



News from the Mill

SPRING - SUMMER 2026

Reframing the Lens: Lou Jones's panAFRICApject

When photographer Lou Jones talks about the pan-**AFRICApject**, he's quick to dismiss the easy elevator pitch. Yes, the project aims to photograph all 54 countries in Africa (Jones has visited 18 so far), but the real goal runs much deeper. "Western media has done such a terrible job," Jones explains. "Our educational system, our neocolonialistic approach . . . has habitually cast a negative eye toward Africa." Conflict, poverty, and pestilence dominate the narrative. The pan**AFRICApject** exists to challenge that narrow lens.

More than ten years in the making, the pan**AFRICApject** documents contemporary African life with nuance, care, and intention. Jones is not interested in caricatures or clichés. "So much of what we get here is a cartoon," he says, referencing pop-culture stand-ins like Tarzan or *The Lion King*. Instead, his photographs reveal Africa as it is today: complex, modern, and deeply human. "Contemporary Africa looks very much like America," Jones notes, "except maybe most of the people are of color . . . and every country is incredibly unique."



Above: Lou Jones. At right, Black Rhino, Kenya

This long-term, deeply researched approach is one of the hallmarks of Jones's career. From photographing the Boston Bicentennial in 1976 to men and women on death row to 13 Olympic Games, Jones consistently returns to projects that ask viewers to slow down and reconsider what they think they know. "If you can look at these photographs, look them in the eye, and still hold the same beliefs," he says of his death-row work, "then it's a different debate." His images don't offer answers—they invite engagement.



The Stories We Don't (Usually) See

That spirit of engagement is what makes the Old Schwamb Mill such a fitting home for this exhibition. Rooted in craft, labor, and community history, the Mill provides a space where serious ideas can be encountered through art. Jones sees this as essential: bringing what some may see as an "esoteric topic" into places where people are already open to learning, making, and looking closely. "Get these pictures in front of different audiences," he says. "Provide a platform for people to start saying, 'Oh, I didn't know that.'"

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Reframing the Lens, continued from page 1

That platform will expand even further as we welcome two groups of Arlington High School photography students to experience the exhibition in person. Jones hopes they will see what's possible when images are made with care and purpose. "Put more energy and time into creating an image," he encourages. "Photography is a universal language. Images can be compelling. They can come from your own head. You become the artist."



Muslim Women, Tanzania

At its core, panAFRICA-project is about connection: between continents, between stories, and between people. By bringing this work to the Mill, and by opening our doors to students and the wider community, we're continuing that work. We invite you to join us at the Mill to experience Lou Jones's panAFRICAproject and partake in a shared moment of looking, listening, and learning.



Printing Newspapers, Namibia

This exhibit opened on March 21 and will close on Saturday, May 16. Lou Jones will present an artist's talk at 2:00 pm during the closing event. For more information, visit his website: <https://panafricaproject.org/>

Foot of the Rocks Park Opens on July 4

As the United States marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on Saturday, July 4, Arlington will celebrate America's founding with the official opening of the Foot of the Rocks Park at the intersection of Mass. Ave. and Lowell Street. This new park is located along the road taken by the British troops and the colonial militia who fought in the Battle of Menotomy (Arlington) on the first day of the American Revolution, April 19, 1775.

The Menotomy portion of that day's fighting began near the Foot of the Rocks as the British units made their way from Lexington through the Mill Brook Valley and back to Boston. This stretch of the road from Arlington Heights to the Center was also known as the "Bloody Mile." New signage in the park sets the larger stage for the battle and then focuses on many of the day's local stories—the attack on Hannah Adams

and her children, the bravery of Captain Samuel Whittemore, the vicious fighting at the Jason Russell House, and other impacts on the roughly 500 residents of the village of Menotomy. A freestanding obelisk in the park introduces the significance of Menotomy's role in the day's events and also honors the Massachusetts people, whose land Arlington now occupies.

The park was designed by Ray Dunetz Landscape Architecture, Inc., and installed by the Belko Group, with monies from Arlington CPA grants supplemented by Arlington250 and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. The effort was led by Allan Tosti and Paul Fennelly with assistance from the Town of Arlington, and the Foot of the Rocks Working Group: Angela Olszewski, Drake Pusey, and historians Michael Ruderman (Arlington Historical Society) and Doreen Stevens (Old Schwamb Mill).

Welcome, Kayla



Kayla Graffam joined the Mill in early January as our Museum Manager and has quickly begun to develop a number of new initiatives. Using her personal and professional experience with social media she has upgraded the Mill's presence on Instagram and Facebook, and is working with others to redesign the Mill's website. Kayla continues to work part time as a museum educator at Lexington History Museums, where she offers tours for all four of Lexington's museums and manages ticket purchases and visitor relations. Her knowledge of regional history is also coming in handy as she works collaboratively with other museums and arts organizations in Arlington.

Kayla earned a BA in history from University of Southern Maine, Portland, and is completing her MA in Public History at University of Massachusetts, Boston. Her thesis examines how music during the American Civil War functioned not only as political propaganda but as a powerful medium for shaping emotional experience among soldiers and civilians. It explores the ways songs constructed, regulated, and expressed emotions such as patriotism, grief, anger, and belonging.

Her independent research project as an undergraduate investigated the lives of the soldiers listed on the Civil War monument on USM's Gorham Campus. She developed a website, now contributed to by other students, at gorham-monument.weebly.com. She has also presented at the New England Museum Association Conference (NEMA) and the American Historical Association Conference (AHA).

Kayla is eager to welcome visitors to the Mill every Tuesday and Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm. Please stop by to meet and welcome her!

A Generous Gift and the Mill's First Endowment

The directors of the Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust, Inc., are pleased to announce the creation of the Richard A. Duffy Fund, the Mill's first permanent endowment fund. Richard Duffy is currently the Mill's treasurer, and for over thirty years he has been involved in various volunteer and official capacities at the Mill. He started the fund with a donation of \$300,000, the largest in the museum's history. The board and president Dermot Whittaker have approved the documents establishing the fund and will have responsibility for its investment and use.

Until now, the directors have invested large donations—some very large and made anonymously—in long-term funds, allowing these investments to grow and then reinvesting them for the Mill's future. The Duffy Fund protects its principal but allows the interest to be spent for any reasonable purpose associated with the museum, as approved by the board.

The Old Schwamb Mill is a non-profit, and, while generous supporters and the sales of frames allow it to operate in the public interest year-round, an endowment will allow the Mill to plan its future in decades rather than in years. The directors are grateful for Richard's generous gift and look forward to years of creative growth for Arlington's unique living history museum.



Old Schwamb Mill Photo: Paola Fabiano

IN THE GALLERY

Driven by Abstraction

June 6 – August 22

Opening Reception

Saturday, June 6, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Closing Reception

Saturday, August 22, 2:00 – 3:30 pm



Measured Horizon
by Mary Bablitch

The Monday Art Collective is a group of eight Boston-area visual artists who have met every Monday on Zoom for more than four years to discuss and make art. During some sessions the artists pursue personal projects in collage, drawing, painting, and printmaking; during others, they work together on specific

exercises or techniques or share work by artists they find interesting and inspiring. What started as a way to alleviate artistic isolation during the pandemic has become an essential part of the artists' lives as they support and inspire each other in developing and growing their artistic expression. Members are Sherry Autor, Mary Bablitch, Nancy Harrod, Susan Kinsella, Bette Frank Leahy, Ellen Liner, Kathi Terwilliger, and Meg Turner.

Reframe

September 12 – November 14

Opening Reception

Saturday, September 12, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Closing Reception

Saturday, November 14, 2:00 – 3:30 pm



Falling Flowers 2
by Tory Fair

Five Arlington-connected sculptors (Adria Arch, Tory Fair, Kristina Goransson, Kate Holcomb Hale, and Olivia Baldwin) are reimagining the Old Schwamb Mill as they work with the building's rustic architecture and industrial heritage to create site-sensitive installations. The exhibition takes its title literally and conceptually: just as frames both contain and transform what

they surround, these artists use the Mill's distinctive spaces to transform their own practices. The building becomes both subject and collaborator—its weathered textures, structural bones, and century-old purpose as a maker's place offer new ways to think about how we frame art, history, and the act of looking itself. In a space built to showcase others' work, the Reframe artists ask: What happens when the frame becomes the art?

SPECIAL EVENTS

Family Day/Patriot's Day

At the Arlington Historical Society

Sunday, April 19, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Arlington's historical museums—Old Schwamb Mill, Dallin Museum and the Arlington Historical Society—are jointly sponsoring a celebration of Patriot's Day with outdoor activities and local history on the lawn of the Society's Jason Russell House at 7 Jason Street. Whether you are interested in art, local history, or just looking for a low-key way to spend the afternoon outdoors with family, there will be a variety of activities to enjoy. Free and open to all.

“The Boyhood of John Muir”

Saturday, April 25, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

This film recounts the early life of Scottish emigrant John Muir, known today as the founder of Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Club, and as America's first environmentalist. In 1996 Florentine Films/Hott Productions visited the Old Schwamb Mill to film scenes that captured crucial experiences in Muir's youth. Filmmaker Lawrence Hott will attend this screening to discuss how the actors, writers, set designers, camera and sound crew, and the Mill's own master woodturner David Graf helped bring Muir's story to life.

“Intentional Framing at the Harvard Art Museums”

Saturday, May 9, 2:00 pm

Frame Conservator Allison Jackson will discuss her latest historic reproduction framing project at the Harvard Art Museums Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies: the reframing of Ford Madox Brown’s *La Rose de l’Infante* (1876). The painting of a young girl needed a new frame, so the project was guided by archival research, scholarship on Pre-Raphaelite framing, and Brown’s catalogue raisonné. Jackson’s presentation will include research into Brown’s role as a frame designer and the alternative design options considered for the reproduction frame. This talk is funded by Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area as part of the Hidden Treasures Festival of Nature, Culture & History.

Go Fish!

Saturday, May 16, 10:30 am – 12 Noon

GO FISH! is a participatory mural project sponsored by ArtsArlington, in collaboration with community partners, to offer members of the public the opportunity to hand paint individual 13” to 17” herring shapes cut from thin aluminum. The painted herring will be installed on the exterior brick walls of the Edith M. Fox Library and other locations around town. This workshop will include a short introduction explaining how the Mystic River herring population has gone from a threatened to a robust species thanks to a combination of government protection, nonprofit organization stewardship initiatives, and volunteer efforts. This free program is designed for families and adults to learn about the herring and contribute to their protection through a creative art-making event.

Old Schwamb Mill Open House and Porchfest

Saturday, June 20, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Join us for tours of the Mill, learn how a frame is made, enjoy refreshments, and much more! All ages are welcome. The Mill’s master woodturner David Graf will offer frame-making demonstrations between 11 am and 2 pm. We will also be hosting musicians as part of Porchfest, a free, town-wide celebration organized by the Arlington Center for the Arts.

Summer Concerts

Bodega Rat

Thursday, July 16, 6:30 pm

This young band based in York, Maine, plays a setlist of 2000s punk and alternative rock favorites, other throwbacks, and original music.

Spajazzy

Thursday, August 13, 6:30 pm

Enjoy the jazz stylings of this popular group, led by Tino D’Agostino, Director of Instrumental Music at Arlington High School.

ARLINGTON TOWN DAY Saturday, September 19
10:30 am – 4:30 pm

Visit the Old Schwamb Mill’s booth to learn about tours of this historic frame-making factory and exhibits in the Mill Gallery, as well as upcoming programs. Town Day takes place along Massachusetts Avenue between Pleasant Street and Jason Street.



Saturday, October 3
12 Noon – 4:00 pm

Save the date for this annual celebration of the Schwamb family’s German heritage, with music, craft beer, German-style food and delicacies, Mill tours, arts activities for children and families, and much more!

For more information about these programs, visit www.oldschwambmill.org or call 781-643-0554.

Additional events will be announced in the Mill’s monthly email notices and on the website.

The Mill Gallery is open during regular Mill hours, Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 4 pm.

Tours are offered on the hour between 10 am and 3 pm. Admission is free, with a suggested donation of \$5.00.

Recent Frame Orders

McFall Barrelhead Frames

The Mill received an unusual request last fall for two 21" round black walnut frames to display lithographed barrelheads. Jim McFall of Florida wanted to preserve these family artifacts, which were placed on top of flour barrels at the McFall Flour Mill in Bolton, Ontario. The mill would produce over 100 barrels of flour per day, weighing 196 pounds each.

Jim McFall and his daughter Elizabeth (who lives in Arlington) shared some family history to explain the origin of this frame order. Great-grandfather Andrew



McFall Flour Mill, c. 1890s.

McFall acquired the water-powered mill on the Humber River in 1881, together with the mill cottage and a large brick family home. Andrew was active in the Bolton community. He was a founder of the Laurel Hill Cemetery in 1892, and was a great friend of the farmers because he often advanced credit for future crops before the town had a bank. He ran the flour mill until his death in 1894.

Grandfather Arthur McFall then took over the mill and used his entrepreneurial flair in running a successful grain trading operation in Toronto, founding the Bolton Heat Light and Power company to provide electricity to the town, and installing the first telephone line that ran from the mill to the railway station, among other technical improvements and investments. Following his death in 1924, through the Depression and until 1941, the mill was run by Great Aunt Annie McFall.



One of the framed McFall barrelheads in a frame crafted at the Old Schwamb Mill by master woodturner David Graf.

The mill and the family home were sold in 1941. The mill ceased using water power in 1951 and was closed in 1968. It was demolished shortly thereafter to make way for a real estate development. The mill cottage was retained in the McFall family until its sale in 2021, after 140 years of ownership. It has been designated an historic building and, based on a construction date circa 1841, is the oldest residence in Bolton.

Friends of the Mill

We greatly appreciate and indeed depend on the support of our individual and business donors. To make a contribution and join our Friends group, please visit the Mill's website at oldschwambmill.org, or send a check payable to the Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust, Inc., 17 Mill Lane, Arlington, MA 02476.

Individual contributions as a Friend are \$30; Family Friend contributions are \$40. Friends who make a donation of \$100 or more are eligible to receive full benefits of the North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) Association, a network of more than 1400 art, history and science museums and nonprofit institutions. See the NARM website at narmassociation.org. Thank you.

The Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable educational institution. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Become a Mill Volunteer

You are invited to join other supporters of the Old Schwamb Mill as a volunteer! Opportunities include serving as a guide for tours of our historic museum, welcoming attendees at our gallery talks, lectures and music offerings, and staffing our visitor center on Tuesdays or Saturdays. Please contact Kayla Graffam at info@oldschwambmill.org for more information.

Custom-made Frames



Our woodturner David W. Graf creating a frame.

The Old Schwamb Mill is historically significant as a picture frame factory that survives intact from the Civil War era. When Charles Schwamb started making frames at the Mill in 1864, much of his business was drawn from customers who wanted oval and circular frames for photographic portraits.

Today, our customers enjoy custom-made, fine-crafted frames to hold a mirror or display family portraits, photos, or artwork. The hand-turned frames are constructed from solid hardwoods such as black walnut, maple, cherry, mahogany and zebrawood. You are invited to visit our showroom, located on the Mill's second floor, to see a variety of oval and circular frames of different wood types and sizes with modern and traditional profiles. We look forward to working with you to create your unique wooden frame.

For additional information about ordering a frame, email frames@oldschwambmill.org or call 781-643-0554.

A New Frame for a Gibson House Portrait

When Catherine Hammond Gibson moved into her new home in Boston's Back Bay in 1860, now the Gibson House Museum, she brought several family portraits with her. One was a pastel portrait of her beloved younger sister, Almira Hammond Greene (1807–1844), who was considered the family beauty but died of tuberculosis at age thirty-seven. Through the generosity of a family member and long-time museum supporter, this portrait was recently returned to the museum.

The Gibson House is proud to preserve this important piece of Gibson family material culture in order to tell the complicated story of tense family relationships and disinheritance. Ethel and Rosamond Gibson (part of the third generation) inherited 137 Beacon Street in 1934 after their mother passed away. This was a surprise to their brother, Charlie Gibson, who had been living at the home and caring for his

mother, but it was a stipulation of their late father's will.

Ethel and Rosamond later sold the house to Charlie for one dollar, knowing that he was passionate about family history, but they removed many of the family's most valuable possessions, including Almira's portrait. Charlie's fraught relationship with his family members—and the conflict between his desire to preserve his family history and his feeling of estrangement—is a story familiar to

many LGBTQ people and is integral to understanding Charlie Gibson and his dedication to preserving the house and its heritage.

Museum staff hired Studio TKM, a well-regarded paper conservation firm in Somerville, to restore the damaged portrait and contacted the Old Schwamb Mill to make a new reproduction frame and liner. David Graf worked closely with the staff to design and craft a mahogany 29.25" x 25.25" oval frame that was later finished and gilded in a period-appropriate style by Wenda Kochanowski, an independent decorative arts conservator. This stunning framed portrait is again hanging in the Gibson House Museum as part of the legacy of one of Boston's notable families.



Almira Hammond Greene

Meghan Gelardi Holmes, former Gibson House Museum Curator, provided much of the information for this article.



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panAFRICaproject

Lou Jones

Boston-based photographer

March 21 - May 16, 2026

Closing Reception

and Artist's Talk

Saturday, May 16

2:00-3:30 pm

Mission Statement

The Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust, Inc., exists for the preservation, maintenance, and enhancement of the Old Schwamb Mill in Arlington, Massachusetts. Begun in 1864 as a picture frame manufactory, the Mill is located on the site of many previous mills built on Mill Brook. It is a rare survivor of the small, family-owned mills that helped define New England, and is the oldest continuously operating mill site in the United States. The Mill's unique 19th century elliptical faceplate lathes, its original belt-driven shaft-and-pulley machinery, and the traditional hand-turning processes are used to this day to create custom-made oval and circular frames. The Trust preserves and protects the Mill's site, buildings, tools, archives, machinery and manufacturing techniques as unique cultural and educational resources.



Woodcut created by Marjorie Cohn.

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