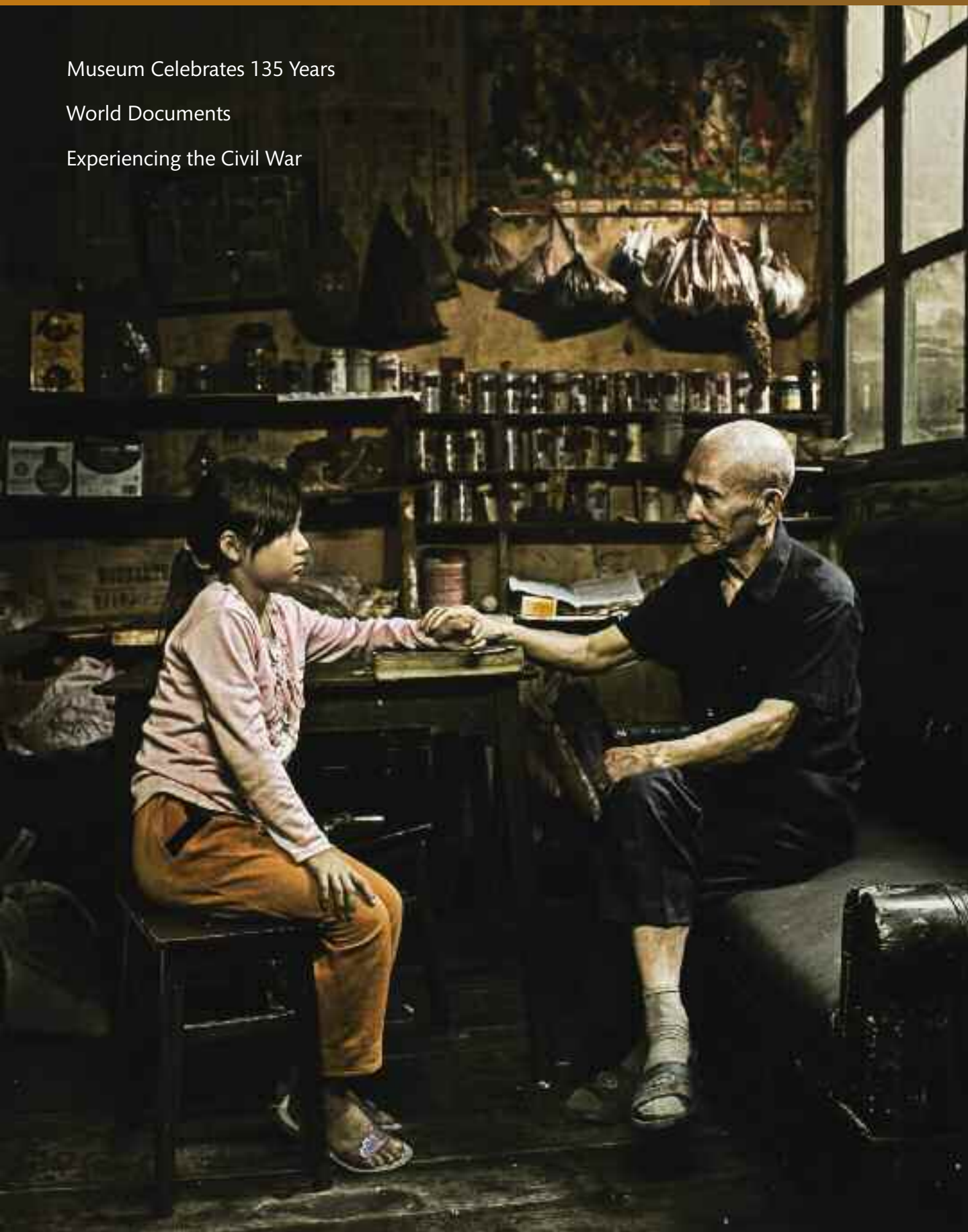


Museum Celebrates 135 Years

World Documents

Experiencing the Civil War



*Lyman Williston Hall,  
Mount Holyoke College, 1876*  
Photograph courtesy of Mount  
Holyoke College Archives and  
Special Collections

COVER:

Ouyang Xingkai (b. 1950)  
*Shen Jinqiu, born in 1921, now  
lives in No. 26, Xiangyangping,  
Hongjiang*  
Inkjet on paper, n.d.



## MHCAM Celebrates Its 135th Birthday

Wednesday, November 15, 1876, was a memorable day in the history of Mount Holyoke College. It was the day devoted to the dedication of Williston Hall, the new building of science and art. At three o'clock, teachers, students, and invited guests were assembled for the procession of the Trustees into the Art Gallery, which occupied the entire upper story. The walls were hung with works of art, including *Hetch Hetchy Canyon*, the painting by Albert Bierstadt presented to the new Art Gallery for the auspicious occasion by Mrs. E. H. Sawyer and Mrs. A. L. Williston.

*Excerpts from the Address by Professor W. S. Tyler, President of the Board of Trustees*

"The objects of study in an institution like this are chiefly two: the acquisition of knowledge, and the discipline of the mind. Both these objects are accomplished by the study of Science and Art; and this is the direct and primary reason why the Trustees of Mount Holyoke should provide for the study, why the teachers should teach these branches, and why the pupils should pursue them. . . . Science not only observes isolated facts, but classifies and correlates them, interprets their meaning, discovers the laws that govern them, and the principles that underlie them. . . . [art] develops and disciplines the same faculties of observation and reason, together with other and in some respects higher faculties, viz., those of taste and imagination, which are not only intellectual and rational but also emotional, and thus more nearly moral. . . . To have seen it, to have studied and comprehended it, to have been inspired and possessed by it, not only delights the mind, but enriches and adorns it."

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum is proud to celebrate its 135th anniversary on November 15, 2011.

WITH THIS LETTER, I would like to share my excitement about joining the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum and about the great work being done today in teaching museums. Around the country, institutions such as the MHCAM are moving from the periphery of their host institutions' educational missions to a more central role. At Mount Holyoke there is a tangible passion for this new curricular mandate, and I feel honored to join with the students, faculty, and staff at the College in realizing the Museum's fullest educational potential.

First and foremost, I want to thank Wendy Watson and the rest of the staff for carrying on the great work of the Museum during its transitional year. Not only did they not miss a beat, but they have achieved great and wondrous things, propelling the Museum forward. As you look through this edition of the *Newsletter*, you will see progress everywhere—great acquisitions, brilliant and challenging exhibitions, record-setting collaborations with faculty and students at Mount Holyoke and beyond, advancement of the digitization project, new engagements with the collections of the Skinner Museum, deeper involvement with the schools in our surrounding communities, and a redoubled connectivity with our great alumnae.

As you may guess, I am eager to learn more about the Museum and its collection, but my first priority will be getting to know the people who make it a living institution. There are many ideas for how we can help a wide range of communities identify the MHCAM as "our museum," and I want to listen to them all. It starts with the faculty and students—what role can the Museum play in the important work that is the central concern of the College? Then there are our alumnae who return often and in whose hearts the Museum continues to hold a special place. And there are those who live in nearby towns—how can we enrich life in the greater Pioneer Valley area? Finally, we need to take our place in the art museum field, using the Museum as a laboratory for furthering scholarship in art, history, and the myriad other fields with which we intersect.

The Museum is a crossroads, both literally and figuratively. It is a place on campus where students work with faculty, where faculty from different disciplines collaborate with each other, where alumnae return to reengage with campus life, where the communities of the College and the local area converge, and where Mount Holyoke can host the world. It is also an academic space, a place for speculative meetings between the ancient and the present, between Renaissance Italy and Edo Japan, between New Delhi and New York, between the visible and the invisible, between the living and the dead. We who work in, study in, take pleasure in, and support the Museum take this role as a crossroads very seriously and foster it every day and in every way possible.

Teaching art museums have come into their own in the last decade, transformed from smaller versions of their municipal first cousins into highly specialized institutions. We work at the leading edge of two exciting and interrelated pedagogical advances in the liberal arts. Art history has been reinvigorated by the rapid expansion of the field, both in terms of what is studied and how it is approached. And, over the last decade especially, it



John Stomberg  
Florence Finch Abbott Director  
Mount Holyoke College  
Art Museum

has become clear that the productive world citizen of the 21st century will have to be well read and visually astute, well trained and boldly creative. The college art museum lies at the center of both curricular developments; it is the place on campus where multi-disciplinary art history joins innovative visual training. Students who train at the college art museum of today, regardless of which subjects lead them there, become astute visual learners prepared for life in an increasingly image-based world.

The Museum's collection makes this educational mission possible by virtue of the wide range of objects in its care. Centuries ago the twin impulses of art and science led to collections of a seemingly endless variety. With their shelves brimming and their walls covered with everything from sculptures, prints, and paintings to exotic animal skeletons, shells, plants, and tools, the *Kunstammer* (art-room) and the *Wunderkammer* (wonder-room) were the antecedents of today's museums. At Mount Holyoke we are doubly fortunate in having collections that represent both traditions (and that often make the distinction between the two intriguingly hard to determine).

The MHCAM was established in 1876, very early in the evolution of art museums in the United States. In fact, it was the same decade that the MFA Boston, the Metropolitan in New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago were established. This early start allowed MHCAM to gather a collection of historical art the quality of which would be impossible to duplicate today. Significantly too, the founders signaled their interest in art of their own time by purchasing as their first acquisition a painting by a contemporary artist, Albert Bierstadt. For 135 years and counting, MHCAM has shared the art of the past and the present with students preparing for their future.

The Skinner Museum adds exponentially to what we can teach. With it, the MHCAM gained both a host of wonderful objects—literally a house-sized cabinet of curiosities—and a self-contained example of the history of collecting. The Skinner Museum might best be understood as a single entity. While all the objects are certainly of interest, their individual significance pales in comparison with the story inherent in the Museum itself. To focus too intently on the particular pots, arrowheads, canes, farm tools and postcards, is to lose the forest for the trees (or should I say the tapestry for the threads). The Skinner Museum is a singular masterpiece in the art of the American *Wunderkammer*.

With these great collections on hand and our spectacular staff in place, we are ready to write the Museum's next chapter. So, what exactly is next? Let's talk. Drop by, send an email, give a call or let me know when I can visit. I would love to hear from you. The Museum has a brilliant future ahead and together we can make it happen.

JOHN R. STOMBERG

*Florence Finch Abbott Director*

*World Documents*

2 September–18 December 2011

WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS facing the socially concerned photographer today?

What would an exhibition of present-day documentary photography, aware of its own historical past and conscious of current social issues, look like now? What new strategies are there to address the obstacles and opportunities created by rapid media changes and intensified cross-cultural contact?

In answer to these questions, *World Documents*, on view in the Harriet and Paul Weissman Special Exhibition Gallery this fall, brings together the work and the ideas of important and eloquent contemporary photographers who represent different generations and are concerned with different parts of the world. These photographers understand the role of the camera and photographic technology in strikingly varied and often competing ways. Confronted by the social and cultural changes wrought by immigration and migration, post-colonialism, ethnic nationalism, and global conflict, and also conscious of the social and activist legacy of documentary photography, they each put forward new goals and distinct styles for the photographic document. The exhibition is curated by art historian, critic, curator, and photographer Anthony W. Lee, Professor of Art History at Mount Holyoke College.

The complexity of documentary photography has emerged in stages over the past century. While it originated in campaigns for social and political reform in the Progressive Era, today it has become clear that the celebrated early documentary form was bound to its place and time. Nationalistic, bestowing faith on the authenticity and veracity of camera work, and bearing witness to trauma in an advanced industrial society, it addressed a specific American context.

Following the 1950s, documentary photography evolved as a modernist “artistic” practice, facilitated through the success of exhibitions such as *New Documents*, mounted at The Museum of Modern Art in 1967. Photographers like Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, and Garry Winogrand created images in stark contrast to those from an earlier generation of photographers, directing the documentary approach toward more subjective ends. Seen as a form of expression as potent and meaningful as any work

Livia Corona (b. 1975)  
 47,526 Homes for Mexico  
 Archival chromogenic print,  
 2007  
 Photograph courtesy of  
 the artist



## ON VIEW

of art, the photographic ambition was, in the words of MOMA's curator of photography John Szarkowski, "not to reform life, but to know it." Over time, this approach gained favor with critics, curators, and collectors.

But what now?

*World Documents* presents the work of some of the most compelling photographers on the current scene, juxtaposing their disparate ideas of documentary photography and familiarizing audiences with social issues facing different peoples of the world. Some possess long distinguished oeuvres, while others are at mid-career and still others are just emerging. They share a commitment to photography's social, ethical, and moral possibilities; they are attentive to the ebb and flow of social and political relationships on a world-wide scale; and they are mindful of the camera, not merely a passive recorder or witness of events, but also as a producer of meanings. The exhibition presents notable or signature projects undertaken by the photographers in order to suggest what a documentary project can be in an individual photographer's hands, while also permitting comparisons within and between the projects.

Binh Danh has emerged as an important documentary photographer whose work investigates his Vietnamese heritage and our collective memory of war, both in Viet Nam and Cambodia. Alternating between explorations of historical recollection and contemporary ruin, he photographs to uncover the many modes of visual testimony, to bear witness to atrocity, and by printing his images on plant material, to emphasize the fragility of photographic evidence. His technique incorporates a chlorophyll printing process of his own invention, in which photographic images appear embedded in leaves through the action of photosynthesis. Photographs for this exhibition come from his series *In the Eclipse of Angkor*, and grapple with the Cambodian genocide under the Khmer Rouge—work that, in his own words, deals with "mortality, remembrance, history, landscape, justice, evidence, and spirituality."

Concerned with immigration, diaspora, and the global flows of displaced peoples, Jason Francisco's many projects have taken him to Eastern and Western Europe and to South Asia. Several of his documentary projects tackle the problem of visualizing historical memory, including works on the death camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau, cultural encounters in Chinese American communities, and the caste system among the Telugu in southeastern India. Though very much concerned with the particularities of histories, communities, and places, his projects, in his words, "also attempt a larger answer to what viable documentary practices might become." Francisco's photographs for this exhibition are drawn from *Strawberry Mansion*, his project about the encounter between different generations of Jewish Americans.

For the last three decades, Pok Chi Lau has been documenting the Chinese diaspora in different parts of the world. He has followed the fortunes of Chinese immigrants and migrants in South America, Europe, and the United States. His three books, *Anguish of the Innocent* (1982), *Dreams of the Golden Mountain* (2002), and *Flow China* (2008), illuminate the impact of global migration on the lives of ordinary Chinese, including people of mixed race. Lau's photographs for this exhibition are taken from a recent series of diptychs, *Imprint*, *Phenomena and Dreams: The Legacy of Contemporary China*, that explore the history and memory of the Cultural Revolution.



Binh Danh (b. 1977)  
*Iridescence of life* #13  
Chlorophyll print, butterfly  
specimen, and resin, 2008  
Photograph courtesy of the  
artist, Haines Gallery, and  
Lisa Sette Gallery



Pok Chi Lau (b. 1950)  
*The character "Communism" /  
 Retired Bachelor Farmer,  
 Guangzhou*  
 Epson inkjet on Epson Luster  
 paper, negatives 2006/1981;  
 composite print 2006  
 Photograph courtesy of  
 the artist

Paul Weinberg is one of South Africa's most important documentary photographers. Co-founder of the documentary photography collective Afrapix in the mid-1980s, he was instrumental in shaping the commitments of "struggle photography" and is best known for his uncompromising stand and visual portrayal of South Africa's apartheid system and of the resistance to it. For the last 20 years, he has also explored the lives and cultures of African tribes as they struggle to accommodate the demands of African modernity. His large body of work explores people, life, culture and environment beyond the news and beyond the headlines. His book, *In Search of the San*, is a long and in-depth documentation of the contemporary lives of the indigenous people living in Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa. Weinberg's photographs for this exhibition come from his most recent project on spirituality in post-apartheid South Africa, *The Moving Spirit*. Other projects reflect human rights issues, environment, development, and, more recently, work in the field of HIV and AIDS.



Paul Weinberg (b. 1956)  
*Performing ratib during the  
 annual Badsha Peer ceremony,  
 Durban, KwaZulu-Natal,  
 South Africa*  
 Inkjet on paper, 2002  
 Photograph courtesy of  
 the artist

Ouyang Xingkai is little known outside his native China, where he is an award-winning documentary photographer. He was born and continues to work in Hunan province. Having received little formal education, he is mostly self-taught as a photographer. For years he has photographed the ancient small city of Hongjiang, its people, their lifestyle, and its architecture. Like many trading towns in the Yangtze watershed that once thrived as river ports, Hongjiang has been "forgotten by history," as he explains, in the rapid and large-scale Chinese shift to industrial capitalism, which emphasizes highway construction and export commodities rather than the old internal river network.

Livia Corona is emerging as one of the key documentary photographers of contemporary Mexico. Her awards include the Sony World Photography Award in Cannes and a nomination for the Lucie Awards "International Photographer of the Year" in 2009. Focusing on the interactions of communities and the ongoing ecological, social, and cultural transformations of a postmodern NAFTA nation, Corona's photographs for this exhibition come from her series *Two Million Homes for Mexico*. This Guggenheim Foundation-sponsored project explores the ramifications of a massive effort by Mexico's president, Vicente Fox, to build low-income housing. Vast numbers of nearly identical new homes

Julia Komissaroff (b. 1977)  
*People jammed on the way  
 out after Friday prayer at the  
 Temple Mount*  
 Digital color print, 2001  
 Photograph courtesy of  
 the artist



have been built every day since 2000. "How are the varied hundreds of thousands of lives played out against the confines of a singular cultural backdrop?" she asks.

Julia Komissaroff has lived and worked in Jerusalem since 1991. Regarded as one of the most important emerging photographers in Israel today, she began her documentary career photographing Ethiopian children in the Givat HaMatos Immigration Camp for a project on resettlement communities between 1998 and 2000. In 2002, she photographed the peace movement in Northern Ireland as a model for peace activism in the Middle East. For the last decade, she has been engaged in two large projects: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the fortunes of ethnic minorities in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Her photographs have been exhibited regularly in Moscow, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Minsk, Belarus. Komissaroff's photographs for this exhibition come from *Kitab Al-Balad*, a project about Palestinian street life under Israeli rule.

Ken Light is one of the most influential social documentary photographers working in the United States today. He is a professor at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley, the recipient of two grants from the National Endowment for Arts, and founder of the International Fund for Documentary Photography. His book, *Witness in Our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers*, now in its second edition, traces the recent history of social documentary photography. Best known for his socially concerned work among working-class Americans, Light's photographs for this exhibition are drawn from a little-known project about child labor in India.

A full-color catalogue accompanies the exhibition and includes statements about the individual projects by each of the photographers and an introductory essay by Anthony Lee.



## Reconstructing Antiquity through 3 June 2012

ANCIENT OBJECTS TRANSCEND millennia in their visual preservation of beliefs, traditions, and events, each one possessing its own unique biography. When assembled, however, collections of antiquities can recount a diverse cultural narrative. The three thematic installations in *Reconstructing Antiquity* weave together this combined identity, and now, a new multimedia tool provides viewers with a platform for discovery. Take the iPad tour in the galleries or visit the exhibition website at [www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum) to access object-specific explorations like these:

### *Legend, Myth, or History?*

Roman identity was rooted in the city's founding myth and its web of legends, tales, and historic events. This blend of history and mythology is evident in a silver denarius of the Trojan prince Aeneas shown departing war-ravaged Troy with his father, Anchises, and the palladium, a revered statue of Pallas Athena. While this coin was minted 20 years before Virgil penned his epic tale, the *Aeneid* (29–19 BCE), examples of early Etruscan material culture demonstrate the promotion of the legend even centuries before.

### *Unlocking the Archaeological Past*

The son of Venus, Aeneas was the genealogical link to Rome's divine heritage. His own child, Iulus, was the first of the Alban Kings and the legendary ancestor of Rome's founding twins, Romulus and Remus. The story is a familiar tale—the abandoned twins, the fostering of the She-Wolf, the fratricide—however, it begins to mingle with historical fact when considering the archaeological evidence for wattle-and-daub huts on the Palatine Hill. Excavations also reveal a nearby necropolis with both inhumed and cremated bodies, making a convincing argument for Romulus' settlement, the abduction of Sabine brides, and the assimilation of Sabine burial traditions. Are these founding tales pure mythology or could they be rooted in historical events?

### *The Pearl of the East*

The ancient Syrian city of Palmyra was a prosperous commercial center, offering an oasis for caravans traveling between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. Made rich from the trade of goods from East to West, Palmyra rose to become a “pearl” city of lore within the Tadmorean Desert and reached its height while under Roman control during the 1st–3rd centuries CE. Surprisingly, Palmyra maintained its autonomy under the shadow of Rome—likely using its position as commodity broker for political leverage—until Palmyran Queen Zenobia flexed her power. Her revolt and subsequent capture by Roman



Roman, Republic  
*Denarius with Aeneas and Anchises*  
Silver, 48 BCE  
2000.3.52.INV



Roman, Republic  
*Denarius with the She-wolf*  
Silver, 137 BCE  
Gift of the Estate of  
Nathan Whitman  
2004.13.155



Roman, Palmyran  
*Funerary bust of a man*  
Limestone and paint,  
2nd–3rd century CE  
Purchase with the Nancy  
Everett Dwight Fund  
Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe  
1932.2.C.011



Roman, Palmyran  
*Funerary bust of a woman*  
Limestone and paint,  
2nd–3rd century CE  
Purchase with the Nancy  
Everett Dwight Fund  
Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe  
1932.4.C.011

Emperor Aurelian in the mid-third century precipitated the steady decline of the city and the eventual redirection of lucrative trade routes to Constantinople.

#### *Commemorating the Dead*

Many wealthy Palmyran merchants buried their dead in elaborate displays of affluence, constructing vertical tower-shaped monuments and expansive underground chambers. Commonly referred to as the “Valley of the Tombs,” a

kilometer-long necropolis bordered the city walls and housed over 150 tombs. These two fragments of funerary busts likely sealed off individual *cubicula*, compartments housing the mummified body of the deceased set into the wall of a subterranean chamber. Such high relief sculptures were sometimes stacked up to ten tall, contributing to the grand appearance of these venerated structures.

#### *Ancient Identities*

A richly jeweled Palmyran lady looks out under an elaborate turban on the Mount Holyoke *stela* while the reclining man raises a cup as if in an eternal banquet. These faces remain largely anonymous to modern viewers, although the identities of some Palmyran deceased are preserved through Greek and Aramaic inscriptions carved into their stone surfaces. These are often formulaic in nature, lamenting: “Alas, [name], Son/Daughter of [name].” A fragment to the left of the Mount Holyoke woman’s head contains the word “alas” and may be all that remains of the original text. The script to the right of her head, however, has been identified as a later addition, likely meant to mimic these common multilingual inscriptions.



Explore the exhibition at  
[www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum)  
or visit the galleries to check out an iPad!

## Math and Art: Meditations on the Concept of Symmetry

SYMMETRY IS EVERYWHERE around us although we often fail to realize the extent of its presence in our daily lives. It exists in nature, in our built environment, and even in our own bilaterally structured bodies. Evolutionary biologists have long noted the pleasing and reassuring qualities of symmetry to our species in our most fundamental engagement with the human face. Even philosophers and poets have remarked upon its ubiquity. As the French intellectual Paul Valéry eloquently mused, “The universe is built on a plan the profound symmetry of which is somehow present in the inner structure of our intellect.”

Exploring more advanced mathematical concepts beyond the basic notion of bilateral symmetry was a central objective of Professors Charlene and Jim Morrow in their course “Explorations of Algebra” offered at Mount Holyoke last spring. The study of symmetry, it turns out, served as an important inspiration for group theory, which was originally conceived—as the Morrows explain in their course introduction—as a purely abstract topic within mathematics. They also note that group theory has “an amazing variety of real world applications to other areas, including the understanding of crystal structures, art, ISBN numbers, codes, and music.” With an art museum right on campus, the Morrows saw an opportunity to have the students study the connections between mathematical ideas of symmetry and those found in visual arts produced by cultures around the world.

The Morrows visited the Museum’s special spring exhibition *Transported and Translated: Arts of the Ancient Americas*, and discovered intricately patterned ceramics, textiles, and metalwork from West Mexico and Peru that displayed not only the familiar mirror symmetry, but also rotational, translational, and glide-reflection symmetry. Inspired by the symmetric shapes and frieze patterns present in the decorative motifs of these objects, the Morrows contacted the Museum to inquire about setting up a class visit. The ensuing conversations with Museum staff soon revealed that a larger collaboration could be developed.

After learning more about the content and objectives of the course during preliminary discussions, Coordinator of Academic Affairs Ellen Alvord and Preparator Brian Kiernan suggested additional works of art drawn from the permanent collection but not regularly on view that reveal underlying symmetrical structures. These objects—including photographs from Berenice Abbott’s *The Science Pictures* series, a Barbara Morgan photograph of Martha Graham’s dancers, gopi boards from New Guinea, and a nearly 3,000-year-old bronze harness ring from Luristan—were displayed in the Carson Teaching Gallery expressly for the class visit.

Following an exercise introducing their 23 students to the Museum, the Morrows divided them into two groups, assigning one to study the objects in the *Transported and Translated* exhibition and the other to examine the chosen works in the Carson Gallery. Each group was equipped with a list of questions to guide their visual investigation and had an opportunity to switch locations halfway through the session in order to view the



Peruvian, Nasca  
*Vessel with birds*  
Ceramic with polychrome pigments, ca. 325-440 CE  
Gift of Susan Eisenhart Schilling  
(Class of 1932)  
Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe  
2005.6.5



Barbara Morgan (American, 1900-1992)  
*Martha Graham—Celebration*  
Gelatin silver print photograph, 1937  
Gift of Donald Holden  
Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe  
© Barbara Morgan, The Barbara Morgan Archive  
1984.16.1



Berenice Abbott (American, 1898–1991)  
*The Science Pictures: Pendulum Swing*  
 Gelatin silver print photograph, 1982  
 Gift of Joseph R. and Ruth Lasser (Ruth H. Pollak, Class of 1947)  
 Photograph Laura Weston  
 1983.21.6



Anni Albers (American, b. Germany, 1899–1994)  
*Orange Meander*  
 Screenprint, 1970  
 Gift of The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation in honor of Lotte Benfey  
 2005.8.2



William Spratling (American, active Mexico, 1900–1967)  
*Bowl with nautilus feet*  
 Silver, ca. 1933–1938  
 Gift of Flora Belle Ludington  
 Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe  
 1964.1.1(C).1

full range of art selected for the visit.

The students were asked not only to identify specific types of symmetry, but also, through close and careful observation, to locate and describe areas where the symmetrical patterns were either broken or not mathematically precise, and to suggest what function these variations might serve. The students then wrote up their findings and composed a reflective essay about their museum experience. Their responses proved to be insightful and provocative, and revealed a genuine enthusiasm for the math-art connections they were discovering.

During their visit, the students were especially drawn to one particular image: Barbara Morgan's 1937 photograph, *Martha Graham—Celebration*. As Haley Nemeth ('12) wrote: "This was my favorite photograph at the Art Museum. It depicts the beauty of symmetry. The balance created by the three women forming a hexagon shape with their arms makes this image pleasing to the eye. While the connection of their arms forms the actual shape, the women's bodies create the continuation of the hexagon into a three-dimensional, cylindrical figure. Being off the ground with toes pointed, the dancers form a shape that seems as if it could continue forever."

Not only did the students increase their abilities to analyze works of art, but they also gained a new depth of understanding of why some works seem aesthetically pleasing. "Initially, I thought that I was attracted to it because of my passion for dance," Haley continued. "However, after exploring all of the pieces and overhearing others discuss the beauty of the picture, I realized that it wasn't just the dancers in the photograph that I liked, but the symmetry."

Since the initial visit produced such remarkable insights, the Morrows decided to return several weeks later with their class, this time to look specifically at the ways surface-covering (or "wallpaper and frieze pattern") symmetries can be described and classified. Working in close collaboration with Museum staff for this second visit, the Morrows chose intricately patterned prints by Anni Albers, a geometric work by Josef Albers, and a contemporary striped print by Frank Stella, as well as a complementary group of ancient American objects from the *Transported and Translated* exhibition.

Surprisingly, as the Morrows explained to their students, only 17 essentially different wallpaper patterns and seven different frieze patterns can be created from symmetry groups. Identifying the subtle differences among these patterns takes a great deal of practice. In the classroom, these concepts are discussed in an abstract and simplified way. But by studying an original work of art in which mathematical groups can be identified as providing hidden underlying structure, the presence of these intricate and complex patterns becomes vividly illustrated. "Our two main goals, in addition to teaching specific course material," explains Charlene Morrow, "are to have mathematics infuse students' experiences of seeing and doing beyond the classroom and to encourage habits of mind that lead to close observation and analytical thinking."

It was evident that the Morrows achieved their objectives from the types of comments they received in the student reflection essays. As Nora Bond ('14) summed up after her second visit, "As always, I came away from the museum trip with a new sense of possibility in the application of mathematics . . . and it made me eager to find more frieze patterns in the Museum, in nature, and in the world!"

## A New Baroque Painting for the Museum

THANKS TO A GENEROUS GIFT from David Carter, long-time member of the Museum's Advisory Board, and his wife Louise (parents of Deborah Carter '76), Abraham Janssens' splendid painting *The Penitent Magdalene* has joined the collection of baroque paintings on view in the Cary Gallery.

Mary Magdalene is one of the most fascinating figures in all of Christian hagiography. Her life and deeds have been dramatically represented—or misrepresented—in every age that followed. The scriptural account, nonetheless, is consistent in saying that she was present at Christ's crucifixion; that she was a witness—perhaps the witness, according to Saint John—of his resurrection; and that she was the first to be charged with proclaiming his ministry. The only other information gleaned from the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke was that she had once been possessed by demons that Christ miraculously exorcised. Every other characterization of the Magdalene—her beauty, her immorality, her hermetic penitence, and her relocation from the Holy Land to France—is the product of the medieval imagination. The ubiquity of her cult is evident from the veneration of six sets of her remains, housed in sites ranging from Istanbul to Naples.

Women played a significantly more important role in Christ's lifetime than succeeding fathers of the church acknowledged, and the Magdalene's evolving biography reflects the misogyny, mythmaking, and syncretic confusions of the ensuing eras. The alteration of her identity solidified in the late sixth century when Gregory the Great declared that Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and an unnamed female sinner mentioned in the Gospel of Luke were one and the same person. Further conflations with the biblical "woman of Samaria" and the "woman taken in adultery" embellished the myth of the Magdalene as archetype of the

Abraham Janssens (Flemish,  
ca. 1575–1632)  
*The Penitent Magdalene*  
Oil on panel, ca. 1620  
Gift of David and Louise  
Carter  
Photograph Laura Weston  
2011.3



## ACQUISITIONS

repentant prostitute. Not surprisingly, her composite personality eventually absorbed that of the original female sinner, Eve.

From this rich store of apocryphal legends, artists have envisioned the Magdalene in a variety of expressive guises. The pious disciple of Christ known from scripture all but faded from view in the post-medieval period as artists increasingly juxtaposed her spiritual enlightenment with the sensuality and materialism of her former life. Renaissance theories about beauty, love, and truth confused the historical portrait even further, with the saint even occasionally assuming the persona of Venus.

Mount Holyoke's new acquisition follows 17th-century conventions in depicting the Magdalene as a weeping and penitent sinner. Her voluptuous figure, enveloped in opulent garments, is complemented by attributes that include a jewel box and a sliced melon, symbols of her vanity and sexuality. Yet she dwells in a dark cave, her tearful eyes and pensive pose suggesting a renunciation of such earthly temptations in favor of meditations upon the chalice, crucifix, grapevine, bible, and skull that surround her.

The painter of this canvas, Abraham Janssens (ca. 1575–1632), was born, trained, and flourished in Antwerp, but the time he spent in Rome from 1598–1601 made a lasting impression on his art. Although he has sometimes been erroneously grouped among the followers of Caravaggio—whose rise to fame occurred at the very moment the young Flemish painter resided in the Eternal City—Janssens is known for his more painterly and sensuous manner, a style linked to some Italian Caravaggisti like Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi, but ultimately more to his contemporary countryman, Peter Paul Rubens.

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## CONSERVATION

Conservator Mary Catherine Betz working on the painting *Willoughby Lacy and his Wife, Maria* by Francis Wheatley (British, 1747–1801) at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center.

Willoughby Lacy, was the son of James Lacy, partner of the renowned actor David Garrick of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, London. A gift of Dr. and Mrs. John K. Knorr III (Elizabeth Walker, Class of 1937), the painting was conserved with funds generously donated by members of the Cincinnati Mount Holyoke Club.



*Experiencing the Civil War: From the Battlefield to the Home Front*

Joseph Allen Skinner Museum of Mount Holyoke College

6 July 2011–30 April 2015

AN UNASSUMING SOUVENIR ENVELOPE rests in the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum. A Civil War soldier stands imprinted upon the paper's face, weapons in hand, as he looks serenely out over white space. He has but one humble request: "For what he was and all he dared, remember him to-day!" While commemorating the past has always been the cornerstone of the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, this summer the Museum joined organizations across the nation in remembering the men—and women—who dared. A new exhibition in the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, *Experiencing the Civil War: From the Battlefield to the Home Front* marks the sesquicentennial of the Civil War and will be on display until the 150th anniversary of the war's end, in April of 2015.

*Experiencing the Civil War* examines the lives of soldiers on the battlefield, women managing the home front, and the role of communication in bridging these two disparate arenas. It also explores the act of commemoration as both Civil War era soldiers and civilians accumulated relics from battlefields like Fort Sumter, Antietam, and Gettysburg. These relics were collected not only during the war and its immediate aftermath, but also well into the 20th century, as Joseph Skinner's personal collection attests. Highlights of the exhibition include a rebel hand grenade from Fort Sumter, a piece of torn bunting from a U.S. flag picked up on the field after the battle of Antietam, a pewter nursing bottle, a photo album of South Hadley area soldiers, and the last edition of the abolitionist newspaper, the *Liberator*, with a penciled note stating: "Let this number be preserved. This paper was started in the infancy and interest of the anti-slavery cause, and for the total abolition of slavery in the United States by peaceful measure . . . *The Liberator* will have been published thirty-five years on the first of January next, and will then be discontinued for the reason that the object for which it was started has been accomplished. . . ." As a complement to the exhibition, a scavenger hunt will help visitors locate and explore additional Civil War era objects found throughout the Museum.

*Experiencing the Civil War* is the outcome of a creative collaboration between the Skinner Museum and the University of Massachusetts Amherst Public History Program. Three graduate students and UMass Professor of History David Glassberg worked with Skinner Museum Assistant Curator Cheryl Harned to create the exhibition as a field project for the course, "Museum and Historic Site Interpretation," in the spring of 2011. The Skinner Museum continues to provide an invaluable space for curatorial exploration and benefits from student and faculty involvement, of which *Experiencing the Civil War* is but the latest example.



Artist unknown  
*The Sentry's Thoughts of Home*  
Engraving, ca.1860s  
Joseph Allen Skinner Museum  
Photograph Laura Weston  
SK 2006.1857.INV



C. Maurand (French, 19th century); after Johann George Meyer von Bremen (German, 1813–1886)  
*Waiting*  
Engraving, 1874  
Joseph Allen Skinner Museum  
Photograph Laura Weston  
SK 2006.1857.INV



Susan Hedlund Vicinelli (Class of 1964), Chair of the Art Museum Advisory Board

### ON BOARD

Last spring the Art Museum Advisory Board honored outgoing members Mary B. Buchan ('65), Sondra M. Castile ('58), Elizabeth C. Gump ('56), Margaret Mathias ('49), and Harriet Weissman ('58) for their many years of service to the MHCAM. We look forward to their continued connection in myriad ways with the Museum.

At the same time, we are delighted to welcome our seven newest Board members: Astrid Rehl Baumgardner ('73), Nora S. Lambert ('07), Julie Lavin Loria ('86), Robert L. Marcus, Susan A. Noonan ('82), Gaynor (Gay) R. Strickler ('73), and Jennifer Vorbach ('78). We also are very grateful to Susan Hedlund Vicinelli, ('64), the new Chair, who joined the Board in 2008. Susan received her B.A. from New York University in 1964, with a major in economics and a minor in mathematics, and received a certificate in fine and decorative arts from The Study Centre, London, England in 1991. In 1995, she earned her master's degree in the history of decorative arts from the Parsons School of Design, New School University, in collaboration with Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.



Malcolm W. Bick

### IN MEMORIAM

With great sadness, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum notes the passing of two of its great supporters: Malcolm W. Bick and T. Marc Futter, who served on the Art Museum Advisory Board from 1976 to 2000 and 1981 to 2009 respectively. Malcolm, together with his wife Toby, were dedicated collectors of old master drawings. Marc's interests ranged from John Constable and Joan Miro to Emil Nolde and Milton Avery. Both were staunch supporters of the Museum through their dedicated service and their extraordinary gifts of works of art to the collection. All of us who have known these two wonderful men over the years will remember their contributions with fondness and appreciation.



T. Marc Futter

### GOING AND COMING

This summer the Art Museum bade farewell to Sadie Shillieto ('09), following the completion of her second year as Art Museum Advisory Board Fellow. In addition to her regular work as Fellow, Sadie served as curator of two successful exhibitions: *Crossing Boundaries/Making Connections*, an exhibition comparing select works from the Museum's permanent collection in spring 2010; and in fall 2010, *From Seed to Supper*, part of the Museum's food-related *Table for Ten* collaboration with Museums10. Sadie also worked extensively on cataloging and researching objects in the collection.

As we wish Sadie well in her future undertakings, we welcome Emily Wood ('09) as



the new 2011-2012 Art Museum Advisory Board Fellow. Emily is well known to Museum staff, having worked both as a collections management and a curatorial intern while at Mount Holyoke. She was also deeply involved with the Society of Art Goddesses through her undergraduate years, serving as chair during her senior year.

"After I finished my master's degree at Cambridge University, I knew that I wanted to work in a museum before starting my Ph.D. But before deciding on a museum vs. an academic career path, I realized that I needed more experience."

"As I looked for jobs," she writes, "I came to understand that the AMAB Fellowship was perfect for someone like me. Though I had worked at the Museum as an undergrad, I didn't have the breadth of background that all the big museums were requiring and the Fellowship would give me invaluable training in both curatorial and collections management aspects of museum operations—perfect complements for my academic training."

Her desire to come back to the Museum was more than just practical, however. Emily reflects that as an undergraduate, "I fell in love with our collection in the first semester. The collaborative relationship between the Museum and the faculty is incredibly beneficial to the liberal arts education (and is something of which my friends who went to other schools are very jealous). I wanted to come back to a place that realizes, and values so highly, the importance of incorporating art as a source for learning in all disciplines."

Welcome aboard, Emily!



Emily Wood (Class of 2009)  
Art Museum Advisory Board  
Fellow

Raymond Saunders (American,  
b. 1934)  
*American Dream*  
Oil and collage on canvas, 1968  
Gift of the American Academy  
of Arts and Letters  
(Childe Hassam Fund)  
1970.300.1(B).PI

## ON THE ROAD

In 1967, Raymond Saunders wrote a pamphlet titled *Black is a Color* in which he stressed individual expression. Being an African-American artist, he noted, places him in a position to comment on certain aspects of the current American scene, but to limit himself to these issues alone would mean artistic atrophy.

This fall, Saunders' *American Dream*, a provocative, compelling, and sobering work, will be on loan to the Hammer Museum at the University of California Los Angeles in a comprehensive exhibition entitled *Now Dig This! Art and Black Los Angeles 1960-1980*. The exhibition examines the incredibly vital but often overlooked legacy of the city's African-American visual artists. By illuminating the richness and complexity of this creative community, *Now Dig This!* demonstrates how these artists were not working in isolation but were quite integral to the developing U.S. art scene during the latter part of the 20th century, with an influence going beyond their immediate creative circles. The exhibition will be on view in Los Angeles from 2 October 2011 through 8 January 2012.

Born in Pittsburgh, Saunders earned a BFA at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and an MFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts, where he is currently on the faculty. He employs a large variety of media, but is mainly known for work that encompasses painting, collage, and other elements that add references and texture without breaking the strong abstract compositional structure. The result is a form of social narrative even in his abstract works of art.



## We gratefully acknowledge our members

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 Mount Holyoke College Club of Cincinnati  
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 Rappaport Endowment for the Development of Interdisciplinary Courses, Smith College

Through June 30, 2011

## CALENDAR

### Fall Exhibitions

*World Documents*  
 2 September–18 December 2011

*Reconstructing Antiquity*  
 through 3 June 2012

### Fall Events

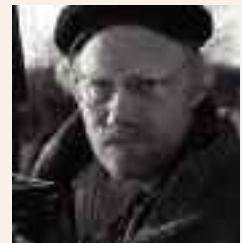
**Wednesday, 14 September 2011, 4:30 p.m.**

*World Documents*  
 Gallery talk with Binh Danh and Jason Francisco  
 Co-sponsored by the Art History Program,  
 Amy M. Sacker Fund



**Thursday, 15 September 2011, 4:30 p.m.**

*World Documents*  
 Exhibition Opening Panel  
 with Anthony Lee, exhibition curator; John Stomberg, Florence Finch Abbott Director, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum; Binh Danh, artist; and Jason Francisco, artist  
 Gamble Auditorium, Art Building  
 Reception to follow



**Thursday, 27 October 2011, 4:30 p.m.**

*Reconstructing Antiquity*  
 "Sex, Lies and Politics: Portraits of Rome's 'Bad Empresses'"  
 Lecture by Eric Varner, Professor of Art History and Classics, Emory University  
 Gamble Auditorium, Art Building  
 Reception to follow



**Tuesday, 15 November 2011, 4:30 p.m.**

*Reconstructing Antiquity*  
 "Making Up a Woman in Ancient Greece"  
 Lecture by Ada Cohen, Professor of Art History, Dartmouth College  
 Co-sponsored by the Art History Program,  
 Amy M. Sacker Fund  
 Gamble Auditorium, Art Building



**Tuesday, 15 November 2011**

**HAPPY 135<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY,  
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ABOVE: Bartolomeo Coriolano (Italian, ca. 1599–ca. 1676), *The Allegory of Peace and Abundance*, Chiaroscuro woodcut, 1627/1642, Purchase with the John Martyn Warbeke Art Fund, Photograph Laura Weston, 2010.10.3

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