July, 2012

Hello Friends of The Grant Wood Art Colony,

The hot, humid lull of the Iowa summer gives time to pause and reflect on the last year of growth and activities of The Grant Wood Art Colony. The landmark event of the 2011-2012 year was the Grant Wood Symposium, entitled *Grant Wood Today*. The symposium took place in the newly recovered Art Building West, the first major public event held there since the flood of 2008. Presentations were given in the second floor auditorium while the ABW gallery space housed a co-exhibition of the 2012 Grant Wood Fellows, Mariangeles Soto-Diaz and Tyler Starr. The symposium lectures demonstrated the renewed vitality of current scholarship on Grant Wood and his art; the exhibition represented the twenty-first century revitalization of Grant Wood's commitment to the production of contemporary art, an effort he initiated in 1932 at the Stone City Art Colony.

The symposium began with Stanford University Professor Emerita Wanda Corn's keynote address, *The Three Lives of Grant Wood's American Gothic*, which took a close look at Grant Wood's painting and its strange odyssey from the studio of an unknown Iowan artist 75 years ago to its international celebrity status today. The extensive afterlife of *American Gothic* in popular culture and on an international scale was a special focus of Professor Corn's lecture. The next morning, the presentations continued with coffee (serendipitously named "American Gothic" blend), and pastries from local gourmet bakery. In the spacious atrium and throughout the building attendees enjoyed the student-designed visual displays of candid images from Wood's time at the UI.

The 250-seat auditorium, provided a pleasing venue for exploring new fields in scholarship, including Wood and theater (Shirley Reece-Hughes, Amon Carter Museum), Wood and his Hollywood collectors (Erika Doss, University of Notre Dame), Wood's interest in masters of the Italian Renaissance (Luciano Cheles, University of Poitiers), and Wood in the light of contemporary gender studies (Travis Nygard, Ripon College).

In the afternoon, photographer and publisher Joan Liffring-Zug Bourret shared personal memories of Grant Wood and his sister Nan Wood Graham. The symposium concluded with a walk over the river to the Iowa Memorial Union for UI Professor Joni Kinsey's gallery talk on Grant Wood's painting, *Blue House, Munich* (1928), recently acquired by the University of Iowa Museum of Art.

What's next? In addition to the biennial symposium, The Grant Wood Art Colony continues to grow. After a record number of applicants, the 2012-2013 Fellowship search concluded. One of the most prestigious awards in the country, the Grant Wood Fellowship offers housing, a teaching stipend, and studio space for the pursuit of creative work. This coming academic year, recipients Hartmut Austen in Painting & Drawing
and Jeremy Lundquist in Printmaking will reside in the The Grant Wood Art Colony housing and teach two studio courses and share an exhibition on the University of Iowa campus.

As this exciting initiative seeks to provide a creative home for the next generation of artists, Wood’s memory has found its rightful place in the School of Art & School History at the University of Iowa. Thanks go to Jim Hayes and Kim and John Callaghan for their generous support. Please contact Assistant Director of The Grant Wood Art Colony, Saffron Henke at saffron-henke@uiowa.edu for more information on how you can join in creating this living legacy.

Best,

John Beldon Scott
Elizabeth M. Stanley Professor of the Arts
Director, The Grant Wood Art Colony
Director, School of Art & Art History
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242