

working together

“We are all in this together” is certainly true. The Arts Advocates Board of Directors and our Team Leaders are very much aware of what that slogan really means. It may be June, but the board continues to meet online via Zoom and plans to continue meeting through the summer months.

HELLO, ARE YOU THERE?

Faith Perkins and Joan Correa have graciously agreed to continue publishing our newsletter as long as you are interested in keeping current with our news.

Our “analytics” show that you spend an average of 2 minutes reading this newsletter. We are pleased that so many of you click on the site but we’d be even doubly pleased if you could give us a bit more of your time. We are working hard to communicate, so how about helping us by reading more of what we write?



Ann Roddy, former Director, Elling Eide Library with members of Arts Advocates at the Library in November 2019.



BRAVO BOARD

Barb Sander, Corresponding Secretary, collects and totals the board’s volunteer hours each month. For the month of May, board members contributed a total of 465.5 hours of their time. For the preceding 11 months, the board’s total volunteer hours were 4,175.25! In June, Barb will begin collecting volunteer hours from other team leaders as well as those from the board.

Volunteer hours translate to \$24 per hour, so for May our board contributed \$11,172 and for the preceding 11 months they contributed \$100,206.

As we expand our fundraising efforts to include foundation grants, these volunteer hours become an increasingly important part of our presentation as they reflect the level of member engagement.

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

In this issue, Tonya Eubank, Vice President and Coordinator for Member Activities and Programs, announces the revised schedule for online General Meeting programs. Please make a note of these zoom meetings on your calendars.

In early January, the Program Team with Kris Gardel and Rennie Carter taking the lead, had already selected speakers and topics for the 2020–2021 season. When the Pandemic hit, they, and the team members, had to go back to the drawing board to see how the general meeting programs could be re-envisioned as Zoom presentations. They deserve a lot of credit for being flexible and responsive to this uncertain environment.

Continued on page 2.

President's Message

Continued from page 1

HOUSE HUNTING

The expanded Collection Team, with Kristi Bundrant and Linda Bruemmer leading the way, is also meeting online to manage our collection and the process of moving to a new space.

The plan to relocate our collection to the historic Burns Court area was overwhelmingly approved by the Finance/Fundraising Team, the Board of Directors as well as a solid majority of our Arts Advocates members.

Some long-term members responded by saying that this move was what they had always dreamed. Apparently, our founders had originally envisioned establishing a museum or gallery of works by Florida artists.

MANAGING THE MONEY

The Finance/Fundraising Team met on Zoom to discuss the financial impact of acquiring a new "home" or "headquarters". All team members approved the proposal. (We are searching for an appropriate term to describe a new meeting place, so please send us your suggestions. The Center for Arts Advocates? Arts Advocates Hub? Arts Advocates Residence? Arts Advocates Annex?)

SCHOLARS

All of the scholarship checks have been disbursed and we are interested in seeing how institutions of higher learning respond to the Pandemic.

Stay sharp. Keep calm and carry on but also please remember to be kind.

Donna C. Matham

website update



As noted in the April newsletter, video recordings were made of the day-long Strategy Workshop and Speaking of the Arts... featuring **Lynn Ahrens** at the Art Ovation Hotel. Both have been posted on <https://www.artsadvocates.org>. The Strategy Workshop may be accessed within the "Member Dashboard." The Lynn Ahrens conversation is available in "What's New" area of the website.



October 2019, WEDU PBS – Florida West Coast, highlighted Arts Advocates/Fine Arts Society of Sarasota. An episode was produced for "Arts Plus" focusing on "the ways in which it is presenting and preserving works by local artists as well as fostering the growth of young artists in Sarasota." It can be viewed here <https://www.artsadvocates.org/philanthropy/giving-challenge-2020> or here <https://www.artsadvocates.org/about/collection>.



arts advocates

Online General Meeting Programs 2020-2021

July 16, 2020 – “Let’s Talk about the Collection!”
with a professional curator.
[ZOOM, 1:00 pm](#)

August 6, 2020 – Meet more of our Arts Advocates
Scholarship Winners!
[ZOOM, 1:00 pm](#)

September 17, 2020 – **Kevin Costello**,
art historian and contributing writer for Arts & Culture
magazine, will explore the intriguing concept of What
Makes a Masterpiece.
[ZOOM, 1:00 pm](#)

October 15, 2020 – **Baila Miller**,
renowned art lecturer, will present “The Making of
Modernism” - How Paris became the epicenter of the
movement to Modernism in the 1920s in art, music,
and literature. [ZOOM, time TBD](#)

November 19, 2020 – **Ann Roddy**
(Head of the China Section, Asian and Middle Eastern
Division, for the Library of Congress in Washington
DC and former Director, Elling Eide Library) will share
some of Elling Eide Library’s exquisite Chinese puppet
collection. The collection is scheduled to be part of an
upcoming special exhibit at the Ringling Museum.
[ZOOM, time TBD](#)

January 21, 2021 – **Andy Sandberg**
(Artistic Director and CEO, The Hermitage Artist
Retreat, as well as accomplished director and
Tony-winning Broadway producer) will talk about
how the Englewood artist colony is inspiring both
up-and-coming and established artists from
around the country.
[Time TBD](#)

February 18, 2021 – Arts Advocates member
Petra Ratner and her husband **Paul** (Director of
Operations and Managing Director, respectively, for
the Sarasota Film Festival) will talk about working with
Sarasota schools and the district’s film programming.
[Time TBD](#)

March 18, 2021 – **Dr. Henry Ettman**, educator
and jazz drummer extraordinaire, will present
“Developing New Audiences for Musical Arts: What We
Can Learn from Jazz,” a visual and musical exploration
of why people engage with jazz and other art music.
[Time TBD](#)

April 15, 2021 – **Mary GrandPre**, illustrator of
all 7 of the US editions of the Harry Potter books, will
discuss her journey from award-winning movie and
book illustrator to accomplished abstract artist.
[Time TBD](#)



**Please read further to view the special
section highlighting the Collection!**

reflecting on the collection

“The women who founded the Fine Arts Organization did so with the intention of creating a collection of works by distinguished local artists. What a remarkable vision the founders had! Today, 51 years, and 50 pieces later, we have the Fine Arts Collection. It is as noteworthy for the story it tells about the history of the area and its artists, as for the art itself.

You have voted for a new vision: a place where members can gather surrounded by and inspired by our *Collection*...a place we can call home...a place where we can display and engage with our *Collection*...a place where Sarasotans and visitors can come and learn about area artists past and present. By having a presence in the community, we will provide more ways to inspire creativity, advance education and connect the community with the arts.

In this special edition of the Newsletter, we are highlighting the Collection. Members of our team have found various way to reacquaint you with, and reflect upon, the Collection and its artists. Enjoy what they have written!”

Linda Bruemmer and Kristi Bundrant
Co-Coordinator of the *Collection*

Sarasota's Colony of Artists

From the 1940s through the 1970s, Sarasota was a thriving art colony, recognized nationally for the celebrated painters and sculptors who had studios in the area. The focus of the area was on its artists, galleries and social activities. These energetic artists came from across the United States and had a significant impact on the local art scene. This congenial group represented major styles and trends of twentieth century art.

Jerry Farnsworth and Helen Sawyer of Greenwich Village and Cape Cod, are considered the acknowledged founders of the Sarasota Colony of artists. They were both instrumental in attracting other artists to the area, but their enthusiastic personalities were a strong influence on encouraging collaborations socially.

Because the Visual and Performing Arts were so celebrated and such an integral part of the City's makeup and culture, many artists who visited Sarasota from throughout the United States purchased homes and studios and stayed for a number of years. Some of these artists are represented in the Arts Advocates iconic Collection of Artists connected with the Sarasota, Florida Area. In the 70s, the Colony scene had dissipated. However, the city is still considered the Cultural Hub of Florida's West Coast.

by Jerome Chesley



Summer, Helen Sawyer

“What Collection?”

For many years, like many of you, I asked: ‘What Collection? Oh, that one sitting in the dark in the Van Wezel?’ Yes, I walked right by it on my way to more interesting events, always with an angel watching me as I had a meal in the dining room with friends.

My, how things are changing! We hope to be moving the Collection into the ‘light’ before too long, to a mid-century modern building with lots of light and a big space and lots of storage. We are planning to have meetings and speakers, and later add videos, and exhibits... themed exhibits of our collection, and mini exhibits featuring a single artist, or local artists, or school exhibits...or whatever you suggest. There will be some salons and workshops, demonstrations, or Open Houses for recent Acquisitions.

So come along and spend time with us getting ready for our new home. We need your support – and smile – as we make this wonderful change celebrating the next 50 years of the Fine Arts Society – Arts Advocates!”

by Kristi Bundrant

Did You Know...

Our Collection contains works by a married couple, the acknowledged founders of the Sarasota art colony:

- Helen Sawyer - ‘Summer’
- Jerry Farnsworth - ‘Night Wind’

What Are You Reading?

We have a suggestion! As you know, Sarasota is a world-class art town—but do you know how it evolved?

As we think about moving our Collection to be more accessible to the community, this summer is a great time to learn more about our Collection and its artists. Mark Ormond, a professional curator for exhibitions at the Ringling College Galleries, described our artwork as “the most important collection of the Sarasota Art Colony.”

A History of Visual Art in Sarasota, was authored by Pat Ringling Buck, a historian and freelance journalist; Marcia Corbino, an arts writer and critic; and Kevin Dean a curator and director of the Selby Gallery at the Ringling School of Art and Design. All three authors lived in Sarasota. Their research is meticulous! After reading it, you will refer to it frequently, especially when you start exploring the Collection further.

Reading this book will give you many benefits!

1. You will acquire a deeper understanding of the evolution of the arts in Sarasota, and a window into the work and social scene during the mid-20th century.
2. Art stimulated the growth of Sarasota as a locus for artists and collectors. You will gain new insights into the importance of the visual arts in our community and region.
3. You will see the role played by the arts organizations and schools in providing a foundation in the arts for future generations.

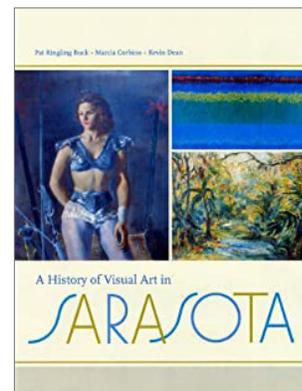
Guess who is listed in this book? **We are!** When you get to page 41 in the book, you can read the following:

*To cap the decade, in November of 1969, an arts organization was formed: **the Sarasota Fine Arts Society!** It was instituted with five charter members: Winifred Clark, Emily Holmes, Adrienne Robbins, Annamae Sandegren, and Marion Storm. The founders planned to recognize the distinctive work of Florida artists by creating a permanent*

collection. In 1970 they made their first purchase, a Hilton Leech painting. The opening of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in January of 1970 provided the growing collection with exhibition space in the lobbies and Grand Foyer.

Whether you are a history buff, an art aficionado, an artist, or just want to know more about Sarasota, this book is an extraordinary resource! It's a fascinating story, and also charts the beginning and the 50-year evolution of the Fine Arts Society, now branded as Arts Advocates. This book is available on Amazon with both new and used copies.

by Tonya Eubank



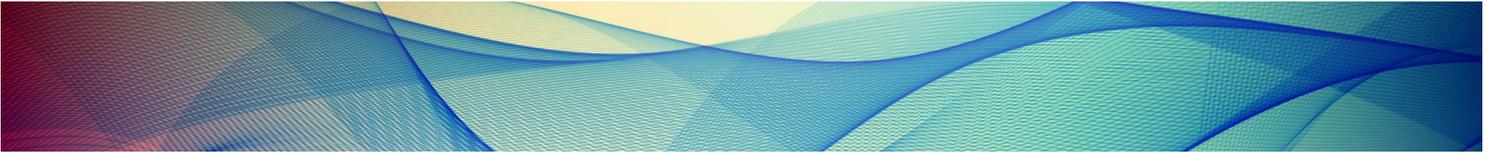
Your Summer Reading?

We would love to include a review of your favorite book in a future issue of our newsletter!

If you have a book you would like to share, please contact me for details at tonya@artsadvocates.org.

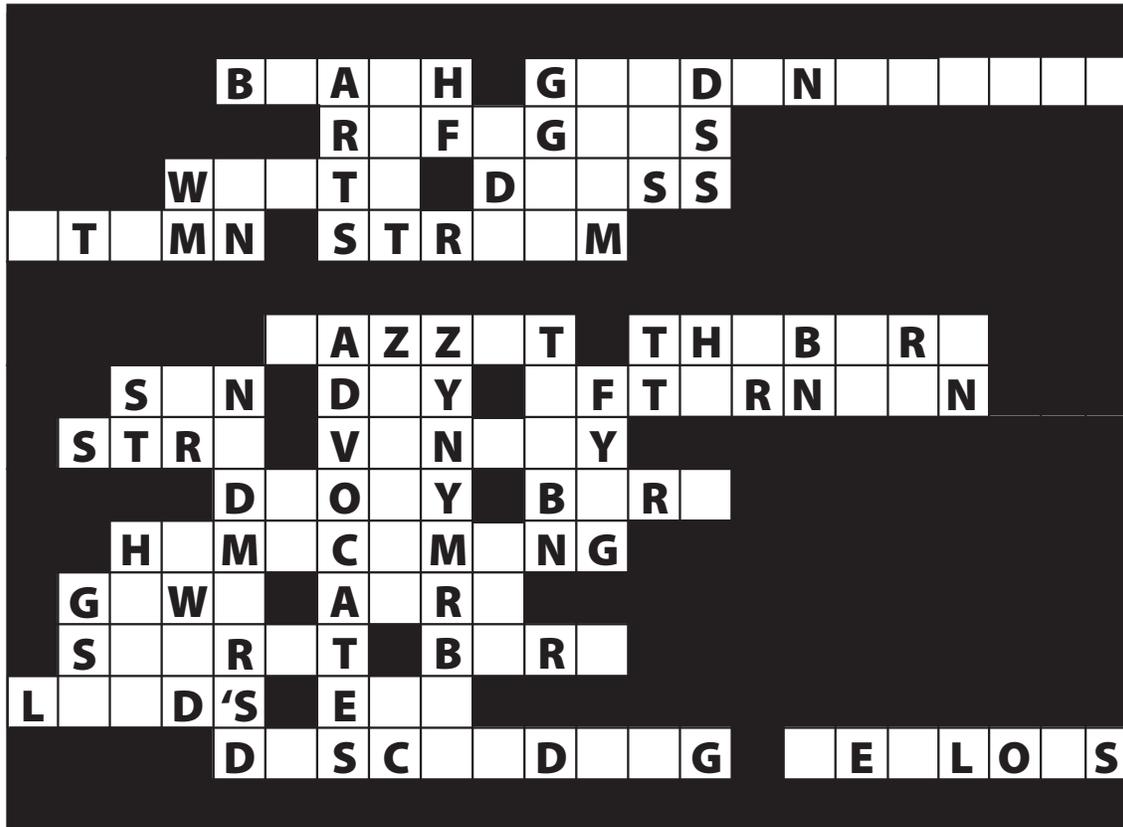
Did You Know...

Hidden behind one of the circus paintings in the Collection is another painting!!



See if You Can Identify These Works From Our Collection

Fill in the Blanks and Match the Artist with the Art



- ___ Thornton Utz
- ___ Beth Arthur
- ___ Eugene White
- ___ Jon Corbino
- ___ Roy Nichols

- ___ Craig Rubadoux
- ___ Stanley Marcus
- ___ Robert Chase
- ___ Robert Gelinas
- ___ Shirley Clement

- ___ Loran Wilford
- ___ Hilton Leech
- ___ Syd Solomon

by Joan Endrizzi

Did You Know...

Our first and last acquisitions of the Collection were watercolors:

- Hilton Leech - *'Descending Yellows'*
- Dean Mitchell - *'Tobacco Barn Shadows'*

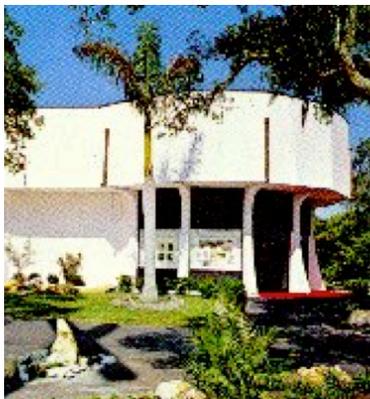


Ben Stahl was one of the best known members of the Sarasota Colony of Artists. He founded the Famous Artists School, one of the first virtual art schools in the United States. He employed artists like Norman Rockwell and Richard Avedon as teachers. Do you remember this match book from your youth that advertised his school?

For 30 years his illustrations appeared as covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*. About this work he said, "I don't see why illustrations had to look like....well, illustrations. I felt that pictures could tell a story and remain good art."

He also filmed an acclaimed 26 week instructional series, "Journey into Art" for Public Television.

In 1965, Stahl opened the Museum of the Cross in Sarasota. The *15 Stations of the Cross* were painted in monumental 6 feet x 9 feet canvases. It was a major tourist attraction that brought people from all over to Sarasota. All 15 paintings were stolen one dark night in November 1966. It was the second largest art theft of the decade. The value was assessed at over \$1.5 million at that time. They have disappeared completely with many conspiracy theories rampant.



by Judy Levine

Did You Know...

Of the 7 sculptures in the Collection, 3 are hanging:

- Frank Colson - 'Shinto'
- Dorothy Gillespie - 'Song of the Rain Dance'
- Sugiyama Akiko - 'Ryugu-Jo Palace'

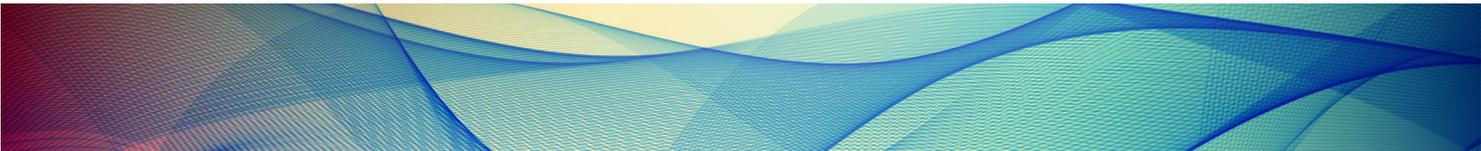
First Purchase Permanent Collection



Descending Yellows, Hilton Leech

Hilton Leech studied with George Luks, Archile Gorky and George Pearse Ennis at the Grand Central Art School; Art Students League, NYC.

Hilton held membership and held office in many prestigious organizations: Florida Artists Group, 1952, 1953, president; Palm Beach Art League; Florida Federation of Art; American Watercolor Society; Philadelphia Watercolor Club; Salmagundi Club; Allied Artists; Knickerbocker Artists; Sarasota Art Association; Casein Painters Society; Ringling Art School; Art League of Manatee County; Atlanta Art Association.



Collection Sculpture

The Fine Arts Society Art Collection is proud of the wide range of Sculptures dating from the 1930's to the present. Sculptors Frank Eliscu, Dorothy Gillespie, Sophie Johnstone, Stanley Marcus, Fred Nagel, and Thomas Williams are all represented in the Collection. They were born in the early 20th century and many studied at the Art Student League and lived in New York City.

An early influencer on the sculptors was the philosopher Kant, who encouraged ideas of beauty, aesthetics, and timeless universal content. Davis worked with abstract steel and arches and gates, while Marcus welded and cast aluminum figures incorporating ceramics, glass and musical instruments. William Zorach was also a part of ASL, and was on the forefront of American sculptors embracing cubism. Nagel, Johnstone, and Williams represented the human form, hollow spaces, music and dance, while Johnstone, like Smith, voiced monumental abstractions.

The Collection includes an abstract of colorful metal ribbons, by Dorothy Gillespie, another ASL member; and Frank Eliscu, known as an enigma, worked on the Jefferson Memorial, the Heisman Trophy, public fountains, and the 5 story frieze that decorates the glass panes above the doors to the Library of Congress.



Song of the Rain Dance,
Dorothy Gillespie

We have quite a variety of sculpture in our Collection. We hope in the future, in a more open space, to have programs featuring these sculptures.”

by Marjorie Sayer



The Secret,
Sophie Johnstone



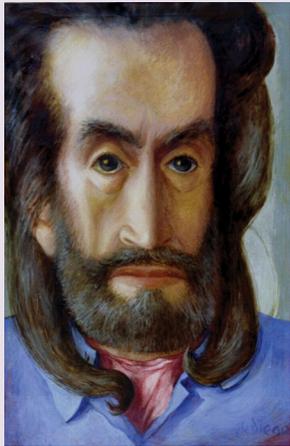
Seated Lady, Fred Nagel



Lyric Motion,
Thomas Williams

Artist with Magenta Scarf Gazes at the Poet

Teresa Carson



Self-Portrait, Julio de Diego

Can he see what I'm wearing?
This oversized shirt, spotted with ink?
Can he see my shot through with gray
disordered hair? Unpolished nails?

His rakish, yet a bit prim, scarf,
framed by deliberately placed, curled
ends of over-styled hair, suggests
he wouldn't approve of the slightest
messiness.

But then again, does he see me at all?
Or, like the gazes of most men
these days, does he look through me
as if no one's there—
old age the invisibility cloak
I didn't choose to wear.

Did You Know...

Of the 13 women artists in the
Collection, 2 were Petticoat Painters:

- Emily Holmes - 'Untitled'

- Mary Sarg Murphy - 'Center Ring'

An ekphrastic poem describes or reacts to a work of art. As poet and teacher Jeanne Marie Beaumont explains: “[The] poem may be descriptive (purely ekphrastic), or it may create a narrative, or speak in the voice (of the artist, a viewer, or someone or something in the work), or use the work as a portal into a personal meditation or memory.”

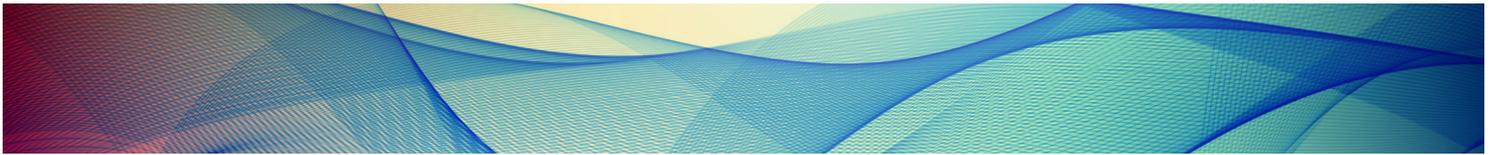
In order to give you an idea of how an ekphrastic poem begins and expands, I'll describe the writing of “Artist with Magenta Scarf Gazes at the Poet.” Because of the coronavirus restrictions, my first encounter with this painting was via its photo in the database file of the Arts Advocates Collection. The intense eyes of the Artist appeared to be looking at me, the viewer, as much as I was looking at him. Almost immediately the first line of the poem popped into my head; the next seven lines followed in short order. The ninth line, which signals a turn to a more personal meditation, took me by surprise, as did the remaining five lines. Until the poem was finished I had no inkling how much that initial encounter had activated my unease over the way in which older women, such as myself, are often unseen by men.

[Want to try writing an ekphrastic poem? Here is Beaumont's suggested process:](#)

Choose a painting, sculpture, drawing or print, collage, textile art, art photograph (ie, not a family photo), installation art, film.

1. Begin by jotting down full notes describing what “It” is. Include:
 - the materials and the methods, the how of its making. Tools? Instruments? Media?–the subject, if it has one, from all sides, the what, who, where. Interrogate it.
 - generate a word list of adjectives, verbs, nouns, etc. that convey the mood, and tone, emotional and sensory impressions (textures, size, etc.), and also include abstract concepts that come to mind from your observation.
2. Next, allow wonder, curiosity, reflection, meditation, imaginative engagement of any type. Ask questions. Shifting from outside to inside the work, let yourself BE MOVED to another “place” or “space”, tracing ASSOCIATIONS and RESPONSES as they occur to you. If you slip from the work through to a more personal narrative, go with that transformation.
3. Work on expanding and developing these materials and responses until you begin to discover something by your encounter. Something, in other words, that you can add, that no one else could. As you begin to shape all of this, you will need to decide on your point of view, focus, selection of details, and formal strategy.

by Teresa Carson



The History of Art Schools in Sarasota

It must have been an exciting time for art lovers to live here from 1940-1970 when the Sarasota Art Colony was flourishing! And what an opportunity for both professional and amateur artists to learn their craft as art schools proliferated. Programs of study at these schools ranged from focused instruction in sculpture to a curriculum that included classes in portrait, landscape, still-life and figure, mostly open in the winter months.

Leslie Posey opened her sculpture studio and Jerry Farnsworth and Helen Sawyer, (husband and wife,) opened their art school in 1941. Hilton Leech opened the Amagansett School of Art on Hillview in 1948, naming it after the one he had operated on Long Island during summers. In 1952, several additional art schools opened, including those run by William and Marty Hartman, Robert Chase, and Syd Solomon, who called his, located on First Street, the Sarasota School of Art. Also during the 50s, Helen Protas, Betty Warren and Paul Schwab opened art schools, while Sophie Johnstone and Helen Remson taught techniques in sculpture. In 1960, Frank Colson arrived, first opening a school teaching pottery, before branching out into other media. All of these were private enterprises of award-winning, resident artists, who regularly exhibited, and had their works purchased for public and private collections. Many of these artists have works in the collection owned by Arts Advocates, that is exhibited at the Van Wezel.

In 1964, New College was established, and Syd Solomon started New College Fine arts Institute. Well known artists each taught for a month. But four years later the Institute was abandoned, suffering from problems of both space and finance.

Sadly, none of these schools exists in its original form today, but one school has survived and thrived until the present day! When Ludd Spivey, President of Florida Southern College in Lakeland, called John Ringling asking for a donation to his school, Ringling instead prevailed upon him to establish a satellite school of art and junior college in Sarasota. The School of Fine and Applied Art of the John and Mable Ringling Art Museum opened in 1931 in the renovated Bay Haven Motel on Rt. 41, where John Ringling said, "Though life is short, Art is long." Two years later the school separated from Florida Southern College, and Ringling School of Art came into being. Many of the artists who had established their own schools in Sarasota both studied and taught there. While representational art was the mainstay of the school, many faculty and students were producing abstract art in the 60s. Fine arts majors were outnumbered by those studying illustration, graphic art and interior design. In 1980, the name was again changed to Ringling School of Art and Design. In 1985, the school obtained accreditation, and soon after became a 4-year liberal arts school, known as Ringling College of Art and Design, one of the top art schools in the country.

by Barbara Sander

Ringling College of Art + Design

