

Brown, Mary. "The SJU Frances M. Maguire Museum is hosting 'Re-Union' highlighting Syd Carpenter et aliae, to straddle Black History and Women's History Months," *Main Line Times & Suburban*, 23 February 2026.

MAIN LINE
TIMES & SUBURBAN

The SJU Frances M. Maguire Museum is hosting 'Re-Union' highlighting Syd Carpenter et aliae, to straddle Black History and Women's History Months

Local artist 'overwhelmed' by support for exhibit running through March 29



A sterling 'Re-Union' of Ceramic Artists, Judy Moonelis, Sana Musasama, Winnie Owens-Hart, Syd Carpenter, and Martha Jackson Jarvis, as they enjoy priceless moments at The Frances M. Maguire Museum until March 29, 2026. (Photo submitted by Mary Brown)

Re-Union: Syd Carpenter, Martha Jackson Jarvis, Judy Moonelis, Sana Musasama, and Winnie Owens-Hart, January 14 – March 29, 2026.

Artist Syd Carpenter crystalized how the February 19th invitational opening reception appealed to her, "I was overwhelmed by the support of the many, many people from all corners of my life in attendance.

"And the best part? The galleries were humming with appreciation for our art."

Judy Moonelis enthused, "I was proud to be in the company of these exceptional fellow artists, and pleased we all received such positive responses."

Maguire Museum Director Dr. Emily Hage provides the introduction, "The Frances M. Maguire Art Museum is honored to be hosting 'Re-Union: Syd Carpenter, Martha Jackson Jarvis, Judy Moonelis, Sana Musasama, and Winnie Owens-Hart.'

"The Museum has had a strong relationship with Syd Carpenter since its inception. Syd's work was part of our first rotating exhibition in Spring 2023, and the Museum is very grateful for her continued support.

"We are also thrilled to be presenting this exhibition in partnership with the Woodmere Art Museum and the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College, which are presenting important related exhibitions on Carpenter's work.

"The inspiration for our exhibition came from Carpenter. It places her work in the context of other female ceramic artists who have inspired her and have maintained connections with her over the past fifty years.

"Preparation for the show involved having the artists speak with one another and with Leslie King-Hammond and Lowery Stokes Sims, at the Maguire Art Museum.

"The room was filled with the insight, skill, grit, energy, wisdom, and humor which have sustained their ties and contributes to the compelling nature of their work.

"We are grateful to each of the artists and their liaisons, to King-Hammond and Stokes Sims for sharing their gifts and for making this exhibition possible.

"We very much appreciate the invitation from Bill Valerio, the Patricia Van Burgh Allison Director and CEO of the Woodmere, to host a show in conjunction with their important retrospective on Carpenter, 'Planting in Place, Time, and Memory.'

"Our thanks go out to Lauren McCardel, the Executive Director at the Berman, as well, for working with us on planning our respective exhibitions and related programming and the exhibition materials.

"I also am grateful to Jennifer Zwilling, Curator and Director of Artistic Programs at the Clay Studio, for her support and advising on this project.

"At the Maguire Art Museum, 'Re-Union' would not have been possible without the expertise and efforts of Associate Director Jeanne Bracy.

"Assistant Curator Erin Downey's work on texts and Jane Allen's creative educational programming are invaluable, as well. Thanks, too, to Jody Work for designing the companion publication."

Dr. Erin Downey elaborates, "Five esteemed artists, whose careers and personal lives have overlapped considerably over the past fifty years.

"The exhibition comprises part of a multi-site retrospective for Carpenter, who developed the concept for the Maguire Art Museum's exhibition and selected the participating artists.

"Emerging in the 1970s, each of these artists profoundly shaped American Art of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

"What bonded these women early on was their shared passion for clay, their inspiration to create, and their motivation to challenge biases in the art world.

"Several – Carpenter, Jackson Jarvis, and Moonelis – studied together at Tyler School of Art and Architecture under Rudolf Staffel (1911-2002), who encouraged them to pursue ceramics in spite of oppressive gender discrimination and racism in the field.

"All, including Musasama and Owens-Hart, actively participated in many of the same national and international arts conferences, exhibitions, and educational programs.

"Through both thematic content and installation, 'Re-Union' underscores how interwoven the artistic production and personal lives of these artists has been.

"As Musasama puts it, they knew each other 'by their work first,' and through their work they made 'a link for a lifetime.'

"The artists continue to share a strong kinship, inspiring and sustaining each other through triumphs as well as challenges.

"During the planning of the exhibition, they came together to determine as a group which pieces they would display, deciding to intersperse their works in the galleries.

"In this way, their pieces are in conversation with each other, conveying visually the entwined nature of the artists and their bodies of work.

"The pieces differ in scale, material, and subject, but nevertheless encompass similar notions of interconnection, experience, place, and history.

Jackson Jarvis selected several monumental, abstract mixed media assemblages from her recent series 'What the Trees Have Seen.'

"The pieces evoke the vicissitudes of the journey and experiences of her ancestor, Luke Valentine, a free Black militia man who fought in the American Revolutionary War.

"Jackson Jarvis investigates the varied terrains – emotional as well as physical – which Valentine encountered as he traversed the war and the land from Virginia to South Carolina.

"Moonelis' mixed media 'neural environments' convey the intricacies of memory, identity, and the inner workings of the human body.

"Often site-specific, Moonelis' works explore the complex relationship between human anatomy and the structural, architectural forms which surround them.

"Among the examples featured by Moonelis is an outdoor installation which incorporates the iconic French well located in the Barnes Arboretum.

"Musasama's 'House Series' comprises works of clay, metal, and glass scaled in relation to her body.

"Inspired by her travels across the globe, and her activism, Musasama examines the role of the home as a universal symbol, a place of 'safety, love, warmth, and personal narrative.'

"Musasama began the series in the late 1970s, but returned to the theme during the isolation and uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Owens-Hart selected pieces from several significant points in her career, including Udo Drum #13, an early vessel which she made following her travels to Nigeria to apprentice with traditional ceramic masters.

"Adorned #2 from her 'Little Women' series and Helmet Mask and Wall Mask #2 from 'Scream . . . You're Black and in America' address both the origin and resurgence of racial and gender violence in the U.S. and globally.

"Finally, Carpenter chose examples from her 'Stem' series, works which embody transformation and growth.

"Produced largely during the 1990s and early 2000s, they visualize a pivotal period of transition for the artist as she moved from wall-mounted pieces to three-dimensional works meant to be 'viewed in the round.'

"The series also connects to Carpenter's broader focus on land, earth, and gardening – a repeated motif is the spiral, a structural formation found throughout nature.

"In a recent interview held at the Maguire Art Museum, Moonelis affirmed the vital role friendship played in the creative enterprises of female American artists, stating, 'We had a community of these great women artists, all inspiring and encouraging each other.'

"The exhibit 'Re-Union' highlights the essential importance and endurance of this interconnection."

Carpenter summarizes, "With this exhibition, I was honored to invite four outstanding artists whom I have admired and respected for decades.

"We began together as art students in the 70s, each of us following our own divergent paths as we developed our lives with art-making at the core.

"Despite these differences, the persistence, ambition and resolution shaped by our individual choices are clearly visible in the work.

"This exhibition serves as a testament to how our varied experiences have influenced our art, offering viewers an opportunity to witness and appreciate the resulting achievements."

Winnie Owens-Hart ices the cake, "In 'Re-Union,' I find kinship with fellow women artists grounded in process, scholarship, and activism.

"Our work is shaped by intergenerational bonds and sustained by friendship, mutual inspiration, and shared urgency."