

PRESS RELEASE

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MATTATUCK MUSEUM

Adventures in Art & History

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Mattatuck Museum Acquires *A Father's Love* (2021) by Boluwatife Oyediran

WATERBURY, CT –The Mattatuck Museum is delighted to announce the acquisition of “*A Father's Love*” (2021) by contemporary painter Boluwatife Oyediran into its permanent collection. The work was acquired in January 2026 through Museum Exchange, the first digital platform dedicated to facilitating art donations to museums across North America.

Boluwatife Oyediran, born in 1997 in Ogbomosho, Nigeria, is an internationally exhibiting artist whose practice explores Black identity, history, and representation through figuration and text. His work is widely recognized for its emotional depth, conceptual rigor, and striking visual language. This acquisition reflects a highly competitive and selective process. Many institutions sought the opportunity to receive this work, and the Mattatuck Museum’s curatorial team worked diligently over several weeks to present a compelling proposal that ultimately secured the painting for Waterbury.

“*A Father's Love*” is a powerful and tender figurative painting depicting a father gently holding his young daughter as they sit together in an expansive cotton field. Clad in white clothing, the figures radiate intimacy, dignity, and care. The imagery is central to Oyediran’s practice, as cotton serves as a recurring motif through which he examines histories of Black labor, exploitation, resilience, and cultural inheritance. The contrast between the tenderness of the father-daughter bond and the charged historical legacy of the cotton field creates a richly layered work that is both personal and profoundly historical.

The painting was created during Oyediran’s residency at the Noldor Artist Residency in Accra, Ghana, a leading independent program supporting emerging contemporary artists from Africa and the diaspora. Made prior to his relocation to the United States, “*A Father's Love*” reflects Oyediran’s engagement with American history from a global and diasporic perspective. The work bridges transatlantic dialogues on identity, memory, and Black experience, demonstrating remarkable foresight and technical excellence in figuration.

Since moving to the United States in 2022 to pursue an MFA in Painting at the Rhode Island School of Design, where he was awarded the prestigious Presidential Fellowship, Oyediran’s practice has continued to evolve. His recent work centers on Black and African diasporic experiences in America and introduces his concept of “inverted blackness,” a visual strategy that challenges racialized ways of seeing by rendering Black subjects in luminous photographic negatives. Oyediran graduated from RISD with honors in 2024 and presented his third career solo exhibition, “*Inverted Blackness*”, at AFIKARIS Gallery in Paris, accompanied by the publication of his first artist book.

The acquisition of “*A Father's Love*” aligns closely with the Mattatuck Museum’s mission as an art and regional history museum serving the diverse community of Waterbury. The Museum presents between

10 and 20 changing exhibitions each year and offers robust educational programming that reaches thousands of students and families annually. Every third, fourth, and fifth grade student in the Waterbury Public School system visits the Museum as part of their curriculum, along with participants in summer camps, homeschool programs, and family education initiatives.

Oyediran's work will play an important role in these educational efforts. His approach to portraiture, which combines historical reference, symbolism, and emotional warmth, resonates strongly with young audiences. For many children in Waterbury, particularly those from historically underrepresented communities, *"A Father's Love"* offers a meaningful opportunity to see their identities, families, and histories reflected within the walls of their local museum.

The Mattatuck Museum is proud to add *"A Father's Love"* to its growing collection of contemporary Black artists, which includes works by Kara Walker, Dawoud Bey, and Renee Cox. As a recent RISD graduate, Oyediran also represents the exceptional talent emerging from regional art institutions, further strengthening the Museum's commitment to collecting artists connected to the region.

Through this acquisition, the Mattatuck Museum reaffirms its dedication to amplifying underrepresented voices, diversifying its permanent collection, and offering new perspectives on American art and society. *"A Father's Love"* will be preserved, studied, and shared with the public for generations to come, serving as a powerful anchor for conversations about portraiture, Black history, family, and cultural memory.



Oyediran, Boluwatife (Nigeria, b. 1997), *A Father's Love*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, Gift of the Collection of Deborah Beckmann and Jacob Kotzubei, 2025, 2026.9.1

ABOUT THE MATTATUCK MUSEUM

Located in the heart of downtown Waterbury's architectural district, the Mattatuck Museum is a vibrant destination, known locally and regionally as a community-centered institution of American art and history. The collections at The MATT span the history of American art from the colonial era to the present day with special strengths in Naugatuck Valley history and Connecticut artists, as well as artists from around the world representing the diversity of our community. The collection includes more than 8,000 objects including paintings, unique works on paper, photography and sculpture.

In February 2021, The Mattatuck reopened after a \$9 million renovation project to reimagine the Museum while continuing to be a welcoming, inclusive, stimulating, and enriching community anchor. The "new" Mattatuck Museum, designed by Ann Beha Architects, includes an extensive 14,000 square foot renovation to the existing space and an addition of almost 7,000 square feet to enhance public access, educational programming, collections storage, and exhibitions.

The Museum is operated with support from the Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development/CT Office of the Arts, which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The Museum is a founding member of the Consortium of Connecticut Art Museums and is a member of the Connecticut Art Trail, a group of 29 world-class museums and historic sites (ctarttrail.org).

The Mattatuck Museum is located on the Green in Waterbury, CT at 144 West Main Street. The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. The Museum is closed on Mondays from September through May. The Museum offers free, convenient off-street parking directly behind the Museum and in additional lots on Park Place. The Mattatuck Museum website (mattmuseum.org) outlines the Museum's updated guidelines for visitors, including what to expect on your visit, cleaning and safety protocols, and frequently asked questions. Face masks are currently not required indoors. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for more updates and content.

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