

SPRING/SUMMER 2026



NEWSCASTING

Grounds For Sculpture's publication for members and volunteers

New Horticulture Grant from the
New Jersey Cultural Trust

*Opening the Vault: A Look
Inside the GFS Collection*

New Work on View by
Kiyon Williams

New Member
Portal

Member
Events

... and
more!



MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST

WELCOME

Dear Members,

As we finally shake off the last of this long, stubborn winter and begin to see the gardens burst back into green, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for your membership. Your support keeps this community vibrant and allows GFS to continue growing as a place where art, nature, and people connect in meaningful ways. Every visit you make, and every program you attend, strengthens GFS and helps us fulfill our mission. See the impact of your support in our [2025 Year in Review](#).

This spring, we're delighted to reveal ***Opening the Vault: A Look Inside the GFS Collection***, a rare chance to see newly acquired works alongside pieces that have long lived behind the scenes. The exhibition was developed through a collaborative cross-departmental process—inviting staff from Development, Education, Guest Services, and Marketing to work closely with our Curatorial team in selecting works, shaping themes, and crafting interpretive materials. If you'd like to dive deeper into how we built this exhibition, you'll find a dedicated piece inside this issue of *News casting*.

We also have a lively season of **programming** that brings our mission to life in new and meaningful ways. On **May 16**, join us for ***Power, Process, Practice: A Conversation with Salvador Jiménez-Flores and GFS Curator Grace Yasumura***, exploring how creative practices can confront social issues and open space for dialogue.

For our **Sustainer and Benefactor Members**, we're hosting an exclusive **Behind the Scenes at Johnson Atelier on June 9**—a special look at sculpture fabrication and conservation. It's a fascinating look into the creative engine that supports so much of the work you see across our campus, and if you've been thinking about upgrading your membership, consider this your sign.

On **June 12**, we're thrilled to present ***Wordsmith: A Def Poetry Reunion Honoring Ursula Rucker***, an outdoor evening of spoken word, live music, and community presented by Danny Simmons. This is our third year holding this event and I urge you to come out with us for an unforgettable celebration under the stars.

If you're looking for a peaceful creative moment, ***Watercolor in the Wild*** on **June 28** and **July 9** invites participants to paint water lilies in a serene garden setting, welcoming all skill levels.

And on **June 21, July 25, and August 16**, the popular guitar and violin duo, **The Midnighters**, return for evening performances at the Van Gogh Café. Bring a friend and join us for a day of art and live music in the gardens.

Thank you for being part of the GFS family and for helping us nurture a welcoming environment where creativity can flourish. I look forward to seeing you on the grounds as we celebrate a joyful and art-filled spring and summer together.

With gratitude,


Gary Garrido Schneider
Executive Director



HOURS THIS SEASON

General Hours | 10AM - 5PM | Wednesday – Monday | Closed Tuesdays
Open Daily | Monday - Sunday | May 25 – Sept 7 (Memorial Day - Labor Day)
Member Mornings | 8 - 10AM | Saturday + Sunday | May 9 - Sept 6
Late Nights | 10AM - 9PM | Friday - Sunday | May 8 - Sept 6
\$5 After 5PM Fridays | Last Friday of each month | May – Aug

As always members enjoy free admission, and on \$5 After 5PM Fridays, members can bring non-member guests for just \$5 each!*

Members may visit spontaneously without a reservation on weekdays. A free reservation is required on weekends and holidays to ensure your desired entry time.

RESERVE YOUR VISIT: groundsforsculpture.org/timed-admission-tickets

As an organization, Grounds For Sculpture has made positive strides towards accessibility and accommodations. From June-December 2024, we participated in Art-Reach's Accessibility Task Force pilot program to audit our policies, practices, procedures, and programs to determine improvements for equitable engagement and access for people with disabilities. The result is a three-year Strategic Accessibility Plan that will advise us on our work going forward. Check this space for updates!

The Access Mobile Tour is a 45-minute tour that is available daily for visitors with disabilities or limited mobility. The cart can accommodate either a maximum of five people OR four people and a wheelchair. Tours are scheduled at 11AM, 12PM, 2PM, and 3PM. You can reserve seats for the guest who needs it + one additional guest (additional guests may join the tour to the guide's discretion). Reservations strongly recommended two weeks in advance by calling 609.586.0616.

Touch tours are available for groups with individuals who are blind or have low vision. These docent-led experiences engage participants with a variety of outdoor sculptures that can be explored tactilely. **ASL tours** are available for groups with individuals who are d/Deaf. **Requests for tours** require advance notice (minimum 2 weeks' notice). For more information, please contact us at access@groundsforsculpture.org or 609.586.0616.

Docent Tours are available based on docent availability. Check in at the Welcome Center to see what pop-up tours are available during your visit!

Discover something new or learn more about a longtime favorite!

Explore our collection of 400+ works on our [website](#) and our [interactive map](#), which features sculpture and horticulture throughout the art-filled gardens, as well as an [audio tour](#) offering docent interpretations of 29 sculptures and two historical spots. View our [Tool Box](#) with new self-guided activities to enhance your next visit, including Art Adventure Backpacks!

[SIGN UP FOR GFS E-NEWS](#)

CONNECT WITH GFS!
@GROUNDSFORSCULPTURE



*\$5 After 5PM Fridays, are supported, in part by Stark & Stark.

**STARK
& STARK**
PC



Cover photo: Willie Cole, *Pretty in Pink*, 2005-06, shoes, wood, metal pipe, screws, staples, depth 19 inches; diameter 70 inches, © Artist or Artist's Estate, photo: Ken Ek; Chakaia Booker, *FOCI*, 2010, stainless steel, 30 x 8 x 8 feet, Courtesy of the Artist, © Artist or Artist's Estate; Isaac Witkin, *Garden State*, 1997, Zimbabwe black granite, 188 x 133 x 115 inches, Grounds For Sculpture, Gift of The Seward Johnson Atelier, © Estate of Isaac Witkin, photo: David Michael Howarth Photography

MEMBER EVENTS

For more information or to register for these events, visit groundsforsculpture.org/calendar or call 609.586.0616



FAMILY PROGRAMS

May-August 2026

Join us on select Saturdays for drop-in Family Open Studios (all ages), Tots for Sculpture studio programs (ages 3-5), and Creative Kiddos studio programs (ages 6-8) to explore a variety of themes through artmaking and materials exploration designed for kids together with their adult caregivers. Then, on Tuesdays in June, enjoy a leisurely 30-minute kid-friendly tour led by a GFS docent and then head into the studio for a creative artmaking activity at our [Stroller Tours](#) (ages 0-3).

LEARN MORE ABOUT UPCOMING FAMILY PROGRAMS

Children's educational programming at Grounds For Sculpture is made possible by generous support from the Jirair S. and Elizabeth Hovnanian Family Foundation. Additional support is provided by Knowledge Without Borders and PNC Foundation. Support is provided, in part, by Jenifer Morack and Schaefer/Batterman Family Fund of the Princeton Area Community Foundation.



FROM OUR GROUNDS TO YOURS - GFS'S ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 2 | Members-Only 10AM-12PM | Open to Public 12PM-4PM

Sunday, May 3 | Open to Public 10AM-2PM

All proceeds support GFS's horticulture program. This event is rain or shine. FREE for members! [LEARN MORE](#)

Interested in getting more engaged? Bringing additional family and friends with you to programs and exploring our art-filled gardens? Upgrading your membership is easy and can be done anytime during your membership's term - and you'll support the arts! Call the Membership Office at 609.249.0225 for more info.



MEMBER MORNINGS

Members-Only hours every Saturday & Sunday, May 9-September 6

Members are granted exclusive early access to the grounds at 8AM and may stay as long as they wish. Enjoy a quiet start to your day and catch the morning light at GFS before the general public is admitted. At GFS, we believe visiting an oasis of beauty, where art and imaginatively landscaped gardens awaken the senses, enhances well-being and stimulates reflection. *Be sure to check your Member Exclusives email for upcoming Members-Only docent-led tours!* [LEARN MORE & RESERVE YOUR VISIT](#)



MEMBER PREVIEW DAY

Saturday, May 16 (8am-2pm)

Member Preview Day is an exclusive opportunity for GFS members to be among the first to explore the season, including [Opening the Vault: A Look Inside the GFS Collection](#), a new exhibition celebrating the depth and diversity of the GFS collection and uniting works across an array of mediums and stories. Join us and participate in a variety of unique programming specifically designed to engage and inspire you!

Member Preview Day highlights include:

- Members-Only access starting at 8AM
- Exclusive first look at the new exhibition
- Artists in Action: Open Studios
- Meet the Artists and Curatorial Staff
- Hands-on artmaking
- Wellness Workshop
- Docent-led Tours
- Access to the Member Lounge with complimentary beverages

Members may use their Guest Passes to bring additional guests.

[VIEW THE PROGRAM SCHEDULE](#)

Family Programs photo: Roshni Khatri; Member Preview Day photo: Zach Teris for DMH Photography



BEHIND THE SCENES AT JOHNSON ATELIER

Tuesday, June 9
(5:30-7pm)

FREE for Sustainer & Benefactor level members.

Join us for a very special tour and talk at [Johnson Atelier](#), the sculpture fabrication and conservation facility located on the GFS campus. Hear from Margaret Johnson, Managing Director at Johnson Atelier, and James Baylis, Director of Design & Fabrication, about recent projects and fascinating operations behind production and conservation of large-scale, high-caliber contemporary sculpture. [REGISTER NOW](#)



WORDSMITH: A DEF POETRY REUNION HONORING URSULA RUCKER + PRE-EVENT TALK

Friday, June 12 (6:30-10pm)

A *Def Poetry Reunion* returns for its third year. Begin the evening with a special pre-event talk in the East Gallery featuring Ursula Rucker and friends, then stroll into the sculpture park for a powerful open-air performance honoring the legendary poet through spoken word and music. Experience unforgettable sets from new and returning voices including Kayo Charles, Derick Cross, and Bonifide Rojas, all set against the dramatic backdrop of Roberto Lugo's monumental 20-foot vessel *Put Yourself in the Picture*. Wander the gardens, connect with friends, and enjoy food for purchase from local food trucks as poetry, rhythm, and visual art come together under the evening sky. This is sure to be a night to remember. Tickets on sale now! [REGISTER NOW](#)



LIVE MUSIC: THE MIDNIGHTERS

June 21, July 25, and
August 16 (6-8pm)

Join us on select Late Nights this summer for live music with The Midnighters! **FREE for members.** [LEARN MORE](#)



GFS FAMILY BREAKFAST

Saturday, August 8 (10am-12pm)

Enjoy breakfast and explore family-focused activities connected to artwork currently on view. **FREE for Family level members & above.** Registration required and opens July 1. [LEARN MORE](#)



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH SHANTELL MARTIN

Wednesday, August 26 (5:30-7pm)

FREE for Sustainer & Benefactor level members.

Meet the internationally renowned artist featured in the forthcoming solo exhibition *Shantell Martin: Past, Present, Future*. Learn about her inspirations and practice during an exclusive look at the installation. After the talk, enjoy a curated tasting and further conversation. [REGISTER NOW](#)



VISIT US IN THE MEMBER LOUNGE!

Friday-Sunday (11am-2pm)

Located in a bright corner of the Welcome Center next to the Van Gogh Café and overlooking the gardens, the Member Lounge is an inviting space for members to take a break with a complimentary refreshment. Read museum publications, learn about upcoming programs, or connect with a staff member or volunteer. *Make sure to check your Member Exclusives email for drop-in programs each month!*



Members' Wellness

We started the new year with a sold-out Members' Candlelight Chair Yoga + Intention Setting event on January 7.

Instructor Carolann Jones led us in a curated yoga flow and a guided intention setting activity sealed with an essential oil blessing

and meditative sound bath, all while we were surrounded by the beauty of twinkling candlelight and exclusive activation of the captivating sculpture *Altar II* by artist Michele Oka Doner in the West Gallery.

Member Mingle + Horticulture Panel

Members gathered in the Member Lounge for a Member Mingle with cookies and warm beverages on February 21, before attending a panel discussion on the book, *Private Gardens of Philadelphia*. Featuring author and horticulturalist, Nicole Juday, and Philadelphia Horticulture Society Vice President and horticulturist, Andrew Bunting, the talk concluded with a book signing with Juday. Members can now enjoy GFS's copy of the book in the Member Lounge or purchase your own copy from the Museum Shop.



Blood Drive

On February 28, GFS partnered again with New York Blood Center. This Blood Drive was incredibly important because the NYBC had been forced to cancel all blood collection operations due to the winter snowstorms. We collected 40 units, saving up to almost 120 lives in our community! Stay tuned as we will be holding another Blood Drive in August at GFS.



Philadelphia Flower Show

Our GFS Member Trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show took place on Wednesday, March 4. Forty members joined Janis Napoli (GFS Director of Horticulture) and the Membership team – Claire Cossaboon (Director of Membership), Caitlin Burns (Membership Associate), and Karen Parmelee (Senior Membership Associate) – to explore the exhibits at the nation's largest and the world's longest-running horticultural event.



Spring Artisan Market

GFS hosted its second Spring Artisan Market featuring 100+ artisans and even more indoor locations on March 21 & 22!

Handcrafted jewelry, pottery, woodworking, original art, skincare, and gourmet treats are some examples of the artisans that participated. Members had first access from 9-10AM on both days before the public! Save the date for the third annual Holiday Artisan Market returning November 28 & 29.



Swirl: An Evening of Art and Wine

GFS just hosted another wonderful evening of *Swirl: An Evening of Art and Wine* on April 24. Guests of the fundraiser enjoyed tasting food pairings inspired by wines of Southern France and learning about highlighted sculptures like *Linden Tree* by Isaac Witkin. While they watched the sunset throughout their evening tours, they were raising money to support GFS's growing sculpture collection, sprawling gardens, and dynamic public programming.

Don't miss another one-of-a-kind evening at GFS where art, cuisine, and exploration will collide again on September 25. Returning fans of *Swirl* and newcomers alike can look forward to another evening full of new wine tastings paired with premium culinary bites curated by the chef and sommelier at Rat's Restaurant, while learning about iconic sculptures throughout the grounds. Members will get the first opportunity to make their reservation during the [Member Pre-Sale](#) running from June 1-14.

Swirl is supported, in part, by Capital Health and Charles Schwab. Additional support is provided by A-1 Tours, a division of A-1 Limousine, Arts In Action Consulting, Donna M. Murray SA Fox & Roach Realtors, Gallagher, Graduate by Hilton Princeton, Greencrown Energy, Mrs. G's Appliances, Princeton Marriott at Forrestal, TD Bank, and V.J. Scozzari & Sons





WELCOME, PERRY!

Membership - Benefactor

Benefactor

ACTIVE

Perry Peacock

Member Since 2026
Expires March 31, 2027

ID: 8-10554239



Juniper Fox

ID: 8-10554243



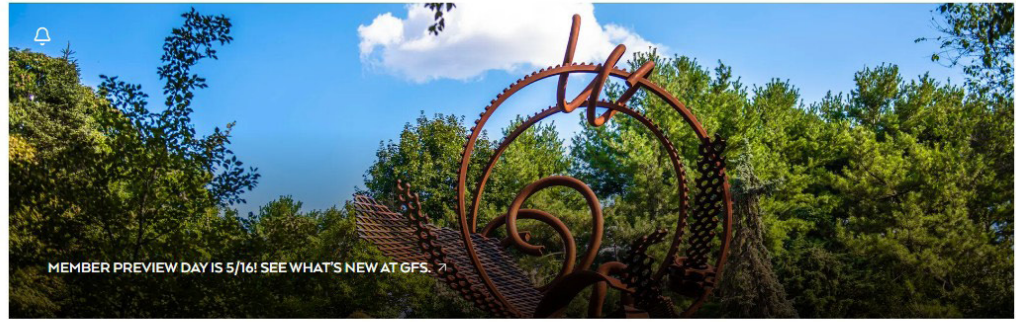
DASHBOARD

MEMBERSHIP

VISITS

PROFILE

LOG OUT



MEMBER PREVIEW DAY IS 5/16! SEE WHAT'S NEW AT GFS. ↗

GUEST PASSES

8 of 8 remaining



GET TICKETS



BOOKED VISITS

No upcoming visits booked yet.

See All Visits ↗

MANAGE YOUR MEMBERSHIP



WEATHER AT GFS

56° F



Grounds For Sculpture's New Ticketing System and Member Portal

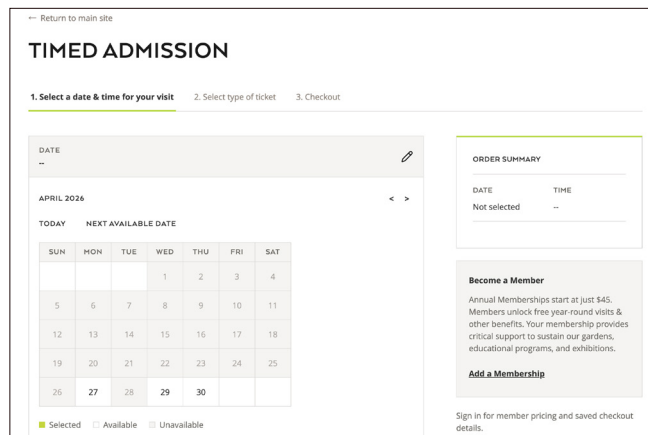
Grounds For Sculpture is excited to share that the new ticketing system and digital membership experience are live! These improvements enhance access, deepen engagement, and streamline the overall GFS website experience. Purchasing tickets online is now easier and faster than ever – your **Online Account** allows you to conveniently reserve your visits, renew or upgrade your membership, register for programs, and receive your member discounts where applicable.

Members now access the **GFS Member Portal** (pictured above), a personalized digital space within our website, to access their digital membership card(s), share guest passes, review scheduled and past visits, and more. Within this space, GFS members benefit from expanded self-service tools, including viewing membership details and updating contact info. *This improved digital experience has replaced the previous eMembership app.*

These updates reflect our ongoing commitment to strategic technology investments that strengthen visitor engagement, support membership growth, and enhance financial sustainability.

We are grateful to our project partners, Dave Ebert (Lapine Group), Monstarlab, and Zetcom, for their expertise and collaboration. Special thanks to Bloomberg Philanthropies Digital Accelerator Program for making this initiative possible.

Click here to access the GFS Member Portal, then follow the instructions to set up your account: <https://portal.groundsfor Sculpture.org/>



Use your GFS Online Account for reserving your free member visits and registering for events.

Coming soon: Targeted for release later this spring, GFS's new art database, MuseumPlus, will provide direct access to information about our art collection. This will offer even more ways to connect to the artwork on view!

This project was developed with the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies' Digital Accelerator for Arts and Culture.

**Bloomberg
Philanthropies**



Opening the Vault: A LOOK INSIDE THE GFS COLLECTION

Whose voices define an exhibition? This season, get your first look at a new kind of exhibition that opens the door for voices beyond the traditional curatorial circle. ***Opening the Vault: A Look Inside the GFS Collection*, curated by GFS staff members from five different departments, takes a deeper look at the GFS collection to highlight the range of artistry and perspectives found within.** Made up of 29 sculptures by 24 different artists, the works date from 1955 to present and feature a variety of materials and processes, such as blown glass, Carrara marble, Cor-Ten steel, beads, and recycled shoes. Inspired by similar exhibitions at the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Phoenix Museum of Art that invited frontline staff to serve as guest curators, *Opening the Vault* invites viewers to see the sculpture park's collection through the eyes of those who live and breathe the institution daily.

This collaboration between GFS staff from Development, Education, Guest Services, and Marketing Departments, guided by Curatorial staff, began with defining overarching ideas to explore, informing the artwork that was selected. Once this was established, the group got to experience each piece in conversation with themselves and with other works in the collection. These conversations synthesized in the resulting layout and design, interpretative text, and interactive experiences to surprise and delight guests. Each bringing a different skill set and lens to exhibitions, this cohort crafted an exhibition over the course of eight months centered around humanity, connection, inclusivity, and accessibility.



Michele Oka Doner, *Eve #1*, 2002

Featured work in the exhibition includes *Pretty in Pink* by Willie Cole, *Obituary Note* by Tallur L.N., and *Eve #1* and *Venus #1* by Michele Oka Doner. These works spoke to the team for a variety of reasons, connecting to major themes and personal experiences. *Pretty in Pink* (pictured on the cover) reflects a common theme in Cole's work with its everyday materials (in this sculpture, high heeled shoes) and repetitive use of a single object. It is a familiar sight to GFS staff, having been on display in the administrative offices since 2015 in a communal space.

Some staff were also familiar with *Obituary Note*, having worked in the galleries while it was last on view during *Interference Fringe* in 2019. Rye Palasciano, Manager of Guest Services, was in their second year working at GFS during *Interference Fringe* and says "the exhibition was one of my favorite breadth of works to protect and discuss with visitors. Tallur created his pieces through assemblage to interfere with philosophical and aesthetic traditions. Most of his work makes viewers stop and think about what they're witnessing, and *Obituary Note* was no exception."

Michele Oka Doner, *Eve #1*, 2002, cast bronze, 62 x 16 1/2 x 14 inches, Grounds For Sculpture, Gift of The Seward Johnson Atelier, © Artist or Artist's Estate



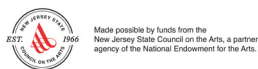
Tallur L.N., *Obituary Note*, 2013

Staff also forged connections to work previously unfamiliar to them, such as Michele Oka Doner’s *Eve #1* and *Venus #1*. “Fabricated at Johnson Atelier, these two sculptures represent the female form combined with the texture of coral, displaying a hallmark of Oka Doner’s work – a study and reverence for nature. Aside from being captivated by their aesthetic, I, and many others, deeply connected with the act of authorship of female forms created by a female artist,” states Caitlin Burns, Membership Associate.

As members, you have an exclusive opportunity to be among the first to experience these works and many more on **Member Preview Day on May 16, 2026**. With a variety of unique programming designed to complement the opening of our new exhibition, you can catch our staff curators during our “Meet the Artists and Curatorial Staff”, hands-on artmaking workshops and throughout the art-filled gardens that day!

This exhibition was guest-curated by Caitlin Burns, Claire Cossaboon, Danielle Costello, Ariel DellArena, Caroline Fazzini, Colleen Molnar, Amy Musselman, Jan Kathleen Reyes, Rye Palasciano, and Leah Southerland.

Opening the Vault: A Look Inside the GFS Collection is made possible, in part, by the Brooke Barrie Art Fund. Support is provided, in part, by The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a division of the NJ Department of State, and a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Atlantic Foundation.



Tallur L.N., *Obituary Note*, 2013, burnt wood, bronze, 183 x 152 x 117 centimeters, Grounds For Sculpture, Purchase, photo: Ken Ek; Jesse Moore, *Sigh (The Morning You Left)*, 1993, poplar wood, steel, 92 x 108 x 72 inches; John Martini, *Odd*, 2000, steel, 81 x 16 x 18 inches; John Martini, *Id*, 2000, steel, 79 x 45 x 16 inches



Grace Yasumura | Curator

Faith McClellan | Director of Collections & Exhibitions

New Work on View This Spring

This spring, visit the Meadow to see Kiyon Williams's *Ruins of Empire II* or *The Earth Swallows the Master's House*. In this work, the viewer encounters a neoclassical structure as it sinks, off kilter, into the ground. The cracked and crumbling columns — the architectural language of empire and power — recalls plantation homes and state capitals, including the White House and Monticello. Unlike monuments, valued for their unchanging permanence, Williams' work is an antimonument that reveals the fissures and volatilities embedded within structures of power.

To make this work, Williams incorporates earth from the same site where enslaved laborers quarried building materials to construct the nation's capital. Earth is an alternative archive that holds the memories of historical violence enacted onto the landscape. As such, it is a powerful reminder that the vast sums of wealth and power accumulated in this nation were built on the violent expropriation of Black life, labor, knowledge, and expertise.

Ruins of Empire II is an invitation to remember the people and histories erased by national founding mythologies, which suppress the many ways slavery and its legacy structure life in the United States. Williams' work is also a generative call to imagine what new futures might grow once the fertile earth swallows the master's house.



Installation of *Ruins of Empire II* or *The Earth Swallows the Master's House* at GFS

This sculpture, first presented at the 2024 Whitney Biennial, was fabricated in partnership with the Johnson Atelier and is on loan to GFS from the artist.

Shantell Martin: Past, Present, Future

On view: September 20, 2026 – July 23, 2028

Beginning September 20, 2026 in the West Gallery, visitors will find a new exhibition of work by LA based artist Shantell Martin (b. 1980, London, England). Martin's work is an immersive journey into storytelling, identity, and space transformation. Curated by GFS Chief Audience Officer Kathleen Ogilvie Greene, this exhibition invites viewers to contemplate the multifaceted nature of time and our relationship with it.

Martin will be onsite in August to create two monumental murals in the West Gallery. Her signature style, characterized by continuous lines and thoughtful words, serves as a foundational aesthetic connecting the various elements of the exhibition and fostering a sense of introspection and interconnectedness. This exhibition will also feature a large installation of the artist's drawings from her daily practice. Reflecting on her drawing practice, the artist notes:

"In 2023 and again in 2025, I drew every day. Each drawing became a marker of that moment, a visual journal entry. As I drew, I also recorded: the sound of the pen on the tablet, ambient noise, the silence between lines, my voice. These weren't grand gestures. They were small, steady acts, built on the idea that a little bit, constantly, can lead to something much larger and sometimes even profound. This daily rhythm became a meditation and a way to document a moment in time."

GFS and the artist will partner with [Princeton Sankofa Stitchers Modern Quilt Guild](#), who will lead a community textile project with the creation of four quilts based on thematic prompts supplied by the artist. Once completed the quilts will be added to the exhibition. *Shantell Martin: Past, Present, Future* will also feature the artist's first three-dimensional outdoor sculptures, fabricated at the Johnson Atelier, which will be accompanied by a series of words and phrases that the artist will paint on selected pathways throughout the sculpture park.



Save the date to meet the artist and curator on Member Preview Day – Saturday, September 19, 2026!

Shantell Martin: Past, Present, Future is made possible by generous exhibition support from Katie Adams and Tony Schaeffer, Lauren and Scott Eder, and Julie and Michael Nachamkin. Additional support is provided by the Brooke Barrie Art Fund and Marjorie Ogilvie. Support is provided in part by The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a division of the NJ Department of State, and a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Atlantic Foundation.



Made possible by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.



Bloom Watch

Cat Swiderski | Manager of Horticulture



Early Summer (May/June)

Aesculus parviflora is a dwarf horsechestnut that bursts into bloom in early summer. It is commonly known as the bottlebrush buckeye, named for its large panicles of flowers that resemble bottle brushes! Each panicle consists of many white, tubular flowers with red stamens, which are highly attractive to pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. The most impressive bottlebrush buckeye specimens at GFS can be found in a pair, side-by-side, in between the [Winter Garden](#) and [On Poppied Hill](#). They are hard to miss when they bloom as it is often quite spectacular.



Late Summer (July/August)

Magnolia sieboldii, commonly known as the Oyama Magnolia, seems to go somewhat under the radar as far as magnolias go, so let's take a closer look at it here. The Oyama Magnolia is a small deciduous tree that can be found along the [Lotus Pond](#) edge and by Rat's Restaurant, near [Viral Art](#). It will start blooming in late spring/early summer, bloom sporadically throughout the season, and then have another bloom as we approach fall. The lovely nodding flowers are creamy white, have crimson stamens, and a pleasing lemony fragrance. If you miss the flowers on *Magnolia sieboldii* earlier in the season, now is a good time to check for more as fall approaches.



What's New at the 2026 GFS Plant Sale

This year, the Horticulture team is excited to introduce a variety of new offerings at the 2026 GFS Plant Sale. If you love pink in your garden, explore our expanded assortment of flowering annuals in shades from blush and coral to vibrant fuchsia. Houseplant enthusiasts will also enjoy an increased array of easy-care plants propagated by the team, including hoyas, begonias, and peperomias. In addition, our ever-growing selection of perennials and woody plants is sure to offer something for every garden. Be sure to shop early for the best selection!

Plus join us for a featured demonstration on container gardening at 11:30AM and 2PM on May 2 and at 12PM on May 3!



Meet the Staff: James MacDuff, Horticulturist

James MacDuff, Horticulturist, joined the GFS Horticulture team in January 2026. He is a graduate of Delaware Valley University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in Horticulture in 2023. Prior to Del Val, James studied at Mercer

County Community College, where he also worked at GFS as a Horticulture intern. He later returned to the team as a seasonal part-time Horticulturist.

After completing his studies, James worked for Bartlett Tree Experts, where he trained as a climbing arborist and plant health care technician. This experience helped him earn his International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist credential.

Outside of work, James is a self-proclaimed plant nerd with a passion for plant propagation and taxonomy. He also enjoys gardening at home, recreational tree climbing, and going on hikes to "botanize." James is beyond ecstatic to be back at GFS, now as a full-time staff member of the Horticulture Department.



New Horticulture Grant from the New Jersey Cultural Trust

Cat Swiderski | Manager of Horticulture

Karen Hollywood | Director of Corporate and Foundation Engagement

In 2025, GFS received an Institutional and Financial Stabilization Grant from the New Jersey Cultural Trust. Receiving this grant, the first awarded for the Horticulture Department, has provided GFS with the tools necessary to establish and preserve a complete and accurate record of the living collection. Comprehensive plant records are a defining feature of arboreta and botanic gardens, and as a Level II accredited arboretum, it is important that GFS has the tools for cataloging and managing the living collection.

Through this funding, the Horticulture Department purchased plant collection database software, as well as an engraver and an initial set of 500 accession tags for properly labeling specimens on the grounds. Existing plant records were transferred into the new database and over the past several months the team has added many new entries as well.

“This significant grant funding allows us to implement this new database system that will help our team manage the extraordinary living collection at Grounds For Sculpture,” says Janis Napoli, Director of Horticulture, “We are excited to enhance our ability to document, track, and care for our horticultural specimens, ensuring that future generations can continue to experience and learn from the ever-evolving landscape in our gardens. We are grateful to the New Jersey Cultural Trust for their support in advancing our mission.”

The database, IrisBG, allows us to store detailed information about each plant, including provenance, taxonomy, plant history, location on the grounds, and photographs - ensuring that institutional plant records are preserved and accessible long term. Data from the GFS plant records can be used to manage the collection, support conservation efforts, share information with other institutions, and educate guests about the living collection.

An important component of cataloging the collection is accessioning. “Accessioning” is the process by which a plant becomes part of the permanent collection and is assigned a unique identification number, known as an accession number. All data associated with that plant is recorded under this number in the database. To ensure accurate documentation, each accessioned specimen receives a tag engraved with its name and accession number. The team has been actively engraving and installing these tags over the past several months, and the first 500 have now been placed throughout our art-filled gardens.

Accession tags are intended for internal collections management and are not prominently displayed. Public-facing labels, by contrast, are designed for guest use and are placed more visibly within garden beds, displaying both the scientific and common names. As the team continues to accession more of the living collection, guests can expect to see an increasing number of public labels throughout the grounds.

This grant marks an important step forward in our continued growth as an arboretum and represents a meaningful investment in the long-term stewardship, documentation, and accessibility of the GFS living collection.

The installation of a new horticulture database and engraver in addition to institutional advancement of the Horticulture Department is supported by the New Jersey Cultural Trust.

New Jersey
Cultural Trust

EDUCATION



Tiffany Allen | Director of Education & Engagement

The Education and Engagement Department is having an exciting 2026, with new leaders, meaningful internships, and the addition of talented educators to our team. We are proud to recognize two well-deserved promotions within the department. Danielle Costello (pictured on the right) has been promoted to Manager of Learning Experiences, and Callie Lasch (pictured on the left) to Assistant Manager of Learning Experiences.



These leadership advancements create new opportunities for growth across our programming. With expanded capacity, the team is developing enhanced team building initiatives, dynamic winter activations, and new adult-focused programming designed to deepen engagement with our exhibitions and collections. We are also delighted to welcome two new Museum Educators to the team. Jason Korski and Rahama Alvi, who joined us in December 2025, are both former public-school art teachers. They bring extensive experience designing innovative, inclusive lessons for learners of all ages.

Our commitment to cultivating the next generation of arts professionals continues through impactful internship experiences. In January, interns from the Father Center presented tours of two sculptures as their final project, attended by GFS staff and Andre Thomas of the Father Center. Over the course of their 10-week internship, Jayden Grey and Andrew Monk explored museum career pathways with guidance from select GFS staff while strengthening their research and public speaking skills through focused work with art.

This past winter, the Education and Marketing Departments also welcomed three interns from HomeWorks Trenton—Zyairah, Jada Kay, and Chobe—for an eight-week experience. HomeWorks is a free, community-based afterschool residential program for high school girls. Each intern completed department-specific projects under the mentorship of staff, gaining hands-on insight into museum operations and creative industries. These internship opportunities are made possible through an endowment from Ilana Gutierrez, supporting young adults as they explore and experience careers in the arts. As we look ahead, the department continues to grow in both depth and reach—expanding learning opportunities, fostering community partnerships, and creating meaningful ways for audiences of all ages to connect with art.

Banner image: HomeWorks Trenton interns Jada Kay, Zyairah, and Chobe pictured with GFS Manager of School and Group Visits, Caroline Fazzini, and GFS Manager of Wellness Programs, Rodney Camarce



Wellness Symposium & Garden Retreat Recap

On April 16, we hosted our first Wellness Symposium, introducing our holistic approach and sharing the vision behind the integrated practices we are cultivating at GFS. The symposium offered an opportunity to explore how emotional, physical, creative, and reflective experiences can work together to support whole person well-being. The evening included a calming herbal mocktail experience guided by Amanda Crooke, a reflective panel discussion with Faith Saunders, Jasmine Sethi, Lindsey Jonin, and Cleandre Ross, and concluded with a gentle journaling session.

Just two days later, on April 18, we welcomed guests to the **3rd Annual Garden Retreat**, a day of reflection and renewal designed to nurture the mind, body, and spirit. This year, participants were introduced to new practices such as intuitive journaling and art therapy—inspired vision boards, alongside returning favorites such as yoga, Tai Chi, nature walks, and artmaking. Each experience was thoughtfully guided by expert instructors and intentionally designed to cultivate balance, connection, and overall well-being.

Together, these two April gatherings reflected our continued commitment to creating meaningful, restorative experiences that foster connection, presence, and lasting wellness within our community.

Education Gallery 2026 Lineup

We're thrilled to share an exciting lineup of 2026 exhibitions in the Education Gallery at GFS. Located in the Seward Johnson Center for the Arts, the Education Gallery is a popular site for visitors to see rotating exhibitions throughout the year. These shows feature the creativity of our vibrant community—from our youngest artists to established members and dedicated staff. This year you will see works from the community organizations ARC Mercer, three local preschools (Millhill, Better Beginnings, and Princeton Nursery), and Indigenous Youth of Lenapehoking, in addition to GFS staff and our yearly *Members' Musings* show. We look forward to your visit to the gallery.

The Education Gallery at Grounds For Sculpture is supported, in part, by Stark & Stark.

**STARK
& STARK** PC

Seward Johnson, *Welcome Home*, 1999, cast plaster, painted wood, fabric,
144 x 138 x 222 inches, © 1999 The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc

Professional Development for Educators

On August 4-6, GFS will be hosting the **Teacher Summer Institute**, a unique 3-day professional development series for educators onsite at GFS. The Institute is an immersive experience designed to empower educators with new tools, techniques, and inspiration to foster holistic learning in their classrooms. Each day's agenda will feature a variety of speakers and instructors discussing art, wellness, and horticulture. Participants will engage in hands-on workshops, interactive presentations, and guided tours that offer practical ideas ready for implementation with students. Thanks to a generous donation from the Dina Wind Art Foundation, we are offering a limited number of scholarships for educators who might not otherwise be able to attend.

Team Building Access for Nonprofits

In 2025, GFS expanded access to its popular team building programs with support from Bloomberg and Capital Health. Long utilized by corporations to strengthen communication, spark creativity, and boost morale, these experiences now include limited underwritten opportunities for local GFS partner nonprofit organizations to participate. This program returns in 2026 with additional supporters – NRG and NJM Insurance Group – providing access along with Bloomberg and Capital Health. Nonprofit discounts are available for nonprofits interested in this experience.

Team building access for nonprofits is supported, in part, by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Capital Health, and NRG Energy. Additional Support is provided by NJM Insurance Group.





Proposal at GFS

Congratulations! GFS Business Member Stark & Stark's Jordan Inver put together a beautiful surprise proposal for his new fiancée at Monet Bridge, working with the dedicated Events team at GFS and Rat's Restaurant. Mother Nature lent a hand with sparkling snow-tinged winter foliage for some stunning pictures of the couple! Jordan shared "Grounds For Sculpture was the perfect place to propose to my fiancée, Erica. The staff was amazing—kind, helpful, and genuinely excited to be part of our moment. They made an already beautiful location even more special."

Updates to GFS Business Membership Program

GFS is excited to announce **NEW** updates to our Business Membership Program. The Grounds For Sculpture Business Member Program offers opportunities for businesses of all sizes to engage in our sculpture park, museum, and Level II accredited arboretum. The program offers exclusive benefits including access to our art-filled gardens, a range of unique and multipurpose meeting and event spaces, the Zagat-rated Rat's Restaurant, team building discounts, workshops, tours, group volunteer opportunities, and more!

This year, GFS is introducing new benefits for all levels, as well as the addition of two new levels, including Guest Passes to share with staff, clients, and more. Our tiered membership options, ranging from \$500 to \$15,000, allow businesses of all sizes to engage with the sculpture park in the way that best suits their needs. From small businesses to major corporations, all are welcome to connect, recharge, and enjoy the beautiful combination of art and nature unique to GFS.

To find out more about the program and how to join, contact Karen Hollywood, Director of Corporate and Foundation Engagement at khollywood@groundsforsculpture.org or 609.249.0248.

Proposal at GFS photos: Rebecca Siorek for Luna & Lark Photography



The Community Access Ticket Program

The Community Access Ticket Program has continued its commitment to equitable access for its fifth year. This program removes financial barriers so that under-resourced community members can experience art, nature, and wellness at GFS. Since the program's launch in 2021, GFS has welcomed more than 3,600 guests from 53 local nonprofits that serve youth, veterans, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and families facing housing and food insecurity.

As a member of the **Families First Discovery Pass (FFDP) program**, GFS provides free general admission to low-income families and individuals across New Jersey. New Jersey residents receiving SNAP, WFNJ, Child Care Subsidy, or WIC benefits are eligible for up to six complimentary tickets per visit, year-round. Since joining FFDP in 2021, GFS has welcomed approximately 8,000 guests annually through the program, providing yet another way for GFS to enhance its ability to provide equitable access to the sculpture park.

Guided by a belief in the restorative power of art and nature, GFS also offers a range of wellness-focused experiences designed to support the health and well-being of visitors of all ages. Over the past two years, with support from Capital Health, **GFS has enabled nonprofit partners**, such as Arm in Arm, Younity, Veterans Affairs, and Discover A New Future, to bring groups to **participate in wellness classes**, such as Tai Chi and yoga, at no cost. To learn more about our community engagement visit: <https://www.groundsforsculpture.org/join-support/community-engagement/>.

We would like to thank our GFS Business Members who partner with our organization to support our mission of providing equitable access to the arts, nature, and wellness for our community members.

The Community Access Ticket Program is made possible, in part, by Stark & Stark. Support is provided, in part, by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Capital Health, Holman, NJM Insurance Group, and NRG Energy.



In 2025, the Families First Discovery Pass program at Grounds For Sculpture was supported in part by Barbara and Gerald Essig, M&T Charitable Foundation, and Grounds For Sculpture Business Members.



ASL Day

On April 4, GFS hosted our first ASL (American Sign Language) Day. The day started with docent tours and then transitioned to a choice of a horticulture tour or dropping in to our Family Open Studios to create paper gardens. Interpreters were available at the Welcome Center, Education Studio and as Park Guides throughout the day. As GFS builds our connection with the d/Deaf community, we hope to offer additional programs like this in the future!



Take a Seat!

New seating is available at the Seward Johnson Center for the Arts – take a moment before or after your visit!

What is Make-A-Will Month?

At GFS, we believe in the power that art and shared community have to mutually uplift and sustain each other. That is why, when thinking of ways to be there for the community that makes our work possible, we partnered with FreeWill - an entirely optional, secure and trusted online tool that helps you create or update your will in about 20 minutes at no cost. Planning ahead can be intimidating, but it is also a chance to pause, reflect on what matters most, and take a step that supports the future you're preparing for. August is National Make-A-Will-Month and provides a pivotal opportunity to create a plan for all that matters to you. While including a gift to GFS is a meaningful way to ensure a shared legacy, it is not an obligation, and we welcome you to take advantage of this accessible tool as a positive and helpful resource regardless.

Feel prepared and make an impact on all you care about this August and beyond.

Artwork by Volunteers & Docents

As our art-filled gardens burst back into bloom this spring, see how the landscape acts as inspiration for our dedicated team of volunteers!

Joyce Galanter

Photograph

I was pleased to see the heron while being a park guide and it was so kind of it to pose for several pictures. Obviously, it appreciates living at GFS.

James Clarke

RoseArbor2

Watercolor

RoseArbor2 is a plein air watercolor that celebrates the roses blooming on the trellises in Rat's Woodlands. The roses in bright sunlight cast dappled shadows on the path while larger trees insulate the scene from the outside world. Wandering about the grounds as a park guide in the morning, I look for scenes to paint in the afternoon. From week to week the plants change, some bloom, some fade. Ground that seemed empty is suddenly filled with daffodils or hyacinths. The angle of the sun changes the shapes of shadows on stone as the seasons change. This all adds up to a mind-boggling number of painting opportunities throughout the park.

Interested in volunteering at GFS? Volunteers play a vital role in all facets of our operation and create a warm and friendly atmosphere for our visitors. Grounds For Sculpture offers a range of volunteer opportunities for people with a variety of interests, schedules, and skills. [LEARN MORE](#)

Jan Koczera

Oil painting

I've done many paintings from my photographs of Grounds For Sculpture. All my paintings are oils, and as I walk through the grounds, I come upon amazing scenes of great beauty. I compose a photograph and then paint them at home. These scenes inspire me, ground me, and I simply have to paint them.

Jennifer Dempsey

Puddle of Petals

Watercolor

Painted from a photo I snapped while volunteering at Grounds For Sculpture, this piece celebrates my favorite ritual—visiting the water lilies. They're like little floating surprises, always changing with the light. I wanted to capture their cheerful calm and the way they seem to throw a tiny party on the pond. This piece brings that moment of peace indoors, perfect for any space that needs a breath of nature.



Joyce Galanter



James Clarke, *RoseArbor2*



Jan Koczera

Christy Stephenson

Pink Plaid Lotus Rising
Quilt

I make quilts and made an improvised art quilt inspired by a picture I took at GFS. I just love how the spectacular lotus flowers rise out of the muddy water each year. I imagine the First Love(rs) are so taken with each other they miss the beauty of their surroundings. Quilting allows me to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the moment. Quilting is a slow art. Cutting fabric in tiny pieces and then sewing them back together again is relaxing for me. Working improvisationally allows the piece to rise out of a pile of cloth scraps, which is what this quilt did, hence the name *Pink Plaid Lotus Rising*.

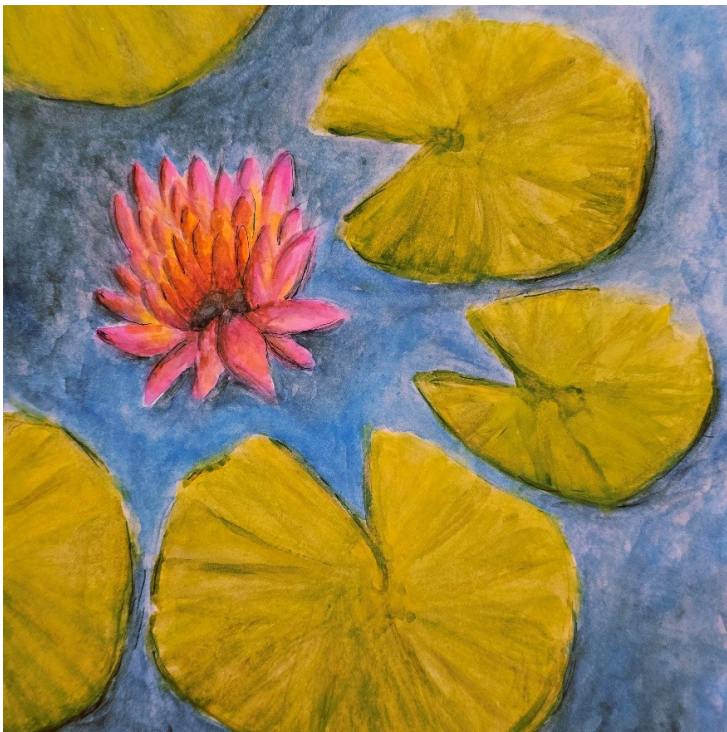
Maia Ream

Praying Mantis on Sacred Lotus
Photograph

This photo was created at the Lotus Pond. It won 1st place in the Mercer County Senior Art Show a few years ago.



Maia Ream, *Praying Mantis on Sacred Lotus*



Jennifer Dempsey, *Puddle of Petals*



Christy Stephenson, *Pink Plaid Lotus Rising*



MEET RAT'S RESTAURANT'S NEW CHEF

Rat's Restaurant recently welcomed its new executive chef, Ali Loukzada, who has developed a vibrant new menu featuring contemporary French cuisine.

Born and raised in Mumbai, India, Chef Ali's love for cooking began in family-owned restaurants and alongside his mother and grandmother, becoming a passion that shaped his career. After honing his craft in some of New York's top kitchens, he brings years of experience and global inspiration to Rat's.

Additionally, curated dining experiences including Chef's Table and wine tasting events will return this spring.

VIEW RAT'S NEW SEASONAL MENU & EVENTS: www.ratsrestaurant.com



BOOK YOUR NEXT PARTY, PRIVATE GATHERING, WEDDING OR COMPANY OUTING AT GFS!

Now through early November, enjoy our [Outdoor Tent](#), which can accommodate events as large as 300 guests, and offers a peaceful ambience near the scenic Water Garden. For more information, fill out our inquiry form at www.groundsforsculpture.org/plan-an-event.

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS FOR MOMS, DADS, & GRADS

GFS membership is the perfect gift that lasts all year, sparking the imagination and encouraging wellness through art and nature. Give the gift of a GFS membership: bit.ly/join-gfs

MEMBER DISCOUNTS AT GFS

Members enjoy 10% off on all merchandise in the Museum Shop and 10% off dining at the Van Gogh Café, Peacock Café, and Rat's Restaurant (for parties up to 8). The discount also applies to Rat's special themed dinners, cooking classes, and more throughout the year! Be sure to note "GFS Member" when making your reservation, and plan to show your membership card at check-out or to your server.

Museum Shop Hours

General Hours: 10AM-5PM

Late Nights: 10AM-8PM | Friday-Sunday | May 8-September 6

Be sure to keep an eye on the [GFS calendar](#) for upcoming artisan pop-ups at the Museum Shop!



Seward Johnson, *Lakeside Table #1*, 1999, bronze, aluminum, and resin, 45 x 54 x 54 inches, Grounds For Sculpture, Gift of The Seward Johnson Atelier, © 1999, The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc., photo: David Michael Howarth Photography; Museum Shop photo: Hannah Yoon

Artists of the Water Garden

V A L O P E R E N O L H
G B L F G R A V E S N O
D A E U M D G S B L S W
S K C N I N G C H B L A
M A N M S E K N A P P R
I N H I M H E Y U R L D
T O A E N Y A L N H O L
H W T E N G I L A R O N
F I S H E R R L O O A G
D C P E P P E R G M F F
E Z D C E M A R O N W D
N F I W R I G H T M H T

FISHER

BENSHALOM

WRIGHT

LOPER

ABAKANOWICZ

HOWARD

KNAPP

PEPPER

MARON

SMITH

CARO

GRAVES



WHAT GFS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ARE READING:

Evergreen: The Trees That Shaped America by Trent Preszler

I Who Have Never Known Men by Jacqueline Harpman

Mona's Eyes by Thomas Schlessler

Private Gardens of Philadelphia by Nicole Juday, Photographs by Rob Cardillo

The New Human Revolution Vol. 5 by Daisaku Ikeda