

A detailed oil painting of a man's head and shoulders. He has dark hair, a full beard, and blue eyes. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt with a red and blue plaid pattern, and a dark cravat. The background is a textured, mottled grey-blue.

In Search of
Julien Hudson

*Free Artist of Color in
Pre-Civil War New Orleans*

DEC 9, 2011 – MAR 11, 2012

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

Presented to Major John Reid
by Marshall White -
July 28 1815

In Search of Julien Hudson

Free Artist of Color in Pre-Civil War New Orleans

DEC 9, 2011 – MAR 11, 2012



Julien Hudson's story is alluring, frustrating, and poignant. An artist who died young and left a fragmentary body of work, Hudson (1811–1844) offers a path into a unique historical moment in our country's history and in a city that has always provided ample fodder for commentary, invention, fantasy, and fascination—New Orleans. Identified as being a person of color by individuals who could not have known him when he was alive, Hudson was not verified as a person of mixed racial ancestry in the historical record until 1995, after nearly a century in which he was steadily enshrined as the second-earliest documented painter of African descent in the U.S.

This exhibition takes the viewer through the search for Julien Hudson. Between 1810 and 1840, New Orleans emerged as the steam-powered-transportation hub of the south. Increased opportunities attracted tens of thousands of newcomers from Europe, the Caribbean, and the American eastern seaboard. Julien Hudson grew up, was educated, and practiced his art during this bustling time period. The son of a mixed-race mother and white British father, Hudson was born into freedom. As a free person of color, or *gens de couleur libres*, he occupied a complicated position within New Orleans' social, economic, and political hierarchy.

Hudson's untimely, mysterious death at age 33 brought his enigmatic career to an end; only a small body of work survives, and it is brought together here for the first time. **A most recent discovery brings the number of Hudson works still extant to six; all will be featured in the exhibition.** The exhibition also features works by Hudson's European and American teachers, colleagues and competitors including examples by other free artists of color—who, like Hudson, made indelible impressions upon the art and history of New Orleans.



IN SEARCH OF JULIEN HUDSON: FREE ARTIST OF COLOR IN PRE-CIVIL WAR NEW ORLEANS is organized by The Historic New Orleans Collection and the Worcester Art Museum. The exhibition is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Related programming is made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius.

Initial research support for the project was provided by a grant from the Terra Foundation for American Art.



COVER: Julien Hudson, *Portrait of a Man, Called a Self-Portrait*, detail, 1839, oil on canvas, Collections of the Louisiana State Museum, 07526B; ABOVE LEFT: Attributed to Julien Hudson, *Portrait of a Creole Gentleman*, oil on canvas, Dallas Museum of Art; ABOVE RIGHT: Louis-Antoine Collas, *Portrait of a Free Woman of Color*, 1829, oil on canvas, New Orleans Museum of Art
REVERSE: Julien Hudson, *Creole Boy with a Moth*, 1835, oil on canvas, courtesy of a private collection; photo courtesy of Fodera Fine Art Conservation, Ltd.

SYMPOSIUM

Understanding Julien Hudson *Free Artist of Color In Context*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2011, 9AM - 5PM

By bringing together all of Julien Hudson's known oeuvre, as well as selected works by his white and mixed-race contemporaries, this ground-breaking exhibition addresses questions of connoisseurship, patronage, style, and identity during a unique, little-studied moment in American art and cultural history. The symposium examines the work and life of Julien Hudson, places him in the context of New England history and art history of the same time period, and more fully examines the experience of mixed race persons in the Americas pre-Civil War.

SYMPOSIUM TOPICS AND SPEAKERS INCLUDE

The 'Race' to find Hudson: A Question of Style and Patronage

William Keyse Rudolph, Curator of American Art and Decorative Arts, Milwaukee Art Museum

Julien Hudson's Life

Patricia Brady, Research Associate, Loyola University New Orleans

People of Mixed Ancestry in the Americas

Thomas Doughton, Senior Lecturer, College of the Holy Cross

19th Century Portraiture in Pre-Civil War New England

Micheal Volmar, Curator of Collections, Fruitlands Museum

From Bondage to Belonging: the Worcester Slave Narratives



Eugene McCarthy and Thomas Doughton, co-editors

For a full schedule or to register, call 508.793.4333 or
go to: www.worcesterart.org/Exhibitions/julien-hudson/symposium.html

Registration is \$55 for Museum Members and \$65 for non-members.
Fee includes Friday night opening reception, post-symposium wine reception,
and speakers (lunch on Saturday is on your own).

Speakers will be available at the post-symposium reception for book signing.

Full-time college students will be admitted to the *symposium only* for \$20 each
upon recommendation from a faculty member.



In Search of Julien Hudson
Free Artist of Color in Pre-Civil War New Orleans

OPENING RECEPTION

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9TH

5:30 – 7PM

RENAISSANCE COURT
(use Salisbury Street entrance)

Cash bar & Light refreshments

RSVP

BY DECEMBER 1, 2011
SUZANNEBONNER@WORCESTERART.ORG
or 508.799.4406 x3123

Free for Members * \$14 nonmembers

Catalog accompanying the exhibition available for purchase in the Museum Shop.



AUDIO TOUR: *Julien Hudson In Context*

Available Saturday, December 10 | Members free, nonmembers \$3

Delve into the world of *Julien Hudson In Context* including works and artists in the Worcester Art Museum Collection. Available at the Visitor Services Desk, Lancaster and Salisbury Street Lobbies.

CLASS: *Mainstream, Ourstream and Blackstream: Artists of African Descent from Julien Hudson to Willie Cole and Gees Bend*

FEBRUARY 1 - MARCH 14, 2012, 7-9 PM

Art historian Jean Borgatti, PhD will teach a six-part course detailing the distinctive paths taken by artists of African descent in America. For more information or to register check the class brochure online at www.worcesterart.org/Education or by calling 508.793.4333.

Black History Month Celebration

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2012, 1 PM

The Museum hosts a special reception for the winning youth artists of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Keeping the Dream Alive* contest. Winning artwork by students grades 4-6 is on view in the Higgins Education Wing from February 1-24. Free with Museum admission.

Oppressed Everywhere in This Slavery-Cursed Land: Free People of Color Before the Civil War

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2012, 2 PM

Professor Janette Greenwood, author of *First Fruits of Freedom: The Migration of Former Slaves and Their Search for Equality in Worcester*, will explore the worlds of free people of color in both the American South and New England. She will discuss the legal and social restrictions that limited their freedom as well as their fight for full-fledged citizenship. Free with Museum Admission.

The Ghost of Pere Antoine: Afro-Creole Traditions and the Making of New Orleans Catholicism

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2012, 6PM

This lecture by Justin D. Poche, Assistant Professor of History at Holy Cross, explores how race informed dominant narratives of New Orleans' Catholic heritage. It also examines the struggle by many Catholics of color in the early twentieth century to recover this lost Afro-Creole tradition against the rise of Jim Crow discrimination. Sponsored by the College of the Holy Cross. Free with Museum Admission.

FOR FAMILIES: *The Traveler's Trunk*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2012, 2 PM AND 3 PM

Meet an 1830s traveler and discover what is in his/her trunk and what it reveals about early American life. This visit from a costumed Old Sturbridge Village educator will make for an entertaining, interactive encounter. Program is 45 minutes, and is best for kids in grades K to 3. Reserve your spot by calling 508.793.4333. Free with Museum Admission.

SAVE THE DATE *La Fête Nouvelle-Orléans!*

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2012

New Orleans, even in the 1830s, was a place of pageantry and festivity. What better way to mark the end of this ground-breaking exhibition than a party New Orleans style with regional delicacies, libations and live music! Watch the Museum's website for details.

CSI: Art History

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2012, 2 PM

William Keyse Rudolph, curator of the exhibition *In Search of Julien Hudson*, has spent years uncovering facts about the artist. Hear him describe his CSI—curator's survey and inquiry (his method of inquiry) and see his results in the exhibition. Dr. Rudolph is the Curator of American Art and Decorative Arts at the Milwaukee Art Museum, and former Curator of American Art at WAM. Free with Museum admission.

