FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 29, 2026

CONTACT
Emily Gaynor Porto, Marketing Director
marketing@woodstockart.org

The Woodstock Artists Association & Museum Announces
Feathered Friends: A Woodstock Aviary
October 23, 2026–January 3, 2027
Opening Reception: Saturday, October 24, 4-6pm

(Woodstock, NY) – The Woodstock Artists Association & Museum (WAAM) is pleased to announce *Feathered Friends: A Woodstock Aviary*, on view October 23, 2026–January 3, 2027 in the Phoebe & Belmont Towbin Wing. This exhibition explores how birds have been employed as artistic motifs throughout the past century, and the changing symbolism they have embodied over time. WAAM will host an opening reception celebrating a new round of exhibitions throughout its galleries on Saturday, October 24, from 4–6pm.

This multidisciplinary presentation includes some forty works drawn primarily from WAAM's permanent collection. Themes such as menace, chaos, comfort, whimsy, and wonder arise as birds become a reflection of human tendencies and world events. For example, a white bird perched atop a guitar in Arnold Skolnick's iconic 1969 Woodstock festival poster evokes Picasso's *Dove of Peace*, while Konrad Cramer's 1943 *War Bond Rally* painting presents an ascendant eagle or hawk as an emblem of war and patriotic sentiment. Other works explore mortality and vulnerability; Rosella Hartman's somber renderings of dead birds, Rosemary Villchur's *Dead Bird*, and Reginald Wilson's *Dead Crow* are poignant reminders that death is ever-present and recall the tradition of *memento mori*. In John McClellan's *Hurt Bird*, the link between man and bird and both parties' inherent vulnerability raises the question of which one actually needs rescuing.

Woodstock artists' depictions of chickens play a recurring role in the presentation, and are represented as both charming and bellicose, while other works celebrate birds' childlike humor, or the ultimate freedom of flight. In the monumental sculptures of Paul Fiene, birds take on the presence of a totem and carry a spiritual quality, and even an association of wisdom. Together, these works reveal how a familiar subject can shift in meaning across a century, reflecting broadly evolving ideas about peace and war, mortality and vulnerability, freedom and fear.

This exhibition is curated by Janis Staggs.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Janis Staggs is the Director of Curatorial and Manager of Publications at Neue Galerie New York, where she has worked for more than twenty years. She has prior experience at other institutions, including the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and the Walters Art Museum. Staggs has organized numerous exhibitions during her career and has lectured and written extensively on the intersection between modern fine and decorative arts with a special focus on the period of fin-de-siècle Vienna. She has a Master of Arts in the History of Decorative Arts from the jointly-administered program offered by the Cooper Hewitt/Parsons School of Design (a division of The New School), a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Maryland, and a Certificate in Strategic Management from the Harvard Extension School. Staggs is a WAAM Board member and member of the Permanent Collection committee.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Opening Reception

Saturday, October 24 |4-6pm

WAAM will hold an opening reception, open to the public, to celebrate a new round of exhibitions on view throughout its galleries.

##

Woodstock Artists Association & Museum

Founded in 1919, the Woodstock Artists Association & Museum (WAAM) is a not-for-profit membership organization featuring an historic Permanent Collection of regional art exhibited in the Towbin Wing, three contemporary art galleries, a dynamic Education Program and an Archives of materials associated with artists of the Woodstock region.

General Information

The Woodstock Artists Association & Museum (WAAM) is located at 28 Tinker Street, Woodstock, NY. Regular gallery hours are Thursday through Sunday from noon-5pm. WAAM is closed during major holidays. For general information please call: 845.679.2940 or visit our website at: woodstockart.org.

Images (left to right): Wilna Hervey (1894–1979), *Fishing Off A Pier*, c. 1960, ink and oil on paper, Woodstock Artists Association & Museum, Gift of the estate of Nan Mason, 1982-05-02; Erika Lohmann (1900-1984), *Pendant Design (Bird)*, oil on canvas, Woodstock Artists Association & Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ludwig Baumgarten, 1998-17-02; Sally Michel Avery (1902-2003), *Feathered Friends*, oil on canvas board, Woodstock Artists Association & Museum, Gift of Eric Goldman, 1998-21-01