45



Julius Faysash (1904–1977)

Shoreline

Oil on canvas

1970

70.74



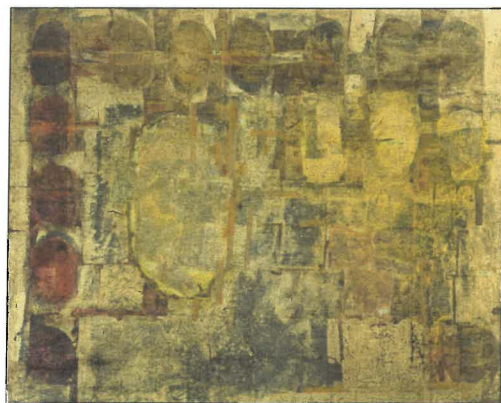
Leo Thomas Kissell (b.1923)

Normandale Afternoon

Oil on canvas

1963

71.80.1



Clare Ferriter (1909–1994)

Camelot

Acrylic and mixed media

1970

73.62



Theodoros Stamos (1922–1997)

Phoenix

Oil on canvas

1952

Gift of Benjamin Weiss

56.136



Richard Florsheim (1916–1979)

Celebration

Oil and wax on gesso

1969

68.131

Sample Sound App

A one-minute description like this accompanies each painting on an adjacent iPad touchscreen:

Celebration is the title of an oil and wax painting on gesso, painted in 1969, by American artist Richard Florsheim. The dimensions of this abstract landscape painting are six inches wide by eighteen inches tall. The painting depicts a blue and green sky consuming most of the length. *Celebration* shows fireworks over water at night. There are three bursts of bright orange and yellow forms filling the dark night sky. Aside from those bursts of color, and more muddled oranges and reds at the bottom of the painting, it is composed entirely of dark blues and black. The bottom quarter of the painting is quite hazy, suggesting the fireworks are over water. It is unclear where exactly the horizon is, as the sky and water blend together.



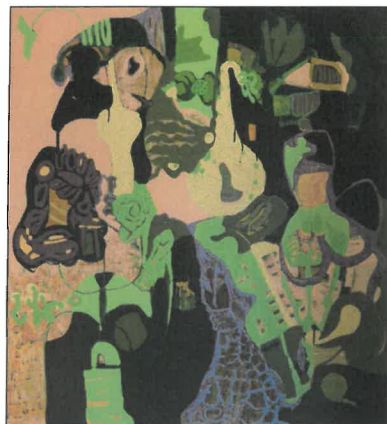
Richard Andres (1927–2013)

Carnival IV

Oil on canvas

1969

69.37



Sherri Hornbrook (b. 1952)

Gourd Head

Mixed media on canvas

2000



Events Scheduled to Complement *Blind Spot*

Opening Reception • Saturday, February 18, 3:00–5:00 pm
Free • Public • No reservations

At 4:00, Canton Symphony Orchestra quartet will perform three musical compositions, each inspired by a painting in the exhibition, composed by students in the Cleveland Institute of Music's Composer Fellowship.

Fundamentals of Reading Braille • Saturdays, April 22 & 29, May 6 & 13, 3:00–4:00 pm
Free • Public • Pre-registration required

Led by Erin Byrne, the class is sponsored by the Philomatheon Society of the Blind. Space is limited.

Do the Mu with David McDowell • Saturday, March 4, 12:00–2:00 pm
Free • Public • No reservations

This free intergenerational drop-in workshop will celebrate the *Blind Spot* exhibition as participants create tactile sculptures based on the Massillon Museum's abstract painting collection.

Brown Bag Lunch • Tuesday, May 23, 12:10–12:50 pm
Free • Public • No reservations

A panel discussion with *Blind Spot* curator Heather Haden, co-curator Pastor Barry Stirbens, and artist David McDowell will focus on the creation of the exhibition and the experience of visiting it.

Mark Andres Photography Workshop • Saturday, May 20, 10:00 am–3:00 pm with lunch break
\$45 (\$40 MassMu member) • Public • Pre-registration required

Mark Andres, son of *Blind Spot* artist Richard Andres, is the founder of the New York-based Seeing with Photography Collective. He will lead participants of all vision levels in a workshop to create long-exposure photographs by "painting" with a flashlight in the dark.

Canton Symphony Orchestra Performance • Fall 2017—Details TBA

Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception at the Massillon Museum

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



News Release: *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* to Open February 18 at MassMu

The Massillon Museum's spring exhibition, *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception*, will open Saturday, February 18, 2017, from 3:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon. Persons with blindness and low vision and their guests will be welcomed at 1:30 p.m. The Massillon Museum members' preview will begin at 2:00 p.m. The free public event will include refreshments inspired by paintings in the exhibition and a performance of specially commissioned music at 4:00 p.m. No reservations will be necessary.

Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception is based on ten abstract paintings from the Massillon Museum's permanent collection by Richard Andres, David Appleman, Julius Faysash, Clare Ferriter, Richard Florsheim, Sherri Hornbrook, Leo Thomas Kissell, Walter Quirt, and Theodoros Stamos. Each painting will be accompanied by a three-dimensional cast aluminum model and a braille label, which all visitors will be invited to touch. Large-print labels will also be displayed. A touchscreen adjacent to each painting will provide an audible description. More than a dozen components will enhance the experience of visiting *Blind Spot*.

The Museum has commissioned three students from the Cleveland Institute of Music's Composer Fellowship to each write a piece inspired by one of the paintings in the exhibition. Alex Cooke's composition is based on *Celebration* by Richard Florsheim; Joseph Tolonen has written a piece based on *Abstraction* by Walter Quirt; and Qingye Wu used *Shoreline* by Julius Faysash as inspiration. A Canton Symphony Orchestra quartet will perform their compositions at the exhibition opening.

Additional exhibition components that guests will encounter at the opening include tactile gallery maps, accessible exhibition design, tactile response artworks created by students at the Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Cincinnati, and low-vision goggles. The exhibition will continue through May 23, 2017, and special programming will be provided throughout its duration.

Blind Spot sponsors include Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Philomatheon Society of the Blind, and Fred's Carpets. The Massillon Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council and ArtsinStark. An Ohio Arts Council grant enabled Curator Heather Haden to attend the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability conference in Pittsburgh in 2016 to support exhibition development.

Yund's Carwash and Detail, Bates Printing, MCTV, Cyrus Custom Framing, The Dell Group, Farmers National Bank, Bonnie's Engravers Gallery and Signs, Massillon Development Foundation, and the Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce are major corporate sponsors.

The Massillon Museum is located at 121 Lincoln Way East in downtown Massillon. Free parking is available on adjacent streets and in nearby city lots. Regular Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday 9:30 to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. For more information, call 330-833-4061 or visit massillonmuseum.org.

Media Contacts:

Alexandra Nicholis Coon, Massillon Museum Executive Director - 330.833.4061 x111
Heather Haden, Massillon Museum Curator - 330.833.4061 x112
Margy Vogt, Massillon Museum Public Relations Coordinator - 330.844.1525

Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception • Massillon Museum

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



News Release: MassMu “Do the Mu!”—Tactile Sculptures with David McDowell

During the “Do the Mu!” at the Massillon Museum on Saturday, March 4, from noon to 2:00 p.m., artist David McDowell will help participants create three-dimensional tactile models of paintings. Guests may drop in any time during the workshop without a reservation.

The workshop complements the main gallery exhibition, *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception*. McDowell created a cast aluminum model to accompany each of ten paintings in the exhibition to make them more accessible to visitors with low vision or blindness.

McDowell, a visual artist based in The Hub Art Factory in the downtown Canton Arts District, graduated in 2002 with a bachelor of science in ceramics from Indiana Wesleyan University with special independent study in sculpture and stained glass. He did post-graduate studies overseas in art history and photography. McDowell was the first individual to receive two consecutive grants from ArtsinStark, and was twice voted by *About* magazine readers as the favorite artist in Stark County.

He just completed *Mother Goose Land Revised: Art of the Canton Landmark*, which featured six original cast aluminum picture frames (mothergooselandrevisited.com). His work can be seen at Grapes in a Glass Wine Bar, outside Sandy Valley High School, and soon in downtown Minerva. He is the artist-in-residence at The Troll Hole Museum in Alliance (thetrollhole.com) and creator and performer of the museum’s mascot, Magnus the Troll.

“Do the Mu!” adds a hands-on dimension to a Massillon Museum visit, providing a multi-generational interactive outlet for creativity. All materials, tools, and instruction are supplied at no charge.

Blind Spot will continue through May 23. For a complete listing of complementary events, visit massillonmuseum.org.

The Massillon Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council and ArtsinStark. *Blind Spot* sponsors include Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Philomatheon Society of the Blind, and Fred’s Carpets.

The Massillon Museum is located at 121 Lincoln Way East (Ohio Route 172) in downtown Massillon. A visit to the Massillon Museum is always free. Free parking is available on adjacent streets and in nearby city lots. For more information, call the Museum at 330-833-4061 or visit massillonmuseum.org.

Media Contacts:

Alexandra Nicholis Coon, Massillon Museum Executive Director - 330.833.4061 x111
April Olsen, Massillon Museum Education and Outreach Manager - 330.833.4061 x104
Heather Haden, Massillon Museum Curator - 330.833.4061 x112
Margy Vogt, Massillon Museum Public Relations Coordinator - 330.844.1525

Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception • Massillon Museum

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



News Release: MassMu “Fundamentals of Reading Braille” Workshop

The Massillon Museum will offer a four-session “Fundamentals of Reading Braille” workshop on Saturdays, April 22 and 29 and May 6 and 13, from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Sponsored by the Philomatheon Society of the Blind, the workshop is free, but pre-registration is required. Space is limited. The workshop is open to persons of all vision levels.

The workshop complements *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception*, an exhibition based on ten abstract paintings from the Massillon Museum’s permanent collection. Each work of art will be accompanied by a small-scale three-dimensional cast aluminum model and a braille label, which all visitors will be invited to touch. Large-print labels will also be displayed. A touchscreen adjacent to each painting will provide an audible description.

Representing the Philomatheon Society of the Blind in Canton, Erin Byrne will teach the class. The Philomatheon Society is an organization of persons with blindness, along with their families and friends. Its mission is to help people who are blind help themselves and remain independent, viable members of the community.

Byrne graduated from Miami University with bachelors’ degrees in vocal performance and Spanish. She earned her master’s in music at Kent State University in 2009. Since then, she has been an avid musician, braille and foreign language tutor, and community volunteer. A life-long braille reader, Byrne believes strongly in disability advocacy and she passionately promotes braille literacy among people with visual impairments. She values every teaching opportunity as a way to connect uniquely with others and she views each new experience as a marvelous learning opportunity.

In 1824, Louis Braille invented the universal system of writing and printing still used today by people who are blind. Characters embossed on paper can be read by passing the fingers lightly over the manuscript. The system is based on a matrix of six raised dots arranged in two columns of three. The sixty-three combinations possible in this framework represent letters, numbers, punctuation marks, and common words like “and” and “the.”

Blind Spot will continue through May 23. For a complete listing of complementary events, visit massillonmuseum.org.

The Massillon Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council and ArtsinStark. It is located at 121 Lincoln Way East (Ohio Route 172) in downtown Massillon. A visit to the Massillon Museum is always free. Free parking is available on adjacent streets and in nearby city lots. For more information, call the Museum at 330-833-4061 or visit massillonmuseum.org.

Media Contacts:

Alexandra Nicholis Coon, Massillon Museum Executive Director - 330.833.4061 x111
April Olsen, Massillon Museum Education and Outreach Manager - 330.833.4061 x104
Heather Haden, Massillon Museum Curator - 330.833.4061 x112
Margy Vogt, Massillon Museum Public Relations Coordinator - 330.844.1525

Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception • Massillon Museum

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



News Release: MassMu “Painting with Light” Workshop

Mark Andres, son of Richard Andres, whose painting, *Carnival IV* (1969), is in the *Blind Spot* exhibition, will lead a one-day photography workshop at the Massillon Museum for persons of all vision levels on Saturday, May 20. Andres founded the Seeing with Photography Collective, a group of photographers with varying degrees of vision that has exhibited work around the world.

The workshop will complement *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception*, an exhibition based on ten abstract paintings from the Massillon Museum’s permanent collection. Each work of art will be accompanied by a three-dimensional cast aluminum model and a braille label, which all visitors will be invited to touch. Large-print labels will also be displayed. A touchscreen adjacent to each painting will provide an audible description.

The Seeing with Photography Collective is an organization of visually impaired, sighted, and totally blind photographers based in New York City. Members, who represent diverse backgrounds and life experiences, share an awareness of sight loss, along with the determination to discuss and integrate their images into a more universal context. Sighted assistants focus and compose a view camera’s frame directed by the blind artist. Then, in a darkened room, photographers leave the camera’s shutter open as they slowly “paint” their model with a small flashlight creating exposures lasting many minutes, rather than today’s typical split-second exposure. Luminous distortions, blurred images, and glowing forms result from photographic technique, rather than digital alteration.

Blind Spot will continue through May 23. For a complete listing of complementary events, visit massillonmuseum.org.

The Massillon Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council and ArtsinStark.

The Massillon Museum is located at 121 Lincoln Way East (Ohio Route 172) in downtown Massillon. A visit to the Massillon Museum is always free. Free parking is available on adjacent streets and in nearby city lots. For more information, call the Museum at 330-833-4061 or visit massillonmuseum.org.

Media Contacts:

Alexandra Nicholis Coon, Massillon Museum Executive Director - 330.833.4061 x111
April Olsen, Massillon Museum Education and Outreach Manager - 330.833.4061 x104
Heather Haden, Massillon Museum Curator - 330.833.4061 x112
Margy Vogt, Massillon Museum Public Relations Coordinator - 330.844.1525



News Release: MassMu Brown Bag Lunch to Feature *Blind Spot*

At the Massillon Museum's monthly Brown Bag Lunch on Tuesday, May 23, a panel of experts who helped prepare *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* will discuss the creation of the exhibit and the experience of viewing it.

Heather Haden, the Massillon Museum's curator, will moderate the panel. With her, artist David McDowell, who made the tactile models of the paintings, and co-curator Pastor Barry Stirbens, who is blind, will discuss the concept of *Blind Spot*, its ten abstract paintings, the tactile aluminum models, and the iPad touchscreen soundscape apps.

The program will begin at 12:10 p.m. and will conclude by 12:50 p.m. to accommodate those who wish to attend during the lunch hour. Brown Bag Lunch programs are free and open to everyone. Reservations are not required.

Guests are encouraged to visit the exhibition in the main gallery before or after the program. They may bring carry-out or a sack lunch; purchase lunch from Anderson's in the City—the lobby café; or simply enjoy a complimentary cookie and coffee provided by the Massillon Museum. *Blind Spot* closes at the end of the day on May 23.

The Brown Bag Lunch series usually features local history, an art or history topic related to a Museum collection or exhibition, or a landmark event in the nation's past. Programs are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, January through October.

Blind Spot sponsors include Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Philomatheon Society of the Blind, and Fred's Carpets. The Massillon Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council and ArtsinStark. Yund's Carwash and Detail, Bates Printing, MCTV, Cyrus Custom Framing, The Dell Group, Farmers National Bank, Bonnie's Engravers Gallery and Signs, Massillon Development Foundation, and the Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce are major corporate sponsors.

The Massillon Museum is located at 121 Lincoln Way East in downtown Massillon. Free parking is available on adjacent streets and in nearby city lots. Regular Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday 9:30 to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. For more information, call 330-833-4061 or visit massillonmuseum.org.

Media Contacts:

Alexandra Nicholis Coon, Massillon Museum Executive Director - 330.833.4061 x111

Heather Haden, Massillon Museum Curator - 330.833.4061 x112

Margy Vogt, Massillon Museum Public Relations Coordinator - 330.844.1525



Exhibition Sponsors



Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired empowers people who are blind and visually impaired to be self-sufficient and fully engaged in their communities. It provides training and support for independent living, vocational training, job placement, recreation, and youth services.

Clovernook's operations in Cincinnati and Memphis manufacture high-quality products, providing meaningful employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The Cincinnati center provided guidance, braille exhibition labels and didactics, and braille overlays for the mailers for the *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* exhibition.

The Clovernook Center began in 1903 with the vision of Florence Trader and her sister Georgia, who was blind. They enlisted the financial assistance of their friend, William A. Procter, head of the Procter and Gamble Company.

PHILOMATHEON SOCIETY OF THE BLIND



Philomatheon Society of the Blind

An organization of blind people, along with family and friends, the Philomatheon Society of the Blind helps people in the community with blindness and low vision to help themselves remain independent, viable members of society. The organization provides social interaction, educational programs, and activities. Most services are provided at no or little cost. The Society provided feedback to assist with exhibit planning. To complement the *Blind Spot* exhibition, Erin Byrne, through the Philomatheon Society, will offer a free "Fundamentals of Reading Braille" class at the Massillon Museum in April.

The Philomatheon Society of the Blind was founded in 1924 by a blind teacher, Mrs. Emma Wernet to "relieve the terrible loneliness of the blind by getting them together." The term "philomatheon," derived from ancient Greek, means "lover of learning." In 1941, the organization incorporated as The Philomatheon Society of the Blind of Canton, Ohio, Inc.

***Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* • Massillon Museum**

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



Exhibition Apps

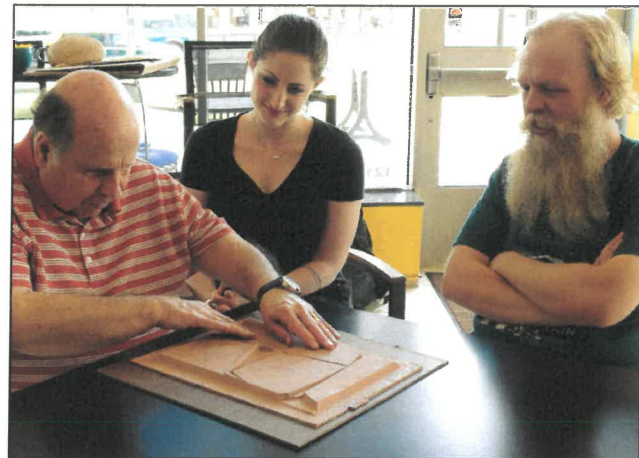


Classic Interactions

Classic Interactions, LLC, a mobile app development company located in Columbus, Ohio, has created sonic interpretations of the paintings in *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception*. Co-curators Pastor Barry Stirbens and Jan Stirbens, who are both blind, verbalized what they thought the tactile models of the paintings would sound like.

The soundscapes will be accessible on iPad touchpads adjacent to the paintings in the exhibition. "In fact, the touchpads and the tactile models will be close enough together that visitors can touch them both, one with each hand, at the same time to better relate to the artwork," Curator Heather Haden said.

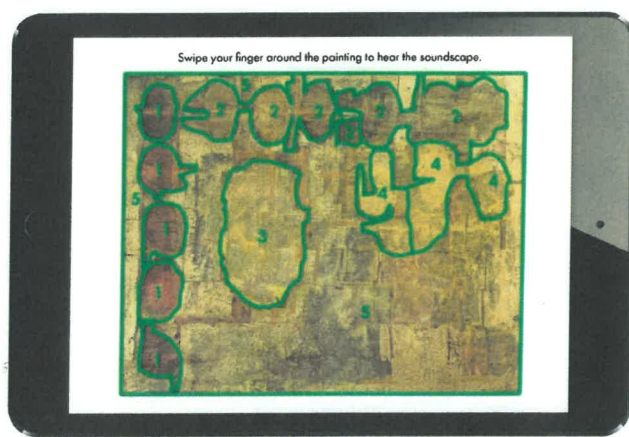
Classic Interactions focuses on producing original, highly interactive educational mobile applications and games. Its client work is limited to educational applications for museums.



Co-curator Pastor Barry Stirbens (left), who is blind, touches the tactile models of Blind Spot paintings as Curator Heather Haden and artist David McDowell, who created the tactile models, watch.

Users drag their fingers over the numbered sections on the touchscreen. Each numbered section has a sound associated with it that plays when the user swipes over it. Numbers and outlines are for description only and will not be visible on the final screen.

Colors don't necessarily always equate to a sound, showing sighted persons that they may rely too much on color relationships when viewing abstract paintings. Colors may actually distract from the viewer's understanding of composition and meaning—creating a metaphorical blind spot.



This iPad screen shows areas that produce different sounds which can be heard when a visitor drags his/her finger over an area. In this painting, the co-curators indicated musical sounds:

- 1—French horns*
- 2—Deep tubas*
- 3—High-pitched clarinet*
- 4—Lower-octave clarinet*
- 5—Pachelbel's Canon*

Other paintings in the exhibition inspire sounds such as: fireworks, ocean waves, rough sandpaper, windows closing, smooth jazz, park sounds, wind, cooking sounds, wind chimes, and a crackling fireplace.

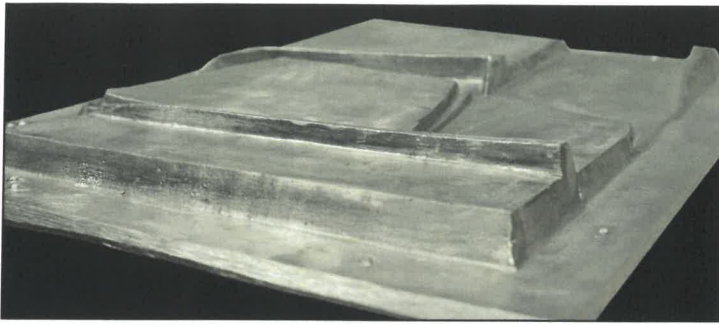


Pressing the left button at the bottom of the screen facilitates an audible one-minute description of the painting, which can be appreciated by persons with deafness, as the words scroll across the screen. (This screen has been updated, but the concept remains the same.)

The center button enables the soundscape described above.

The right button initiates a brief overview of the exhibition.

The Philomatheon Society is providing tactile stickers to adhere to the surface of the iPad to help patrons with blindness to locate the audible home screen buttons.



TOP: Side view of the tactile model of the oil painting, Earth Four, by David Appleman.

To map the soundscapes, Curator Heather Haden divided each tactile model into four quadrants to help Pastor Barry Stirbens (pictured) and Jan Stirbens navigate and assign sounds to the shapes. Verbal descriptions aligned with each quadrant, written with the assistance of exhibition intern Caroline Hill, hone in on specific formal elements to which sounds were assigned.

Find high-resolution files of these photographs on the flash drive in this media kit.



Heather Haden
Curator

Massillon Museum Curator Heather Haden previously served as the Museum's education and outreach coordinator from February 2014 to September 2015. She holds an MA in art history and a BA in fashion design, both from Kent State University. She has been involved with the Massillon Museum since 2011, when she served as curatorial intern for *Another Look at the New Look*.

Haden has taught fashion illustration and various art history courses as an adjunct at Kent State University and contemporary art history as a faculty member at Malone University, and has served various roles at the Kent State University Museum from 2007 to 2013. She currently teaches the online art history course, *Art as a World Phenomenon*, through Kent State University Main and Stark campuses.

In 2015, Haden published her MA thesis, "The Aesthetics of Unease: Telepresence Art and Hyper-subjectivity," through Kent State University, and served as editor in chief for the Massillon Museum publication, *Educator Resource—Imagining a Better World: The Artwork of Nelly Toll*, working with a team of professional Holocaust educators and art therapists. This resource was the recipient of the Ohio Museums Association 2015 Visual Communication Award, Silver Award Level 4.

Haden has presented independent art historical research to regional, national, and international audiences at conferences held through the Midwest Art Historical Society, the Ohio Museums Association, the College Art Association, and the Image Knowledge Community. In spring 2016 she represented the Massillon Museum at the Ohio Museums Association Conference in Columbus, presenting "Curating for the Visually Impaired." In October 2016 she presented "What Museums Can Learn from Synesthesia: Curating Non-representational Art for the Visually Impaired" at the Ohio Local History Alliance Annual Meeting in Dublin, Ohio.



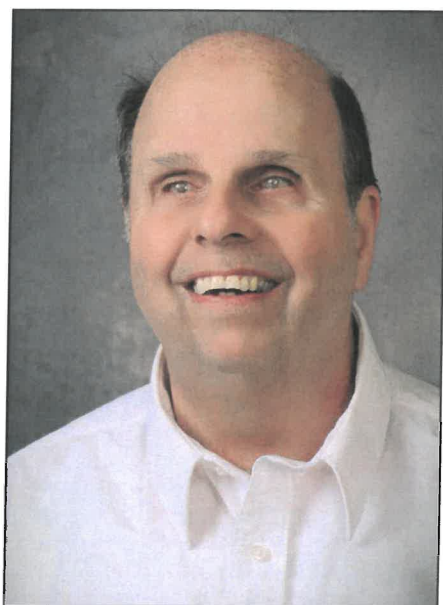
Curator's Comments

Heather Haden

The Massillon Museum and museums internationally have begun designing exhibitions more universally to advocate for access to the arts for all, especially following the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 2015. In 2011, in advance of starting a curatorial internship at the Massillon Museum, I attended the *Faces of Rural America* exhibition of photographs by Henry Clay Fleming and Belle Johnson. Our current director, then-curator, Alexandra Nicholis Coon, had commissioned four local artists to each translate a photograph into a tactile model with braille. She had been inspired by the Elizabeth Morse Touch Gallery at the Art Institute of Chicago, and I in turn was inspired by what I encountered at the Massillon Museum.

My inaugural visit to the Massillon Museum was incredibly impactful, and it was the *Faces of Rural America* exhibition that planted the seed for the exhibition we are preparing to open on February 18, 2016. At the time I encountered *Faces of Rural America*, I was reading, for leisure, Vladimir Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark*, a work of fiction about an art critic who goes blind in a terrible car accident. Simultaneously, I was a masters student of art history at Kent State focusing on the history of abstract painting and thought to myself, if I were to lose my sight, how could I possibly enjoy abstract art? I recalled an eighth grade English project for which I wrote a book report on the biography of Helen Keller and remembered how utterly inspired I had been by the determination of Helen and the inventiveness of Anne Sullivan, who taught Helen, who was blind and deaf, to communicate, first by feeling the vibrations on Anne's throat as she spoke. Certainly there must be a way to bridge the divide between abstract art and patrons with blindness and low vision.

Over the next five years I would follow the increasing arts accessibility offerings of international institutions and was pleased at the proliferation of universal design but was shocked to find that this gap, a veritable blind spot in the art historical timeline, was still gaping. This Massillon Museum original exhibition is the collective attempt of a team of co-curators, centers for the blind and visually impaired, visual artists, software designers, and musicians to begin to fill this perceptual gap and to start a much-needed conversation regarding art for all.



Pastor Barry R. Stirbens
Blind Spot Co-curator

Born in Sharon, Pennsylvania, Barry R. Stirbens grew up with his twin brother Alan, in Northeast Ohio, spending most of his childhood and youth in the Youngstown area. A premature birth necessitated time in an incubator, resulting in total blindness, a condition shared by several thousand premature infants of the era.

“My parents were steadfast in their resolve that I would grow up to become an educated and productive member of society,” Stirbens said. Special education classes, taught by well-trained and dedicated teachers, were available in the Youngstown public school system, allowing for ample interaction with sighted students. He graduated with a high school diploma in 1966.

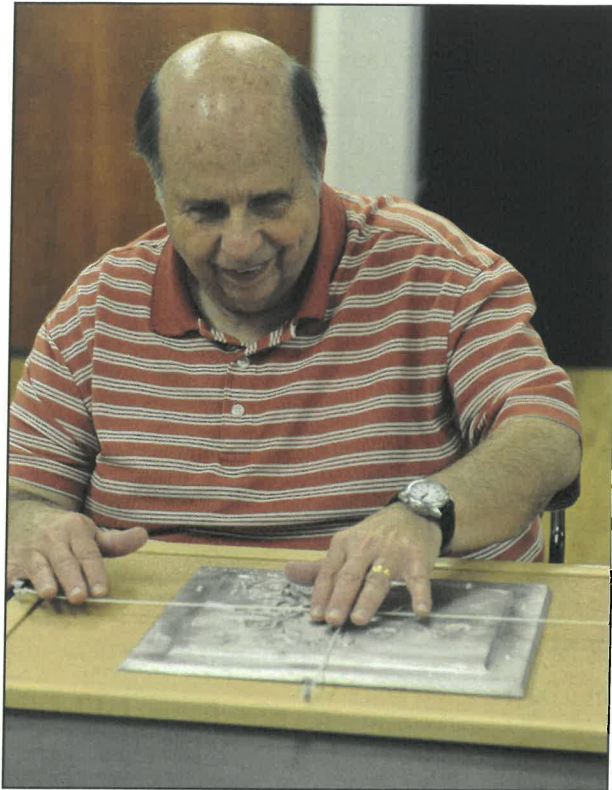
“My first dream of adulthood had convinced me that I would aim for a career in radio broadcasting, but in high school, I sensed a definite call of God to enter into the Christian ministry,” Stirbens said. Accordingly, he earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Youngstown State University in 1970 and a master of divinity (MDIV) from Eden Theological Seminary of St. Louis, Missouri, in 1974.

Following his ordination into the United Church of Christ in 1974, Pastor Stirbens served congregations in Talmage, Nebraska, and in Holmes County, Alliance, and Massillon, Ohio. Since his retirement in 2013, he continues to enjoy serving the church through pulpit supply invitations and participation in boards and committees of his denomination.

In 1973, he married Kathleen Altimus of North Lima, Ohio. Their daughter, Elizabeth, attends graduate school in Fort Worth, Texas.

Stirbens has held an amateur radio license since 1967. He enjoys meteorology and following the human spaceflight program, especially the early Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo projects. An avid reader, he relishes spending time with friends and family.

“I am honored to have been invited to be an active participant in the development of *Blind Spot* with the Massillon Museum,” Stirbens said.



Co-curator's Comments
Pastor Barry R. Stirbens

Having been exposed to, and able to work with, the developers of the *Blind Spot* project for several months, I believe that this endeavor will aid the visually impaired in two ways.

First, imagining. Many visually impaired folks may have never considered the possibility of interacting with art and/or sculpture, since these areas of human expression are generally seen as confined to the sighted community. Simply imagining the possibilities now opening to the visually impaired in this arena is a major first step.

Second, discussion. The *Blind Spot* project opens the door to conversation between the project developers and the visually impaired. Much progress results when developers and patrons engage in meaningful conversation.



Jan Stirbens
Blind Spot Co-curator

Jan Stirbens was born in Sharon, Pennsylvania, and grew up in the Hubbard, Ohio, area. She attended Kent State University.

Jan was a cafeteria manager and vending operator in Akron, Ohio, for two years.

Married for more than thirty-seven years, Jan has three adult children and four grandchildren. She is also the caregiver of an eight-year-old miniature dachshund— a deaf rescue dog.

Jan's hobbies include computers, reading, cooking, and baking. She has an extensive cookbook collection as well as a large collection of vintage country music and classic television shows.

Like her brother-in-law, Pastor Barry Stirbens, with whom she co-curated the *Blind Spot* exhibition, Jan has been blind since birth.



Exhibition Interns



Caroline Hill

Caroline Hill is a native of North Canton, Ohio. She received a bachelor of arts in history with a minor in English from Miami University in December 2013. During her time at Miami, she published an analysis of one of Eugene O'Neill's early dramas in the online journal, *Laconics*, which focuses on O'Neill-related pieces.

Caroline originally interned at the Massillon Museum from August 2014 to February 2015, when she helped organize, photograph, and catalog the Museum's Immel Circus collection.

Returning to the Museum in August 2016, she began working with curator Heather Haden on *Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* as well as continuing her work with the circus collection.

Caroline is a digital assistant at the Akron-Summit County Public Library, where she researches historic Summit County photographs for the database, *Summit Memory*.



Spencer George Thomakos

Spencer George Thomakos, a native of New Philadelphia, Ohio, is a recent graduate of Ohio University, where he received a bachelor's degree in specialized studies, focusing on art and film, with a minor in English and a certificate in museum studies.

Last spring, Spencer and his museum studies class erected an exhibit entitled *Merging Concepts II*, which stood for a year at the Kennedy Museum of Art in Athens, Ohio.

Spencer now lives in the Cleveland area, where he continues to pursue a career in the museum field. Spencer would like to thank his family and friends for their overwhelming support.



David McDowell
Artist

David McDowell, a visual artist based in Canton, Ohio, has worked in nearly every artistic medium. He graduated in 2002 with a bachelor of science in ceramics from Indiana Wesleyan University with special independent study in sculpture and stained glass. He did post-graduate studies overseas in art history and photography.

McDowell has just completed what he considers to be the biggest show of his career—*Mother Goose Land Revised: Art of the Canton Landmark*. The show, an ode to Canton's beloved children's theme park, featured six cast aluminum commemorative picture frames created from original sculptures by McDowell that feature the park's nursery rhyme attractions (mothergooselandrevisited.com).

When he isn't working in his studio inside The Hub Art Factory in the downtown Canton Arts District, McDowell can be found at The Troll Hole Museum in Alliance (thetrollhole.com), home of the *Guinness Book of World Records* Largest Troll Doll Collection. There, he is the artist-in-residence and creator and performer of the museum's mascot, Magnus the Troll. This year, he performed as Magnus the Troll on the Cleveland Channel 3 evening news, doing the weather with Betsy Kling.

Along with troll installations, dioramas, and exhibits, McDowell's talents can be seen in other Stark County venues: Grapes in a Glass Wine Bar, the Heritage Tree monument at Sandy Valley High School, and a soon-to-be-installed outdoor work in downtown Minerva. He considers his *Blind Spot* commission to be one of his most exciting projects.

McDowell was the first person to receive two consecutive grants from ArtsinStark, and was voted by *About* magazine readers as the favorite artist in Stark County, 2015 and 2016. In June, Faction Pictures released *Selling Out*, (wearefaction.com/selling-out) a documentary film about the artist and his work, detailing the life of someone who wants to follow his passion while still paying his rent. In it, he describes his childhood dream jobs: artist and mad scientist.

See more of McDowell's work on Instagram at: [burnt.marshwigglesstudio](https://www.instagram.com/burnt.marshwigglesstudio), [mothergooseland](https://www.instagram.com/mothergooseland), and [troll_doll_museum](https://www.instagram.com/troll_doll_museum).

***Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* • Massillon Museum**

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



Brent Boyd
Logo Designer

Brent Boyd is a graphic designer living in Akron, Ohio. He graduated from Kent State University with a degree in visual communication and design and a minor in photo illustration. His areas of specialty are letterpress and silkscreening.

For the *Blind Spot* logo, he wanted to explore a universal symbol for caution, and he wanted to use geometric shapes and simple images for the eye. The artist chose to represent arts accessibility as an expanded field of vision.

After intersecting many ideas and working through several variations, he synthesized the logo that is being used for this exhibit, consisting of two main shapes: a simplified, wide-open eye overlapping the top half of a triangle.

The base of the triangular element is symbolic. In the logo, the base extends further than the corners of the eye, as access to art experience is not limited to vision. This symbolizes how the *Blind Spot* exhibit will expand access to art for all. Unlike a visual periphery that limits the field of visual experience, the *Blind Spot* exhibit will extend the experience of art beyond the eye by including multiple senses.



Student Composers Cleveland Institute of Music



Alex Cooke

Alex Cooke is a doctoral student at the Cleveland Institute of Music in composition and a doctoral student in applied mathematics at Case Western Reserve University. He has served on the faculty of both institutions.

Cooke is the music director for R.E.D. Dance Company, editor and senior writer for *Fstoppers*, a published photographer, an avid equestrian, an aviation enthusiast, and a competitive runner.

His composition for the Massillon Museum's *Blind Spot* exhibition was inspired by Richard Florsheim's 1969 *Celebration*, an oil and wax painting on gesso.



Joseph Tolonen

Joseph Tolonen won the 2015 Carl E. Baldassarre Composer-Performer Competition and the 2015 Hope and Stanley Adelstein Prize for Excellence in Composition and Performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He won third place in the Third Annual Collegiate Cleveland Composer's Guild Competition, and has had pieces performed by the Cleveland Composer's Guild.

Proficient in oboe and piano, Tolonen was part of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, and continues to play in chamber ensembles. He is pursuing a BM in composition with a secondary concentration in piano.

Tolonen's composition for *Blind Spot* is based on Walter Quirt's 1952 oil painting, *Abstraction*.



Qingye Wu

Qingye Wu, born in China, began to study piano and the Chinese national instrument Erhu when she was four years old. In 2009, her work, *Xiao-Xing* for qudi, pipa, and cello, won the awards of "Good Works" in the "Confucius ode" national composition competition. Her work, *Light-Continuation* for flute and piano, was published in *Musical Works*, No.1, 2013.

In 2015, she was commissioned by The Cleveland Orchestra's Mary Kay Fink for the piccolo, violin, and piano trio, *Where Is My Sky?*

The composer based her *Blind Spot* piece on *Shoreline*, which Julius Faysash painted in oil on canvas in 1970.

The Canton Symphony Orchestra will perform the pieces composed for *Blind Spot* at the exhibition opening and in a special concert in the fall of 2017. Founded in 1937, the Canton Symphony Orchestra is a fully professional ensemble and organization dedicated to performing concerts that enrich, educate, and entertain residents of Stark County and beyond. The Canton Symphony Orchestra performs classical, holiday, and educational programs each season at Umstadd Performing Arts Hall, as well as other venues in Stark County. Administrative offices are located in the Zimmermann Symphony Center, at 2331 17th Street N.W., Canton.

***Blind Spot: A Matter of Perception* • Massillon Museum**

121 Lincoln Way, East • Massillon, Ohio 44646 • 330.833.4061 • www.massillonmuseum.org



Massillon Museum Fact Sheet

Address	121 Lincoln Way East, Massillon, Ohio 44646-6633
Location	Southeast corner of Lincoln Way (Ohio Route 172) and First Street, S.E. Downtown Massillon
Telephone	330.833.4061
Fax	330.833.2925
Website	www.massillonmuseum.org
Hours	Tuesday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sunday, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Closed Monday and major holidays
Admission	Free
Parking	Free on adjacent streets and in nearby city lots
Executive Director	Alexandra Nicholis Coon (330.833.4061 x111)
Curator	Heather Haden (330.833.4061 x112)
Funding	Property tax within Massillon City School District Augmented by membership, sponsorships, grants, and donations
Accreditation	Accredited by the American Association of Museums
Founded	1933—originally housed in the home of city founder, James Duncan
Present Site	Built in 1931—designed by Herman J. Albrecht for Swanson Brothers Purchased by Museum in 1992 Opened as the Massillon Museum on May 16, 1996 Capital Campaign and expansion plans currently underway
Current Size	Approximately 29,000 square feet
First Floor	Lobby and reception area (available during closed hours for party rental) Gallery for changing art and history exhibitions Museum shop—OHregionalities (Ohio art and items related to Museum and local history) Lobby café: Anderson's in the City
Second Floor	Exhibitions during <i>Blind Spot</i> : <i>From the Drawing Board: Architectural Renderings from the Collection (through May 21, 2017)</i> <i>Paul Brown and the Massillon Tiger Swing Band (through summer 2017)</i> <i>Westward Ho: True Grit Themes in Costumes and Artifacts</i> Immel Circus Gallery
Lower Level	Education Department Fred F. Silk Community Meeting Room (available for rental to members) Studio M art exhibition space Public restrooms and drinking fountain
Third Floor	Non-public state-of-the-art storage space
Collections	More than 100,000 objects—local history and Ohio art Strong collections: photography, quilts, clothing, circus, furniture, nursing
Yearly Activities	4 main gallery exhibitions and openings, 12 Studio M exhibitions and openings, 3 changing permanent collection exhibitions (second floor), 10 brown bag lunches, class and workshop offerings, Island Party, 12 history discussion group sessions, Relics and Refabs Roadshow, members' holiday events