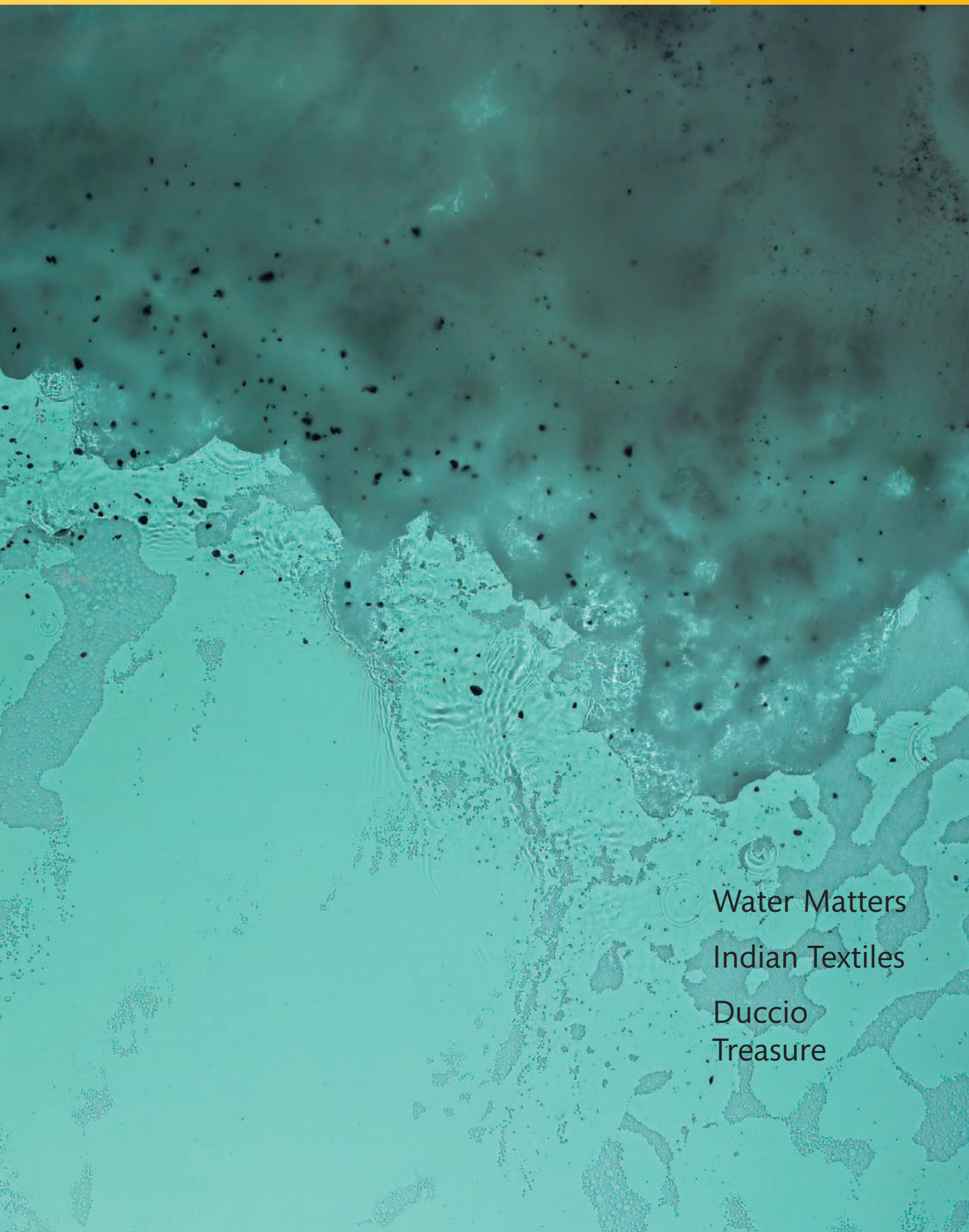
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

Spring 2005



Water Matters

Indian Textiles

Duccio
Treasure

LETTER

ONE OF THE MUSEUM'S primary goals is to stimulate inquisitive looking and encourage the understanding of artistic achievements throughout history. Since art objects bring ideas to life in a vital and palpable way, faculty from across the curriculum can use the collection as a teaching resource. Alan Durfee's math class, for example, studied perspective and the concept of the vanishing point by looking carefully at various paintings. Tom Wartenberg's philosophy class visited and had a lively discussion of issues ranging from what constitutes art to how artists create meaning. Nicole Vaget used the French landscape show last fall to teach description and narration for French composition. Each student selected a painting, wrote an expository paper, and gave an oral presentation in French in the galleries.

"This generation is bombarded with images, speed and glitz," says Vaget. "Viewing these immobile scenes required some adjustment, but they became acquainted with their selection on a very personal level. And they discovered that, unlike virtual images, paintings are unique and alive." Being in the museum enhanced the presentations, Vaget notes. "In front of those beautiful paintings, it was energizing."

After Sarah Green's Asian studies students viewed some Asian bronze sculptures, she wrote, "It was an excellent learning event, particularly because they could touch the objects [with gloved hands, of course]. The experience was very immediate, as encounters with art really should be. . . .I appreciate [your] care and attention." Individuals in Diana Larkin's Egyptian art class were "dazzled" when allowed to handle a selection of their choice. Said one, "Holding a bowl that another human being made 5,000 years ago [is] pretty incredible. Thrilling is the closest I can come to describing [it]." Another commented, "We faced the cultural past head-on." The French landscape exhibition was a major component of Bettina Bergmann's class "Issues in Art History." By emphasizing looking and describing, students addressed shifting cultural attitudes in the light of politicized issues of identity, technology, urban development and tourism.

And proving that one is never too young for inquisitive looking, the museum's docents launched a pilot program with local third graders. Using photographic details of sculptures as clues, children had to find the objects in question. Using paintings, docents also stimulated observation and discussion about what they were seeing. A huge success, the program will soon include more schools.

We look forward to hosting classes from all disciplines. From investigating political symbolism in ancient coins to researching episodes in the life of Heracles using a Greek vase, the possibilities for using this terrific cultural resource are endless.

MARIANNE DOEZEMA
Florence Finch Abbott Director

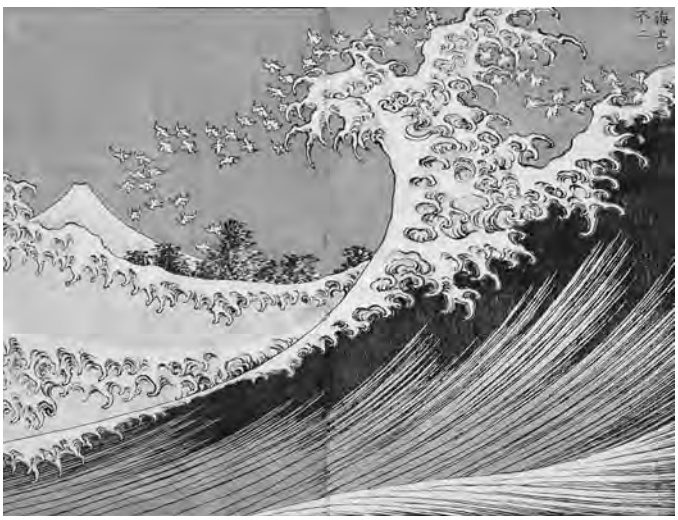
COVER:
Susan Derges (British, b. 1955) *September 1998* (detail), dye-destruction print photogram, 1998. Gift of Jennifer Vorbach (Jennifer Josselson, class of 1978)
See page 6 for a full view of the image.

Water, Water Everywhere!

INTERVIEW

IN THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION Karen Remmler, director of the Weissman Center for Leadership and the Liberal Arts, Thomas Millette, director of the Center for the Environment, and Marianne Doezema, director of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, discuss the origin and substance of the yearlong "Water Matters" program at Mount Holyoke College. For details related to the museum's current *Eye on Water* exhibition, see page 5.

MD: The recent tsunami in Asia reminds us that besides being a key element of life, water is also a powerful destructive force. The subject of water resonates with all of us—I remember that the faculty arts group spoke a long time ago about a water theme and programming that could be developed. But then the Weissman Center got involved, and momentum picked up.



Katsushika Hokusai
(Japanese 1760–1849)
Fuji of the Waves from the series *100 Views of Mount Fuji*, woodblock print, 1836
Gift of Mrs. Louis Black
(Helene Brosseau, class of 1931)

KR: Yes, when Chris Benfey and I became codirectors of the Center five years ago, water was a theme that came up in planning discussions all the time. It is the interdisciplinary topic that affects everyone, everywhere.

TM: At the same time I had started working on the campus water system. We were trying to develop a number of related courses and linkages as part of a Mellon grant which allowed the campus to be an outdoor laboratory. A certain synergy got everybody thinking about water. A faculty seminar, hosted by the Center for the Environment, was based on the notion of looking at the topic from perspectives other than science. The discussions were fascinating. Everyone had their own disciplinary interest, but there were echoes among us. Karen and I were hopeful that seeds for this "Water Matters" series would sprout—and they did.

KR: Colleagues across the disciplines are now teaching water-related courses that might not otherwise be happening in the same year. Students can really be immersed in the topic across the curriculum. Breaking down curricular divides is crucial here.

MD: It's certainly happening in all of our disciplines. We wove the water theme into our French landscape exhibition last fall. The museum's Daubigny, one of two touchstone paintings in the installation, has water as its central feature. In the opening gallery talk, co-curator Michael Marlais spoke of water not only as a compositional element but also as a subject, a thematic event. And then Thomas gave a fascinating lecture on the Daubigny from an ecological point of view.

James Rosenquist
(American, b. 1933)
My Mind is a Glass of Water,
color lithograph, 1972
Gift of Susan B. Matheson
(class of 1968)

TM: Preparation for that was a bit nerve-wracking! Like any 20th-century scientist, I've been trained to use one side of my brain and not the other. But art is definitely part of my life. The challenge and unconventional tack of a scientist looking at a French landscape painting was irresistible. I tried to think about the painting as a landscape, the organisms and the ecology of the site, how that linked to the images and textures and tone in the painting. In that painting, you can see the weather, the season, the condition of the site. Leszek Bledski [senior research associate, ecology] helped me work through the limnology of the painting. Intellectually, it was a wonderful adventure; I'm going to rework it as a journal article. My ES 100 class was there, and when we spoke about the talk later I had some sense that students connected with it in the way that I had hoped—to think about water in a variety of spheres that overlap, instead of individual spheres, which is the way science tends to work.

KR: Listening to you reminds me of an earlier campus-wide series: "The New Meaning of Travel" (fall 2002). In a brilliant move Marianne was able to bring Thomas Cole's painting *The Oxbow* here from The Metropolitan Museum of Art as the centerpiece of an exhibition about Mt. Holyoke (the mountain) as a travel destination. Looking at that painting then, I remember thinking about how water is rendered in art and how water in art enables us to see this life-giving element as we have never seen it—or thought about it—before. We even begin to experience it differently. Artists have helped make the properties of water more visible for those who are not scientists. They also help us use our imaginations in understanding that water matters.

This spring's symposium "The Place of Water in the World: Ritual, Beauty and the Environment" will bring together international and local scholars, activists, and practitioners to talk about their water-related work and give them space to network. A session on transforming community will look at the meaning of water in urban planning and landscape architecture and how ecoartists contribute to this. Another session will include writers, photographers and scientists who have documented the mutual impact of the environment, people, and cultural politics on major rivers. A film historian and a filmmaker will look at experimental film and ways in which water has been the subject or has actually been used to create different images. Alumnae with an interest in water and the general public are invited to participate in discussions and workshops. (See www.mtholyoke.edu/ go/water.) We will look at water as a permeable barrier, and at the ways creatures emerge from and return to water, and the relationship between the human body and water. We'll also focus on women and water—in many parts of the world women are the water carriers, so there's a relationship to gender politics as well.

MD: It's an ambitious series and encapsulates how all of us can make our programs more meaningful to various constituencies by coming together. The keynote speaker, Mary

Miss, is a very influential contemporary artist and sculptor. She speaks eloquently about artists using water as a subject and site for public work. One of her very interesting pieces was done in 1988 along an abandoned area of shoreline in Battery Park [New York City]. In an effort to bring people back to this place, she created a series of walkways that go up and out into the water. And visitors have come in great numbers.

KR: Students also will be participating and presenting their work. And Holger Teschke of the theatre arts department is directing *Undine Goes,* a performance piece about mythical water figures, like mermaids and other fabled marine creatures, with Jim Coleman and dance students.

TM: I'd like to recapitulate a bit about the fall semester. I have a class that works on constructive wetland issues upstream of Upper Lake. This long-term project started a couple of years ago and is inching toward a strategy to modify the wetlands. If water coming to campus is cleaner, it will help us manage the quality of the water in Lower Lake and avoid using chemicals in this cultural resource. Photographer Kathie Florsheim (class of '69) was among our speakers. She passionately showed how the adjacencies of human society and water, particularly oceans, intersect. Lots of people have been thinking about this for a long time, but she, as a talented photographer, looked at the issue in a different way. John Reid, president of Bioshelters, Inc., spoke about water in the new economy. The notion there was that water is an industrial tool, a natural resource for production. Most production mechanisms degrade water, but we don't have an unlimited supply. That's an issue. John's industrial process is a zero-discharge recycler of water. If more industries would think about opportunities to optimize their manufacturing infrastructures by following the Bioshelter paradigm, then growth truly would be unlimited. The symposium really is the culmination of this yearlong series of events.

KR: I'm very excited about the *Eye on Water* exhibition in the museum's print room, too.

MD: The show includes images of waterfalls, rivers, aspects of the ocean, how water is—and has been—extracted for use. Visitors will see various creative perspectives in a variety of media.

KR: Water creates a sense of place, metaphysically, physically, and viscerally. We interact with water in particular spaces and those spaces change. Our hope is that we all become much more aware of water as a resource and perhaps think about what it would be like to go without water. As Emily Dickinson said: "Water is taught by thirst." ■

Vija Celmins
(American, b. Latvia 1939)
Drypoint—Ocean Surface, 1983
Purchase in honor of Professor Jean C. Harris

Petals and Plumage: A Collection of Indian Textiles

26 January–20 March 2005

The history of textiles from India over the last two millennia has been closely linked with the history of global trade. Cottons, silks and Kashmir shawls were highly prized in Europe and America during the colonial period, and in earlier times cotton fabrics from India were objects of prestige in Southeast Asia and the countries around the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The mastery of Indian spinners, dyers and weavers over their materials was renowned and not attained elsewhere in the world until the advent of the industrial revolution and the concomitant invention of mechanical looms and chemical dyes.

Petals and Plumage, organized by the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, with guest curator Cynthia Cunningham Cort, a specialist in Indian textiles, celebrates the extraordinary aesthetic and technical diversity of Indian textiles and attests to India's preeminence in textile production throughout history. The works are all drawn from an extraordinary private collection which simultaneously displays the rich variations within Indian traditions of ornamentation and speaks of textile utility within Indian cultural contexts. The ubiquity of flora and fauna in defining the vernacular of adornment in India is revealed in the vivacious petals and fanciful plumage that embellish and enliven the overall visual effect. Visitors will see examples of a broad range of production techniques, including painting, block printing, ikat, tie-dye, brocade, tapestry and embroidery, spanning 600 years of the history, graphic beauty and technical precision of this remarkable tradition.

From early times, Indian brocades achieved worldwide fame. Romans wrote of them as cloth of gold. Indian looms produced yardage for garments that Muslim and Rajput rulers wore. At the beginning of the 17th century, when Europeans began to trade in the Spice Islands, Indian textiles were the commodities most in demand in these island cultures. Dutch, Portuguese and English traders purchased shiploads of fabric to trade for spices from Indonesia where they were used for clothing, ceremonial status, gift exchange and barter. At the same time painted and printed textiles began to be exported directly to Europe, though the market demanded different designs, materials and colors.

Early Indian textiles are rare. Climate, insect damage and usage patterns contributed to their rapid deterioration. In addition, worn cloth woven with gold or silver thread often was burned to reclaim the precious metals. This exhibition does, however, include rare examples from the 15th and 16th centuries, as well as trade textiles—some of which have only

Indian, Gujarati, for the Indonesian market.
Patolu with Design of Elephants (detail), ikat dyed silk
19th century
Private collection

recently come to light. Their rich and varied cultural origins, together with their diverse and complex production techniques, accentuate the visual appeal of these exquisite fabrics.

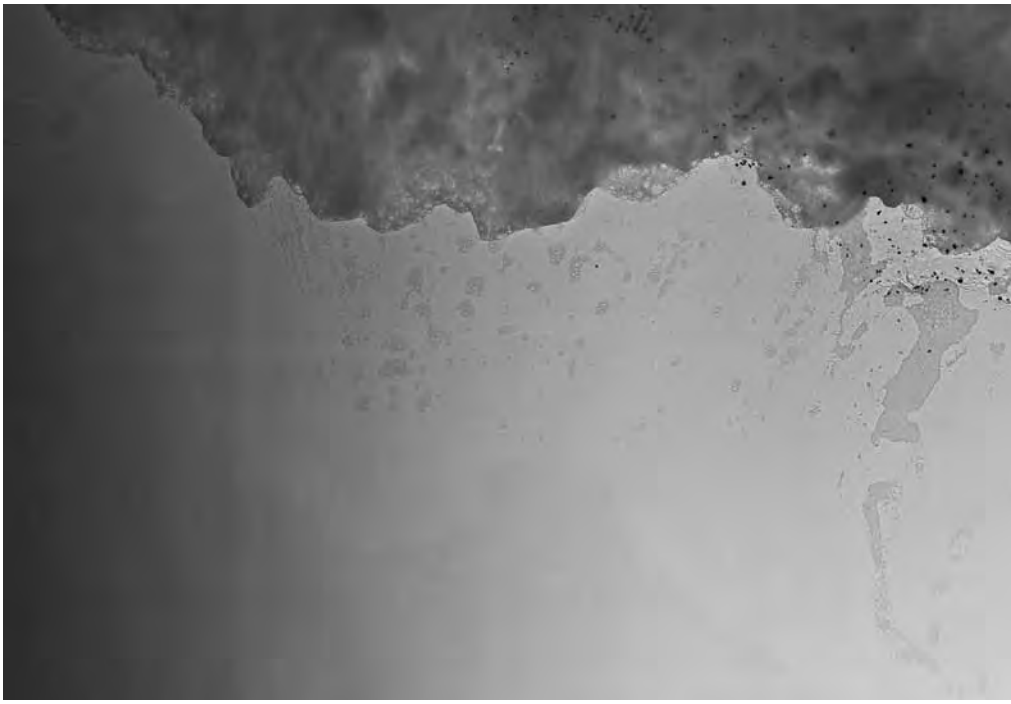
"My husband and I are delighted that these 'ambassadors' for Indian art and culture are being used to educational advantage," says Banoo Parpia of their collection. "Textiles, like other decorative arts, have been a stepchild in the art world for too long. The technical mastery and creative expression on display here offer an overall aesthetic impact that rivals the finest paintings and sculpture. That the museum recognizes this and is bringing the exhibition to the community is very gratifying."

Eye on Water
1 February–3 July 2005

Water is the most vital element of life as well as creative and spiritual expression. Artistic renditions of water affirm our connection to it, just as water's place in the world determines not only our existence but that of the planet and all its inhabitants. Organized in conjunction with the yearlong series of programs and events developed at Mount Holyoke College around the theme "Water Matters," this exhibition in the Rodney L. White Print Room focuses on water as a subject for artists from a diversity of cultures in a variety of media. Selections from the museum's collection include two of Ansel Adams' magnificent photographs of water taken in American national parks, Vija Celmins' stunning etching *Drypoint—Ocean Surface,* and Louisa Chase's woodcut *Red Sea* of hands reaching out of a purple-, black- and red-colored sea.

Ansel Adams (American, 1902–1984)
Portfolio Three-Yosemite Valley: Nevada Falls, Rainbow, gelatin silver print photograph, 1960
Gift of Hugh Tatlock, M.D., in memory of Jessie Tatlock

Visitors will see *Fuji of the Waves* by Katsushika Hokusai from the book *One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji,* printed in 1836 (the year before Mount Holyoke was founded). In this image the artist has magically transformed the wave's spray into a flock of birds. Reflecting that same time period in history on the opposite side of the globe is the watercolor *View of Mount Holyoke, Massachusetts, and the Connecticut River* by Elizabeth Goodridge. It depicts her interpretation of this famous scene practically in the College's backyard. The view from and of the mountain, which in the 19th century was the second most visited tourist destination in the United States, continues to inspire artists. Among them are Martha Armstrong and Robert Aller. The



Susan Derges (British, b. 1955) *September 1998*, dye-destruction print photogram, 1998. Gift of Jennifer Vorbach (Jennifer Josselson, class of 1978)
See page 10 for details about this image, on view in *Eye on Water*.

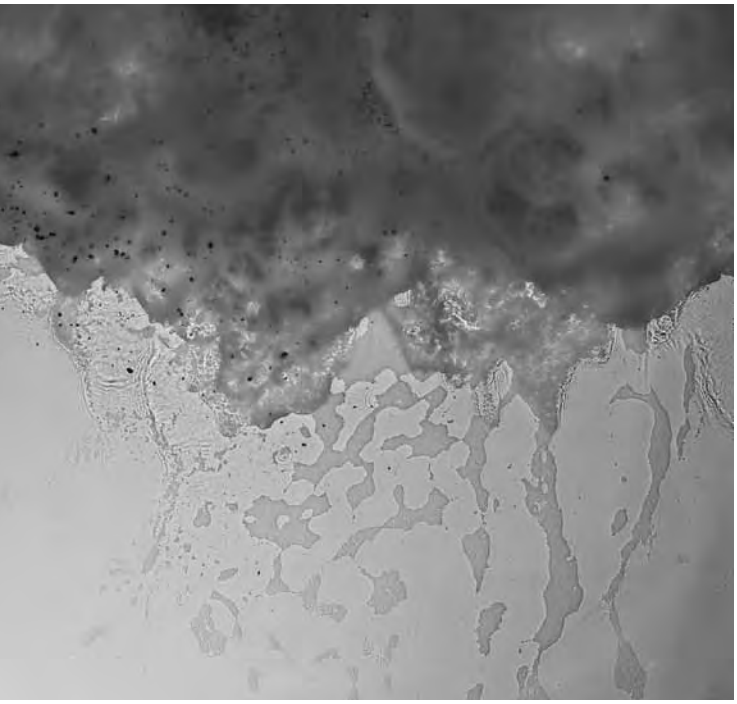
exhibition includes Armstrong's 1993 painting *Oxbow from the Summit House* and Aller's photograph *View from Mount Holyoke, South Hadley, Massachusetts,* 2001 (for more, see Acquisitions in this issue).

Best known for her documentary photographs of New York City, Berenice Abbott was also engaged in scientific interpretation. Included in the show is *Water Pattern* (from her *Science Pictures*) that reflects Abbott's appreciation for the capacity of rigorously conceived images to convey information in an aesthetically engaging way. Sébah J. Pascal's 19th-century photographs of water-conveying devices in the Nile River document for posterity how inhabitants of the arid region managed the collection of this life-sustaining liquid. An Italian albumen print of the same period shows a Roman aqueduct. Also on view is the recent acquisition *Little Pigeon River, Tennessee* by Justin Kimball, who received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2003 for distinguished achievement and exceptional promise for future accomplishment.

For details about the yearlong "Water Matters" program, cosponsored by the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum with the Weissman Center for Leadership and the Liberal Arts and the Center for the Environment, see www.mtholyoke.edu/go/water. And don't miss the interview in this issue that discusses how the series came to be.

Architecture of Silence: Cistercian Abbeys of France—Photographs by David Heald
29 March–3 July 2005

Long revered for their exquisitely proportioned spaces and ethereal acoustics, early Cistercian abbeys of France, together with the great cathedrals, embody the profound mastery of architecture that blossomed in 12th- and 13th-century Europe. Built by monks nearly 900 years ago, these remarkable medieval buildings are renowned among contemporary



architects and artists for their austere, almost minimal, design and immensely refined construction. Long interested in architecture and the natural landscape, David Heald, chief photographer for the Guggenheim Museum, made seven trips to France between 1985 and 1995 to photograph 22 of these sites.

This traveling exhibition, organized by Exhibitions International of New York, includes 40 luminous large-format black-and-white images that are saturated with surface detail, penetrating illumination, and rich tonal range. Tom Hinson, curator of photography at the Cleveland Museum of Art, notes, "Heald's photographs capture the essence, the emotional impact, of these incredible spaces. In his detailed images, the marriage of light, space, and texture is succinctly, beautifully expressed. His serene photographs perfectly render the distinguishing quality of Cisterian architecture and monastic life: silence."

Heald's work is part of many public and private collections (including Mount Holyoke's) and has appeared in numerous publications, including the highly acclaimed book of the same title as the exhibition (Harry N. Abrams, 2000). Chosen as one of the finest books on architecture in 2000 by the *New York Times Book Review,* the photographs in it were described as "hauntingly beautiful . . . perfectly illustrat[ing] Le Corbusier's famous definition of architecture as 'the skillful, correct and magnificent play of volumes assembled in light.'" In the book's introduction, Terry N. Kinder writes, "These photographs awaken a longing for a quieter, simpler existence. . . .The immediacy of the images

David Heald (American, b. 1951)
Nave and Chevet Looking East, Silvacane, gelatin silver print photograph, 1986

makes us want to touch stone, to run a hand across the ancient surfaces, angles remarkably fresh, tool marks still visible. . . . The indefinable magnetism present here—one might call it the attraction of God—is almost lost on the surface of today's culture. Yet in the poetry of an image one can be stirred by the same spirit that flickered in Cistercians. . . ." Among today's foremost architectural photographers, Heald has created a unique body of work that is the defining photographic record of an extraordinary architectural legacy. Copies of the catalogue and boxed cards are available for purchase at the museum.

Jay DeFeo (American, 1929–1989)
Untitled (teeth in shell), gelatin silver print photograph, 1973
Courtesy of the Estate of Jay DeFeo © 2005 The Estate of Jay DeFeo/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Out of My Own Head: Photographs by Jay DeFeo
6 September–11 December 2005

"I worked on photography alone . . . and gave it nearly as much attention as painting in the early 1970s. . . . Most of the work . . . was concerned with photographing various objects that later became 'models' for the paintings to come. The best of them have a kind of haunting quality I think . . . surrealists leanings . . . a sense of portraiture in landscape surroundings. . . . It is worthy of mention because it has had a most important role in my work as a whole."

—Jay DeFeo, Letter to Dorothy Miller, 1977

In her lifetime Jay DeFeo (1929–1989) produced hundreds of evocative drawings, paintings and photo collages. A leader in San Francisco's avant-garde art and poetry world of the 1950s, along with Allen Ginsberg, she is known as an abstract expressionist, a Beat painter, a Funk artist, an eccentric and a romantic. Even so, her work was virtually unknown beyond the West Coast, although she was prominently featured in a 1975 exhibition at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum. After the Berkeley Art Museum's traveling exhibition *Jay DeFeo: Works on Paper* reintroduced her to the art world in 1990, her reputation began to grow. In 2003, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York made her painting *The Rose* a focal point of an exhibition, the first in New York, in conjunction with a book on the subject. This massive, radiant impasto, built up layer upon layer over seven years, was DeFeo's masterpiece of the 1960s. Weighing more than a ton and measuring 7.5 x 11 feet, the painting is central to her work as well as the breadth of her artistic activity.

Forty years worth of writings provides a solid foundation for understanding the complexities of DeFeo's oeuvre. Yet much still needs to be examined to get a complete picture. Certainly, her photography has received scant attention. This exhibition, developed by the Mills College Art Museum, introduces viewers to a range of her photographic work and aims to encourage further exploration of this remarkable artist's contribution to the medium. The 30 images, mostly unique prints made between 1972–74, raise a range of vital questions about DeFeo's artwork and practice. While there are numerous ways of approaching her photographs, they share a singular and constant strategy of engaging the viewer. DeFeo never fails to invite us to first formally analyze her work and then to reward our sustained looking, usually with another question out of our own heads. ■

Venetian Baroque Painting

Last spring the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum organized the exhibition *The Intimate Baroque: Small Paintings from the John Ritter B. Collection.* When the show closed, Ritter generously donated Giambattista Bassano's *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* to the museum. Through his gift, students can appreciate firsthand a part of the private world of 16th-century cabinet painting in Italy.

Italian Baroque art is generally thought to be grandiose in size and aspiration. Theatrical altarpieces, illusionistic ceiling frescoes, spectacular fountains and flamboyant church facades, largely created for institutional patrons and public display, fill textbooks and tourist itineraries dedicated to the visual arts of 17th-century Italy. However, the period also witnessed a proliferation of smaller, more intimate works of art—like the Bassano—destined for a burgeoning market of private collectors. This charming painting is but one of several known replicas of a composition (now in Houston) that is co-signed by Jacopo Bassano and his son Francesco. The original is dated 1576–77, just when the younger Bassano began to paint biblical subjects as genre scenes in smaller formats for private collectors and dealers. The demand must have been considerable given the number of versions and variants that survive.

Jacopo's father and his three other sons were also artists. Together this dynasty of painters was responsible for the creation of a distinctive narrative naturalism drawn from their rural background in Bassano del Grappa, a town northwest of Venice from which the family took its name. The imagery of the Bassano family remained remarkably coherent

Giambattista Bassano (Italian, 1553–1613)
Christ in the House of Mary and Martha, oil on panel
Gift of John B. Ritter

over a period of several decades and replicating their own work was an important part of the enterprise. One of Jacopo's four sons, Giambattista, is even said to have foresworn an independent career in favor of "contenting himself by simply following the masterly manner of his father, copying and imitating his works so skillfully that even the most expert eye has difficulty distinguishing the original from the copy," as art department professor John Varriano noted in the gallery guide. The composition of the Ritter picture reverses that of the presumed original in Houston, suggesting the painter may have used a print as an intermediate source of inspiration.

Water Photography

New to the collection are several photographs that are on view in the *Eye on Water* exhibition (see page 5 for more information). Jennifer Josselson Vorbach (class of 1978) donated a Susan Derges photograph entitled *September 1998,* produced without a conventional camera lens. Her internationally acclaimed "photograms" are made directly onto photo emulsion, using running water as a lens. Everything passing through the water, or reflected on it, becomes the image. The photograms are made at night, using only moonlight and a flashlight held above the water, as the natural environment becomes her darkroom. Derges' work, which pushes the parameters of photographic practice, reveals surprising aspects, such as vortex trails in water and how moonlight can give a color bias to prints.

Derges' notable work combines science and art to record processes of transformation. During the early 1980s in Japan, she produced a series of ghostly black-and-white photographs by sprinkling carborundum powder directly onto photographic emulsion where it was agitated by sound waves at varying frequencies. Notions of natural order and chaos, perception and metaphor play a fundamental role in her later work. Influenced by the way 19th-century Japanese artists, such as Hiroshige and Hokusai, represent landscape and the vicissitudes of nature, she sees each image of cellular or tissue-like streams of water and foliage as "living entities reflecting a human microcosm." These images become traces, the residue of unique chance operations which record a "collective memory" of nature.

Peter Henry Emerson (British, 1856–1936)
Marsh Man Going to Cut School-Stuff, platinum print photograph, 1885
Purchase with funds realized from bequest of Britta J. Stamy (class of 1944)

The purchase of Peter Henry Emerson's 1885 photograph *Marsh Man Going to Cut School-Stuff* shows a fisherman preparing bait that will bring in

Robert Aller (American, b. 1947)
View from Mount Holyoke, South Hadley, Massachusetts, 2001, carbon pigment photograph, 2004
Gift of Robert Aller

his livelihood. Born in Cuba to a British mother and an American plantation owner, Emerson spent his early youth in the northeastern United States before moving to England in 1869. Schooled at Cambridge, he received his medical degree in 1885. The following year he abandoned medicine for writing and photography. Between 1886 and 1895 Emerson published eight photographic portfolios or books. Often described as a difficult zealot, he vocally championed a naturalistic approach to making images and advocated soft-focus lens techniques. He favored presenting rural subjects in a simple, direct manner. Emerson's influential 1889 book *Naturalistic Photography* outlined his thesis that photography's ability to record nature truthfully was its most expressive one. A tireless champion of photography as a fine art, Emerson became the unofficial godfather of the Photo-Secessionist movement, founded by Alfred Stieglitz in 1902.

Robert J. Aller's *View from Mount Holyoke, South Hadley, Massachusetts,* 2001, shown in *Changing Prospects: The View from Mount Holyoke* (2002), was recently given to the museum by the artist. Aller, in a spirit of naturalism, approached the view as he imagined Thomas Cole would have when he painted *The Oxbow,* now hanging at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Making photographic "sketches" of nature that he saw while hiking up the mountain, Aller then took some panoramic shots from the mountaintop. In this image he, like Cole, included a rock ledge at the left as well as an extended view of the river on the right. Although a slight haze obscures some details in the distance, he has captured the same sense of vastness portrayed by Cole. His photograph, which adds depth to the museum's collection of this famous scene, also reveals the difficulty of identifying the parameters of the Oxbow today, with the addition of Route 91, a factory and the marina basin. Even so, the foreground scene remains remarkably similar to Cole's view. ■

THANKS

Roman, *Denarius with the Head of Faustina*, silver, 138–139 AD
Gift of Mark Salton

Thank you to the following Friends of Art who supported the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum between July 1, 2004 and January 25, 2005. Their generosity makes things happen—from installing multiple special exhibitions each year to keeping the galleries open for visitors six days a week. We can't get it done without our Friends! If you'd like to join, or wish to renew, see back cover for details.

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Rare Duccio Painting at Home in South Hadley

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART'S purchase of an early Renaissance painting by Duccio di Buoninsegna (1278–1319) last fall for a cool $45 million pointed again to the rarity of paintings by the artist and his circle, especially in the United States. Smaller than a sheet of paper, and painted in tempera and gold on a panel, the *Madonna and Child* (ca. 1300) is the first Duccio in the Met's collection. Only the Frick in New York has another. Paris' Louvre has none. But visitors to the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum can feast their eyes on a magnificent panel from Duccio's workshop.

Mount Holyoke's *Angel* is from the renowned double-sided *Maestà* altarpiece (1308–1311), created for the Cathedral of Siena in more than 40 sections. Like many early altarpieces, the *Maestà* sections were dispersed throughout Europe and the United States in the 18th century. Mount Holyoke's small but precious panel, probably executed by a workshop assistant under Duccio's supervision, is one of four angel pinnacles that survive. The figure's elegant pink and light green robes and gilded halo, as well as the panel's rich gilded border and ground, are characteristically Ducciesque. The angel's frontal pose conveys an aura of unapproachable grandeur and solemnity that religious Trecento Italian art retains from its Byzantine heritage.

The *Maestà*'s importance to Siena is legendary. When it was carried to the Duomo in 1311, the Bishop ordered a great procession "of priests and brothers . . . accompanied by . . . all the populace and all the most worthy . . . next to the said panel with lights lit in their hands, and then behind were women and children with much devotion." The angel traveled back to Siena in 2003–04 for a major international exhibition that gathered elements of the original *Maestà* at the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo and Santa Maria della Scala.

The painting came to Mount Holyoke in 1965 through the bequest of collector Caroline Hill. She acquired the angel in the 1920s when the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin deaccessioned it. Though she had no direct ties to Mount Holyoke, Hill was captivated by the museum's broad collection and its use in the liberal arts curriculum. She left many other Renaissance and Medieval works to the museum, forming the centerpiece of the gallery named in her honor.

Attributed to Casole Fresco Painter, school of Duccio di Buoninsegna (Italian, active 1278–1318)
Angel (Pinnacle from the *Maestà* altarpiece), tempera and gold leaf on panel, ca. 1308–1311
Bequest of Caroline R. Hill

Joseph Goodhue Chandler
(American, 1813–1884)
Third Meeting House, South Hadley, oil on canvas, 1876
Gift of Mrs. Thomas E. Brown, Jr.

Fine art reproductions of this image and others are available for purchase. Go to www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/artmuseum/general_info.html for details or call 413-538-2245.

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