

Order / Reorder: Experiments with Collections

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Art as both creative output and curated object is in constant dialogue with the past and the present. It is this never-ending conversation that pushes art into its future, forcing us to continually reimagine the ways in which we project a vision of ourselves and the world around us. Order / Reorder: Experiments with Collections explores approaches to looking at American art that consider expressions of American identity from new perspectives.

The works on view range across genres: portraiture, figural studies, still life, landscape, and abstraction. Recent additions to the Museum's collection and other artworks on view for the first time are joined by visitor favorites, paired with special loans from Joslyn Art Museum and contributions from regional artists. Rather than structured chronologically, the installation is designed to spark discussion through juxtapositions of styles, outlooks, and eras. Works by renowned artists are in conversation with those now emerging.

We invite viewers to find connections in unexpected groupings of objects. For example, arranging works by Hudson River School artist James Fairman, Southwest painter Eanger Irving Couse, and Shinnecock Nation photographer Jeremy Dennis side by side offers fresh insight into traditional assertions of who owns and has access to nature and current efforts by artists to combat erasure. Alison Moritsugu and Valerie Hegarty remind us that nineteenth-century visions of pristine nature presaged its destruction, and that the preservation of "wilderness" requires environmental stewardship. Contrasting images by Hananiah Harari and Winfred Rembert assert the dignity of the working class, whether at work or at play.

The Hudson River Museum, like our audiences, is not static. The events of recent years have reaffirmed the importance of art as a source of inspiration, healing, and hope. As the HRM enters its second century with forward-looking initiatives for collection growth and new interpretations, we will showcase the Museum's collections and these loans through many lenses and diverse voices, providing innovative opportunities for visitors to engage with the objects and with each other. The gallery experience will include ways for visitors to provide feedback on favorite themes and artworks, as well as to propose new pairings and groupings—all to help the Museum crowdsource ideas for future rotations and reinstallations. We want Order / Reorder to spark interaction, joy, and wonder—welcoming our communities to explore art, new viewpoints, and their own creativity, as well as the many stories to be found in the Museum's rich collection.