



The Benton welcomes new exhibitions in time for auction

The William Benton Museum of Art showcased its three newest exhibitions, “With Gratitude: Highlights from a Decade of Gifts,” “Colors in the Dark: Ellen Carey” and “Encounters with the Collection: Reframing America at 250,” at an opening reception on Thursday, Sept. 10. The event also launched the Benton’s 60th anniversary online auction fundraiser, which will close on Sunday, Sept. 27 at 4 p.m.



Guests attend the Exhibition Opening Reception and 60th Anniversary Celebration at the William Benton Museum of Art in Storrs, Conn., Sept. 10, 2026. The event celebrates the opening of the Benton’s fall exhibitions.
PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

WITH GRATITUDE: HIGHLIGHTS FROM A DECADE OF GIFTS

by **Elijah Polance**
STAFF WRITER
HE/HIM/THEY/THEM
elijah.polance@uconn.edu

The Benton’s East Gallery was transformed into a diverse display of artwork, for its new exhibition, “With Gratitude: Highlights from a Decade of Gifts,” all of which was donated to the museum over the last 10 years.

The exhibition features a variety of art practices from throughout history and around the world, ranging from pastoral 17th century landscapes from Dutch painter Jan Both, to contemporary three-dimensional collages from Maureen McCabe.

Upon entering, visitors immediately find themselves beside Peter Waite’s wall-sized acrylic depiction of an Italian pal-

ace and a similarly sized charcoal portrait sketch by Ray DiCapua. But just as close is a series of African masks from different tribes, part of a collection donated by UConn professor emeritus of sociology Joseph Gugler and his wife Janine Gugler.

The masks were a highlight for Ahmad Zoghol, a seventh-semester mechanical engineer student. Zoghol said he visited the museum once but wasn’t aware that the exhibits changed until this semester.

“It was cool to learn everything and see the generosity of the community,” Zoghol said.

Zoghol’s friend, Ahmad Zobi, a seventh-semester biology student, said this was his first time visiting the museum. He said he

was most drawn to a series of Indian manuscript leaves that depicted parts of Bhagavata Purana, which represents aspects of Hindu mythology.

For others, the method of creation was just as engaging as the artwork itself.

Ashton Pike, a first-semester illustration student from the University of Hartford, said he appreciated the displays that provided background information for a corresponding art piece. He pointed out a wooden pair of figures from an unnamed Yoruba artist as a favorite.

“I don’t know how they even made those,” Pike said. “It’s like they took different configurations of wood and somehow put them together.”



ART BY CAMERON COHAN, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

COLORS IN THE DARK: ELLEN CAREY

by **Thaddeus Sawyer**
STAFF WRITER
HE/HIM/HIS
thaddeus.sawyer@uconn.edu

Upon entering the “Colors in the Dark” exhibit, photographs shining with each color of the rainbow immediately catch your eye as they effortlessly contrast against the white walls of the room.

Ironically, many of the images in the display were made in complete darkness by experimental photographer Ellen Carey, who is based in Hartford.

“[The photograms are]

all done in a color tight darkroom, which means I’m working without any light at all,” Carey said. “These are done in nanoseconds, so I have to work very quickly.”

Consisting of photograms, images made without a camera by placing objects onto light sensitive paper in a dark environment and exposing the paper to light, and Polaroid images, the artwork in the room represents nearly four decades of Carey’s career.

“I think time is really important,” Carey said.

“It reminds me that time waits for no one, so time is really important. It moves very, very quickly. I like photography because photography, when it was invented, we could stop movement. There’s travel photography, landscapes, family albums, flash and shutter speed.

So, photography, embedded in the medium itself, is about time.”

“Dings and Shadows,” a series of photograms created from 2012 to 2016, stretches across multiple walls of the space. The photograms depict

a progression in Carey’s work, with the 2012 images showing each of the six primary and secondary colors separately.

The 2014 and 2016 photograms begin to blend the colors in the same images. Each image has visible and purposeful wrinkles and imperfections that give the prints texture and character.

“The ding is very taboo in photography,” Carey said. “If you have a ding, you’re supposed to print very purposely. These are crushing the paper in the color darkroom.”

Carey is also well known for her work with the 20 x 24 Polaroid camera, a camera that Carey described to be as famous as the moon in art circles.

Carey gifted most of the art on display to the Benton, according to the museum’s website.

“I hope everybody loves it as much as I do,” Carey said. “Color is our universe, and it’s an artist’s universe.”

“Highlights from a Decade of Gifts” and “Colors in the Dark” will remain at the Benton until Dec. 20, 2026.

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE COLLECTION: REFRAMING AMERICA AT 250

by **Maleena Muzio**
LIFE EDITOR
SHE/HER/HERS
maleena.muzio@uconn.edu

“Reframing America at 250” debuted Sept. 1 at the Benton following America’s semi-quincentennial anniversary this July. The collection will run until Aug. 1, 2027, and is a follow-up exhibition to last year’s “Exploring America at 250.”

“Reframing America at 250” was inspired by visitor feedback, largely asking for more art surrounding immigration, immigrant artists and the history of Indigenous peoples, Benton Curator and Academic Liaison Amanda Douberley said.

The exhibit serves as a complement to its pre-

decessor, showcasing art that encompasses themes of transnationalism across different mediums, while also still representing the country as a place, an identity and an idea. Douberley pointed out that this collection does differ from the last by focusing more closely on artists’ individual stories.

One artist in particular is Benjamin West. Douberley said that West is an artist who represents transnationalism well, as he was born in the American colonies before studying in Italy and moving to London. West’s influence permeated through the United States, within the work of his many American-born students, who would return home after

their schooling.

“It just goes to show how, you know, much of history is really about mythmaking,” Douberley said. “Benjamin West, who’s seen as this really important American artist — he’s born here, and he gets a little bit of training, and then someone pays for him to go on the grand tour.”

Douberley said this tour was in Europe.

West’s legacy is represented in the collection by a copy of his Italian-influenced “Venus Admonishing Cupid,” which was replicated by one of his American students.

Another painting that encompasses a similar theme is Caleb Arnold Slade’s “Atelier at the

Académie Julian, Paris,” which depicts an art school that many Americans, other foreigners and women studied at. Slade was American born and never returned to the U.S. after his time in school.

Briana Paternoster, an employee at the Benton and a third-semester marketing student, said Slade’s piece is one of her favorites in the collection.

“I like how big it is, ‘cause sometimes when I just, like, step back, it kind of feels like it’s moving a little bit.”

Douberley also mentioned that transnationalism can apply to Indigenous sovereignty and doesn’t only relate to the borders of states or foreign countries.

“Tribal borders don’t always match the borders of nation-states,” Douberley said.

“Deer Woman’s New Medicine” is a piece of physical art in the collection made by Natalie Ball, who is an enrolled member of the Klamath Tribes.

Ball stitched together several materials that each represent national histories of violence toward Native people but assembled them together to create a new meaning of hope, according to the Benton. The work is comprised of a quilt, hide, a letter jacket and other fabrics, Douberley said. It stands out as one of the most unique and eye-catching works in the collection.