

**Exhibitions at Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Boston Athenæum
Celebrate Allan Rohan Crite**

Select Gardner Museum exhibition images [here](#).

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Allan Rohan Crite (American, 1910–2007),
Harriet and Leon, 1941. Oil on canvas.
Boston Athenæum. Gift of the artist, 1971.
Courtesy of the Allan Rohan Crite Institute
and Library.

September 22, 2025 (Boston, MA) – A comprehensive exploration of the work of artist Allan Rohan Crite (1910–2007) will take place with two exhibitions— [Allan Rohan Crite: Urban Glory](#) and [Allan Rohan Crite: Griot of Boston](#)— at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Boston Athenæum, from October 23, 2025 – January 19 and 24, 2026, respectively. With a career spanning most of the twentieth century, during times of immense social and economic changes, Crite devoted himself to depicting the multicultural, multiracial, and multigenerational community of Boston. Crite maintained an intellectually curious and artistically experimental practice ranging from vivid oil paintings documenting the joy of life's everyday moments to prints and watercolors of spiritual themes rendering the holy figures as Black.

The concurrent exhibitions, each examining different aspects of Crite's career, are organized by two institutions that held great meaning to Crite— the artist exhibited at the Athenæum throughout his eight-decade career and he sought inspiration at the Gardner, even incorporating images of the Museum within his works. The Athenæum and Gardner Museum have also co-published [Allan Rohan Crite: Neighborhood Liturgy](#), produced by Princeton University Press, the first extensively researched, fully-illustrated, career-spanning book about the artist. Scholars, historians, artists and community leaders influenced by Crite have contributed essays and recollections to the publication.

Additionally, most of the works from the Gardner and Athenaeum's exhibitions will be combined to be featured in [Allan Rohan Crite: Neighborhood](#), which will be on view at the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey starting in February (2026).

At the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, [Allan Rohan Crite: Urban Glory](#) will focus on Crite's images of the Black and multicultural communities of Boston's Roxbury and South End neighborhoods where he lived during a time of urban renewal (or "removal" as Crite described) and gentrification. It will encompass approximately 130 works – oil paintings, watercolors, lithographs, books, collages, and works on paper. On view in the Museum's Hostetter Gallery, the exhibition includes generous loans from the Boston Athenaeum; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Smithsonian American Art Museum; Museum of African American History; the Boston Public Library; as well as several private lenders. [Allan Rohan Crite: Urban Glory](#) was co-curated by Diana Seave Greenwald, *William and Lia Poorvu Curator of the Collection* at the Gardner, and Professor Theodore C. Landsmark, Crite's friend and collaborator. The Gardner Museum also collaborated with a group of artists and spiritual leaders in Boston who either knew Crite personally or were inspired by him.

A companion exhibition, *Visions of Black Madonnas*, will simultaneously be on view in the Gardner Museum's Fenway Gallery. This exhibition of thirteen works juxtaposes the Museum's recently-conserved 16th-century [Black Glass Madonna](#), a work that Crite admired and visited often, with his own depictions of a Black Holy Family. Additionally, a public work of art by Gardner Artist-in-Residence Robert T. Freeman—*Allan Crite - American Griot, 2025*—has been commissioned by the Museum for its Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade.

The Boston Athenaeum, which houses the largest and most important institutional repository of Crite's work, will present [Allan Rohan Crite: Griot of Boston](#). This exhibition examines Crite's role as griot (pronounced "gree-oh")—a storyteller and knowledge keeper in West African traditions—for Boston's Black and multicultural communities. It highlights a range of materials from the artist's long career depicting sacred and secular subjects, including his early Neighborhood Series in both oil and watercolor, drawings, illustrated books, and archival material as well as a special focus on his embrace of the printing press during the second half of the twentieth century. The exhibition includes

nearly 100 works primarily drawn from the Athenaeum's extensive permanent collection along with loans from the Addison Gallery of American Art; Boston Public Library; Charlestown Navy Yard (National Park Service); Massachusetts Historical Society; Museum of African American History; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and private collections. *Griot of Boston* was curated by Christina Michelin, formerly of the Boston Athenaeum, and currently *Pamela and Peter Voss Curator of Prints and Drawings* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, with the input of an advisory committee composed of local scholars and friends of the artist. *Griot of Boston* will be on view in the Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery and extend into the Leventhal Room and throughout the Athenaeum's first floor.

An accompanying installation of original collages by artist Ekua Holmes, who was also a friend and mentee of Crite, will be on view alongside *Griot of Boston*. Commissioned for the Athenaeum's Children's Library mural, the collages celebrate Black childhood and everyday life, as so much of Crite's work does.

Please save the date: Tuesday, October 21, Media Preview

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: 10 am – noon; and Boston Athenaeum: 2 – 3:30 pm

Allan Rohan Crite: Urban Glory and Visions of Black Madonnas are supported in part by Barbara and Amos Hostetter, the Abrams Foundation, the Barr Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Wyeth Foundation for American Art, The Tom and Katherine Stemberg Fund for Exhibitions and Programs, Fredericka and Howard Stevenson, and by an endowment grant from the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Robert T. Freeman: *Allan Crite - American Griot, 2025* is supported in part by Barbara and Amos Hostetter, the Abrams Foundation, the Barr Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Barbara Lee Program Fund, The Tom and Katherine Stemberg Fund for Exhibitions and Programs, and Fredericka and Howard Stevenson.

The Artist-in-Residence program is supported in part by Lizbeth and George Krupp and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and directed by Pieranna Cavalchini, *Tom and Lisa Blumenthal Curator of Contemporary Art*. Funding is also provided for site-specific installations of new work on the Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade on Evans Way.

The Museum receives operating support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which is supported by the state of Massachusetts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Allan Rohan Crite: Griot of Boston is supported in part by the Terra Foundation for American Art, the Henry Luce Foundation, The 'Quin Impact Fund, and The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation.

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