



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Making of an Icon: Walter looss and Sports Photography *Exhibition at the Housatonic Museum of Art Wins 2024 AASLH Award of Excellence*

BRIDGEPORT, CT —June 17, 2025—The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) proudly announces that the Housatonic Museum of Art and Interpreting Sports, LLC are the recipients of an Award of Excellence for *The Making of an Icon: Walter looss and Sports Photography*. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards, now in its 80th year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

The Housatonic Museum of Art holds 141 photographs by acclaimed sports photographer Walter looss, representing the museum's only sports-related holdings in a modern and contemporary art focused collection. These images ask compelling questions about photography's ability to tell sports stories in an aesthetically powerful way. Dubbed "the Rembrandt of sports photography," looss has defined iconic images of athletes since the 1960s, capturing highs and lows of athletic performance in a variety of sports. Interpreting Sports of Somerville, Massachusetts curated [The Making of an Icon: Walter looss and Sports Photography](#), on view from March 6 - August 2, 2024, showcasing 49 photographs of the collection. Organized into three sections containing nine thematic subsections, the exhibit explored various ways photographs capture heroic moments, contribute to legendary myths of greatness, and tell authentic stories of athletic struggle and uplift. HMA and IS hosted five programmatic events, featuring interviews with Walter looss, sport writer Ivan Maisel, and journalism professor Adam Rugg, and opening and closing receptions with guest-curator-led tours. Before removing the exhibition, HMA produced a guest-curator-led virtual tour. Support



provided by CT Humanities and the Housatonic Community College Foundation. Several loans were provided by the collection of Lyman Allyn Art Museum, New London, Connecticut.

“We are grateful to be recognized by the AASLH for this year’s Leadership in History Award and have the opportunity to honor Walter looss’ work and career. Both the Housatonic Museum of Art and looss’ photographs invited us to deeply consider the lives of iconic athletes and delve into questions of individual and group identity, critical controversies, and collective memory-making. As a result, this exhibit gave us a chance to carefully consider the impact of sports and iconography on the lives of athletes rather than placing them on pedestals, providing relatable human touchpoints to figures often relegated to god or villain statuses.

“It has been such a pleasure working with Interpreting Sports to bring this exhibition and related programs to life,” says Jennifer Reynolds-Kaye, Director of the Housatonic Museum of Art. “We are thrilled that AASLH recognized the importance of Walter looss’ contributions not only to sports history, but also to the larger stories of humanity throughout the twentieth century. We are grateful to our partners at Connecticut Humanities and the Lyman Allyn Art Museum who understood the vision and carried this project to the finish line.”

This year, AASLH confers 54 national awards honoring people, projects, exhibits, and publications. The winners represent the best in the field and provide leadership for the future of state and local history.

The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards not only honor significant achievement in the field of state and local history, but also bring public recognition of the opportunities for small and large organizations, institutions, and programs to make



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contributions in this arena. For more information about the Leadership in History Awards, contact AASLH at 615-320-3203 or go to www.aaslh.org.

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About the Housatonic Museum of Art

The Housatonic Museum of Art is located on the Connecticut State Community College Housatonic campus, located at 900 Lafayette Blvd. in Bridgeport. It is home to one of the premier college art collections in the country, spanning the history of art from the ancient to the contemporary, and is on continuous display throughout the 300,000 square foot facility. The museum also hosts changing exhibitions in the Burt Chernow Galleries, and engaging lectures, workshops, films, special events and programs throughout the year, both in-person and online. Visit www.HousatonicMuseum.org to learn more.

About Interpreting Sports

Interpreting Sports is a museum consulting firm that offers historical and curatorial services - helping organizations create socially responsible and culturally responsive sports content. They work with a mission of re-centering the international sports conversation around empathy, balanced humanity, and authentic connection, one interpretive project at a time. Their principal consultants bring 30+ years combined field experience and are the co-editors and contributing authors of *Interpreting Sports at Museums and Historic Sites*, a groundbreaking contribution that provides a roadmap, their 'Game Plan,' for the future of sports interpretation in public spaces.

About the American Association for State and Local History

The American Association for State and Local History is a not-for-profit professional organization of individuals and institutions working to preserve and promote history. From its headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, AASLH provides leadership, service, and support for its members who



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preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful to all people. AASLH publishes books, technical publications, a quarterly magazine, and maintains numerous affinity communities and committees serving a broad range of constituents across the historical community. The association also sponsors an annual meeting, regional and national training in-person workshops, and online training.

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