

The Ware Family Art Gallery

Blaney House | Home of the President

featuring
Hunt Slonem's Mr. Lincolns



*This exhibit celebrates West Virginia University's
150th anniversary.*

On February 7, 1867, the Governor of West Virginia, Arthur I. Boreman, signed the bill that created the Agriculture College of West Virginia, better known today as West Virginia University. This bill was possible through the passing of the Morrill Act, signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1862 offering land grants of 30,000 acres of federally owned land to states that agreed to establish a college to teach agriculture and engineering. This year we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of West Virginia University. This exhibit honors President Lincoln.



About Hunt Slonem

Hunt Slonem, a NYC based artist is considered one of the greatest colorists of all time. The Maine born creative force of nature is known for his neo-expressionist works of butterflies, rabbits and tropical birds, the latter inspired by his 30 to 100 exotic feathered friends he houses at any given time in an aviary in his Manhattan studio.

As a founding element of his process, Slonem likes to say, “Repetition is very important.” He starts each day painting, treating each moment as one of profound meditation and channeling of God or a higher consciousness. Included in this ritual are his famous bunny paintings – the result of a daily morning warm-up that was sparked during a late-night revelation at a Chinese restaurant: that he was born in the Year of the Rabbit. His famous Bunny Wall combines his art with his passion for collecting, as the paintings are exhibited in Victorian-era portrait frames picked up from his travels across the country.

Another recurring theme in the artist’s pictorial work is portrait painting, and of the 16th President in particular. Slonem has said that his portraits of Lincoln feel personal, and in surprising ways, he’s close to the long-deceased. This series of work has been dubbed “Abraham’s Peace Plan.”

A graduate in Painting and Art History from Tulane University in New Orleans, Slonem has work placed in permanent collections in 250 museums including the Guggenheim, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney, and the Moreau Foundation and is part of private collections all over the world.

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The Ware Family Art Gallery was made possible through the generosity of Alfred F. and Dolores Jamison Ware. The Wares have supported the University for many years and are members of the Woodburn Circle Society, the WVU Foundation’s most prestigious giving society. They have served on the College of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences Visiting Committee and Mrs. Ware served on the Blaney House Visiting Committee. Mr. Ware, chairman emeritus of Amherst FiberOptics, has been inducted into the Order of Vandalia, the WVU Academy of Distinguished Alumni, and the WVU College of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences Hall of Fame. Mrs. Ware has been a leader and benefactor in the development of fitness and wellness initiatives for our students. In 2011, the Wares were honored as the WVU Foundation’s Outstanding Volunteer Philanthropists.

Both are West Virginia University graduates. He received his Bachelor of Science in 1950 and his Master of Arts in 1952. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in physical education in 1952.

They, and the Ware Family Foundation, established the Ware Distinguished Professorship, the first such professorship in the College of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences.

Their generosity also established The Ware Jamison Park, gateway to the “old” downtown campus, at the intersection of University and Beechurst Avenues.

A changing selection of fine art is exhibited year-round in the Ware Family Art Gallery.

