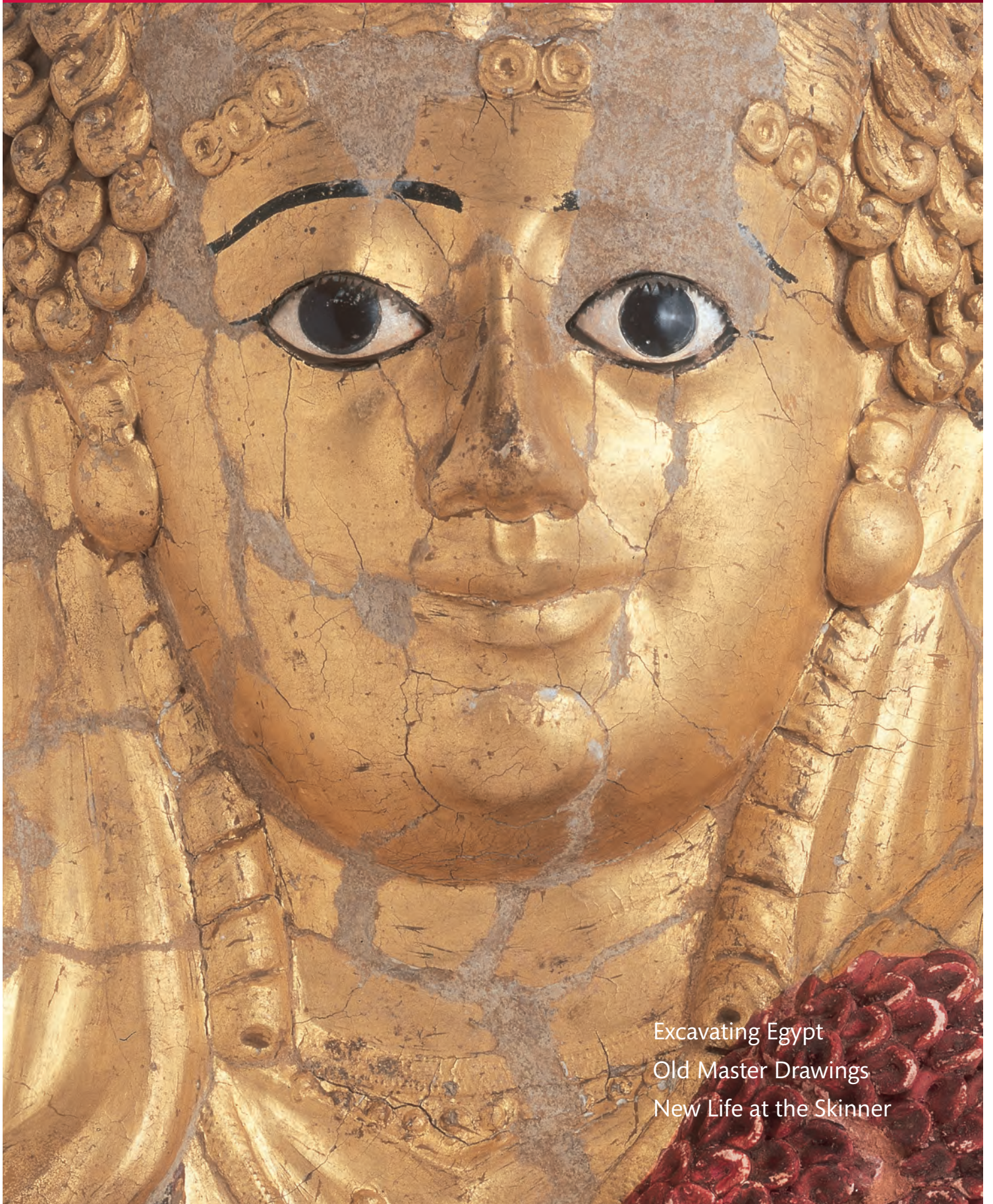


MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

SPRING 2007



Excavating Egypt  
Old Master Drawings  
New Life at the Skinner



## LETTER



IN THE RECENT issue of the *Alumnae Quarterly*, President Joanne Creighton reflected on what has been accomplished at Mount Holyoke College since her arrival ten years ago. She takes pride in the way she has been able to coax various constituents of the campus to work together in support of a shared, articulated mission. Likewise, I am proud of the way the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum has played a part in that process. Over the past decade, the Museum has burnished its reputation for organizing intellectually provocative exhibitions, some of which have garnered national press, and all of which have helped affirm the College as a leader in liberal arts and women's education. President Creighton noted that the "highs of [her] job" include "sharing in the intellectual energy and moral passion of the place, the finest educational environment I have ever been part of. . . . Moreover, I, who have no daughters of my own, have now the pleasure of seeing the palpable coming to selfhood of wonderful young women, so full of earnestness, purposefulness, and joie de vivre." I felt an instant connection while reading that passage, which could equally apply to my own experience as museum director.

I very much appreciated the intellectual energy, as well as the earnestness, that I felt in the student audience for the Museum's recent "Careers in Visual Arts" panel. The idea for the panel came from the internationally renowned artist Jane Hammond '72, whose artwork was featured at the Museum last fall. Hammond, who well remembers her undergraduate years at Mount Holyoke, has been an inspiration to many aspiring young artists on campus. She was joined on the career panel by KC Maurer '84, CFO of the Andy Warhol Foundation, Wendy Watson, the Museum's curator, and myself. A *Mount Holyoke News* reporter summed up the panel this way: "While planning or cultivating contacts cannot replace hard work, Hammond, Maurer, Watson, and Doezenia demonstrate that a student can persist and succeed in making her life's passion her life's work."

Spa Night, organized each year by the Museum's student organization, the Society of Art Goddesses, has become a much anticipated autumn event. This year, 164 students came for massages, facial masks, yoga, and to hear theatre arts professor Vanessa James lecture on the history of "Extreme Fashion." While some readers may be surprised that students received manicures in the Museum's lobby, I have no reservations about the appropriateness of Spa Night. Each year, students enjoying Spa Night's enticing offerings find themselves drawn in by objects in the Museum's permanent collection. I have observed the gleam of discovery in these students' eyes as they study the objects closely and then discuss them with friends.

Meanwhile, more and more faculty from across the curriculum are devising assignments based on special exhibitions and objects in the collection. (As I write this, ten students are working on ancient coins in the Carson Study Gallery.) Some of these assignments require our staff to bring objects from storage or to assist students in other ways. We love to do it. There isn't anything we would rather do.

M A R I A N N E D O E Z E M A

*Florence Finch Abbott Director*

COVER:  
Early Roman Period, Hawara,  
*Mummy mask* (detail),  
cartonnage, gilt, bronze, and  
glass, 40–60 CE  
Courtesy of the Petrie Museum  
of Egyptian Archaeology,  
University College London  
Photo by Mike McKelvey

MARIANNE DOEZEMA, director, and Wendy Watson, curator of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, recently sat down to discuss the current exhibition, *Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London*. They were joined by Diana Wolfe Larkin, curatorial consultant and visiting associate professor in art history.

**MD:** *Excavating Egypt* has been a very exciting exhibition project for all of us on the Museum staff and, of course, for our audiences. The culture of ancient Egypt seems particularly intriguing, perhaps because of the symbol-based language or because of the Egyptians' elaborate practice of mummification. Whatever the reason for our fascination, the current show provides the opportunity to learn much more about ancient Egypt, which has been represented in the Museum's collection since the late 19th century.

Wendy Watson and Diana Wolfe Larkin

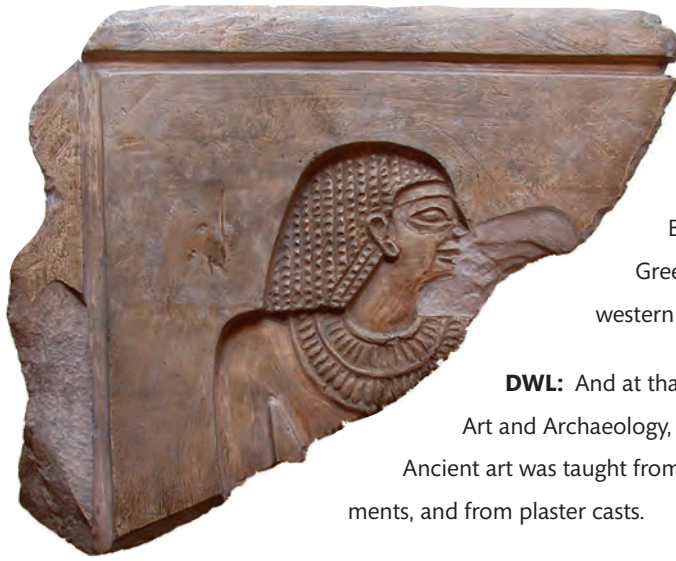
**WW:** It's true. Louise Fitz-Randolph, an alumna who taught at the College from 1892 to 1912, had a particular passion for Egyptian art and archaeology and made a concerted effort to bring Egyptian objects into the collection. She traveled to Cairo and Luxor in 1909 in order to purchase things there. The Museum was also a member of the Egypt Exploration Fund, a subscription system that funded excavations. Participating institutions from many countries received a share of the finds, with the approval of the Egyptian government's Antiquities Service.



**MD:** How did it happen that Mount Holyoke became a participant in this program?

**DWL:** Mount Holyoke was receiving literature from the Egypt Exploration Fund when Mary Dickinson (class of 1854) paid for Mount Holyoke's membership. It was through Dickinson's gift that we became eligible to receive objects. In becoming a subscriber, Mount Holyoke joined a circle of distinguished institutions that included Bryn Mawr College, Harvard University, Yale University, the University of Pennsylvania, and public museums such as the Worcester Art Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

**WW:** Interestingly, Mount Holyoke was one of the first places in the United States where art history was included as a regular course in the curriculum. In 1876, the old Williston Hall became the first home for the Museum's growing collection of original art, as well as for an important collection of plaster casts. Then in 1902, when the Dwight Art Memorial Building was dedicated, the collections were installed there. Art students in the early 20th century must have been particularly captivated by the presence of actual ancient objects,



Egyptian, *Stela fragment*, limestone, First Intermediate Period, Dynasties 7–10 (2181–2040 BCE), Gift of American Exploration Society, Philadelphia

to which few students in the U.S. would have had access. In photographs of the Museum galleries at that time, you see a real emphasis on antiquities, even though the collection also included contemporary paintings like our George Inness and Albert Bierstadt landscapes. The cultures of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome were considered central to the history of western civilization.

**DWL:** And at that time, the department was known as the Department of Art and Archaeology, which in itself indicates an interest in the ancient world. Ancient art was taught from actual objects, from photographs of ancient monuments, and from plaster casts.

**MD:** It's interesting to recall how rigorously casts were collected in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially casts of antiquities. In 1898, Samuel Parrish, the proprietor of what is today the Parrish Art Museum [in Southampton, NY] argued that plaster reproductions of antique and Renaissance sculpture were museums' "real treasures." In Parrish's view, collections of "modern pictures" did not compare in educational worth. Casts fell from favor, of course, but in the last few decades their value for teaching has been recognized once again. So it is fortuitous that the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, which is today known for its original works of art, still retains a large portion of its cast collection. I want to thank you again, Diana, for helping us design the reinstallation of the casts when the art building and Museum were reopened in 2002 after a major renovation and expansion. We're also in your debt for alerting us to the United States tour of the Petrie Museum exhibition. Perhaps we could now talk about Petrie's special significance in the history of archaeology.

**DWL:** Flinders Petrie is considered the father of modern archaeology. He was one of the first excavators to be scrupulous in recording information about where the object was found, which is crucial data for scholars. He pointed the way toward the now very refined protocols of recording the exact strata in which objects are found and in what context. Additionally, Petrie published his findings every single year. He typically spent the winter excavating and then he wrote up his report the following summer. The standard he set has become a model for modern archaeologists.

**MD:** I understand he was also groundbreaking in his interest in small objects of daily life in a moment when many of his contemporaries were focused exclusively on stone statuary and architecture. He recognized how revealing utilitarian artifacts could be.

**DWL:** I'm glad you mentioned that. Indeed, he collected pottery, stray beads, little scraps of things, everything. One of his contributions was an innovative method, known as "seriation," for establishing the chronology of a site by identifying different styles of pottery.

**WW:** Before Petrie, archaeology was almost like grave robbing. Objects were taken because they were the most appealing and intrinsically valuable. Artifacts that could tell us more about Egyptian life and culture were often disregarded.

**MD:** The current exhibition features more than 220 amazing objects from the Petrie Museum in London, but we have also developed a small companion display of related Egyptian material from Mount Holyoke's own collection.

**DWL:** The Museum's holdings here include several dozen objects that were excavated by Petrie. I'm looking here at a relief fragment showing the head and shoulders of a male figure. It was excavated in 1898 by Petrie at the site of Dendera and went with other Egypt Exploration Fund objects first to Philadelphia. When the American Exploration Society in Philadelphia was disbanded, the objects went to a number of museums including those at Bryn Mawr and Mount Holyoke.

**WW:** One of those is a clay offering tray. It has been in storage for a long time, and so I'm delighted that this exhibition provides the opportunity to put it on view.

**DWL:** That tray, also from Dendera, has depicted on it little offerings that would have helped the owner along in the afterlife. We see parts of an ox and loaves of bread along with drainage channels suggesting offerings of cool water. This pottery tray relates to a grander object that is on permanent display in the Museum, a limestone offering table that would perhaps have been made for someone of a higher station.

**MD:** What are the highlights among other Petrie-related artifacts in the Museum's collection?

**DWL:** Well, there is one group of interesting small statuettes that were excavated at Ehnasya in the Fayum region, south of modern Cairo. They are from the Roman period, the very last phase of ancient Egyptian history. One of them is Byzantine, perhaps as late as the 7th century. Egypt had become very cosmopolitan by that time, so several of these objects combine a mixture of cultural influences—they have some Egyptian elements and some Hellenistic.

**MD:** Will the students in your class be working on some of these objects?

**DWL:** The class I'm teaching this semester, which I've called "Egyptian Art from Site to Museum," encompasses archaeology and museum theory. We will look not only at the works of art, but also the excavation reports. We will talk about excavation practices during the period the objects were found, and the understanding of art history at that period. Then we will consider how ancient art is displayed in museums today and how our understanding of it has changed over time.



Egyptian, *Offering tray*, clay, Middle Kingdom, Dynasties 11–12 (2040–1782 BCE), Gift of the American Exploration Society, Philadelphia



## INTERVIEW

### EVENTS

Thursday, 22 February, 4:30 p.m.

Opening and Reception

"Excavating Egypt"

Louise R. Weiser Lecture

Peter Lacovara, Senior Curator of  
Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and

Near Eastern Art, Michael C.

Carlos Museum, Emory

University, Atlanta

Gamble Auditorium, Art Building,

Mount Holyoke College

Thursday, 1 March, 4:30 p.m.

"Distaff Discoveries: Women in  
Early Egyptology"

Catharine Roehrig, Curator,

Department of Egyptian Art,

The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

New York

Gamble Auditorium, Art Building,

Mount Holyoke College

Thursday, 29 March, 4:30 p.m.

"Re-Imagining Ancient Egypt"  
(Gallery Talk)

Diana Wolfe Larkin, Visiting

Associate Professor of Art History,

Mount Holyoke College

Mount Holyoke College Art

Museum

Thursday, 12 April, 4:30 p.m.

"Re-Imagining Ancient Egypt"  
(Gallery Talk)

Diana Wolfe Larkin, Visiting

Associate Professor of Art History,

Mount Holyoke College

Mount Holyoke College Art

Museum

**WW:** Sounds like a wonderful combination of historical and museological viewpoints.

Am I correct in assuming that you will also introduce your students to Amelia Edwards and her role in what became the Petrie Museum?

**DWL:** Yes. Edwards was the founder of the Egyptian Exploration Fund, which is now the Egypt Exploration Society. She traveled to Egypt in the 1870s and was horrified by the rampant looting that she saw there. Wanting to encourage a more scientific approach to excavation, she became a tireless organizer, lecturer, and fundraiser on behalf of Egyptian archaeology.

**WW:** And she was Petrie's prime backer, both financially and theoretically.

**DWL:** Indeed. Petrie was one of the chief excavators for the Fund and eventually became the Edwards Professor at University College London, a professorship set up through a bequest of Edwards. Without Amelia Edwards, there would be no Petrie Museum, for the institution that today bears the archaeologist's name was created by Edwards' 1892 bequest, through her donation of several hundred Egyptian objects to University College. The museum also acquired Petrie's extensive collection in 1913.

**WW:** One final thing: we recently discovered that Amelia Edwards has a special connection to Mount Holyoke. While on a lecture tour of the United States in 1889–90, she spoke on Egyptian art at the College and received such an enthusiastic welcome that she was named an honorary member of the class of 1891.

**DWL:** Edwards was indeed a remarkable person, and not someone who inherited her fortune, by the way. She was a journalist and novelist. Her best-selling book, *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*, is an engaging account of her only trip to Egypt. A first edition of that influential volume is now on display in the exhibition alongside an 18th-dynasty statue that once belonged to Edwards.

Egyptian, *Painted Dyad*,  
limestone, pigment,  
Late Dynasty 18  
(1352–1292 BCE)  
Courtesy of the Petrie  
Museum of Egyptian  
Archaeology, University  
College London



*Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum  
of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London  
17 February–22 July 2007*

It's an exhibition with all the trappings of an historical novel. The dogged archaeologist. The lady adventurer. A dazzling collection of clues to a lost age.

While touring Egypt in the late 19th century, the popular writer Amelia Edwards (1831–1891) was disturbed by the neglect and damage she observed at ancient Egyptian monuments and archaeological sites. Upon returning to her native England, Edwards founded the Egypt Exploration Fund to promote more carefully managed excavations.

Enter Sir William Flinders Petrie (1853–1942), renowned for his scientific techniques, extensive experience, and scholarly work in the field of Egyptian archaeology. Petrie was among the first to map his sites in systematic fashion, documenting the exact location of toys, papri, utensils, furniture, and the masses of pottery that Petrie recognized as being able to speak in places where the written record went silent. "We can't overstate Petrie's importance to the field," says Dr. Peter Lacovara, curator at the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University. "He took what had been a glorified treasure hunt and lent the ethics, protocol, and hard science that today define archaeology."

Amelia Edwards became a devoted patron to Petrie, who acknowledged Edwards' support by sending her many beautiful antiquities, including jewelry, scarabs, statuary, funerary tablets, pottery, and writings on linen and papyrus. Upon her death, Edwards bequeathed these gifts and her fortune to the University College London (the only English university then offering degrees to women) to establish the United Kingdom's first profes-

sorial chair in Egyptology. In 1892, Petrie assumed the chair and responsibility for what would become the Petrie Museum. Two decades and many dozens of excavations later, he sold his own extensive collection to UCL, creating one of the largest and most important collections of Egyptian antiquities outside of Egypt and sealing Petrie's reputation as the "father" of Egyptology.

*Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology* traces the development of Egyptian archaeology from its beginnings in the 1880s to the present day through spectacular artwork and rare archival materials amassed by the Petrie Museum and its namesake. On view are over 220



Amelia Edwards



## EXHIBITIONS

of the Petrie's most important objects from sites in the Nile River Valley, including one of the world's earliest surviving dresses (circa 2400 BCE), royal art from the palace-city of the "heretic pharaoh" Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti, a gold mummy mask, jewelry, stone sculpture, and objects of daily life ranging from copper tweezers to a ceramic rat trap.

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum will be the only New England venue for *Excavating Egypt*, which was organized by the Carlos Museum. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with contributions by Dr. Lacovara, Carlos Museum curator of Egyptian art, Betsy Teasley Trope, former Carlos Museum associate curator of ancient art, and Stephen Quirke, Petrie Museum curator.

Thanks to preexisting ties to Amelia Edwards and her Egypt Exploration Fund, the Art Museum has in its permanent collection a number of Petrie-derived antiquities. Like other college museums with a subscription to the Fund in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Mount Holyoke received numerous objects (with the approval of Egyptian authorities) from excavations by Petrie and his associates. Through the Fund and through gifts from another subscription, Mount Holyoke acquired approximately 150 works, including jewelry, pottery, funerary figurines, and other items. A selection of these have now been organized into a special companion show to *Excavating Egypt*.

### *Two by Two: Lines, Rhymes, and Riddles*

4 September–16 December 2007

"Every good story is of course both a picture and an idea," wrote Henry James. "And the more they are interfused the better." James might have been writing about *Two by Two: Lines, Rhymes, and Riddles*, an exhibition that combines picture, poetry, and the remarkable talents of two brothers.

Brad and Mark Leithauser were born in Detroit in the 1950s. Brad, a professor at Mount Holyoke, is an award-winning poet and author of, among other works, *Darlington's*

*Fall*, a novel-in-verse. Mark, the chief of design at the National Gallery of Art, is an accomplished painter and draftsman. Starting in 1985, the Leithausers began collaborating on illustrated works of literature that have delighted their audiences.

The *Providence Journal* praised the brothers' 2004 book, *Lettered Creatures*, as "a work of sublime charm." "[Brad] Leithauser's light verse moves nimbly among taut rhythms and relaxed, golden conversation, while on the other side of the spread an image of deeply humorous exactness lovingly looms." The *Washington Post* described Brad's poetry and Mark's artwork as "living in a world that is filled with stuff." Mark's drawings "burst their seams (and border) with detail, often rendered with the objectivity, precision and finickiness of scientific plates torn from some old volume on botany."

Mark Leithauser (American, b. 1950) *Lettered Creatures*, oil on panel, 2003  
Courtesy of Hollis Taggart Galleries







Mark Leithauser (American, b. 1950) *A Greeting*, oil on panel, 2004  
Courtesy of Hollis Taggart Galleries

*Two by Two*, which will display the text of Brad's poems alongside Mark's images, is scheduled to coincide with the publication of the brothers' latest creative endeavor, an illustrated volume of poetry entitled *Toad to a Nightingale: Drawn-Out-Riddles*. The exhibition will showcase original artwork from *Toad* and from Brad and Mark's three previous collaborations: the chapbook *A Seaside Mountain*, *Darlington's Fall*, and the aforementioned *Lettered Creatures*. The installation also will feature other of Mark's paintings, drawings, and prints that either inspired or were inspired by Brad's writings.

The *Washington Post* observed that Brad and Mark Leithauser "have the aura of sane high spirits common to people for whom the line between work and play is nonexistent." The publication accompanying *Two by Two* will include an essay about the Leithausers' first two decades of interfused creativity.

*Two by Two: Lines, Rhymes, and Riddles* is offered as part of Museum10's *BookMarks*, a celebration of word and image. For more on *BookMarks* and Museums10, visit [www.museums10.org](http://www.museums10.org).

### New Old Master Drawings

In the half century that has passed since the Museum acquired its first important Old Master drawing—Guercino's *Christ Among the Doctors*—the drawings collection has steadily grown. In 2005, Thomas Cassirer donated more than 60 drawings from his renowned family collection to complement 23 others acquired in 1977 from Art Advisory Board members Esther and Malcolm Bick. This fall, the Museum further enriched its holdings with the purchase of three drawings, each with special art-historical significance.

The first work, *Landscape with Castle*, is by Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi (1606–1680), a Bolognese artist known for his reiterations of the so-called “ideal” or “classical” land-



Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi  
(Italian, 1606–1680)  
*Landscape with Castle*, pen and  
ink with wash, ca. 1666–1675  
Warbeke Art Museum Fund

scape. The pronounced compositional structure and antiquarian sensibility of the idiom originated with his countryman Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), a narrative painter whose occasional landscapes proved to be of enduring influence. Carracci's Bolognese pupil Domenichino (1581–1641), and later the French painters Poussin (1593/94–1661) and Claude Lorrain (1600–80), continued to refine the ideals that

eventually culminated in the *paysages historiques* of the Neoclassical artist Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes. Valenciennes, of course, was the author of Mount Holyoke's own *Classical Greek Landscape with Girls Sacrificing their Hair to Diana*, the centerpiece of the exhibition of French landscape painting held at the Museum in 2004.

Grimaldi's lush study in pen and ink with wash exemplifies the “ideal” landscape at the moment of its full maturity in the second half of the 17th century. It was probably made in preparation for either a print or a fresco, for comparable compositions by the artist are known in both media. Prior to its coming to Mount Holyoke, the drawing was in two distinguished private collections in Europe.





The second acquisition is a charming red chalk portrait of *A Man in Oriental Dress* by the French painter and printmaker Jean-Baptiste Le Prince (1734–1781). Le Prince was a student of François Boucher, the preeminent master of the late Rococo, but unlike Boucher, Le Prince shunned the make-believe world of the *ancien régime*, taking more interest in the exotic and ethnographic imagery he encountered during his extensive travels through Russia. After five years abroad, and a number of commissions from Peter III and the Empress Elizabeth, Le Prince returned in 1762 to France where he continued to make exotic costume studies like this one. The artist was also a master of the aquatint technique, and the drawing was acquired with two prints made after it, both presumably from his own studio.



ABOVE: Jean-Baptiste Le Prince (French, 1734–1781) *A Man in Oriental Dress*, red chalk, John Martyn Warbeke Art Fund

The third drawing, a two-sided work representing *Camillus Liberating the Capitol from the Gauls* (recto) and *The Continnence of Scipio* (verso), perfectly exemplifies the ideals of Neoclassicism, the period immediately following the Rococo. In subject matter and style, this splendid sheet by Vincenzo Camuccini (1771–1844) combines the historicism and political ideology that together lay at the heart of the Enlightenment. Nurtured in the heady Roman circles of J.J. Winckelmann and Anton Raphael Mengs as well as Jacques Louis David, Camuccini was among the most sought after and influential artists in early 19th century Italy. Interestingly, the two compositions were drawn at different times in his long career: the verso in 1808 in preparation for a private commission in Russia, the recto in 1840–41 for a royal commission destined for the Palazzo Royale in Genoa.

TOP: Vincenzo Camuccini (Italian, 1771–1844) *Camillus Liberating the Capitol from the Gauls* (recto), pen and ink with wash Art Acquisition Endowment Fund

All three drawings will be on view in the Museum this spring where they will be studied by students in my seminar, “The Stroke of Genius: Drawings of the Old Masters.”

—John Varriano, Idella Plimpton Kendall Professor of Art

Did you dislike studying history in school? Meghan Gelardi, collections management assistant at the Skinner Museum, wants to talk to you.

The Joseph Allen Skinner Museum of Mount Holyoke College sits on Woodbridge Street (Route 116), two blocks north of the Art Museum and the College campus. Casual passersby could mistake the Skinner for another austere New England church with a picturesque spire; in fact, the main building was originally the Congregational Church in Prescott, Massachusetts. When that town was flooded due to the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir, Joseph Skinner bought the 1846 building and moved it to South Hadley. It became his personal museum, housing his wide-ranging collection of American furniture, decorative arts, crafts, tools, and natural history specimens.

To say Skinner was an avid collector would be understatement. When the Skinner Museum first opened to the public in 1932, it was crammed with nearly 5,000 objects. Taxidermied creatures perched above antique furnishings, which brushed up against suits of armor. Shelves strained beneath a bounty of glassware, geological specimens, and ancient Incan, Egyptian, and Roman artifacts.

And today? "Over the years, there have been some really subtle changes," says Gelardi. "Objects have moved an inch here or there."

Gelardi's eyes sparkle with the excitement of someone who has taken on an enormous challenge. With a newly minted Master's degree in public history from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the 25-year-old Salt Point, NY, native has been hired by the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum to spend a year cataloging Skinner's eclectic assortment of objects.

Joseph Allen Skinner Museum  
Photo by Michael Zide





"The way the collection is designed, you can have a chip off the Roman Colosseum next to a souvenir mug from Mount Tom [in nearby Easthampton/Holyoke, Massachusetts]. That speaks to how things were valued," explains Gelardi. "It's a time capsule of what was important to people of that generation."

In other words, the value of Joseph Skinner's eclectic collection lies not in the individual objects he collected, but rather in the arrangement of those objects, which are still presented as they were in the 1930s.

On September 30, 2006, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, which administers the Skinner Museum, hosted a community gathering at the Skinner. Organized in collaboration with the Art Museum's *Looking Beneath the Surface: The Quabbin and Hetch Hetchy Canyon* exhibition, the Skinner event honored the four "lost towns" that were cleared in the 1930s to make way for the Quabbin Reservoir.

The Quabbin gathering attracted over a hundred people with ties to the lost towns. It also drew in many other visitors who fondly remembered having visited the Skinner Museum as schoolchildren, or who were simply curious about the collection.

Gelardi enjoys watching visitors become animated by what they find in the Skinner. "It always starts with the 'oh-this-is-so-cool' factor. Visitors are either knocked out of their comfort zone to see how people lived in a different period or they are surprised to find something quite familiar."

Visitors who ask Gelardi about her favorite object in the collection will be directed to the early American collection downstairs, particularly the broom-making machine. "Broom making was a big industry in the valley until the mid-19th century. It was a way to make some money in the home when agriculture started to fail as a reliable source of income." In an age when most people buy common household items such as brooms, "it's hard to imagine how labor-intensive life used to be without seeing it."

"There's an intimacy to being able to get up close to an object and to think about how it came from your own town," says Gelardi. "There is much less of a barrier between the stories in this place and the visitor's own story."

The opportunity to dissolve barriers is the reason Gelardi has devoted herself to public history. "I always felt that academic history, in a way, was preaching to the choir, because history majors are already sold on history." Gelardi gestures to the densely packed cases all around her. "I love all this, and I want the general public to love it. Or at least to be reminded that history can be fun. That's the purpose—to reach that broader audience that might not otherwise be touched."

The Skinner Museum is open to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., from May through October. Admission is free.



Meghan Gelardi in the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum

#### FRIEND OF ART

Watch this space for profiles of people essential to the Museum and its operations. In this issue, we welcome Anne Mercogliano '04, who recently accepted an invitation to join the Art Advisory Board as its young alumna. While at Mount Holyoke, Anne served four years as program director and then assistant general manager of the College's radio station. She was captain of the Amherst/Mount Holyoke sailing club and, for three years, a staff assistant at the Art Museum.

Following a stint as a research analyst for the political consulting firm, Varoga & Rice, Anne became the diversity specialist for Heller Ehrman LLP in San Francisco. In this capacity, she created The Opt-In Project, a nationwide initiative for the retention and promotion of women in the legal field. Anne hosts The Opt-In Project's bi-weekly podcast and is an author of a report on work-life balance strategies for women attorneys, which will be published this spring.



Anne Mercogliano

#### CAFFEINE BUZZ

A collection of the Museum's decorative arts objects, now on loan to the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, provided a jolt of inspiration to students in Mimi Hellman's art history seminar, "Buzz: The Visual and Material Culture of Caffeine." "Buzz," which focuses on the histories of coffee, tea, chocolate, and Coca-Cola, considers how these commodities have been presented to consumers in different places and times, and how these modes of presentation reflect cultural values. Professor Hellman asked her students to research one of the Mount Holyoke objects and then contrast it with another object or image from a different period. Professor Hellman reports: "The students came up with some really wonderful juxtapositions. The silver hot water urn was compared to a

water cooler, as another monumental object that facilitates social interaction. . . . The tea caddy was compared with a Celestial Seasonings box featuring an enthroned lion, in order to draw out points about physical handling and how decorative motifs suggest status and privilege. The moustache cup was compared with a Nalgene water bottle equipped with a spill guard, which revealed interesting insights into the etiquette of drinking. . . . [The Skidmore students] really worked hard on the project and it was wonderful to be able to give them a chance to study original objects."

Elizabeth Lundy and Samantha Widder, Skidmore '10  
Photo by John Weber







Docents Sheila McElwaine and Jerry Goldman discuss Empress Faustina in the Gump Family Gallery

#### MUSEUM INTERPRETERS

Picture yourself in a world of art. The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum is looking to expand its dynamic team of museum interpreters. Docent volunteers receive rigorous training and learn to give tours both of the Museum's comprehensive permanent collection and of special exhibitions. Each docent develops his or her own strengths, and is given the opportunity

to guide elementary school groups and adults. Other perks of the job include free lectures, social opportunities, and field trips to regional museums. For more information, contact Jane Gronau at 413-538-2085 or [jgronau@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:jgronau@mtholyoke.edu).



Vanessa James, Professor of Theatre Arts  
Photo by Peter Healey

#### SPA NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Art + Beauty + Intellectualism = another successful Spa Night at the Museum. The Society of Art Goddesses' annual fall event drew over 160 students for massages, yoga, manicures, and facial masks. Attendees also enjoyed Theatre Arts Professor Vanessa James's lively lecture on the history of costume and "extreme fashion." The artful Goddess President, Nora Lambert '07, coaxed Trader Joe's to donate delicious treats for the event.

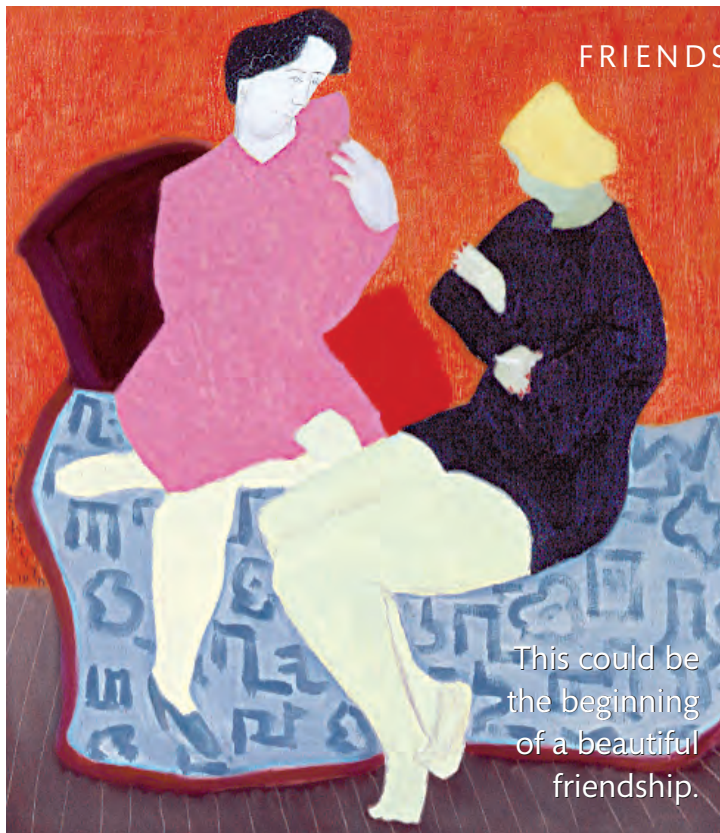
#### CALLING ALL EDUCATORS

Many area teachers took advantage of the Museum's fall program, *Say What You See*, which helps children develop visual literacy and critical thinking skills. Spring is the season for *Daily Life and Afterlife: Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome*, a program for Grades 4 through 8. *Daily Life* offers students direct experience with original works of art and artifacts as an entry into history, world cultures, and archaeology. Special to the program this year: interaction with the *Excavating Egypt* exhibition. To reserve space, contact Jane Gronau at 413-538-2085 or [jgronau@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:jgronau@mtholyoke.edu).

#### LIFELONG LEARNING

The Museum strives to be a resource for learners of all ages, organizing exhibitions both for the Mount Holyoke campus and for the wider community. Thus, we welcome our future neighbors at Veridian Village, a new residential community for people who want to take advantage of the abundant cultural events and educational programs in the Pioneer Valley. Construction will likely begin this summer on approximately 125 environmentally sustainable units near Hampshire College, just ten minutes up the road from Mount Holyoke. For more on Veridian Village and its partnership with area museums, visit [www.veridianvillage.com](http://www.veridianvillage.com).

## AT THE MUSEUM



## FRIENDS OF ART MEMBERSHIP

### Membership categories

Student/Young Alumna (Mount Holyoke students or alumnae in classes 2001 or later)	\$10
Individual Member	\$25
Family/Dual Member	\$50
Patron	\$100
Sponsor	\$250
Benefactor	\$500
Director's Circle	\$1,000

Name (as it will appear on mailing list) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like information on bequests, life insurance annuities, endowed funds, gifts of art and other planned giving opportunities.

Please send form and check, payable to MHC Friends of Art, to Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, Lower Lake Road, South Hadley, MA 01075-1499. Questions? Call 413-538-2245 or email [artmuseum@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:artmuseum@mtholyoke.edu).

### Become a Friend of Art.

Friends of Art provides core funding for special exhibitions, publications, and public programs. Friends receive invitations to opening receptions, lectures, and other events as well as the newsletter. Memberships, valid for one year, are tax-deductible contributions to support Mount Holyoke College Art Museum.

Museum Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and weekends, 1-5 p.m.  
Admission is free. Donations welcome.  
413-538-2245 [www.mtholyoke.edu/go/artmuseum](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/artmuseum)

ABOVE: Milton Avery (American, 1893-1964) *Discussion*, oil on canvas, 1944  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Neuberger, 1953



To sign up for *MHCToday*, a biweekly e-newsletter, go to [www.mtholyoke.edu/go/mhctoday](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/mhctoday).

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Mount Holyoke College Art Museum  
50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075-1499

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