



Washington Art Association Historic 70 Year Timeline

1952 — Founded by Margaret Train Samsonoff, a painter and portrait artist, and a small group of local artists and patrons as a summer endeavor. The group staged its first exhibition in July of 1952 in the former R.J. Benham drugstore.

1954 — Washington Art Association (WAA) established residence in the former Washington Depot post office.

1955 - 58 — The flood of 1955 prompted WAA to purchase the Hearn Building, a small brick structure on the banks of the Shepaug River, move it to the newly reconstructed Bryan Memorial Plaza, and attach it to a group of milk sheds. Following two years of construction and renovations, the WAA's current quarters opened and year-round exhibitions and classes were added. Celebrated artists such as Alexander Calder, Andre Masson and Yves Tanguy participated in shows at WAA during these years.

1960s and 1970s — Throughout the '60s and '70s WAA continued to offer Innovative exhibits with such diverse art as the American Folk genre to Children's Art from Around the World.

1983 — The gallery space was enlarged and a multipurpose studio space was added, allowing for more ambitious exhibitions and greater educational offerings.

1990s — Beginning in 1991, in addition to its regular schedule of exhibitions, WAA began The Clothesline Art, the outdoor exhibition much beloved by both members and the community at large.

2002 — Celebrates 50 years with "50th Anniversary Show" of the Washington Art Association in Washington Depot with paintings and sculptures by artists who were Associated in some way with the long-lived organization. They include a horizontal wood piece, "Phoenix," by Tom Doyle, and an enormous all-white (fiberglass) head by Philip Grausman titled "Suzanna."

2007 — WAA celebrated its 55th year with an anniversary retrospective exhibition at the Gunn Memorial Museum. This anniversary exhibition traced the history of the art association through photos, documents, words, and memories.

2009 — Based on a fund-raising atelier sale initiated in 2008, WAA holds its first Summer Solstice Party, which would become an annual event to bring the community together in celebration.

2012 — WAA celebrated 60 years with 60 events in 60 days with the intent to bring art for all ages and to engage our community in the creative process. In addition, WAA invited its members to participate in the creation of a cookbook combining art and food. The images from 84 participating artists included Hungarian cheese blintzes, lobster mac and cheese, pantry salmon cakes, and chicken with peaches.

2017 — The whole plaza was redesigned between The Judy Black Memorial Park and Gardens and WAA. A new addition was designed by Gray Organschi Architecture at the front of the WAA building.

2018 — A Sculpture Walk was conceived and co-curated by WAA trustees Mark Mennin and Barbara Talbot. Sixty-one pieces from 40 sculptors ranging in age from 23-year-old Jake Paron to 95-year-old Tim Prentice were dotted throughout Washington Depot. It was a community-wide effort, which transformed a tiny, peaceful village into an outdoor gallery.

2019 — In response to the Covid pandemic, WAA remained active and visible as we created a new website featuring online exhibitions and Zoom classes.

2022 — WAA celebrates 70 years with the exhibition, Philip Grausman: Sculpture & Drawings, and the 13th Annual Summer Solstice Party.

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