

CITY OF MUSCATINE



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CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF CREATIVITY & COMMUNITY

Muscatine Art Center will be hosting special anniversary event on September 18

MUSCATINE, Iowa — The Muscatine Art Center is celebrating 60 years as a cornerstone of the city's cultural life on Thursday, Sept. 18, with a special anniversary event from 5–7 p.m. at the Art Center.

The evening will begin with welcoming remarks at 5:45 p.m., followed by the unveiling of a new painting of the Japanese Garden by Kimble Bromley, created specifically to honor the 60th anniversary. Guests can enjoy catered appetizers, a few silent auction items, and the opportunity to reflect on the Art Center's six decades of history and creativity.



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Since the Musser family gifted their historic home and grounds in 1965, the Muscatine Art Center has evolved from a single house museum into a vibrant cultural institution, now home to more than 20,000 objects. Enhancements such as the Stanley Gallery, the restored Japanese Garden, and countless exhibitions and programs have made the Art Center a place where history, art, and community converge.

Over the past decade, the Art Center has undergone transformational growth, including upgraded HVAC systems, expanded collections care, and enhanced visitor experiences. Interactive technology, hands-on activities for children, and exhibitions such as Nature Connects: Made with LEGO Bricks and Muscatine History Revisited have brought new energy to its galleries.

In 2017, the Laura Musser McColm Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places, affirming the site's cultural significance. The anniversary also honors the Art Center's dedicated team, including long-serving staff members Virginia Cooper and Pat Carver, both retiring in 2025 after nearly four decades of service. With new staff and fresh leadership in curatorial and education roles, the Art Center looks to the future with confidence, continuing to inspire discovery, foster wellness, and strengthen community pride.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION:

Midwest Icons: Grant Wood, John Steuart Curry, and Thomas Hart Benton
September 18, 2025 – February 22, 2026

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This exhibition celebrates the central figures of the American Regionalist movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, and John Steuart Curry captured the landscapes, people, and values of the Midwest during a transformative era. Complementary works by artists such as Marvin Cone and members of the Stone City Art Colony showcase everyday American experiences and help define a distinctly American style. Midwest Icons draws from the Muscatine Art Center's permanent collection and offers visitors a rich exploration of Midwestern art and culture.

Wood, best known for *American Gothic* (1930), grounded his art in the landscapes and people of Iowa, while Benton's sweeping murals and dynamic depictions of labor and rural life reflected his Missouri roots. Curry, who grew up on a Kansas farm, brought dramatic intensity to his portrayals of heartland scenes such as *Tornado Over Kansas* (1929). Together, these artists celebrated Midwestern life and values during the early 20th century, creating images that resonated with a nation searching for identity during the Great Depression.

Marvin Cone, a close collaborator of Grant Wood, was celebrated for his cloud studies and sensitive renderings of Midwestern skies. Figures such as John Bloom, Nellie Gebers, Arnold Pyle, and others connected to the Stone City Art Colony helped extend the reach of Regionalism. Their efforts not only brought widespread attention to Midwestern culture but also helped define a distinctly American style, one that celebrated community, landscape, and the everyday resilience of ordinary people during one of the nation's most challenging eras.