

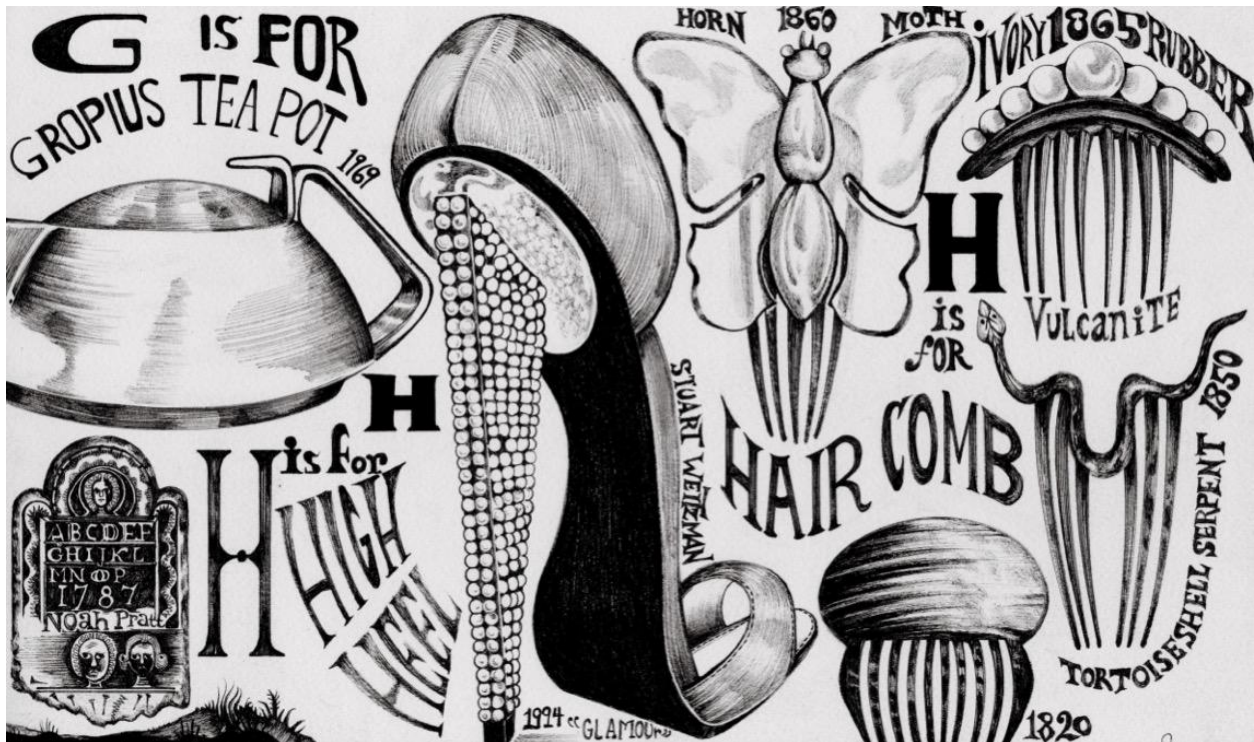
HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND LAUNCHES INAUGURAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM WITH INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED ARTIST RUBEN TOLEDO

*A community-created mural will transform Historic New England's
extraordinary collection into a living work of art in Haverhill*



Courtesy of Historic New England

Haverhill, MA – On July 25, Historic New England will unveil a major new mural by acclaimed artist Ruben Toledo, which will inaugurate the organization's first artist-in-residence program. The program includes several days of programming and participation by local artists and the local community at the new Historic New England Center in Haverhill, Massachusetts, a destination where history, art, design, and community converge.

Created specifically for the Historic New England Center, Toledo's immersive mural reimagines Historic New England's collection – the largest in the world – of more than one million objects related to the history of New England, through the expressive language of illustration and fashion. Conceived as an A-to-Z visual encyclopedia of New England design, the work invites visitors to experience history not as something fixed behind glass, but as a living source of creativity that continues to evolve through public participation.

"I love being at the beginning of something," said Ruben Toledo. "Historic New England is opening the doors to an extraordinary collection, and I wanted to approach it like a visual dictionary – an A-to-Z of design. Every object tells a story, and together they speak a timeless language of design, innovation, and the joy these bring to our everyday life. My hope is that this mural becomes the beginning of a conversation the community continues to engage in long after I've put down my brush."

The artist-in-residence program represents the next chapter in Historic New England's broader vision for the Historic New England Center as a dynamic cultural destination that brings together preservation, exhibitions, partnerships, and community activity. Building on the Center's recent public opening, the program introduces a new model for engaging visitors with Historic New England's extraordinary collections through contemporary artistic practice and community participation.

"With the Historic New England Center, our goal is to create a place where history inspires creativity, where our collections become a catalyst for new artistic voices, and where residents and visitors alike can gather to experience New England's cultural heritage in new ways," said Vin Cipolla, president and CEO of Historic New England. "Ruben Toledo's residency exemplifies the kind of programming that will define the Center as it continues to grow."

Historic New England will celebrate the residency with four days of public programming, including community mural painting, family art workshops, master classes with Toledo, and a public unveiling celebration. Highlights of the schedule include:

Thursday, July 23

- Intergenerational Art Workshop, 10:30am – noon
- Community Mural Participation, noon – 5pm
- Kids Music Program, 3 – 4pm
- Master Class with Ruben Toledo, 6 – 9pm

Friday, July 24

- Kids Art Workshop, 10:30am – noon
- Community Mural Participation, noon – 5pm
- Teen Art Workshop, 1 – 2:30pm
- Neurographic Art Workshop, 6 – 7:30pm

Saturday, July 25

- Public Mural Unveiling Celebration, 2 – 5pm

Sunday, July 26

- Portrait Workshop with Mark Hayden, 2 – 3:30pm

To view the full schedule and register for upcoming programs, please visit:
<https://www.historicnewengland.org/visit/events/>.

Over several months, Toledo immersed himself in Historic New England's collections, working closely with curators Nora Ellen Carleson and Michelle Tolini Finamore to uncover objects that reveal both the richness and the whimsy of New England's design history. Furniture, textiles, clothing, wallpaper, decorative arts, photographs, and everyday artifacts are transformed into an energetic visual composition that demonstrates how great design can transcend time.

Rather than presenting these objects as historical artifacts alone, Toledo interprets them through the lens of fashion illustration. Despite spanning centuries and diverse origins, each object reflects the design sensibilities of its era while speaking a common visual language that remains strikingly contemporary.

The mural is also conceived as an act of collaboration. Throughout the residency, Haverhill residents will be invited to paint alongside Toledo, gradually transforming the installation into a collective work that reflects both Historic New England's collection and the creativity of the surrounding community.

"Historic New England has always believed that history is most meaningful when it sparks new ideas and new connections," said Dr. Finamore. "Ruben's mural transforms our collection into something dynamic and participatory, inviting visitors to see the extraordinary design stories embedded in everyday objects while adding their own voices to that conversation."

Launched in 2026, Historic New England's artist-in-residence program invites contemporary artists to engage deeply with the organization's collections while exploring New England's history, architecture, craftsmanship, and creative traditions. The initiative reflects Historic New England's commitment to connecting preservation with contemporary artistic practice and expanding public access to one of the nation's most significant collections of material culture.

As the inaugural resident artist, Toledo establishes a new model for interpreting history through contemporary art – one that celebrates preservation not as an end in itself, but as the beginning of new conversations, new creative work, and new community connections.

The residency has been shaped in collaboration with Dr. Finamore and local artists Jennifer Arndt and Mark Hayden, who will lead workshops and community programming throughout the installation. The artist-in-residence program is supported in part by a \$55,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

About Historic New England

Historic New England – founded as the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in 1910 – is the oldest, largest, and most comprehensive independent preservation organization in the United States. Historic New England welcomes the public to 38 exceptional museums and landscapes, including several coastal farms. The organization operates a major collections and

archives center in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and has the world's largest collection of New England artifacts, comprising more than 125,000 decorative arts and objects and 1.5 million archival documents including photographs, architectural drawings, manuscripts, and ephemera. Engaging education programs for youth, adults, and preservation professionals, and award-winning exhibitions and publications are offered in person and virtually. The Historic New England Preservation Easement program is a national leader and protects more than 129 privately owned historic properties throughout the region. For more information, visit historicnewengland.org.

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