



Kara Walker

Ancient America

Against the Wall

The Tague Collection



John Stomberg  
Florence Finch Abbott Director  
Mount Holyoke College  
Art Museum  
Photograph Jim Gipe

## *Creativity, Innovation, and Leadership through Art*

THIS PAST YEAR has been remarkable in so many ways—we have acquired amazing works of art; hosted well-reviewed exhibitions; brought in speakers from around the country who addressed capacity audiences; and reached a degree of faculty involvement that we would barely have dreamed of a year ago—fully 82 different courses from 24 distinct disciplines! But this is no time for us to rest on our laurels.

This fall we embark on a three-year plan to advance “Creativity, Innovation, and Leadership through Art.” The plan targets three broad areas for the evolution of the Museum—our program, our collection, and our staff.

Building on our success in reaching deep into academic life on campus, we can now address one of the most ambitious goals of the College: training Mount Holyoke College students to take on leadership roles after they graduate. The literature on leadership identifies a particular facet that the Museum can indeed support: creativity. Almost every field of endeavor identifies creativity as one of the most salient characteristics of emerging leaders. If the Museum can assist in teaching, inspiring, encouraging, and practicing creativity, then it will take “teaching with art” to a whole new level, actively linking creativity, innovation, and leadership through art.

Encouraging these skills will inform our programmatic decision-making during the coming years. We will continue to present lively and diverse exhibitions and programs, but each will have a direct connection to our overall aim. Our student visits will include skill-training exercises designed to increase their comfort with the creative process. Our exhibitions will emphasize the ways in which the included artists worked through the creative challenges they faced (or established for themselves). And our lectures will evoke the idea that, although there are many paths to artistic success, there are some overarching characteristics that link productive artists—not just to one another, but to professionals working in a wide variety of fields.

Our September 20th talk by sculptor Kenneth Snelson will launch the new plan, acting as a keynote address for the creativity initiative. The Museum also will display one of his iconic towers in the main Museum lobby all semester. Snelson’s work straddles art and physics so seamlessly that it is tempting to describe his artistic medium as physics, though it would not be off base to think of his activities as physics research expressed in sculpture. His career represents many aspects of creativity addressed in our new plan, from his ability to think in ways that diverge from well-worn paths of inquiry to the creation of work that clearly articulates his ideas. In recognition of his talent, he has been selected as the artist to collaborate with the architecture and engineering firm Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill to design the tower that will sit atop the Freedom Tower at One World Trade Center. Snelson is an inspiration for creative thought and action; and his visit to the campus will set the tone for the Museum’s new direction.

### COVER:

John Ahearn  
(American, b. 1951)  
*Thomas*  
Oil, cast polyadam, 1983  
Lent by Lenore Fassberg Schorr  
(Class of 1962)  
Photograph Laura Shea  
Image courtesy of  
Alexander and Bonin,  
New York

In addition, following up on last fall's celebration of the Museum's 135th anniversary, we are redoubling our attention to the collection. With over 17,000 objects in the Art Museum, and another 7,000 in the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, MHCAM has a lot to offer. This fall, we take a moment to celebrate the collection as it stands with four new exhibitions and two gallery reinstallations—all drawn from the Museum's holdings. The exhibitions include: *Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*; *Against the Wall: Contemporary Art from the Collection*; *Encounters: Faces of the Ancient Americas*; and *African American Artists and the Experimental Printmaking Institute: The Janet Hickey Tague '66 Collection*. We have also re-installed the American and Ancient galleries. Returning students, faculty and visitors this fall will find all nine galleries dedicated to the wonders of the Mount Holyoke collections.

Over the past year, we have been quietly working to expand our holdings. Continuing the 135th anniversary festivities, the Museum has embarked on a campaign to add 135 new gifts of art to the collection over the next two years. To date, supporters have donated over 100 works, ranging from a Flemish Baroque painting to modernist photographs. This initiative has the potential to significantly increase both the depth and breadth of the holdings at MHCAM. The Art Museum is building on its very solid foundation and will continue growing the collection to be among the best in the country. When all 135 gifts have been received, they will be included in a celebratory exhibition with a fully illustrated catalogue.

The final area of our plan aims to expand our permanent staff. We have been very fortunate in receiving from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation significant matching funds to help endow the salary of the Coordinator of Academic Affairs. Supported by a grant from the Mellon Foundation since 2009, this position has been the key to the Museum's success in opening its collections to multiple faculty disciplines. Over the next three years the Museum intends to raise the match necessary to make this position permanent.

I am grateful to all our staff, faculty advisors, and board members for helping shape a plan that blends ambition with reason, and challenge with excitement. The next three years have the potential to be game-changers for the Museum and with your help, we are poised to make it all happen.

JOHN STOMBERG  
*Florence Finch Abbott Director*

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Kara Elizabeth Walker  
 (American, b. 1969)  
*Exodus of Confederates from  
 Atlanta*, from the series  
*Harper's Pictorial History of the  
 Civil War (Annotated)*  
 Offset lithography and  
 silkscreen, 2005  
 Purchase with the Susan and  
 Bernard Schilling (Susan  
 Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund  
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 Photograph Laura Shea  
 © Kara Walker/Courtesy of  
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*Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*

31 August–23 December 2012

THROUGHOUT HER CAREER, Kara Walker has combined exquisite technique with biting social commentary. Her large-scale print suite *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)* is considered by many to be her quintessential work in a multiple format and among the most important works in her oeuvre to date. In it she juxtaposes *Harper's* version of the Civil War with images of her own that question the notion that slavery ended with the war. Her works insist that we reconsider the semi-official narrative and the true plight of both African Americans and women during the conflict and beyond—an insistence that asserts the continuing centrality of race in our nation.

Beautifully drawn, and printed with rare skill, her prints vacillate between sumptuousness and fury. Images originally published as wood engravings are enlarged through



lithography and become backdrops for Walker's signature silhouettes executed in silk screen. The works were printed at the renowned LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies in New York. The exhibition celebrates the Museum's recent acquisition of the complete 15-image suite of prints.

The original two-volume anthology, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War*, is a collection of images and essays intended by the editors to illustrate the history of that great struggle. It was first published by Alfred H. Guernsey and Henry Mills Alden in 1866 after the war had ended.

Kara Walker's education includes an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in Painting / Print-making, and a BFA in Painting / Printmaking at the Atlanta College of Art. When she received the MacArthur Award in 1997 (three years after completing her MFA) she was one of the youngest recipients to date. She represented the United States at the Bienal de São Paulo in 2002 and has had numerous one-person exhibitions including a full survey at the Walker Art Center in 2007.

*African American Artists and the Experimental Printmaking Institute: The Janet Hickey Tague '66 Collection*

1 August–23 December 2012

This exhibition features a selection of outstanding works on paper by prominent African American artists, all produced at the acclaimed Experimental Printmaking Institute (EPI) at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. On view are a range of printmaking processes including serigraphs, relief prints, color etchings, and lithographs by eight internationally renowned artists: Emma Amos, David C. Driskell, Melvin Edwards, Sam Gilliam, Robin Holder, Joseph Holston, Curlee Raven Holton, and Faith Ringgold.

These important works were generously donated to the Museum in 2007–2008 by Janet Hickey Tague '66, former Mount Holyoke College Trustee and long-time EPI supporter, thereby establishing the Tague collection of prints by African American artists. This gift of 17 prints significantly enhanced the Museum's holdings in this area and was an important step in Mount Holyoke's efforts to acquire key works by artists of color.

Under the direction of founder and master printer Professor Curlee Raven Holton, the Experimental Printmaking Institute has become known for its dynamic and collaborative approach allowing artists, students, and printers from diverse backgrounds to experiment with traditional printmaking techniques and to create new bodies of work. Holton established EPI in 1996 "as a way to create a living classroom that embraces diversity, creativity, and collaboration." Over the years, the Institute has generated works of art that have been showcased internationally in traveling exhibitions and now figure prominently in collections worldwide.



Faith Ringgold  
(American, b. 1930)  
*Nobody will ever love you  
like I do*  
Silkscreen, 2006  
Gift of Janet Hickey Tague ('66)  
Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe  
Faith Ringgold © 2006



Christopher Wilmarth  
(American, 1943–1987)  
*Gnomon's Parade (Late)*  
Etched glass and steel, 1980  
Private Collection, New York  
Photograph Laura Shea

## *Against the Wall: Contemporary Art from the Collection*

Opens 1 August 2012–ongoing

The contemporary relief sculptures brought together in this exhibition are of many descriptions. Though relief is probably not the first form that comes to mind when we think of contemporary art, it is actually quite prevalent. The challenges of directly engaging the vertical plane of the wall provide artists unique creative opportunities. *Against the Wall* explores some of the myriad ways artists have addressed the wall in furthering their ideas in three dimensions.

The sculptures are organized into four groups, though most could fit into multiple categories. Christopher Wilmarth, Bruce Robbins, and Loren Madsen work in dialogue with the vocabulary of architecture; Abe Ajay, Joseph Cornell, and Mary Ann Unger embrace a variety of abstract forms from geometric to organic; Kiki Smith and John Ahearn sculpt forms that directly evoke bodies; and Larry Rivers and Stuart Diamond create paintings that seem to have exploded out of their two-dimensional origins to become relief sculpture.

The selection is made primarily from the permanent collection with a few key loans to round out the range of approaches on display. It is part of a multi-year salute to the Museum's permanent collection in honor of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's 135th anniversary in 2011.

## *Encounters: Faces of the Ancient Americas* Opening 10 August 2012–ongoing

To 16th-century European observers, artifacts of indigenous Mesoamerican and South American peoples possessed a scintillating foreignness that was simultaneously alluring and frightening. The perceived primitiveness of these objects persisted for centuries, with the first exhibitions of Ancient American art not appearing in the United States until the 1930s and '40s. On view in the Gump Family Gallery, *Encounters: Faces of the Ancient Americas* features 27 works of art drawn from the Museum's sizeable holdings—a rare collegiate collection that matches the Metropolitan Museum of Art's in longevity. Disentangled from lingering biases and misconceptions, these objects represent the sophistication and technological achievements of cultures that flourished from the 5th century BCE



until European contact after 1492.

The ceramics on view in this exhibition are dominated by faces—images of people from the West Mexican grasslands, the Yucatán Peninsula, and the arid coastal plains along the base of the Andes—constructing a sense of their unique cultural identities. Each face represents a member of an individual society with independent religious systems and civic structures, ranging from the extensive cities of the Maya to the small chiefdoms of the Nasca.

Although distinctive and diverse, the ceramics of these cultures reveal a similar

reliance on the land and a devotion to preserving the human form in clay. Examining images of men and women, shamans and deities, and flora and fauna, *Encounters* offers a window into the lives and beliefs of the ancient Americans, while highlighting some rarely exhibited gems of the MHCAM collection.

Peruvian; Nasca  
*Vessel with anthropomorphic being*  
Ceramic with polychrome pigments, 325–440 CE  
Gift of Sarah A. Nunneley (Class of 1963)  
Photograph Laura Shea

### **The Louise R. Weiser Lecture Features Kenneth Snelson**

On September 20th, renowned sculptor Kenneth Snelson presents the MHCAM's second annual Louise R. Weiser Lecture in Creativity, Innovation and Leadership through Art. Entitled "Forces Made Visible" after his book of the same name, the lecture highlights the Museum's initiative to inspire, encourage, and practice creativity.

Rooted in invention, discovery, and solution, Snelson's career has led to the creation of a body of work that clearly expresses a unique vision. A contemporary sculptor and photographer, Kenneth Snelson creates three-dimensional sculptures composed of flexible and rigid components arranged according to the idea of 'tensegrity'. Shiny metal rods, held together by networks of tensed aluminum wires, climb into the air at improbable angles, with an apparent disregard for gravity. Using scientific principles, he creates mesmerizing works of art that portray the physical world in new and unexpected ways. Soon his newest work will stand atop the Freedom Tower at One World Trade Center.



Kenneth Snelson  
(American, b. 1927)  
*Lens Easy-K*  
Digital print, 1998  
Gift of an anonymous donor

## A New Acquisition for the Dutch Collection

LEANING BACK in a rustic chair, his right foot propped comfortably on a bench alongside a brazier of glowing coals, a young man cups a large beer glass in one hand and blows a plume of pipe smoke into the air. A fellow reveler naps nearby, his own extinguished pipe by his elbow. The two friends in the foreground have evidently taken a break from the convivial card game that continues animatedly behind them, where a serving maid peers over the shoulder of one player. Dimly evident in the dark background, a boy taps a keg to supply the merry-makers with yet more alcohol.

This rustic genre scene was one of a great many produced by 17th-century Netherlandish artists who found a ready market for still-lives, landscapes, portraits, marine subjects, and images of social life that appealed to the middle-class collectors who replaced the nobility and the church as the principal patrons of art. Hendrik Sorgh (1609/11–1670) was one of those who became part of this secular movement, studying first with the Antwerp painter David Teniers and later with others in his home town of Rotterdam. The son of a market ferryman and himself an honorary barge captain, he became a prosperous and well-regarded artist, a master in the prestigious Guild of St. Luke by 1637, and its dean by 1669.

Hendrik Martensz. Sorgh,  
(Dutch, 1609/11–1670)  
*A Barn Interior with Peasants*  
Oil on panel, ca. 1641–45  
Gift by exchange of the Trustees  
of the Carlyn H. Wohl Trust  
Photograph Laura Shea



Most of Sorgh's works are market scenes or low-life peasant interiors like this one, following the tradition of Teniers and Adriaen Brouwer, whose influence emerges in the younger artist's work. In fact, the primary figure in the Mount Holyoke painting is a nearly identical mirror image of the smoker in a 1638 painting by Brouwer now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Although less well-known than some of his compatriots, Hendrik Sorgh was an exceptionally talented painter, and by the 1640s, when he signed this panel, he was at the height of his powers. The meticulously rendered still-life of basket, barrel, straw hat, and ceramics in the right foreground is nothing less than a tour-de-force rendering of these homely objects which invites the viewer closer. Sorgh's intriguing composition focuses attention on the still-life and the smoker, whose tunic, leggings, and hat, rendered in jewel-like colors, stand out against the more subdued palette of the rest of the painting. This half of the painting is in marked contrast to the background areas which are executed in a sketchy manner using a nearly monochromatic palette. The tipped-over stool that bears the artist's signature anchors the lower left corner, directing the viewer's attention back to the center.

In contrast to Brouwer's sometimes brutally satirical scenes of inebriated and stupid peasants behaving badly in fetid interiors, Sorgh appears to offer a simple slice of life in which nothing—at least not yet—has gotten out of hand. Even so, the double-edged message would have been quite clear to the purchaser of this painting. The Dutch reputation for hard drinking and tobacco smoking—at all levels of society—was notorious.

The prevalence of scenes depicting decorous feasting, "merry companies," and much less decorous tavern and barroom scenes emanated from the impulse to comment on acceptable and unacceptable social behavior. Sorgh's peasants, pleasantly sozzled, are enjoying their leisure time, but underlying the benign scene is the danger of overindulgence, time-wasting, and sensual gratification that threatens to overtake them.

As a "visual sermon" the painting serves as a reminder of worldly vanity and the ephemerality of earthly pleasures. The psalmist's words that "my days are consumed like smoke" (Psalms 102:3) are embedded in the painter's visually appealing composition and carry the message of Calvinist propriety for those who would have passed by this painting every day.



The acquisition of the Sorgh painting inspired yet another addition to the collection—this masterful etching by Cornelis Dusart, one of the last pupils of Adrien van Ostade. Four decades later, Dusart continued the popular tradition of depicting expressive, merrymaking peasants in rustic interiors.

Cornelis Dusart (Dutch, 1660–1704), *The Seated Violinist*, Etching, 1685, Purchase with the John Martyn Warbeke Art Fund

## Who Owns the Past?



Elaine Fulton ('12) examines Minoan potsherds donated to the MHCAM by Edith Hayward Hall in 1911

AS MUSEUM VISITORS contemplate the marvels of history preserved inside display cases, their attention often shifts between the objects themselves and the didactic labels mounted nearby. They might look for the answers to questions such as: Where did this object come from? How old is it? Of what is it made? But only the rarest museum-goer thinks to ask how that work of art found its way onto a museum pedestal.

This is the puzzle that students in Art History Professor Bettina Bergmann's art history seminar, "Who Owns the Past?", set out to answer in a unique assignment last spring. Faced with the task of researching the past lives of ancient objects in the collection of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, students found themselves in the role of detective, tracing not only the acquisition history of Greek lamps and Egyptian scarabs, but also the fascinating biographies of some of Mount Holyoke's most intrepid alumnae and faculty.

Through a collaboration with the Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections; Library, Information, and Technology Services; and the MHCAM, students were granted access to a treasure trove of primary materials and offered the willing assistance of professional staff. Their weekly seminars involved a blend of discussions on the debated topics of cultural property, excavation, and the history of museum collections, as well as hands-on research sessions that applied this broader context to real-life experiences. They reviewed departmental records and scrapbooks, donor files and accession reports, and worked with the Museum staff to examine their selected objects in person to unlock their hidden stories.

Edith Hall (Instructor of Classical Archaeology, 1908–1912, standing second from right, second row) with archaeologist Harriet Boyd and 80 workmen at the Minoan site of Gournia on the island of Crete (1904)  
Courtesy of the Penn Museum, image #102168



The trail of discoveries that organically emerges from original research is never a direct trajectory, and Bergmann's nine students each documented their successes and challenges in a research journal, sharing their progress with their classmates at the beginning of each session. In many cases, the biographies of the objects' donors unfolded to reveal similar stories: independent women who pursued careers and lives devoted to academics and missionary work overseas. Ellen Blakely (Class of 1881), for example, was a Mount Holyoke College librarian who spent nearly 45 years in Turkey as an unmarried missionary—a rarity during that time. Other pioneering Museum donors include Caroline Ransom (Class of 1896), who became the first professionally trained Egyptologist in the United States, and Edith Hayward Hall (MHC faculty 1908-1912), who earned the inaugural PhD in archaeology from Bryn Mawr College and personally excavated the Minoan potsherds that she donated to the MHCAM.

Many of these women voyaged across seas and rode pack-laden camels across deserts. They climbed mountains in Europe, led Red Cross missions in the Middle East, and bravely donned "bob" haircuts on the South Hadley campus. But ultimately, they were all collectors, acquiring objects as teaching resources, mementos, and artifacts of their rich and varied pursuits. Today, these objects complement their handwritten letters and yellowing photographs to narrate the amazing lives of a group of Mount Holyoke women.

HOW DO YOU CONVINCE students that even the most daunting research project can flip 180 degrees with just one significant finding? You look to serendipity! When MHCAM Curator Wendy Watson joined Professor Bergmann's class at an information session hosted by Patricia Albright of Archives and Special Collections, she listened in disbelief as the pieces of her own research puzzle fell into place. Albright read from an 1844 letter composed by Mount Holyoke student Jerusha Babcock (Class of 1845) describing a missionary meeting at MHC and the attire of two women from the Sandwich Islands: "... around her neck, a neck-lace of human hair, taken from the head of captives; the hair was braided in little braids and a number of hundred composed the neck-lace; in front, fastened over the hair was the ponderous tooth of a whale." To the great surprise of Bergmann's students, Watson retrieved this very object from Museum storage and unveiled it in class the next week. It was long thought to have joined the Museum collection sometime before 1892; but Albright's randomly selected letter from the MHC Archives revealed the true origin of this intriguing object, now perhaps one of the earliest additions to the Museum's permanent collection.



Polynesian;  
Hawaiian, 19th century  
*Neck ornament*  
Human hair, olona fiber,  
and whale ivory  
Acquired before 1844

## Beyond the Visible Spectrum: The Chemistry of Art Analysis

THIS PAST SPRING, visitors to the Museum were just as likely to encounter chemistry students closely examining works of art in the galleries as they were art history students. A bit more conspicuous, the chemistry students could often be seen wheeling around gray carts with laptop computers and infrared camera equipment—giving them a distinct advantage for seeing more than normally meets the eye.

Utilizing near infrared (NIR) imaging technology in a Museum lab session gives science students a tool similar to those used by art conservators for understanding the techniques and alterations of the artist, as well as subsequent restoration attempts. This experience has become an integral component of the advanced Chemistry course “Atomic and Molecular Structure” offered each spring by Associate Professor Maria Gomez.

This past spring, however, Professor Gomez extended the opportunity to first-year students in an exciting new seminar entitled “Using Spectroscopy to Analyze Paintings.” This special course offers students in the earliest phase of their undergraduate experience the rare opportunity to spend an entire semester delving into the physical properties of paintings and other artistic media.

A physical chemist who works on fuel cells, Gomez likes to empower her students to make interdisciplinary connections because she understands how exciting it can be for students to discover “the direct relevance chemistry has to things they see every day.” It was in fact Gomez’s own personal interest in art that led her to attend an NSF-sponsored workshop on “Art and Chemistry” during the summer of 2004, which inspired her shortly after to offer a January term course on the spectroscopy of painting.

In that abbreviated entry-level course, Gomez experimented with using simple digital cameras outfitted with special filters to examine an original work of art in the Museum’s collection. Working with Curator Wendy Watson to select a painting with potential underdrawing and other variations hidden beneath the top layer of paint, Gomez and her students focused on a Northern Renaissance oil on panel, *The Holy Family*, from the workshop of Flemish artist Joos van Cleve. They made a number of interesting discoveries. Obscured layers revealed by the infrared light demonstrated alterations in artistic choices ranging from lengthening one of the putti’s legs to opening the Virgin’s hand from an initially closed position.

This specialized course was so successful that Gomez and her husband, spectroscopist Fred Haibach, co-wrote an article in *The Chemical Educator*, 2007 about employing this unconventional lab as a pedagogical tool for undergraduate teaching. Using their students’ infrared analysis of the Joos van Cleve painting as a model, they outlined an exercise that could be replicated at other institutions of higher education in collaboration with their campus museums.

Professor Gomez’s new first-year seminar this past spring expanded this condensed lab experience into a semester-long exploration of concepts related to the electromagnetic

spectrum, using art as the central object of study and incorporating a number of sessions at the Museum. Topics covered in the course ranged from learning about the chemical origins of color and understanding light as both a wave and a particle to studying the anatomy of a painting and investigating how infrared imaging and other forms of spectroscopy can reveal new information about works of art.

Class visits to the Museum included: a tour with MHCAM staff to learn about a variety of art-making materials and techniques; a lab with infrared cameras to examine the underlayers of paintings; a hands-on session with Associate Director of the Smith College Museum of Art David Dempsey who demonstrated how to use an x-ray fluorescence (XRF) handheld spectrometer to identify the elemental make-up of selected works of art in Mount Holyoke's collection (including ceramic vessels, paintings, coins, and metalwork); and finally, a special session about art conservation with Marigene Butler '53, former Art Museum Advisory Board member and Head of Conservation Emerita at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Professor Gomez's main objective for the seminar was to teach this motivated group of students enough basic chemistry that they could begin to access the scientific literature they needed to pursue independent research on projects of their choosing. Not limited to the realm of painting, students gave presentations and wrote final papers on a range of topics from photography, luminescence, and the chemistry of ceramics to methods for detecting forgeries and the art of restoration.

In true liberal arts fashion, one student in the course, Ashley Kosa '15, was able to further her study of a selection of Italian tin-glazed pottery known as maiolica from the Museum's collection after having written an in-depth paper during the previous semester for a Renaissance art history class on these same objects. "It was thrilling to first learn about the art historical context of these fascinating works of art and then continue my study of them from a chemist's standpoint, which opened up areas of research I never imagined."

For these students, seeing art from a scientific point of view is just the beginning of discovering whole worlds that exist beyond the visible realm.

## CONNECTIONS

Professor Maria Gomez and students examine art using infrared technology  
Photograph Laura Shea



David Dempsey teaches students how to use an x-ray fluorescence (XRF) handheld spectrometer

## Revealing Luca Giordano

THE DRAMATIC LARGE CANVAS by Luca Giordano, *Perseus Turning the Followers of Phineas to Stone*, is a central feature of the Museum's Cary Gallery and a perennial favorite with visitors. On loan to the Museum since 1984, the painting's varnish had become increasingly opaque with age, concealing Giordano's bravura brushstrokes, pigments, and eventually even the rendering of the mythical story itself. With generous support from the lenders, the painting was conserved this past winter and spring at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center under the direction of Sandra Webber.

Conserving the Giordano at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center



The canvas—which measures 66 by 88 inches—had been relined at least twice in its history to contend with numerous damages that had occurred over the years. Webber began by removing the old varnish and restorations, pausing to accommodate a visit to the lab by Director John Stomberg, Curator Wendy Watson, and a group of Mount

Holyoke student interns. This mid-treatment seminar provided a unique opportunity for students to experience the discussions that take place regularly between curators and conservators, and to see an Old Master painting in the midst of a major treatment.

Webber and WACC conservation intern Christine Roman laboriously removed old backings and glues, relined the painting on new linen, filled old losses, inpainted missing areas, applied a final varnish layer, and returned it to its frame for transit to South Hadley. The finished product—after more than 220 hours of work—is nothing short of astonishing. Back on the wall

at Mount Holyoke, the painting appears much as Luca Giordano himself would have seen it when it left his studio. Returned to its original glory, its remarkable theatrical composition and powerful figures were revealed, playing out Perseus's story once again on the artist's canvas stage.



Luca Giordano (Italian, 1632–1705)  
*Perseus Turning Phineas and His Followers to Stone*  
Oil on canvas, ca. 1680  
Anonymous loan

*Joseph Allen Skinner: A Life in Objects*  
Continuing through 31 October 2012

Since January 1, 1932, the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum has been telling tales of people's lives through the objects that made up their days, both mundane and exceptional. A 20th-century cabinet of curiosities, the Museum became part of Mount Holyoke College upon its founder's death in 1946. Today it is administered by the MHCAM and continues to be preserved as a resource for the campus and community, in keeping with Joseph Skinner's original vision. This year, as we mark the 150th birthday of Joseph Skinner and continue to celebrate the 80th anniversary of his museum, we have examined what his collection could tell us about the life of the founder and namesake in an exhibition entitled *Joseph Allen Skinner: A Life in Objects*.

Joseph Allen Skinner (1862–1946) occupies a unique place in the history of Mount Holyoke College, the towns of South Hadley, Holyoke, and Williamsburg, and the community at large. This exhibition reveals the arc of his life through the objects he collected. Because Joseph Skinner left little in the way of written documents, his collections have become his biography, and an intriguing one at that. As we explore his early life in Williamsburg alongside the original family silk mills, the devastation of the Mill River Flood of 1874, the reestablishment of the mills in Holyoke, and Joseph's own successes, service, travel, collecting and the creation of his museum, this exhibition serves as a testament to the man and his passions.

While Joseph Skinner took collecting to exceptional levels, many of us seek to capture or represent our own existence in some fashion. After the Mill River Flood, 13-year-old Joseph Skinner tried to make sense of his world, starting with a pocketful of rocks. Over the years, his "pocket" simply grew larger. This exhibition asks visitors to examine their own pockets—what is it that they collect, and why?

For Joseph Skinner, much of his life concerned friends and community, but even more so—family. Every generation or so, the Skinner family gathers at their ancestral home, Wistariahurst, in Holyoke, to make connections and to celebrate their shared roots. This past June, the Skinner family reunited once again, well over a hundred strong, in a group that included direct descendants—grandchildren and great-grandchildren—as well as myriad nieces, nephews and cousins. Many of them visited the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum for the very first time.



Descendants of Joseph Allen Skinner toured the Skinner Museum with Assistant Curator Cheryl Harned in June 2012

### On Board

Last spring, the Art Museum Advisory Board bade farewell to four important members who, through a combined 123 years of service, supported the growth and development of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum in countless ways.

**MARIGENE HARRINGTON BUTLER '53**, worked as a conservator throughout her professional life, capping her career as the Head of Conservation at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from 1978 until her retirement in 1997. She generously shared her expertise with staff and students at both the MHCAM and the Skinner Museum for 34 years.

**SUSAN B. MATHESON '68** oversees the Yale University Art Gallery's collections of ancient art as the Molly and Walter Bareiss Curator of Ancient Art. For 16 years, since 1996, she offered her professional skills and wisdom to the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, most recently in her role as chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee.

Since 1995, **SUSAN BONNEVILLE WEATHERBIE '72** unstintingly gave the MHCAM Advisory Board the benefit of her years of experience as a collector and as a leader on numerous other boards in the art world. For eight of those years she served as Board Chair helping to shepherd the Museum through its building expansion in 2000–2002.

Author, collector, and philanthropist **SHELBY BAIER WHITE '59** served on the MHC Art Museum Advisory Board since 1968. In addition to her involvement with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Institute for Advanced Study, The New York Botanical Garden, and the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University, she found time to support the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum as a member of the Board for more than 40 years.

In May, members of the Museum's Director's Circle traveled to Washington, D.C. for a behind-the-scenes-tour at the National Gallery with Arthur Wheelock, Curator of Northern Baroque Painting, as well as visits to unparalleled public and private collections ranging from Dutch Old Master painting to dynamic contemporary sculpture. Here the group is shown in one of the rooms at the U.S. Department of State.



In July, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum was delighted to receive a landmark donation of 17 works of art from the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation. In a letter from Elizabeth Sackler, President and Chief Executive of the Foundation, the Museum was notified that these objects, which had been on loan since 2004, were being converted into outright gifts. Ms. Sackler noted that it was the unanimous wish of the Foundation's board to give these exceptional works of art in honor of the Museum's record of innovative approaches to interdisciplinary teaching with art.

Comprising works from Asia and the Near East, the objects being given date from the second or third millennium BCE to the early 17th century CE and add to the existing strength of Asian and Islamic art in the MHCAM collection. Key works include a pair of Tang dynasty (609-907 CE) ceramic camels, a painted wood sculpture of the bodhisattva Guanyin from China, a bronze Buddha from Thailand, and clay vessels from Iran.

Currently on view in the Warbeke Gallery of Asian Art, the works have been used extensively in courses on subjects as diverse as the Silk Road and the food of ancient China and Italy. Indicating an appreciation for MHCAM's focus on the use of its collection in education at all levels, the Foundation wrote, "For more than 40 years, The Arthur M. Sackler Foundation has been committed to making its collections available to students, scholars, and the general public. It is our firm belief that your museum and college will carry our goals into the future, enhancing the lives of so very many individuals. Your interdisciplinary use is exemplary."

"We are truly grateful to the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation for this extraordinary gift", commented Mount Holyoke President, Lynn Pasquerella. "The Museum is a centerpiece of liberal learning at Mount Holyoke, and each of these works will contribute enormously to our goal of integrating art throughout the curriculum and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration."

Arthur M. Sackler (1913-1987), physician, entrepreneur, and philanthropist, made his fortune in the pharmaceutical field. He was also a scholar and collector of art, who acquired objects from India, Japan and the Near East, as well as from Europe and the New World; his collection of Chinese ceramics, bronzes, jades, and sculpture was one of the most important outside of China. Donating to many of the world's leading cultural and academic institutions, Sackler endowed galleries, often with his brothers, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Princeton University, the Arthur M. Sackler Museum at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology at Peking University in Beijing, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C., and the Jillian & Arthur M. Sackler Wing at the Royal Academy, London. According to Dr. Sackler, "Great art, like science and the humanities, can never remain as the possession of one individual, creator or collector... great art and all culture belongs to all humankind."



Persian, Seljuk period, late 12th/early 13th century  
*Tankard with Ten Princely Figures*  
Minai ware; clay, glazes, enamel pigments, and leaf-gilding  
Gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, New York



Thai, 15th-16th century  
*Standing Buddha*  
Cast bronze, gold, shell, and resin  
Gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, New York

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Kenneth Snelson  
(American, b. 1927)  
*Easy Landing*  
Stainless steel, 1977  
Collection: City of  
Baltimore, MD  
Image courtesy of the artist

CALENDAR

Fall Exhibitions

*Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*  
31 August–23 December 2012

*African American Artists and the Experimental Printmaking Institute: The Janet Hickey Tague '66 Collection*  
1 August–23 December 2012

*Against the Wall: Relief Sculpture from the Collection*  
1 August 2012–ongoing

*Encounters: Faces of the Ancient Americas*  
10 August 2012–ongoing

Fall Events

**Thursday, 6 September 2012, 4:30 p.m.**  
Gallery Talk  
*Against the Wall: Contemporary Art from the Collection*  
John Stomberg, Florence Finch Abbott Director  
Futter Gallery  
Reception to follow

**Thursday, 13 September 2012, 4:30 p.m.**  
Exhibition Opening  
*Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*  
Panel Discussion with  
• Elizabeth Young, Carl M. and Elsie A. Small Professor of English, Mount Holyoke College  
• Patricia A. Banks, Associate Professor of Sociology, Mount Holyoke College  
• John Stomberg, Florence Finch Abbott Director, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum  
Gamble Auditorium, Mount Holyoke College  
Reception to follow

**Thursday, 20 September 2012, 4:30 p.m.**  
The Louise R. Weiser Lecture in Creativity, Innovation, and Leadership through Art  
"Forces Made Visible"  
Kenneth Snelson, sculptor  
Gamble Auditorium, Mount Holyoke College  
Reception to follow

Art à la Carte Gallery Talk Series  
**Thursday, 4 October 2012  
12:20–12:50 p.m.**  
*Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*  
Emily Wood, Art Museum Advisory Board Fellow  
Weissman Gallery

**Thursday, 25 October 2012,  
12:20–12:50 p.m.**  
*African American Artists and the Experimental Printmaking Institute: The Janet Hickey Tague '66 Collection*  
Ellen Alvord, Andrew W. Mellon Coordinator of Academic Affairs  
Warbeke Gallery

**Thursday, 8 November 2012  
12:20–12:50 p.m.**  
Gallery Talk  
In conjunction with the 175th anniversary of Mount Holyoke College  
"The Making of a Museum"  
Wendy Watson, Curator  
Museum galleries

**Thursday, 29 November 2012  
12:20–12:50 p.m.**  
*Encounters: Faces of the Ancient Americas*  
Rachel Beaupré, Assistant Curator  
Gump Family Gallery

For more information, call 413.538.2245 or visit [www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum)



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ABOVE: Attributed to Michael Wolgemut (German, 1434–1519), *Moses creating Aaron a high priest and his sons priests* (detail), woodcut with hand coloring, 1491, purchase with funds given by Patricia Altman Falkenberg (Class of 1964) in loving memory of Roger Aaron, husband of Virginia Altman Aaron (Class of 1966)

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

To sign up for MHCAM News and receive exhibition and event announcements, go to [www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum).

☐ 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 MHCAM 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).