



mhcam

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2025-26



COUNTING DOWN TO OUR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

The countdown has officially begun! November 2026 will mark our 150th anniversary, an exceptional milestone in the history of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum. To honor this sesquicentennial, we set an ambitious goal: to rethink entirely how we present our permanent collection.

Museum staff have been working tirelessly to meet this objective, reimagining our collection galleries through a cross-cultural, chronological display. In order to do so, we are breaking down walls and boundaries, both literally and art historically. The discrete and thematic galleries conceived for our 1971 building, now over half a century ago, are being transformed into larger and more inclusive spaces that better serve the Museum we are today.

Our newly renovated galleries will advance our Teaching with Art program in meaningful ways as well as *all* activities held at the Museum. By broadening the stories told through our distinctive collection from antiquity to the present, our modernized galleries will better reflect the values and mission of the College at large.

Thanks to the vital support of our Friends of Art members, the Museum has been able to innovate and expand our vision over the years. In fact, during our sesquicentennial we will be celebrating another milestone—the 95th anniversary of our Friends of Art program! MHCAM staff and I hope that you will partner with us for this once-in-a-generation transformation, a rare occasion to both honor our legacy and shape our future.

With gratitude,

Tricia Y. Paik
Florence Finch Abbott Director



TEACHING WITH ART

As our built-in collaborators, faculty and students continuously activate our collection in ways relevant to the present moment. The following class partnerships show how art can function as a catalyst for experiential learning, connecting class topics to contemporary issues.

For the second consecutive year, President Danielle R. Holley's "Supreme Court" seminar visited the Museum to examine how Court decisions impact American society. In conjunction with their study of *Brown v. Board of Education*, students compared Charles Moore's iconic civil rights photographs with Faith Ringgold's *Letter from Birmingham City Jail* print portfolio. As student Ruth Poku '25 reflected, "The language of the law can feel abstract. Visiting the Museum and viewing legal cases through visual culture pushes our understanding of their human impact."

A recent collaboration with Professor Patricia Banks' new course "Visual Sociology" provided both students and Museum staff the opportunity to learn how artificial intelligence might be used for "detecting" people and animals in artwork. Using the object-detection model YOLO11, students compared computer vision with the traditional hand-coding techniques of social scientists, thereby expanding research potential while also enhancing museum data.

Last spring, inspired by the Museum's painting *Sierra Ravine* (2022) by Kay WalkingStick, students in Assistant Professor Patricia Dawson's history class "Turtle Island Stories and Thought" created a collaborative quilt as their final class project. Highlighting natural elements such as mountains, flowers, and rivers in their individual quilt squares, the students made connections to specific stories about human relationships to the natural world. Displayed in the Museum lobby at the end of the semester, their quilt formed a living land acknowledgement, recognizing local Indigenous communities.

These examples demonstrate the innovative ways MHCAM's collection enriches Mount Holyoke's liberal arts curriculum, enabling students to test theories, question assumptions, and experiment with hands-on applications—all of which have the potential to impact our present and future worlds.



IN THE GALLERIES

As we countdown to our 150th anniversary, we are steadily unveiling our reimagined galleries! Last spring we revealed our newly renovated gallery of art before 700 CE, featuring the oldest art in our collection. Friends and supporters from campus and beyond joined us to celebrate at a festive open house, where they were able to experience the new global and chronological installation of our earliest holdings.

This fall 2025 we are excited to debut the newest phase of our ambitious reinstallation project—the transformation of two small galleries into one much larger one, now dedicated to art from 700 to 1700. Old favorites are now in conversation with rarely-displayed works from the collection as well as some notable recent acquisitions. This fall also marks the final semester of *Relaunch Laboratory*, our multi-year exhibition where we have been piloting ideas for the permanent collection reinstallation.

In spring 2026, the Museum will be closed to the public as we complete our last phase of renovation, which also includes key upgrades to collections storage. We look forward to welcoming you to our fully renovated galleries when we reopen in fall 2026 for our 150th anniversary celebration!

OBJECT SPOTLIGHT

This Japanese *zushi* (portable shrine) was likely owned by a Buddhist household, monk, or pilgrim. Behind the golden doors of the *zushi*, a votive depiction of Jizō, a bodhisattva (enlightened being), invites offerings of fragrant lotus flowers, food, and candles in exchange for blessings. We can imagine that the small size of this shrine allowed it to fit into a palm, bag, or pocket of a traveler, providing moments of intimate worship during long journeys. It is just one of the engaging objects—rarely on view—that visitors can explore in the new gallery of art from 700 to 1700.



SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Anni's Orchestra: Theme and Variation in the Prints of Anni Albers

September 2–December 9, 2025

Wendy M. Watson Gallery

In art as in life, Anni Albers had a dazzling way of turning obstacles into creative opportunities. Barred as a woman from every program at the Bauhaus except weaving, she became one of the most significant textile artists of the twentieth century. Less well known is her energetic transition to printmaking during the final phase of her career. In her culminating *Orchestra* series, the central focus of this exhibition, she evoked her lifelong love of music, seeking visual analogues for sound. The show is guest-curated by Christopher Benfey, Professor Emeritus of English and great nephew of the artist.

Lorna Simpson: Cloudscape

September 2–December 9, 2025

Gump Family Gallery

Lorna Simpson is a photographer and multimedia artist whose work deals with themes of race, identity, gender, and history. In *Cloudscape*, Simpson's 2004 single-channel video installation, the artist presents a solitary male figure seen whistling softly through a haze of fog. His form fades in and out of view, ghost-like, as the fog thickens and disperses. By reversing and looping the video, Simpson creates an uncanny visual and aural echoing that asks us to question both visibility and temporality.

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Mount Holyoke College Art Museum
50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075

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IMAGE CAPTIONS

Front Cover:

Top: Installation view of new gallery of art before 700 CE
Bottom: Student Guide Setareh Greenwood '25 leading a museum tour

Back Cover:

Left: Unknown Peruvian (Lambayeque) maker, *Double spout and bridge vessel*, 900–1400 CE, ceramic earthenware with burnishing (blackware), Gift of Mr. Hershel Richman and Dr. Elizabeth Rosner Richman (Class of 1967), 1996.9.5

Interior, Left Page:

Bottom left: Florence Finch Abbott Director Tricia Y. Paik with new students at annual "Museum Mania" orientation event

Top right: President Danielle R. Holley discussing artworks related to the Civil Rights Movement with students in her "Supreme Court" seminar

Interior, Right Page:

Bottom left: Unknown Japanese maker, *Votive Image of Bodhisattva (Jizō)*, 14th century, cylindrical votive box made of wood and metal with gilt and pigment, 1.Q.C

Top right: Anni Albers (American, b. Germany, 1899–1994), *Orchestra III*, 1980, photo-offset lithograph, Gift of The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation in honor of Lotte Benfey, 2005.8.8
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