MAJOR THEMES

Celebrating Ten Years of Teaching with Art

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MOUNT HOLYOKE
COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

Contents

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MAJOR THEMES
Celebrating Ten Years of
Teaching with Art

Foreword

This publication celebrates the tenth anniversary of Teaching with Art at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum (MHCAM) and commemorates the exhibition that honored this milestone. The Museum proudly serves the College in a myriad of ways. At the core of this work is the dynamic Teaching with Art program, begun in 2009. Through fruitful partnerships between Museum staff and College faculty, the Museum collaborates annually with professors representing departments across the curriculum ranging from anthropology to neuroscience, biology to politics, and English to sociology. The encyclopedic collections of art and material culture drawn from the Art Museum and its subsidiary, the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, allow MHCAM to function as a daily laboratory of experiential object-based learning, bringing the humanities, sciences, and social sciences all under one roof, thus upholding the principles of a liberal arts education.

The Teaching with Art program is possible because of the generosity and vision of key donors. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provided an initial grant that was subsequently matched by Susan Bonneville Weatherbie '72, endowing a staff position fully committed to Teaching with Art named the Weatherbie Curator of Academic Programs. Harriet Farber Friedlander '52, Elizabeth Cannon Gump '56, and F. Chaney Li '64 have endowed funds that support essential aspects of this program. Furthermore, other donors to the Museum, whether through gifts of art and objects, annual Friends of Art giving, contributions from the Art Museum Advisory Board, and other endowed Museum funds all serve to support Teaching with Art. This core program inspires all that we do at the Museum, whether through exhibitions, public programs, acquisitions, student internships, and other forms of student mentorship.

Thanks to our visionary donors, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum is able to provide meaningful pathways for MHC students to follow through on College founder Mary Lyon's call: "Go forward, attempt great things, accomplish great things."

Tricia Y. Paik, Florence Finch Abbott Director


OF OBJECTS

MAJOR THEMES:
Celebrating Ten Years of Teaching with Art

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum has one of the most active Teaching with Art programs in the country. Each year approximately 200 college class sessions from over 35 different disciplines are held in the Museum. This exhibition was designed to bring these stimulating classroom encounters into public view for visitors to experience firsthand.

While the Museum's Teaching with Art program was officially launched in 2009 with an initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to engage classes across the curriculum, the idea of collecting objects for use in teaching is not a new one. The College began collecting in the 19th century and in 1876 opened Lyman Williston Hall, a new building dedicated to the arts and sciences. Faculty and students had access to a variety of collections including paintings, sculpture, minerals, fossils, plaster casts, and artifacts from around the world.

In recent years, the Museum has embraced its teaching mission with an eye towards experimentation and innovation. The Museum's classroom provides a space where art, artifacts, and other objects can be combined in ways not traditionally seen in public galleries. Faculty and students can look closely, think creatively, and make connections, conceptually linking original objects with course material seeking to probe topics from the laws of physics to fundamental aspects of the human condition.

Inspired by the interdisciplinary dialogues that take place during these class visits, the exhibition presents five thematic sections: Optics of Art, The Non-Human, The Precarious Body, Afterlives of Objects, and Conflict and Commemoration. Each section highlights the ways in which faculty members view the Museum's collection through the unique lens of their disciplines, collaborating with Museum staff to create unexpected juxtapositions of objects and exceptional teaching moments. Engaging labels for the exhibition were written by 26 different faculty members, six students, as well as curators and other staff, each shedding light on meaningful object-based teaching. Select labels are reprinted here, alongside images of artwork from throughout the three-year run of the exhibition.


THE NON-HUMAN


OPTICS OF ART

Optics of Art

Understanding how the human brain's visual system works is the business of both artists and scientists. How do we perceive form and depth on a two-dimensional surface? What is the science behind one-point perspective? How do artists mimic the interaction of color and light when representing the world around us?

Neurobiologists, cognitive psychologists, mathematicians, and physicists have set out to explore these questions with their students in partnership with the Museum, working to elucidate the science behind our perceptions of the visual world.

The Museum functions as a laboratory for exploring topics such as visual perception, infrared imaging, the laws of physical phenomena, and other theoretical concepts through a hands-on, experiential approach with illuminating results. This section provides a glimpse into the world of scientific discovery and exploration that students and faculty experience when using the Museum as their classroom.

—Ellen M. Alvord, Associate Director for Engagement and Weatherbie Curator of Academic Programs


KRAFT


KRAFT

Janet Fish (American, b. 1938)
Kraft Salad Dressing, 1973
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Barancik
1983.15

This painting immediately caught my eye because of its striking sense of depth. The bottles appear solid and palpable, as if they pop out from the canvas. How did Janet Fish get this effect? A grayscale image of the painting gives us one clue.

Although color in this image has been removed, the sense of depth remains. Note that the bottles are not a uniform gray; different parts appear lighter or darker. It is these variations in lightness (what scientists call "luminance" and artists call "value") that help create the sense of depth.

Look back at the painting and try to judge the luminance or lightness of each area or patch of color. Now compare your judgment with the grayscale image. Although much more of our visual circuitry is devoted to signaling luminance than to signaling color, most of us can easily distinguish different colors but have a much harder time judging levels of lightness. This is a skill that artists must develop, and Janet Fish has used it to great effect in *Kraft Salad Dressing.*

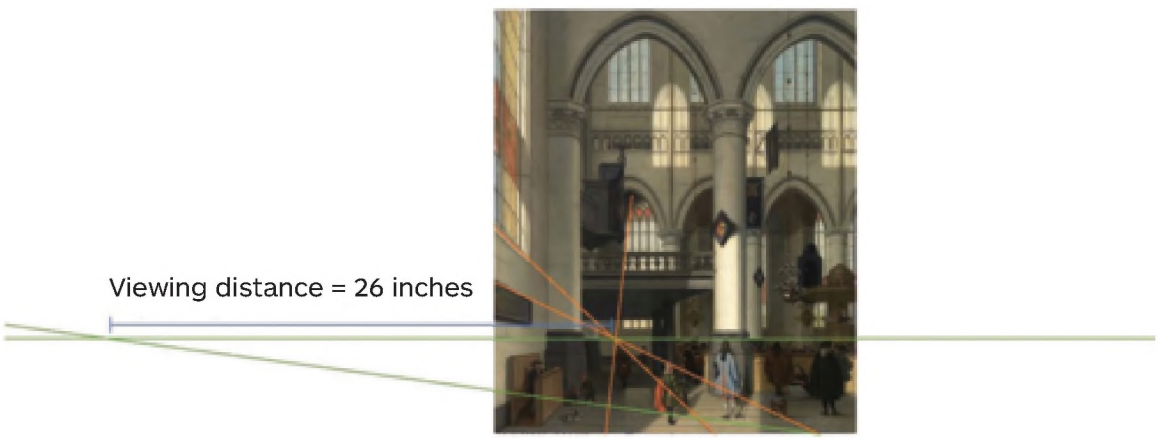
—Sue Barry, Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences and of Neuroscience and Behavior

Hendrick van Streek (Dutch, 1659–after 1719)
Interior of the Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, ca. 1690–1700
Oil on canvas
Purchase with the Warbeke Art Museum Fund
2009.2.1

In "Mathematics of Perspective Drawing," we explore ways to use mathematics to analyze and create art. One skill students learn is how to calculate the location of the artist when painting a scene like this. In artworks using one-point perspective, the first step is to identify the vanishing point, which is the point in the distance where parallel lines seem to converge. Here we can do this by following the red lines (in the diagram below) along the edges of the bricks, tiles, and other architectural features until they intersect at a common vanishing point.

The optimal viewing point, and assumed location of the artist, is opposite this vanishing point. But at what distance? If two adjacent tiles form a square, the diagonal of that square can be extended until it intersects the green horizon line. The distance from this intersection to the vanishing point (26 inches) is the same distance we stand from the painting to experience the greatest illusion of depth.

—Jessica Sidman, Professor of Mathematics on the John S. Kennedy Foundation




VENEZIA - MVRANO
PAULY.C
PAULY.C

Richard Estes (American, b. 1936)
Venezia-Murano,* from the portfolio *Urban Landscapes No. 2, 1979
Screenprint in colors on Fabriano Cotton paper
Gift of Ruth Lasser (Ruth J. Pollak, Class of 1947)
1991.25.3

At the heart of this Richard Estes print are the complex and playful ways light is refracted and reflected by glass, mirrors, metal, and polished surfaces. Tricks of light force us to engage with optical principles to understand the underlying perspective. It is perhaps surprising that works of art such as this go well beyond the immediate physics of optical phenomena and can be used to help explain many of the deep and indeed beautiful concepts at the heart of modern physics.

In my class, "Themes in Physics and Art," we explore this intersectional space by considering analogies that arise naturally in the visual arts and which allow students to use their well-honed visual intuitions in the service of understanding physics. This image, by deliberately omitting the observer's reflection in the window, highlights the difficulty of separating the act of observation from the scene being observed. Unlike in classical physics, where this division is natural, in quantum mechanics the observer (or detection device) is fundamentally part of the system it is measuring.

—Spencer Smith, Assistant Professor of Physics

Walter Sargent (American, 1868–1927)
The Sunlight Path, 1913
Oil on canvas
Purchase with the Nancy Everett Dwight Fund
1916.95.I(b).PI

Richard Joseph Anuszkiewicz
(American, b. 1930)
Inward Eye #4, 1970
Serigraph
Purchase with the Nancy Everett Dwight Fund
1971.165.5b.I(b).RII

These two works demonstrate that colors are not always perceived "as-is," as I discuss with students in the course "Art, Music, and the Brain." Color perception is influenced by many factors, including the context in which the colors appear and the viewer's expectations.

In *The Sunlight Path,* Walter Sargent used color to convey the presence of light. When viewed up close, we see many colors, including blue, purple, and orange. At a distance, however, our visual system combines the colors into bright whites, creating the perception of a light-filled landscape.

Richard Anuszkiewicz's *Inward Eye #4* demonstrates the influence of context on color perception. Our impression of the dominant orange color changes with the background color: the orange has a yellowish hue when mixed with the green lines in the top left but becomes a darker red when surrounded by pink in the bottom right corner. In addition, the foreground and background colors are equiluminant, meaning they reflect the same amount of light, which gives them a shimmery, unstable quality.

—Mara Breen, Associate Professor of Psychology and Education


THE NON-HUMAN

The Non-Human

What informs our concepts of animals, monsters, and machines? Is it fundamental to our sense of humanity that these entities are inherently different from ourselves?

Artists have long explored what makes us human; in this section artists grapple with what it means to not be human. Surrealist representations of animals and amorphous machines test our preconceptions of human and non-human categories. Depictions of monsters show us how often our notions of brutality are projected onto other creatures. The preserved remains of animals, valued as decoration, remind us of the often-violent relationship between human and non-human.

Other objects illustrate the many types of interdependence between humans and animals—whether as pets, pack animals, or used to provide necessities like wool, fur, transportation, and even food. Everyday objects like teapots and containers show us the long-standing and widespread importance of animal forms in human decoration—indeed, many prehistoric paintings were of non-human subjects like horses, bison, and mammoths. Students and faculty across disciplines from English and Italian to gender studies and anthropology have used these objects to explore how we relate to the non-human entities in our lives.

—Kendra D. Weisbin, Associate Curator of Education

Rosamond Wolff Purcell (American, b. 1942)
Monkey Skeleton with Bezoar, 1995
Iris print color photograph
Purchase with the Henry Rox Memorial Fund for the Acquisition of Work by Contemporary Women Artists
2008.10.3

I am lucky to teach with this photograph in a First-Year Seminar called "The Nonhuman," in which we study literary and visual representations of animals. Artist Rosamond Wolff Purcell often photographs natural history specimens, and here she poses a monkey skeleton holding a bezoar in front of the edge of a book. A bezoar—an undigested mass that forms in the stomach of animals—was long thought to have magical properties (there are even bezoars in the Harry Potter universe).

In this photograph, the bezoar is only one of several mysterious elements. It is strangely leashed to a monkey's skeleton, which, in turn, is positioned in an oddly human way and against a background of pages turned unreadably sideways. My students have written wonderfully about these strange elements. For example, they have interpreted the book's edges as prison bars and the chain as a kind of shackle. The monkey is suspended in an uncanny zone, between living and dead, and between human and nonhuman; it—he?—seems magical, perhaps tragic. The monkey, like the bezoar and this photograph as a whole, refuses easy digestion.

—Elizabeth Young, Carl M. and Elsie A. Small Professor of English

Hippopotamus skull, late 19th or early 20th century
Sub-Saharan Africa
SK 2006.2571.a-b.INV

Thirty-five years ago, this hippopotamus skull graduated from being a doorstop in the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum to being the centerpiece of a biology laboratory. Students use skulls like this one to trace the relationships of even-toed hoofed mammals—this group also includes giraffes, pigs, cattle, and deer. The hippo's lower canine teeth point sideways; this is also seen in two families of hoofed mammals: pigs and peccaries. The teeth of mammals often tell us what the animal eats. However, the cheek teeth of the hippo, with their clover-shaped ridges, do not predict that hippos actually eat nothing while they are in the water. At night, they leave the water to feed on grasses. After studying the skulls, students learn to make evolutionary trees out of genetic information. These data show that the hippo's closest living relatives have no hooves at all: they are whales.

—Stan Rachootin, David and Lucy Stewart Professor of Biological Sciences

Unknown Yomut Turkmen weaver
Asmalyk (camel trapping), 19th century
Wool warp, weft, and pile; symmetrical knot
Gift of Walter B. Denny
2017.15

Why would someone create a pentagonal rug and what could it be used for? These are often the first questions students ask when they encounter this unusual and compelling textile, which—like many good teaching objects— at first poses more questions than answers.

The unique shape hints at its original context. This is an *asmalyk,* a camel decoration woven specifically for use in wedding processions. Attached to the side of a camel, its triangular top mimics the hump of the animal. Created in identical pairs, *asmalyks* were hung on either side of the camel ridden by a bride to her new husband's home. The piece is skillfully precise and tightly knotted—a hallmark of Turkmen weaving. In Turkmen culture (and many others) weaving is a woman's art, and this *asmalyk* probably would have been woven by the young woman whose bridal camel it adorned.

Leading students through looking at the *asmalyk* hones multiple skills simultaneously. They consider how form and function inform one another while also analyzing materials and structure. For students who are accustomed to looking at figural or narrative art, the geometric and stylized floral patterns of the *asmalyk* can stretch their visual thinking, challenging them to look in new ways.

—Kendra D. Weisbin, Associate Curator of Education

Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973)
Minotaure Attaquant une Amazone [Minotaur attacking an Amazon]* #62 from the *Suite Vollar, 1933
Etching in black ink on ivory wove paper
Gift of T. Marc Futter
2001.6.2

This piece depicts an act of sexual assault. Picasso conveys the fast pace and massive weight of the Minotaur—a mythological half-bull and half-man creature—over the defenseless body of a once powerful Amazon warrior. It is a violent display of male domination over the female body, and a primordial representation of the horror of rape.

In his work, Picasso often represented the quintessential Spanish animal, the bull, as well as Minotaurs. Here, the creature's body occupies almost all of the space with just a corner left for the Amazon—reduced to her head and torso, she is subdued, crushed, defeated. The image is part of a series Picasso created in the 1930s, a challenging decade for Europe as a whole and for Spain in particular—the Spanish civil war lasted from 1936 to 1939. Its violent depiction of sex speaks to today's viewers differently than a century ago. Like all art, it lends itself to be recontextualized and studied with an eye to our post-feminist society and the Me Too movement.

—Ombretta Frau, Dorothy Rooke McCulloch Professor of Italian


THE PRECARIOUS BODY

The Precarious Body

For centuries, artists and makers have considered how the self can be translated into words and images. Countless objects in the Museum's collection exemplify these efforts, supporting a range of class discussions about identity, agency, and the precarious nature of the human body.

Bodies are not static, but constantly in flux, changing under our own gaze and the gazes of others. Portraiture—the product of an artist's gaze— often leads to questions about representation and power. In their relationship with a model or sitter, does the artist always have the power? Is the subject always vulnerable? In creating a self-portrait, does an artist exert control over their image, or do they submit to the viewer's probing gaze?

Images and objects in this section also convey how aspects of our identities—race, gender, health, age, religion, class, and vocation—deeply affect our physical bodies. Some works ask us to consider how nudity and eroticism factor into representation. Is a naked body necessarily a precarious body? Can a body be both vulnerable and powerful? Considering these questions in direct dialogue with works of art, students discover how representations of our bodies both reveal and conceal who we are.

—Hannah W. Blunt, Associate Curator, 2015–2018

Man Ray (American, 1890–1976)
Herma, 1975
Polished bronze
Gift of Anne W. Wells (Class of 1945)
2004.8

In this statuette, Man Ray has wholeheartedly embraced the essential mystery of the art of sculpture: a three-dimensional object inhabiting the same physical space as the viewer, and yet insistently demanding one to leave behind all assumptions regarding the familiarity of the everyday. *Herma* is no mere thing, not just an object among many objects with which one interacts on a daily basis, but rather a deliberate crisis of representation. Its title is a pun on the name of Hermaphroditus of Greek mythology, who in a single body combines male and female.

Produced near the end of Man Ray's long artistic career devoted to exploring playful ambiguities, *Herma* gleefully thrusts us into a perpetual search. When I look at this work with students, we walk around the sculpture and look at it from multiple angles in order to find the one definitive viewpoint from which this formless thing might resolve itself into one intelligible and coherent identity. Alas, to no avail. Just like its namesake Hermaphroditus, Herma refuses to be reduced into one.

—Gülru Çakmak, Associate Professor of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Mary Ann Unger (American, 1945–1998)
Black Heart, 1996–1997
Hydrocal (plaster of paris), fiberglass mesh, cheese cloth, shellac, pigments, diluted beeswax, graphite powder
Purchase with funds from Marion and Alan Brown
1998.18

The shape of this sculpture recalls the human heart, the powerful organ that sustains life. Scarred, wrinkled, blackened, and brittle, the surface has telltale marks of bodily suffering.

Achieved by covering a steel armature with cheesecloth, plaster, beeswax, and other materials, the sculpture is part of a series begun by artist Mary Ann Unger following her first bout with breast cancer. Unger battled the disease for more than a decade. During that time, she created works that explore the vulnerability of the body, as well as its regenerative forces. Her deeply evocative sculptures express the opposing forces of life and death that are inherent in our precarious bodies.

The expressive yet ambiguous qualities of the work present unique opportunities for close looking and conversation with students, who often remark upon the raw, almost painful surface of the work in contrast to its soft, organic shape. Unger, who is an alumna of Mount Holyoke College, class of 1967, died a year after this work was completed at the age of 53.

—Hannah W. Blunt, Associate Curator, 2015–2018

Dorothea Tanning (American, 1910–2012)
Still in the Studio, 1979
Oil on canvas
Purchase with the Warbeke Art Museum Fund
2013.11

To see an artist at work is to learn something about the nature of art. Here the mood is intense yet ambiguous. The artist's body is bare, fused with the space; her chest is a palette and bands of color bind her to the wall and chair, while a ghostly echo of her form clasps the windowpane. Is this a scene of steady persistence or motionless repose? The title word "still" can mean either. Perhaps it is both. Art-making is an expression of human perseverance. At the same time, art endures in a way that the precarious body cannot.

There is an autobiographical context too: Tanning describes the painting as a farewell to Paris, which she left following the loss of her husband, the surrealist artist Max Ernst. Whenever an artist paints herself, she blurs the line between artist and artifact, between subject and object—because she is both. Tanning's nude, shining in the gloom, is at once vulnerable and self-possessed, pointing to the interesting tensions that arise in self-portraiture.

—Suparna Roychoudhury, Associate Professor of English


AFTERLIVES OF OBJECTS

Afterlives of Objects

A single object can have many lives as it passes from one context to another. This thematic section explores how the vastly different circumstances of creation, use, collection, and display can change our understanding of objects from across the world.

How do sacred personal belongings like dance masks or burial items end up at a museum? How do artists and collectors capture and transform art and artifacts to create something entirely new? How can an object become a document for underrepresented histories or communities? And how does changing the context of an object sometimes change its very meaning?

Classes in the social sciences and humanities regularly consider questions like these during visits to the Museum. Through object-based discussions, students, faculty, and Museum staff investigate the paths artifacts and works of art took to get here and how to appropriately engage with them now that they are in the Museum's care. In a similarly complex discourse, contemporary artists represented in this section grapple with complicated pasts by engaging with found objects and historical materials.

—Aaron F. Miller, Associate Curator of Visual and Material Culture and NAGPRA Coordinator

Unknown makers from various Native American communities
Bifaces and projectile points, 11,000 BCE–17th century CE
Present-day Pike County, Illinois
Chert and quartz
SK K.A.1.3

This framed group of spear points, knife blades, and arrowheads was added to the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum in 1933 with virtually no information about the objects or who made them, save their location of origin. Today we acknowledge that Pike County, Illinois, has been home to diverse groups of Indigenous Americans for more than 10,000 years. Each of these framed stone artifacts silently records the lives of generations of individuals who collected raw materials and skillfully chipped and flaked stone into tools.

These objects represent meals prepared, hunts, and battles. Perhaps most importantly, these belongings represent distinct cultures, languages, and belief systems spanning thousands of years, from the people who shared this continent with mammoths, to the Mississippian and Hopewell mound builders and the confederation of tribes known as the Illinois. What is now Pike County has been—and remains—homeland to many. Faculty from many disciplines explore America's complicated past and present relationships with Native communities. In a time of increased focus on water rights, sports mascots, land acknowledgments, repatriation, and genocide, objects like this can help foster difficult and important conversations.

—Aaron F. Miller, Associate Curator of Visual and Material Culture and NAGPRA Coordinator

Unknown Moche maker(s), Peru
Portrait head vessel, 200–500 CE
Earthenware with polychrome pigments
Gift of Sarah A. Nunneley (Class of 1963)
2009.14.1

It is hard to escape the penetrating gaze of this individual, who was expertly sculpted by Moche potters over 1,500 years ago on the north coast of modern-day Peru. In my archaeology classes, students who "meet" this figure are intrigued, spending several minutes searching his face for clues or insights. While students often ask about how the vessel was made (in a two-piece mold) or where it was found (likely in a burial), they invariably want to know who this person was in Moche society. Is this the portrait of an important individual? Or does it represent a group of people, perhaps distinguished by their occupation or place of birth?

According to archaeologist Christopher Donnan, this cup depicts "Cut Lip," an individual identified on over forty clay vessels by a small facial scar. While it is possible to trace the physical changes in Cut Lip from youth to adulthood using these objects, we may never uncover the reasons for his commemoration within Moche society.

—Elizabeth Klarich, Five College Associate Professor of Anthropology

Kara Elizabeth Walker (American, b. 1969)
Lost Mountain at Sunrise,* from the series *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated), 2005 plate/2005 print
Offset lithography and silkscreen on Somerset textured paper
2012.14.11

Contemporary artist Kara Walker's work reminds us of the inherent subjectivity of historical perspective. This work is one of 15 prints belonging to Walker's powerful series in which she enlarges selected images from two volumes of *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War* (1866–68) and then "annotates" them by superimposing her signature silhouettes.

Silkscreened in solid black, her silhouettes disrupt *Harper's* visual narrative, casting ghostly apparitions of those excluded from this "official" history of a young nation divided by its ideals of freedom and its practice of slavery. In classes from Critical Social Thought to Politics and Africana Studies, students are drawn to how Walker's annotations both obscure and recontextualize the original image, forcing us to question the assumptions we bring to these 19th-century illustrations. What does this work say about our fragmented and selective recounting of the past? Walker's unsettling reframing adds a layer of ambiguity to the afterlives of these historic images.

—Ellen M. Alvord, Associate Director for Engagement and Weatherbie Curator of Academic Programs

Unknown Mende maker, Sierra Leone
Sowo Wui dance mask, early 20th century
Wood and silver
Purchase with the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund
2013.2

My introductory courses on African art always begin with a *sowo wui* like this one. Originally made for use by the Mende culture's Sande Society, a women's social and political organization, this mask teaches students how to look at African art in key ways. Each element of this mask has multiple levels of symbolism. The neck rings represent health and wealth. The closed mouth suggests a dignified woman. The prominent ears honor both learning and sexual eroticism. The eyes, the most important body part, stare out from the center of this face, emphasized by stylized eyelids and brows.

A study of the mask also calls attention to the drastic recontextualization of an artwork that has traveled from Sierra Leone to South Hadley. Learning to look at a *sowo wui* as artwork requires more than just a study of its visual attributes; it asks us to stretch our imagination and see the mask in dance.

—Amanda Gilvin, Sonja Novak Koerner '51 Senior Curator of Collections and Assistant Director of Curatorial Affairs, Davis Museum at Wellesley College

Conflict & Commemoration

In *Regarding the Pain of Others,* scholar Susan Sontag writes "We can't imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. . . That's what every soldier, and every journalist and aid worker and independent observer who has put in time under fire, and had the luck to elude the death that struck down others nearby, stubbornly feels."

Objects and works of art can tell the stories of those on the front lines. They can also reflect the experience of individuals looking at war from the outside, attempting to understand the pain and suffering of others. Some of these works may be difficult to look at, and not everything here can be called art—you will also see weapons, propaganda posters, and photojournalism. Whether made as social commentary, advertising, or fine art, these works offer both personal and collective responses to war. They were created to memorialize, inform, outrage, challenge, and even terrify.

Conflict and commemoration are themes that arise frequently in a wide array of courses at the Museum, from politics and international relations to English and anthropology. Students examine works of art and material culture to consider issues such as the role of the individual in the machinations of global conflicts, the national and personal dimensions of grief and loss, and the human capacity for cruelty and compassion.

—Kendra D. Weisbin, Associate Curator of Education

Ruins of Arsenal, Richmond.

The Confederate arsenal at Richmond was one of the most extensive establishments of the kind in the South. At the commencement of the war the rebel authorities took possession of a large number of private buildings, such as tobacco and cotton warehouses, and manufactories, and transformed them into Government shops. The masonry shown in the photograph formed the abutment of the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad bridge. The depot was immediately at the end of the structure, and became a portion of the arsenal. In the background are the ruins of the Franklin paper mill, and on the right those of the carbine manufactories. The space occupied by shells, stone, and blocks of iron formed the yard of the shops, in which the ordnance was made. In the foreground are piled up eleven-inch shells. In the middle distance are thirty pound shells, near which are half a dozen charges of canister and a large number of grape shot, each bundle of rings enclosing about thirty pounds of balls, and constituting a charge for a gun. Scattered over the yard, and standing near the base of the arch, are seen the elongated one hundred pound shell for rifled cannon.

The arsenal was destroyed by the great fire, at the evacuation of Richmond. The Tredegar Iron Works, where the Confederates manufactured a considerable portion of their artillery, were situated a short distance to the left of the ruins shown here, and escaped the conflagration.

Alexander Gardner (American, b. Scotland, 1821–1882)
Ruins of Arsenal, Richmond, Virginia, April 1865
Albumen print photograph
Purchase with the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund
2009.7.6

The buildings have lost their roofs, the windows are blown out, the railroad tracks are a roller coaster of falling metal, and bricks are strewn everywhere. Only the cannonballs retain any semblance of order, piled up in neat rows and readied for transport elsewhere. Once the capital of the Confederacy, Richmond had been the target of Union military campaigns throughout much of the Civil War and mostly repelled them. In 1865 the Confederates burned the city in an effort to reduce all of its usable weaponry to rubble and keep the advancing Union army at bay. To no avail: a week later, the Confederate general Robert E. Lee surrendered. That same week, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. The ruins at Richmond epitomized the war's awful ending.

At least that is what the photograph might suggest. Gardner was attempting to tell a history with a camera, a newfangled instrument never before called upon to do any such thing. He turned to words, too. What, I ask students, is the relationship between word and image? What kind of story can they each tell?

—Anthony Lee, Idella Plimpton Kendall Professor of Art History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Bin Danh (American, b. Vietnam, 1977)
Ghost of Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum #3,* from the series *In the Eclipse of Angkor: Tuol Sleng, Choeung Ek, and Khmer Temples, 2008
Daguerreotype
Gift of the artist
2012.5.1

The eyes stare out of this image, arresting the viewer. Wide open and steady, they seem to have seen too much, known too much. While the roundness of the child's face and the delicate, floral pattern on the shirt convey softness and innocence, these qualities are overwhelmed by the ominous sense of detachment evoked by the number pinned to the shirt. The portrait contradicts the vitality and promise we associate with childhood.

If you tilt your head, you can catch a glimpse of the daguerreotype's negative image, which produces a sense of depth that intensifies the child's individuality. The daguerreotype—based on an original photograph taken in the Tuol Sleng prison camp—stands as a one-of-a-kind tribute memorializing the nameless child's short life; of the 17,000 people imprisoned at Tuol Sleng only seven survived.

The reflective metallic surface of a daguerreotype is sometimes referred to as a "mirror with a memory." This mirror calls the viewer to be a witness to the history of the Cambodian genocide—which took the lives of as many as 3 million people—and be accountable to their memories.

—Iyko Day, Associate Professor of English and of Critical Social Thought

Oscar A. Kunath (American, b. Germany, 1830–1909)
He Does Not Return, 1867
Oil on canvas
Purchase with the Friends of Art Fund
1988.6

A single illuminated tear on a mother's cheek, a barely discernible bayonet, two flags, and a church spire configure this scene of grief. Does the window separate the space of the home, the site of mourning and nurture, from the town and the nation? Or does it link them together? Red drapes, shining lace, and brick frame the window. What is inside, what out?

My history courses ask students to consider how changing ideas about emotion and individual experience have emerged from and, in turn, helped to produce empires, nations, racial hierarchies, regimes of gender and sexuality, and other apparatuses of power. Who got to be in the public square, and for what purpose? Who labored to keep the richly furnished home free of mud from the street, recognizable as a space apart? As the soldiers below return, do they carry thoughts of the Union victory over the Confederacy or a Union massacre of Native people? Oscar Kunath commemorates a sacred space of domesticity, consecrated to the nation. What do such commemorations teach us to see—and what do they hide from view?

—Mary Renda, Professor of History


CHINA
FIRST TO FIGHT!
UNITED CHINA RELIEF
PARTICIPATING IN NATIONAL WAR FUND

Martha Sawyers (American, 1902–1988); United China Relief, Inc. (publisher)
China—First To Fight, 1943–1946
Offset lithograph AM halftone
Transfer from the Mount Holyoke College Library
2017.29.42

Before TV and radio, propaganda posters like *China—First to Fight* were vital to the war effort. They represented art in the service of the state. As such, their messages had to be simple, accessible, and eye-catching. They were designed to mobilize popular support.

This poster fulfills these goals with a resolute-looking mother, her wounded arm in an improvised sling, holding her child's hand. They are both under the protection of a Chinese soldier. All look directly at the viewer, as if to say, you cannot ignore us. "First to Fight" refers to the second Sino-Japanese war, fought 1937–45. Propaganda posters like this one help my students understand the power of words and images, as well as the impact of messages that are carefully crafted to connect with emotions like fear, pride, compassion, and patriotism.

—Stephen F. Jones, Professor of Russian and Eurasian Studies

Lynsey Addario (American, b. 1973)
October 22, 2013. Iman Zenglo, 30, sat with her five children in their tent at a squatters camp outside of the Kilis refugee camp on the Turkish side of the border with Syria,* #11 from the series *Syria's Refugees, 2013 capture/2015 print
Inkjet print on Hahnemühle FineArt Baryta paper
Purchase with the Henry Rox Memorial Fund for the Acquisition of Work by Contemporary Women Artists
2015.24.2

For students in my seminar on global migration, Addario's photograph represents the human suffering unleashed by the wars in Syria and Iraq, manifested most dramatically in the massive refugee movements throughout the region. Taken at a refugee camp on Turkey's border with Syria, the photograph reminds students of the human costs of war, the risks and dangers that refugees everywhere face, and the uncertainty of their fate.

Analysis of the war in Syria leads to a broader conversation of how photographs like Addario's can shape public opinion and policy toward migrants and refugees. To what extent can visual images transform public attitudes and promote more humane policies? Students wrestle with the ethical dilemma of documenting humanitarian crises while preserving the dignity of the victims of war and violence.

—Kavita R. Khory, Ruth Lawson Professor of Politics

Permanent Collection

The Museums' five permanent collection spaces, which house only a fraction of its encyclopedic collection, are hubs of teaching activity on campus. From Renaissance art classes inspecting the Museum's Duccio panel painting in the Caroline R. Hill Gallery, to anthropology and history classes exploring the Evans Gallery of Ancient Art, these spaces are alive with the excitement of students learning through engagement with art and material culture. As part of the *Major Themes* exhibition, the Museum extended the conversation about teaching out of the exhibition space and into our permanent galleries, highlighting important works used regularly in classes with special faculty-written "Teaching with Art" labels.

Albert Bierstadt (American, b. Germany, 1830–1902)
Hetch Hetchy Canyon, 1875
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. E. H. Sawyer and Mrs. A. L. Williston
1876.2.I(b).PI

This landscape painting is as much about absence as presence. There are no humans visible in this light-suffused valley, only a herd of elk. It is a portrayal of "Nature" on a grand scale, designed to evoke feelings of awe—a seemingly pristine wilderness untouched by human hands. But when this was painted, Miwok and Paiute people had been connected to the Hetch Hetchy Valley for thousands of years, using traditional ecological knowledge to actively manage its fertile ecosystems for sustenance across many generations.

As the United States expanded westward, it deployed settler colonial policies and violence to physically remove Native people from their traditional homelands. In the valley depicted here, Natives faced exclusion as the area was incorporated into Yosemite National Park. Works like this painting by Albert Bierstadt naturalized these painful, contested processes by marginalizing tribal communities or portraying them as vanishing. Students in my history courses critically interrogate Bierstadt's representation as an argument that erases the longstanding presence of Indigenous people in order to create a vision of an American West freely available for claiming and enjoyment by Euro-Americans.

—Christine DeLucia, Associate Professor of History, Mount Holyoke College, 2012–2018

Unknown Egyptian maker(s)
Block statue of the scribe Amunwahsu, 1386–1278 BCE (New Kingdom, late Dynasty 18–early Dynasty 19)
Limestone and plaster
Gift of Mrs. Trent McMath
1956.36.A.G

Like the Egyptian scribe Amunwahsu, commemorated by this statue, we are wrapped in words. They surround us and define us. Reading and writing are commonplace activities today, but over 3,000 years ago in ancient Egypt, writing was a sacred and specialized duty performed by trained scribes who served the rulers and the public.

Here, Amunwahsu is literally inscribed with language that attests to his honest and upright character. These essential qualities allowed messages to be delivered intact and ready to be decoded by readers, just as our own digital text travels across vast distances to arrive at an exact address.

I use this object to help students expand their understanding of reading and writing as social performances that allow societies to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next. I also use it in my seminar on witchcraft, where we think more deeply about the technology of "spells," whose syntax and vocabulary activate our intentions and compose our desires.

—Erika Rundle, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts and Gender Studies, 2005–2020

Unknown Italian makers, Siena
Wedding chest (cassone) with painted panel showing the Death of Lucretia,
ca. 1465–1475
Wood and tempera
Purchase with the Warbeke Art Museum Fund
2008.13

A naked woman rises in bed as two clothed men threaten her with sword and dagger. Lucretia is about to be raped. In the center she appears again, dressed in red and holding a small dagger below her chest, recounting the assault to her shocked family. A bearded man looks on as men chase after the fleeing rapist on his horse. Although innocent, Lucretia will kill herself to preserve the family name, an act which ultimately leads to the founding of the Roman republic. Lucretia: model of virtue and chastity, the perfect wife.

Why depict a woman's imminent rape and suicide on a wedding chest that will be carried through the streets in the marriage procession to the groom's home and then sit at the end of the couple's bed? The visual narrative challenges students to consider aestheticized violence against women in the context of Renaissance Italy with today's heightened awareness about male power and sexuality. In my courses on ancient Rome and classical myths, Lucretia is just one of countless female victims that startle students and ignite discussions about the persistence of such tales throughout history.

—Bettina Bergmann, The Helene Phillips Herzig '49 Professor of Art History

Unknown northern Italian or possibly Austrian maker(s)
Capital with human and animal figures, first half of the 12th century
Marble
Gift of Caroline R. Hill
1959.6.P.011

A jumble of bodies, heads, and animals. Ever since the 12th century, viewers have puzzled over the meaning of the strange, often violent, world of Romanesque sculpture. Find the harpy at the corner—its human head combined with a bird's body; now look for the basilisk, identifiable by its cockscomb, gnawing a man's ear; and finally a wide-eyed giant head marking the opposite corner. On adjacent sides, two lions, one missing its head, and a serpent converge to devour a woman's head and feet. Is this a craftsman's idle fantasy or a meaningful message? The woman's naked body and the man's stricken face suggest a warning: evil is near and sinners will be punished by the devil's creatures.

Reimagine the capital back into its original architectural setting. Seen from all sides, its scale would be just right for a cloister, its subject inviting meditation. But there is no right answer. Each time my students and I encounter this capital, we discover new interpretive possibilities that remind us that art history is an active conversation between our present and the past.

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

MAJOR THEMES

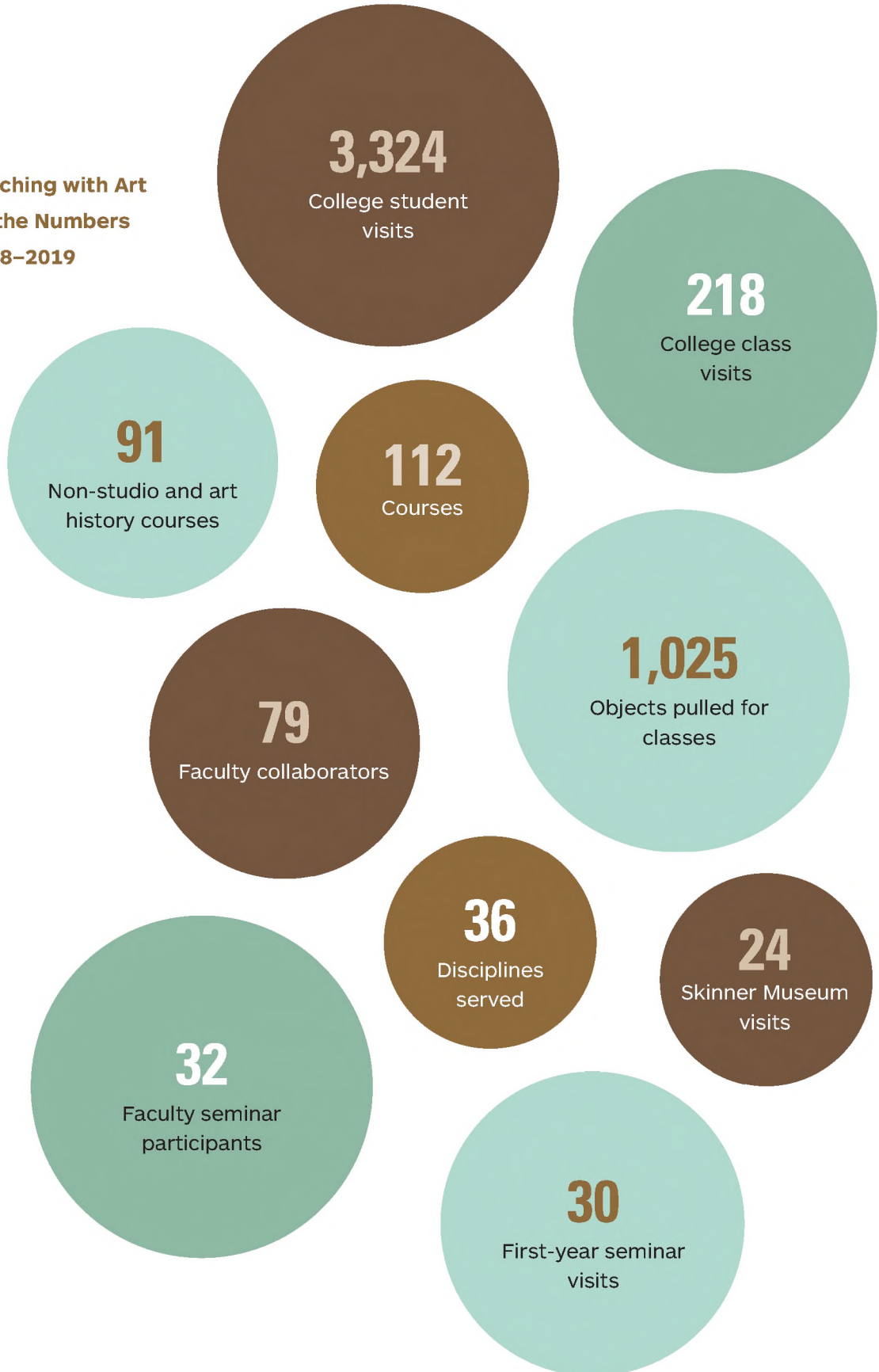
Conclusion

As the texts in this catalogue demonstrate, the range of insights that faculty and students generate from working with original museum objects is inspiring. These deep engagements take place in the galleries on a daily basis and enable students to confront the power of representation, analyze visual information from multiple perspectives, and challenge traditional ways of seeing. As faculty have eloquently written, original works of art provide opportunities to tackle difficult topics—from exploring America's complicated past to understanding the world around us by making scientific phenomena more accessible. These investigations bring a rich vitality to the Museum's core activities and support the College's mission to provide an intellectually adventurous education, preparing students for lives of thoughtful and purposeful engagement in the world.

In this way, the Museum has become the largest and most dynamic classroom on campus. In 2018–2019, MHCAM hosted 218 classes and over 3,000 student visits. Serving 79 faculty and 36 academic disciplines, staff pulled more than 1,000 works of art from storage for class use. Using the Museum as a laboratory for innovative teaching, many faculty developed in-depth collaborations with the Museum, visiting multiple times over the semester and enabling students to conduct original object-based research or pursue written and creative assignments. In addition, more than three quarters of visiting classes represented disciplines outside art history and studio art, underscoring the Museum's integral role as an academic resource across the liberal arts curriculum.

The past decade has seen the Teaching with Art program flourish, transforming and invigorating the Museum's alignment with the College's academic mission. Almost every day, the Museum is bustling with class visits, faculty collaborations, independent studies, honors thesis research, student guide training, and more. The Museum has become a lively campus center, bringing together students, faculty, staff, and community members in new and vital ways. This exhibition's collaborative model, created and designed by four curators with dozens of faculty voices, has become a hallmark of our teaching museum and lays the groundwork for a future of continued innovation and discovery.

Teaching with Art by the Numbers 2018–2019



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