



140<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY | SPECIAL EDITION

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FALL 2016



# Fall 2016 Events



## The Third Annual Patricia and Edward Falkenberg Lecture

“Teaching Museums in the 21st Century: Sharing Collections and Learning with Art”

Jock Reynolds, The Henry J. Heinz II Director, Yale University Art Gallery

**Thursday, September 15 at 5:30 p.m.**

Gamble Auditorium

Fall Opening Reception to follow

## Art à la Carte Gallery Talk Series

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

**Thursday, September 22**

“Human Images Rise”

Kimberly Juanita Brown, Assistant Professor of English and Africana Studies

**Thursday, October 13**

“Prospect Hill: The Recovered History”

Robert L. Herbert, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities Emeritus

Followed at 12:45 p.m. by a guided hike along the restored trail up to Prospect Hill by Timothy Farnham, Chair of Environmental Studies

**Thursday, November 17**

“Who is the Boy in the Top Hat?”

Paul Staiti, Alumnae Foundation Professor of Fine Arts

## Sightlines Tour Series

Join us on select Saturdays at 1:30 p.m. for thematic tours presented by MHCAM Student Guides. Check the Museum’s website for dates and more details.

Cover: Andy Warhol (American, 1928–1987), *Reigning Queens (Royal Edition) (Queen Ntombi)*, 1985, screenprint on Lenox Museum Board, Gift of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, 2014.9.2, © 2016 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Left: Chinese, *Guanyin (Avalokiteshvara)*, 960–1368 (Song Dynasty or Yuan Dynasty), wood, gesso, paint, and gilding, Gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, 2012.40.2. Petegorsky/Gipe photo

# 140

## 140th Anniversary Bash!

**Join us** for special music and dance performances, art talks, Mission Cantina food truck, cupcakes, a champagne toast, and much more!

**Friday, November 11 at 5:30 p.m.**



Faith Ringgold (American, b. 1930), *Somebody Stole My Broken Heart*, 2007, screenprint, edition 27/60, Partial gift of the Experimental Printmaking Institute, Lafayette College and purchase with the Susan and Bernard Schilling (Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund, 2016.2.9

All photographs by Laura Shea unless otherwise noted.

As the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's 140th anniversary approaches, we have much to celebrate. In the past months, MHCAM ranked 11th on a national list of top college art museums, earned two awards for its new website as well as a design award for the recent *El Anatsui: New Worlds* catalogue, and last but not least, received a renewal grant of \$150,000 from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation for our "Diverse Voices" initiative. This recognition encourages us in our efforts to reach new audiences and spark meaningful encounters with original works of art. It also makes us aware of the opportunities that lie before us.

This fall, an exciting next chapter begins for the Museum as we anticipate the arrival of a new Florence Finch Abbott Director. Simultaneously, we unveil a stunning re-installation of the galleries highlighting over 140 recent acquisitions made possible through the generosity of our Museum supporters. *140 Unlimited* refers not only to our year-long, museum-wide exhibition of these important new works—juxtaposed in fresh and dynamic new combinations with the permanent collection—but also the limitless potential of a museum dedicated to its teaching mission and the possibilities of object-based learning.

The publication you hold in your hands is an important component of all that we are celebrating. It features a diverse sampling of the extraordinary works of art presented to MHCAM as part of the *140 Gifts* campaign begun five years ago under the visionary leadership of our former director, John Stomberg. The pages that follow demonstrate the transformative power of great art and also reveal the collaboration necessary to achieve such an ambitious endeavor. We are deeply grateful to the many individuals who have made both the *140 Unlimited* exhibition and this accompanying publication possible, including the faculty, staff, scholars, and alumnae authors of the following 24 insightful essays, and of course all the donors who

contributed many of these notable works of art.

The future has never looked brighter, and I would personally like to thank our talented, hard-working staff for all they have accomplished during the transition between directors. My thanks also goes out to our Art Museum Advisory Board members and Friends of Art at all levels, who have contributed to this moment in myriad ways and continue to invest in the Museum's mandate to inspire visitors through direct engagement with art and material culture.

We look forward to welcoming you to the newly re-installed galleries and seeing you at our fall programs, including two celebratory events: the Third Annual Patricia and Edward Falkenberg Lecture given by Jock Reynolds, Henry J. Heinz II Director of the Yale University Art Gallery on September 15 and the 140th Anniversary Bash on Friday, November 11.

New discoveries and old friends await you!

Ellen M. Alvord '89

Interim Director and Weatherbie Curator of Education and Academic Programs



*The exhibition 140 Unlimited is made possible by the Susan B. Weatherbie Exhibition Fund, the Joyce Marcus Art Exhibition Fund, and with generous support from Rosamond (Class of 1963) and David Mack.*

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With great affection and admiration, we dedicate this publication to the memory of John Varriano (1943–2016), Idella Plimpton Kendall Professor of Art History Emeritus. He was a beloved teacher, mentor, and friend to countless generations of art lovers as well as a devoted supporter of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum. We also honor his wife, Wendy Watson, whose generosity of spirit and extraordinary cultivation and stewardship of the collection during her 41 years as the Museum's curator will be forever cherished.

## 140 Unlimited: Recent Acquisitions in Honor of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's 140th Anniversary September 6, 2016–May 28, 2017

Hannah W. Blunt, Associate Curator

In John Sloan's 1905 etching *Connoisseurs of Prints*, well-dressed art patrons compete to see pictures on a gallery wall. The image is a jumble of bobbing heads, craned necks, and scrutinizing expressions. Such a scene is not uncommon at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, minus the top hats and tailcoats. Close looking is a fixture of the Museum's vibrant Teaching with Art program, where a whole class of students often clusters around a single work of art, like a team of forensic scientists, or a panel of print connoisseurs.



John Sloan (American, 1871–1951), *Connoisseurs of Prints*, 1905, etching, Promised gift of Alice Tetelman (Class of 1962) in honor of her parents, Leah and Harry Tetelman

Sloan's iconic etching is a promised gift to MHCAM from alumna Alice Tetelman '56. It is one of more than 140 recent acquisitions on view this fall in a special exhibition marking the 140th anniversary of the Museum's founding in 1876. In 2011, in anticipation of this milestone—one which is matched by only a handful of other college art museums in the United States—MHCAM launched a gift-raising campaign to commemorate the 2016

anniversary with 140 transformative works of art. Since that initiative was announced, MHCAM has been the recipient of more than 300 gifts from alumnae, artists and their estates, prominent foundations, and countless other benevolent supporters. Additionally, the Museum has undertaken its own collection-building efforts, implementing endowed acquisition funds from generous donors present and past, to acquire works of art that have broadened the scope of the collection, and deepened areas of existing strength.

Highlights from this campaign include a gift from the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation of 17 objects from China, Thailand, and the Islamic World, dating from the first to the 17th century. This group of sculptures and ceramics single-handedly transformed the Museum's collection of Asian art and has already prompted several exhibitions and a publication. The Museum's notable holdings in European art have been augmented by an Italian Renaissance

altarpiece by Bartolomeo di Giovanni, Mannerist paintings by Abraham Janssens (a gift of David Giles Carter and Louise Carter) and Mirabello Cavalori (an anonymous promised gift), an exquisite ca. 1530 Italian pastiglia box (a purchase made possible by Gaetano and Susan Vicinelli '64), an 18th-century French pastoral landscape by Jean-Baptiste Benard (a gift of long-time MHCAM supporter Renee Scialom Cary '48), and a grand



Tonita Martinez Roybal (San Ildefonso Pueblo/American, 1892–1945), *Jar (olla)*, ca. 1910–20, Gift of Juli Shea Towell (Class of 1955) and Gil Towell

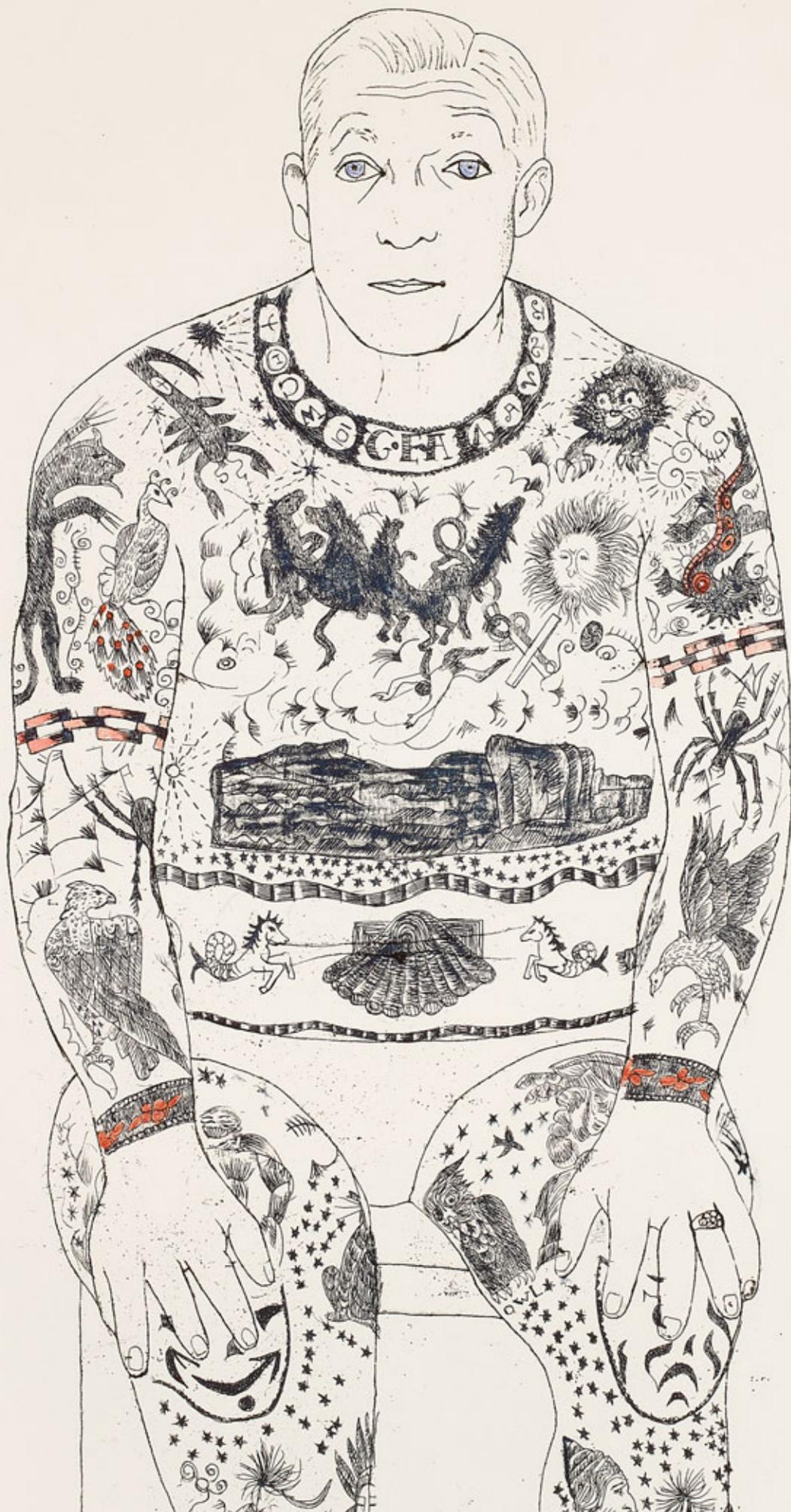
Neoclassical history painting by Étienne Aubry (a purchase made possible by Joyce Chaikin Ahrens '62). Likewise, a promised gift from Juli Towell '55 of works by 20th-century Zuni, Acoma, and San Ildefonso potters have joined related ceramics in the collection, offering a multi-generational picture of Puebloan craft traditions.

Photography has also had a banner five years at MHCAM thanks to donors such as Bonnie Barrett Stretch '61, Dr. Norman Aubrey, Gay Strickler '73, Julie Herzig Desnick '73, Paula and Mack Lee, Frances Cronin '57 and Richard Jeffrey, and others. One gallery of the exhibition will be dedicated to 20th-century documentary photography, an area of new depth because of these gifts. A selection of humble but captivating snapshots by anonymous individuals will also be on view, part of a remarkable gift of more than 200 vernacular photographs from Ann Zelle '65.

Throughout the Museum's galleries—many of which are fully re-installed with new, thematic introductions for the 140th anniversary year—visitors will encounter these recent acquisitions interspersed with familiar highlights, as well as

fascinating objects from the collection that have rarely, if ever, been on view. Decorative and utilitarian arts, including several objects from the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, will also be incorporated into the displays—a testament to the Museum's increasing engagement with material culture. Numismatics have also become an area of concerted collecting and apposite gifting in recent years, motivated by the interests of professors Bettina Bergmann, Michael Davis, Michael Penn, and Geoff Sumi, among others. More than two dozen coins will be on display, including gifts from the Honorable Robert H. Pelletreau, Jr., and Susan B. Matheson '68. A magnifying glass will be at the ready.

*140 Unlimited* will also celebrate the overwhelming recent growth of the Museum's holdings in global contemporary art, presenting new acquisitions by Chuck Close, Melvin Edwards, Jasper Johns, Zanele Muholi, Kiki Smith, Lin Tianmiao, Kara Walker, Andy Warhol, Carrie Mae Weems, and many others. Showcased in a rotating display in the Harriet L. and Paul M. Weissman Gallery—as well as in dialogue with historical objects throughout the Museum—works of the present and recent past will be featured prominently in the exhibition, upholding the important place contemporary art has had at the Museum since its founding. The oil paint was likely still drying on the inaugural gift to MHCAM, Albert Bierstadt's *Hetch Hetchy Canyon* (1875), when Mrs. E. H. Sawyer and Mrs. A. Lyman Williston offered it to the College in 1876. These visionary donors hoped that the painting would “prove an inspiration” to Mount Holyoke students. One hundred years later, this work of art continues to inspire those jumbled clusters of students into discussions about American history, the ideology of landscape, environmental policy, and the emotional power of light. Meanwhile, the generosity of thoughtful, dedicated donors still resonates throughout the galleries.



# Highlights from the 140 Gifts Campaign

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## The Penitent Magdalen: Sainly Sinner

Wendy M. Watson, Consulting Curator, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

Abraham Janssens was one of many Northern European painters drawn to Italy by its incomparable artistic riches. Documented as working in Rome between 1598 and 1601, he could not have happened upon a more dynamic and decisive moment in Italian art, with Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci at work on major commissions, and with the pervasive influence of Raphael, Michelangelo, and classical antiquity strongly in the air. Janssens's Roman sojourn fundamentally affected his subsequent practice, which drew upon aspects of Carracci's classicism and Caravaggio's *chiaroscuro* and colorism. At the same time, echoes of the late Mannerist style of the North persisted in his work.

Returning to Antwerp in 1602, Janssens joined the Guild of Saint Luke and became the leading painter of large mythological and historical works, receiving numerous public and private commissions. 1608, however, brought with it the return of Peter Paul Rubens to Antwerp after eight years in Italy and Spain. Rubens's homecoming had a dramatic impact on the critical fortunes of Janssens; although the two artists certainly inspired one another, Janssens was soon eclipsed by his ambitious countryman's talent and the prolific output of his large workshop.

Janssens continued, however, to successfully garner commissions from wealthy Flemish patrons. In the 1620s, he embarked upon a series of vibrant, half-length, figural compositions including the *Penitent Magdalen*. This sumptuous painting was intended for a private patron who could savor the visual opulence of the pensive saint surrounded by jewels, silks, fruit, and a golden ointment jar, while taking note of the somber skull and crucifix as emblems of death and redemption. In this way, it bears comparison to another important work in the Museum—a *vanitas* still-life by Hendrik Andriessen that conveys the same compelling message without a human presence.

When Janssens took on this subject, the Counter-Reformation Church was anxious to encourage penitence—rather than the scandalous sale of religious indulgences—as the route to salvation. Fittingly, the intended lesson of the Magdalen was one of liberation and hope. Traditionally described as a prostitute, she embodied the association of sexuality and sin that began with Eve. Saved by Jesus, she repented and



Abraham Janssens (Flemish, ca. 1575–1632), *The Penitent Magdalen*, ca. 1620, oil on panel, Gift of David Giles Carter and Louise Carter in honor of John Varriano, Professor of Art History (1970–2009), 2011.3

became a devoted disciple and ultimately the witness to the Resurrection at Christ's tomb—the “apostle to the apostles.”

Mary Magdalen has remained a complex and mutable symbol of women and their place in the church throughout history. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the discovery of ancient texts from the Gnostic gospels—including the Gospel of Mary—elevated her modest New Testament characterization into that of a prominent and trusted apostle of Jesus. Janssens's depiction of the Magdalen offers the opportunity to consider and reconsider this important figure and her representations—from penitent sinner to influential disciple—in art through time.

## The Evolution of the Gorgon

Taylor Anderson '15, Art Museum Advisory Board Fellow, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

Representations of the Greek monster Medusa are as varied as the mythology in which she appears. The first written record of the myth of Zeus's hero son Perseus, and Medusa, a Gorgon whose face turned men to stone, survives from the eighth century BCE. It is not surprising that nearly three millennia later, both the story's details and Medusa's appearance have evolved.

One of the oldest figures in Greek art, the first depictions of the Gorgon are consistent with descriptions in early mythology. The female monster is shown with a snarling grin, distended tongue, bulging eyes, and occasionally fangs, wings, and a beard. Unlike other Greek figures typically shown in profile, the Gorgon always faces the viewer directly.

Gorgon imagery endured for centuries and appeared in coinage, ceramics, and sculpture in ancient Greece and Rome. Over time, representations of the Gorgon became more varied; for example, Medusa's snaky hair did not appear until the first century CE. The rapid expansion of Christianity following the fall of the Roman Empire resulted in the suppression of mythological imagery. However, the Gorgon reemerged during the Renaissance, and ever since, Medusa has been featured in popular culture and fine art, portrayed by artists including Caravaggio and Pablo Picasso.

*Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, an early 20th-century woodcut by Dutch artist Johannes Josephus Aarts, captures the moment when Perseus valiantly defeats the beastly sea monster Cetus to rescue Andromeda, a sacrificial maiden. Hovering above the turbulent sea with magical winged sandals, Perseus raises the decapitated head of Medusa to petrify Cetus. Later versions of the legend describe Perseus riding on the back of the winged horse, Pegasus, who is shown rearing behind the hero. Unlike most post-Renaissance illustrations of this scene, Andromeda is absent from Aarts's rendition.

Aarts, a master printmaker and longtime arts academy instructor, not only captures the action of the dramatic moment, but also a host of complex textures. Using just one color of ink, Aarts convincingly executes Pegasus's powerful, feathery wings, Cetus's slippery scales, and the foamy, crash-

ing waves that frame the encounter.

Aarts renders Medusa with angular features, protuberant eyes, and the now characteristic writhing snakes in place of human hair—a typical post-Renaissance portrayal. In contrast to archaic Gorgons, as depicted on the black-figure kylix displayed at MHCAM on long-term loan, Medusa maintains recognizably human features. Aarts's work illustrates a timeless myth and an enduring monster, exemplifying the persistence and evolution of the Gorgon since antiquity.



Greek (from Attica), *Kylix with the head of the Gorgon*, 6th century BCE, slip-painted earthenware with red and white pigment (black-figure), Lent by the University Museum of Contemporary Art, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1992.L1. Petegorsky/Gipe photo

Johannes Josephus Aarts (Dutch, 1871–1934), *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, ca. 1905, woodcut, Gift of William P. Carl in honor of Wendy Watson, 2015.13



## Enlightenment in a Photograph: Sarah Charlesworth's *Levitating Buddha*

Ajay Sinha, Professor of Art, Mount Holyoke College

In this large-scale photograph by Sarah Charlesworth, the vague outline of a seated Buddha is barely visible. Viewers might wonder if the levitating Buddha is an original sculpture from an archaeological site in China or a replica from a tourist gift shop. The photograph eliminates all references to context, and the shadowy form remains suspended on a milky-white ground.

This purposefully ambiguous image is less about the depicted sculpture and more about the conditions that shape our reactions to it. Charlesworth's choice of Fujiflex, a polyester-based industrial technique of breaking down and bleaching the colors from original prints and transparencies to produce large-size images, is instructive to this interpretation. It emphasizes the act of removing information, thus mimicking in the printing process what Charlesworth provoca-



tively calls “postmodern amnesia,” the cultural condition of the media-saturated world in which she grew up. In this consumer-driven environment, the original object withers into what philosopher and political theorist Jean Baudrillard calls a “simulacrum,” merging representation and reality.

In the 1980s, Charlesworth belonged to a group called the Pictures Generation, comprising mostly women artists such as Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Laurie Simmons, and Cindy Sherman. The group was largely influenced by Conceptual art, a movement of the 1960s and 1970s that treated art as a visual language for conveying an artist's ideas rather than as an aesthetic and material object to be admired in itself. Artists of the Pictures Generation used Conceptual art's linguistic and ideational approach to interrogate the commercial world that surrounded them. They reworked im-

ages from popular media to show the gendered logic and grammar of advertisements and display windows aimed at women consumers. In Charlesworth's *Levitating Buddha*, thus, the Buddha figure is treated as a commodity, a glowing embodiment of Asian spiritualism around which developed a (gendered) marketplace of alternative bookstores, antique shops, meditation centers, and yoga retreats.

For Charlesworth, however, photography was not only a means for cultural critique, but also a medium for hosting and repositioning the commercial object of mass culture. The rich tonality and sturdiness of the Fujiflex print's polyester base gives the three-dimensional statue another kind of material presence. As the sculpture blends into the matte lamination of the photograph, the milky-white ground solidifies like a smooth marble surface, across which faint shadows scatter like streaks and veins in a mineral. The sculpture becomes luminous just when it dissolves into the materiality of the image, and light—the medium of photography—reactivates in the disappearing sculpture the Buddhist idea of enlightenment, the threshold at which the soul begins to disentangle itself from the material constraints of the body.

Sarah Charlesworth (American, 1947–2013), *Levitating Buddha*, from the series *0+1*, 1999, laminated Fujiflex color photograph, Gift of Jennifer Vorbach (Class of 1978), 2011.<sup>14</sup>

## An Early Woodcut of Daniel in the Lions' Den

Jessica Maier, Assistant Professor of Art History, Mount Holyoke College

This important early woodcut was included in Stephan Fridolin's *Schatzbehalter, oder Schrein der waren Reichtümer des Heils unnd ewyger Seligkeit* (*Treasure chest of the true riches of the saints and eternal salvation*), a devotional book issued by legendary Nuremberg publisher Anton Koberger in 1491. A monument in early printing, the book included 96 full-page illustrations of Hebrew Bible and New Testament subjects. The woodcuts were executed by Michael Wolgemut, his step-son Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, and their assistants—the same team that would collaborate with Koberger again for the publication of the famed Nuremberg Chronicle just two years later. Wolgemut is also noted for being the teacher of Albrecht Dürer, who went on to become the most noted print-maker of the Northern Renaissance after working for a time in Koberger's shop.

The woodcut depicts an encapsulated version of the rather complicated Hebrew Bible story of Daniel. A Jewish captive in Babylon, the virtuous Daniel impressed King Darius, who bestowed high authority upon him. The king's favoritism sparked jealousy among other royal officials, who—knowing of Daniel's piety—tricked Darius into issuing an edict against worship, then immediately accused Daniel of committing the crime of prayer. Darius reluctantly imposed punishment, and Daniel was thrown into a den of lions; with the intervention of an angel, he miraculously survived. Darius freed him, fed his accusers to the lions, and decreed that all royal subjects revere Daniel's god.

During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Daniel was considered a precursor of Christ: Daniel's trial on false grounds and his escape from death were seen as parallels to Christ's trial before Pontius Pilate, his Crucifixion, and Resurrection. Rather than using a biblical setting, this woodcut stages the scene as if taking place in late 15th-century Germany. Darius, wearing a crown and a fur-trimmed robe, sits enthroned beneath a gothic canopy at left. Kneeling before him is an envoy holding the decree against worship. Behind them, Daniel's antagonists crowd in and point accusingly toward Daniel, at upper right, kneeling in prayer at the top of a tower. Fear-some lions lurk around the base of the tower, licking their chops.

The woodcut's style speaks to a key early stage in the history of printmaking. In the decades after the invention of the printing press, devotional imagery was suddenly available to the masses. The earliest woodcuts tended to be small-



Possibly Michael Wolgemut (German, 1434/37–1519), *Daniel accused before Darius and cast into the lions' den*, 1491, woodcut with hand coloring, Purchase with funds from Patricia Falkenberg (Class of 1964) in loving memory of Roger Aaron, husband of Virginia Altman Aaron (Class of 1966), 2012.31.5

scale, simple renderings of single holy figures. This woodcut and the book it comes from, by contrast, were more ambitious: costly and artistic, with high production values. In this example, color was applied by hand to enliven the image, and considerable care was given to the aesthetic value of the print. No wonder that this and other woodcuts from the *Schatzbehalter* were thought to have made a strong impression on the young Dürer.

## Four Sculptures for the 140th

John R. Stomberg, Virginia Rice Kelsey 1961s Director, Hood Museum of Art  
(Florence Finch Abbott Director, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, 2011–2015)

As part of the *140 Gifts* campaign, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum received four major works of sculpture that date to within 12 years of one another—1980 to 1992. Despite their proximity in time, these artworks range in material and approach from assembled wood, steel, and glass to fine bronze casting. Together, they form a powerful snapshot of late modern art and advance the Museum's collection to better represent 20th-century art history. Already blessed with examples from earlier in the century, including important works by Barbara Hepworth, Isamu Noguchi, and Richard Stankiewicz, these recent gifts have solidified and expanded the narrative told with art at the College.

The earliest sculpture, *Gnomon's Parade (Late)*, reflects Christopher Wilmarth at the height of his career. Working with great consistency, Wilmarth mined the expressive possibilities of architectural materials—thick steel, glass, and cable—and the limited color palette they offered—primarily green and grey. His sculptures emerge from the weighty realm of skyscrapers, but exist within a floating world of light and shadow. Because Wilmarth uses this restricted material palette and non-objective abstraction, he is often associated with Minimalism. His work is largely about the materials, addressing the look and feel of the steel and glass, but like many labels, Minimalism is not a perfect fit. Wilmarth embraced the potential for allusion in his work as well, encouraging meaning and significance that transcended the strict interpretation of sculpture as object.

*Gnomon's Parade (Late)* is one of a series he made with similar titles—each variant altered in the parenthetical subtitle. A gnomon is the vertical structure in a sundial that casts the shadow used to tell time. While this title evokes concerns essentially temporal—of this earth and our shared experience of duration—the structure itself suggests concerns that are more universal. Wilmarth uses the undeniable weight and density of construction steel to counter the ephemerality of pure light captured by the glass. Wilmarth also uses steel and glass for their power of allusion. He approaches his materials in a manner parallel to the way poets use words, and his themes include time and space, heaven and earth, the fleeting and the permanent—that is, life and death.

Wilmarth had strong support during his lifetime with some critics even suggesting that he was one of the most important sculptors of his generation, but this praise failed to lift him from a state of acute depression in his forties. He took his

own life at his home in the Red Hook district of Brooklyn when he was just 44 years old. The work he created in the approximately 20 years that he was active has become increasingly treasured for its intimacy, grace, and austere visual poesy. Wilmarth's sculptures now take their proper place of prominence in museum collections around the country.



Christopher Wilmarth (American, 1943–1987), *Gnomon's Parade (Late)*, 1980, etched glass and steel, Gift of Shelby Baier White (Class of 1959), 2014.18



Judy Pfaff (American, b. 1946), *Wallabout*, 1986, painted balsa wood, plywood, and steel, Purchase with funds from Astrid Rehl Baumgardner (Class of 1973), 2014.8a-k

Judy Pfaff works in an additive manner similar to Wilmarth, but with considerably different materials and sensibility. Pfaff creates sculpture from myriad everyday things that surround her, from building supplies to found objects. For Wilmarth, the materiality of the steel and the glass are inherent to how we perceive the work, whereas for Pfaff, the surfaces present opportunities for expressive color and mark-making. Though close in date, these two works emerge from very different artistic practices and represent contrasting, though concurrent, threads in 20th-century abstraction.

*Wallabout* developed out of Pfaff's expanding sculpture practice in the late 1970s and early 1980s. She had started as a painter and turned to installation art, but at this time she began creating works that combined both. She changed from painting images of forms that existed only in the conceptual space of her canvases to painting literal forms that exist in actual space. We can imagine *Wallabout* as a two-dimensional composition that has exploded out into three-dimensional space and been frozen at a dramatic moment in its transition. In her subsequent work, the relief aspects of Pfaff's sculptures become so pronounced that they require support from beyond the wall, emerging ever farther into the spaces they

inhabit and setting the stage for her later, full-gallery installations.

*Wallabout* marks an important time in what was then Pfaff's nascent evolution and embodies the artist's ideas at the moment of a creative breakthrough. Exuberant and colorful, it extends the notion of an expressive art, one that allows for the vagaries of an artist's truest personality to find a physical reflection in the three-dimensional realm. Simultaneously, she advances the ideal established by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in the first decade of the 20th century—namely, creating art that includes time as a fourth dimension (in addition to height, width, and depth). This goal occupied a central position in Cubism, and Pfaff brings it up to date. As we move around her sculpture, our comprehension of it changes in significant ways, making it impossible for us to fully engage

without focusing on how we respond through time and its direct corollary, space. *Wallabout* brings to the Museum a concrete manifestation of both the legacy and reinvention of modernism, and it represents one of our great living artists at a moment of profound inspiration.

The one cast sculpture in the group would be hard to fathom without the context of post-World War II Europe. Though created much later, the source for Arnaldo Pomodoro's vision lies in the complex decades that followed the continental conflict and includes ideas stemming from post-atomic malaise, the Cold War, and the growing understanding of the universe and our place within it. Born in 1926, Pomodoro came of age during the war and worked for more than a decade as a civil engineer consulting on the rebuilding of Italian cities—in particular Pesaro. He turned to sculpture full time in the late 1950s, armed with a deep knowledge of architecture, ruined and restored, and a worldview shaped by his experience.

*Disco con sfera (Disk with sphere)* exemplifies perfectly Pomodoro's mature work. It demonstrates a pictorial language born of conflict and weaned on a qualified enthusiasm for the future. In the sculpture, he holds opposing forces in

perpetual tension, both formal and textual. We see the sphere and recognize its perfection, but on the back it is incomplete, flattened, and covered by several angled forms. The sphere also breaks the precision of the disc, interrupting the circle. A closer look reveals that the textural details resemble both the accretions of civilization and their demise, antiquity and modernity. We recognize patterns that evoke ancient markings and futuristic design. These elements of Pomodoro's work occupy an intellectual terrain familiar to authors and filmmakers of the era—artists who looked to the past as a path into the future.

Pomodoro's technique connects him to a long tradition of sculpture-making despite the contemporaneity of his themes. He works in clay, carefully modeled and prepared for casting. Then a foundry creates the beautiful bronze versions such as *Disco con sfera*. Lastly, the artist works hard to get every surface to a degree of reflectivity and color that he approves. Pomodoro is particularly well-known for working with different waxes and polishes to achieve various surface effects. Careful examination of this sculpture will reveal a great deal of variety in the way light reacts with different areas, drawing our attention to specific regions and plunging others into shadow. These highlights offer visual reinforcement to his thematic contrasts, adding light and dark to his repertory of "discordant tension," as he describes his work.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, this humbly titled work of sculpture reflects the artist's aspirations to connect with the greatest dilemmas facing mankind in an atomic age—the survival of civilization in the face of our own power to build and destroy.

Finally, the Museum received a classic Kenneth Snelson sculpture as a gift from the artist. That work, *Wing 1*, exemplifies quintessential characteristics of the artist's signature approach. Constructed with stainless steel pipes and cable, the whole is in a perpetual state of balance between the structural integrity of the pipes and the tension of the cable—a concept that Snelson created for his work called "tensegrity." Through his union of rigidity and flexibility Snelson has been able to draw in space, create tangible forms of immense grace and beauty, further the modernist dream of merging the means with the meaning, and set out a series of metaphysical oppositions that get to the very core of our most daunting internal ontological musings.

Since at least the early Renaissance, artists have endeavored to draw images of space; with *Wing 1* Snelson draws in space. As we move around the sculpture the drawing shifts in endlessly complex ways, but retains its essential harmony from any angle. Balanced asymmetry characterizes the drawing; that is, it never feels overly weighted to one side or the



Arnaldo Pomodoro (Italian, b. 1926), *Disco con sfera (Disk with sphere)*, 1986, cast bronze, Gift of Linda Taft Litton (Class of 1958), 2014.17, image courtesy Arnaldo Pomodoro, all rights reserved

other, but is also never actually symmetrical. In this way, the composition is both harmonious and beguiling. We never fully grasp the whole and instead enter into a process of perpetual discovery as we spend time with the work.

Of course, *Wing 1* is not a drawing per se, but a three-dimensional object sharing our space. We move around it and interact with it in the same way we do with all objects in our world—including people. In fact, dancers may be an appropriate metaphor for this sculpture. *Wing 1* leans, stretches, reaches, and compresses in a manner reminiscent of a terrific dancer expressing emotions gently, voicelessly, and with seemingly effortless grace. To be in the presence of this sculpture prompts us to feel first and think second.

Once we do begin to ponder the theoretical significance of Snelson's work, we realize the enormity of his contribution to art. Since the advent of modernism as an ideal to be strived for, artists have sought a union of what they make with how they make it. For sculptors, this enterprise involved thinking through how specific characteristics of their medium carried meaning. With works such as *Wing 1*, Snelson creates a perfect unity between what he is saying with how he is saying it. The sculpture emerges from the new technological world

where materials such as stainless steel and cable made possible everything from bridges and skyscrapers to airplanes and rockets. The artist embraces both the materials and the science and engineering of his own time. In the creation of his work, Snelson merges physics and art seamlessly, establishing a perfect union between how and why he makes his work. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Snelson engages his viewers in the deepest of all considerations. Similar to Pomodoro's work, Snelson's sculptures suggest that life is indeed defined by oppositions held in harmonious tension. The pipe and the cable, the rigid and the flexible, these are the forces that lie at the heart of his work, and through their relationship beauty emerges. Physics can explain the complexity and essence of the universe—where it leaves off art takes over. *Wing 1* is both a model for the forces of the universe that we know and for those about which we wonder.

Collectively, these four sculptures offer the students, fac-

ulty, and community members who visit the Museum much more than an opportunity to understand art of the late 20th century. From these works we learn to search deeply for connectivity to others, for glimpses of brilliant liaisons between the visual and the conceptual, and to simply look long and hard at art produced at the highest level of creativity, innovation, and inspiration. The Museum will be forever grateful to the individuals who have donated these great works. Their gifts exceed the physical presence of the sculptures in the galleries, offering transformative experiences to all who engage with the art of Christopher Wilmarth, Judy Pfaff, Arnaldo Pomodoro, and Kenneth Snelson.

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1. Arnaldo Pomodoro quoted in Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation, "Arnaldo Pomodoro: Sphere within as Sphere," accessed May 26, 2016, <http://dsmpublicartfoundation.org/public-artwork/sphere-within-a-sphere/>.



Kenneth Snelson (American, b. 1927), *Wing 1*, 1992, stainless steel and wire, Gift of the artist, 2012.53

## Sargent's Dance with Baudry

Paul Staiti, Alumnae Foundation Professor of Fine Arts, Mount Holyoke College

John Singer Sargent was an admirer of the mural work of Paul Jacques Aimé Baudry, a Parisian painter and winner of the Prix de Rome, who topped his career with a suite of colossal murals for the Paris Opéra. The 30 paintings—which took a



decade to paint—spanned the 500-foot-long ceiling on the second-floor foyer of the Charles Garnier building that opened in 1875. Sargent praised Baudry for having “infused his grandiose scheme [at the Opéra] with a modern spirit.”<sup>1</sup> By that he meant the impressive scope of the painting program came out of Baudry’s deep, first-hand study of Old Masters: Michelangelo, Raphael, and Correggio. The execution, however, squared firmly with mid-century French art. As the American painter Kenyon Cox phrased it, there was in Baudry’s murals a “balance of his filled and empty spaces, the elegance of his silhouettes, the binding and weaving of lovely lines.” It would be precisely that “rhythm of beautiful line” that attracted Sargent to Baudry.<sup>2</sup>

This drawing is Sargent’s sketch of a portion of Baudry’s ceiling, specifically part of the lunette depicting the dance of Salome. In it, Salome, nude but for a loose body veil, entralls her stepfather, King Herod, with erotic dancing and wins his promise to grant her any wish. Prompted by her mother, Herodias, Salome asks to receive the head of John the Baptist; Herodias wanted ultimate revenge for John’s condemnation of her marriage to Herod.

Sargent seems to have had no interest in Herod or the murder plot, but was besotted with Baudry’s figure of Salome in mid-dance, her arms arched overhead, backside and breasts visible, and legs caught mid-step. Sargent altered but one aspect of Baudry’s Michelangelesque figure: his is more graceful and serene, yet less physical and formidable.

It is not known precisely when Sargent drew the figure. It could have been any time after Baudry’s paintings were unveiled in 1874, for Sargent lived in Paris until 1886. But it is tempting to think that he made the sketch after he was asked to paint murals for the new Boston Public Library in 1890 and perhaps was scouting Paris for ideas. Sargent came back to Paris in the summer of 1891, then late in 1892, and again in the spring of 1894.

1. Hamilton Minchin, “Some Early Recollections of Sargent,” *Contemporary Review* 127 (June, 1925): 738.

2. Kenyon Cox, “Paul Baudry,” in *Modern French Masters: A Series of Biographical and Critical Reviews by American Artists*, ed. John C. Van Dyke (New York: The Century, 1896), 68.

John Singer Sargent (American, 1856–1925), *Salome dancing, after Paul Jacques Aimé Baudry’s murals for the Paris Opéra*, ca. 1874–78, pencil on paper, Gift of Odysia A. Skouras (Class of 1954), 2013.22

## Iznik and Exoticism in Victorian England: The Tiles of William De Morgan

Kendra D. Weisbin, Assistant Curator of Education, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

William De Morgan was a noted ceramicist involved in the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain, which advocated for the rejection of industrial arts and a return to hand crafting. He was connected to the Pre-Raphaelite circle, and in particular to designer William Morris, with whom he had a sometime partnership and enduring friendship. De Morgan was an important player in the revival of artisanal tilework in Victorian Britain, though his most notable contribution may be the rediscovery and popularization of a medieval Persian glazing technique known as lusterware.

De Morgan's designs draw heavily upon the ceramics of Italy, Spain, and the Islamic world, particularly of 16th to 18th century Turkey and Iran. The Victorian aesthetic incorporated eclectic and "exotic" elements, including Chinoiserie, Japonisme, and "orientalist" motifs derived from the art and architecture of the Middle East, Iran, and Turkey. De Morgan's mature work, as represented in this tile, was somewhat unusual in his thorough adoption of an Islamic decorative mode, often to the exclusion of other elements. His interest in and familiarity with these ceramics was likely due in large part to the time he spent installing original Turkish, Syrian, and Persian tiles at the home of artist Lord Frederic Leighton, who was a collector of Islamic ceramics.

The tile illustrated here is one of a set of six given to the Museum in 2013. The design is listed in Martin Greenwood's catalogue of De Morgan designs as "Persian flowering foliage 572 & 591."<sup>1</sup> The title of the design is a misnomer indicative of the slippage between "Persian," "Damascus," "Turkish," and "Arab" wares on the part of Victorian collectors and designers. The designs of these tiles are, in fact, almost exclusively drawn from Ottoman Turkish ceramics, and specifically those created in the city of Iznik, which was the center of Ottoman ceramic production from the 15th to the 17th century. This is certainly true of the tile illustrated here: the circular blue, white, and pink carnations derive



William De Morgan (British, 1839–1917), *Iznik-inspired tile*, 1882–88 design/1898 production, earthenware, Gift of Kay Althoff, 2013.35.2

from the stylized carnations of the Ottoman floral style, as do the three-pronged blue tulips below.

These six tiles, though clearly a set, do not align to create a seamless pattern. The tiles originally would have been joined by a matching number with a different design to create a larger cohesive pattern. An example of the full set can be found in the collection of the De Morgan Foundation (illustrated, left), in the form of a long and narrow panel bordered by plain turquoise tiles. Given the distinctive shape of the full composition, these tiles were likely designed as an architectural element for a specific space, such as a fireplace surround.<sup>2</sup> As a dazzling backdrop in an upper-class Victorian home, these tiles would have been a symbol of the owner's wealth and sophisticated embrace of the aesthetics of the Orient.

1. Martin Greenwood, *The Designs of William De Morgan: A Catalogue* (Richard Dennis and William E. Wiltshire III, 1989), 149.

2. Claire Longworth, Curator/Manager, De Morgan Foundation, e-mail correspondence to author, April 22, 2016

William De Morgan (British, 1839–1917), *Iznik-inspired tile panel*, 1872–1907, © De Morgan Foundation, currently on view in the *Sublime Symmetry* touring exhibition, C\_WDM\_0223

## American Landscape Photographs from 1861 to 1980: A Collector's Perspective

Bonnie Barrett Stretch (Class of 1961)

This collection of photographs of the vast and varied American landscape was compiled between 1975 and 1980 when the photography art market was in its infancy. After researching and writing articles on 19th-century photography for *American Art & Antiques* magazine, I began to collect what I liked and what I could afford. I looked for works that gave me a fresh viewpoint and understanding of the historic visions of a changing world. Alongside works of art, I also accumulated a large collection of reference materials. In 2008, I donated to the Mount Holyoke College Library my collection of over 500 volumes on art and photography. Now, I am pleased to see this group of nearly 50 photographs complement that donation.

As a group, these images cover a century of evolving technologies and ideologies, from 1861 to the 1980s, and partner with the American landscape paintings in the Museum's collection. As art historian Barbara Novak wrote in her seminal book *Nature and Culture*, "Each view of nature carried with it not only an aesthetic view but a powerful self-image, a moral and social energy that could be translated into action."<sup>1</sup> Throughout the 19th century, photographs were seen as the "thing itself"—proof of the nation's God-given grandeur and destiny. In 1861, while eastern states were engulfed in a civil war, the western landscape offered an aesthetic and spiritual response.

The earliest two images in this collection are by Carleton Watkins, who was the first photographer to record the western wilderness with deliberate artistic intention. In 1861, determined to capture the enormous scale and beauty of Yosemite Valley, he designed a unique camera to accommodate 18 x 22-inch wet glass-plate negatives to create large-format photographs of this unknown, immeasurable territory. Climbing to extraordinary heights, with mules lugging 2,000 pounds of equipment—including a darkroom tent—Watkins captured Yosemite's vastness in images whose radiance and detail have never been surpassed.

In December of 1862, 30 of Watkins's mammoth-plate pictures reached the East Coast and were displayed at the prominent Goupil Gallery in New York City. An ecstatic review in the *New York Times* attracted large audiences, including Hudson River artist Albert Bierstadt and California's Senator John Conness, who persuaded Congress and President Lincoln to pass legislation to protect the valley—a first move toward the National Park System to be instated years later. In



Carleton E. Watkins (American, 1829–1916), *Yosemite Falls*, 1865–66, albumen print photograph, Bonnie Barrett Stretch (Class of 1961) Photography Collection, Gift of Bonnie Barrett Stretch (Class of 1961), 2015.28.1

1864, Bierstadt joined Watkins in Yosemite, the painter working from the valley floor while Watkins continued to work from the towering heights. The photograph illustrated above, dating from 1865–66, captures the awesome Yosemite Falls and the sparkling light of the untouched valley, complementing the early pillar of the Museum's collection, Albert Bierstadt's *Hetch Hetchy Canyon* (1875).

After the Civil War, the West opened rapidly to new exploration. Photographs in this collection by artists such as John K. Hillers, Frank J. Haynes, and William H. Jackson provide early documents of the unexplored territories, often resulting from their employment as part of railroad survey teams. In 1870, a government geologist, F.V. Hayden, organized a sur-

vey to explore the rugged Yellowstone region. He hired Jackson as the expedition's photographer and paired him with Hudson River artist Thomas Moran, who served as the official painter. Together, their photographs and paintings convinced Congress, in 1872, to declare Yellowstone the nation's first national park.

With the expansion of the railroad network and advancements in photographic technologies, the second half of the 19th century witnessed dramatic changes. Examples in this collection demonstrate the aesthetic transition away from documentation toward the picturesque, embracing an international style known as Pictorialism. Popular in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, Pictorialism's otherworldly aesthetic emphasized composition, tone, and various alternative printing processes to create painterly images. In America, it was imbued with the spiritual theories of Tonalist painter George Inness, whose monumental painting, *Saco Ford: Conway Meadows* (1876), graces the Museum's collection.

The most prominent Pictorialists of the time were Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen, whose poetic images evoked both the natural and spiritual realms. Stieglitz was not only a brilliant photographer, but also an entrepreneur creating publications, organizing exhibitions, and proselytizing photography's artistic mission. Steichen was the most frequently featured photographer in the groundbreaking magazine, *Camera Work*, published from 1903 to 1917. Two of Steichen's experimental color works are included in this collection: *Experiment in Three-Color Photography*, which appeared in *Camera Work* No. 15, 1906, and *Pastoral-Moonlight*, a hand-toned photogravure published in *Camera Work* No. 20, 1907. This atmospheric image of sheep in a moonlit forest glade, transforms a mundane scene into a spiritual vision through the use of soft focus, careful compo-

sition of light and shadow, and hand-applied color.

Pictorialist masters like Stieglitz and Steichen were intent on winning a place for photography in museums, alongside the major paintings of the day. In 1910 the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, New York, invited Steiglitz to curate the *International Exhibition of Pictorial Photography*—the first show in an American museum to elevate photography to a form of artistic expression. Beautifully organized in true Stieglitz style, the exhibition drew large crowds and positive reviews.

Meanwhile, Pictorialist clubs, salons and periodicals increased in cities like Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York, and the ranks of serious amateur photographers continued to grow. In 1906, eight members of the Buffalo Camera Club broke away to found their own group to advance pictorial photography. As the Photo Pictorialists of Buffalo, the small creative group met to discuss technical and aesthetic issues and share their work. In Chicago's Fort Dearborn Camera Club, Charles W. Frankenberger emerged as a prolific Pictorialist. In 1926–27, 19 of his prints were accepted at salons in ten cities, and the next year, 25 of his landscapes were shown in nine cities. Six of his works are included in this gift to MHCAM. A selection of works by H.Y. Summons, a



Edward Jean Steichen (American, 1879–1973), *Pastoral-Moonlight*, 1907, hand-toned photogravure, Bonnie Barrett Stretch (Class of 1961) Photography Collection, Purchase with the Henry Rox Fund, 2016.7.2

Edward Sheriff Curtis,  
(American, 1868–1952)  
*Sioux sub chief Red  
Hawk - Oasis in the  
Badlands, South  
Dakota, 1904*  
sepia-toned silver gel-  
atin print photograph  
Bonnie Barrett Stretch  
(Class of 1961) Pho-  
tography Collection  
Purchase with the  
Susan and Bernard  
Schilling Fund (Susan  
Eisenhart, Class of  
1932), 2016.17



highly revered Englishman known for picturesque European scenes, also augments this unique holding of Pictorialist photography.

While such gentlemen photographers competed in salons, Edward Curtis, an anthropologist and photographer, dedicated his life to documenting North American Indian tribes, a project that resulted in 1,500 photographs and 20 volumes of history. Curtis caught the passing of the old West in his 1905 iconographic image, *Sioux sub chief Red Hawk - Oasis in the Badlands, South Dakota*. Born in 1854, Chief Red Hawk had fought in 20 battles, including the Custer fight in 1876. Curtis posed him as a lone figure on the empty South Dakota plain, still wearing his war bonnet while his tired horse drank from a small waterhole. The compelling composition and subject matter have made this one of Curtis's most sought-after images for more than a hundred years. This and five other Curtis photographs in this collection join the Museum's growing holdings in early photo-documentation and original material objects of Native American cultures.

Throughout the 20th century, despite spreading urbanization, photographers focused on the changing American landscape as a source of spectacular and fragile beauty. Ever-progressing photo-technologies enabled them to capture the

smallest details and the grandest landforms. Although Ansel Adams dominated the scene for decades with his stunning mural-sized black-and-white images, each photographer added a unique vision and philosophy. The latest examples in this collection explore the emergence of modernism in American photography. Works by Wynn Bullock reveal spiritual and psychological truths glowing within the realism of his subjects. Eliot Porter was committed to the complex dye transfer color process, focusing his lens on private corners of his landscapes and the beautiful creatures and plants that the earth supports; he published 25 books working with the Sierra Club. William A. Garnett captured the abstract patterns of earth's vast landforms photographed from his light 1956 Cessna plane. As Wynn Bullock once said, "It is not just what your eye sees, but what our mind sees. Mysteries lie all around, even in the most familiar things, waiting only to be perceived." For me, this insight applies not only to the modern American landscape, but to the magic of photography throughout its history.

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1. Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825–1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 7.

## Yosemite Sightlines

Lauret Savoy, Professor of Environmental Studies, Mount Holyoke College

### Yosemite Falls 2630 Ft.

#### Albumen print photograph

The above tombstone details can be skimmed over quickly—yet these seven words describe Carleton Watkins's view of rock, water, and a forested valley meadow. The egg albumen paper speaks of nascent field photography: cumbersome cameras, glass plates coated with light-sensitized colloid, tents as portable darkrooms.

Rock. Water. A forested valley meadow.

What I also see in Watkins's photograph of Yosemite Falls is time, history, and absence. Ancient granitic bedrock, from the age of dinosaurs, forms the core of the Sierra Nevada. This terrain was later glaciated, the erosive work of Pleistocene ice ages apparent in smoothed rock walls and domes, broadened valleys, carved peaks, and tributary valleys "hanging" high above the main valley floor. Such spectacular scenery would draw many.

In the summer of 1861, three months into civil war, Watkins found his way to Yosemite Valley. A dozen or more mules accompanied him, hauling nearly 2,000 pounds of equipment that included an 18 x 22-inch plate view camera, a stereoscopic camera, glass plates, tripods, and other field accoutrements.

The images he returned with would help change the terms of American landscape photography. "As specimens of the photographic art they are unequalled," wrote a critic for the *New York Times* in December 1862, in a review of Watkins's exhibition at the Goupil Gallery. "The views of lofty mountains, of gigantic trees, of falls of water which seem to descend from heights in the heavens and break into mists before they reach the ground, are indescribably unique and beautiful. Nothing in the way of landscape can be more impressive or picturesque." And, after visiting Watkins's exhibition, the painter Albert Bierstadt would visit Yosemite himself.

Watkins's photographs of a seemingly pristine wilderness played a key role in build-

ing public and congressional support to preserve land that most people would never see. In June of 1864, President Lincoln signed the Yosemite Valley Grant Act, giving the valley and nearby Mariposa Big Tree Grove to the state of California "upon the express conditions that the premises shall be held for public use, resort, and recreation; shall be inalienable for all time."

There are no people in Watkins's image beyond the implied presence of the photographer, through whose eyes and from whose point of view we see. For me, the absence is striking.

19th-century American landscape photography went far beyond documenting nature. Such image-making proceeded almost hand-in-glove with the making of "wilderness" as an idea and the preservation of land. And wilderness never existed apart from human experience or from policies that bounded land and bounded people.

Yosemite Valley was ancestral homeland to the Ahwahneechee and related tribal groups until they were pushed out, starting in 1851 by a California militia. Bit by bit, after Yosemite became a national park in 1890 to well within in my lifetime, Native residents would be forced out of the valley, as they were removed from history as a "vanished Indian" and absent from images of a place that had been home.

What do you see in Carleton Watkins's photograph?



Carleton E. Watkins (American, 1829–1916), *Yosemite Falls 2630 Ft.*, 1861, albumen print photograph, Purchase with funds from Dr. Norman Aubrey and the Susan and Bernard Schilling (Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund, 2013.25

## A Florentine Judith

Monika Schmitter, Associate Professor of Renaissance and Baroque Art, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

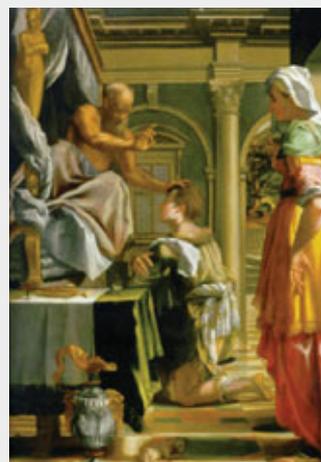
This representation of the Hebrew Bible heroine Judith is steeped in Florentine tradition, and was attributed to the painter Mirabello Cavalori by the famous Italian Renaissance art historian and connoisseur Sydney Freedberg in the late 1970s. Its abstraction, aesthetic refinement, and desire to reference and innovate upon existing artistic traditions are characteristic of Florentine painting in the later 16th century. A member of the Florentine Academy, Cavalori is best known for two paintings in the *studiolo* in the Palazzo Vecchio, which was commissioned by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Francesco I de' Medici.

The painting shows Judith after she seduced and decapitated the Assyrian general Holofernes. She matter-of-factly deposits his head into the bag held open by her maid, while Holofernes's headless body lies in the tent behind her. The background is a nighttime landscape with the Assyrian encampment, some soldiers as yet unaware of their leader's demise, and the Jewish city of Bethulia, to which they laid siege.

An original composition, the image nonetheless makes clear references to earlier works, especially those by Florentine artists. Judith's drapery billows behind her in the manner of quattrocento figures by Sandro Botticelli or Domenico Ghirlandaio. The maid's profile, the *changeant* effects in the hanging drapery, the strong contrasts of light and dark on the clothing, and especially the sharp, acidic colors betray the debt all artists of Cavalori's generation paid to Michelangelo. It would have been impossible for a Florentine to paint this subject without thinking of Michelangelo's rendition in the Sistine Chapel. Andrea Mantegna similarly focused on the two women in front of the tent; indeed the head of Holofernes is similar to a version of Mantegna's composition in the National Gallery, Washington, D.C.

In comparison to most representations of the gory narrative, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum painting is decidedly sanitized. Judith is not shown as a seductive temptress, nor is she shown committing the violent act. The head does not drip blood, and Holofernes's severed neck is decorously avoided. It is as though the artist has tried to minimize sexuality and brutality in order to emphasize Judith as a virtuous savior of her people; the inclusion of the military camp and the city on the hill similarly emphasizes Judith's role as a symbol of Florentine civic engagement. Given the size of the Museum's *Judith*, it is possible that it was to be displayed in a domestic context as an expression of civic

pride. In this regard it is interesting to note that the beautiful painting by Cavalori, *Isaac Blessing Jacob* (illustrated, below), another Hebrew Bible scene, is nearly identical in size (23 inches x 17 inches). Might the two paintings have been part of the same commission?



Mirabello Cavalori, (Italian, 1535–1572), *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, ca. 1565–70, oil on panel, Anonymous promised gift

Mirabello Cavalori, (Italian, 1535–1572), *Isaac Blessing Jacob*, ca. 1569–70, oil on panel, collection unknown (sold through Christie's London, Sale 6234: Old Master Pictures, December 17, 1999)

## Learning to Look at a Mende Mask

Amanda Gilvin, Assistant Curator, Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College

My introductory courses on African art always begin with the projected image of a *sowo wui* like this one, purchased by the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum in 2013. Originally made for use by the Mende culture's Sande Society, a women's social and political organization that—like Mount Holyoke—educates young women, this helmet mask (a mask worn over the head) teaches students how to look at African art in two key ways. First, it illustrates both the benefits and limits of formal analysis. Second, it demonstrates the importance of knowing more than one way to look.

Each element of this mask has multiple levels of symbolism, thus making the art historical method of formal analysis, or the interpretation of form, accessible to new art history



students. Mende aesthetics prize neck rings, which not only represent health and wealth, but also the ripples in a sacred lake. 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 the face, emphasized by stylized eyelids and brows.

The Museum's mask boasts an especially elaborate hairstyle, which represents both spiritual and earthly power. Abundant growing hair connected the mask to the fertile Great Mother Earth, the female aspect of an omnipotent god. With its crown on top and combs at the sides, the coiffure evoked women of important families. A metal appliqué (detail illustrated, below) and carved rectangular shapes depicted

amulets that protected their wearers and demonstrated wealth.

Yet, few members of the Sande Society would have quietly observed this *sowo wui* as visitors might in a MHCAM gallery. Instead, in one of the few instances of masked dancing by women in West Africa, a Sande leader would have worn it along with a large raffia robe to embody the group's founding deity, Sowu. Requiring the rest of this ensemble in performance, the mask is not



a freestanding, motionless artwork.

It is a great privilege for students to have the opportunity to spend time in person with this element of Sande masquerade, for they can appreciate its intricate detail and complex multivalence. This study 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.

Mende (from Sierra Leone), *Helmet mask (sowo wui)*, early 20th century, wood and metal, Purchase with the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund, 2013.2

## Mary Lee Bendolph and the Artistic Legacy of Gee's Bend

Ellen M. Alvord, Interim Director and Weatherbie Curator of Education and Academic Programs,  
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

A revered matriarch of the renowned Gee's Bend quilting artists, Mary Lee Bendolph has spent a lifetime transforming reclaimed fabrics and worn-out clothing into skillful improvisations and sophisticated, Mondrian-like abstractions. Bendolph's lively compositions, pulsing with unexpected rhythms and bursts of color, derive from the endless visual inspiration she receives from the world around her—a truck passing by, the structure of a barn, patterns in the yard, or the vibrant bustle of people at church.

In this masterful print, Bendolph pays homage to the expressive and spiritual power of music passed down from mother to daughter. Its title, *Mama's Song*, refers to a hymn of longing and lament that Bendolph grew up hearing her mother, Aolar Mosley, sing while quilting—an act of creative renewal in the midst of continuous hard labor. Drawn to this activity as a child, Bendolph learned to quilt from her mother at the age of 12 and recalls that “she always would be praying and singing around a quilt, moaning a moan.”<sup>1</sup> The print, remarkable for its stark black-and-white piano key palette with four distinct syncopations of saturated red, creates a visual echo of the darkness and light embodied in the spiritual music of Bendolph's upbringing.

Bendolph's artistry came to widespread national attention in 2002, when her work was included in the ground-breaking exhibition *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*, which traveled to major museums across the country, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, where it was hailed in the *New York Times* as “the most ebullient exhibition of the New York art season.”<sup>2</sup> The artists featured in this show came from a rich tradition of quilt making, the creative legacy of multiple generations of African American women living in a remote hamlet in southwest Alabama. This endlessly inventive art form originated as a means of providing warmth and protection for their families in the face of extreme conditions.

In 2005, in response to this critical acclaim, Mary Lee and her daughter-in-law, Louisiana Bendolph, were invited to make a series of fine art etchings at Paulson Bott Press in Berkeley, California; this trip became the first of three residencies over the course of a decade to experiment with the



Mary Lee Bendolph (American, b. 1935), *Mama's Song*, 2005, color aquatint, spit-bite aquatint, and softground etching, Gift of Renee Conforte McKee (Class of 1962), 2012.52.1, image courtesy of Rubin Bendolph Jr. and Paulson Bott Press

medium of printmaking. Their work would eventually become part of a larger gift of “celebrated American art” to be donated to U.S. embassies in countries all over the world. The two prints in the Museum's collection were created during the first residency and are among Bendolph's most popular works.

1. Mary Lee Bendolph, “Mama's Song,” in *Gee's Bend: The Architecture of the Quilt*, Paul Arnett, Joanne Cubbs, and Eugene W. Metcalf, Jr., eds. (Atlanta, GA: Tinwood Books, 2006), 176.
2. Michael Kimmelman, “Art Review: Jazzy Geometry, Cool Quilters,” *New York Times*, November 29, 2002, accessed June 8, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/29/arts/art-review-jazzy-geometry-cool-quilters.html?pagewanted=all>

Two years after receiving the Mary Lee Bendolph prints, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum acquired a gelatin silver print photograph titled *Girl at Gee's Bend*. This now iconic image of Artelia Bendolph was captured by Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographer Arthur Rothstein during one of two visits to this part of rural Alabama in 1937. At once heart-rending and timeless, this image provides both a visual and historic backdrop to the tight-knit community of Gee's Bend quilters, as well as Mary Lee's own personal story.

Rothstein's assignment was to create a series of photographs documenting the extreme poverty of the residents of Gee's Bend in south-central Alabama. Geographically isolated and encircled on three sides by the deeply curving Alabama River—with only a variously dusty/muddy road for traversing to the north or a makeshift ferry to cross the river to the south—this remote area was home to around 750 descendants of slaves who had become tenant farmers. The FSA's intent was to provide images to Congress for the purpose of securing legislative aid for improved housing and farming conditions.

Refraining from taking more common pictures of sharecroppers laboring in the fields, Rothstein instead chose to chronicle varied aspects of domestic and community life. His carefully balanced compositions share an aesthetic elegance, affording a level of dignity to his subjects. In this case, he used a rich tonal palette of darks and lights to record the serious expression of a ten-year-old girl, regally posed in profile and framed by an unglazed window of a log-and-mud cabin. Closer inspection of the swung-open window reveals legible advertisements within the curling and tattered newspaper, which functioned partly as a means of insulation and also as



Arthur Rothstein (American, 1915–1985), *Girl at Gee's Bend, Gee's Bend, Alabama* (Artelia Bendolph), 1937 negative, gelatin silver print photograph, Purchase with funds from Julie Herzig Desnick (Class of 1973), 2014.14.4

decoration throughout the interior walls of the cabin. One prominent image features a smiling blonde woman offering fresh bread. There is a certain irony in the stark contrast between the apparent circumstances of the white woman and the black girl, underscoring the racial and class dynamics permeating the agency's overall project.

In response to these photographs, the community of Gee's Bend received significant reconstruction-era aid. The government bought the acreage of the old plantation and eventually created a cooperative-based program to sell parcels of land and newly built "Roosevelt houses" to the residents through subsidized loans. Enough progress was made by 1939 that the administrators of the FSA assigned another photographer, Marion Post Wolcott, to create a selection of "after" images documenting the improvements.

In 1955, Mary Lee married Artelia's first cousin, Rubin Bendolph, Sr. After their wedding, they moved into a Roosevelt house built on the very site of the cabin depicted in the photograph.

## Photography Goes Public

Anthony W. Lee, Idella Plimpton Kendall Professor of Art History, Mount Holyoke College

Between the stock market crash in 1929 and the end of World War II in 1945, photography blossomed on the American scene, emerging in an unprecedented variety of commercial, fine art, journalistic, and documentary practices. Pictures appeared in the stylish mass market magazines that hit the newsstands by the truckload; on the wire services that gave faraway events a visual immediacy; in private galleries that began displaying challenging and adventurous art photographs; at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which developed its first omnibus “History of Photography” exhibition;

and in the pages of dailies and tabloids, with more than a few trading in trashy or otherwise sensational imagery to feed the appetites of a picture-hungry public.

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum’s holdings of photographs from this period are rich, including works by Berenice Abbott, Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, Aaron Siskind, and the loveable Weegee. Three recent acquisitions are especially notable, however, adding to the collection key works by Walker Evans, Arthur Rothstein, and Wayne Miller. Walker Evans’s *Lunchroom Buddies, New York City*, suggests the kinds of

serendipitous street pictures that the new, portable, rangefinder cameras encouraged. Like many disaffected bohemians in the 1920s, Evans had spent a number of years in Paris, hoping to escape what he and others described as a crass, tinsel, and philistine American culture. When he returned to New York in 1927, he turned to the camera in earnest as a way to confront the country he had once left behind. His earliest subjects included vernacular architecture, street signs, city skyscrapers, and the occasional passerby. Often off-kilter and compositionally daring, including experiments in double and triple exposure, these pictures borrowed heavily from the European modernist aesthetic that he had seen abroad. By 1931, however, Evans’s eye had become much sparer, more content with exactly observed details of the streets and back roads of America’s cities and small towns. In *Lunchroom Buddies*, we also see his eye for the gently comic. The short-order cook has assumed a pose that is reminiscent of the contrapposto in antique and Renaissance sculpture; such is the exaggerated sway of the cook’s hip and lean of his shoulder that his companion, whom he wraps in a chummy embrace, also functions as a sculptural support. For Evans—always mindful of the gap between the cultures of the Old World and New—the surprise of finding such an aesthetic on New York’s streets was by turns ironic, parodic, and delightful. Shy, halting,



Walker Evans (American, 1903–1975), *Lunchroom Buddies, New York City*, 1931 negative/1974 print, gelatin silver print photograph, Purchase with funds from Gaynor R. Strickler (Class of 1973) in honor of her husband Charles S. Strickler Jr. (Amherst College, Class of 1971), 2014.14



Arthur Rothstein (American, 1915–1985), *John Dudek, an unemployed worker, Dalton, New York, 1937*, gelatin silver print photograph, Gift of Paula and Mack Lee, 2014.14.1

given to haughtiness, Evans rarely confronted people so directly. Yet, *Lunchroom Buddies* was and remained for him a key work that spoke of his unexpected re-enchantment with America.

By contrast, in Arthur Rothstein's *John Dudek, an unemployed worker, Dalton, New York*, the reference to earlier art is less subtle and the purpose of that comparison more politically pointed. Rothstein's photograph was part of a social documentary experiment organized by the federal government. He had been a prize photography student at Columbia University under Roy Stryker. When Stryker was handpicked to lead a photography division in Roosevelt's New Deal administration, Rothstein, too, was brought along to help put the program in place, run its darkroom, and pursue photo-

graphic projects on the road. One early assignment took him to the small towns in western New York, where he found farming communities hit hard by the miserable economy. Living in broken down homes—sometimes just one- and two-room shacks—on acreage that Rothstein called “submarginal,” the men and women in Allegany County were exactly the kinds of subjects Stryker's division was designed to document: out-cast farmers most in need of government assistance. Rothstein took at least four photographs of John Dudek in and around his house, showing his efforts to survive the harsh winter, including the suggestion that he resorted to burning his precious books in a woodstove, and capturing the dishevelment and emotional toll that poverty brought. By picturing Dudek, a Polish immigrant, beside a print of Gilbert Stuart's famous unfinished portrait of George Washington (1796), Rothstein asked his contemporaries to consider the private veneration of a humble man and, in turn, the evidence of nationalist feeling among those whose status as citizens was often questioned. Stuart's portrait had been published as prints and posters in 1932 as part of the bicentennial celebration of Washington's birth. Widely distributed, it became part of a new cult devoted to the first president, whose character as a man of modesty, perseverance, and self-sacrifice took on added meaning during the darkest days of the Great Depression. Rothstein's photograph asked his contemporaries to understand Dudek's character in the same light, and it also seems to ask, “If he is not in need of help, who is?”

Wayne Miller's *Chorus girls backstage at the Rum Boogie Club* is one of eight photographs the Museum has acquired belonging to Miller's series called *The Way of Life of the Northern Negro*. Miller had received a Guggenheim fellowship to photograph the inhabitants of Chicago's South Side in an effort to “document the things that make this human race of ours a family,” he later wrote.<sup>1</sup> Segregated, marginalized, the victims of discrimination and neglect, Chicago's blacks had built a community that was hardly noticed in the major newspapers and magazines. Miller sought to rectify that and took his camera on a three-year journey into what had been, for most of white Chicago, *terra incognita*. He photographed those who comprised the South Side's street life and work life, including streetwalkers and their pimps, barkers, spiritualists, and squatters; but he was especially drawn to entertainers and night clubs. Photographing luminaries—Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, and many more—Miller was also keen on the anonymous men and women who worked nightly at the jazz and blues clubs. In *Chorus girls*, we see the glitz and erotic appeal that often characterized the acts, and we also witness Miller's ability to gain access to its



least public realms. Sometimes referred to as the Rhumboogie Café, the club was the brainchild of Charlie Glenn and boxing champion Joe Louis, but it was short-lived. In this it was also typical of the South Side's nightlife—of change and flux and fleeting pleasures and of labor that moved with every new venue.

These photographs by Evans, Rothstein, and Miller helped viewers make some sense of the experiences taking place in American society—of the social fallout of a cataclysmic economic downturn, of the tensions and revelations brought about by migrations, of cultural differences, class relationships, and the meanings of ethnic and racial diversity. Or, to

put it another way, these pictures helped their viewers, then and now, make sense of the modern world.

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1. Wayne F. Miller, *Chicago's South Side, 1946–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), xiii.

Wayne F. Miller (American, 1918–2013), *Chorus girls backstage at the Rum Boogie Club*, from the series *The Way of Life of the Northern Negro, Chicago*, ca. 1946 negative/1999 print, gelatin silver print photograph, Purchase with funds given in memory of Joanne Hammerman Alter (Class of 1949) and the Art Acquisition Fund, 2012.18.1, image courtesy Wayne Miller / Magnum Photos

## A Funeral March Amid a Sea of American Flags

Kimberly Juanita Brown, Assistant Professor of English and Africana Studies, Mount Holyoke College

Charles Moore's gelatin silver print photograph shows a group of mourners attending the funeral of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers. Evers, who was a World War II veteran, as well as the field secretary for the Mississippi chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was shot in the driveway outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi, on June 12, 1963. His subsequent funeral procession was attended by thousands of mourners including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy. Moore's photograph is a crowded image of people, hands, and American flags, all converging within the visual field. It is a striking reminder of the ways in which people embody the spaces they inhabit and attempt to move those spaces forward, often with only the force of their own bodies.

In the photograph, multiple hands fill the air as they clasp the national flag. The effect is a visual of flags attached to people, all attempting to highlight the citizenship that routinely eludes them. In the center of the frame, appearing larger than the rest, one flag holds the viewer's attention. The triangle formed by this central flag splits the image between two of the mourners, one black and one white. The cloth flag folds over on itself, as if collapsing on the entire concept of national progress and the future of American democracy. But Moore also captures the forward march of the pursuit of civil rights in the image. The viewer is allowed to imagine the multiple figures of the photograph—as well as the two-dozen flags they are determined to offer—as a representation of collective citizenship.

Part of the twelve-image portfolio, *Pictures That Made a Difference: The Civil Rights Movement*, Moore's photograph is one of many famous works of art making visual the potent immediacy of violence that African Americans have consistently endured. An American flag in a photograph can signal many things, including patriotism, unrest, celebration, and dissent. In Moore's image, the sea of flags functions as an insistence, delivered in the imperative. The flags are meant to say: I am an American citizen. Full stop.

This citizenship is fraught with excessive violence, slain martyrs, and painful historical circumstances steeped in racial hegemony. It treads a dividing line between white and black. It illustrates the profound slippage between who we are as a nation, and who we say we are. It is a reminder of all the work still left to be done. Moore's photograph endeavors to signal the collective alignment of this work as an evolving process of democracy, visibility, collaboration, citizenship, and human recognition.

Medgar Evers's memory deserves nothing less.



Charles Moore (American, 1931–2010), *People at the funeral of Medgar Evers, field secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi, who was shot and killed in his home state*, from the series *Pictures That Made a Difference: The Civil Rights Movement*, June 1963 negative/1989 print, gelatin silver print photograph on Kodak Elite fine-art paper, S-surface, Gift of an anonymous donor, 2015.2.8, image courtesy Charles Moore/Black Star

## The “Three Perfections” at the Qing Court: A Landscape by Aisin Gioro Hongwu

Christine I. Ho, Assistant Professor of East Asian Art, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

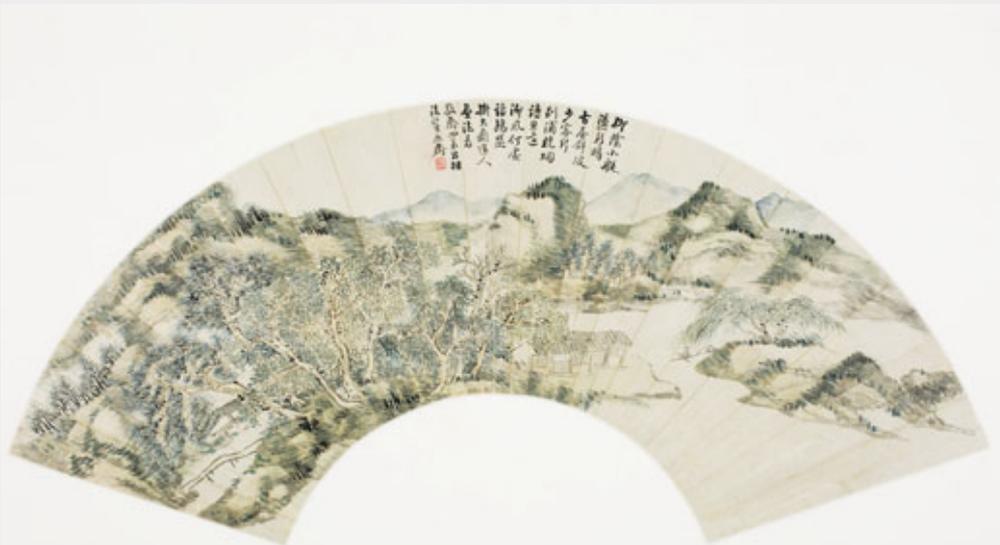
Intimate in scale, Aisin Gioro Hongwu's *Landscape in the Style of Huang Gongwang* presents for the viewer a condensed lesson in the tastes and hobbies of the 18th-century Chinese court. A quiet, lush landscape crowds the painting, built up through the application of elegant pale washes and energized by an insistent repetition of rhythmic texturing brushstrokes. Elements of the scenic view—an islet, boatman, thatched huts, bridges, dense stand of trees, and rocky outcropping—are arrayed along a winding river that echoes the gently curved shape of the fan. As the river, suggested through negative space, converges and disappears behind a bank, a sense of deep space emerges. The landscape's wide-ranging sweep belies the modest scale of its format; folding fans such as this one were frequently exchanged among friends as exquisite, personalized gifts.

Aisin Gioro Hongwu was a member of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) imperial clan, the last dynastic regime to govern China. The grandson of the Kangxi emperor, Hongwu grew up playing and studying alongside a long-lived patron of the arts, the Qianlong emperor. The Qing were not members of the Chinese Han ethnic majority, but were instead an Inner Asian ethnic minority known as the Manchu. The Manchu rulers famously employed a hybrid culture, preserving Inner Asian customs while co-opting cultural practices associated with

the traditions of the Chinese scholarly elite. These hybrid tendencies are seen in Hongwu's career, as he combined service as a somewhat failed bannerman in the Manchu system of military administration with more success in cultivating appreciation of literati pursuits. His command of the scholarly arts throughout the ages is captured by a contemporary, who flattered Hongwu's talents: “His calligraphy does not follow people any later than the Jin dynasty, his poetry has the resonance of the Tang dynasty [618–907], his painting possesses the intention of the masters of the Yuan dynasty [1271–1368].”<sup>1</sup>

Hongwu's mastery of the “Three Perfections” (*sanjue* 三絕) of poetry, painting, and calligraphy is here amply demonstrated. Inscribed at upper center, his original poem draws parallels between leisurely boating and evanescent, meandering thoughts, his relaxed script reinforcing the gracious atmosphere of the landscape. The inscription further pays homage to the celebrated painter Huang Gongwang, although here Hongwu's style is closer to that of his teacher, the amateur landscapist Dong Bangda. When Hongwu or Dong Bangda claimed to imitate (*ni* 擬) legendary artists, their concept of imitation was by no means a straightforward transcription of existing works. Instead, the creative copy was conceived as a stylistic innovation sparked by historical refer-

ences. *Landscape in the Style of Huang Gongwang* represents an influential school of Qing court painting dominated by Manchu imperial relatives. A coolly restrained orthodox landscape, the fan is an artful expression of the Qing princes' enjoyment of gentlemanly pastimes coupled with their grasp of art historical knowledge.



Aisin Gioro Hongwu (Chinese, 1743–1811), *Landscape in the style of Huang Gongwang*, late 18th–early 19th century (Qing dynasty, 1644–1911), ink and colors on paper, Gift of Professor and Mrs. Po-zen Wong, 2014.38

1. Wang Shuzhen, *Youyi hanmo: Man Qing Aixinjueluo jiazhu shuhua yishu* (Taipei: Shitou chuban gufen youxian gongsi, 2012).

## Paul Scott: Where Past Meets Present

Aaron F. Miller, Associate Curator of Visual and Material Culture, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum hosts a collection that spans the spectrum of materiality from the most modest objects of everyday life to art produced by celebrated artists. The artwork created by Paul Scott occupies the territory between these two worlds while connecting the viewer with the varied contexts of both the past and the present.

Rather than throwing his own pots, the artist most often works directly with 19th-century British transfer-printed ceramics. These historical vessels often feature fanciful landscapes marketed for British and American consumers. Scott uses the original designs as the backdrop to his own print and collage work, creating from the repurposed object a contemporary ceramic work of art that engages with current issues and events. Challenging the viewer to look more closely at his final product, he examines topics such as the West's interaction with the Middle East, how the world meets its energy needs or, most recently, the American landscape.

Scott celebrates the workmanship of the past that created his "canvases" and embraces the idiosyncrasies and imperfections resulting from hundreds of years of use. He writes that these chips and cracks "evidence the object's history" and add to the meaning embedded in his completed works.<sup>1</sup> Scott often incorporates these imperfections into his designs and even draws attention to them with gold *kintsugi* technique or by allowing the kiln changes that unexpectedly happen to centuries-old cut marks to creatively guide his artistic choices.

The canvas for Scott's *Cumbrian Blue(s), Palestine, Gaza*, is



a ca. 1840 British pearlware plate manufactured by William Adams. Known as the Palestine pattern, the original scene is a whimsical landscape likely engraved by someone who had never visited the region and produced for sale to others who probably never would. Fascinated by British depictions of the area in the 19th century and interested in their dialogue with the present, Scott scoured the internet for public domain imagery of the 2015 devastation in Gaza. Scott then created a collage of these manipulated modern images, removed a portion of the original print, and applied his own work framed in a border of applied gold. Both the front and back of this vessel are host to Scott's printed participation; from the small, almost unnoticed bomber in the sky to his engagement with the historic institution of maker's marks on the back. Here he incorporates his own logos alongside Adams's, including one that shows that this vessel was made near Mount Holyoke, in Cummington, Massachusetts. Layering old and new, Scott breathes fresh life into historic ceramics.

1. Paul Scott, *Cumbrian Blue(s) – On Cracks, Blooms and Chips*, Artist's statement, June 2015.

Paul Scott (British, b. 1953), *Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s), Palestine, Gaza*, ca. 1840 original plate/2015 print collage, refined earthenware, lacquer, and gold (*kintsugi*), transfer printed in cobalt blue and lead glaze (pearlware), Purchase with the Elizabeth Peirce Allyn (Class of 1951) Fund, 2015.12.2

William Adams and Sons (British), *Plate with Palestine pattern*, ca. 1840, earthenware (pearlware) with transfer print, Purchase for Study Collection, 2016.S4

## Women in Coats

Hannah W. Blunt, Associate Curator, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

American artist Isabel Bishop was first recognized in the 1930s for her paintings, prints, and drawings exploring the daily perambulations of working class New Yorkers: men and women traversing sidewalks, shop girls fidgeting at lunch counters, and crowds of passengers exiting the subway. While Bishop experimented stylistically throughout her career with depictions of human movement, fixtures of her images include hats, gloves, handbags and, especially, coats—material signifiers of coming and going. Mount Holyoke College Art Museum’s drawing of a girl putting on a coat belongs to a series of sketches and paintings Bishop made of women checking their appearance or preparing to go out. The anonymous girl hoists her trench over her shoulder, her left arm held out at a rigid, perpendicular angle to her slender frame. Bishop’s quickly sketched ink lines capture the heroic in the humble: the figure in transformation. The drawing was a Christmas gift from Bishop to her cousin, Betty Etling Morrison, a Mount Holyoke College alumna from the class of 1939. In 1987, Ms. Morrison donated the work to the sesquicentennial benefit auction at the College, where it was purchased by Kitty Eppston Rabinow (Class of 1964). In 2013, the drawing returned to Mount Holyoke, this time as a

generous gift to the Museum. It came and went, and then came back.

Another recent acquisition also prominently features a coat. In *Megan in a Green Coat*, London-based artist Chantal Joffe’s regular sitter, Megan Watkins, dons a striking trench in palest celadon. The coat accentuates Megan’s narrow shoulders, cascading around her via Joffe’s liquid brushstrokes. Yet the stylish cut and delicate spring color of the garment clash with Megan’s gawking gaze, her crooked—albeit lipsticked—mouth, and her enormous, entangled pile of fingers.

Joffe is acclaimed for her unapologetic portraits of young women, taken from both fashion magazines and from life. Her images of this often idealized demographic are ripe with awkwardness and ambiguity. Joffe first encountered Megan Watkins at a daycare facility, where they were both dropping off their children. The artist said of the scene, “I kept trying to smile at her, but she was completely caught up in the agony of separation.”<sup>1</sup> Like Bishop, Joffe finds truth and nobility in moments between feminine composure.

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1. Chantal Joffe quoted in Laura Barnett, “My muse and me,” *The Guardian*, May 27, 2012.



Isabel Bishop (American, 1902–1988), *Girl Putting on Her Coat*, ca. 1935, ink on paper, Gift of Kathryn Eppston Rabinow (Class of 1964) and Richard Rabinow, 2013.<sup>39</sup>

Chantal Joffe (British, b. 1969), *Megan in a Green Coat*, 2012, oil on canvas, Gift of Jeffrey and Julie Lavin Loria (Class of 1986), 2012.47, image courtesy Cheim & Read, New York

## Object as Document: An American Tea and Coffee Service

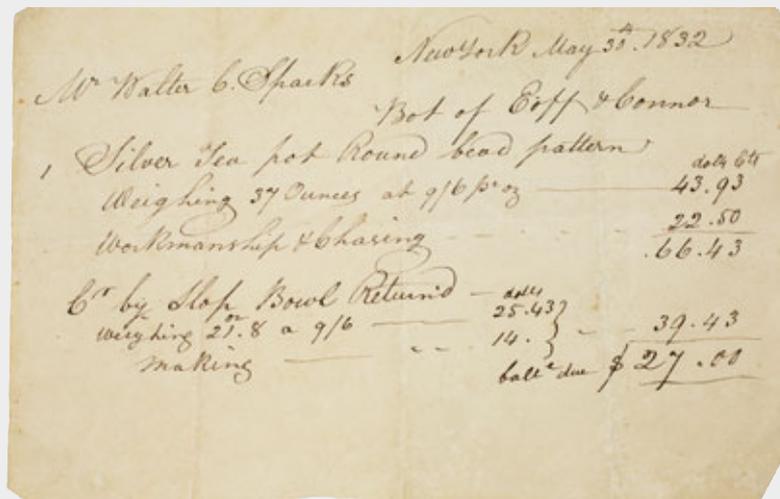
Aaron F. Miller, Associate Curator of Visual and Material Culture, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum



On a spring day in 1832, a member of Walter Sparks's household entered the shop of the Manhattan silversmiths Garrett Eoff and John H. Connor and retrieved a monogrammed silver teapot for a matching tea and coffee service. More than 180 years later, this spectacular early American service was gifted to the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum by Sparks's descendent, Carol (Topping) Baum '60, and her husband, Jim Baum. Carol was not the first alumna to enjoy this service, however; it once belonged to her grandmother, Leslie Hinchman (Class of 1895).

Much of what we know about the set comes from the original 1832 receipt and the impressed hallmarks that transform object into document. In addition to the names of the two silversmiths, other marks were stamped onto the coin silver. One vessel includes a gothic "S" that may represent the involvement of a journeyman silversmith, likely a young man learning the trade from one of early America's premier makers. A series of other marks that look deceptively British are imprinted on another: the reign mark of George III, the lion signifying sterling, and a letter noting the date. However, because it is certain that these wares are American-made and not British, these are identifiable as "pseudo marks," not uncommon on silver from the early United States.

Why would a prominent American silversmith include marks that were meant to deceive? Were British wares considered more sophisticated at the time? Would a savvy 19th-century New Yorker sneak a glimpse at the hallmarks when



Garrett Eoff (American, 1779–1845) and John H. Connor (American, active 1830s), *Tea and coffee set*, ca. 1832, coin silver and ivory, Gift of Jim and Carol Baum (Class of 1960), 2014.25.1-4

Invoice from the workshop of Garrett Eoff and John H. Connor to Mr. Walter Sparks, May 30, 1832, for one silver teapot with bead pattern

their host's tea was poured? Questions like these reveal the remarkable teaching potential of objects. This beautiful silverware prompts conversations about America and Great Britain's complicated 19th-century relationship given their somewhat recent non-amicable divorce, the complex trade network burgeoning between the United States and China, and the evolving sense of refinement and etiquette in a country coming into its own. These objects offer contexts that are both local and global, blur the line between art and artifact, and exemplify what makes the Museum's collection unique.

## Idol Worship

Ingrid Schaffner '83, Curator, Carnegie International 2018, Carnegie Museum of Art

A woman, kimono flowing, appears to have stepped right out of a Japanese print. Nearby, a crystalline structure balances precariously on top of an enlarged die. Clipped and copied from sources high and low comes a repertoire of figures, props, decor, decorations, animals, minerals, architecture, and views, which artist Jane Hammond selectively combines and arranges on the printed page like the elements in a toy theater. Hammond, who grew up in New England, attended Mount Holyoke College, and has lived and worked in New York for much of her career, works not unlike a puppeteer. One clue that this picture might in fact contain a disguised self-portrait is the hand puppet on the woman's outstretched arm.



Jane Hammond (American, b. 1950), *Idol Worship*, 2013, monoprint with hand-coloring and collage, Purchase with funds from Sharon Murray Lorenzo (Class of 1970) in honor of Eleanor Neill (Class of 1927), Susan Hansen Murray (Class of 1979), Tracy Storer Cast (Class of 1986), and Grace Elizabeth Ehlers (Class of 2011), 2013.8, image courtesy of the artist and Pace Prints

And generally, if there is a woman in the picture—and there usually is—she is probably an avatar for Jane Hammond. Indeed, one might even see *Idol Worship* as a stage tableau of the artist at work in her studio.

Jane Hammond is part of a generation of artists for whom the project of picture making is the act of representation itself. Pointing to the powerful role that the camera and the computer have on contemporary perception, their work shows us how we see the world in terms of images that already exist. What distinguishes Hammond's postmodern approach from that of her contemporaries is its literary and historical scope of references and play. Conjuring Dada and

Surrealist collage techniques, her art transmits a powerful sense of visual syntax, stirring juxtapositions, and strange ellipses that makes it as much a pleasure to look at as to read. No wonder Hammond has collaborated so successfully over the years with poets, including John Ashbery, who once penned her 44 titles to paint.

Part of a series of collaged monoprints, *Idol Worship* is also emblematic of how intertwined painting and works of art on paper are to Hammond, for whom art is first and foremost a form of imaginative invention. Her most current body of work is photography based. She has been using the computer, personal archives, and vintage photos to cut and paste herself into settings real and retouched. Thus, the life and times of Jane Hammond's heroine continue to unfold in the digital age.

## Diva in Gold

Bettina Bergmann, Helene Phillips Herzig '49 Professor of Art History, Mount Holyoke College

Few people in the Roman Empire would have held a gold coin (*aureus*) like this one. Produced in Rome from a hand-carved die, such aureii circulated far less than silver and bronze coinage. But in this miniature profile most people would have recognized the empress Faustina's distinctive features: her hairstyle, brushed in waves behind her ears and plaited in braids piled in a circular nest on top of her head, and her straight, low forehead, large eyes beneath heavy lids, slightly bent nose, full cheeks, small but full-lipped mouth, and "breathing throat." Although living in a pre-electronic age, the administration ensured that her official likeness circulated from Britain to Syria.

Annia Galeria Faustina, called "the Elder," married the future emperor Antoninus Pius in about 110 CE, bore him two sons and two daughters, and was granted the title of "Augusta" as the highest ranking Roman woman after Antoninus Pius succeeded his adoptive father, Hadrian, in 138 CE. She died just two years later at the age of 40. On the day of her death, Antoninus elevated Faustina to a divinity, awarding her the title "*Diva*." Paradoxically, Faustina's image came to life upon her demise. Unlike any empress before or after, her status as a new imperial deity was widely celebrated in bronze and marble statues, in paintings and precious stones, and above all, in millions of coins that flooded the empire.

For at least 20 years after her death, Faustina's persistent visible presence exemplified ideal Roman womanhood: dutiful wife, traditional mother, and general keeper of social concord. Not only was she wife of the emperor, but in 145 CE when Marcus Aurelius married her daughter, Faustina the Younger, she posthumously became aunt, mother-in-law, and grandmother of future emperors. Faustina thus symbolized the harmony (*concordia*) of the imperial family and, by extension, of the Empire itself.

Faustina was also revered as a goddess with her own active cult and was associated, and sometimes assimilated, to



Minted under Antoninus Pius (Roman, 86–161 CE), *Aureus of Faustina the Elder*, ca. 155–161 CE, gold, Purchase with funds from Susan B. Matheson (Class of 1968) in honor of Wendy Watson, 2012.56

Olympian goddesses. On the reverse of this aureus stands Ceres, goddess of fertility, holding in her right hand two ears of wheat (symbols of fecundity), and in her left the tall, lighted torch of nocturnal wedding processions. Faustina's identification with Ceres was more than imagistic, for she actually was worshipped in Eleusis, Greece, at the ancient sanctuary of Demeter (Ceres's Greek counterpart) and outside Rome on the Appian Way in a private precinct that imitated Eleusis and included a Temple of Faustina as the "new Demeter."

The easy conflation of Faustina's image with other divine women expanded her symbolic powers and related her to a spectrum of abstract values. Her iconic physical appearance thus came to embody political, moral, and religious ideals.<sup>1</sup>

1. For further reading: Barbara Levick, *Faustina I and II: Imperial Women of the Golden Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Martin Beckmann, *Diva Faustina: Coinage and Cult in Rome and the Provinces* (New York: The American Numismatic Society, 2012); Janet Stephens, "Ancient Roman Hairdressing: On (Hair)Pins and Needles," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 21 (2008): 110-132; Bettina Bergmann and Wendy Watson, *The Moon and the Stars: Afterlife of a Roman Empress* (South Hadley, MA: Mount Holyoke College Art Museum) 1999.

## The Long Shadow of Memory in the Work of Lin Tianmiao

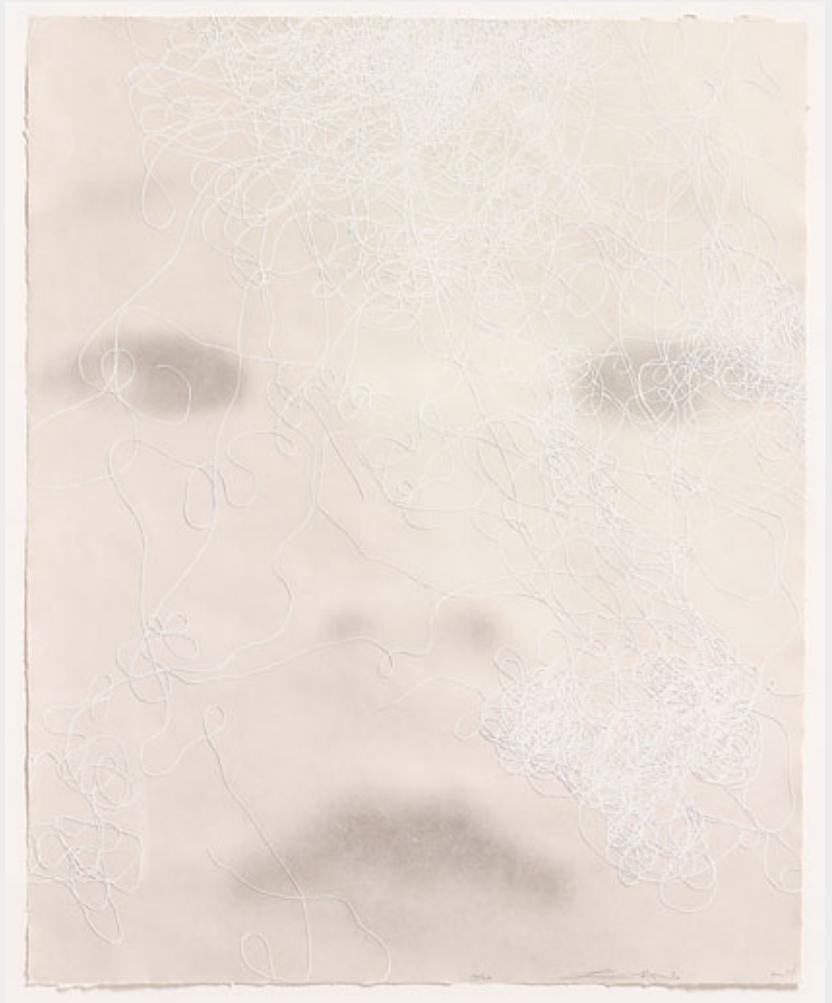
Michelle Yun '96, Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Asia Society

Lin Tianmiao is one of the leading artists of her generation and among the few female artists to emerge from China in the 1990s. Her multifaceted practice—which encompasses painting, sculpture, installation, and works on paper—is largely autobiographical and often rich in psychologically-charged subject matter. Producing compelling imagery from a variety of media, Lin explores issues relating to gender, power, and identity within contemporary Chinese society.

The artist was born in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, in 1961. She received a BFA in Fine Art from Capital Normal University in Beijing in 1984 and, shortly thereafter, in 1986 moved with her husband and fellow artist, Wang Gongxin, to New York, where they remained until 1995. It was only upon the couple's return to Beijing that Lin formally began her artistic practice and developed her signature medium of wound cotton thread. The artist's early career as a textile designer largely contributed to her use of cloth and sewing techniques, but it was an early memory of winding thread for her mother that prompted Lin to implement cotton thread balls in works such as *Focus print 06-606A*. The artist has since explained that the balls, when used in relation to human forms, allude to a connection between the internal and external elements of the body.

Like many of her generation, Lin's experiences growing up during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) have infiltrated the artist's mature practice. *Focus print 06-606A* is part of Lin's ongoing *Focus* series that she began in the late 1990s. During the Cultural Revolution, portraits of Mao Zedong were ubiquitous in all public—and most private—spaces. It was with this in mind that the artist decided to embark on a series of portraits of herself, her family, and her friends as an attempt to mitigate the memory of Mao's omnipotence. These monochromatic portraits are printed on canvas or, in this case, paper, and altered by the applications of sewing, embroidery, and the artist's signature thread balls, until the images are largely obscured.

Lin conceived of *Focus print 06-606A* during her residency at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute's (STPI) Visiting Artists



Lin Tianmiao (Chinese, b. 1961), *Focus print 06-606A*, 2007, silk, cotton threads, foams, and print paper made by Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Purchase with funds from Alice Godfrey Andrus (Class of 1963) and Enid Lasko Kay (Class of 1963) in memory of Candace Curlee Dumont (Class of 1963), 2013.10, © Lin Tianmiao, image courtesy Galerie Lelong New York

Program in 2006; the monoprint was included in a solo exhibition at STPI entitled *Focus on Paper: Lin Tianmiao* the following year. For this project, Lin took photographs of 13 acquaintances and cropped them in a manner that removed distinguishing characteristics relating to gender, age, and individual identity. Lin then adorned the surface with details including needles, Styrofoam balls, hair, and cotton thread. The resulting images are haunting portraits that conjure a sense of loss and memory, reflecting the painful legacy that the Cultural Revolution continues to cast on the lives of those touched by this tumultuous period in China's history.

## Mark Hewitt's (Un)melting Pot

Christopher Benfey, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of English, Mount Holyoke College

Born in the English industrial city of Stoke-on-Trent in 1955, the ceramic artist Mark Hewitt is descended from brick-makers and pottery manufacturers. Both his father and grandfather were directors of Spode, the internationally known producers of fine industrial china. Hewitt was drawn instead to pre-industrial craft practices: the mark of the maker's hand and the chance effects of wildfire in a wood-fired kiln.

In college, Hewitt read Bernard Leach's classic *A Potter's Book* (1940), with its clear directives for how to throw, glaze, and fire a pot, and its insistence on the superiority of the clean lines and austere decoration of classic Asian pottery. Hewitt apprenticed himself to Michael Cardew, another legendary ceramicist, who had worked in West Africa, grafting indigenous practices onto Leach's aesthetic blend of English slipware (pottery decorated with colorful liquid clay before firing) and Japanese simplicity. Backpacking through Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, Hewitt traveled to the places that inspired his mentors. He studied pottery methods in West Africa, Japan, and Korea, and found a personal resonance in the unpretentious big pots he saw along the way.

Hewitt now works in the red-clay town of Pittsboro, North Carolina, using local clays and glazes and a huge "groundhog kiln" modeled on Thai prototypes. He is both a production potter—making mugs, plates, bowls, and pitchers for daily use—and a ceramic artist of one-of-a-kind monumental pots, destined for museums and private collections. *Diadem*, which entered the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's collection in 2013, is a striking example of such magnificent pots, unprecedented in the North Carolina folk-pottery canon.

A diadem (originating from a Greek word for "binding around" or "fastening") is a crown or ornamental headband signaling royalty. Hewitt's stoneware pot wears a crown of porcelain white studs, resembling teeth, but also recalling the fine-china traditions of his native England. *Diadem* has a bulging belly that you might find in water and storage jars from Africa, which glides upwards into an elegant neck and grooved black finale. The juicy, alkaline glaze of the main body of the pot was first developed around 1800, when white and African American potters in Edgefield, South Carolina, were trying to match understated Chinese celadon glazes. Tiny diamonds of stained glass, impressed into the leather-hard clay on the vase's shoulder—a North Carolina touch—melt into the ash glaze creating a vibrant wash of visual and tactile rhythms.

A pot like *Diadem* crosses regions and mixes elements of England, Asia, Africa, and the American South. We're not talking melting pot here, with everything resolved into a bland uniformity. *Diadem*, like its Greek etymology, represents a binding of traditions, where the aesthetic and cultural cross-currents are preserved and kept in creative tension, taut as this vessel's emphatic shape.



Mark Hewitt (British, b. 1955), *Diadem*, 2012, stoneware with alkaline glaze and porcelain, Purchase with funds from Christopher Benfey and Francis Murphy in memory of Rachel Thomas Benfey and with the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund, 2013.36

## Without Ceremony: New Acquisitions that Pop

Jaime Pagana, Education Assistant, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

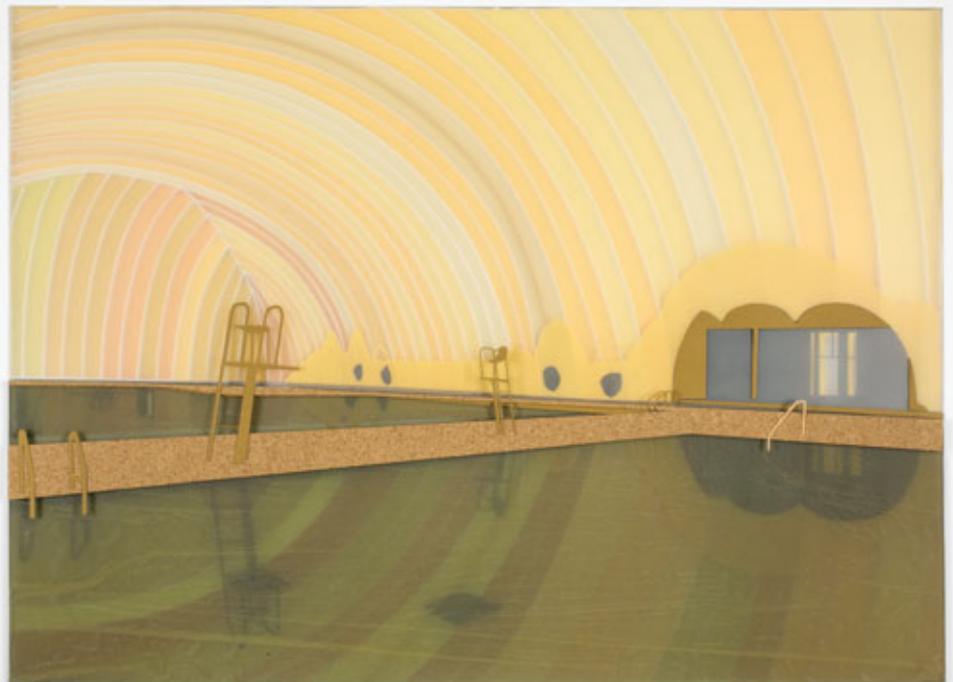
Since its beginnings in the early 1960s, Pop art has undergone countless iterations and incited just as many insults. At the outset, critics emasculated Pop as flaccid and passive; they scorned Pop as parasitic to the faddism of Hollywood and consumer culture—as one critic put it, “substituting styling for style;” and, still more, condemned Pop as immoral and historically trivial, requiring neither sensibility nor intellect.<sup>1</sup> But as overblown as these critics’ indictments might have been, they were not all wrong. Pop artists flouted the rugged masculinity celebrated by critics like Clement Greenberg in the splatters of the Abstract Expressionists, opting for more detached methods. They instead employed industrial and commercial techniques that G.R. Swenson commented were “without ceremony or pretense.”<sup>2</sup> Analogously, Pop artists freely appropriated imagery from everyday and popular culture—by turns vulgar, cliché, and banal—which they defended with opaque and dubious claims, like “Pop art is liking things” and “art should be as comprehensible and immediate as a crucifixion.”<sup>3</sup> However, in spite of how disparate, ambiguous, and perhaps ambivalent their appropriations are, they have often proven tactical and subversive, and just as often personal. Joining the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum’s growing collection of Pop-related works, three new acquisitions from contemporary British artist Lucy Williams and Pop forerunners Robert Indiana and Andy Warhol testify to Pop’s depth and dimension.

Since 2001, Lucy Williams has been appropriating images of 20th-century modernist architecture constructed of concrete, glass, and steel into miniature, low-relief collages pieced together from precision-cut acetate, board, cork, and other unexpected materials like embroidered wool. Williams’s architectural subjects comprise some of the most innovative and ambitious designs of the 20th century, including exterior views of Adolf Loos’s theatre

box at the Villa Müller (1930) and Mies van der Rohe’s glass-walled Farnsworth House (1945–51). But while some of Williams’s references are iconic, more often they are ordinary and obscure, including postwar industrial and public buildings, such as in the Museum’s recent acquisition, *Swimming Pool*.

One of numerous images of public pools represented in Williams’s abundant body of work, *Swimming Pool* depicts an empty indoor pool of unknown location, enclosed by a candy-striped barrel vault reflected in the still, dark water below. Working from photographs taken at the time of the building’s construction and found in architectural publications, Williams professes an interest in how the architecture was first imagined. While Williams is attracted to modernist architecture generally—rational, transparent, and machine-like—in particular she allies with the progressive ideologies of the Bauhaus School and founder Walter Gropius’s ambitions to alleviate social problems through design.

Many of the pools Williams depicts, however, have since been closed or worse, demolished. Public pool construction peaked during periods of economic growth and socially pro-



Lucy Williams (British, b. 1972), *Swimming Pool*, 2003, paper, acetate, and cork, Gift of Renee Conforte McKee (Class of 1962), 2015.17



Robert Indiana (American, b. 1928), *Eternal Hexagon 6*, 1964, color screenprint, Gift of Inge Heckel in honor of Wendy Watson, 2015.10, © 2016 Morgan Art Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

gressive agendas at the turn of the 20th century and during the interwar years, stagnating after World War II. In the U.S. in particular, anxieties over the racial desegregation of public spaces in the 1950s and '60s coincided with a boom in the construction of pools at private clubs and suburban residences. In the decades since, state budgets have been unable—or unwilling—to keep up with operating and maintenance costs, resulting in the closure of thousands of public recreational facilities. Williams resists any overt political or historical content and intentionally suppresses narrative with her insistent exclusion of figures. But in her pristine miniatures, perhaps a kind of nostalgia resides—not for buildings no longer present, but for dreams now past.

Similar to Williams, Robert Indiana—a self-identified “American painter of signs”—sources imagery for his paintings, prints, and sculpture almost exclusively from architectural and industrial designs, including road signs, bridges, and pinball machines. Like many of his contemporaries in the early 1960s, Indiana rejected the emotional gesturalism and lofty pretenses of the Abstract Expressionists. Instead, he took in-

spiration from the early twentieth-century American painters sometimes referred to as the Precisionists, whose work combined hard-edged, flat, geometric forms with numbers, text, and other symbols. Though even more direct and austere in composition and technique than the work of his forerunners, Indiana’s combinations of forms are riddled with cryptic symbolism that taken together challenge the notion of art as autonomous and reflect the connectedness of things both eternal and everyday.

The five-color screenprint *Eternal Hexagon 6* is grounded in basic, Euclidean geometry and is composed of a hexagon circumscribed by a circle inscribed in a square. While generally speaking, the hexagon is a more obscure shape than the circle or the square, it is nevertheless ubiquitous; it occurs not only in industrial and natural forms, such as bolts, fencing, turtle shells, honeycombs, and snowflakes, but also in religious art, for example in the tessellated tiles that decorate many mosques. Mathematically speaking, however, a hexagon that is equilateral and equiangular—like the one in this image—can be both circumscribed and inscribed by a circle, meaning that it both shapes and is shaped by a circle. This attribute gives rise to a metaphysical paradox—a restlessly circling question on the origins of existence and the nature of being.

Central to *Eternal Hexagon 6*, and recurrent in Indiana’s work, is a large yellow number six. Like the hexagon, and indeed the circle and square, the number six is thick with religious symbolism, particularly biblical, where six is both the number of days in which God created the world and the “number of the beast” (666)—a Satan-like apparition in the Book of Revelation. Not insignificantly, the number six is mutable and morally ambiguous, collateral with both creation and sin. Much later in his career, Indiana revealed the personal significance of the number six—a hex of sorts—as the number of his father’s birth month, the name of the Phillips 66 gasoline company where his father worked, and the number of the road, Route 66, that his father took west to California when he abandoned him and his mother.

Distinct from Indiana, Andy Warhol’s work is decidedly impersonal, though often no less tragic. Warhol seized international attention in the early 1960s with his appropriations from American mass media and consumer culture, including subjects as divergent as soup cans, film stars, and electric chairs. Though notoriously ambivalent about his intentions, Warhol’s persistent scrambling of signs—of icons, indexes, and symbols—has been continuously interpreted in Marxist

polemics on the commodification of everyday life, poststructuralist theories on simulacra, and queer discourses on camp aesthetics in gay subcultures, to name only a few. In *Sitting Bull*, one of several new MHCAM acquisitions from Warhol's late career, Warhol piles together multiple mis-registered screenprints of enlarged halftone dots and painterly marks, creating a surface at once severely flat and strangely immersive.

Scholars comment regularly on the significance of source imagery in Warhol's work, as it often reveals critical and tragic details about his subjects. At the age of just 14, Sitting Bull earned recognition as a daring and skilled warrior, though he is perhaps best known for his resistance against white settlers and visions presaging the defeat of General Custer in the 1876 Battle of Little Bighorn. Warhol shows the Hunkpapa Lakota holy man in a rigid half-length portrait, recalling both Byzantine icons and Baroque royal portraiture; his countenance is cool and placid, and his eyes betray a ready wariness—qualities for which he was named. The reference photograph Warhol chose, however, was taken in 1881 by Orlando Scott Goff shortly after U.S. forces captured Sitting Bull crossing the border from Canada, where he retreated with his followers in 1877. Subsequently, the Lakota leader spent two years in prison before returning to the reservation and touring with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in 1885. Just five years later, he was shot and killed for resisting arrest on suspicion of joining the Ghost Dance.

Similar to Warhol's most famous portraits of Marilyn Monroe based on an early 1950s publicity photo and produced just after her overdose in 1962, Warhol pictures Sitting Bull at the crux of this historical drama—captured, though not yet defeated. Here Warhol severely crops the original photograph and reframes Sitting Bull asymmetrically. This “decentering” of Sitting Bull's image in one sense subverts the pretenses of photography to capture a person's essence. Likewise the predominance of the color red, a racialized and derogatory term for indigenous people, as well as a metonym for blood, here figures in a trio of primary colors illustrating the construction of the image as a process of color mixing. Sitting Bull is represented not as a historical person rendered naturalistically, but as a material construction of America's romantic and mythic



Andy Warhol (American, 1928–1987), *Sitting Bull*, 1986, screenprint on Lenox museum board, Gift of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, 2014.9.3. Extra, out of the edition. Designated for research and educational purposes only. © 2016 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

“Wild West”—encircled in chalk-like outlines and marked for death.

Warhol's slightly left-of-center appropriations have remained a bottomless source for critical inquiry in postmodernist discourses, as well as more recent global contemporary ones. Like Warhol, Williams and Indiana do more than merely cut and paste from the everyday; they magnify it. Now more than 50 years after Pop's emergence, though its initial shock has weakened and its images recuperated by our delirious consumer culture, these artists' critiques—of the failed social promise of modernism, the presumed autonomy of art, and the shallowness of American popular culture—are only deepening.

1. For a comprehensive anthology of early Pop criticism, see Steven H. Madoff, *Pop Art: A Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) esp. 35–36, 313–316.
2. G.R. Swenson, “The New American ‘Sign Painters,’” *Art News* (September 1962): 44–47.
3. Respectively stated by Andy Warhol and Robert Indiana, see G.R. Swenson, “What is Pop Art? Part 1,” *Art News* (November 1963): 24–27.

## Roman Religion at Home

Taylor Anderson '15, Art Museum Advisory Board Fellow, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

Orating before the College of Pontiffs in 57 BCE, M. Tullius Cicero pronounced: “The most sacred, the most hallowed place on earth is the home of each and every citizen. There are his sacred hearth and his household gods, there the very center of his worship, religion, and domestic ritual.”<sup>1</sup> One such household god recently joined Mount Holyoke College Art Museum’s collection—the Museum’s most significant acquisition of ancient Roman art in nearly 20 years.

Holding a *patera* (libation bowl) and cornucopia, the Museum’s bronze statuette wears the high sandals, windblown tunic, and wreath of leaves typical of the *lares*, domestic deities that Roman families worshipped daily at household shrines known as a *lararia*. *Lares* almost always appeared in pairs, whether as statuettes in structural shrines or as painted figures in fresco *lararia* frequently found in the service quarters of the home.

Romans believed that, despite the diminutive size of the *lares* (the MHCAM *lar* stands at just over four inches), properly honoring the domestic gods with prayer and sacrifice would ensure the protection of the household.

Statuettes of other figures, referred to as *penates* (guardians of the pantry), also appeared in *lararia* and were venerated during domestic religious practice. A number of intact shrines have been uncovered, and scholars now recognize the highly personal nature of *lararia* ensembles. The groupings were likely developed over generations with new statuettes added periodically to meet changing religious needs. The MHCAM *lar* may have been worshipped alongside gods and goddesses of the Roman Pantheon as well as foreign deities from Egyptian, Italic, Oscan, and other traditions. Many shrines

included statuettes of family ancestors and animals; the *lararium* at the so-called House of the Priest in Pompeii even featured a statuette of a hippopotamus. Unlike public worship, which necessitated government approval and was led by an official priest, domestic religious practice followed no strict doctrine and was therefore more varied. No two *lararia* were the same.

Nearly 2,000 years after it was cast, the *lar* will return to a *lararium* next spring.

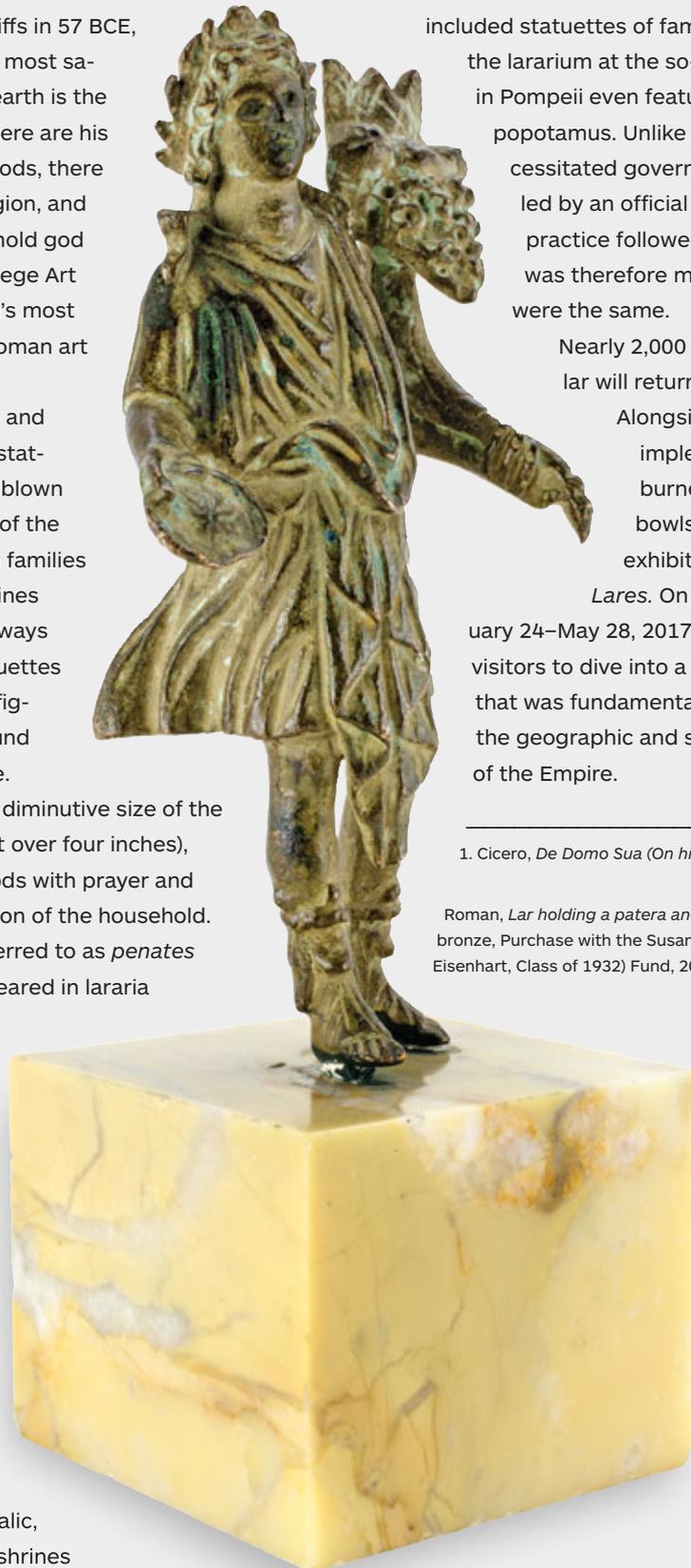
Alongside *penates* and religious implements including incense burners, lamps, and libation bowls, it will be featured in the exhibition, *The Legend of the*

*Lares*. On view at MHCAM from January 24–May 28, 2017, the exhibition will invite visitors to dive into a facet of Roman culture that was fundamental to daily life and spanned the geographic and socioeconomic landscape of the Empire.

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1. Cicero, *De Domo Sua (On his house)* 41, 109.

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



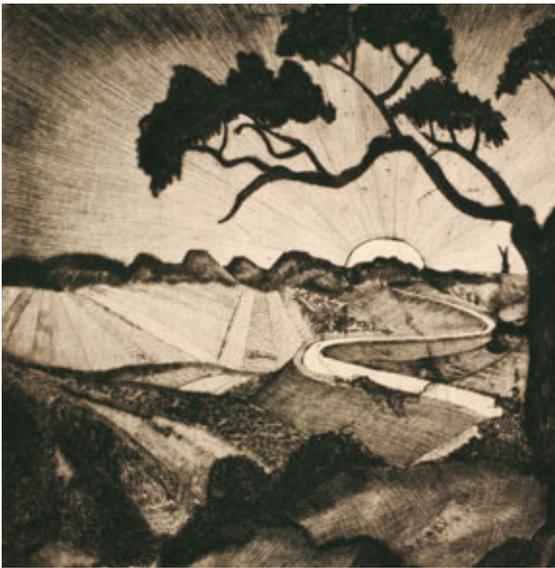
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Asher Brown Durand (American, 1796-1886), *Promontory with Autumn Foliage*, oil on canvas, Bequest of Compton Allyn in memory of Elizabeth Peirce Allyn (Class of 1951), 2014.35.1

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Jean-Baptiste Bernard (French, active 1751–1789), *River Landscape with Figures and Beasts*, ca. 1750s, oil on canvas, Gift of Renee Scialom Cary (Class of 1948), 2015.19





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*Child's belt*, 19th century  
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