

HEART OF THE HOLTER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER ■ July 2026



Visit

Exhibitions

Education

Museum Shop

Donate



From the Director's Corner

Dear Holter Friends and Family,

Our 2026 fiscal year has come to a close, and I am happy to report that the museum had a very good year. We are entering the next year with momentum and a solid upward trajectory. While I am always hopeful, at heart I am also a pragmatic person. Last night, we had our annual board meeting and retreat, and a budget was passed that is both forward-looking and grounded in the need to remain conservatively cautious. This approach served us well this past year, and the board and staff are excited to see all of the hard work from the past few years really come to fruition.

At last night's annual meeting, the board also elected new officers, and the past board, which had served in their capacities for the previous three years, passed the baton on. A few years ago, the board had dwindled down to seven members. We have worked hard at rebuilding, and I am happy to report that we are officially at 13 engaged and enthusiastic trustees. I would like to thank the three outgoing executive committee members for their support and perseverance over the past three years: President Robyn Kiesling, Vice President Carley Smith, and Secretary Dawn Gallinger. THANK YOU! I would also like to thank the newly elected officers who have spent the last year learning the ropes during their season of training.

I look forward to working with President Cecily Townsend, Vice President Katherine Anderson, and Secretary Hannah Cail. May we all embrace the many opportunities we will have: problem-solving, supporting each other through challenging times, and celebrating our future growth and wins.

The summer is a fantastic time to come and experience all that the Holter has to offer. We have two fabulous, thought-provoking exhibits, and the sounds and sights of children learning and creating at our summer camps are always a delight. Lastly, a HUGE thank you to all the donors who have responded to our Raise the Roof Campaign since its launch at the Gala! As of this writing, we have raised over \$80,000 towards this critical infrastructure project. Our Community Development Block Grant application is almost complete, and we have a public comment hearing at the July 21st Lewis and Clark County Commissioners' meeting. If successful, this grant will be instrumental in assisting the Holter with the roof replacement. I can't thank our sponsors at the county enough for their efforts!

With much gratitude to our community of supporters,
Christina

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Artist Talk with
Jennifer Thompson**
July 12, 6-8 p.m.

**Curator Talk with
Gianna Sherman:
Now, Next, Always**
July 15, 6-7 p.m.

Summer Art Walk
July 17, 4-8 p.m.

Exhibitions



Life of Montana...As Ever: The Art of Bob and Gennie DeWeese

JUN 12 -AUG 16

Known as the “parents” of Montana’s Modernist movement, Bob (1920-1990) and Gennie (1921-2007) DeWeese devoted themselves to a life of art-making. This retrospective, guest curated by Tina and Josh DeWeese, highlights the Holter’s robust collection of DeWeese artwork and celebrates the power of art and family.



Now, Next, Always: The Bray, 2000-2025

JUN 12 -AUG 2

Established in 1951 as an on-site residency program for serious ceramic artists, the Archie Bray has a long and illustrious twentieth-century history. This show links the Bray’s twenty-first century future to the strength of its female progenitors and other women working in ceramics throughout the Mountain West. Guest curated by Jenni Sorkin.



OPENING AUGUST 7TH

Corwin Clairmont: Prints from the MAM Collection



Seek the Sun: A Juried Exhibition

Exhibition support by:



Additional support from coal tax placed into Montana’s Cultural and Aesthetic Projects Trust Fund.



Now, Next, Always: The Bray, 2000-2025

Last month, we opened the exhibition *Now, Next, Always: The Bray, 2000-2025* to celebrate 75 years of Archie Bray history. The Holter has a long history of hosting exhibitions put on by the Archie Bray, including the 50th anniversary show 25 years ago and the second-year residency shows held (almost) biannually. This time, rather than having the show curated by the Archie Bray director, the institution looked beyond itself and its closest neighbors, tapping Dr. Jenni Sorkin, an art history professor at UC Santa Barbara who specializes in ceramics. A resident at the Bray at one time herself, Jenni was an excellent candidate. Based on her knowledge and connections to the Bray, she was selected to curate the exhibition and write about the ever-expanding Archie Bray Foundation collection. You can read her essays about the exhibition in an exhibition catalog provided by the Holter Museum of Art.

Jenni has broken up the exhibition into seven categories: Women Pioneers, Put a Bird on It, Narrative Portraiture, Functional Ceramics, Domesticity, Stylized Botanicals, and The Body. Naturally, I gravitate towards some categories more than others. If you have come to my talks or read my other articles, you'd probably be able to guess which ones, but if not, they are Narrative Portraiture, The Body, and Domesticity. I am drawn to these three categories because they represent a broader perspective that informs my interpretation of artwork.

Narrative Portraiture can depict a variety of subjects, from self-portraits to loved ones, family members, and the community. What makes the work "narrative" is the use of gesture, expression, staging, and design. For example, in Haylie Jimenez's *Hold Me Close* (2022), we see the depiction of a hug. While we don't know exactly who the people in the portrait are just by looking

at it, we can infer that the embrace is likely warm and loving from the body language depicted in the piece. The title *Hold Me Close* also suggests this, as most of us would not ask to be held close by those we don't like or don't know. A story is being told, and it is up to us, the viewers, to fill in the blanks based on the visual cues the artist has provided and our personal experiences as they relate to those cues.



Haylie Jimenez, *Hold Me Close*, 2022. ABF Collection.

Another example is *Study for L'Amonte* (2012) by Beth Cavener and Alessandro Gallo. The sculpture depicts a cat-rabbit-human hybrid. Its head has rabbit-like ears but maintains a human-like expression, especially in the eyes. The body is gestural and sensual, positioned like a lounging cat with one leg hanging over the edge. Cavener, with keen perception and skill, uses personified animals to convey complex human emotions and interactions. By depicting these animal-human hybrids, she explores themes of sensuality and sexuality in a way that avoids lustfulness or exploitation. This approach also creates a tension for viewers. It permits open viewing of sexuality or seduction, reducing guilt often associated with human depictions, but also evokes discomfort by showing it through creatures resembling pets, touching on taboo. This internal conflict provokes a lasting emotional response, illustrating her artistic courage and nuanced understanding of the human psyche.

Broad Vision (continued)



Beth Cavener and Alessandro Gallo, *Study for L'Amonte* (detail),
2012. ABF Collection.

Next, we move on to The Body, the oldest subject matter we know of. It is an inescapable curiosity, loathed as much as it is loved. From the Gargas Cave hand stencils, to Greco-Roman sculpture, to Renaissance portraits and the Modernist nude, the body continues to dominate artistic subject matter; it is something we all possess, yet it remains misunderstood. In this exhibition, the body appears in several variations, from full abstraction to direct representation — even literal molds of women’s breasts. Take Beth Cavener’s *Captive* (2024) (can you tell I’m a fan?), the only piece in the exhibition not connected to the Holter’s or Bray’s collections. Much larger than her other piece, *Captive* depicts an equine-type creature, somewhere between a horse and a deer, with a lion’s tail, a human expression, and female genitalia. The creature nips at its shoulders the way a horse would scratch an itch while perched on its custom pedestal like a dog commanded to sit. Its front arm extends out like a dressage horse stopped mid-motion. Along its entire back, a tiger tattoo in a quasi-Japanese style begins to overtake the animal, as if it is being transformed into the big cat itself. Again, Cavener demonstrates a deep understanding of the significance of gesture and how the body’s shapes and contortions can convey a narrative beyond the form alone. Her work is so effective not only because of the texture achieved by the ceramic medium, but also because of the ability to view the subject in the round. While I’m sure her understanding of body

language would translate to two-dimensional work, it would be less evocative. The viewer would be led to see the subjects as individual objects, devoid of the additional context provided by a background. This piece in particular straddles the categories of Narrative Portraiture and The Body, making it an excellent transition piece within the context of the exhibition.

Another standout piece in this category is Martha Grover’s *Wall Jewelry Box* (2008). At first glance, you may assume it belongs in the Stylized Botanicals category, and there is a good argument for that, but upon closer inspection, a new narrative unfolds. It is a large wall-mounted piece that vaguely resembles the carnivorous pitcher plant, a species famous for luring insects and small rodents into its deadly, poisonous pitcher, where they are slowly digested by the plant’s “stomach” acids. An apt choice for The Body category, as many (though not all) depictions of botanicals in art represent or evoke female genitalia. You may be asking why I find the deadly flower such an appropriate metaphor for something known for providing life — it’s because of Freud. It’s always because of Freud. Women’s genitalia have been a source of men’s sexual anxieties since we crawled out of the primordial ooze. From the ancient fears of vagina dentata to Freud’s Oedipal complex. Entering a woman’s territory has always been seen as equivalent to storming a battlefield laced with landmines of sexual inadequacy. Depicting such a body part as not only feminine and beautiful, but also unsuspecting and deadly, adds dimension to women as not only the personae of the Earth Mother, but also a consuming Gorgon. Implying that women can take as much as they can give, which is, in fact, everything. Plus, it makes for a unique, one-of-a-kind jewelry box! I bet you can’t find that at Claire’s.

Finally, we come to Domesticity, arguably the most gendered category after Women Pioneers. The word traditionally signifies a

Broad Vision (continued)

sphere dominated by femininity, with a common perception that women are responsible for managing the home—although this has shifted due to women's liberation and economic challenges. Today, few can afford to stay home, even if they'd like to. Historically, women have been linked to domestic tasks and interior life, while men's roles often extended beyond the home through competitive and resource-extractive labor. The selected works in this category explore women's internal conflicts with sensitivity and humor. For example, Shalene Valenzuela's 2006 piece, *Out of the Box*, vividly captures these contradictions.

It's a ceramic shoebox with a lid featuring a drawing of a 1950s housewife cleaning a chef's knife, which reminds me of John Waters' film *Serial Mom* (1994), about a bored housewife turned homicidal maniac. The box's front shows instructions for making a bed. Inside are two black kitten heels: the right depicts a woman politely sipping a martini, and the left shows her dancing, possibly after a couple of martinis.



Shalene Valenzuela, *Out of the Box*, 2006. ABF Collection.

The imagery is rich with social critique. Even choosing between high heels and flats is provocative—heels can symbolize liberation, as women claimed their sexuality or rejected patriarchal expectations for quietness and docility. Conversely, heels can serve patriarchal purposes, making women appear more sexually desirable and hindering escape from danger. Personally, I wear heels because they're cute and I like the way they make my legs look. The illustrations on the shoes reflect similar themes—on the right, a composed, polite woman; on the left, the same woman dancing, hair tousled, martini flying, appearing loud and out of control. This visual duality can be interpreted as either a story of liberation or an exploration of personal duality. In any case, it provides rich material for social commentary.

Altogether, Jenni Sorkin has curated a diverse and thought-provoking exhibition of many artworks that have not been seen by the public until now. I encourage patrons to take their time as they meander through the exhibition. Consider the implications of the category that each piece has been chosen for, and what the significance of that choice might be. If you would like to hear more about my interpretations of the work in this exhibition, come to my Curator Talk on Wednesday, July 15, from 6-8 p.m.



Frances Senska, *Two Birds*, n.d. The Shaner Collection.

Fairy Village Weekend

with Holter's After School Teen Arts Council and Prickly Pear Land Trust

Celebrate the magic of summer with a weekend of fairy-themed activities, all taking place in a handmade fairy village! As a collaboration between the Holter's Teen Art Council and Prickly Pear Land Trust, this weekend blends creativity, whimsy, and outdoorsy fun for all ages. All events are offered at no cost.

Location: The Grove, East Helena ([CLICK HERE](#) for more information)

Friday, July 31

Dog Costume Contest

5:30pm, judging at 5:45pm

Festoon your fido in the finest fashions, and strut your stuff for the judges- a fairy prince and his entourage, The Council of Faes! Most festive fairy doggo will receive a big prize. There will be treats for all furry competitors and much admiration from the Prince, the Council, and visitors to the Village.

Saturday, August 1

Fairy Tea Party

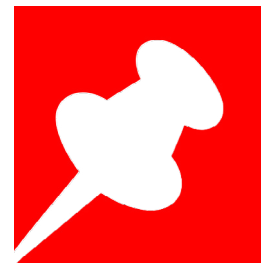
11 am - 12 pm

Sip tea and enjoy treats and crafts with the fairy folk. (Pre-registration is required for this event. [CLICK HERE](#) to register.)

Fairy Dance

7-9 pm

Dance your heart out with fellow fairies under twinkling lights.



PRICKLY PEAR
LAND TRUST

Adult Programs



Courage to Create (Morning)

Weekly on Tuesdays, 10 am - 12 pm

(On hiatus from June 16th until the beginning of July)

- ◆ Art-making for Veterans, Active Duty Military, and Caregivers.

**Click on the
class titles to
learn more and
register.**

Artist's Talk with Jennifer Thompson

July 12, 6 - 8 pm.

- ◆ Multimedia artist Jennifer Thompson shares the process behind her previous exhibition, *Lines and Connections*, which was on display at Montana's Written in Stone Farm.

Curator Talk: Now, Next, Always

July 15, 6 - 7 pm.

- ◆ Join the Holter for another installment in a series of exhibition talks with curator Gianna Sherman! This session is focused on the exhibition *Now, Next, Always: The Bray, 2000-2025*.

Not All Art Hangs on a Wall: Poetry in the Galleries

Tuesdays in July, 6 - 8 pm.

- ◆ Award-winning poet Donna Davis welcomes you to a four-session poetry writing workshop inspired by the extraordinary exhibitions on display. Registration required.

Finding Your Mark: Exploring Individual Mark-Making

July 20-23, 6 - 8 pm.

- ◆ This four-day adult workshop with artist Sky Angove explores the expressive potential of mark making. Develop a deeper understanding of how individuality emerges through the act of painting.

Scrolling Along: A Scroll Painting Workshop

July 31, 6 - 7:30 pm.

- ◆ In this workshop, we'll be drawing inspiration from artist Gennie DeWeese's scroll paintings to create our own miniature versions, made with canvas, paint sticks, and dowels.

Free!

Free!

Free!

Free!

BECOME A HOLTER MEMBER



Membership Benefits by
LEVEL

Trailblazer (\$60-\$119)

- All local business perks listed on the next page
- Free museum admission for one adult for an entire year

Holter Friend (\$120-\$499)

- All benefits at the previous level
- Free museum admission for two adults for an entire year

Meadowlark (\$500-\$799)

- All benefits at the previous level
- Invite to annual luncheon with the executive director

Bitterroot (\$800-\$1,199)

- All benefits at the previous level
- Invite to a free tour of the museum led by the executive director

Ambassador (\$1,200-\$9,999)

- All benefits at the previous level
- Two tickets to the annual Holter Gala fundraiser

Founder (\$10,000 +)

- All benefits at the previous level
- Complimentary event rental at the museum



NEW! Free combo with any purchase of soup or sandwich at Planet Gyros



10% OFF classes at
**Gentle Healing
Wellness Center**



10% OFF in
museum store &
Holter classes



NARM - access to
over 650 museums
across North America



One FREE
beer per month at
**Ten Mile Creek
Brewery**



10% off your
purchase at
**Fire Tower Coffee
House**



\$1 OFF
your first drink
at **Gulch Distillers**



\$1 of your first drink
at **The Hawthorn**
will be donated
to The Holter



FREE sprinkles
on a single
cone purchase
at **Big Dipper**



10% OFF all art
supplies at
Queen City Framing



10% OFF your
purchase at
Montana Book Co.



What is *Raise the Roof*?

Our building, originally built in 1896, has served Helena and the surrounding region for decades, housing rotating exhibitions, a permanent collection, educational programming, and countless community events. But aging infrastructure does not announce itself gracefully. Prior to December 14th, we had planned to spend a year and a half developing and implementing a capital campaign for our roof and two of our exterior walls. But since then, we have documented accelerating deterioration in the roof structure.

The Holter's exhibitions, collections, staff, visitors, and students deserve a safe, sound building. A roof failure does not just threaten art, it threatens our ability to open our doors at all.

The Raise the Roof: Protect the Art campaign is a fundraising push to raise money for a complete roof replacement in the upcoming year. Whatever you are able to give, please know that every dollar goes directly to this critical infrastructure need, that 100% of campaign funds will be directed to roof replacement, and that your contribution will be recognized in permanent campaign donor recognition in the museum. Thank you.

To donate to Raise the Roof and learn more:

[**CLICK HERE**](#)

For sponsorship opportunities, please email development@holtermuseum.org.

From the Holter Vault: Artwork from the Collection



If you haven't stopped by to see the current exhibition, *Life of Montana...As Ever: The Art of Bob and Gennie DeWeese*, make sure to do so before the exhibition closes on August 16! This simple composition, *Tomatoes on a Window*, was brought to life by Gennie (1921-2007), who often explored the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in her work.

"The elements of line, movement, space, shape... are all the same regardless of whether you are responding to the inner or the outer worlds," Gennie said of painting.

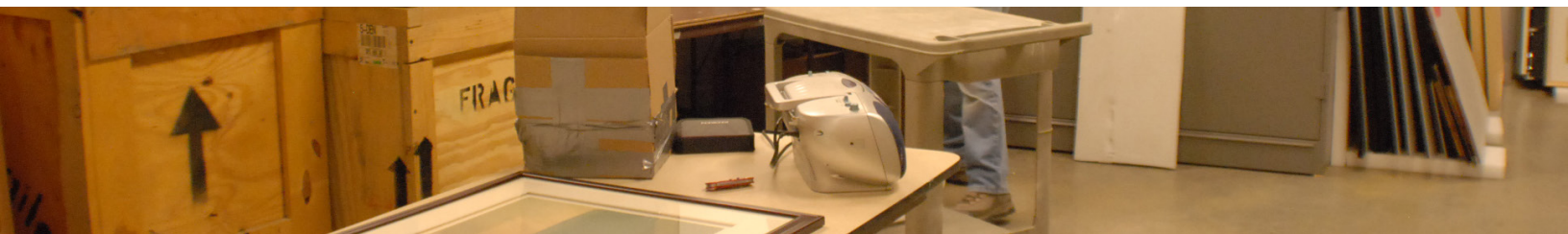
In your opinion, which portions of this piece might reflect Gennie's "outer world?" Which portions might reflect her "inner world?"

Image: Gennie DeWeese, *Tomatoes on a Window*, 1978. Oil on Masonite. Collection of the Holter Museum of Art, gift of the DeWeese Family.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: COLLECTIONS

The Holter Vault (where our collection is stored) is getting a makeover! We're adding some new shelving and reconfiguring current storage systems in the vault. To do this, we'll need extra hands to help move artwork and heavy shelves/cabinets. This vault "work day" will be taking place on **Monday, July 13 from 10 am - 1 pm**. If you are interested (and comfortable with some heavy lifting/team lifting), please sign up below!

SIGN UP



HOLTER ONLINE SHOP

You can now shop ONLINE for handmade arts and crafts at the Holter! Jewelry, ceramics, prints, art kits, and more will be available at

shopholtermuseum.org

Click the link above to check it out.

This website will be updated with more products soon!

Event Space Rental



Host your next event at the Holter Museum!

- Staff Meeting / Corporate Training
- Holiday Parties
- Birthday Parties
- Memorial Services
- Weddings and Receptions
- Small Business Networking Events
- Comedy Events
- Luncheons
- Corporate Social Happy Hours
- ...and MORE!

Holter Museum of Art
12 E. Lawrence Street, Helena, MT 59601

FOR MORE INFO EMAIL: DEVELOPMENT@HOLTERMUSEUM.ORG OR CALL (406) 204-3401