



Art at Vassar



A publication for the members of
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
Fall 2008

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

For a portion of this past summer I was in Japan, among other reasons, to attend the opening of the exhibition, *Paris-New York: Modern Paintings in the 19th and 20th Century. Masterworks from the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York*, in the city of Yamagata about three hours bullet train ride north and west of Tokyo. The Yamagata Museum of Art was our partner museum on this project and their curator, Nobuyuki Okabe, worked with us to make the selections for the exhibition. It was important for me to attend this event in order to thank the staff of the museum and the people of Yamagata in person for their superb collaboration. The

mood at the opening events was very festive and with the support of the local sponsor, the Yamagata Newspaper and Broadcasting Corporation, the exhibition received a great deal of regional promotion.

There are over one million people in the prefecture of Yamagata and many of them feel somewhat left out of the prevailing culture of globalization. This is the area that Harvard Professor of Japanese History and Culture Edwin O. Reischauer (1910-1990), whose memory is revered in Japan, called “the other side of the mountain” in a famous essay on Yamagata since it lies outside the cosmopolitan Tokyo-Nagoya-Osaka-Kyoto corridor.

While I was in Yamagata, I was asked to deliver a lecture at the Tohoku University of Art and Design on the subject of the importance of the art museum to a harmonious society. The topic at first struck me as curious and decidedly Japanese, where harmony in society is prized above all things often at the expense of knowing one’s true thoughts. Yet, this is perhaps more true for the older generation of Japanese than for the younger one. The evident estrangement between generations, even in a place like Yamagata that values family ties above all things, is being felt. Many feel that public presentations of cultural events can provide a common ground on which the generations can meet and engage in the exchange of ideas. While the topic of the lecture seemed to evidence some self-doubt among the Japanese as to whether or not they are doing enough in this area, I was quick

to point out to them that they are perhaps the most avid museum-going people on Earth. Last year, when the daily annual attendance of museum exhibitions was published by *The Art Newspaper*, Japanese exhibitions took the top three and four of the top ten places. Unlike the other cities on that list such as Paris and New York, the attendees are by far citizens of Japan and the figures are not enhanced by the presence of hordes of international tourists. My own unscientific, anecdotal evidence supports this view. I visited an exhibition on the Bauhaus at the gallery of the Tokyo National University of Art and Design on its final day and later, a Vermeer exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum on one of its first days and, in both cases, in spite of the very congested spaces, scarcely another Western face could be seen. Plus, there was no seeming predominant demographic. While it became clear to

me that my encouraging words on this subject to a Japanese audience only added more gilt to their particular lily (or chrysanthemum), I was at the same time very proud that Vassar’s art collection was becoming part of a very active and sophisticated ongoing international educational effort.

James Mundy
The Anne Hendricks Bass Director



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Vassar Exhibition at the Yamagata Museum of Art featuring left to right: Seiji Satomura, CEO, Shonai Bank; Akio Ichikawa, Mayor of Yamagata City; Hiroshi Saito, Governor Yamagata Prefecture; James Mundy; Kenichi Soma, Chairman of the Board, Yamagata Shimbun; Minoru Sonobe, President Yamagata Broadcasting Co.; Yosuke Kurosawa, Publisher, Yamagata Shimbun; Chiaki Kato, Director Yamagata Museum of Art.



Yamagata Museum's Chief Curator Nobuyuki Okabe (in Vassar tee-shirt) gives a public tour of *Paris-New York: Modern Paintings in the 19th and 20th Century* from the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center.

An Inspired Collection

ON VIEW

Excerpt: Selections from the Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn Collection
September 26, 2008 – January 4, 2009

In the late 1980s when Jeanne Greenberg was an art history student at Vassar College, she first saw The Velvet Underground album cover featuring Andy Warhol's banana sketch and she immediately recognized the image. It brought her back to 1975 when Warhol sent The Greenberg Gallery, her father's contemporary art gallery in St. Louis, a roll of purple Mao wallpaper for his upcoming exhibit there. Her father brought it home and used it to wallpaper the powder room. During the opening evening's celebrations, a shy, wigged Warhol sat in that bathroom, signing Campbell's Soup cans that guests had nicked from the pantry. Eight-year-old Jeanne stood below him, and when he had a break he would doodle bananas on a napkin for her. This was one of the first of many inspiring moments Jeanne has spent in the presence of a legendary living artist. Today, Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn (Vassar class of 1989) is an art advisor, independent curator, and contemporary art collector. She is also the founder and director of Salon 94, an experimental project space for emerging and mid-career contemporary artists on the first floor of her Manhattan home. Much of her own collection, assembled over the last decade with her husband Nicolas Rohatyn, can be found on display just upstairs, in her family's living space. For the first time, a selection of that collection is on public display in the exhibition *Excerpt: Selections from the Jeanne Greenberg Collection*.

Ms. Rohatyn's collection, which includes artist portraits of her and her family, reflects a personal connection to the artists she supports and reveals how her passion for art permeates both her private and professional life. In a recent interview about collecting art she said, "Regardless of which medium you choose to start with, the most important thing is to buy art that moves you." *Excerpt: Selections from the Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn Collection* demonstrates her belief in that statement by featuring a wide range of media and styles by both established and emerging artists. Painting, sculpture, photography, video, film, installation, and performance art by eighteen international artists are presented in this group show, ranging from figurative sculptures to large-scale abstract

Julie Mehretu
(American, b. Ethiopia 1970 -)
Excerpt (riot), 2003
Ink and acrylic on canvas
32 x 54 inches
Collection of Jeanne Greenberg
and Nicolas Rohatyn, New York;
© Julie Mehretu, courtesy of Salon 94.
Photo by John Berens.



paintings. Included are works by Barry X Ball, Tamy Ben-Tor, Huma Bhabha, Glenn Brown, Jennifer Cohen, Benjamin Edwards, Katy Grannan, David Hammons, Sarah Lucas, Julie Mehretu, Marilyn Minter, Wangechi Mutu, Tim Noble and Sue Webster, Richard Prince, Aida Ruilova, Rudolf Stingel, and Piotr Ukiński. The exhibition also includes screenings of the Laurie Simmons film *The Music of Regret*, a mini-musical in three acts featuring Meryl Streep, Adam Guettel and dancers from the Alvin Ailey II Company.

While the work shows evidence of a diverse set of social, political, ethnic, and intergenerational interests, it is bound together in this distinguished collection, which not only illustrates the personal preferences of an experienced collector with a well-trained eye, but also reveals a rare intimacy and deep understanding of the power of the art of our time. By directing our focus on Jeanne in organizing this exhibition and the corresponding catalogue, we at Vassar College want to honor her as one of our cherished alumna. We hope *Excerpt* will be an inspiration for the many students—past, present, and future—that emerge from this campus as she did, with an intense passion for art.

Mary-Kay Lombino

Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and Richard B. Fisher Curator

IN THE FIELD

Curator Awarded Distinguished Fellowship

In October, Mary-Kay Lombino, The Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and Richard B. Fisher Curator, was awarded a fellowship from the Center for Curatorial Leadership. This is the second year of the fellowship program where curators from around the world convene “to address what many in the museum world see as a need for curators to become better business people.”

The fellowship includes a combination of ‘teaching’ and ‘doing’. Fellows participate in a two-week intensive course at Columbia Business School, complete a one-week residency at another institution, and complete a team assignment. During the six-month course of the fellowship, Ms. Lombino and her nine colleagues will also participate in a mentoring program with directors and trustees from other museums. This year’s fellows include curators from the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Walters Art Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.

Benjamin Genocchio noted in the *New York Times* article, “Boot Camp for Curators Who Want the Top Job,” about the first year of the fellows program that: “It is easier to teach a passionate curator to be a leader than it is to teach a professional manager to be passionate about the presentation and display of great art, the assumption being that you need both to be a good director.” In their acceptance letter, the Center recognized Ms. Lombino’s “unique perspective, experience, and talent” as valuable assets with which to navigate the changing landscape of curatorial practice.



The Music of Regret, one of the works selected from Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn's collection to be included in *Excerpt*, was screened for a theater audience during the run of the exhibition.

The Music of Regret is a 35-millimeter film by Laurie Simmons. A mini-musical in three acts, the film grew out of distinct periods of this New York artist's photographic work. Here her familiar subjects come to life with music, dance, and an onscreen narrative. In the first act, vintage child-craft puppets enact the disappointment, pain, and regret that erupt between two feuding families. Act two features Meryl Streep who plays Simmons and sings about the failures of attachment and communication to her five dummy suitors. The third act is the grand finale in which giant objects with legs (a gun, a house, a cupcake, a book, a birthday cake, a pocket watch, and a camera) played by the Alvin Ailey II dancers perform on a dramatically lit stage as though auditioning for a Broadway show. With the help of composer Michael Rohatyn and cameraman Ed Lachman, Simmons transforms this collection of toys, dolls, and props into a genuine and tangible representation of the highs and lows of real life. Incorporating original music and choreography, the film lies between the boundaries of narrative cinema, puppetry, musical theater, and dance.

The title refers to one of the prevailing themes in the film. In a recent interview on the PBS television show *Art:21—Art in the Twenty-First Century*, the artist said, "The film is very much about the different guises of regret. It's something I've been exploring for a long time. It interests me, as a state of mind, as an emotion, as something that people become mired in. I think that right now the whole country's in a state of regret. No matter what you think, no matter what you feel, you're wondering if this was the right thing to do, no matter what side you're on."

Film still from Act 2, *The Music of Regret*, featuring Meryl Streep
Courtesy of the artist, Salon 94, and Sperone Westwater Gallery

Laurie Simmons (American 1949 -)
The Music of Regret, 2006
35-millimeter film transferred to HD,
edition of 10
44 minutes, 14 seconds
Director, Laurie Simmons; Composer,
Michael Rohatyn; Lyrics, Laurie
Simmons; Director of Photography,
Ed Lachman; Featuring Meryl Streep,
Adam Guettel, and the Alvin Ailey II
Dancers
Collection of Jeanne Greenberg and
Nicolas Rohatyn, New York

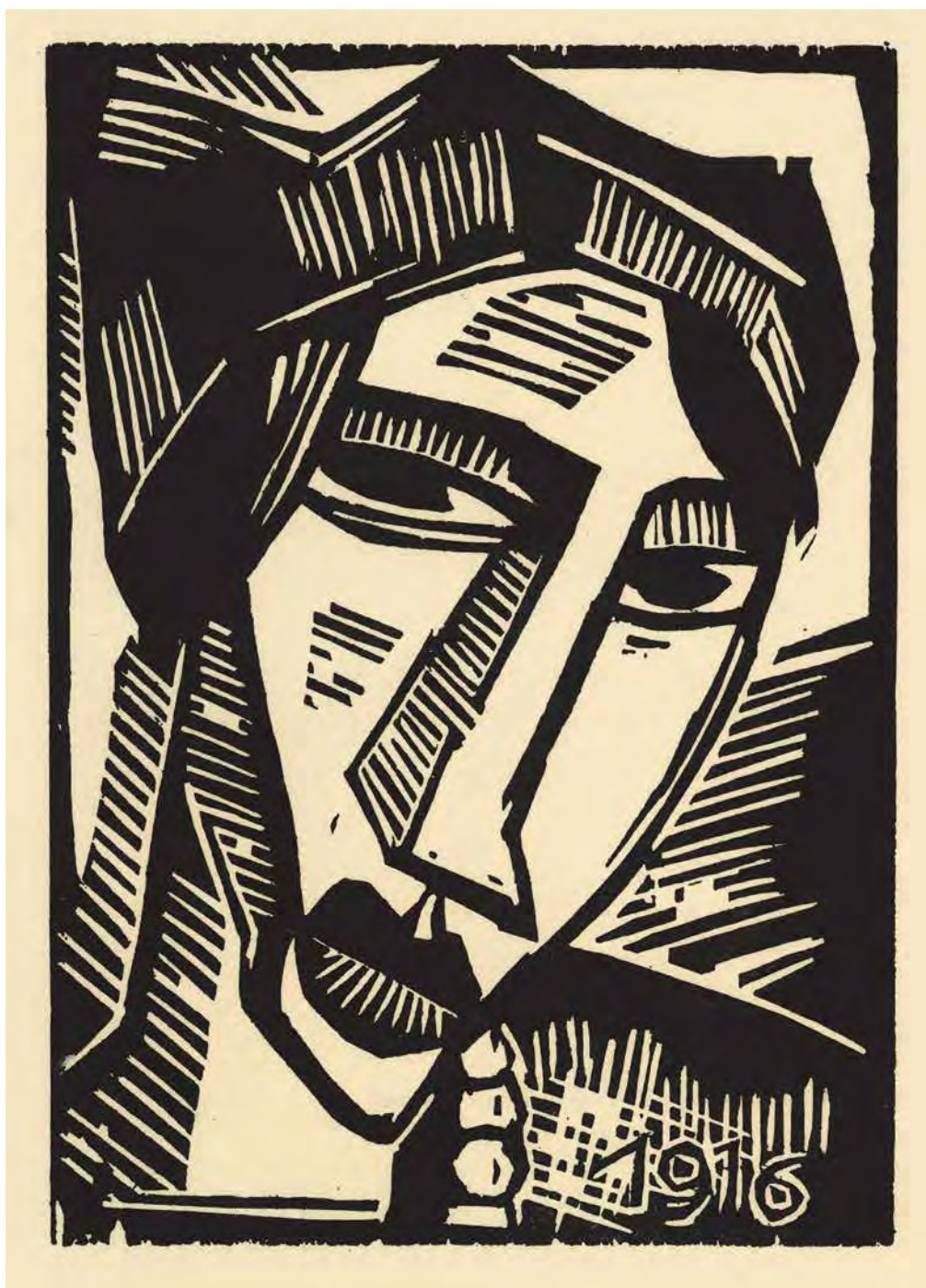
Signs of the Times

Impassioned Images: German Expressionist Prints
August 22 – October 26, 2008

In the early twentieth century, Germany forged a vital, multifaceted movement in the arts that encompassed architecture, painting, printmaking, sculpture, poetry, prose, music, theater, and film. This pluralistic and visionary modern movement, Expressionism, rebelled against the traditions and constraints of German society and extended roughly from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end of the Weimar Republic in 1933.

Prints became a favored medium among German Expressionists. Individual prints and prints published in portfolios, posters, manifestoes, or literary journals could relay powerful utopian or critical messages to a wide audience. Artists confronted social and political issues and captured pleasing, fleeting moments in these works with an energy and immediacy not seen in the art academies of the day. This startlingly direct, aggressive handling of media became the hallmark of the German Expressionist.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff
(1884-1976)
Head of a Woman, 1916, woodcut,
Syracuse University Art Collection,
Collection purchase



Die Brücke (The Bridge), the first of German Expressionism's many groups, emerged in 1905 in Dresden and collapsed in 1913 in Berlin. Its founders were students of architecture and included Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, joined later by Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein, and Otto Mueller. Beginning with roots in Jugendstil, the German equivalent of Art Nouveau, Die Brücke would revitalize printmaking in Germany, introducing a black and white woodcut vibrating with contrast that could be carved by hand and printed without a professional printer. With their jarring woodcuts, sinuous drypoints and etchings, and speckled lithographs, these self-taught printmakers recorded their surroundings in individual prints and in seven print portfolios to which the artists' friends and collectors subscribed.

Its major successor, Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), formed in Munich in 1911, lasted until the beginning of World War One in 1914. Its founders included Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, and August Macke, with Heinrich Campendonk, Lyonel Feininger, and others joining later. The movement takes its name from an almanac edited by Kandinsky and Marc of new art and music fostered by the expressions of the "inner wishes" of artists rather than



Willy Hameister, cinematographer, a still from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1920, Robert Wiene, director; Hermann Warm, Walter Reimann, and Walter Röhrig, production designers; Walter Reimann, costume designer.
© Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung

through conventional styles of art. Der Blaue Reiter sought a renewed world of the spiritual, using symbols such as the apocalypse and elements such as color to affect one's spiritual and emotional states.

World War One changed the lives of German artists, many of whom volunteered or were drafted. For instance, Heckel became a medic and Schmidt-Rottluff served on the Eastern Front, though both made some of their boldest woodcuts while on leave during these years. The printmaker Käthe Kollwitz lost her son, Peter, while George Grosz, a Berlin painter and printmaker, made nightmarish, desperate city scenes between his two stints in the army.

After the war, artists produced prints and print portfolios reflecting their wartime experiences, the ensuing political and societal turmoil, involvement in political or utopian programs, and their travels. A new trend, *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity), developed where an active shift occurred toward socially engaged criticism. Grosz captured the chaos of post-war Berlin in his photolithographs, while Otto Dix revealed a world of horror, decadence, and indifference in his drypoints, etchings, and print series *Der Krieg* (The War). Max Beckmann transformed his style, becoming aggressive and harsh in his crowded, claustrophobic, drypoint narratives.

The heightened emotions and jagged, fractured shapes of German Expressionist prints profoundly influenced other artistic media in Germany, especially film. Their modernist and emotional spirit flooded the new medium of cinema and helped to create a distinctive golden age of German film during the 1920s and early 1930s. Most famously, director Robert Wiene in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) set brooding figures against dizzying expressionist-cubist walls with skewed windows and patterned floors. Obsession, tales of insanity, and irony took place within disorienting, painted sets. In *The Last Laugh* (1924), director F. W. Murnau rendered taut cinematic compositions of diagonals and lines with his architectural views and created dream sequences made of montage and fade-outs, all in a tale of a working-class hero who swings from sweet comfort to deep, troubled times to joyous high life. Special effects and heavy tales of murder, the underworld, vampires, and other villainous themes meant to stir and transfix, underscore many of these silent and sound films from this era.

By 1933 the new government of the Third Reich denounced Expressionism and promoted heroic nationalism and naturalistic representation. However, many years later, after the Second World War, German Expressionism would become accepted again as an enduring movement essential to the history of modernism, where many artists had found woodcuts, etchings, drypoints, and lithographs an essential part of documenting their impassioned lives, observations, and hopes.

The exhibition of fifty prints is organized by the Syracuse University Art Collection and is generously supported by the Friends of the Frances Lehman Loeb Exhibition Fund.

Patricia Phagan
The Philip and Lynn Straus Curator of Prints and Drawings

A special outdoor film series screened during the run of the exhibition included:

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)

The Last Laugh (1924)

Der Golem (1920)

Nosferatu, a Symphony of Horror (1922)

Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler (1922)

M (1931)

Testament of Dr. Mabuse (1933)

On October 2, the Art Center hosted over 200 people with a special Late Night at the Lehman Loeb program, complementing *Impassioned Images: German Expressionists Prints*. A night of Berlin - inspired Cabaret filled the galleries with the powerful voice of bass-baritone Robert Osborne and nimble fingers of pianist Richard Gordon.

Guests, many dressed in period attire from the 1920s and 30s, returned to an era when musical expression spoke of decadence, exile, corruption, revolution, crime, and experiment. Osborne, Adjunct Artist in Music, and Patricia Phagan, The Philip and Lynn Straus Curator of Prints and Drawings collaborated on the program which reflected the emotions and opinions of many German artists of the time.

Please see page 15 for images from the evening.

A Professor's Pick, or backstage at an Art 105 conference

Circle of Rogier van der Weyden, Netherlandish, (Brussels), 15th century
Crucifixion with the donor Brother Aurelius of Emael
 Oil on oak panel, 14 x 14 1/4 inches
 Purchase, Betsy Mudge Wilson, class of 1956, Memorial Fund; Pratt Fund; Suzette Morton Davidson, class of 1934, Fund; Francis Woolsey and Helen Silkman Bronson, class of 1924, Fund, 1995.10



The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded a \$1.2 million challenge grant to The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College to create and support a new position. The grant, which will be matched at \$750,000 over the next three years, will significantly strengthen the role of the Art Center within the academic curriculum of the college through the position of Coordinator of Academic Affairs.

“Our grant from the Mellon Foundation’s College and University Art Museum program, the largest such grant received by The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center to date, will endow a dedicated staff member and ongoing program to integrate more fully our art collections within the curricular context at Vassar,” explained Art Center Director James Mundy.

In 1995 the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center made an extraordinary acquisition: a small early Netherlandish panel painting, produced in Brussels during the 1460’s by the workshop of Rogier van der Weyden. *Crucifixion with the Donor Brother Aurelius of Emael* (purchased from a sale of paintings from the New York Historical Society) is one of the gems of our collection. Its stunning quality and richly allusive symbolism make it such a perfect “teaching picture” that we devote an entire fifty-minute conference of Art 105 to it every year. Here’s what we talk about in that class.

At first glance, the painting seems a pastiche-like combination of parts, for it includes variants of motifs found in other compositions by Rogier van der Weyden. Yet it is also so unified in composition and meaning that it makes perfect sense on its own as the distinctive kind of private altarpiece produced in Flanders during this period. Such small-scale images, rendered with the fine detail and the brilliant coloring made possible by oil paint, generated intense private devotion for their owners.

An inscription in gold at the left tells us the name of this donor: a monk named Aurelius de Emael, who kneels at the left in front of the weeping Mary Magdalen in green and behind St. John in red and the Virgin Mary in blue. Infra-red reflectography examination reveals that Mary’s hands were originally lifted in anguish and that the donor was added after the panel was virtually complete. Probably Brother Aurelius bought the piece in the painter’s workshop and asked that his portrait be inserted into an almost or already completed composition. Since donor figures must be shown in perpetual prayer – and two sets of lifted hands would have looked boringly repetitive the artist apparently shifted Mary’s hands to the present position. The gold leaf background at the top of the panel is original, but somewhat worn; its rainbow border recalls the rainbow upon which Christ is often enthroned in Netherlandish paintings of the Last Judgment.

As a whole this scene represents the perpetual sacrifice of Christ, who appears on the cross against a landscape representing the world which will be redeemed from mortality by his death. Below his feet are the skull and bone that identify the site as Golgotha (“place of the skull”), the site of the Crucifixion. According to medieval legends, the cross was made either from the Tree of Knowledge itself, or from a tree that grew out of seeds that had sprouted in the skull of Adam, whose original sin created the necessity for Christ’s redeeming mission. Students often notice how this balanced (but not symmetrical) design and the careful alignment of the central figure with levels of the landscape behind him draw special attention to his body. What they seldom notice at first is that the wounds of his crucifixion are so delicately rendered in red paint that the paint seems to flow — making not only Christ, but the painting itself appear to bleed as if it were a miraculous image responding to a worshipper’s prayers.

A second gold inscription above the horizon at the right proclaims the words purportedly spoken at the Crucifixion by the Roman centurion who recognized Christ: “truly this man was the Son of God.” It draws attention to the second group of beautifully painted standing figures at the right. Here students explore contrasts between the holy versus the worldly sectors — the former, at Christ’s right hand, are on the side of the blessed. The judges and soldiers, led by a vividly dressed worldly ruler who holds a staff of judicial authority (Pilate?), form a denser, more impenetrable, less emotionally reactive mass on the opposite side. Is greater spiritual weight given to the left or is there also awareness (or even a sense of conversion) at the right? A class will debate this point. Finally we notice that the deliberate coordination of figures with setting and the way Christ overlaps the zones of earth and the sky/gold leaf of heaven indicate that he is the conduit to immortality for the devout worshipper. As we examine this small painting as art history students we enjoy its beauty as a museum object, but we also try to retrieve the meanings it had and the intensity of response it elicited in its own time.

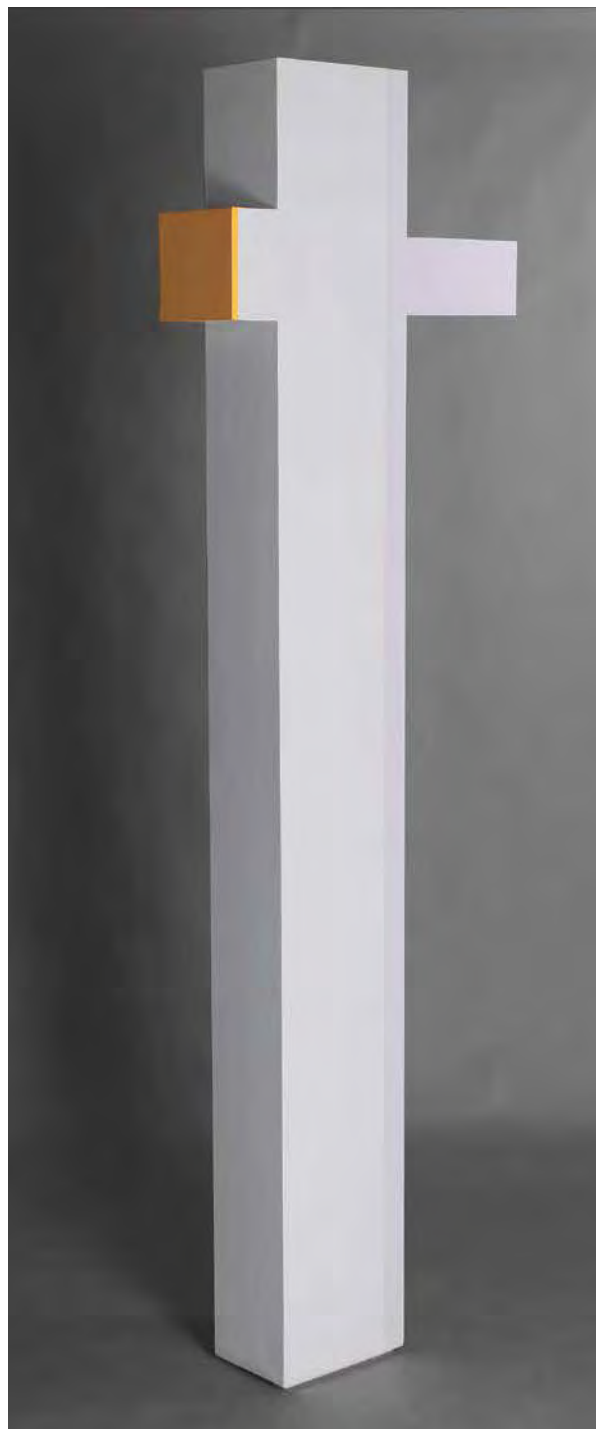
Susan Donahue Kuretsky '63
 Sarah Gibson Blanding Professor of Art

Anne Truitt's Signature

CURATOR'S CHOICE

Anne Truitt was a talented and innovative American sculptor who was largely unrecognized during her lifetime for her contribution to post-war art. *Signature* is an excellent example of one of Truitt's reductive, painted wood sculptures, which became the hallmark of her career. This work, a rectangular shaft with a cruciform top, departs slightly from the standard format of Truitt's later columns. However, the muted colors are typical of her work from this period in which she emphasizes the effects of color on the viewer. Each patch of color remains distinct while narrow stripes travel around the structure, eliminating the possibility of a frontal reading and reiterating the three-dimensionality of the structure. Through a meticulous process of applying multiple, delicate layers of gesso and then pigment, sanding in between each coat, the surface color and the object become almost indivisible. Throughout her work, she balanced her sustained interests in proportion, scale, and color, with her concerns with perception and memory. Writing in April, 1965, Truitt stated: "What is important to me in not geometrical shape per se, or color per se, but to make a relationship between shape and color which feels to me like my experience. To make what feels to me like reality."¹

Born Anne Dean in Baltimore on March 16, 1921, Truitt grew up on the Eastern Shore in Easton, Maryland. She did not consider art as a career possibility until well after her graduation in 1943 from Bryn Mawr College with a degree in psychology. After becoming disillusioned by the field while working in a psychiatric ward at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, she began studying sculpture at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Washington, D.C.. Following her passion, Truitt left clinical psychology in the mid-1940s, and began making figurative sculptures. She married in 1947 and embarked on family life eventually raising three children. She wrote in the first of her published journals that the task of fitting this "personal obsession" into her daily life proved to be "tricky."² In addition to the demands of child care, she wrote, "I had to fit my own work into a schedule of cooking, shopping, housecleaning, entertaining and, very often, moving from city to city." Her marriage to the late James Truitt, a prominent political journalist whose career often required the family to relocate, ended in divorce in 1969. As her children grew older and the tension



Signature, 1975
Acrylic on wood
95 ½ x 27 x 8 inches
Gift of Cicely d'Autremont Angleton,
class of 1947, and Elizabeth L.
Eisenstein, class of 1945-4, in memory
of Mary Pinchot Meyer, class of 1942
1980.4

On the Road

Although *Saul Steinberg: Illuminations* left campus in February, the exhibition has continued to live on past the gates of Vassar. After leaving the Art Center galleries, the 120 works travelled to the Fondation Cartier-Bresson in Paris, the Kunsthhaus Zürich and is currently on view at the Dulwich Picture Gallery through February 15, 2009. Its last stop of an eight-stop international tour will be at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg. The show, organized by the Art Center, has also been on view at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Cincinnati Art Museum. This full-length survey of Saul Steinberg's career continues to delight audiences around the world.

between home life and studio time became less pronounced, Truitt began making large-scale sculptures at a more prolific pace and her mature style emerged.

In 1961 she saw works by Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt in New York. After that, she turned toward the reduced geometric form exemplified here and in her other late work. She was especially inspired by Newman's use of simple divisions and large expanses of color, as well as suggestions of the sublime, yet her works remained highly personal in theme and subject and intuitive in their making. Truitt made what is considered her most important works in the early 1960s anticipating the work of Minimalists like Donald Judd, Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, and others. While she is sometimes associated with Minimalism, she was unlike these artists in significant ways. Her first radically simplified, painted wood sculptures still retain allusions to objects such as picket fences, tombstones, and other architectural details recalled from the artist's childhood. Although the representational aspects soon dropped out, experiences of landscape and personal memories would continue to animate her otherwise severely abstract, vertical structures.

Soon after Truitt began making these new works, the Color Field painter Kenneth Noland, a friend since her student days at the Institute of Contemporary Art, encouraged the dealer Andre Emmerich to pay a visit to her studio. In 1963, he offered her a show at his gallery on 57th Street in Manhattan, and she continued to exhibit there regularly for more than three decades. Her work was also the focus of several solo museum exhibitions at such institutions as the Whitney Museum of American Art (1973), The Baltimore Museum of Art (1992), and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2004).

For more than four decades Anne Truitt produced works of art that continue to challenge the conventions of traditional painting and sculpture. Her achievements and her impact on the course of contemporary art are now becoming more widely recognized. In 2000 Truitt was included in the book *Minimalism*, edited by James Meyer who acknowledges her seminal contribution to this movement, but also argues that "her hand-painted surfaces, instinctive color, and retention of allusion countered that tendency's literalist impulse... suggest[ing] on the contrary a practice that points beyond its material substance toward an opaque yet constitutive subject matter."³

Signature has been selected to be included in *Anne Truitt: Perception and Reflection*, the first major exhibition of Truitt's work since her 1974 twelve-year survey of sculpture and drawings at The Corcoran Gallery of Art organized by Walter Hopps. The exhibition, scheduled to take place at the Smithsonian Institution's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in 2010, is a survey of two- and three-dimensional works made during the artist's forty-year career and will be accompanied by the first complete monograph on the artist.

Mary-Kay Lombino
*The Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and
Richard B. Fisher Curator*

1 Anne Truitt's private papers as quoted on annetruitt.org/biography/introduction © annetruitt.org. Used with permission from Alexandra Truitt.

2 Anne Truitt published three books of her journals, *Daybook: The Journal of an Artist* (Pantheon 1982), *Turn: The Journal of an Artist* (Viking 1986), *Prospect: The Journal of an Artist* (Scribner 1996), each chronicling a different period of her life.

3 *Minimalism*, ed. James Meyer. [London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2000], p. 24.

Revealed Anew

CURRENT EXHIBITION

Revealed Anew: Selections from the Permanent Collection
November 7, 2008 – January 4, 2009

As a number of key works from the permanent collection are on tour in Japan, the curators of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center have taken this opportunity to review the museum's storage vaults in order to present a sampling of works that have not been on view in recent years. In addition to those works now on display in the Permanent Collection Galleries, this new exhibition gives viewers a chance to further their knowledge of the almost 18,000 objects in the permanent collection.

The exhibition concentrates on works from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries and includes Richard Westall's heroic *Ajax Defying the Lightning*. A deft study in opaque watercolor, or gouache, this work was preparatory to a print published for a book of illustrative plates of Shakespeare by the prolific English publisher John Boydell.

Revealed Anew gives the opportunity to explore the work of other important nineteenth century artists. For example, the exhibition presents *A Winter View from Newburgh*, 1856, a gift from Matthew Vassar by Hudson River School painter Louis Rémy Mignot. It also includes two etchings—Sir Francis Seymour Haden's velvety *A Sunset in Ireland*, a gift in 1920 of Vassar trustee and print collector Dr. Henry M. Sanders, and James Abbott McNeill Whistler's *Greenwich Pensioner*, given to the college in 1941 by Mrs. Felix M. Warburg and her children.

Artist Elizabeth Rebecca Coffin, class of 1870, gave to the college her *Study of a Head*, an elegant oil on view. Coffin, an American realist painter based in Brooklyn and Nantucket, studied drawing and painting at Vassar with Henry Van Ingen, the college's first professor of art. She also trained in painting and drawing at The Hague in the Netherlands and with Thomas Eakins at the Brooklyn Art Association and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. In fact, Coffin went on to receive the first master of arts degree in fine art in America with postgraduate study at Vassar with her thesis, "The Progress of Art in Ancient Times."

Revealed Anew presents around forty works of art, including prints by Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol, drawings by Benjamin West and Philip Guston, and sculpture by Malvina Hoffman and Robert Laurent. It allows viewers to delve further into the many-layered collection of the Art Center and measure the broad, rich diversity of its holdings.

Patricia Phagan
The Philip and Lynn Straus
Curator of Prints and Drawings

Mary-Kay Lombino
The Emily Hargroves Fisher '57
and Richard B. Fisher Curator

Louis Rémy Mignot (American 1831-1870)
A Winter View from Newburgh, 1856
Oil on panel
15 3/16 x 12 7/8 inches
Gift of Matthew Vassar, 1864.1.57



First Impressions

When I was younger there was a shampoo commercial that aired regularly. I do not remember the brand, but the tagline was “Because you only get one chance to make a first impression.” While the commercial failed to make me a customer, it sufficiently convinced me of the importance of first impressions. As the new Coordinator of Public Education and Information at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, I have been experiencing a lot of first impressions. With a new campus, new co-workers, a new town, and new neighbors, my life currently feels like an unending shampoo commercial.



Nicole M. Roylance

The least anxiety-producing of these first impressions (and the least dependent on the luster of my hair) has been my first encounters with the FLLAC collection. One of the reasons I entered this field is the indescribable feeling I get when I enter a museum for the first time. I imagine myself as an indoor Thoreau, sauntering through the galleries allowing the artworks to lead me. I lose myself until something finds me. When a work first captures my attention, there is an electric rush that I find exhilarating.

But the reason why I remain in the museum field is because it provides me the opportunity to get beyond the first impressions of an work of art. As an undergraduate at the College of the Holy Cross, I became attached to *The Freaks* at the Worcester Art Museum. As a graduate student at the Henry Radford Hope School of Fine Arts at Indiana University, I had the good fortune of regularly sitting before Stuart Davis' *Swing Landscape*. The massive, rhythmic canvas sang to me in different ways on different occasions. As a

Gallery Interpreter for three summers at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, I slowly got to know Winslow Homer's painting *Undertow*. The power of Homer's ocean rescue scene never faded, but I gradually paid closer attention to how Homer manipulated the paint to drench the four figures. As Academic Programs and Intern Coordinator at the Smith College Museum of Art, I witnessed the installation of a Sol LeWitt walldrawing over the course of January and every day found a new pattern, a new moment even after the installers put down their pencils.

Stumbling upon Hubert Robert's *Octavian Gate* was thrilling on one of my first walks through the Vassar galleries. It's a large canvas and commands attention when you enter the gallery space. However, as I look at the canvas with my student docents and visitors, there have been slow revelations: the way Robert uses red like arrows to slowly lead your eye further into the scene; there is a woman on a balcony in a tucked away corner; and Robert's signature carved into one of the fish monger's tables.

My hope is that in my new role I can work with the rest of the FLLAC staff to encourage and support meaningful interactions with the collection. Our dedicated student docents play an important part in achieving this goal. They continue to lead engaging tours that encourage visitors to look closely and visit area classrooms through the *Every Artwork Tells A Story* program. In the spring, they will join the Vassar After School Tutoring program at Poughkeepsie Middle School to forge connections between middle school students and the FLLAC. In Fall 2009 we will publish a Teacher's Guide to the Permanent Collection and start organizing and hosting Teacher Workshops. Through these initiatives we can support teachers who look to the arts, as they are increasingly required to teach to the test. Beginning with *Excerpt: Selections from the Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn Collection*, there will be podcasts available on the FLLAC website to draw all of our visitors, near and far, deeper into Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn's compelling collection of contemporary art. These podcasts will become a regular feature online and in the galleries to enable a variety of voices and perspectives to be heard.

The advertising executives were correct: first impressions are important. I look forward to joining new visitors on their first visit to our collection and accompanying regular guests when they first experience a new exhibition. Hopefully we can share the same electric charge of a first encounter with a work of art. And then, after that initial impression, we can linger a little longer and really get to know what is there for us to see.

Nicole M. Roylance
 Coordinator of Public Education and Information

Online

This fall, the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center joined millions of other users and groups on Facebook, the popular social networking site. Current users can search for “The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center” and become “a fan.” Fans can find out about upcoming exhibitions, receive notifications about upcoming events, read reviews, and see pictures from recent happenings at the Art Center. Grab your Facebook friends and visit us on Facebook today.

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A Night of Cabaret



Left to right: Mary Beth Alexander '09, Lia Simonds '10, Asia Suler '09, and Jojo Read '09

Elizabeth Gardner '09



Elizabeth Gardner '09

Bass-baritone Robert Osborne and pianist Richard Gordon



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 Mary Ellen Weisl Rudolph '61
 *Norma Honig Schlesinger '52
 Mary Coxe Schlosser '51
 Adam Sheffer '90
 H. Peter Stern
 Katharine Stone White '36
 Allison C. Whiting '86

Staff

James Mundy
The Anne Hendricks Bass Director
 Mary-Kay Lombino
Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and Richard B. Fisher Curator
 Patricia Phagan
The Philip and Lynn Straus Curator of Prints and Drawings
 Jennifer Cole
Coordinator of Membership, Special Events & Volunteer Services
 Nicole Roylance
Coordinator of Public Education and Information
 Joann Potter
Registrar and Collections Manager
 Karen Casey Hines
Assistant Registrar
 Bruce Bundock
Museum Preparator
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 Matthew Woodard
 Dominick Canino
 Manfred Schunzel
Museum Guards



The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
124 Raymond Avenue, Box 703
Poughkeepsie, New York 12604
<http://fllac.vassar.edu>

The Art Center is open
Tuesday to Saturday 10:00 to 5:00,
Thursday 10:00 to 9:00, and
Sunday 1:00 to 5:00.
We are closed Thanksgiving Day,
and from Christmas to
New Year's Day.

On the Cover:
Wangechi Mutu (Kenyan 1972 -)
The Mare, 2007
Mixed media on Mylar
85 x 60 inches
Collection of Jeanne Greenberg
and Nicolas Rohatyn, New York;
© Wangechi Mutu, courtesy of
Sikkema Jenkins & Co. and Salon 94.

Art at Vassar

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The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
Fall 2008

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:



Faith and Fantasy in Outsider Art from the Permanent Collection

Prints and Drawings Galleries
February 13 – April 26, 2009

Opening: Friday, February 13

Lecture 5:30 pm
Taylor Hall, room 203

Brooke Davis Anderson, Director and
Curator of the Contemporary Center and
Director of the Henry Study Center at
the American Folk Art Museum
*Through the Lens of Language:
Self-Taught Artists from Dubuffet to Today*

Reception 6:30 pm
The Atrium of The Frances Lehman Loeb
Art Center

Howard Finster (American 1916-2001)
Jesus Saves-Angel, 7/9/1992, 1992
Oil and black marker on plywood
Gift of Pat O'Brien Parsons, class of 1951
2005.33.15
© The Estate of Howard Finster

Catching Light: European and American Watercolors from the Permanent Collection

Prints and Drawings Galleries
May 8 – July 26, 2009



Charles Demuth
(American 1883-1935)
Groups on a Beach, 1934
Watercolor over graphite
on paper
8 1/2 x 11 inches
Gift of Leonard B. and
Mary Coxe Schlosser,
class of 1951
1982.43

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