

*Mechanics Hall
Portraits Project*



Beyond the FRAMES

A Celebration

Thursday, March 14, 2024



Artists' Talk Washburn Hall 5:00 p.m.

Artists

Imo Nse Imeh, Manu Saluja, Brenda Zlamany

Moderator

Juliet Feibel, ArtsWorcester

Reception Great Hall 6:15 p.m.

Tom McGregor
President, Board of Trustees, Worcester County
Mechanics Association

Carolyn Stempler
Co-Chair Portraits Campaign

Harriette L. Chandler
President Emerita of the Massachusetts Senate

Abby Marschke
Executive Director Retail, Marketing &
Customer Service Saint-Gobain

Celebration Great Hall

Invocation

Rev. Dr. John H. Vaughn
Executive Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church
Atlanta, Georgia

Emcees

Carolyn & Howard Stempler

Co-Chair Portraits Project
Gloria D. Hall

Auctioneer


Ernest "Ernie" Floyd, Unity Radio

Kathleen M. Gagne

Executive Director, Mechanics Hall

Keynote Speaker

James E. Goldsberry



The Mechanics Hall Portraits Project marks a transformational era for the Worcester County Mechanics Association and its Mechanics Hall. Trustee Stacey Luster ignited the idea in 2019, when she suggested the Hall should commission a portrait of Frederick Douglass. A 19th century icon of American history, Douglass was among the first to speak on the Hall's stage when doors opened in March 1857. His daring and outspoken abolitionist work was supported by the Association and by many influential community leaders throughout Worcester. Adding Douglass to the portrait gallery seemed a natural fit. However, the Association was not satisfied that adding one Black American to the gallery would sufficiently tell the story of its social reform advocacy and the role Mechanics Hall played as a platform in the abolitionist and women's rights movements. Nor would it honor the importance of Black leaders including Douglass and his contemporaries whose bravery and indomitable spirits combined to change the history of our country.

Led by Mechanics Hall Executive Director, Kathleen Gagne, the Association convened a group of experienced historians, preservationists, and art professionals with Association and community representatives to form the Portraits Project Committee. It was their task to determine whose portraits would be commissioned, to administer the project, decide how artists would be selected, and to raise the needed funds.

After considerable deliberation, the Project Committee proposed commissioning portraits of extraordinary Black Americans whose lived experiences and work exemplified the values and social reform issues of concern to the early Mechanics Association: Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and William & Martha Brown. All subjects were important to Worcester. Douglass spoke frequently in Worcester, William Brown was the first Black member of the Worcester County Mechanics Association, and Sojourner Truth spoke at the first National Women's Rights Convention held in Worcester in 1850.

It was important for Mechanics Hall to better reflect the Worcester community while honoring its 19th century roots and the historical importance our city played in the social reform movements of that time. Then as now, Mechanics Hall's role in the community was as the hub of cultural, social, educational, and civic events. The important goals of The Portraits Project were to shine a light on the 19th century history of Mechanics Hall and of Worcester, to better represent the 21st century community in which we live, and further, to declare, through art, that Black history is American history.

Based on her many years of experience as a call administrator, historic preservationist, and her distinguished work with public art, Gloria D. Hall was asked to co-Chair the Project. In addition, the Committee asked her to facilitate

and administer the commissioning process. After a three-month search, a diverse panel of national and regionally recognized art professionals were brought on board to review submissions and eventually recommend three artists, one for each portrait. The panelists were: Kelli Morgan, Ph.D., then Professor of the Practice and Inaugural Director of Curatorial Studies at Tuft University in Medford, MA; Dorothy Moss, Ph.D., then Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.; Toby Sisson, M.F.A., Associate Professor and Director of Studio Art at Clark University in Worcester, MA; and James Welu, Ph.D., former Director, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA.

Artists were selected based on their submissions in response to a request for qualifications (RFQ). The RFQ called on potential artists to recognize that Douglass, Truth, and the Browns carried out their life work as abolitionists, entrepreneurs, and community leaders during the period in American history when Black people, free or enslaved, were the least legislatively protected. Additionally, the RFQ asked them to do some initial research on the individual or individuals they were interested in portraying and to indicate which portrait they wished to paint. The RFQ was widely distributed in the U.S. and Canada through online hosting platforms as well as directly to individual artists, multiple US portrait associations, Haitian galleries, art programs and schools at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other educational institutions, and museum curators. After almost two months, a great mixture of geographically and ethnically diverse professional artists from across the US and Canada submitted applications.

Over a weeklong period, the panelists reviewed an assembled forty-nine submissions. Following careful deliberations Morgan, Moss, Sisson, and Welu named ten finalists. The ten artists were then given one and one-half months to submit a sketch proposal of the portrait they hoped to paint. Following a second round of review and discussion, the panelists recommended Imo Nse Imeh, Holyoke, MA to paint Frederick Douglass; Manu Saluja, Long Island, New York, to paint Sojourner Truth; and Brenda Zlamany, Brooklyn, NY, to paint Martha Ann Tulip Lewis (Brown) and William Brown.

The Trustees of the Mechanics Association approved the recommendations. The artists began work in winter 2023 and the portraits were completed by early November. Guido Frames handcrafted the portrait frames. Clark Fine Arts Services transported and installed the portraits. Installation was done in cooperation with the Mechanics Hall facilities team and the installation project was led by Tricia Shea, Mechanics Hall Facilities Director.

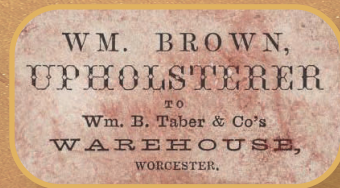
Educational programming was identified early in the process as an important aspect of the Portraits Project. Such programming begins this spring and Mechanics Hall plans to offer cultural and humanities events for children and adults in the years to come.



William Brown. Credit: American Antiquarian Society



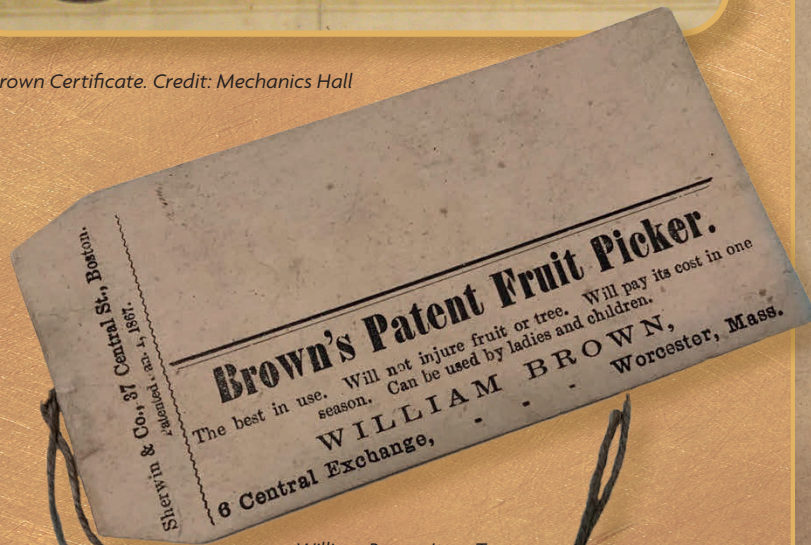
Martha Brown. Credit: American Antiquarian Society



Trade card. Credit: American Antiquarian Society



Brown Certificate. Credit: Mechanics Hall



William Brown Item Tag



Charles Brown. Credit: American Antiquarian Society

William Brown (1824 – 1892)

Businessman, Inventor, Abolitionist

Martha Ann Tulip Lewis Brown (1818 – 1889)

Churchwoman, Social Reformer, Abolitionist

William and Martha Tulip Brown's dedication to emancipation goes back to a family history of self-advocacy—on William's side to 1751 and on Martha's side to 1770. They were born in freedom in Massachusetts, he in 1824 in Boston, Massachusetts and she in 1818 in Harvard, Massachusetts. In spite of potential capture to be sold and enslaved, after they married in 1849, the Brown's continued to build their families' legacy as they worked in support of the abolition of slavery. Their modest home on Palmer Street in Worcester was not only the family's hearth, it was also the center of life for the Black community, offering access to Martha's extensive book collection including *The Child's Antislavery Book*, 1859, and was believed to offer temporary space to runaway slaves. William and Martha donated funds and time to support fugitive slaves, soldiers fighting in the Civil War and, through the Freedmen Relief Society, newly freed slaves.

William and Martha's business, community leadership, and social circle included individuals from their First Unitarian Church, local white anti-slavery advocates from the legal and business community, as well as the Black community. Martha partnered

with William in the operation of his successful upholstery and carpetmaking business, WM. Brown Upholsterer. Clients of the business included prominent white leaders and other middleclass Blacks in the city. William owned rental property in Worcester and Washington, D.C. He was an inventor whose patents included the "Browns Patent Fruit Picker" (1867)* and "A New Improved Sofa Bed" (1868). In 1867 William became the first Black member of the Worcester County Mechanics Association and had been associated with the organization as early as the 1840s. Martha was actively involved with planning many social events for the Black and white community and with the Ladies Benevolent Society of their First Unitarian Church. Their friendship circle included other free and formerly enslaved individuals from throughout Massachusetts and the U.S., including Frederick Douglass.

Their son, Charles, worked in the family business and he, too, was a member of the Worcester County Mechanics Association. Dr. John Goldsberry, the Brown's great-grandson is a lifetime trustee of the Association and John's son James is currently (2024) a trustee of the Association.

**The fruit picker is mentioned in an 1867 issue of Scientific American.*





Brenda Zlamany (b. 1959, American)
William Brown and Martha Ann Tulip Lewis Brown, 2023

Oil paint on canvas

83" x 119" unframed

Commissioned by Mechanics Hall

Brenda Zlamany has set this portrait in 1867, the year William was inducted into the Mechanics Association, its first black member. She shows the couple in a domestic setting with accessories that speak to their personal histories, and she has manipulated the space to foreground the pair. Martha stands in front of a piano and booklined wall that recede sharply behind her, lending her figure monumentality. The books refer to the considerable library maintained by the Browns, the piano to their culture and status. A curtained window curtails the recession into space and focuses attention on William who is shown seated by a small table. The drapes, patterned after one of Brown's own designs, frame his head and shoulders just as the bookcase forms the backdrop for Martha's figure.

The artist has taken visual cues for the Browns' faces from existing photographs. In the absence of any images showing them together, she has based her composition on 19th century portraits that frequently show the husband seated and the wife standing, the better to show off the woman's dress, as well as to mitigate differences in height. According to the artist, the colors of dress and drapes were chosen to harmonize with the other portraits in the Hall and the Hall's décor. Other details reflect aspects of the Browns' lives. The silver pencil suggests William's drafting skills as do pages that include his actual designs. Martha Brown is shown holding her commonplace book—a journal often kept by women to record personal information, ideas, quotations, and observations. In this case it is opened to a page of pressed botanicals. The sheet music on the piano is for a work composed in 1847 to honor Frederick Douglass, set there to establish the friendship linking Douglass and the Browns, and reinforce our sense of the Browns' work as abolitionists and community leaders. Portraying the Browns together, rather than William Brown alone as a distinguished member of the Mechanics Association, seems particularly appropriate since the two not only worked together in Brown's carpet and drapery business, but served the community together, and founded a family whose descendants continue to live in Worcester today.

— Jean M. Borgatti, PhD

Brenda Zlamany is a painter who lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Since 1990, her work has appeared in over a dozen solo exhibitions as well as in numerous group shows in the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Museums that have exhibited her work include the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum in Gdańsk, the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, The Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent, the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, the Frankfurter Kunstverein, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, and the New-York Historical Society. Her work has been reviewed in the New York Times, the New Yorker, Artforum, Art in America, ARTnews, Flash Art, ArtCritical, Artnet, the Taipei Times, and elsewhere, and is held in the collections of the Cincinnati Art Museum, Deutsche Bank, the Neuberger Museum of Art, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the World Bank, Yale University, and The Rockefeller University. Zlamany has collaborated with authors and editors of the New York Times Magazine on several portrait commissions including an image of Marian Anderson for an article by Jessye Norman and one of Osama bin Laden for the cover of the September 11, 2005, issue.

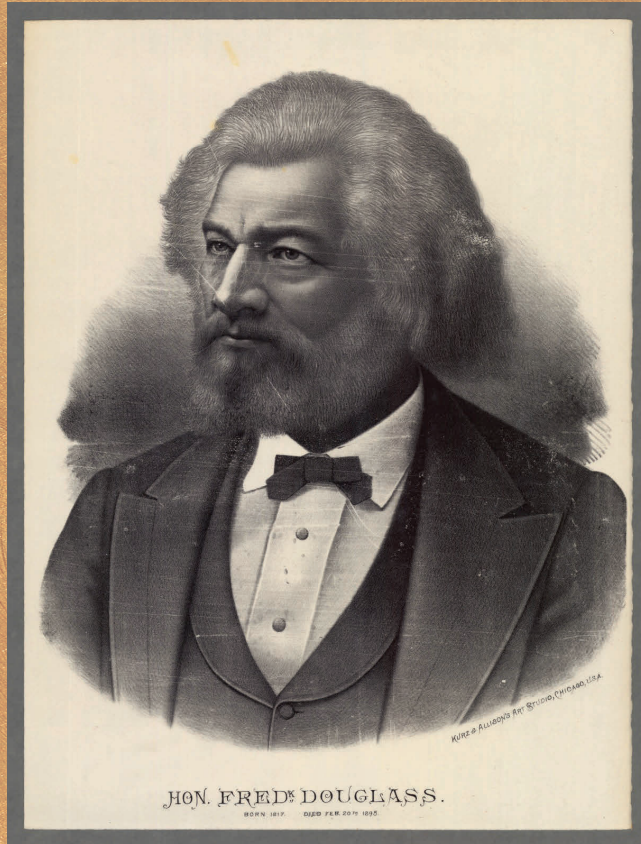
Zlamany has won numerous notable portrait competitions including painting Yale's first seven women PhDs and feminist icon Elga Ruth Wasserman also at Yale University and Portrait of Discovery, a monumental painting depicting five trailblazing women scientists from The Rockefeller University. In 2007, she became the first female artist to be commissioned by the World Bank when she painted a portrait of the bank's retiring president, James D. Wolfensohn. She recently won the competition for the monumental portrait of William and Martha Brown. This painting is part of a program to bring impactful Black and indigenous Americans to the walls of the Great Hall Portrait Gallery (WMH) in Worcester, MA.

Website: <https://www.brendazlamany.com>

Instagram: @brenda_zlamany



Brenda Zlamany
portrait of William &
Martha Brown



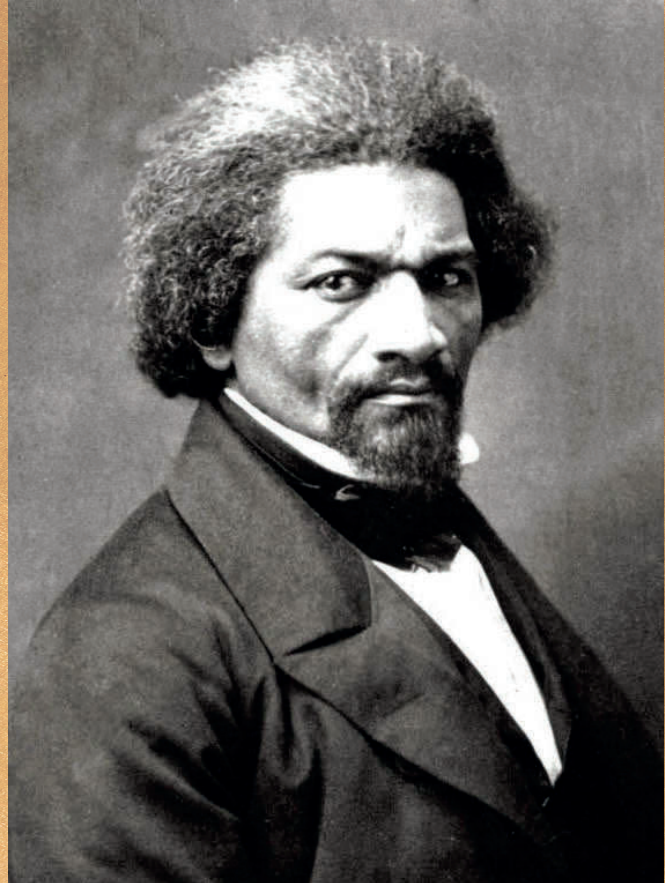
“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.”

—Frederick Douglass

*Frederick Douglass, circa 1866.
Credit: American Antiquarian Society*

*“It is easier to build strong children
than to repair broken men.”*

—Frederick Douglass



Frederick Douglass. Credit: The New York Historical Society

Frederick Douglass (1818 – 1895)

Abolitionist, Orator, Author, Women's Rights Advocate, Statesman

Within his soul, at a pivotal moment in his youth, Frederick August Washington Bailey knew freedom belonged to him. Born into enslavement in Talbot County, Maryland, he possessed the intellectual, personal, and ancestral resources that would enable him to walk tall and stand up to the inhumanity of slavery. Years later, he became Frederick Douglass, an author, greater thinker, courageous speaker, and crusader to abolish slavery, an advocate for women's rights and education for all. He argued that Black men should fight in the Civil War and he worked toward the betterment of the lives of those formerly enslaved. He authored his three-part autobiography, "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave", "My Bondage and My Freedom" and "The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass." He created and published "The North Star" newspaper; traveled and spoke internationally; engaged with presidents; and served as Ambassador to Haiti.

Frederick Douglass spoke to the Worcester Anti-Slavery Society and to the Worcester County Mechanics Association on many occasions starting in the 1840s and was among the first to speak on the stage of Mechanics Hall (1857). Douglass was also an outspoken advocate for women's rights. In October 1850, he spoke at the first National Women's Rights Convention held in Worcester,

MA, as did Sojourner Truth, Abby Kelley Foster, William Lloyd Garrison, and Lucy Stone (all of whom are subjects of portraits in the gallery).

Escaping slavery at age 20, Douglass went North to Massachusetts where he publicly spoke against slavery. His notoriety, however, brought attention to the fact that he was a wanted man. To avoid re-enslavement, he travelled to England. For several years Douglass spoke there, in Ireland and in Scotland about the abomination of slavery. By the time he returned to the United States, he was an internationally recognizable figure, esteemed as a brilliant orator.

Beneath the veil of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which ruled that persons of African descent in America were not citizens, Frederick Douglass delivered in 1852 his famous speech: "What, to the Slave, is the Fourth of July?" Among many others in the audience was then President Millard Fillmore, signer of the law. Douglass' dignified presence when he spoke and as he lived belied the fact that his body wore the physical scars of vicious beatings and attacks endured during his early life as a slave.





**Imo Nse Imeh, PhD (b. 1980), American
Frederick Douglass, 2023**

Oil paint, India ink, and charcoal on canvas

53 1/2" x 77 1/2" unframed

Commissioned by Mechanics Hall

Imo Imeh shows Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) in an image laden with references to his life and times. The artist depicts him as a young man, basing his face and characteristically severe expression on an 1858 daguerreotype. Though photographed many times during his life as a public speaker and activist, he rarely smiled in order to present a dignified image to counteract the caricatures of African-Americans presented in the 19th century media.

The portrait shows him in the process of tucking an American Beauty rose (the state flower of Washington DC where Douglass died, by then a free man) into his lapel. The placement of his hand is almost a visual pun on the gesture used when pledging allegiance to the American flag – an idea reinforced by the Civil War era American flag draped over his right arm and a suggestion of his ideological stance as an American citizen who did not believe in the various return to Africa movements popularized at the end of the Civil War. Shown on his right pocket is the Black-eyed Susan, the state flower of Maryland, representing the state where he was born and lived enslaved for the first 20 years of his life. By locating Douglass between the two flowers, the artist positions him in the portrait as moving across two different eras in American history, suggesting the complexity of his life.

In his left hand Douglass holds two books that serve as a reminder of his status, not as merely literate but as a celebrated 19th century scholar of history and philosophy. Referencing his African heritage are the faintly visible symbols adorning the cloak thrown over his shoulders. The artist has employed Ghanaian Adinkra and Nigerian Nsibidi ideographs, evidence of indigenous writing systems, to comment further on Douglass's personality and career. The Adinkra Ram's Horns stand for strength and humility; the Nsibidi circle represents community and interaction.

Finally, shallow pictorial space and focus on his upper body bring Douglass close to us as viewers. Only a stain disrupts the neutral background against which the figure is seen. According to the artist, this stain is meant to indicate the dark period of history into which Douglass was born. Again, in a visual pun, the stain suggests a shadow that in turn evokes the substance of the man who was the most important leader of the movement for African-American civil rights in the 19th century.

– Jean M. Borgatti, PhD

Dr. Imo Nse Imeh is a visual artist and scholar of African Diaspora art, whose work considers historical and philosophical issues around the Black body and cultural identity.

Dr. Imeh's work has been exhibited in numerous public venues including the August Wilson African American Cultural Center (Pittsburgh, PA), the Fine Arts Center Galleries of Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, Ohio), the Sigal Museum of the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society (Easton, Pennsylvania), the Mariposa Museum (Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts), University Museum of Contemporary Art (Amherst, Massachusetts), the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art (Grand Rapids, Michigan). His work is represented in the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art; in the museum collection of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; as well as in a number of private collections; and it has been featured by the PBS NewsHour, New England Public Media, Orion Magazine, and in the contemporary art and culture magazine Art New England. In 2024 a series of Dr. Imeh's works will appear on the covers of six issues of the medical journal Biological Psychiatry, edited by Dr. John Krystal of Yale University. Dr. Imeh has been the recipient of the Mass Cultural Council Artist Fellowship for his studio project Benediction, a Project Evolution Grant from the ValleyCreates Program of Mass MoCA and The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, a Holyoke Cultural Council Grant, and the Springfield Cultural Council Grant.

Imeh earned a BA from Columbia University in 2002 and PhD in the History of African Art from Yale University in 2009. He is Professor of Art and Art History at Westfield State University in Massachusetts.



Imo Nse Imeh
portrait of
Frederick Douglass

“Life is a hard battle anyway. If we laugh and sing a little as we fight the good fight of freedom, it makes it all go easier. I will not allow my life’s light to be determined by the darkness around me.”

–Sojourner Truth

*Sojourner Truth.
Credit: Smithsonian*



**I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance.
SOJOURNER TRUTH.**

*Truth is powerful and it prevails.
—Sojourner Truth*



Sojourner Truth.

Sojourner Truth (1797–1883)

Entrepreneur, Abolitionist, Women's Rights Advocate

Sojourner Truth was one of the most outspoken, celebrated, and recognized advocates for abolition, women's rights, civil rights, and temperance in the 19th century.

Born enslaved as Isabella (Bell) Baumfree in 1797 in Dutch-speaking Ulster County, New York. Bell was bought and sold four times and suffered harsh physical labor and violent punishments.

Isabella's journey to becoming Sojourner Truth began to take shape in 1826, when, steadfast in her resolve, courageous, self-assured, and with trust and faith in herself and her God, Bell took her infant daughter, Sophia, and walked away from slavery. A nearby Quaker and abolitionist family, the Van Wageners bought Bell's and her daughter's freedom (reportedly for \$20) with the understanding that the young mother would work to repay that debt.

In 1828, as Isabella Van Wagenen, she sued a white man in court to return her five year old son, Peter, who had been illegally sold into slavery in Alabama. She won. In doing so she was the first Black woman to win such a legal victory for the freedom of a family member.

Believing that the Spirit called upon her to speak truth, she gave herself the name Sojourner Truth in 1843 and started life as a travelling preacher. In 1844, she joined the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Florence, MA. The organization was founded by abolitionists and supported women's rights, religious tolerance, and pacifism. While there,

Truth met William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. Encouraged by the community, she delivered her first anti-slavery speech that year. She first became a homeowner in Florence.

In 1850, Sojourner Truth spoke at the first National Women's Rights convention, which was held in Worcester, MA. Other speakers included Frederick Douglass, Garrison, Abby Kelley Foster, and Lucy Stone. All are subjects of portraits in the Mechanics Hall gallery.

She would go on to deliver her famous speech on Black women and gender equality at the Women Rights Convention in 1851. Based on the actual speech the speech widely known as "Ain't I A Woman" is best titled "I Am A Woman's Right."

Amid the gender and racial cacophony of her time, Sojourner Truth stood tall to proclaim the humanity of the enslaved and the hypocrisy of so-called Christians actively involved in the institution of slavery as well as those supportive of the peculiar institution.

Sojourner Truth sold copies of her image, which she strictly curated, earning money for several printings of her book, "Narrative of Sojourner Truth, a Northern Slave" dictated by Truth to Olive Gilbert. The book was quite successful, bringing national recognition to her and enabling her to purchase her home in Battle Creek, Michigan.





**Manu Saluja (b. 1971), American
Sojourner Truth, 2023**

Oil paint on canvas

53 1/2" x 77 1/2" unframed

Commissioned by Mechanics Hall

Manu Saluja has portrayed Sojourner Truth (c.1797-1883) with one hand on her hip and the other grasping her cane, standing, a pose suggesting both strength and purpose. She confronts the viewer with an uncompromising gaze, her face framed by her signature white cap and shawl. She is flanked by a chair and cloth-covered table that bears a photograph of the house she owned in Florence Massachusetts, a bound copy of her autobiography, and a photograph of her grandson – items that evoke important aspects of her life and that are familiar from her portraits on numerous cartes de visite.

The artist has also used several techniques to monumentalize her subject and communicate her natural dignity and majesty. Truth's figure is firmly anchored within the composition by the swell of her skirt and the details of furniture, a complexity that balances and supports the upper part of the composition where she focuses viewer attention on Truth's head and face by setting it against a neutral background. The whole is set in a shallow space, bringing Sojourner Truth physically and psychologically close to us and giving us a sense of this woman's importance even if we are unaware of her personal history.

The words of Frederick Douglass spoken after her death in 1883 remain as relevant and true for us today as they were then: "Venerable for age, distinguished for insight into human nature, remarkable for independence and courageous self-assertion, devoted to the welfare of her race, she has been an object of respect and admiration to social reformers everywhere." And so she remains, and so she has been portrayed.

– Jean M. Borgatti, PhD

Manu Saluja (b. 1971, Brooklyn, NY), a resident of Queens and Long Island, New York, is a contemporary figurative artist. Her paintings have been exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, the National Portrait Gallery in London, the Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art in Wisconsin, and the Butler Institute of American Art in Ohio. Winner of the 2019 BP London National Portrait Gallery's Travel Award, her paintings were exhibited at the Aberdeen Art Gallery in Scotland in 2020.

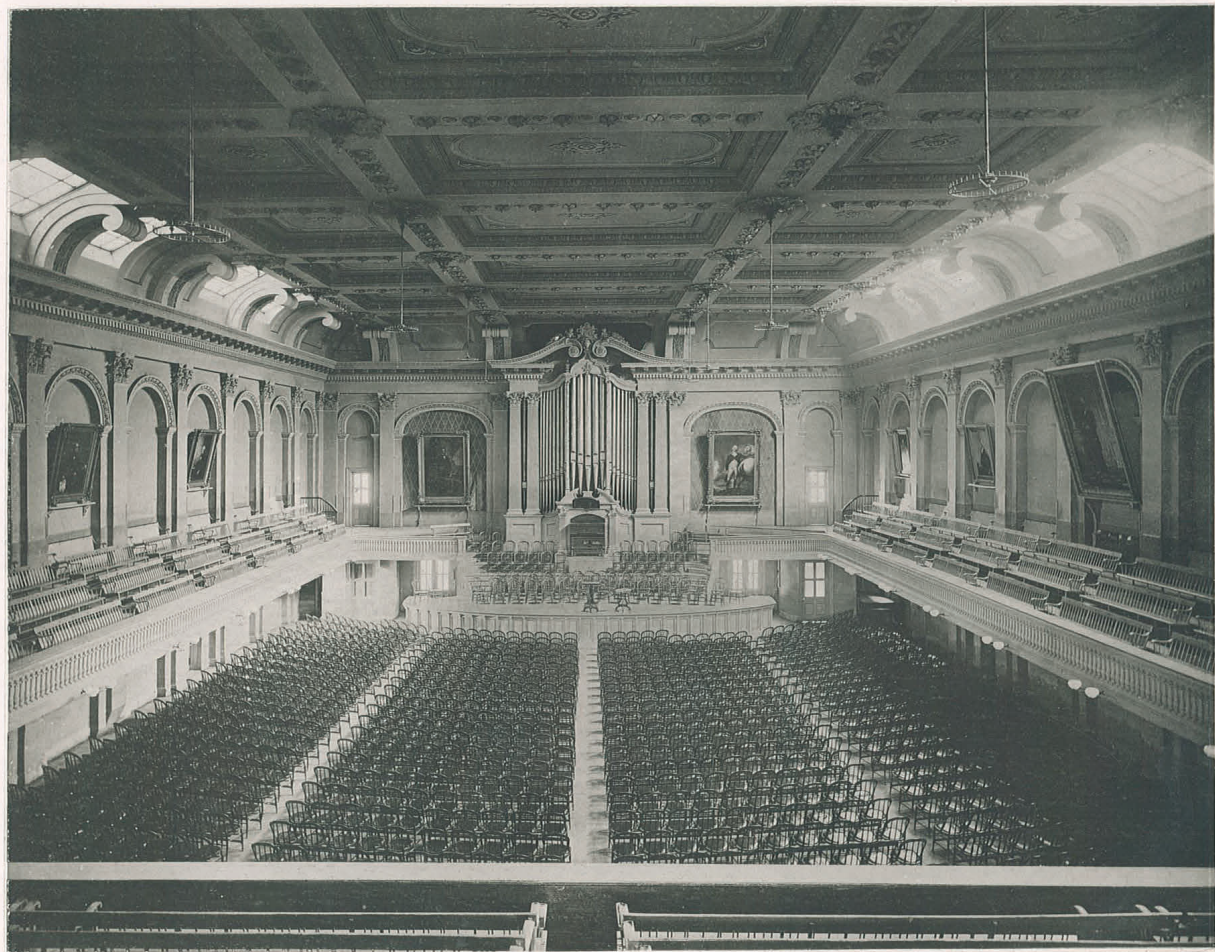
Saluja's commissioned portraits are in permanent collections at St. Joseph's University in Pennsylvania and Teacher's College, Columbia University in New York City, and in private collections throughout the U.S., Canada, U.K., and India. Her solo shows have been written about in Huffington Post, Fast Company Design, American Art Collector, Realism Today, Fine Art Connoisseur, and News India Times. Influenced by her experiences as a Sikh-American, Saluja's paintings are in conversation with anti-colonialism and perceptions of the "other", centering on positive representations of Sikh history, its culture and diaspora. Her most recent work shares narratives of a diverse group of women focusing on the complexities of cultural identity, gender, and power.

After completing her B.A. in psychology at Barnard College in 1993, Saluja studied with artist John Frederick Murray privately and at New York's School of Visual Arts, where she earned a B.F.A. in 1997. She is Adjunct Professor of Painting at the New York

Academy of Art, where she received her M.F.A. in 2013.



Manu Saluja
portrait of
Sojourner Truth



MECHANICS HALL,—INTERIOR.
(SEATING 2,000.)

Worcester County Mechanics Association

Established in 1842, the Worcester County Mechanics Association (WCMA) was an educational and charitable organization that fostered skills in the mechanical arts and demonstrated technological innovation, cultural experiences, and social ideals. The Worcester Mechanics were at the forefront of America's Industrial Revolution and promoted the value of well-rounded education and self-improvement. The Association built Mechanics Hall in 1857.

WCMA and Social Reform

Three social reform issues were of important concern to the Worcester Mechanics: Abolition, Women's Rights, and Temperance. As early as the 1840s, Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists were invited to speak to the membership and the wider community. Advocates of women's rights and temperance also used Mechanics Hall as their platform for social reform. These were not issues being discussed everywhere – the Mechanics Hall stage was one of the nation's major social reform platforms.

The Great Hall Portrait Gallery

The Great Hall portrait gallery is a commanding installation honoring the innovators of Worcester in the 19th century and those they admired, representing interests that honor the values of the Association founders. They include Mechanics, activists, Civil War heroes, and political leaders. Many of the individuals portrayed crossover these categories. The women were not added until 1999, but they exemplify those same values.

Educational Opportunities

The Portraits Project creates a wonderful opportunity for Mechanics Hall to develop ongoing educational programming about Worcester in the 19th century: social reform activity then and now; civil debate; innovations in technology, science, and industry; arts and culture; education, and other related issues that affect all our lives. Fundraising for educational programming is ongoing.

ARTIST SELECTION PANEL



Dr. Kelli Morgan is a Professor of the Practice and the inaugural Director of Curatorial Studies at Tufts University. A curator, educator, and social justice activist who specializes in American art and visual culture, she has held curatorial positions at the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, the Birmingham Museum of Art, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts, from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, Dr. Morgan earned an MA from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She was awarded a dissertation fellowship from the Ford Foundation and earned her PhD in Afro-American studies and a graduate certificate in public history–museum studies from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.



Dorothy Moss is curator of painting and sculpture at the National Portrait Gallery and coordinating curator of the Smithsonian American Women’s History Initiative, educator, and art historian. Moss directed the 2013, 2016, and 2019 Outwin Boochever Portrait Competitions. Her curatorial work at the Portrait Gallery’s includes its first performance art series, “IDENTIFY: Performance Art as Portraiture,”; serving as one of the curators of the ongoing “Portraiture Now” series and co-curating “The Face of Battle: Americans at War, 9/11 to Now”, which was part of that series. Moss most recent Gallery exhibition was “Hung Liu: Portraits of Promised Lands”.

Prior to joining the National Portrait Gallery, Moss served as assistant curator of American art at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. From 2008 to 2013, she served as guest lecturer in American studies for Smith College. She has contributed to numerous exhibition catalogues, and her commentaries and articles have appeared in many publications. Moss is also an author of *The Obama Portraits* (Princeton University Press/National Portrait Gallery, 2020).

After graduating from Smith College, Moss earned an MA in art history from Williams College, and a PhD in art history from the University of Delaware.

Toby Sisson is Associate Professor and Program Director of Studio Art at Clark University, Worcester, MA and artist. Her areas of specialization incorporate community-based service learning, collaborative public art, and curatorial projects. Sisson's studio practice in drawing, painting and printmaking reflects her creative research and exploration on themes at the intersection of history and race in America. She has exhibited widely, including the Tinjin Art Museum in China, Concordia University, Provincetown Art Center and Museum, Hunterdon Museum of Art, the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute, Louisiana State University, Rhode Island College, St. Thomas University, Brown University and the Worcester Art Museum.

Toby Sisson earned her M.F.A. from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.



James Welu served as assistant curator, chief curator and for twenty-five years director of the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA. Born and raised in Dubuque, Iowa, Welu holds a BA from Loras College, an MA and MFA in studio art from the University of Notre Dame, and a PhD in art history from Boston University. A specialist in 17th-century Dutch and Flemish art, he has published and lectured widely and organized a variety of exhibitions, including Judith Leyster: A Dutch Master and Her World. Welu served as president of the Association of Art Museum Directors and chair of the Accreditation Commission of the American Alliance of Museums. He remains active in numerous Worcester organizations and continues to lecture at the Worcester Art Museum, the College of the Holy Cross, Clark University, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.



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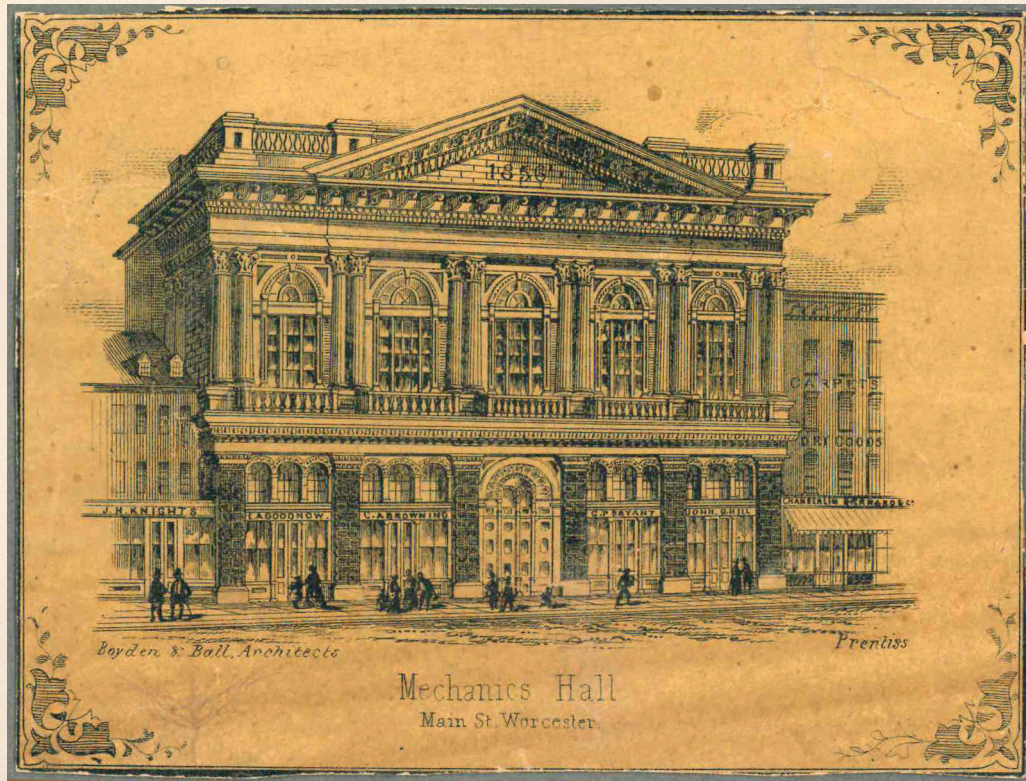
Matching Gifts

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"May the hand of time and fates of fortune deal gently with this offspring of our love and labor, for unto succeeding generations do we desire to transmit this building, as an expression of the taste and skill of the mechanics of Worcester."

Henry S. Washburn, WCMA President
Mechanics Hall Dedication, March 19, 1857

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Deborah Packard, Executive Director, Preservation Worcester
Hilda Ramirez, former Executive Director, Latino Education Institute at Worcester State University
Jessie M. Rodrique, Ph.D., Historian
Kristen Waters, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, Worcester State University

William Brown and Martha Ann Tulip Lewis Brown

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Portrait Descriptions

Jean M. Borgatti, PhD (she/her/hers)

Fulbright Scholar (2002-2003, 2014-2015)

Professor, Fine and Applied Arts, University of Benin - Nigeria (2013-2017)

Longterm Affiliations - Clark University and Boston University

Consulting Curator - Global Africa, First Peoples - N.America & Oceania



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