

Owning the Feminine Self

Hammond Museum honors suffrage movement

BY ABBY LUBY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The illuminating and provocative exhibit “Broad Powers” at the Hammond Museum features work by local artists Carla Rae Johnson, Marcy B. Freedman and Mary McFerran.

The installations by each of these artists is a continuation of their 2017 collaborative project “In_Question,” a staple at the museum’s Hays Gallery. The overarching theme is the 100th anniversary of America’s adoption of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote.

McFerran’s wall installation, “Suffragists” is a rich, historical collage of archival pictures and newspapers from the 19th and 20th centuries depicting American women’s long, embattled journey to have the right to vote. McFerran’s

in-depth research is our gain. Images of protests, marches, speeches, reproductions of the Declaration of Sentiments, and notes from Suffragist diaries are the key ingredients, the essential friction to recognize women as equals. This is not just an elaborate spreadsheet of key historical moments. Voices are in the handwritten words in white on black paper, in the delicately stitched fashion silhouettes on fabric bearing the authentic 18th century home-spun sewing tools — a perceived tactile import. The work is anchored on one end by a floor to ceiling tri-colored banner of purple, white and gold, the colors of the U.S. suffrage movement. Troubling images are of women being abused, man-handled by police, wearing prison garb, being force-fed. Quotes promoting women’s rights over female roles defined by a patriarchal society become subliminally audible and are key reminders of a mass movement that for well over two centuries, tried to obliterate the disputed demeaning stereotype of women who would succeed in declaring themselves equal to men. A quote by Abigail Adams in a 1776 letter to John Adams reads “Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex,” or contrarily, “The husband and wife are one and that one is the husband,” by 18th century English law commentator William Blackstone, and the Sioux author and suffragist Zitkala-Ša (1876-1938) “There is no great; there is no small; in the mind that causeth all.”

“Suffragists” is jam-packed with rare images and forgotten words but is easily consumed given its diverse mix of messaging. Here you have to hang out, take in the contents of this very prescient chapter in American history and connect to the current national battle against restricting voting rights.

Freedman’s “Just Look at Us Now” is a satisfying jolt to the evolution of female identity. Appropriated faces of



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HAMMOND MUSEUM

Carla Rae Johnson’s “Encore Power,” is an interactive panel entitled “Virginia Woolf.”

women in portraits of the Renaissance to the early 20th century are reassigned to contemporary role models. Freedman snatches these personas, usually wives of rich and powerful men appearing chaste and proper in their finest

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Elizabeth Winthrop Chanler (1893)
by John Singer Sargent

As an astronaut

Marcy B. Freedman’s “Just Look at Us Now” examines the evolution of female identity.

BALANCED ROCK

Norm Hathaway Big Band

FREE CONCERT

Sunday, July 4 from 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Come celebrate Independence Day with a free outdoor concert featuring the renowned Norm Hathaway Big Band. Bring a lawn chair and snacks. The event will be held at Red Mills Park, 23 Hill St., Mahopac. For more information visit www.normhathawaybigband.com or call 914-669-8953.

Ruth Keeler Memorial Library

The Keeler Library is open for limited browsing, computer use, and reading! For more information, visit www.ruthkeelermemoriallibrary.org

Most of our programs are on ZOOM. Send us an email if you want to participate: keelerlibrary@wlsmail.org. When you email us, we will send you a link to click on, and a password to enter.

TEEN BOOK GROUP

Tuesday, July 6 from 7 - 8 p.m.
The next book will be "Cinder" by Marissa Meyer. The library has copies to check out. We talk about the progression of the book, as well as play a game of Kahoot!

WRITERS WORKSHOP

Wednesday, July 7, from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Accomplished and aspiring writers are invited to join Maryanne D'Amato, local resident and published author for a supportive meeting.

BAGELS AND BOOKS

Thursday, July 8, from 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
"The Beekeeper of Aleppo" by Christy Lefteri is a poignant tale

of a Syrian family from Aleppo forced by war to flee through Turkey and Greece to an uncertain future in Great Britain.

CONVERSATION WITH LOCAL GARDENERS

Saturday, July 10 from 10 - 11 a.m.
Meets monthly on the second Saturday of the month. Bring your questions and ideas to this informal group of local expert garden enthusiasts.

Knights of Columbus

GOLF OUTING

Monday, July 19 at 11:30 a.m.
Rescheduled from June 14 due to inclement weather. The Knights of Columbus will hold their first annual golf outing on July 19 at Salem Country Club. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Veteran's Honor Flights and St. Joseph's Church & Council 6205. The Hudson Valley Honor Flight honors American Veterans by providing them transportation to Washington D.C. to visit war memorials and historic sites at no cost. Anyone interested may contact Bob Mazza at rjmazza@optonline.net or 914-282-2513.

Putnam Chorale

LAWN CONCERT SERIES

Friday, July 23 and Saturday July 24
Join us when the Putnam Chorale performs outdoor lawn concerts in Putnam and Dutchess counties. The concerts, titled "America Through Song", features songs that represent significant eras in our cultural and social history. Two concerts will be held:

Friday, July 23 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bowdoin Park bandshell, 85 Sheafe Road, Wappingers Falls.

Saturday, July 24 at 3 p.m. at Southeast Veteran's Park (formerly Electrazone Field) in Brewster.

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dress, reassigns them with a punch of the switcheroo. The transformations are uncanny; the faces fit as if they were meant to be there. The 31 digital collages are engrossing, stimulating and accessible. The face of Elizabeth Winthrop Chanler adorned in black velvet and painted by John Singer Sargent in 1893, is placed into an astronaut suit, and she is bulked up ready to go. Mexican artist Frida Kahlo transforms to a contemporary congresswoman; adorned in 18th century silks and feathers is Sarah Siddons painted by Thomas Gainsborough now a martial arts fighter in briefs and bra ready to attack. In their new roles, the demeanor is strikingly different as we are asked to shift gears and question women's roles, past, present and future.

Johnson's "Encore Power," is a life-size, interactive panel entitled "Virginia Woolf." We are invited to take selfies with the Virginia Woolf remake. She is newly imagined as a water conservationist wearing waders, inflatable life-vest, sunhat, brandishing a snorkel, swim-mask and water test kit, possibly checking the waters of the Hudson River. Inner reflection of shape shifting and time travel, we can imagine our momentary new identity and that of Woolf's had she been alive today. More nuanced is how the work summons Woolf's repeated use of water imagery in her writings, particularly



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMMOND MUSEUM
Mary McFerran's "Suffragists" is a comprehensive look at American women's journey to voting rights.

the physical and spiritual presence of water in "To the Lighthouse" and "The Waves," which may have fed Johnson's inspiration. Similar panels (not in this show) are Frida Kahlo teaching Southwest Indigenous Americans how to paint, a camouflaged Harriet Tubman helping people cross the Mexican border, Fannie Lou Hamer serving water to Georgians standing in line to vote. These women were movers and shakers then, and their legacy is with us today, when it's needed now more than ever.

"Broad Powers" will be displayed until November 2021.
For more information, visit www.hammondmuseum.org/