Dear Friends,

Collective creativity is born from moments like this. The arts have the power to heal. And making art is good for your health! Now more than ever, art is a critical vehicle for staying healthy and connected with the greater community. At Hill-Stead Museum, we are thrilled to offer meaningful creative outlets to uplift the spirit during this unprecedented moment in time.

Speaking of history, have you ever wondered about the birth of photography? In a tale of two cities, Frenchman Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, and Englishman William Henry Fox Talbot simultaneously announced the first practical photographic processes in 1839. It is fitting that Daguerre, an artist, and Talbot, a scientist, and inventor, would be the fathers of photography. Together, art and science—oft sketched as opposites—are two chapters in the same book. When photography was first developed, the people behind the camera captured the world as they saw it such as our own founder and architect, Theodate Pope Riddle, who experimented with photography, including this image of her swing.

No other artistic medium has drawn on such rapid scientific innovation. Now, with the advent of Smartphones, photography is rapidly becoming the first art form where everyone engages.

Today, during this time of uncertainty and social distancing, art can keep us together. Photography continues to serve as a communications vehicle that influences, inspires, and ignites change. Bring your cameras the next time you enjoy the beautiful grounds of Hill-Stead. We invite you to participate in our fun-filled “Budding Photographer” contest, including three robust categories to spur creativity: Architecture, Landscapes and Horizons, and Living Things. Flock to the sheep or frolic in our meadows as the grounds come alive with spring’s first blooms.

For the intensely curious, armchair adventurers, students, architecture buffs, and historians, we are delighted to offer an extraordinary virtual tour. For the jet setters among us, the experience will be especially timely, allowing us to keep our spirits high during the current travel ban. So, come along with us on a thrilling trip with Theodate during her Grand Tour (1888-1889), a ten-month educational sojourn across Europe in search of arts and culture via her diary entries. Thanks to archival photography, check out the making of the Eiffel Tower as Theodate experienced it during her first tour stop in Paris. Each week we will reveal excerpts from her journal alongside enriching online cultural programming. It’s the ultimate trip across Europe!
Whether you can stop by Hill-Stead Museum or browse the rich content on our Museum’s website, an art adventure awaits all who embrace it! You might even discover sweet coloring scrolls left behind by leprechauns and perfect for kids of all ages.

Best Wishes

Anna
Dr. Anna Swinbourne, Executive Director & CEO