



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

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AMA BOOK CLUB GETS A NEW VIEW OF WYETH'S *CHRISTINA'S WORLD*

The Book Club Meets at 6 pm on Tuesday, May 17 at the Albany Museum of Art

[For Release April 14, 2022 – Albany, GA] — *A Piece of the World*, a novel by Christina Baker Kline inspired by Andrew Wyeth's poignant painting *Christina's World*, will be the topic of discussion when the AMA Art Lovers Book Club meets at **6 pm on Tuesday, May 17** at the Albany Museum of Art.

The book club meetings are free and open to the public.

"This meeting will wrap up our third season of the book club, and we're already looking forward to the fourth season that will begin in July," AMA Director of Education and Public Programming Annie Vanoteghem said. "We look forward to these relaxing evenings away from TVs and digital devices where we can share a glass of wine and talk about these books and whatever else pops up in the discussion. The story behind this painting, which is one of the most famous works by an American artist, is fascinating, and Christina Baker Kline brings that story to life through an absorbing blend of fact and fiction."

Wyeth's tempera painting depicts a woman in a pink summer dress, apparently reclining in a field and looking beyond a tawny, sundrenched field to a gray house and nearby barns and outbuildings in the distance. While the scene on the surface can evoke feelings of loneliness and a sense of melancholy, those emotions run even deeper when the viewer knows the story behind the painting.

It was a scene with which Wyeth was familiar. Looking out his window at his summer home in Cushing, Maine, he often saw Olson—55 at the time he created the painting—in the field, though she was not reclining and enjoying a sunny day. Olson had a degenerative muscular disorder that progressed to the point where she could not walk by age 30. She refused to use a wheelchair, however, preferring instead to crawl everywhere she went. Wyeth's painting forever captured an instant of her struggle.

While Christina was the inspiration for the painting, and she and her brother were often subjects of Wyeth's works, the artist's wife, Betsy, posed as the torso for *Christina's World*, which is part of the collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

In her 2017 novel *A Piece of the World*, Kline weaves fact with imagination to bring Olson into focus. Kline explores how a woman seemingly destined for a little-known existence on a small farm lived instead a life in which she forged a special bond with one of America's foremost artists, and became immortalized in one of the best-known American paintings.

"Later he told me that he'd been afraid to show me the painting," the novel's Christina Olson says in the prologue. "He thought I wouldn't like the way he portrayed me: dragging myself across the field, fingers clutching dirt, my legs twisted behind. The arid moonscape of wheatgrass and timothy. That dilapidated house in the distance, looming up like a secret that won't stay hidden."

A No. 1 New York Times bestselling author of eight novels, including *The Exiles* and *Orphan Train*, Kline is published in 40 countries. Her novels have received the New England Prize for Fiction, the Maine Literary Award, and a Barnes & Noble Discover Award, among other prizes, and have been chosen by hundreds of communities, universities, and schools as "One Book, One Read" selections. Her essays, articles, and reviews have appeared in publications such as the *New York Times* and the *NYT Book Review*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *LitHub*, *Psychology Today*, and *Slate*.

The AMA Art Lovers Book Club meets every other month on the third Tuesday to talk about novels and books associated with art, artists, and art history. There is no formal membership, and participants are welcome to bring a favorite beverage or snack to share with fellow book lovers. Each session begins at 6 pm in the AMA's Willson Auditorium.

The club's fourth series opens on July 19.

AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *The Way of Life, Works by Ray Pierotti* is in the Haley Gallery through April 23, 2022.
- *Prismatic, Works by Melissa Huang* is in the East Gallery through April 23, 2022.
- *Ordo naturalis, Works by Eric Mack* is in the McCormack Gallery through April 23, 2022.
- *African Artifacts of Spirituality and Identity* is in the Hodges Gallery through April 23, 2022.
- *Escape Plan*, installation by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West Gallery.

ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Ga., adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, www.albanymuseum.com or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

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