Gathering: An assembly or meeting, especially a social or festive one or one held for a specific purpose. -Oxford dictionary

In the midst of this pandemic, when the Museum had to close its doors and cancel or postpone all the planned exhibitions and programs, Benton Jones, The Museum's Director of Art decided to curate a show called Gatherings. The time of social distancing and isolation became the right time to search through the breadth and depth of the Museum's permanent collection, which provided the majority of the works Benton selected for this show. It seems that during the lock downs and quarantining, what we missed the most was getting physically together. Yes, there are Zoom meetings, Skype and Facetime calls, which became a new way of gathering and keeping us together, but it seems that these ways of communicating can feel like a Waterless Fountain, which is the title of Roy Freed's sculpture that Benton decided to incorporate into the Gatherings exhibition.

It has become evident, now more than ever before, that we human beings, are very social creatures and we simply thrive on being together, in small or big groups, even if for a short time, so that we can share a common theme, purpose or some kind of experience. There is a unique power in gatherings that unite us in times of celebration, but also in difficult times.

Other works in the show are the examples of various ways people used to gather Before Covid 19 consumed the world. These gatherings were fundamental and unquestioned ways of living. Gatherings can take on many forms as the
showcased artists help us remember. It can be expresses in a typical Cape Cod crowded scene of parades and garden parties as in *Wellfleet, Fourth of July* by Karol B. Wyckoff and CMFA (*Art in the Garden*) by Ruth Hogan or *The Garden Party* by Ric Howard, as well as through images of summer time beaches captured by Vernon Smith in his oil painting *Beach at Nauset* or Arnold Geissbuhler's *Girls on Beach*.

Gatherings can be a group of people living through the shared experience of music and dance in *Dancing Figures* by Howard Gibbs, *Jazz Rhythms* by Virginia Goldman, and *Dancers* by Xavier Gonzalez or people enjoying meals together as in *What's for Dinner* and *Sharing Recipes* by Eleanor Ferri Jones. It can be a city scene like *The Boston Crowd* by Howard Gibbs or *1930's New York in Bread Line, No One Has Starved* by Reginald Marsh, where people line up closely together to receive food during the tough times of the Depression. Gatherings can also be very intimate, which is beautifully captured in the sculpture *Family Group* by Dorothy Polansky; one can feel the delicate yet powerful bond of a family.

Perhaps the most notorious gathering is represented by a large wooden panel painted on both sides and suspended in the middle of the Hope / McClennen Gallery, depicting two comical renditions of the historically acclaimed Provincetown Beachcomber’s Ball, held in the Provincetown Town Hall.

Gatherings is a celebration of our humanity, the fundamental shared experience that unites us in good and bad times. Maybe we, social animals, can allow ourselves to be inspired by Eugene Jackson's woodblock print, also in the exhibition, *Animals of the World Unite (For the Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness)*.