

Being Outdoors: Recreation in the American Imagination
Opens at The Rollins Museum of Art on Tuesday, May 19, 2026



Presented on the occasion of the United States' Semiquincentennial, this exhibition celebrates the nation's 250th anniversary by highlighting the strong connections between outdoor recreational activities and American identity. It explores how artists have visually shaped American ideas of nature, recreation, community, and belonging. Featuring paintings and prints from the 19th to the 21st centuries, *Being Outdoors* examines the relationship with the outdoors across various contexts — from fishing and picnicking to ice skating and tourism. These works invite consideration on how depictions of outdoor activities have reflected societal and cultural values over time and contributed to shaping American identity.

Being Outdoors includes works from the Rollins Museum of Art's permanent collection by eight artists including Thomas Cole, Robert Freeman, Winslow Homer, and Jaune Quick-To-See Smith, among others, along with a carefully curated selection of loaned works that deepen engagement with the theme.

Image: Robert Freeman (American, b. 1946) *Marco Polo*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 88 ½ x 70 ½ in., The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art, Rollins Museum of Art. Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alfond, 2021.1.12 © Robert Freeman.

Robert Freeman, whose work is pictured above, explores the interactions between figures and the history and experiences of Black Americans. In *Marco Polo*, we witness a moment of joyful unity with figures interacting in a bright swimming pool, reaching toward one another, and circling a beach ball adorned with the American flag. The pool setting in this painting is significant since Jim Crow laws once prohibited Black Americans from using pools designated for whites only. Expressive and colorful, the outdoor scene in this painting becomes a space for reconciliation and belonging. Freeman grew up in Washington, D.C., and Ghana; his work is shaped by these experiences and by his views on the history of racial divisions.



Born in Montana's Flathead Reservation and raised on the West Coast, Jaune Quick-To-See Smith explores Native American identity and place in her work. In this piece, she depicts a dripping, colorful map of the U.S., symbolizing crossed boundaries. The text references Paul Gauguin's monumental 1897 painting *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*, which he created while living in Tahiti, as he grappled with questions of origin and destiny. Through text and image, Smith questions the

division of land and the meaning of identity in relation to it.

Image: Juane Quick-To-See Smith (American, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation, 1940-2025), *Where Do We Come From? 1*, 2001, Mixed media on canvas, 36 x 48 ¼ x 1 ½ in. The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art, Rollins Museum of Art. Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alfond 2018.1.4. Image courtesy the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, NY



For painter Mary Josephine Walters, inspiration stemmed directly from what was in front of her outdoors. Although women had fewer opportunities to travel for inspiration, Walters visited the Catskills to explore and capture the region's stunning beauty in plein-air painting. The two works in the exhibition illustrate

Walters' romanticized view of nature—the wide landscape contrasts with small boats in the foreground, suggesting outdoor exploration and admiration of nature's vastness.

Image: Mary Josephine Walters (American, 1837-1883), *Hudson River Scene*, 1877, Oil on canvas, 24 x 35 x 3 in. Museum purchase from the Mary Louise Tibbets Berg Acquisition Fund, 2016.5

Being Outdoors: Recreation in the American Imagination will remain on view through January 3, 2027 and take two different editions. The summer edition includes an interactive component where visitors will be able to share how they interact with the outdoors. The fall edition will feature a new rotation of works.

A link to select imagery is here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/q1p50i1putjuhndqjijff/AJt48VCpNr0YkdyZrgbW10o?rlkey=ax9fosqwxscrfrherxqfs9pz6&st=k2x1wz1v&dl=0>

ABOUT THE ROLLINS MUSEUM OF ART

The Rollins Museum of Art offers always-free admission to rotating exhibitions, dynamic public programs, and access to an extensive permanent collection of more than 6,000 objects spanning antiquity to the present. The collection includes a world-class global contemporary art collection, the only European Old Master paintings in the Orlando area, and a significant holding of American art. Contemporary works are also on view at The Alford Inn at Rollins, a nearby philanthropic boutique hotel whose proceeds support student scholarships. In 1981, the museum became Florida's first accredited college museum and remains one of only four museums in greater Orlando accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. For additional information, call 407.646.2526 or visit www.rollins.edu/rma. "Like" the RMA on Facebook and follow on Instagram @rollinsmuseum.

ABOUT ROLLINS COLLEGE

Founded in 1885, Rollins College is Florida's oldest recognized college. Located in Winter Park, near Orlando, Rollins is consistently ranked as one of the top regional universities in the South by U.S. News & World Report. In addition to full-time undergraduate programs in the College of Liberal Arts, Rollins offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs for working adults through its evening program at the Hamilton Holt School and graduate business degree programs through its Crummer Graduate School of Business, which has been ranked a top MBA program by Forbes and Bloomberg BusinessWeek. Rollins serves approximately 3,127 degree-seeking students annually. For more information, visit www.rollins.edu. "Like" Rollins on Facebook and follow on X @RollinsCollege.

Museum Location

Rollins Museum of Art, Rollins College
1000 Holt Avenue, Winter Park, FL 32789 | 407.646.2526

Museum Hours

Tuesday and Thursday: 10am-7pm
Wednesday and Friday: 10am-4pm
Saturday-Sunday: 12-5pm (11am-4pm beginning May 30)
Closed Mondays, major holidays, and during installation periods

Alford Inn Location

The Alford Inn at Rollins College
300 East New England Avenue
Winter Park, FL 32789

Press Contact

Lindsay DeSantis | Publicist
lindsay@lindsaydesantis.com | 814-460-3365

Museum Contact

Jamie Donmoyer | Digital Initiatives Coordinator
jfriedmandonmoyer@rollins.edu