

CAPE ANN Museum

In Sculpting Self, sculptures created by 300 Cape Ann students are paired with works by Walker Hancock

Youths learned about renowned sculptor and created own renditions

On view: April 16 to June 12, 2022



Walker Hancock (1901-1998), *Passing Off*, 1960s, bronze. Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA. Museum purchase, 1982, with funds provided by Evelyn Bartlett [Acc. #2576.23] (left). Sculpture by student at O'Maley Middle School in Gloucester (right).

GLOUCESTER, MASS. (March 2022) – [Sculpting Self](#) is an inventive program that had eighth graders learning about the renowned work of Cape Ann sculptor Walker Hancock (1901-1998) while creating their own sculptures for an exhibit that will pair the student and master works together. They will be on view at the Museum, 27 Pleasant St., in Gloucester from April 16 to June 12, 2022.

The program was inspired by Hancock's Basketball Series. Over 15 years from 1961 to 1977, the sculptor made sculptures inspired by watching the Gloucester High School varsity basketball team practice. The players would repeat moves like *Sky Hook* and *Waiting for the Pass* so Hancock could capture their dynamic, active movement in clay and later bronze. "The basketball players were the result of having the opportunity to observe the game in its amateur form, which to me is more interesting than the professional, from the point of view of action. Because there are many more accidents than in professional plays," Hancock said during an interview at the Cape Ann Museum in 1989.

During the 2021-2022 school year, Cape Ann Museum Education Manager Miranda Aisling visited three area schools with classes of eighth graders twice to talk about Hancock's work and to teach the students how to create their own wire armature and then cover it in clay. Each student was asked to portray

themselves doing their favorite activity from reading to dancing to listening to music to playing video games. The sculptures capture the interest of eighth graders from Manchester-Essex Middle School, Rockport Middle School, and Gloucester's O'Maley Middle School.

Born in St. Louis Missouri, Hancock made his home in the Lanesville section of Gloucester and devoted his long and distinguished career to capturing the spirit of the human figure. His subjects were diverse, ranging from prominent American political and military figures to important artists and his friends and neighbors. One of his most famous is the *Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial* (circa 1949-1952) which hangs at the Thirtieth Street Station in Philadelphia. The plaster cast hangs at the Cape Ann Museum.

Beginning in 2020-2021, the Museum sought to bring together community members across Cape Ann for its annual Community Art Exhibition. The unique initiative provides an opportunity to celebrate student artwork alongside the Museum's collection, creating a juxtaposition of emerging and established artists' works. Last year, the exhibition was *Quilted Together*, featuring more than 637 self-portraits drawn by area residents of all ages during the pandemic.

In connection with *Sculpting Self*, the Museum will be free for families during the April School Vacation week so they can see the exhibition. A Free Family Tour on the Sculptors of Cape Ann will also be held on Saturday, May 28. On Saturday, May 21, the scholar Meg Black, Phd, will present CAM Talks: Behind Walker Hancock's sculptures, *The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane*. Visit www.capeannmuseum.org for more details and to sign up.

The Cape Ann Museum, founded in 1875, exists to preserve and celebrate the history and culture of the area and to keep it relevant to today's audiences. Spanning 44,000 square feet, the Museum is one of the major cultural institutions on Boston's North Shore welcoming more than 25,000 local, national, and international visitors each year to its exhibitions and programs. In addition to fine art, the Museum's collections include decorative art, textiles, artifacts from the maritime and granite industries, three historic homes, a Library & Archives and a sculpture park in the heart of downtown Gloucester. In Summer 2021, the Museum opened the 12,000 square foot Janet & William Ellery James Center at the [Cape Ann Museum Green](#). The campus also includes three historic buildings – the White-Ellery House (1710), the recently acquired Babson-Alling House (c.1740), and an adjacent Barn (c. 1740), all located on the site at the intersection of Washington and Poplar Streets in Gloucester. CAM Green will re-open in the spring.

The Cape Ann Museum is located at 27 Pleasant Street in Gloucester and is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is \$12.00 adults, \$10.00 Cape Ann residents, seniors, and students. Youth (under 18) and Museum members are free. Cape Ann residents can visit for free on the second Saturday of each month. For more information please call (978)283-0455 x110 or visit www.capeannmuseum.org. For a detailed media fact sheet please visit www.capeannmuseum.org/press.

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