

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

FALL 2009

Lisette Model
Dance
Conservation



LETTER



THE MUSEUM RECEIVES correspondence almost every day regarding the Andrew W. Mellon grant that was announced last spring—an award that will allow us to further enhance the integration of the Museum and its collection into the curriculum across the campus. For a three-month period, the messages also focused on searches for two new staff members funded by the grant. One of my favorites came from Ellen Alvord shortly after her on-campus interview for the position of Andrew W. Mellon Coordinator of Academic Affairs. Ellen is also an alumna of the College (Class of 1985) and so it was especially gratifying to read: “The art museum has never felt as dynamic and as exciting as it felt on this last visit.”

The energy Ellen sensed while speaking with faculty and students has only intensified, in part because she has since joined the Museum staff as the new Coordinator. She has already begun her outreach efforts, meeting with faculty members about their classes, reviewing syllabi, and suggesting potential uses of the Museum’s exhibitions and collections. Ellen’s growing knowledge of our holdings and experience handling delicate works of art have greatly aided these faculty collaborations.

The Mellon grant also provides funding to support an assistant to the curator whose primary responsibilities involve working closely with Wendy Watson to develop and care for the collection, and helping to organize changing exhibitions. Shortly after Rachel Beaupré joined the staff as the new Mellon Curatorial Assistant it became clear that she would contribute to the Museum’s work in a rich variety of ways. She quickly became an integral member of the Museum team and has had the opportunity to be involved with acquisitions, preparations for exhibitions, and the redesign of the Museum Web site. Besides managing the Museum’s rights and reproductions operation, Rachel also helps field requests for information from students, faculty, and researchers.

Mellon-supported internships give students the special opportunity to gain professional museum experience and work on substantive projects. The first of these interns, Theresa Antonellis, (FP, Class of 2010) worked all last summer and continues to do so this fall while continuing her studies. One of her most important projects has been gathering information about the various collections at the College, ranging from the well-catalogued live plants in the Talcott Greenhouse and the Botanic Garden to a select group of historical barometers on view in the Kendade Hall atrium.

The Museum staff is firmly committed to the value of using original works of art in teaching, and it only makes sense to extend that effort to other primary resources on campus, like the Skinner Museum, which my staff also administers. As Curator Wendy Watson has remarked: “There are a multitude of underutilized treasure troves hidden in plain sight all over the College. Costumes, documents, fossils, minerals, rare books, Japanese tea ceremony items, cuneiform tablets, furniture, plaster casts, and even our historic buildings provide unparalleled opportunities for students to learn from primary materials. After we’ve gathered the information, we hope to make these resources available through the College’s Web site, but more importantly, in actuality.”

COVER:

Barbara Morgan (American,
1900–1992)
Valerie Bettis—Desperate Heart
Gelatin silver print photograph
1944
Gift of Donald Holden
© Barbara Morgan
The Barbara Morgan Archive

Objects for Learning: Partnering with the Yale University Art Gallery

IN THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION, Director Marianne Doezema discusses the Museum's participation in a collections sharing project initiated by the Yale University Art Gallery with Bettina Bergmann, Helene Phillips Herzig '49 Professor of Art, and Geoff Sumi, Associate Professor of Classics. The planning phase of the initiative was funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and we are hopeful that the Foundation will also subsidize the implementation phase.

MD: I want to start by thanking you for your participation in the planning process for this project. You have both visited Yale with our Museum staff members to help select the objects that we will borrow, ensuring that the antiquities we bring to Mount Holyoke will support the specific educational goals of our faculty and students in classes across the curriculum. I am also grateful to Jock Reynolds, Director of the Yale University Art Gallery, for including us in this project, along with the Williams College Museum of Art, the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, the Smith College Museum of Art, and the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin. Our thanks go to Susan

Roman, from Gerasa
Mosaic Fragment with Bust of Erato
Stone and glass mosaic
Late 2nd to early 3rd-century CE
Ruth Elizabeth White Fund
Yale University Art Gallery



INTERVIEW

Matheson (Class of 1969), as well. She is Chief Curator and Curator of Ancient Art at Yale and has been enormously helpful in our work there.

BB: It was tantalizing to go there and learn more about the depth and breadth of Yale's holdings in Greek and Roman materials.

MD: In an email about this forthcoming loan, you summarized one of the themes you have in mind as you consider which objects would be most useful for your teaching. You mentioned a mosaic and two reliefs that would "make wonderful study objects, as they raise issues of excavation, collecting, and reconstruction (my favorite topic)." Can you tell us why you like this topic so much?

BB: My main focus of research has been Roman frescoes. Many museum visitors do not see that painted frescoes were part of the physical fabric of a building just as mosaics were part of the floor. And so I've been very interested in the ways that museums exhibit "objects" that were actually embedded in the built environment. Considering these issues is a great way for students to understand the original function of many ancient works on display in a gallery. As they become engaged in reconstructing the environments—either in the form of a photo montage, a computer recreation, or a built model—students learn when and where objects were excavated. That introduces them to the history and the process of archaeology. We talk about how these objects left their sites of origin, the journeys they've taken since ancient times, and how they have been collected and exhibited.

GS: I do something similar with inscriptions from buildings or sculpture, for example. Usually when students read them they are translated and totally out of context. I've tried to convey a sense that these inscriptions were really part of a larger whole—a monument or statue base, whatever it might be—to give the students some sense of the original setting.

BB: Several of the objects we are borrowing from Yale bear inscriptions that are very revealing. For example, the mosaics have Greek words inscribed on them, so students can see the way inscriptions have a role in identifying the figures that are represented.

MD: I understand you are also interested in visual narrative.

BB: Indeed, and several of the objects we will borrow from Yale tell important stories. Greek vases depict mythological figures such as Herakles involved in heroic adventures. A couple have scenes of ancient theatrical performances. In one of my regular courses (taught with Paula Debnar in Classics), *Gods and Mortals: Myth in Ancient Art and Literature*, a major focus is visual narrative and how such complex tales can be so effectively represented on such small objects. A single attribute held in the hand can signal the identity of a god or hero, and the juxtaposition of two figures can convey one moment of an elaborate tragedy.

MD: What are some of the other subjects that interest you, Geoff?

GS: I became involved in this project mainly to access the Roman coin collection at the

Roman
Silver Denarius of Augustus
Silver, 29–27 BCE
Numismatic Collection Transfer
2001, Gift of Hopkins
Grammar School
Yale University Art Gallery



Yale University Art Gallery. In my courses, I place a strong emphasis on the interpretation of primary evidence—i.e., literary texts, inscriptions, architectural remains, and coins. I've found over the years that students really appreciate the opportunity to handle ancient artifacts rather than merely looking at images of them projected on a screen in the classroom. Roman coins are especially interesting because they contain visual images disseminated by the ruling authority. These images might supplement, corroborate, or contradict the written sources.

MD: How do you plan to incorporate the coins into your curriculum this year?

GS: For my Roman history course this fall, I am planning a unit on Roman coins within a specific historical context. I want to focus on the reign of Emperor Augustus, especially the transition to monarchy from the late Republic when Augustus was coming to power, and discuss with my students the visual imagery that appears on his coins. Students can then compare this imagery with the other sources that they are reading, and we can discuss how numismatic depictions adhere to or depart from the written record. A coin of particular interest from the Yale collection depicts on the reverse a triumphal arch surmounted by Augustus riding in a *quadriga*, or four-horse chariot. This is probably a representation of an arch erected in the Roman Forum that no longer survives. A coin such as this can foster a discussion about the topography of Rome that Augustus largely reshaped when he came to power. He also restricted celebrations of triumphs to members of the imperial family, thus laying the foundations for court ceremony. This is one way that I'm hoping to use some of Yale's coins to supplement the Art Museum's own strong collection.



Roman copy of an original by Eutychides (Greek, active ca. 295 BCE)
Bronze Statuette of Tyche
Bronze, 2nd century CE
Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., B.A.
1913, Fund
Yale University Art Gallery

MD: That is one of the main goals of this collections sharing initiative, to complement and enhance the holdings of the six participating museums through the loan of objects from Yale's extensive collection. What are some of the other ways these objects relate to our own holdings in ancient art?

BB: The other important theme associated with the Yale objects is the representation of women in antiquity. We have included on our list of requests a beautiful marble head of an Alexandrian queen and a miniature ivory head of the Roman empress Julia Domna, which will be wonderful complements to our portrait of Faustina and offer more original works for students to examine firsthand in my seminar on ancient female portraits. The



Egyptian/Greek
Portrait of a Ptolemaic Queen,
probably Arsinoe III
Marble, ca. late 3rd to early
2nd-century BCE
The Harold A. Strickland, Jr.,
Collection
Yale University Art Gallery

theme includes goddesses and female personifications as well, which would be extremely useful for classes in many departments.

In contrast to the imperial portraits, some of the vases we are borrowing from Yale are intriguing because they show intimate domestic scenes. There is one of a woman fashioning a wreath, another of a woman spinning, and another of a woman making an offering at an altar.

MD: Isn't that unusual?

BB: Yes, the majority of narrative representations depict goddesses or mythological figures. The images of women engaged in daily activities will be a fascinating aspect to explore.

MD: Speaking of representations of women in antiquity reminds me of the process that we went through to acquire our great portrait bust of the Roman empress Faustina. Given the cultural property issues involved, it was a very complicated and time-consuming acquisition, but in the end, I believe it was one of the most exciting additions to the collections that has been made during my directorship.

GS: The portrait of Faustina is certainly a highlight, but there are several other areas of strength in our Museum's collection. In the past when I have scheduled a class at the Museum, I have encouraged students to arrive early or stay late in order to spend some time in other galleries and learn more about the permanent collection.

MD: That's great. As you know, I'm very interested in having students take advantage of the Museum as a resource for their studies, but I also like to encourage them to think of it as a place for personal enjoyment, relaxation, and reflection (oh, and by the way, we have wireless internet access throughout the galleries and lobby, so it's a great place to study as well!). As a result of outreach efforts aimed at integrating the Museum more effectively into the curriculum, class visits have tripled over the past year. I certainly hope that the presence of Yale's antiquities will encourage even more faculty to incorporate the Museum into their teaching.



Roman
Faustina the Elder
Marble, second half of the 2nd century CE
Purchase with Art Acquisition Endowment Fund, Belle and Hy Baier Art Acquisition Fund, Teri J. Edelstein Art Acquisition Fund, Marian Hayes (Class of 1925) Art Purchase Fund, Susan and Bernard Schilling (Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund, Warbeke Art Museum Fund, and Abbie Bosworth Williams (Class of 1927) Fund

Lisette Model and Her Successors

1 September-13 December 2009

“Don’t click the shutter until the experience makes you feel embarrassed.”

WHETHER ELOQUENT OR ABRUPT, terse or verbose, the teachings of Lisette Model had monumental impact on a generation of American photographers. Her protégées include an extensive list of accomplished names, with the impressive roster featured in this exhibition, *Lisette Model and Her Successors*, being just a sampling of the many artists who rose to distinction under her tutelage. Diane Arbus, Bruce Cratsley, Elaine Ellman, Larry Fink, Peter Hujar, Raymond Jacobs, Ruth Kaplan, Leon Levinstein, Eva Rubinstein, Gary Schneider, Rosalind Solomon, and Bruce Weber are a representative dozen of her distinguished followers in this survey exhibition of over 130 works.

Born Elise Félic Amelie Sybert to a Jewish family in Vienna, Model’s childhood was one of affluence and culture, yet she did not pursue the visual arts until well into her thirties. The characteristics of her photographic signature were present even in her earliest work, however, as seen in the 1934 series, *Promenades des Anglais*. These images of wealthy European aristocrats at their leisure display a documentary quality, intimately cropped so as to invade the very space her subjects occupied. Although Model attested that she “did not want to prove anything” with her photographs, she continued to be drawn to unique human circumstances, capturing society at its very extremes throughout her career.

Model settled with her husband, the Russian-born painter Ersa Model, in New York City, a pair of exotic artists enraptured with American life. She reflected in a 1977 interview that only in the United States could an amateur photographer like herself so quickly ascend the pedestal of fame. With her ambition set modestly upon becoming a darkroom assistant, Model made the acquaintance of PM newspaper photographer and art director, Ralph Steiner. She was subsequently caught up in a whirlwind of public exposure, with Steiner’s praise as the catalyst. *Harper’s Bazaar* published her iconic image *Coney Island, Standing*, the Museum of Modern Art purchased a selection of her works, and the Photo League of New York presented her first solo exhibition, all within three years of her arrival on the American art scene.

Model’s teaching career began with much the same flourish. While she had scoffed



Lisette Model (American, b. Austria, 1906–1983)
San Francisco
 Gelatin silver print photograph
 ca. 1947
 Courtesy HASTED HUNT,
 New York, and Baudoin Lebon
 Gallery, Paris/Keitelman
 Gallery, Brussels
 © 1983 The Lisette Model
 Foundation, Inc.
 From the exhibition *Lisette
 Model and Her Successors*
 (Aperture)



Lisette Model (American,
b. Austria, 1906–1983)
Coney Island, Standing
Gelatin silver print photograph
1942
Courtesy HASTED HUNT,
New York, and Baudoin Lebon
Gallery, Paris/Keitelman Gallery,
Brussels
© 1983 The Lisette Model
Foundation, Inc.
From the exhibition *Lisette
Model and Her Successors*
(Aperture)

at the invitation from Ansel Adams to lecture at the California School of Fine Arts in 1949, saying, “My dear, what I know of photography I can say in two and a half minutes,” Model would go on to teach for nearly 40 years. She instructed both privately and at the New School for Social Research, where she encountered many of the artists in this exhibition. In her classes, she emphasized the need to be passionate about one’s subject matter and addressed her personal desire to capture humanity without judgment. Remarkably, Model never shared her own photographs with her students, but her words evidently had a lasting effect. Whether her protégées traced her footsteps to Coney Island, as did Raymond Jacobs and Leon Levinstein, or pursued her fascination for life on the outskirts of society, as did Diane Arbus, Model’s successors carried forth the independent philosophy of their mentor. Devoted to teaching, Model passed away on March 30, 1983, just three weeks after giving her last lecture at Haverford College.

Aperture, a not-for-profit organization devoted to photography and the visual arts, has organized this traveling exhibition and produced the accompanying publication.

Dance & Dancers 5 September–13 December 2009

Dance & Dancers features both well-known and seldom-seen treasures from the Museum’s collection, a few judicious loans, and some outstanding new acquisitions appearing in the galleries for the first time. The Museum’s holdings now number over 15,000, but only a small selection are on view at any given time for reasons of space and conservation. Thematically based shows like this one provide a welcome occasion to explore the collection in new and different ways.

Curator Wendy Watson—a longtime dance aficionado—has been compiling an inventory of dance-related art in the Museum for some time. The list comprises such varied items as a Greek vase with veiled women performing to the music of female flutists; photographs of Martha Graham, Twyla Tharp, and Merce Cunningham at work; a netsuke representing a monkey masquerading as a Japanese Sambaso dancer; an African mask; and a number of prints depicting that popular late-medieval allegory of mortality, the *danse macabre*, or dance of death. The works of art chosen from the collection were supplemented by generous loans from the Smith College Museum of Art, among them prints by Henri Matisse and Kiyonaga, two Native American drawings, and a photograph by Margaret Bourke-White.

Artists have turned their attention to this engaging subject across cultures and continents from antiquity to the present day, and the pervasiveness of this theme is evident in the current show. Dance forms relating to religious or spiritual beliefs are seen alongside visual records of artistic performances and performers; other works of art depict celebra-

tions, revelry, or simple carousing; and allegorical graphic images signify both life-giving forces and reminders of mortality. Even abstract works by Wassily Kandinsky, Berenice Abbott, and Joseph Cornell have at their core notions that can be associated with the physical movements of dance.

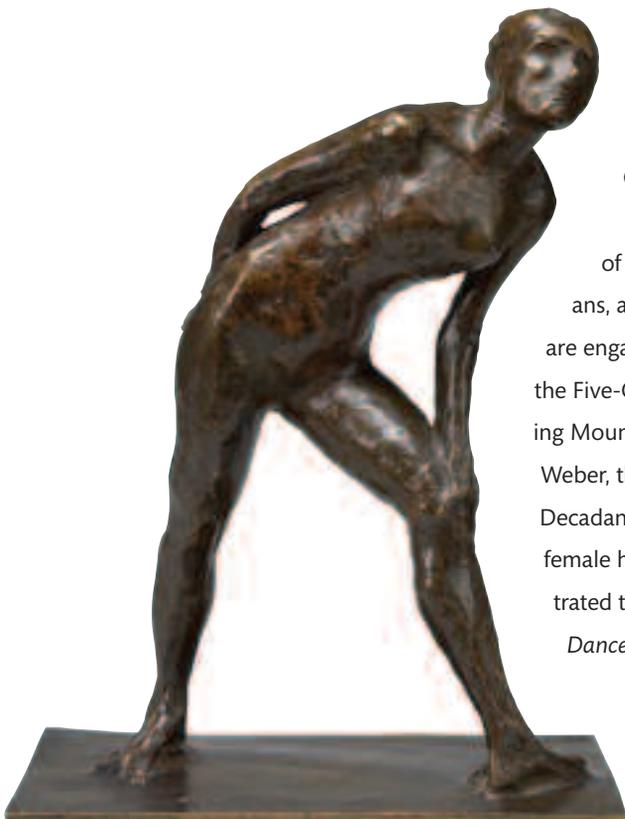
While *Dance & Dancers* is certainly a manifestation of the visual riches held by the Museum, it also symbolizes the deep collaborative roots that exist among the arts on the Mount Holyoke campus. The Mount Holyoke College Arts Group, founded by Museum Director Marianne Doezema and now led by Professor of Film Studies Robin Blaetz, meets monthly to plan and facilitate cooperative ventures linked to both the curriculum and the life of the College. One of those is the annual Leading Women in the Arts award (co-organized with the Weissman Center for Leadership and the Liberal Arts), which involves public presentations, residencies, and small master classes led by distinguished women artists in various media. Dancer Trisha Brown, installation and performance artists Ann Hamilton and Rachel Rosenthal, and Academy-award nominated production designer Jeannine Oppewall have visited the campus most recently as recipients of this honor.

This year, the College celebrates the opening of two splendid new dance studios in Kendall Hall (check the College Web site for the opening events in November). It also

marks the 30th anniversary of the Five College Dance Department, a pioneering consortium of programs at Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges, and the University of Massachusetts. This diverse group of faculty includes performers, historians, and choreographers, many of whom are engaged in dance activities far beyond the Five-College sphere. One of them—visiting Mount Holyoke faculty member Jennifer Weber, the dynamic founding director of Decadancetheatre, a Brooklyn-based all-female hip-hop crew—will present an illustrated talk at the opening of *Dance & Dancers*. Photographs by Daniel Pincus of Decadancetheatre performances will also be included in the show.



Attributed to the Eupolis Painter (Greek, active ca. 450 BCE)
Red-figure column krater with veiled dancers
Terracotta, ca. 450–440 BCE
Purchase with the Nancy Everett Dwight Fund



Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917)
Dancer Rubbing her Knee
Bronze, ca. 1885–1890
Lent by the David Winton Bell Gallery, List Art Center, Brown University, Gift of Robert F. Ebin (Class of 1962) and Family

Art of Devotion: Panel Painting in Early Renaissance Italy
9 February–30 May 2010

In 2005, Middlebury College professor Katy Smith Abbott came to Mount Holyoke on a mission. Middlebury's museum had just acquired a splendid early Renaissance panel painting attributed to Lippo di Andrea—*Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Nicholas of Bari*—and Abbott was studying related works of art around the country. Thanks to donor Caroline R. Hill, the Museum here has remarkable holdings of early Renaissance paintings and medieval sculpture.

In conversations with Curator Wendy Watson, a plot was hatched to share an exhibition on the devotional art of this understudied period of Renaissance art. The show, supported by a grant from the Kress Foundation, is on view at Middlebury this fall and will travel to South Hadley in February. Smith Abbott and Watson contributed essays to the catalogue, published in association with New England University Press.

It seemed fitting for the two academic museums to work together, since the creation of early fifteenth-century panel paintings was itself so collaborative in nature, depending upon a tight network of connections between patrons, painters, woodworkers, and gilders. The products of these artistic interactions were paintings and sculptures that served both as a focus for devotion and as an emphatic statement about wealth and status.

Tradition and innovation have long been seen as complementary forces in the development of Italian Renaissance art. While surveys of this period tend to focus on the innovative departures of artists such as Masaccio, Ghiberti, and Brunelleschi, this exhibition focuses on their counterparts: artists valued for their knowledge of and appreciation for tradition. Because many of the artists represented in *The Art of Devotion* were close contemporaries, even occasional collaborators themselves, museum visitors will enjoy the opportunity to observe stylistic affinities borne of common patterns of training, as well as intentional emulation.

The materials of early Renaissance artists will also be on display in the exhibition, offering viewers a unique look at the many layers that contributed to the final appearance of tempera paintings. By viewing dry pigments, gesso, gold leaf, paint brushes, and drawing materials, as well as a model for an altarpiece frame, visitors will come closer to understanding exactly how artists fabricated the stunning works on view.

School of Lorenzo Ghiberti
(Italian, ca. 1381–1455)
Virgin and Child
Painted and gilded stucco-forte
ca. 1420
Purchase with the Mary Jane
Benner Fund and the Nancy
Everett Dwight Fund



The Science and Art of Conservation

IT IS AN UNAVOIDABLE FACT that every work of art begins to deteriorate virtually as soon as the artist has completed it. The application of new analytical technologies and treatment stratagems, however, can reveal information about those changes and begin to return an object to a condition closely approximating its original appearance. The collaboration of art historians and museum curators with conservation scientists has become standard practice today, and these interdisciplinary efforts have become an essential part of the analytical and restorative processes. The study of artists' techniques made possible by new technologies has also allowed for a more integrated approach to the work of art as object and as image, extending the study of technique to the study of meaning.

With these themes in mind, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum organized an exhibition collaboratively with the Williamstown Art Conservation Center (see photo) entitled *Altered States: Conservation, Analysis, and the Interpretation of Works of Art* (1994). The show, which traveled from South Hadley to the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown and the National Academy of Design in New York City, included works of art from Mount Holyoke and other WACC member institutions, and ran the gamut from sculpture to paintings, decorative arts, and works on paper. It offered a fascinating opportunity for viewers to learn what goes on behind the scenes in both museums and laboratories, and how art historians, curators, and scientists work together to investigate and interpret works of art.

The Museum has pursued a systematic conservation program since 1977 when it became one of five founding members of WACC. Prior to that time, works of art were sent to the labs of other museums or to independent conservators. With this nearby conservation center to rely upon, Museum staff members were able to take a more coordinated approach, methodically reviewing areas of the collection and treating the objects of greatest importance and most urgent need. Using endowed funds designated for this purpose and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Institute for Museum Services, the Museum has conserved Egyptian sculpture and ceramics, Greek vases, Italian Trecento panel paintings, American and Old Master paintings, and many works of art on paper. As new works enter the collection, they are routinely surveyed and, if necessary, are treated or stabilized, sometimes with funds provided by alumnae and other donors.



In 2008, the Williamstown Art Conservation Center (WACC) moved into its state-of-the-art facilities in the Clark Art Institute's Stone Hill Center, designed by Pritzker Prize architect Tadao Ando. For more information: www.williamstownart.org



After Peter Paul Rubens
(Flemish, 1577–1640)
*Night Scene with an Old
Woman and a Boy*
Oil on canvas, ca. 1620–40
Purchase with the Nancy
Everett Dwight Fund
Conserved with funds from the
Class of 1953

resurfaced on the London art market and was acquired by an American collector; this night scene, rare in Rubens' oeuvre, was documented in an inventory of the pictures that remained in the artist's possession at the time of his death in 1640. Previously, it had been known only from an etching by Rubens that included the inscription: "Light can be taken a thousand times from another light without diminishing it." Several scholars who have examined the Mount Holyoke painting have pronounced it to be of especially high quality, but its attribution has yet to be determined. Because the recently discovered original is known to have hung in Rubens' own studio or home, it would have been seen by members of his workshop, his students, and other contemporary artists like Jacob Jordaens and Mathias Stomer. Now that Mount Holyoke's painting has been cleaned and stabilized, research can continue as to who may have been the author of this intriguing canvas.

Encouraged by Marigene Harrington Butler (Class of 1953; Art Advisory Board member and former head of conservation at the Philadelphia Museum of Art), she and a group of her classmates funded the treatment of the Mount Holyoke picture in 2007. In a note to the Museum, they wrote that they were particularly captivated by the allegorical theme of a young boy lighting his candle from one held by an older woman, an act symbolic of the conveyance of knowledge and enlightenment to a younger generation.

Coming soon: a report on a pigment study currently being conducted on a painting formerly attributed to American Impressionist Theodore Robinson (1852–1896).

In 2004, a portrait that had hung in the library for years, uninventoried and uncatalogued, was given a second look. Its darkened varnish had rendered it practically invisible, and it suffered from other condition problems as well. After cleaning and repair, the unsigned canvas was revealed to be a rare early portrait of Mount Holyoke's founder, Mary Lyon, by Joseph Goodhue Chandler (1813–1884). The Mount Holyoke Club of Cincinnati generously underwrote the costs of its treatment, and it currently hangs next to Chandler's iconic image of Lyon that was given to the Museum in 1885.

A mysterious Old Master painting in the museum storeroom—*Night Scene with an Old Woman and a Boy* (see photo)—was similarly obscured by a thick coat of dirt and old varnish. It was long thought to be an early copy of a lost painting by Peter Paul Rubens but research had proved inconclusive. In 2004, the original miraculously

HOUSING THE WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION of works by the brothers Charles (1863–1948) and Maurice Prendergast (1858–1924), the Williams College Museum of Art has partnered with the Terra Foundation for American Art to produce an astonishing exhibition of Maurice Prendergast's Italian works on paper. The Museum's vibrant watercolor *Festival Day, Venice* is among the nearly 100 objects highlighted in this major exhibition, *Prendergast in Italy*. This luminous study from the artist's first trip to Italy demonstrates his fascination with the rhythmic patterning of color and form over a densely populated surface. On view at Williams through September 20th, the exhibition—and Mount Holyoke's watercolor—will then travel to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice.

Visitors to Vermont this fall can enjoy three objects from the Museum's strong Italian holdings as part of the Middlebury College Museum of Art's exhibition *Art of Devotion: Panel Paintings in Early Renaissance Italy*.

Illustrating the dual function of panel paintings as both devotional objects and emblems of social status, the exhibition addresses the many themes underlying their highly adorned surfaces. Our painted and gilded stucco-forte bust of the Madonna and Child, from the School of Lorenzo Ghiberti, and the tempera and gold panel paintings, *Madonna and Child*, by Sano di Pietro, and *Stigmatization of Saint Francis*, by Bartolomeo di Tommaso da Foligno, are prime examples of the elaborately embellished devotional imagery created during this period. This sumptuous exhibition will travel to South Hadley during the spring of 2010.

From our Greek collection, a beautifully crafted black-figure skyphos narrating a scene from the *Twelve Labors of Herakles* will travel to the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore this October and to the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville in January. As part of the touring exhibition, *Heroes: Mortals and Myths in Ancient Greece*, the circa 500 BCE skyphos will be presented among pairings of objects and literary quotations that illustrate the drama of Greek mythology.

Maurice Brazil Prendergast
(American, 1859–1924)
Festival Day, Venice
Pencil and watercolor, 1898–99
Purchase with the Gertrude
Jewett Hunt Fund in memory of
Louise R. Jewett



Theseus Painter (Greek, active ca. 500 BCE)
Black figure skyphos with Herakles, Athena, and Hermes
Terracotta, ca. 500 BCE
Purchase with the Nancy Everett Dwight Fund



Sadie Shillieto, (Class of 2009)
Art Advisory Board Fellow
Photograph Jessica Lavallee

FINITE DETAILS OF MUSEUM WORK

“Even with my prior experience in the Museum, my first staff meeting was revealing as I discovered the amount of forethought that goes into every detail of museum work, which all appears to happen seamlessly from an outside perspective,” commented Sadie Shillieto, the Museum’s new Art Advisory Board Fellow. Having transitioned from student assistant to fellow, Shillieto is gaining the experience necessary to understand the “forethought” that goes into the seemingly infinite details of museum work and to be involved in many of them.

Shillieto, a recent graduate of Mount Holyoke College (Class of 2009) with a degree in art history, intends to use the fellowship to gain valuable professional skills. She explains, “I want to take advantage of this opportunity to further explore my career options and plan to use it as a stepping stone to my graduate studies.” The fellowship is intended to expose recent graduates to all aspects of museum operations, keeping in mind each fellow’s distinct abilities and interests. Shillieto’s extensive knowledge of the Museum means that she can jump in and participate in all areas of the operation. Over the next year she will focus on deaccessions and the renewal of long-term loans. Her previous experience as the collections assistant for digitization also allows Shillieto to hit the ground running with the photographic documentation of both classes and events for the Museum. The Museum staff is pleased to have Shillieto on board, as we enter into an exciting year of academic initiatives!

REPORT ON THE SPRING MEETING OF THE ART ADVISORY BOARD

On April 24-25, 2009, when the campus looked almost paradisiacal, the Art Advisory Board held its annual spring meeting and, as is happening in all such meetings everywhere these days, watched warily for the snake in the Garden of Eden. Specifically, the Board focused its attention on the financial health of the Museum and on finding ways to imaginatively and energetically maintain the high standards of the outstanding exhibitions, events, and activities that have always characterized its mission.

To that end, the weekend’s focus was on long-range planning, guided by consultant Ed Hudner, from Cambridge Hill Partners. He charged us with the tasks of: 1) expanding



Director Circle weekend
New York City
May 2009

the membership base of the Friends of Art, 2) extending the Museum's reach into the life of the College and of the

surrounding region, and 3) making the most of the extraordinary opportunities afforded by the Mellon Grant. Hudner will return to campus for our November 13–14 meeting, when we will consider the role of the Art Advisory Board itself, as well as its best means of supporting the Museum's strengths and its efforts to help implement the strategic goals for the future.

With all this in mind, we paid tribute to the retiring members of the Board—David Carter, Marc Futter, Irene Leiwant, Lenore Schorr, and Anne Windham—whose combined service to the Museum totaled an astonishing 101 years! We also approved the nomination of Brian Allen, Director of the Addison Gallery at Phillips Academy, Andover, as a new board member, and we look forward to welcoming him to our deliberations about the future of the Museum.

As part of our continuing commitment to being a significant source of support for the Museum in these uncertain times, the Art Advisory Board has agreed to meet for the foreseeable future in South Hadley for both of its biannual meetings, instead of spending the spring meeting off-campus as has been the custom in years past. We also have heightened our engagement with the Museum by conducting online discussions between meetings, and we are reviewing our by-laws to be sure they conform to today's realities. One of those realities is that the Friends of Art's membership brochure has needed updating, a task undertaken by the Friends of Art Development Committee along with Museum staff members Debbie Davis and Jessica Lavallee. We hope to disseminate the handsome new brochures far and wide in an effort to entice new members to support the Museum we love so well. When you are next on campus, please pick up a handful to give to your friends and classmates. — Alice DeLana, Art Advisory Board Chair

FALL EVENTS

Thursday, 17 September, 5:00 pm
Exhibition opening and reception
Lisette Model and Her Successors

"Capturing an Instant: Lisette Model and Her Successors"
Panel discussion with
Tony Lee, Professor of Art and Art History, Mount Holyoke College
Christopher Benfey, Mellon Professor of English, Mount Holyoke College
Karen Koehler, Associate Professor of Architectural History, Hampshire College
Moderated by Marianne Doezema, Museum Director
Gamble Auditorium

Thursday, 1 October, 6:30 pm
Exhibition opening and reception
Dance & Dancers

"Hoodies or Heels: A Visual History of Women in Hip-Hop"
Illustrated lecture by Jennifer Weber, Visiting Artist in Dance, Mount Holyoke College, and Founder and Artistic Director of Decadancetheatre, an all-female, hip-hop dance theatre company based in Brooklyn
Gamble Auditorium

Special Lecture
Thursday, 22 October, 5:00 pm

"Beyond Convention: Lisette Model and Her Successors"
Lecture by Jane Gronau, Education Coordinator
Museum Galleries

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

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

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

ABOVE: John Constable (British, 1776-1837), *Hampstead Fields*, *Looking West*, *Afternoon (Branch Hill Pond)*, *Harrow Hidden in the Mist* (detail), Oil on panel, 1821, Gift of T. Marc Futter

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