MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

SPRING 2009

What Can A Woman Do?

Faith Ringgold

Weegee

LETTER

WHILE THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION has been a powerful force in the arena of higher education, I have been most keenly aware of the Foundation's profound influence on academic art museums. Recognizing that many campus museums were less engaged with the academic pursuits of their parent institutions than they might be, the Foundation initiated the College and University Art Museum Program (CUAM) in the early 1990s. Two objectives were identified: to discover and institutionalize effective ways for museums and academic departments to collaborate fruitfully; and to strengthen the educational role of the museum and its collections in the teaching and training of undergraduate and graduate students.

Six college and university museums were invited to submit proposals for a three-year effort to address these objectives and awarded generous grants that made their initiatives possible. The majority of the museums demonstrated significant progress and were awarded a second round of three-year grants, and then finally a select group accepted and matched a challenge from the Foundation to establish a permanent endowment in support of these initiatives.

I watched all of these developments with a mixture of interest and envy. I also read very carefully the summary report about the program commissioned by the Mellon Foundation and written in 2007 by two seasoned museum professionals, Suzannah Fabing, then director of the Smith College Museum of Art, and Marion Goethals, private museum consultant and former deputy director of the Williams College Museum of Art. After numerous site visits and 160 interviews, Fabing and Goethals concluded that the CUAM program was "profoundly successful in guiding these recipient campus museums toward closer integration with the educational enterprise of their colleges and universities." Specifically, they reported that the experience of working with the museum collections transformed the teaching of participating faculty and that on each campus many more students had substantive, first-hand involvement with collections through classes and internships.

As many of you will recall, this Museum's last newsletter included a richly illustrated article about the surge of interest by faculty in using the permanent collection for teaching. So, in fact, we have been engaged with exactly the kind of effort the Mellon Foundation has been promoting. You can imagine how gratified I was early last summer to receive an invitation from the Mellon Foundation to submit a proposal for a new round of CUAM grants. I was even more gratified that our proposal was successful.

I look forward to conveying more information about this exciting program in the fall newsletter. And let me take this opportunity to reiterate our heartfelt thanks to the Mellon Foundation for their progressive and forward-thinking approach to supporting our work and that of so many other academic museums across the country.

MARIANNE DOEZEMA
Florence Finch Abbott Director

COVER:
Levi Wells Prentice
(American, 1851–1935)
Still Life with Plums (detail)
Oil on canvas, 19th century
Gift of Compton Allyn in memory of Elizabeth Peirce Allyn (Class of 1951)

Dressing for Work

INTERVIEW

IN THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION, Director Marianne Doezema discusses the exhibition *What Can a Woman Do? Women, Work, and Wardrobe 1865-1940* with Guest Curator, Lynne Bassett, an independent scholar and member of the Class of 1983. For more background about the exhibition, see page 5.

MD: Let's begin with the book from which the title of the exhibition was taken, *What Can A Woman Do: Or Her Position in the Business and Literary World* by Mrs. M. L. Rayne, published in 1893.

LB : This is an advice book for young women wishing to make their own way in the world. At the time there were dozens of books of this kind that advised women about what they could do to earn a living. Being self-sustaining was very important after the Civil War, due to the fact that 600,000 American men were killed and many more were disabled.

MD: In the exhibition, the book is open to a photograph of a woman sitting at a typewriter. Is she working as a secretary?

LB : Yes, stenography was an important job that opened up for women in the late 19th century. In areas ranging from government and law offices to businesses of various kinds, there was a need for behind-the-scenes support, people who could type and take short-

Winslow Homer
(American, 1836–1910)
New England Factory Life – "Bell Time"
Wood engraving from *Harper's Weekly*, 1868
Collection of Lindsley Wellman
Photograph Laura Weston

OPENING EVENTS

Thursday, 12 February, 5:00 pm
Exhibition opening and reception
What Can a Woman Do? Women, Work, and Wardrobe 1865-1940
Panel discussion "Dressing for Work"
Lynne Zacek Bassett, Guest Curator and Independent Scholar
Mary Renda, Associate Professor History & Gender Studies, MHC
Patricia Campbell Warner, Professor Emerita History of Dress, UMass
Moderated by Museum Director Marianne Doezema
Gamble Auditorium

Thursday, 5 March, 5:00 pm
Faith Ringgold: Works on Paper
Lecture by the artist:
"Faith Ringgold: More Than 50 Years"
Book signing and reception to follow with live jazz by the Amherst College Reservoir Cats
Gamble Auditorium

SPECIAL LECTURES

Thursday, 26 February, 5:00 pm
Lecture by Michael Lasser, Independent Scholar
"How Do You Do It, Mabel, On $20 a Week: Women, Work, Wardrobe—And Popular Songs"
Gamble Auditorium

Wednesday, 1 April, 5:00 pm
Gallery talk on three newly acquired works of the 1940s by documentary photographer Arthur Fellig "Weegee" by Tony Lee, Associate Professor of Art, MHC "Weegee was a Clown, but no April Fool"
Hinchcliff Reception Hall

hand. So, the image you refer to is a great illustration of a woman in appropriate business attire sitting at a typewriter, itself a fairly new invention at the time.

MD: Women also went into the workforce. We have in the exhibition an engraving after a drawing by Winslow Homer, *New England Factory Life—"Bell Time."* It was published in *Harper's Weekly* in July 1868 to illustrate an article focusing on Charles Dickens's views of the New England factory system. While Dickens had condemned some social peculiarities he observed in America, he spoke favorably about the laborers in the mills at Lowell. The article quoted his American Notes: "From all the crowd I saw in the different factories that day, I cannot recall or separate one young face that gave me a painful impression." To my eye, though, the workers depicted here seem anything but delighted with their situation. What's your sense of that?

LB : Millwork was an important early opportunity for women to earn a wage. Prior to industrialization, women could earn money mainly by dressmaking or midwifery, but millwork offered the first large-scale avenue toward self-sufficiency. New England women found in millwork a way to escape the drudgery of the family farm. But, as you point out, the mechanization of the textile industry did not liberate workers from drudgery. Increasingly automated processes resulted in high-speed, continuous production, forcing workers to keep up with the pace of the machine while performing repetitive, menial functions as efficiently as possible.

But, in spite of that, farm girls came to the mills, like those in Lowell, in droves in the first half of the 19th century, and later in Holyoke. Many had specific goals, such as getting an education. If they could have access to the education necessary to become a teacher, for example, it would be a way of getting ahead.

MD: We know that by the end of the century, mill workers were largely immigrants. So did American-born women turn elsewhere for their livelihoods?

Farmerettes with a Dairy Wagon, detail
Photograph, ca. 1917
Mount Holyoke College War Collection, Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections

LB : Indeed, it is largely for these women—looking for ways to earn a living during the last decades of the 19th century—that the advice books we've mentioned were written.

MD: More than one chapter in *What Can a Woman Do* addresses women writers, both as journalists and authors of books.

LB : The 19th century saw a huge burgeoning of women writers. In fact, most of the books advising women on possible careers were written by women. Nathaniel Hawthorne was famously quoted as talking about "these damn scribbling women," who gave him a bit of competition.

MD: Women also took up pen and paper in order to produce art, as we see in the James Montgomery Flagg drawing in the exhibition of women in a formal art class.

LB : Absolutely. And women were beginning to gain better recognition for their skills as artists. The arts offered an acceptable way for women to make a living.

Women were getting employment making woodcuts and engravings for the illustrated magazines that were suddenly numerous and affordable because of important changes in printing technology. The popularity of illustrated weeklies such as the *Illustrated American News, Gleason's Pictorial, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, New York Illustrated News,* and *Harper's Weekly* played a part in stimulating public interest in pictures, which in turn created a livelihood for many women.

Often, women went into less traditional directions in the arts. For example, we have in the exhibition a dress that was worn by a Mount Holyoke alumna who became a professional butter mold carver.

The arts in general really opened up a world of opportunities. Women earned income not only as artists and writers but also as stage performers or dancers.

Day Dress
Circa 1885
Collection of the Mount Holyoke College Theatre Department

MD: The theme of the current exhibition is about how changing roles for women altered what they wore and introduced changes in fashion. Could you tell us more about that?

LB : There were many dramatic developments taking place during the post-Civil War period. Women were entering the workforce. Wars were happening around the world. Industrialization, urbanization, and economic changes affected what they wore profoundly. For one thing, women needed more convenient clothes just to board the trolley to get to work.

The author of an article that appeared in a Hartford, Connecticut, daily newspaper on September 12, 1915, put it this way:

> We had an unpleasant suspicion that we were misfits in those Victorian clothes. They did not go with platform speaking for votes for women, nor college basketball teams, nor subways at 8 in the morning, carrying one to work for hours in an office full of males. We felt foolish in small waists and hats with 'suivez-moi, jeune homme' ribbons. But [the new fashion] is not to be Victorian, ladies. Look up and be of good cheer. You need not pull in your waists, nor cultivate a baby stare, nor droop the shoulders, nor look anemic.

MD: Yes, of course, it would be very difficult to get onto the trolley wearing bustles and hoops. What else was going on?

Oscar Kunath
(American, 1830–1909)
He Does Not Return
Oil on canvas, 1867
Purchase with the Friends of Art Fund
Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe

LB : Women were participating more in athletic activities and going to the beach. Bathing costumes had an important impact on changing fashions in the early 20th century. Many things were happening, and there was a cycle of demands and influences: as women entered the workforce they needed different clothes, and as these clothes became available it became easier for women to be able to do what they wanted to do.

These enormous changes did not go unnoticed. One section of the exhibition deals with clothing worn by the Mount Holyoke "Farmerettes" during World War I. These were students who went out from campus in order to work on farms where the farmers themselves were off fighting the war. It was considered scandalous for the "Farmerettes" to get onto a trolley in the overalls they wore when doing the work. Townspeople actually complained to the College's President, Mary Woolley, and she had to mandate that the girls wear skirts on the trolley and change into pants when they arrived at their destinations.

MD: Now that we are talking about war once again, I'd like to ask you about a painting from the Museum's collection that portrays a widow and her son looking out a window to watch a parade of returning Civil War soldiers. Its title is *He Does Not Return.*

LB: It is a particularly poignant work of art. The woman is wearing a mourning dress. At the base of her throat she has an onyx mourning broach with a single seed pearl set in the center. Seed pearls symbolized tears in mourning jewelry, and the painter has depicted an actual tear running down her cheek as she gazes out the window.

As I mentioned, 600,000 American men died in the Civil War, leaving many women without husbands. It amazes me that widows and spinsters were often viewed by society with so little pity and understanding. An article from the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* in 1891, for example, referred to them as "excess women." It's really exciting for me to have the opportunity in this exhibition to show how these "excess" women changed history—and forever changed how we dress!

What Can a Woman Do? Women, Work, and Wardrobe 1865-1940

6 February–31 May 2009

WOMEN'S FASHIONABLE DRESS changed dramatically in the period between the Civil War and World War II, embodying the expansion of their job options and roles in society. In the 1860s, voluminous hoop skirts hid women's legs, while tightly fitted corsets and bodices sent some of the fair sex to the fainting couch. By the 1930s, pants and blouses were common and acceptable for women's casual wear; skirts came to the knee, and the far more comfortable brassiere replaced the corset. Women became as unfettered in their dress as they were in society. Among the carefully selected images and costumes that illustrate this point are Mary Cassatt's color etching, *The Fitting,* and a *Day Dress,* circa 1885.

The book, *What Can a Woman Do?,* written by Mrs. M. L. Rayne in 1893, is the jumping off point of the exhibition, and it serves as a literary manifestation of the "New Woman" of the late 19th century. By 1870, 14.7 percent of the female population over 16 years were breadwinners, and by 1900 the percentage had risen to 20.6 percent. These self-confident women dared to participate in sports, to ride bicycles, to support themselves with a job, to go unescorted to parties, parks, museums, and the theater—even, to live willingly without a husband. Referred to in period literature uncharitably as an "excess of women" or as a "surplus of women," widows and spinsters often were forced to work at low-paying, mind-numbingly repetitive, and health-threatening jobs in factories and sweatshops. Domestic servants and shopgirls fared little better.

The book *What Can a Woman Do?* describes a variety of work and career options available to women at the time, providing encouragement by profiling successful women in careers such as medicine, law, agriculture, manufacturing, business, dressmaking, education and the arts. By advising her readers on how to apply for a job and how to dress, Mrs. Rayne offers the tools necessary for young women to strike out on their own. The paths they forged opened up opportunities for other women, leading to a broadening of career options and increasing acceptance of women in the workplace. The social roles and attitudes of women were radically redefined as they began to enter professions previously reserved for men, and to have access to a college education and greater personal freedoms.

This exhibition will pair paintings and graphic works with period costumes to illustrate selected career paths that Mrs. Rayne promoted in *What Can a Woman Do?,* showing women in business, the arts, agriculture, manufacturing, education, domestic service, dressmaking and millinery, along with traditional roles. The guest curator for the exhibition is Lynne Zacek Bassett (Class of 1983), an independent scholar specializing in historic costume and textiles.

Mary Cassatt
(American, 1844–1926)
The Fitting
Dry point and aquatint, 1891
Photo courtesy of the Smith College Museum of Art

Faith Ringgold
(American, b. 1930)
Jazz Stories: Mama Can Sing, Papa Can Blow #1, Somebody Stole My Broken Heart
Acrylic on canvas with pieced border, 2004
Photo courtesy of ACA Galleries, New York

Faith Ringgold: Works on Paper

7 February–31 May

For more than 40 years, Faith Ringgold has been telling stories drawn from her history, heritage, and memories as an African-American woman, mother, daughter, and artist—a strategy that has effectively translated her very particular experience to a narrative art with universal significance. This exhibition of Ringgold's prints and drawings—many executed in the last decade—represents key themes to which the artist has returned often throughout her career.

Faith Ringgold first came to public attention in the 1960s with paintings that examined the complicated state of interracial social relationships of the day. Since then, she has frequently used her art to oppose injustices around the world, making prints about apartheid in South Africa, poverty, and war.

Complementing these unambiguous statements on pressing national and international concerns are Ringgold's equally nuanced explorations of a very personal set of memories, ambitions, and fantasies. Perhaps the most famous example in this vein is Ringgold's *Tar Beach* series, which inspired the first of her wildly popular books for children. Young girls are pictured enjoying a summer night on the roof of their Harlem apartment building in this series which is included in the show. Ringgold conveys a sense of innocence, aspiration, and familiar security in the *Tar Beach* works that speaks easily to anyone who ever shared a sleep-over with a grade-school friend.

A subject of special interest for the artist in recent years has been the history of jazz music and musicians. This exhibition includes examples in several media from Ringgold' s *Jazz Stories* series, which offer a unique opportunity to trace the manifestation of an image from its genesis as an acrylic painting on paper to its reproduction as a silkscreen print and, in one case, a hand-painted quilt.

Although Ringgold's gift for storytelling in these personal works may temper the anger and disappointment evident in her early paintings, it has not obscured her lifelong commitment to social justice. As she has explained, "I wanted to make a difference . . . [and] decided I was going to use art to do it."

Lisette Model and Her Successors

1 September–13 December 2009

The broadest and most revealing survey of its kind, *Lisette Model and Her Successors* brings together for the first time a selection of 150 vintage works by Lisette Model (American, 1901–1983)—one of the last century's most significant photographers—and 13 of Model's illustrious students who went on to leave their own marks on American photographic history: Diane Arbus, Bruce Cratsley, Lynn Davis, Elaine Ellman, Larry Fink, Peter Hujar, Raymond Jacobs, Ruth Kaplan, Leon Levinstein, Eva Rubinstein, Gary Schneider, Rosalind Solomon, and Bruce Weber.

Lisette Model's searing images and eloquent teachings have influenced three generations of photographers, including the star-studded roster of artists featured in this exhibition. A native of Vienna, she lived in France before moving to New York in 1938. On view in the exhibition are many of her most iconic images that collectively convey a portrait of America at all social levels, from Coney Island and local hangouts to jazz clubs and Fifth Avenue. Coinciding with the show, and to mark the 25th anniversary of her death in 1983, Aperture is reissuing the classic 1979 monograph on Model with the original design of Marvin Israel.

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

Annie Leibovitz
(American, b. 1949)
Terese Capucilli (Nude #13), Dancer, Martha Graham Dance Company, Buglisi/Foreman Dance, Clifton Point, Rhinebeck, New York
Iris print on Sumerset Velvet watercolor paper, 1999
Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe
© 1999 by Annie Leibovitz

Dance and Dancers

Annie Leibovitz's dramatic 1999 image of Terese Capucilli is one of about thirty-five works of art that will be on view in the Museum's Rodney L. White Print Room (1 September–13 December) in an exhibition entitled *Dance and Dancers*. Drawn mostly from the Museum's own collection, the show will include paintings, sculpture, and graphic works ranging from Aubrey Beardsley and Annie Leibovitz to Edgar Degas and Richard Yarde. The exhibition is also intended as a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Five College Dance Department.

Arthur Fellig (known as Weegee; American, 1899-1968)
Wife of the Victim
Gelatin silver print photograph, ca. 1940
Purchase with the Madeleine Pinsof Plonsker (Class of 1962) Fund
Photograph Laura Weston

Murder and Mayhem: Photographs by Weegee
3 March–26 April 2009

When Mount Holyoke professor Anthony Lee's book, *Weegee and "Naked City,"* came out in 2008, it reminded curator Wendy Watson that the Museum had no images by this important New York crime and street photographer. Lee's fascinating study—co-authored with Richard Meyer and the latest in the series Defining Moments in American Photography—provided the impetus for rectifying that situation.

Arthur Fellig (American, 1899-1968), better known as "Weegee," prowled the New York streets at night with his 4x5 Speed Graphic camera and developed a deep familiarity with the city. He acquired his unusual moniker because of an almost magical knack for showing up at a crime scene even before the police arrived. This uncanny ability was likened to that of the Ouija board, a popular fortune-telling game—and he was dubbed "Weegee," the name by which he was known ever after. His seeming prescience was also helped, perhaps, by the fact that he had a police radio in his car.

All three of the newly acquired photographs exemplify Weegee's unwaveringly sensational and often sordid depictions of American urban life. Two of them depict intoxicated men—one shot in a dismal, grimy Los Angeles drunk tank, and the other through the door of a paddy wagon in New York's Bowery district. In the third image, a woman collapses into the arms of two policemen as she realizes that her husband, concealed behind the car door, is dead. A relentless self-promoter, Weegee often stamped the back of his photos—as he did with *Wife of the Victim*—"Credit Photo by Weegee the Famous."

Weegee emigrated from what is now the Ukraine in 1910 with his mother and three siblings. His father, a devout Jew with rabbinic training, had arrived four years earlier, and the family settled into a crowded tenement apartment on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Fellig's interest in photography began when a street photographer took his picture. He bought his own camera and was soon making a modest income selling photographs of children to their immigrant parents in the tenements. He spent seventeen years perfecting his skills while working low-level jobs, and in 1935 launched his freelance career. In 1940 he was hired by *PM Daily*, a tabloid which paid him $75 a week and, unlike most newspapers, was willing to credit his work.

In the 1930s and 40s, Weegee made a name for himself photographing the gritty side of New York City—grief-stricken women outside a burning tenement building, a driver trapped inside a mangled car, a robbery suspect being arrested, a blood-spattered body

sprawled in the gutter following a gangland slaying. While he also photographed less dramatic events like opera openings, charity balls, crowds at Coney Island, and homeless men in the Bowery, it was the melodramatic and lurid images that most appealed to the readers of the daily tabloid newspaper where these images appeared.

In 1941 Weegee had his first one-man show at the New York Photo League, called "Murder Is My Business." He gained further recognition when several of his images were included in exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, first in 1943 and again a year later. Having made the leap from lowbrow journalism to museums, he was becoming well known in different circles. But it was the spectacular success of his first photography book, *Naked City* (1945), that made him famous. The noted photographer, Paul Strand wrote at the time that Weegee's groundbreaking book was published: "that it was the first major contribution of day-to-day journalism to photography as a creative medium." And as Professor Lee notes in his recent book, "It is one of the great ironies of Naked City that although it established Weegee as an expressive photographer and helped prepare the way for his work to enter—and belong in—art museums, it produced one of the purest forms of the tabloid as we know it today."

The publication of *Naked City* marked both the height and the end of Weegee's career as a photojournalist. He moved to Hollywood and worked as an actor and film-maker, with only modest success. In the 1950s and 1960s, he returned to his camera, making what he called "art" photographs that were completely unlike his earlier work.

Arthur Fellig (known as Weegee; American, 1899–1968)
Drunk Tank, Los Angeles
Ferrotype print photograph, ca. 1940
Purchase with the Madeleine Pinsof Plonsker (Class of 1962) Fund
Photograph Laura Weston

Teaching and Learning at the Museum

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum brings to the study of the liberal arts an opportunity to use works of art as complex examples of material facts and ideological notions that are essential elements of the College's curriculum. Neither simply a repository of treasures nor an archive, the Museum is a place of learning—a "cultural laboratory"—that can engage with virtually any department across campus. In 2007, Museum staff launched a vigorous new effort to encourage faculty and students to think of the Museum as a center for teaching and learning. The results have been nothing short of remarkable. Faculty use of the collections and special exhibitions has doubled, and classes in history, English, comparative literature, foreign languages, classics, neurobiology, chemistry, and other disciplines have all taken place in the galleries.

In thinking beyond these successes however, it is intriguing to consider how the Museum might leverage its mission of serving faculty and students in order to have an impact on the world beyond. We began to ponder how the Museum could bring value not only to our current audiences, but to broader audiences in the future.

In an attempt to answer these questions, Museum staff turned their attention this year to a new collaboration with the Department of Psychology and Education, and in particular to its teacher certification program. Through that program, Mount Holyoke students minoring in education are able to pursue teacher licensure in early childhood, elementary, middle, and secondary levels as well as in visual art or music education. Over

Students in Lenore Reilly Carlisle's Developing Literacy class, listen to Education Coordinator Jane Gronau discuss the importance of object based learning for elementary and secondary school students. Photograph Jessica Lavallee

the past summer, Jane Gronau, Education Coordinator at the Museum, and Professor Lenore Reilly Carlisle, Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Teacher Preparation Programs, designed a three-part learning experience for students in the licensure track. Early in the fall, Professor Carlisle's students visited the galleries to learn about some of the theoretical underpinnings of object-based learning and the rationale for a museum experience in elementary and secondary education. This spring, these same students will return to participate in a field trip experience led by trained docent-educators. At present, more than 1,000 schoolchildren participate in these substantive museum programs every year. The Mount Holyoke students who are preparing for licensure at the middle and secondary level will participate in the tour *Life in the Ancient World: Egypt, Greece, and Rome.* During the field trip, schoolchildren have direct exposure to original works of art and artifacts, learning about ancient history, world cultures, art, and archaeology. The use of the inquiry method of teaching encourages each child to observe, listen, and participate in an active way.

Licensure students who are training to teach at the elementary level will participate in a tour entitled *Say What You See.* During this one-hour interactive experience, Museum docents serve as facilitators, encouraging students to translate their observations of works of art into words and discover how artists use creativity to transform ordinary materials into art. The children learn how to look at objects and express what they see as they explore the materials of sculpture, identify various genres of painting, and use their imaginations to explore sensory experiences with works of art.

As part of their training during the spring semester, the licensure students are required to design an entire curriculum unit suitable for teaching in the classroom. Having gained an understanding of the benefits of a museum experience, they will be able to include this element in their plans. Education Coordinator Jane Gronau will work closely with them on ways to augment their curriculum design with museum field trips.

We live in an increasingly visual culture and are surrounded by images everywhere in our lives. Mary Alice White, a researcher at Columbia Teacher's College, has noted that young people learn more than half of what they know from visual information but, ironically, few schools have a curriculum to teach students how to think critically about visual data. By working with future educators through the licensure program at Mount Holyoke, the Museum hopes to have an important impact not only on the College community but in the schools beyond the campus. Through this initiative, Mount Holyoke students will help to cultivate visual literacy and cross-cultural competency in upcoming generations, developing critical-thinking skills in schoolchildren, and providing them with expanded abilities in self-expression and communication. In so doing, we hope to expose not one, but two generations of students to exploratory experiences that will foster life-long connections with the arts.

Students in Mary Renda's first-year seminar, *Gender and Power in the History of Mount Holyoke College*, work at the Skinner Museum. Photograph Jessica Lavallee

THE POWER OF OBJECTS

An original work of art or artifact can be a powerful teaching tool in the hands of faculty members, and can have a profound effect on their students. Last spring, Museum staff members invited a group of history professors to view and learn about objects from the collections of both the Art Museum and the College's Skinner Museum. In this case, the selections related to various notions of war and conflict, and included a hand grenade from Fort Sumter, an 1862 *Pictorial History of the Civil War,* a stunning Comanche bandolier bag, and World War II propaganda posters, some of which were designed by painters of the period like Ben Shahn and Norman Rockwell. The assortment of objects was met with enormous enthusiasm and ideas bubbled up from the group about how they might use these and other original materials in their teaching.

The visit inspired Mary Renda, Associate Professor of History and Women's Studies, to incorporate the collections at the Skinner Museum into her first-year seminar, "Gender and Power in the History of Mount Holyoke College." The class visited the Museum to experience artifacts that exemplify women's work—butter churns, spinning wheels, and cooking pots. Working in groups, the students used each set of objects to help them think about the physical and material elements of labor and household chores in 1830s New England. They contrasted this lifestyle to the experiences of students at Mount Holyoke College during that same period, considering the drastic change that attending college represented for many of these young women. After the class finished, Professor Renda commented that "it was very interesting how some of the quieter students had taken the lead during this class. I'm looking forward to ways in which I can build upon the museum experience in my classroom." Renda also plans to incorporate objects from the Art Museum into her class this semester, demonstrating how the multifaceted collections of Mount Holyoke's two museums provide a fascinating and valuable complement to one another.

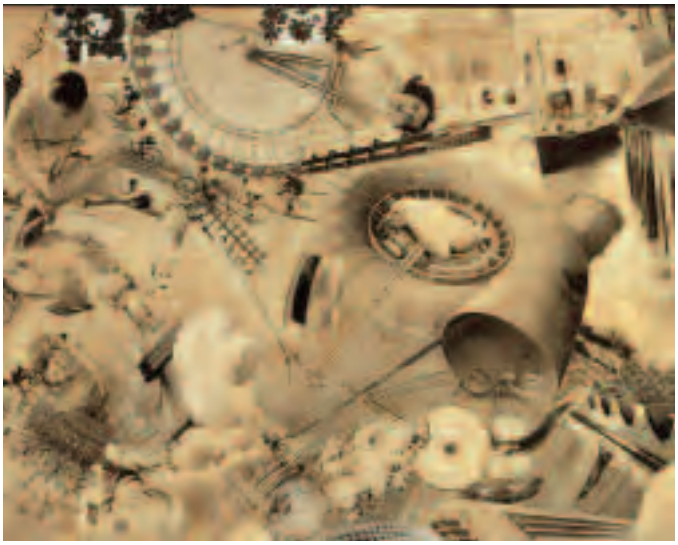
ART MUSEUM ON THE ROAD

The Museum's treasured handscroll, *Spring Morning at Yanji,* was recently on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York for the exhibition *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui* (1632–1717). This stunning show was reviewed in the *New York Times* on September 12, 2008, in the article *Master of Many Styles and Many Mentors.* To read the article, please visit http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/12/arts/design/12wang.html.

Spring Morning is one of many works of art from the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum that may be seen in your own back yard from time to time.

The bronze portrait by Chana Orloff of *Maria Lani*—a mysterious eastern-European woman who was a sitter for many major artists in Paris in the 1920s—was included in the exhibition *Paris Portraits: Artists, Friends, and Lovers* at the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, Connecticut. To read the *New York Times* review on this exhibition, please visit http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/26/nyregion/connecticut/26artsct.html.

An intriguing collage by the California artist Jess, *When My Ship Come Sin,* has been traveling the country in a major touring exhibition, *Jess: To and From the Printed Page,* organized and circulated by Independent Curators International. Curator for the show and author of the catalogue is Ingrid Schaffner, Mount Holyoke Class of 1983 and senior curator at the University of Pennsylvania's Institute of Contemporary Art.



Jess, Collins
(American, 1923-2004)
When My Ship Come In
Collage, 1955
Gift of Federico and Odyssia Skooras Quadrani (Class of 1954) in honor of Professor Peter Viereck

WEB SITE RENAISSANCE

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum has been especially active this year, and a surge of students, faculty, schoolchildren, and other visitors have been flowing through the front doors. To be sure that everyone is up to date on the Museum's exciting initiatives, and to keep the strong links that have been established with many faculty and students, this spring we will launch our redesigned Web site. Its new and refreshed contents include a streamlined new layout that will make it easier to find information about the collection and exhibitions, how to use the Museum in teaching and learning, how to plan your visit, information about events, and a new online press room to help you stay current with Museum news. To stay connected to the Museum, sign-up online for e-news exhibition and program announcements, and become a friend of Faustina, the Museum's Facebook personality. Features planned for the future include streaming image galleries, podcasts, and virtual tours. Visit the site today and rediscover the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum at www.mtholyoke.edu/go/artmuseum/.

FRIENDS OF ART MEMBERSHIP

Become a Friend of Art.

Friends of Art provides crucial funding for special exhibitions, publications, and public programs. Friends receive invitations to opening receptions, lectures, and other events as well as the newsletter. Memberships, valid for one year, are tax-deductible contributions to support Mount Holyoke College Art Museum.

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

ABOVE: Jean-Francois Millet (French, 1814-1875) *Woman Carding Wool*, watercolor on ivory paper, Gift of Helene B. Black (Class of 1931) Photograph Petegorsky/Gipe

To sign up for *MHCAMNews*, to receive exhibition and event announcements, go to www.mtholyoke.edu/go/artmuseum.

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

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

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