



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

CUMMER MUSEUM OF ART & GARDENS RECEIVES SOUTHEASTERN MUSEUMS CONFERENCE EXHIBITION AWARD

Cummer Museum received a Bronze Award in recognition of the exhibition Touring the Landscape: Art, Travel, and the Shaping of American Identity

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, September 9, 2026 — The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens is pleased to announce they are a recipient of the 2026 Southeastern Museums Conference Bronze Award in the Under \$10,000 budget category for the exhibition *Touring the Landscape: Art, Travel, and the Shaping of American Identity*. The SEMC Exhibition Competition showcases the best in our profession and provides benchmarks for regional exhibition efforts in southeastern museums.

Organized by the Cummer Museum and guest curated by students at the University of North Florida, this exhibition examines how late 19th and early 20th century artists used landscape painting and tourism to explore American identity at home and abroad.

As part of the Hicks Honors College class *Public Narratives: Museum Curation and Interpretation*, taught by Assistant Director of the Hicks Honors College, Dr. Meg McCrummen Fowler, students were challenged to create an exhibition for the Cummer Museum that showcased works from the Museum's permanent collection in new ways. The result is an insightful exhibition that explores the connection between people and place, and how the shared visual experience of landscape shaped the American imagination amid a rapidly-changing century. The exhibition is on view at the Cummer Museum through November 29, 2026.

Dr. Fowler commented, "The chance to guest curate such an exhibition is a rare opportunity for undergraduates, and this sort of experiential learning and undergraduate research is extraordinary preparation for their careers. I'm especially grateful for the Cummer Museum's enthusiastic partnership that created such an outstanding experience for our UNF students."

Holly Keris, the Cummer Museum's J. Wayne & Delores Barr Weaver Chief Curator, explained, "While these paintings by Jasper Cropsey, Martin Johnson Heade, Winslow Homer, and others are among the most recognizable in our collection, the students' research provides an opportunity to see these familiar favorites through a new lens."

For many visitors, exhibitions are the public face of museums, and effective planning, management of resources, research and interpretation, collections care, public programs,



publications, and fundraising all contribute to the fulfillment of a museum's mission. Expectations and standards were exceptionally high for this year's applicants. The SEMC Exhibition Competition received a record-breaking number of applications from a wide variety of museums across the southeast.

The Exhibition Competition recognizes exhibitions for overall excellence or for stretching the limits of content and design through innovation. Winning entries were well-designed exhibitions of merit with educational value and demonstrated respectful treatment of objects. Recipients of the awards were judged by an appointed jury of museum professionals across the region who specialize in curatorial studies and exhibition design.

Award winners will be recognized at the 2026 Annual Meeting Awards Luncheon on September 30, 2026, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and in the Winter 2026 Edition of INSIDE SEMC, a digital publication of the Southeastern Museums Conference. This designation recognizes the Cummer Museum's contribution to professional standards in Southeastern museums.

###

About the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, founded in 1958 by Ninah Cummer, is one of Northeast Florida's most enduring and significant cultural institutions. For more than six decades, it has provided community access to five millennia of art celebrating the creativity of the human spirit, alongside 2.5 acres of historically significant riverfront gardens. Visitors to the museum enjoy access to world-class exhibitions, learning opportunities, and outdoor experiences designed to inspire discovery and well-being. Recently voted the Best in Jacksonville in 14 categories including best museum, best attraction, best summer camp, best gift shop, and best place to take visitors, the Cummer Museum is a trusted, vibrant cornerstone of Jacksonville's cultural and civic life.

About the Southeastern Museums Conference:

The Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC), a nonprofit membership organization, is an association of museums, museum staff, independent professionals and corporate partners. We focus on the Southeastern United States including: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico, and US Virgin Islands.

SEMC works to:

- Provide educational and professional development opportunities
- Improve the interchange of ideas and information
- Encourage respect and collegiality



The Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC) is dedicated to providing a safe, inclusive, and welcoming conference experience for everyone. We do not tolerate discrimination or harassment in any form.

For more information about the Southeastern Museums Conference, visit <https://www.semcdirect.net/>.

Contact: ruckus
904.874.2700
media@createaruckus.com