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SPRING 2017

Exhibitions

The Legend of the Lares

January 24–May 28, 2017

Curated by Taylor Anderson '15

This exhibition is made possible by the Leon Levy Foundation, the Susan Davenport Page and Margaret Page Fales Art Fund, and the Susan B. Weatherbie Exhibition Fund. The opening program is made possible by the Louise R. Weiser Lecture Fund.

140 Unlimited: Recent Acquisitions in Honor of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's 140th Anniversary

Through May 28, 2017

This exhibition is made possible by the Susan B. Weatherbie Exhibition Fund, the Joyce Marcus Art Exhibition Fund, and with generous support from Rosamond (Class of 1963) and David Mack.



Kano Masamitsu (Japanese, d. 1765), *Six-fold screen with scenes from the Tale of Genji*, mid-18th century, opaque watercolor on paper, gold leaf, Gift of Florence Brugger (Class of 1922) in honor of the Centennial of the Alumnae Association, 1972.26.Q.PI, photograph Petegorsky/ Gipe (detail).

Cover image: Grace Chino (American, Acoma Pueblo, 1929-1994), *Seed Pot*, last quarter of the 20th century, earthenware with white slip and red and black pigment, Gift of Juli Shea Towell (Class of 1955) and Gil Towell, 2016.12.7 (detail).

Events

“The Roman Lares, Gods of the Home and Journey”

Lecture by Harriet Flower, Professor of Classics, Princeton University

Thursday, February 2 at 5:30 p.m.

In conjunction with the special exhibition *The Legend of the Lares* Gamble Auditorium

Spring Opening Reception to follow



“A Tale of Two Wolves”

Photographer Pete Muller in conversation with Jon Western, Dean of Faculty

Thursday, March 30 at 5:30 p.m.

Co-sponsored with the Department of International Relations

Gamble Auditorium

Reception to follow



Joseph Allen Skinner Museum Spring Opening

Join us for an afternoon of discovery and fun, including “Mysteries of History” challenge, prizes, and refreshments!

Thursday, April 27, 4:30–6:00 p.m.

Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, 33 Woodbridge Street

Art à la Carte Gallery Talk Series

All talks begin at 12:20 p.m. and last for 30 minutes.

Thursday, February 16

“140 Unlimited: A Contemporary Look”

Tricia Y. Paik, Florence Finch Abbott Director

Thursday, March 2

“Monsters and the Meaning of a 12th-Century Capital”

Michael T. Davis, Professor of Art History and Chair, Architectural Studies Program

Thursday, April 13

“The Tale of Genji in Four Seasons: from Cherry Blossoms to Playing in the Snow”

Sadako Ohki, The Japan Foundation Associate Curator of Japanese Art, Yale University Art Gallery

All photographs by Laura Shea unless otherwise noted.

It is with much enthusiasm and honor that I write this letter as the new Florence Finch Abbott Director of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum. As my tenure began in the fall, I was fortunate to join the 140th anniversary celebration on November 11, 2016. It was a lively, memorable evening, well attended by students, neighbors, and members of MHC faculty and staff, including Acting President Sonya Stephens and Dean of Faculty Jon Western.

Our showcase was the *140 Unlimited* exhibition, a stellar reinstatement of the galleries that features over 140 recent acquisitions and continues this spring. As many of you know, my predecessor John Stomberg tirelessly led the *140 Gifts* campaign, an impressive initiative that resulted in over 300 acquisitions made possible through the considerable generosity of our many supporters.

The Museum's distinguished history and expanded collection were celebrated that evening, while our students brought great originality and vitality to the galleries. Our Student Guides led engaging tours while other students shared their own ekphrastic poems inspired by individual works on display. The evening concluded with a splendid roaming concert through the galleries; of special note was the choral finale featuring the work of alumna Linda Conway Correll George ('60).

Indeed, it was a very auspicious start to my tenure here. Although it has been only a few months since I arrived at the College, I must say I already feel at home. The Museum staff and the broader Mount Holyoke College community have been very welcoming, making my transition seamless. While I have curated contemporary art for many years, I most enjoy working with an encyclopedic collection, such as MHCAM's, and creating connections across centuries and cultures. The Joseph Allen Skinner Museum also resonates with my interests, and thus I find our corresponding commitment to both art and material culture

meaningful and relevant. Through such distinctive resources and our esteemed Teaching with Art program, MHCAM actively enriches the lives of our students and surrounding community. It is exactly the kind of museum where I want to be.

As we embark on our next chapter, I would like to thank former directors Marianne Doezema and John Stomberg, and former curator Wendy Watson for their significant contributions. We would not be where we are today without their legacy. I would also like to share my gratitude to both past and current members of the Art Museum Advisory Board for their longstanding support and counsel, and in particular to Board Chair Susan Noonan ('82). And finally, I extend a heartfelt thanks to the talented, committed Museum staff for their tremendous work, and to Ellen Alvord, Weatherbie Curator of Education and Academic Programs, who served as the interim director with boundless energy and aplomb.

I look forward to sharing my ideas with you in upcoming newsletters, and hope you will introduce yourself whenever you visit MHCAM—it would be an honor to personally welcome you!

Tricia Y. Paik, PhD
Florence Finch Abbott Director



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The Legend of the Lares

January 24–May 28, 2017

Taylor Anderson '15, Art Museum Advisory Board Fellow (2015–2016)

Roman (Pompeii)
Lararium in the House of the Golden Cupids,
 1st century CE
 Photograph Paul Asman and Jill Lenoble,
 Flickr (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pauljill/4144322890/>)

Roman
Lar holding a patera and cornucopia, 1st–2nd century CE
 Bronze
 Purchase with the Susan and Bernard Schilling (Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund
 2013.31



In the spring of 2010, an impressive group of Greek and Roman artifacts from the Yale University Art Gallery came to South Hadley for the sensational collaborative exhibition, *Reconstructing Antiquity*. Seven years later, the Anne Greer and Fredric B. Garonzik Family Gallery is once again home to a striking collection of objects from the ancient world. *The Legend of the Lares* brings together nearly 30 antiquities from ten different collections to explore Roman domestic religion and the cult of the Lares.

Enigmatic and flexible deities, the Lares appeared in a variety of settings, most commonly the home.

The *Lares Familiares* (household Lares) took the form of statuettes or painted figures and were trusted as guardian spirits to ensure the well-being of an entire *familia*—both the free and enslaved members of a household.

Almost always appearing in pairs, the Lares are depicted as male youths in traveler's clothes. They carry symbols of virtue and abundance, including drinking horns and offering dishes. Every day the family paid the Lares worship, offering prayer and sacrifice, and greeting the household gods upon entering or leaving the



home. The Lares were also invoked during familial rites of passage including weddings, funerals, and coming-of-age ceremonies. The cult was widespread and thousands of representations of the Lares have been unearthed throughout Roman territories.

Romans venerated the Lares at the *lararium*, a prominently positioned shrine and sign of the family's *pietas* (piety and devotion to the gods). *Lararia* have been found in all manner of Roman dwellings and most took the form of a wall niche, an *aedicula* (a miniature temple such as the one above), or a painted image on the wall. Every lararium included images of gods and a place for offering, but no two were identical. An assortment of other deities and important figures, collectively known as the *Penates* (guardians of the pantry), accompanied the Lares within the shrines. These statuettes varied in size, material, and quality of craftsmanship and were likely accumulated over generations.

Just as the lararium was the focal point of Roman household religion, the principal feature of

The Legend of the Lares is a recreated aedicula lararium, fashioned after a well-preserved shrine at the so-called House of the Golden Cupids in Pompeii. The Museum's own Lar is displayed inside the shrine, which provides a frame of reference for visitors and aids their visualization of the setting in which the Lar originally appeared.

A selection of statuettes that reflect the diversity found among ancient Penates occupies the Museum's lararium. *Lar holding a patera and cornucopia* stands beside Olympian gods and goddesses including Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter (below, right). A bust of the Egyptian fertility goddess Isis (below, left) and a representation of a Gallo-Roman warrior god reflect the incorporation of foreign deities. Mortal figures also appear, specifically a statuette of a sacrificial bull and a portrait of the notorious first-century CE emperor Gaius, more commonly known by his childhood nickname, Caligula. At the heart of the assembly is the ancestral *genius*, a toga-clad figure personifying the procreative power of the *paterfamilias* (male head of the household).

In addition to the MHCAM Lar, the exhibition features several other bronze Lares, allowing for an analysis of the similarities and differences in the depictions of the household gods. Tools of domestic worship, including libation bowls, oil lamps, and incense burners illustrate religious rituals. Commonplace objects that were dedicated to the Lares during special ceremonies are also on view. The exhibition boasts an exquisite marble bust of Augustus, facilitating an exploration of the first emperor's dramatic program of religious reform and the public cult of the *Lares Augusti* (guardians of the crossroads in the city of Rome).

The Legend of the Lares gives visitors the opportunity to

reexamine highlights from the MHCAM collection in a new context as well as see objects from the permanent collection that have never before been on view. Antiquities from the Colby College Museum of Art, Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Harvard Art Museums, Mead Art Museum, Princeton University Art Museum, Smith College Museum of Art, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, and Yale University Art Galleries are on display at MHCAM for the first time. Finally, a number of beautiful antiquities are on loan from a private collection in New York. Together, these objects illuminate the cult of the Lares, gods that were not only a central component of domestic religion, but also a fundamental part of Roman life.

This exhibition is made possible by the Leon Levy Foundation, the Susan Davenport Page and Margaret Page Fales Art Fund, and the Susan B. Weatherbie Exhibition Fund.



Roman
Bust of Isis
2nd century CE
(Hadrianic period, 117–138 CE)
Bronze
Purchase with the Nancy Everett Dwight Fund and the Psi Omega Society Fund in honor of Mary Gilmore Williams (Class of 1885)
1965.10.C.G

Roman
Standing figure of Jupiter
ca. 370–360 BCE (original); 1st–2nd century CE (copy)
Bronze with inlaid copper and silver (proper right nipple)
Yale University Art Gallery
Gift of Ruth Elizabeth White
1988.80.12
Photograph Yale University Art Gallery

140 Unlimited

Recent Acquisitions in Contemporary Photography

Through May 28, 2017

Jaime Pagana, Curatorial Assistant

The *140 Gifts* campaign, initiated in 2011, has brought in more than 300 gifts in honor of the Museum's milestone anniversary. Contemporary photography accounted for a sizeable portion of these gifts, and will be prominently featured in the second iteration of *140 Unlimited's* modern and contemporary installation in the Harriet L. and Paul M. Weissman Gallery.

Rowan Renee's photograph *Ahnika Delirium* is one of two recent purchases from the American artist's series, *Z*. The series comprises portraits of cis-gender, transgender, genderqueer, and gender-nonconforming individuals reclining nude on furniture evocative of silken Victorian parlor rooms. For their (the artist's preferred pronoun) photographs, Renee uses the antiquated photographic medium ambrotype, a variant of the wet plate collodion process. Like earlier daguerreotypes and modern Polaroids, ambrotypes are unique and one-of-a-kind, and their near-instant return made them a popular medium for portraiture in the mid-19th century.

Ambrotypes are a difficult and messy endeavor, however, requiring the photographer to

prepare and expose wet plates in the span of about ten minutes. The resultant flaws—the dents, smears, drips, and cracks—and the images' smoky presence appear to us today as haunting and moody. Smearred silvery material runs across the surface like rain down a windowpane. But Ahnika Delirium's gaze comes through as confident and unabashedly seductive. The reclining nude has a long history in figural representation, but one that belongs almost exclusively to male viewers of female subjects. In Renee's series, the exchange of queer bodies in a vernacular specific to heteronormative male gazes attempts to undermine a history of representation waged on gendered lines. Combined with a process embracing singularity, chance, and alterity, their photographs bring into view the fluidity and fragility of concepts of gender and representation alike.

Rowan Renee (American, b. 1985)
Ahnika Delirium, from the series *Z*, 2015
 Silver on glass (ambrotype)
 Purchase with the Ann Nelson Behrman (Class of 1954) Art Acquisition Fund
 2015.21.2

Richard Learoyd (British, b. 1966)
Nancy Recovered, 2011
 Unique Ilfochrome photograph
 Promised Gift of Renee Conforte McKee (Class of 1962)
 2015.L4
 © Richard Learoyd, image courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco



Also on view for the first time is British photographer Richard Learoyd's *Nancy Recovered*, a promised gift of alumna Renee Conforte McKee ('62). Just slightly larger-than-life, the sitter in Learoyd's photograph eerily shifts between illusion and presence—an effect enhanced by the photograph's vivid clarity. This effect can be attributed to Learoyd's use of a camera obscura, a room-sized apparatus in which a scene from outside is projected on one wall through a lens



John Willis (American, b. 1957)
Victoria Chipps, of the Horn Chipps lineage of medicine men, on her ninetieth birthday with her great-granddaughter, 2005 negative/ 2012 print
 Peiziographic pigment archival inkjet print on Hannamuele Photo Rag paper
 Gift of Richard S. and Jeanne Press
 2014.37.1
 © John Willis,
www.jwillis.net

mounted on an adjacent wall. To create his prints, Learoyd positions a large sheet of Ilfochrome positive paper on the wall opposite the lens and on it captures his subjects posed in an adjoining studio. Without the intermediary of film, the images are completely grainless and startlingly lifelike—better, even. Every pore, hair, and mole seems to vault from the print's surface. And without a film negative, his photographs, like Renee's, are one-of-a-kind—as unique as a drawing or painting.

Learoyd does not privilege perfection or purity, and the title, *Nancy Recovered*, is deliberately obscure. He shows in full view Nancy's stretch marks, blackheads, and rogue hairs. Blood pools in blue, bulging veins in her hands and wrists, like the thoughts in her eyes. Nancy Gryspeerdt posed for Learoyd throughout her twenties, before which they were unacquainted. She wrote recently about her experience in a monograph of Learoyd's photographs, *Day for Night* (Aperture, 2015): "I see the fixedness and anonymity. But of course I also see the moment when the picture was taken, and often the pictures are evidence of the instability, excitement, or trauma of that period."

Four recently acquired photographs by John Willis depict with unflinching candidness a view of contemporary life on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. These photographs were given by Richard S. and Jeanne Press and are part of a

larger series titled *A View From the Rez* begun in the early 1990s. Willis is the Founding Director of the In-Sight Photography Project in Vermont, which provides photography courses at no cost to underprivileged youth. Since 2003, Pine Ridge has been host to In-Sight's summer program, *Exposures*, bringing together youth from all over the United States to collaborate and learn photographic skills.

Willis's photograph of Victoria Chipps—daughter-in-law of Horn Chips, a medicine man and lifelong friend of Crazy Horse—shows an elderly woman on her ninetieth birthday slouched in a chair, withdrawn and despondent. Before her death in 2009, Chipps witnessed nearly a century of conflict on the Reservation over land rights and governance. Today Pine Ridge remains the poorest reservation in the U.S. Unemployment is over 80% and the rates of mortality, suicide, depression, and alcoholism more than double those anywhere in the country. Willis's photographs of Pine Ridge show a community devastated by U.S. expansionism, whose existence is continually threatened by U.S. policy. Together these acquisitions reveal significant changes in contemporary photography and the profound commitment of photographers to increasing the visibility of persons too long kept out of view.

140 Unlimited Pueblo Potters: Tradition and Innovation Through May 28, 2017

Aaron F. Miller, PhD, Associate Curator of Visual and Material Culture

Verna L. Nori (Class of 1932), ca. 1932
Archives and Special Collections, Mount Holyoke College
RG 27.1

As Mount Holyoke College Art Museum exhibitions and classes increasingly utilize objects made by indigenous Americans, it is crucial to also engage with the people and stories from those communities both past and present. The life of one Mount Holyoke alumna, Verna Nori ('32), repeatedly intersects with the stories of the ceramics now on view in the Gump Family Gallery.



Laguna Pueblo
Jar (*olla*), late 19th century
Earthenware with white slip and brown and orange pigment
Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, Mount Holyoke College
SK K.113

In the late 1920s Nori left her home at Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico and traveled to Massachusetts with plans to become an elementary school teacher. Not a great deal is known about Nori's experience at the College and what it may have been like for her as an indigenous person of color at the time. From the guest log we know that while at Mount Holyoke, Nori visited the newly opened Joseph Allen Skinner Museum in the winter of 1932. Inside, she saw objects from the communities surrounding her home of Casa Blanca, Laguna and may have even seen the large water vessel

Acoma Pueblo
Jar (*olla*), early 20th century
Earthenware with white slip and red and black pigments
Gift of Mary Ann Searles Weiss (Class of 1963) in memory of Jessie Bartholomew Searles (Class of 1933) and Verna L. Nori (Class of 1932)
2009.19.1



from her own Pueblo community (left). What did she think of its inclusion in a Museum like Skinner's?

Nori's connection to MHC and its collections does not end there. The neighboring Pueblos of Laguna and Acoma have a shared history; the

olla (jar, below) with the parrot feather motif—currently on view in the Gump Family Gallery—belonged to Nori's own grandmother. In March of 1934, Nori's classmate, Jessie Bartholomew Searles ('33) stopped to get gas west of Gallegos, New Mexico and inquired after Nori with the owner. After consulting with some of his employees, it turned out that she lived just down the road. At her home, Searles learned from Nori's cousin that she was away teaching at an "Indian school" (a day-school at Santo Domingo Pueblo).¹ Nori's grandmother, a "very old lady . . . dripping turquoise jewelry" gave Searles the parrot feather motif bowl.² Searles's daughter, Mary Ann Searles Weiss ('63), gave the vessel to MHCAM in 2009.



Through gift-giving that has spanned nearly a century, the Museum's collection of southwestern ceramics continues to grow. The most recent gift by Juli Shea Towell ('55) and Gil Towell has begun to fill in key gaps both temporally and geographically related to these important centers of ceramic innovation. From the historic to the contemporary, Puebloan art is flourishing at MHCAM.

1. *Annual Report of the Department of the Interior, Government Printing Office (Washington, 1933), 79.*

2. Letter from Jessie Bartholomew Searles ('33).

Toni Morrison and the Visual Imagination

Ellen M. Alvord, Weatherbie Curator of Education and Academic Programs

140 Unlimited has inspired fresh ways of using the Museum as a space for faculty and students to interact with the collection. The influx of so many recent acquisitions, including global contemporary art and important works by women and artists of color, has opened up new possibilities for connecting with a range of thematic course topics.

For instance, this past fall, Assistant Professor of English Kimberly Juanita Brown decided to spend a full three-hour session at the Museum with her upper-level seminar on the writings of the great American novelist Toni Morrison. She believed the new selections on view throughout the Museum would create rich opportunities for activating what she refers to as her students' "visual imagination," conjuring evocative parallels with Morrison's writings and ideas.

Visiting the Museum on a warm October day, the students were asked to find visual analogies with the novels they had been reading and to be guided in particular by Morrison's compelling work of literary criticism *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. As the students fanned out into the galleries, they gravitated to works with powerful black-and-white aesthetics like Carrie Mae Weems's *I Looked and Looked and Failed to See What So Terrified You* and Arthur Rothstein's 1937 photograph *Girl at Gee's Bend*. They even found images that resonated with specific characters, one student seeing David Driskell's *Woman with Bird* (illustrated, p. 12) as an incarnation of Sula. But students were also drawn to works with unexpected, nuanced connections such as Dorothea Tanning's *Still in the Studio* and Leon Dabo's haunting landscape painting, *Moonlit Waterscape*.

Gathering back together, the students shared their visual insights with one another, touching on some of Morrison's most complex themes related to race,

gender, individualism, and community interaction. Ruminating on her experience, Libby Kao '17 explained: "There was a special, rich immediacy about reflecting aloud with my classmates while physically sitting in the exhibition. The experience made me reckon as I'd never done before with the way literary and visual texts enmesh to form a cultural force that 'speaks back' to structures of historical (un)consciousness. Using the frame of Toni Morrison's imagination as we floated through the exhibition space made me see the art on display—especially works I was already familiar with—not only in a *new light*, but in refractions constantly collapsing and interlacing. It was like something shifted, and in sharing that shift, whole universes of the potentiality of interpretation opened up."

One of the Museum's top priorities is to enable students to see themselves reflected in the art on view. With this goal, we also hope to create safe spaces for discussing the most important and challenging issues of our time, as well as those relevant to all facets of a 21st-century liberal arts education. Professor Brown and her students inspire us to think we are moving in the right direction.

Students in Assistant Professor Kimberly Juanita Brown's upper-level seminar discuss thematic connections between works of art on view and the writings of Toni Morrison.



Mount Holyoke's Lost Museum

Aaron F. Miller, PhD, Associate Curator of Visual and Material Culture

South Alcove, Zoological Cabinet, Lyman Williston Hall, date unknown
Archives and Special Collections, Mount Holyoke College

On the heels of a year celebrating the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's 140th anniversary, it is fitting to look back at the building that housed the College's very first art gallery, Lyman Williston Hall. Tragically, 2017 marks another anniversary: 100 years ago a fire destroyed Williston Hall. From its founding in 1876, the gallery set to bring together the riches of the natural world with artworks created by human hands. The Museum's current mission, "to spark intellectual curiosity and ignite a lasting passion for learning and creativity through direct engagement," mirrors Professor W. S. Tyler's opening address in 1876. He expounded that "science and art naturally dwell together. They belong to the same family. They are co-workers in the same work and to the same end . . ." ¹ Tyler claimed the analysis of art and science "develops and disciplines the same faculties of observation and reason, together with . . . those of taste and imagination." ² The first vision for museum collections at Mount Holyoke combined the wonders of the natural and human-made world. Today, the Art Museum, Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, and other campus collections are continuing that legacy. Together faculty, staff, and students are breaking down the boundaries between the arts and sciences—an enduring legacy that was established more than 140 years ago.



The Williston Hall museum was indeed a marvel to behold. Four stories of cabinets of scientific wonder and state-of-the-art classrooms with speaking tubes and electric bells contained everything from an extinct flightless Moa bird and a 22-ft. geological map to a fully articulated whale skeleton. The top floor housed the art collection, with the exception of antiquities, which were housed in the basement. The second story had the vast zoology collection and mineral cabinet including an entire set of important (and often massive) fossil casts from the Ward's Natural Science catalogue. The first story was comprised of a lecture hall, laboratories, and the botany collection. The basement was home to the geological cabinet and

one of the most impressive collections of dinosaur footprints anywhere in the United States.

On the afternoon of December 22, 1917, the cry went up: "Williston Hall is on fire!" ³ Although the art gallery had fortunately moved to a new space in Dwight Art Memorial Hall in 1902, the losses to the

Ichneological Cabinet, Lyman Williston Hall, after 1884
Archives and Special Collections, Mount Holyoke College





Lyman Williston Hall,
Art Gallery, ca. 1876–
77
Archives and
Special Collections,
Mount Holyoke College

remaining campus collections were severe. Vast irreplaceable collections of mineral specimens, fossils and casts, shells, taxidermy, and more were lost. Faculty and staff braved the flames to save what they could of the building's treasures. Abby Turner Howe (Class of 1896) recalled that "[Asa Kinney] thought of Miss [Mignon] Talbot's fossil, her famous dinosaur, but that was inaccessible to one man though two perhaps might have dashed up through the smoke and carried the heavy thing out."⁴ Howe goes on to poetically recount the event: "We all worked in that magic place, with the gorgeous light, the fierce heat near the fire, the rain of sparks even as far as Porter—the beauty of it all a thing to remember as well as the tragedy. There were wonderful red colors in the flames, great black swirls of smoke, a few explosions when the flames reached the chemicals. And then the glow of the smoldering heaps of ruins on the clouds of silvery white smoke and steam within the half fallen walls as the fire died down."⁵

However, like a phoenix, out of the ashes came new life. In response to the College's loss came scores of new objects from donors. Many of the tens of thousands of items that now make up the various campus collections came to Mount Holyoke as a result of the 1917 fire. Today, the Departments of Geology and Biology once again have stellar teaching and reference collections at their disposal.

In her 1937 book, *On a New England Campus*, Frances Lester Warner (Class of 1911) reminisced about her first year initiation at Williston where new students would climb "through the turtle" in the fossil cast room of the museum. She mused upon Mignon Talbot's lost dinosaur, the blending of art and science, and the different modalities of time, writing: "Relative antiquity is a tantalizing thing. There is a skip in its beat that has always troubled the human imagination. To stand on the spot where one's forefathers stood: to stand on the spot where a Pharaoh stood: to stand on the spot where a dinosaur stood . . . which of these experiences has the most power to raise the bristles of the mind?"⁶ At Mount Holyoke we are lucky enough to have objects that allow us to ponder all of these questions. Today, as in 1876, we have collections that span the breadth of human and natural histories.

1. W.S. Tyler, *Opening of Lyman Williston Hall. Address by Prof. W. S. Tyler, and Exercises of Dedication* (Springfield: Clark W. Bryan & Company, 1877), 18.

2. *Ibid.*, 16.

3. Lindsay Theile '04 "Abby Turner Howe, Professor of Physiology, Documents Williston Fire, January 21, 1918," <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/rschwartz/hatlas/fires/williston/turner2.htm>.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. Frances Lester Warner, *On a New England Campus* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 165.

Experimental Prints from the Ink Think Tank

Hannah W. Blunt, Associate Curator

David Clyde Driskell, (American, b. 1931) *Woman with Bird*, 2011 Woodcut and reductive screenprint, edition 14/35 Partial gift of the Experimental Printmaking Institute, Lafayette College and purchase with the Jean C. Harris Art Acquisition Fund 2016.2.16

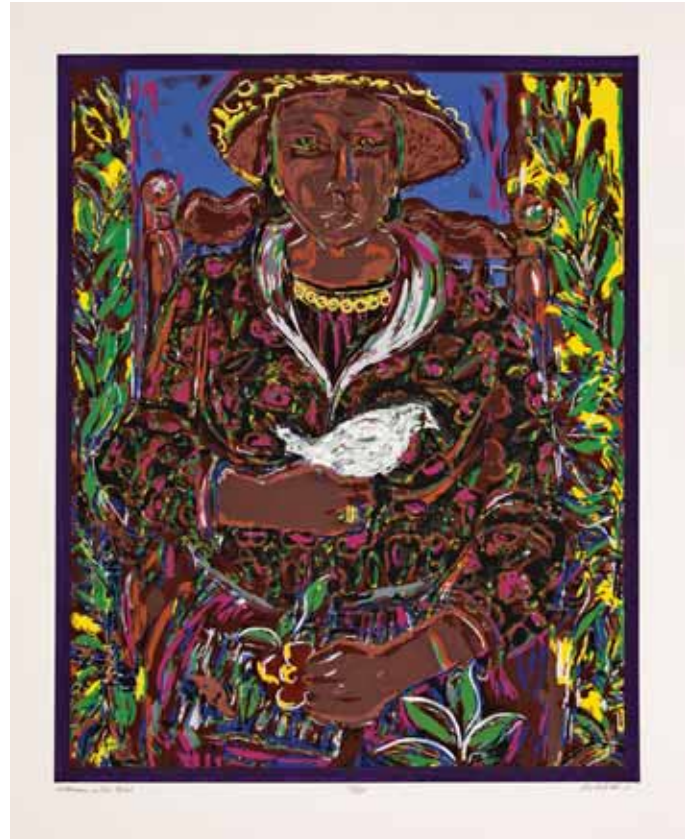
"The medium of printmaking is perhaps the most democratic form of artistic practice and provides unique opportunities for creative collaboration."

Artist and master printmaker Curlee Raven Holton shares this insight knowingly from 20 years of experience heading the Experimental Printmaking Institute (EPI) at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, which he founded in 1996. Holton created EPI, once referred to as the "ink think tank," to be a unique printmaking laboratory enabling liberal arts students to work hand in hand with professional artists, while also intending it to be "a doorway for artists of color to participate more fully in the art making process."

Within the context of this highly experimental and collaborative workshop environment, the program has produced over 150 editions by more than 100 different participants. This includes some of this country's most acclaimed artists, such as Faith Ringgold, Richard Anuszkiewicz, David Driskell, Grace Hartigan, Benny Andrews, and Sam Gilliam.

With the recent gift and purchase of 23 discrete prints and four print portfolios from EPI, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum has now become one of the largest archives of art produced at the Experimental Printmaking Institute. These new acquisitions significantly add to the collection of associated prints previously donated to Mount Holyoke by Janet Hickey Tague ('66) and her husband, Harold Tague, long-time supporters of EPI, bringing the total number in the collection to nearly 50.

These innovative works of art augment the Museum's holdings in contemporary master prints



and in works by African American artists. Highlights from the acquisition include a pair of lithographs by Abstract Expressionist Grace Hartigan; five highly experimental, painterly prints by David Driskell; Curlee Raven Holton's enchanting artist's book and accompanying portfolio of etchings, *Othello Re-imagined in Sepia*; and ten prints and two portfolios by Faith Ringgold, including her brightly colored and evocative illustrations to *Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham City Jail*. The richness of imagery will be relevant for classes from a variety of disciplines and have already enhanced installations in the Museum's galleries, including the current *140 Unlimited* exhibition.

Six-fold Screens Depicting the *Tale of Genji*

Kendra D. Weisbin, Assistant Curator of Education

This fall, students in Assistant Professor of History Lan Wu's "History of Modern East Asia" course sat in front of newly installed Japanese screens depicting the *Tale of Genji*. The students practiced their observational skills, together working through the complex imagery on the screens and considering the ways in which these two remarkable objects can serve as primary documents in the study of history. The screens, which have not been on view in over a decade, were reinstalled in the Museum's Norah McCarter Warbeke Gallery of Asian Art in the fall as part of a sweeping effort to highlight new acquisitions, rarely seen masterworks from storage, and material culture throughout the galleries.

The screens illustrate scenes from the *Tale of Genji*, a Japanese novel written in the Heian period (794–1185) that focuses on the life and romantic exploits of prince Genji. The scenes depicted here do not chart the progress of the novel, but rather are organized by season and, like Japanese text, are meant to be "read" from right to left. The blooming cherry blossoms of spring grace the panels of the right screen (detail on p. 2), in which an ancient Japanese ball game called *kemari* is being played at Genji's palace. One of the players catches a glimpse of Genji's beautiful new wife, and this chance encounter turns into a tumultuous love affair. The left screen (right) depicts summer in the palace, followed by autumn, displayed by the bright red Japanese maple. The left screen's last two panels depict winter, and ladies of the court can

be seen playing in the snow while Genji and his wife recite love poems to one another.

Screens depicting the *Tale of Genji* were popular dowry items for wealthy brides in the Edo period (1615–1868), probably because of the story's emphasis on courtly love. Weddings between the families of provincial lords (*daimyō*), which were arranged to create and solidify political alliances, involved elaborate wedding processions, in which the dowry would be paraded to the groom's home. The *daimyō* would commission extravagant sets of gifts for their daughters' trousseaus, usually including a set of sumptuous screens like these. As items associated with the marriage of wealthy women, these six-fold screens are connected to other significant objects in the Museum's collection, such as the fine Renaissance *cassone*, and rare 1700s Hadley dowry chest, both of which are currently on view. Together these objects speak to the role of women in artistic patronage and political alliances—globally and across time.

Kano Masamitsu
(Japanese, d. 1765)
*Six-fold screen with
scenes from the Tale
of Genji*, mid-18th
century
Opaque watercolor
on paper, gold leaf
Gift of Florence
Brugger (Class of
1922) in honor of the
Centennial of the
Alumnae Association
1972.25.Q.PI
Photograph Pete-
gorsky/ Gipe



140th Anniversary Celebration



From the top: Visitors young and old enjoy a variety of drawing and poetry activities in the galleries. | Music professor Cheryl Cobb shows off the eclectic instruments she used to perform John Cage's *Aria*. | A young visitor participates in an interactive multimedia performance organized by dance professors James Coleman and Terese Freedman. | Art Museum Advisory Board members gather for the Museum's anniversary.



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Roman
Brooch with
cameo portrait of
a woman, 3rd
century CE
Gold and shell
Museum Purchase
1926.4.C.1

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Memberships are tax-deductible contributions to support the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, a department of Mount Holyoke College. Memberships are valid for one year.

Questions? Call 413.538.2245 or email artmuseum@mtholyoke.edu

Thank you for your support!



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Do you seek new experiences with art? Do you enjoy developing friendships with others who share your passion for art? The MHCAM Director's Circle offers this and more! Director's Circle members receive exclusive access to special Museum events, trips, and publications, and enjoy the company of a community of dedicated art supporters.

Join today to support the Museum and receive invitations to special events including

our annual Director's Circle Art Tour led by the Museum's new director, Tricia Y. Paik, in Chicago this May.

Go to www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum or complete the membership form in this newsletter to join. For more information, please contact Debbie Davis, ddavis@mtholyoke.edu or 413.538.2096.

Participants in the 2016 Director's Circle Art Tour enjoyed behind-the-scenes tours of private collections, museums, and galleries in San Francisco.

To learn more about MHCAM exhibitions, events, and membership visit www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum

MUSEUM HOURS
Tuesday–Friday,
11 a.m.–5 p.m.
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1–5 p.m.
Free, open to the public, and fully accessible.

**Mount Holyoke
College Art Museum**
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