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# Mirrors & Masks: Reflections and Constructions of the Self

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**M I R R O R S**



**M A S K S**



**M I R R O R S**



**M A S K S**

REFLECTIONS AND  
CONSTRUCTIONS  
OF THE SELF

EDITED BY  
Steven Z. Levine  
Carrie Robbins

Bryn Mawr College



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## FOREWORD

So much about what makes Bryn Mawr College special comes together here. The exhibition *Mirrors & Masks: Reflections and Constructions of the Self* is part of Bryn Mawr's signature 360° program, in which cohorts of students, faculty, and allied professionals gather to study a complex topic from multiple disciplinary and experiential perspectives. Undergraduates are active scholars at Bryn Mawr, working closely with faculty and extraordinary experts from many fields in co-creating new knowledge based on the foundations they develop through their studies. Bryn Mawr houses remarkable special collections, and these treasures are meant, in our context, to be used, touched, considered intimately, and framed in new ways by the students and faculty who interact with them.

This 360°, *Mirroring the Self/Exhibiting the Self*, is a space where diverse forms of creative and analytical intelligence come together as students encounter powerful artistic products and histories, as the class explores cultural heritage practices and professions connected with art making and art curation, and as the course shifts from learning in the seminar room and in the field to the practical work of mounting an exhibition that represents individual and collective ways of understanding "masks and mirrors." The students are scholars and apprentices, learning from course faculty Steven Z. Levine, Leslie Clark Professor in the Humanities and Professor of History of Art, and Carrie Robbins, Curator/Academic Liaison for Art & Artifacts, and from the myriad lovers of art and art professionals with whom they've interacted. The students have produced an exhibition that synthesizes their theoretical and experiential learning into powerful re-presentations of their own in the Rare Book Room gallery.

Our outstanding Special Collections department has long enabled students and faculty to work closely with primary objects at the College. Bryn Mawr's new Museum Studies minor is taking these opportunities to new levels, providing core and multi-disciplinary courses in theory and practice of museums and serving as the nexus for a robust internship program in partnership with LILAC (the College's Leadership, Innovation, and the Liberal Arts Center), providing students with

opportunities for research and hands-on work at Bryn Mawr, at cultural heritage organizations in Philadelphia, and beyond. Together this year, Robbins and Director of Museum Studies, Monique Scott, envisioned and created a new Collections Learning Lab within our Rare Book Room, a space in which students experiment with the craft of presenting the objects they're studying in ways that foster the kinds of critical reflection and discovery that they have developed through their coursework.

As you'll read in this catalogue's introduction, by Steven Levine, many generations are responsible for the fortuitous conditions that make this 360° experience possible at Bryn Mawr. Steven's own decades of teaching and leadership in the History of Art Department are an essential thread in this legacy, and the students in creating this exhibition and catalogue are carrying that legacy forward. It is an honor to learn from the outstanding work they have produced and a joy to know that the exhibition and this catalogue will enable many to appreciate the concepts and objects of self-portraiture and self-reflection through the eyes of Bryn Mawr's student scholars and practitioners.

**Cina Siesing**

Chief Information Officer & Constance A. Jones Director of Libraries





## MIRRORING AND MASKING THE SELF Myriad Points of Light Encircling the Void

In keeping with the motto “today’s learning for tomorrow’s lives,” the new Museum Studies program at Bryn Mawr College seeks to supplement the theoretical and historical study of the arts in which we have always excelled with a focus on the more practical skills that will be required of the broad range of museum personnel that our students wish to become, including curators, educators, administrators, fundraisers, publicists, exhibition designers, online programmers, social media specialists, financial and legal advisers, and the like. For students of biology, chemistry, geology, and physics, the laboratory is the essential place to transform their classroom learning of scientific theory into the actual practice of science by doing experiments with their own hands. Just in the same way, the gallery is the indispensable laboratory for producing exhibitions and sharpening critical thinking by students of art, archaeology, anthropology, history, and other disciplines in the humanities and the natural and social sciences that are charged to preserve collections of material artifacts and archives and display them in respectful and informative ways to diverse communities around the world.

Initiated during the presidency of Jane McAuliffe, encouraged by then-provost Kim Cassidy and dean of graduate studies Mary Osirim, and further encouraged under their leadership as president and provost, the Museum Studies initiative was inaugurated by a generous planning gift from Jeanne de Guardiola Callanan (Class of 1993) and her husband William Callanan. The primary result of the planning that extended over the course of several years is the new slate of courses taught by Director of Museum Studies Monique Scott and Curator of Art and Artifacts Carrie Robbins (PhD 2013) that offer opportunities for students to create exhibitions of their own from our largely hidden collections of many thousands of items, only some of which are displayed in the online database Triarte ([triarte.brynmawr.edu](http://triarte.brynmawr.edu)). Gina Siesing, Chief Information Officer and Director of Libraries; Eric Pumroy, Associate Chief Information Officer and Seymour Adelman Head of Special Collections; Bob Miller, Chief Alumnae Relations and Development Officer; and Lisa Saltzman, Professor of History of Art and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Chair in the Humanities, have all supported our group endeavor.

### FIG. 1

Susanna Coffey  
(American, born 1949)

**Self-Portrait**  
1993

Acrylic on paper  
12 3/4 × 10 1/8 in.  
(32.4 × 25.7 cm)

The William and Uytendale Scott  
Memorial Study Collection of Works  
by Women Artists, gift of the artist  
Bryn Mawr College 2006.1.172

In 2013–2014 I taught a course in which a dozen student curators researched and wrote the catalogue entries for the exhibition *A Century of Self-Expression: Modern American Art in the Collection of John and Joanne Payson*, for which Joanne d'Elia Payson (Class of 1975, MA 2008) and her late husband John Whitney Payson generously loaned some 40 works of painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, and photography from their distinguished private collection. The generosity of our college community is embodied in the present exhibition, with splendid loans from Treasurer Emeritus Margaret M. Healy (PhD 1969) and former college trustee Nora Lavori (Class of 1971), as well as works given and bequeathed to the college by an extraordinary roster of donors, including M. Carey Thomas, President of Bryn Mawr College, 1894–1922, whose dressing case mirror from the Deanery and presidential portrait by the internationally celebrated American painter John Singer Sargent are at the center of our exhibition on mirroring and masking the self (plates 9 and 10). Other donors whose generous gifts are on display include Eleanor Wood Whitehead (Class of 1902); Theresa Helburn (Class of 1908); Margery Hoffman Smith (Class of 1911); Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914, AB 1915); Edith Finch (Class of 1922); Elizabeth Gray Vining (Class of 1923); Clarissa Compton Dryden (Class of 1932, MA 1935); Jacqueline Koldin Levine (Class of 1946) and Howard H. Levine; Margery Peterson Lee (Class of 1951) and B. Herbert Lee; Jane Martin (Class of 1953); Helen Katz Neufeld (Class of 1953) and Mace Neufeld; Ryoko Shibuya (MA 1957); Constance Maravell (Class of 1965); Howard L. Gray, Professor of History, 1915–1940; Fritz Janschka, Professor of Fine Arts, 1949–1985; James Tanis, Director of Libraries, 1969–1996; Seymour Adelman, Honorary Curator of Rare Books, ca. 1975–1985; and Bill Scott, donor of the William and Uytendale Scott Memorial Study Collection of Works by Women Artists. A startling self-portrait in the Scott Collection by the noted contemporary artist Susanna Coffey animates the mythic posture of Narcissus contemplating his reflection with something of the anxious affect of narcissism that plagues contemporary self-consciousness (fig. 1). Is that mirror image who I am and aim to be? Or is the persona I see merely a mask?

The yearlong sequence of two courses that has this exhibition and accompanying catalogue as its immediate product is part of the 360° program, one of the college's flagship endeavors that recruits students from across the nation and the world. Interdisciplinary and interactive, the 360° course clusters and sequences expose students to a diversity of perspectives and empower them to put those theoretical precepts into practical action. In the fall semester my advanced undergraduate seminar, HART 350: Topics in Modern Art, provided the vehicle for students to undertake art historical research on objects on loan and from the permanent collection. Choosing from a potential set of dozens of works on the theme of the fashioning and representation of the self from ancient Greek and Chinese bronze mirrors to 20th-century African and Japanese wooden masks by way of etchings and engravings of the Italian Renaissance, 19th-century color

prints by Pennsylvanian Mary Cassatt as well as the Japanese masters who inspired her, and large-format photographs and lithographs by contemporary masters of their paper-supported mediums, the students read article upon article and wrote draft upon draft, sometimes upward of six or seven, on the three dozen works of art that are featured in the catalogue. In the spring the course of curator Carrie Robbins, HART 301: Exhibition Strategies, will give ample scope for the students to translate the bookish themes of the catalogue into the real spatial coordinates of display cases and wall mountings in the Rare Book Room of Canaday Library, the most suitable space available to us in the absence of a purpose-made campus gallery.

The hard work and good fun of the students is also represented online in the course blog—*360°: Mirroring the Self* ([selfie360.blogs.brynmawr.edu](http://selfie360.blogs.brynmawr.edu))—which I invite you to explore. Overseen and supported by 360° coordinator Sarah Theobald (Class of 2012), as well as Educational Technology Specialist Beth Seltzer and Digital Scholarship Specialist Alicia Peaker, who visited us in the classroom for a very lively media session, the student curators maintain a verbal and visual blog on various digital platforms to keep their classmates informed, as well as faculty, staff, alumnae/i, and prospective Mawrters too, as the team turns the ideas for the exhibition into catalogue entries, gallery labels, and a host of public celebrations and events.

**FIG. 2**

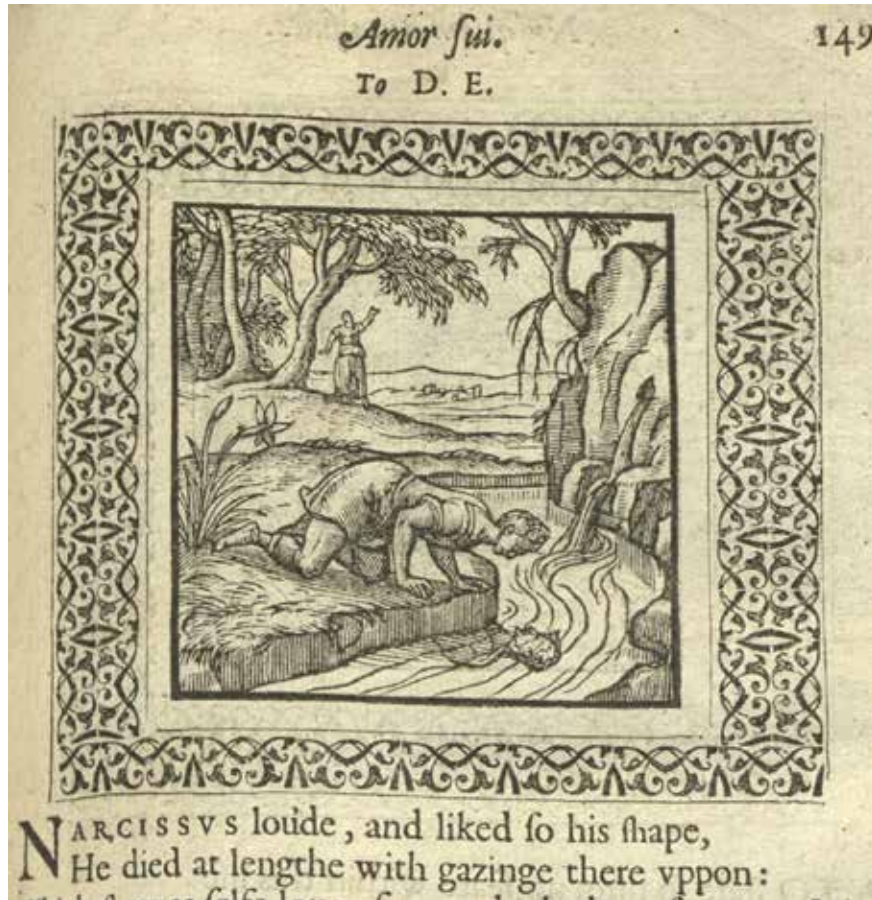
Lawrence Hours,  
use of Cambrai, France  
**Mermaid Holding Her Mirror and  
Comb**, folio 46 verso  
ca. 1450

Bryn Mawr College MS 24



While the students were compiling a collective archive of responses to class readings as well as pursuing their own independent research on parallel tracks, most weekly sessions also saw visitors discuss their professional and personal perspective as it pertains to the work of the class. Artist Kris Graves, staff photographer at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, lectured on his stunning series of photographs of black men and women, *The Testament Project*, curated by Carrie Robbins, that served as a foreshadowing of the installation the students will undertake later in the year. Nathanael Roesch, doctoral candidate in History of Art, shared with the class his ideas for the page spreads of the catalogue that you are perusing at this instant.

During her visit to class Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts Marianne Hansen not only explained in quite grisly terms the preparation of parchment or vellum as scraped animal-skin supports for inked inscription and golden illumination, she also brought to class a wonderful sampling from our medieval and early modern treasury of books of hours, emblem books, and conduct manuals (figs. 2, 3, and 4) in which women and men,



**FIG. 3**  
Geffrey Whitney  
(English, 1548?–1601?)  
**“Amor sui” (Self-Love)**  
1586

*A choice of emblemes and other  
devises . . . (Leyden), p. 149*  
Bryn Mawr College Special Collections



**FIG. 4**  
George Wither  
(English, 1588–1667)  
**“In all thine Actions have a care,  
that no unseemlinesse appeare”**  
1635

*A collection of emblemes, ancient and  
modern . . . (London), p. 249*  
Bryn Mawr College Special Collections

but particularly women, are exhorted in word and image to use their mirror reflection as a tool of philosophical or religious acknowledgment of human imperfection rather than as a token of the disastrous preening of the mermaid or the drowning self-love of Narcissus. The increasing expectation of women to bear both the social burden of bodily beauty and at the same time abjure its adoration in the name of modesty and morality is especially well illustrated in Wither's manual, where the small background vignette of Narcissus peering into the fountain is overshadowed by the large foreground figure of the lady and her looking glass: "In all thine Actions have a care, that no unseemliness appear." We find this same sentiment across the globe in 19th-century Japan in the inscription on a color wood block print of a woman at her mirror (plate 5).

One afternoon in the fall we left our comfortable classroom in the Eva Jane Romaine Coombe (Class of 1952) Special Collections Suite on the second floor of Canaday Library to visit the hushed precincts of the Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology Collection on the third floor of Thomas Library, with its 6,000 objects from ancient Greek and Roman empires, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cyprus, and Mycenae. Collections Manager Marianne Weldon provided us with blue nitrile gloves so we could handle our Greek and Etruscan bronze mirrors in the company of Mireille Lee (PhD 1998) of Vanderbilt University, who was visiting the Center for Visual Culture to deliver a lecture on her current research, "Women's Ways of Knowing: A Phenomenology of Mirrors in Ancient Greece." Professor Lee's precise Hellenic focus was supplemented by the Romans' ways with mirrors and makeup in the vivid presentation by Professor Annette M. Baertschi from our department of Greek, Latin, & Classical Studies. Their knowledge of the artistic and literary representation of mirrors in antiquity, far from my own expertise in modern art, was indispensable in the drafting of the catalogue essay on our Roman cosmetics tube of Tiffany-inspired iridescent blown glass and the handsome verdigris-encrusted bronze mirror from the Greater Grecian world (plate 1).

One of the great privileges of the course was the visit of two women who loom large in the history of the college, Mary Patterson McPherson (PhD 1969), president of the college from 1978 to 1997, and Margaret M. Healy (PhD 1969), who as college treasurer helped Pat manage the serious financial stresses on the endowment and budget before taking on the challenges of the presidency of Rosemont College in 1995. Peg spoke with passion about how she assembled her magnificent collection of graphic works by 20th-century women artists, four striking specimens of which she selflessly allowed herself to be dispossessed for the duration of the course (plates 26, 28, 29, and 30). Pat regaled the rapt room with the tale of how Pennsylvania artist Peter Schumann included portraits of her dogs at her request in the half-size model of the presidential portrait that he completed almost 99 years to the day after Sargent painted M. Carey Thomas. Unlike the oil painting executed during that traditional studio sitting in London in 1899, Pat's portrait resulted from



photographs taken by the artist in her office of her face and hands that he later composed into a life-size effigy outside of the presence of the living subject.

On a very long Friday in October we undertook the principal fieldtrip of the semester to the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. Dianne Johnson, Director of Gift Planning and Senior Philanthropic Advisor, and Anna Kamstra (Class of 1980), Senior Associate Director of Alumnae Relations, prepared the students to meet with their dozen alumnae luncheon partners from the Class of 1956 to the Class of 2014 who have had and are having distinguished and burgeoning careers in many departments of the Smithsonian Institution of which the portrait gallery is a part. Megan Pongratz, Associate Director, Career Development & Outcomes Assessment, gave the students excellent tips on perfecting their “elevator pitches” about the research and professional interests they would be able to discuss at this very special networking and career-building event.

**FIG. 5**

Jessica Todd Harper  
(American, born 1975; Class of 1997)  
**Self-Portrait with Christopher  
(Rochester)**  
2001

Chromogenic color print  
32 × 40 in. (81.3 × 101.6 cm)  
Bryn Mawr College 2016.6.109

At the portrait gallery students had the opportunity for a private exhibition tour with its dynamic director Kim Sajet (MA 2005) of *The Outwin 2016: American Portraiture Today*, in which one of the prize-winners was Jessica Todd Harper (Class of 1997), who visited our class later in the semester and whose reflected self-portrait is intertwined with her husband's intense gaze in a richly resonant photograph that Special Collections was able to acquire for the college (fig. 5). At the portrait gallery in Washington our students also had a special session with the emeritus curator of painting, Ellen G. Miles (Class of 1964), one of the principal authorities on early American presidential portraiture, as well as a behind-the-scenes visit to the off-site storage facility with the emeritus curator of prints and drawings, Wendy Wick Reaves, whose 2009 catalogue, *Reflections/Refractions: Self-Portraits in the Twentieth Century*, presents the extraordinary collection of American self-portrait drawings and prints assembled by Ruth Bowman (Class of 1944) and her partner Harry Kahn that I visited years ago in New York City. Without a full gallery staff and professionally outfitted exhibition facilities the college was perhaps not a suitable candidate to receive these hundred fragile works on paper, but lively discussions with Ruth over many years inspired me to imagine mounting an exhibition of self-portraiture here at the college. At lunch in Washington I was very glad to be seated with another friend, Cynthia R. Field (Class of 1963), former chair of the Smithsonian's office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation, who more than 30 years ago planted the idea in my head for just the sort of robust exhibition program that, as I near the end of my career at the college, I am proud to see coming into being.

A special treat at the National Portrait Gallery was to view a newly acquired self-portrait by another friend of the college, Sigmund Abeles, a virtuoso feat of foreshortening that the artist achieved in 1970 by drawing on a piece of paper on the floor what he observed of his body in the mirror at his feet, using a pencil attached to the end of a long stick. Illustrated in the catalogue is one of Sigmund's more recent self-portraits, this one coupled with the portrait of Nora Lavori (Class of 1971; plate 33). We plan for a special visit with Sigmund and Nora in the gallery during the run of the exhibition. Nora's sister, Angela Lavori (Class of 1985), was one of my early senior thesis students who memorably demonstrated through comparative interviews that the discourses of her fine arts and history of art professors on Picasso's famous mural *Guernica* (1937) overlapped in virtually no particulars, a counter-narcissistic lesson in epistemological humility that I have repeatedly failed to live up to these past 30-odd years.

Another high point of our semester was the visit of Professor K. Porter Aichele (PhD 1975), emeritus professor of art history at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, to deposit papers and works of art of her late husband Fritz Janschka, Bryn Mawr's much beloved professor of Fine Arts. Porter's reminiscences about her life with Fritz greatly enriched our impromptu classroom exhibition of a number of



his witty works of unconscious Viennese fantasy. This personal conversation made formerly enigmatic works of art intimately accessible to our students.

One of the college's most enduring enigmas, of course, is Miss Thomas herself, with her complicated mix of progressive views on women's education and regressive views on matters of society and race. We see the face of that enigma staring out at us from the portrait by Sargent, the subject of an outstanding senior thesis last year by Dylan Kahn (Haverford College, Class of 2016), whom I invited to write the entry for this catalogue. Supplementing his portrayal of the New Woman of 1900 is new research on the uncanny, skin-like materiality of Sargent's late portrait paintings by prize-winning author Susan Sidlauskas of Rutgers University, who joined us for a memorable confrontation with the portrait on the spot where it hangs in the library. On that occasion President Thomas was further reawakened as a ghostly revenant in the aura of the autograph letters, photographs, and personal memorabilia that College Archivist Christiana Dobrzynski evocatively displayed for us.

An archival display of papers and photographs concerning our superb holdings of African art and artifacts also animated the very special return to Bryn Mawr of Zoe Strother (Class of 1982), Riggio Professor of African Art at Columbia University and one of the world's leading authorities on African masks and masquerades. Sharing her unpublished essay on the sense of the uncanny in masking, presenting vivid personal videos of African masked dancers, and examining many of our African ritual masks and mirrors in the gallery, Professor Strother held our students transfixed and then did it again with a second exhibition class, taught by Monique Scott, from the 360° course cluster—The Politics and Poetics of Race: Querying Black and White. For this course Carrie Robbins transformed half of the Rare Books Reading Room into a Collections Learning Lab with an informal array of artistic and utilitarian objects from which the students eventually created *Exhibiting Africa: Ways of Seeing, Knowing, and Showing*, their own new look at this important aspect of the college's collection.

As strong as is our collection of art and artifacts from Africa so too is there great strength in our collection of the art of East Asia, however unknown these collections remain to our community, our region, and beyond. Here, once again, I needed to turn to the expertise of a valued colleague, Haverford's Erin Schoneveld of the Bi-College Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, who visited our class to discuss her research on the emergence of the concept of the self among early 20th-century Japanese women artists and intellectuals, as well as her own experience as a carver of Noh masks. Professor Schoneveld also generously contributed to our endeavor by advising the students writing catalogue entries on Chinese and Japanese bronze mirrors and *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints.

A curator once cleverly said to me that what I knew about curatorial studies went all the way from A to B, but for all the breadth of professional expertise that the students

were exposed to during this course, the true stars of the project are the students themselves who give voice to their inimitable curiosity and wit and style in the pages of this catalogue. They wrote many drafts and presented them in class workshops for collective critique. With the support of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, master's candidate in History of Art Laurel McLaughlin served as course assistant and unofficial older sibling, who posted excellent questions for our guests online, wrote entries that served as exemplary models for her teammates, and encouraged the undergraduates by feeding them pizza, cookies, and moral support. Even beyond my debt to Carrie Robbins, who labored in the course far more than her other curatorial duties might reasonably permit, my greatest debt is to the authors of the essays that follow these introductory remarks: Maya Berrol-Young (Class of 2017), Alexa Chabora (Class of 2018), Lizhu Duanmu (Class of 2017), Dylan Kahn, Abi Lua (Class of 2019), Sarah O'Connell (Class of 2017), Cassie Paul (Class of 2018), Alex Wilson (Class of 2017), Xiaoya Yue (Class of 2018), Zixin Zeng (Class of 2018), and Zichu Zhao (Class of 2018). Their illuminating entries are so many dazzling points of light orbiting the blinding sun we call the self—impossible directly to behold—mapping the shifting constellations of mirrors and masks that lend imaginary and symbolic consistency to the real creative energy at the center of all flesh.

**Steven Z. Levine**

Leslie Clark Professor in the Humanities and Professor of History of Art



H. Daumier

## THE COLLECTION AS SELF-PORTRAIT

When a committee of Bryn Mawr College alumnae and students commissioned John Singer Sargent to paint M. Carey Thomas's portrait in 1898, the first dean and second president did not cede all control over her portrayal to the artist. While we would not go so far as to describe the painting as a self-portrait, there are of course aspects of self-portrayal at work in this commission, allowable especially to the extent that the artist wished to please his clients and subject. That Thomas was pleased is confirmed in her correspondence but also by the fact of the portrait's acquisition by the College under her leadership. Thomas understood that this picture of her would long outlast her corporeal presence on the campus, and the participatory role she played in accepting this gift ensured that she would be represented in a particular way and as she wished for generations of Bryn Mawr students yet to come (plate 9). I want to suggest that it was thus the role she played in the donation of this portrait to the College, even more than her readying of herself for her six-day sitting or her negotiations with the artist, that we might best understand as a form of self-portraiture.

On the occasion of this exhibition I invite us to think about the College's Special Collections as a self-portrait of its donors. At Bryn Mawr we are privileged to enjoy collections comprising more than 50,000 artworks or artifacts, more than 50,000 rare books, and more than 3,000 linear feet of manuscripts and College archives; most of this has come to the College as individual gifts from alumnae, faculty, or other extended community members. From these donations we not only learn about the cultures of the world across time and place but also about the people who selected and acquired these items. Each object was something that attracted someone's particular attention; it may have been purchased, having resonated with that individual's interests or enthusiasms, or it may have been an heirloom or gift, representing a significant social bond formed in and across her lifetime. Often, these things were lived with and enjoyed by the donor, regarded with affection as if friends, used to express her unique identity, and then given to be preserved in perpetuity to an institution that held personal meaning for her.

### FIG. 6

Alfred Prunaire  
(French, mid-19th century–1914)  
After Honoré Daumier  
(French, 1808–79)

**Man at Pictures Stall**  
late 19th century

Wood engraving  
12 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 9 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
(32 × 23.5 cm)  
Gift of Doreen Canaday Spitzer  
(Class of 1936)  
Bryn Mawr College 1976.33

Such was the case for Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914, AB 1915) and Elizabeth Gray Vining (Class of 1923), whose gifts comprise a major portion of the College's collection of Asian art and artifacts. Dr. Chapin was so important a scholar of China, Japan, and Korea that upon her death the *Journal of American Oriental Society* wrote a multi-page obituary asserting that "the field of Oriental Studies has suffered a great loss."<sup>1</sup> Chapin discovered her enthusiasm for Chinese art in a class at Bryn Mawr and developed it further as a staff member in the Oriental Department of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. She began private study of literary Chinese language in Boston before moving to China, where she served as a clerk at the American consulate in Shanghai and traveled the countryside extensively, usually by bicycle. Her acquisition of the ancient Chinese mirror included in this catalogue (plate 2) might be thought of as a self-representation of these experiences. She bequeathed her collection of art objects and books "to repay her alma mater for evoking an interest that was to become her life"<sup>2</sup> and "to form a nucleus of study materials for future Far East scholars."<sup>3</sup>

Vining was a graduate and trustee of the College. After earning a master's degree in library science and serving as a librarian at the University of North Carolina, she began authoring young adult novels, including the Newberry Award-winning *Adam of the Road*. During the Allied occupation of Japan from 1946 to 1950 she served as a private tutor to the Crown Prince Akihito, teaching him English and "open[ing] windows to a foreign way of life."<sup>4</sup> She was the first foreigner allowed in the living quarters of the Imperial Palace, and she developed an enduring bond with Japan's 125th emperor, sustained by correspondence, phone calls, and visits on the occasion of his wedding and his trip to the United States in 1987. Like the subject of *Dorinne in Kimono*, illustrated in this catalogue (plate 24), Vining found herself cloaked in the warm reception of her Japanese hosts, an experience she would wear all her life as if a kimono, like the one she gave to the College (plate 23).

The College's African collections too might be understood as a self-portrait of their donors. But to think of them in this way perpetuates a problematic appropriation of these objects that is all too dominant across Western collections of African art. That is, African art and artifacts often enter the marketplace with little context about who made them and for what purpose, so that the most securely known information about a given object is the name of the donor who gave it to the institution. Our most recent donation from the collection of Jane Martin (Class of 1953, MA 1958) was pursued as a joint acquisition not only of the art she had collected but of the papers, personal journals, and photographs she amassed during her PhD work in Liberia and while living and traveling in West Africa more broadly. Some of this provides specific information about the maker of a given object now in our collection, but certainly not always (figs. 9 and 10). Or, it indexes the donor's idiosyncratic documentation practice, such as Martin's index cards with hand-drawn illustrations of the Sande masks she acquired. Notably, the



**FIG. 7**  
**Photograph of Helen Burwell Chapin with her bicycle in China**  
 circa 1920s–30s

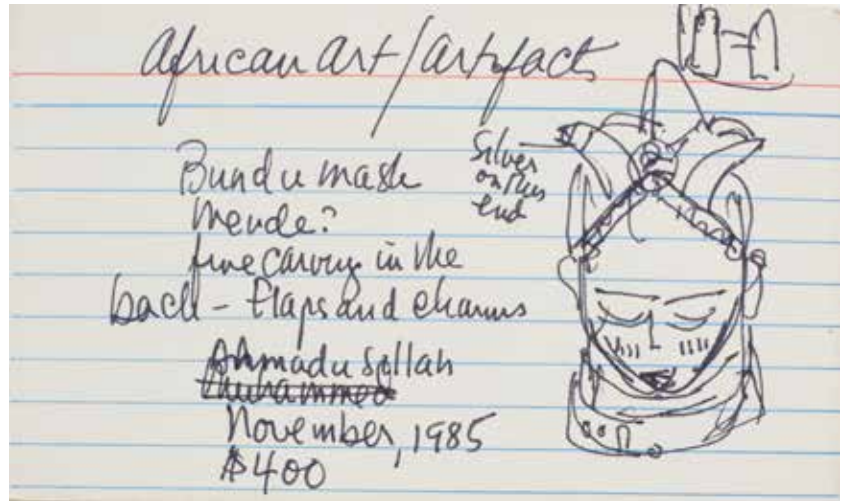
Photographic Archives and The Helen Chapin Papers, Bryn Mawr College Archives



**FIG. 8**  
 Bern Schwartz  
 (American, 1914–78)  
**Elizabeth Gray Vining**  
**(1902–1999), Former Trustee,**  
**Bryn Mawr College**  
 February 1975

Photo-dye transfer  
 24 1/4 × 19 1/2 in. (61.6 × 49.5 cm)  
 Gift of Rosalyn Ravitch Schwartz  
 (Class of 1944)  
 Bryn Mawr College Archives

College's collection of Sande masks is unusually large, numbering 24 gifts from two alumnae donors, both Martin and Helen Katz Neufeld, also from the Class of 1953. One of Neufeld's Sande masks is included in this catalogue for its exploration of a culturally-specific masking tradition practiced by women initiates (plate 20). But the prevalence of so many of these masks—the only African masks known to be danced by women—in the collection of two alumnae of this women's college, alumnae who would have lived through the second-wave feminist movement, suggests a particular reason to read this specific collection of Sande masks as a self-portrait of these donors and their possible celebration of this women-centric practice.



**FIGS. 9 and 10**

**Photograph of workers and Jane Martin at Nyema Smith's sugar cane production in Liberia**  
April 15, 1976

**Catalog card written by Jane Martin**  
ca. 2000

The Jane Martin Papers,  
Bryn Mawr College Archives

The College's vast collections of works on paper reflect their donors' often shared interest in supporting women artists. This is perhaps most especially true relative to Bill Scott's gift of over 125 works by women artists, primarily from the Philadelphia area, in memory of his parents, William and Uytendale Scott. His gift has since inspired other donors to help grow this collection of modern and contemporary works by more than 200 items. Alumnae donors, such as Margery Lee (Class of 1951), have given work by prominent women artists, including the print by Marlene Dumas included in this catalogue (plate 32). The mask-like face of *The Supermodel*, in whose image women at their mirrors might make themselves up, perhaps more than any other work in our exhibition encapsulates the enterprise of mirroring and masking the self at its center. We might imagine that this dilemma was something with which Lee sympathetically identified. While prints by women artists are among the sizable donation from Howard and Jacqueline Koldin Levine (Class of 1946), it is perhaps the sheer volume of prints that their gift made available to our student curators which became a self-portrait of the couple's shared joy for acquiring pictures (plates 12 and 18 and fig. 40). Former College Treasurer and PhD alumna Margaret M. Healy's generous loan to this exhibition reflects her commitment to backing institutionally underrepresented populations of women artists. But as she

commented in her visit with our student curators this past fall, she only bought works that she liked. The included self-portraits from her collection by Miriam Schapiro, Margo Humphrey, Pele deLappe, and Emma Amos represent Healy's aesthetics and convictions at least as much as they represent the artists themselves (plates 26, 28, 29, and 30).

As the exhibition's student co-curators have interpreted it, a self-portrait is not necessarily a likeness or mirror-like reflection of a given individual's appearance; indeed, it may be a mask, a surrogate object used to represent the self, not as a physical appearance but as an intellectual interest or a life experience. Our collections then might be masks that reflect, if not with mirror-like precision, the various selves of a widely dispersed and ever-growing Bryn Mawr community of generous donors. From M. Carey Thomas to Jane Martin, when our donors leave their collections to the College, they not only give us culturally significant objects with which to teach, but they share their worlds, their individual experiences, their selves with us and generations to come.

**Carrie Robbins (PhD 2013)**

Curator/ Academic Liaison for Art & Artifacts

1. Shuyler Cammann, "In Memoriam Helen Burwell Chapin," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 70.3 (July–September 1950) 189–191, 189.
2. J. LeRoy Davidson, "Helen Burwell Chapin," *Artibus Asiae* 13.1/2 (1950) 102.
3. Cammann 191.
4. Elaine Woo, "Elizabeth Gray Vining: Quaker Who Tutored Japan's Emperor-to-Be," *The Los Angeles Times* (December 7, 1999).

# COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

**PLATES and STUDENT ESSAYS**





**PLATE 1**  
**Roman glass double cosmetics tube**  
ca. 4th century CE

Blown glass  
5 1/2 × 1 13/16 × 1 in. (13.9 × 4.6 × 2.5 cm)  
Gift of Clarissa Compton Dryden (Class of  
1932, MA 1935)  
Bryn Mawr College G. 1

## 1

Hidden away on the third floor of Thomas Hall, a collection of over 6,000 archaeological artifacts sits in metal and glass storage cases, ready for examination and study. Known as the Ella Riegel '89 Study Collection, its objects come from ancient Greece and Rome, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cyprus, and Mycenae.<sup>1</sup> The Riegel Collection was founded in 1940 by Mary Hamilton Swindler (PhD 1912), a Bryn Mawr professor of classics and archaeology, who introduced the College's archaeology major in 1914.<sup>2</sup> The collection has grown over the years thanks to the donations of Bryn Mawr alumnae, faculty, and friends. Clarissa Compton Dryden (AB 1932, MA 1935), known for her research on heavy minerals with her husband, Bryn Mawr professor of geology Lincoln Dryden, donated over 600 Roman artifacts.<sup>3</sup> Dryden named her bequest the Charles Densmore Curtis Collection, after her first cousin, a renowned archaeologist known for his work on the Bernardini Tomb in Rome.<sup>4</sup> One of the objects in the Curtis Collection, a Roman cosmetics tube, stands out for its material beauty and unique structure.

In the proper light the cosmetics tube seems to transcend its glass body as it gleams with a silvery green hue reminiscent of an aged mirror. The tube's twin chambers, made from one gathered piece of glass, appear to be a single large tube at first glance, dissimulated by the glass's shiny surface. A long, meandering thread of glass wraps around the shaft of both tubes, which visually fuses the two compartments. This spiraling thread catches the eye and distracts from the overall physical structure, deceiving the mind into seeing a singular tube.

This double tube shape was common in Syria and Judea through the mid-6th century CE.<sup>5</sup> Such containers held a powdered form of the lead-based mineral galena, which was made into a paste used as eyeliner—commonly known as kohl.<sup>6</sup> Galena was favored for its blackened silver sheen, even though its toxicity led to adverse health effects and, in extreme cases, fatal lead poisoning.

Women were willing to risk their lives to make themselves up and to live up to cultural expectations of beauty. In the ancient world these ideas of beauty circulated through treatises and poems like *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*) by Ovid (43 BCE–17 CE) and *De Cultu Feminarum* (*On Female Fashion*) by the early Christian moralist Tertullian (155–220 CE).<sup>7</sup>

Concepts of beauty were also spread by the advent of mirrors, several fine specimens of which are in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections. Ancient mirrors were not like the smooth glass panes we use today; they were highly polished metal discs that could be hung on a wall, propped up, or, like this bronze mirror from the Greater Grecian world, held in the hand.<sup>8</sup> This mirrored disc was kept in a metal case that protected the polished surface from scratches. While the decorative female profile was most likely added sometime in the late 19th or early 20th century to increase its value, this mirror was a precious object, belonging to a wealthy individual who could afford such a luxury.<sup>9</sup> Imagine the owner of this mirror, perhaps a famous Corinthian courtesan, like Laïs of Corinth (who lived circa 425 BCE), speaking to us:

I, Laïs, whose haughty beauty made mock of Greece,  
I who once had a swarm of young lovers at my doors,  
dedicate my mirror to Aphrodite,  
since I wish not to look on myself as I am,  
and cannot look on myself as I once was.<sup>10</sup>

Like the elderly Pele deLappe who recalls her former beauty in a 1991 self-portrait (plate 29), Laïs reflects her aged self in a mirror. Laïs donates this mirror to the shrine of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, because she no longer wants to see the reflection of her aged face.

This bronze mirror and glass cosmetics tube are but two of the many objects in the Riegel Collection that can advance our understanding of ourselves. We gain an enhanced sense of identity in relation to the cultural artifacts we study. We see ourselves reflected in the history, traditions, and tools of self-fashioning of the Greek and Roman past.

**Cassandra Paul (Class of 2018)**



**FIG. 11**  
**Greek mirror and mirror cover**  
400–350 BCE

Metal  
6 11/16 × 6 11/16 × 1 5/16 in. (17 × 17 × 3.3 cm)  
Gift of Eleanor Wood Whitehead (Class of 1902)  
Bryn Mawr College M.49

1. "Resources in Archaeology," *Bryn Mawr College*, [www.brynmawr.edu/archaeology/resources.html](http://www.brynmawr.edu/archaeology/resources.html).  
2. "Breaking Ground, Breaking Tradition: Bryn Mawr and the First Generation of Women Archaeologists," *Bryn Mawr College*, September 2007, [www.brynmawr.edu/library/exhibits/Breaking-Ground/newera.html](http://www.brynmawr.edu/library/exhibits/Breaking-Ground/newera.html).  
3. W. C. Krumbein, "Memorial to Lincoln Dryden," *Geological Society of America* (June 1978): 1–2. See also "Art and Artifact Collection: Archaeology," *Bryn Mawr College*, [www.brynmawr.edu/collections/archaeology.html](http://www.brynmawr.edu/collections/archaeology.html).

4. Stephen L. Dyson, *Ancient Marbles to American Shores: Classical Archaeology in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 119.  
5. Stuart J. Fleming, *Roman Glass: Reflections of Everyday Life*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1997), 9.  
6. *Ibid.*, 106.  
7. Annette M. Baertschi, "Mirrors and Makeup in Roman Literature and Culture," lecture, Bryn Mawr College, September 26, 2016. Many thanks to Professor Baertschi of Bryn Mawr's Department of Greek, Latin, and Classical Studies for her illuminating lecture.

8. Mireille M. Lee, "Mirror, Mirror: Reflections of Femininity in Ancient Greece," unpublished lecture. Many thanks to Professor Lee, PhD 1999, of the Vanderbilt University Department of History of Art, for examining the ancient mirrors in our collection and sharing with us her unpublished research.  
9. *Ibid.*  
10. *The Greek Anthology with an English Translation*, vol. 1, trans. W. R. Paton (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1916), 299.



**PLATE 2**

Unknown maker (Chinese)

**Mirror**

206 BCE–200 CE

Bronze

$\frac{1}{4} \times 5 \frac{1}{2}$  in. (0.6 × 14 cm)

Gift of Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914, AB 1915)

Bryn Mawr College 82.47.a

**2**

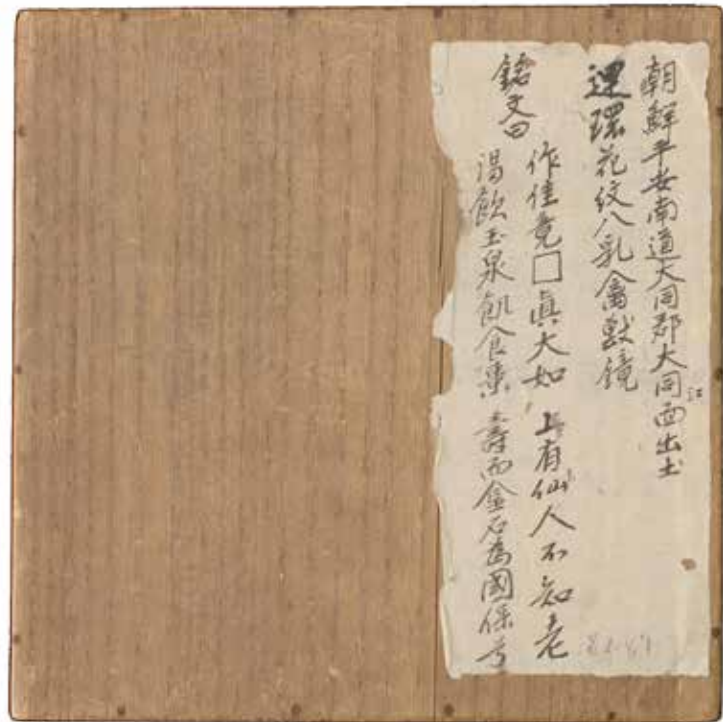
Bronze mirrors in ancient China not only had a reflective function, but also a mythological purpose in connection with the cosmic realm.<sup>1</sup> The round shape of the mirror echoes the shape of the full moon. A full moon appears on the day of the mid-autumn festival and it is a festival for family members to reunite. This bronze mirror is a temporal symbol that expresses a longing for communion.<sup>2</sup> Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, the bronze mirror reflects the light of the face. One can trace the aging on one's face in its shining surfaces just as the moon goes through its phases every month. The mirror, as a motif of the cyclical universe, both warns of the passage of time and immediately connects the body to the heavenly world.

This bronze mirror was acquired by Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914, AB 1915), an energetic scholar who traveled throughout East Asia.<sup>3</sup> Excavated in present-day North Korea, this Chinese bronze mirror is patterned with the famous TLV design of the Han dynasty. So called because of its similarity to the shape of the Latin letters T, L, and V, the TLV pattern is assumed to be inspired by *liubo*, a Chinese board game.<sup>4</sup> In this chess-like game, two players gamble using dice on a TLV-patterned board.<sup>5</sup> The positions of the TLV motifs reflect the order of the celestial realm.<sup>6</sup> The square center represents the earth and the surrounding circle of the mirror signifies the ruling power of the cosmos.<sup>7</sup> The TLV design often decorates tombs, embodying a wish for the continuation of life after death.<sup>8</sup> In the context of this cosmic symbolism, the action of looking at oneself in the mirror implies leaving the earthly world and crossing the threshold into the celestial world of eternal life.

The inscription on the rim of the mirror reads as follows, in my translation: "It is a great honor to make this wonderful mirror. There is a god in the heaven who is oblivious of aging. He drinks divine water when he is thirsty and eats dates when he is hungry. He is as old as the golden stone and this mirror shall be preserved for the country."<sup>9</sup> The ancient Chinese believed that all things on earth obey the rule of the cyclical universe, "the unity of man and nature" (*tian ten he yi*).<sup>10</sup> The inscription paints an image of a heavenly god and carries the owner's prayers for protection.<sup>11</sup> Holding the mirror is like holding the cosmic world in one's hand and fulfilling the desirable future reflected in the mirror.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike the corroded surfaces of many surviving Chinese bronze mirrors, the well-preserved surface of this mirror still functions as well as it would have 2,000 years ago. Holding the knot on the back of the mirror, reading the inscription on the rim, and seeing the reflection of my face in the mirror, the mystery of the cosmos is unveiled. Formerly untouchable heaven comes close to me as I look at myself in this mirror. Traveling through time and space to contemporary America, this ancient Han bronze mirror, for a Chinese student like me, is a precious object of nostalgia for my homeland.

**Zixin Zeng (Class of 2018)**



**FIG. 12**  
Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914, AB 1915)  
**Calligraphy on label of Paulownia wood box that houses ancient Chinese mirror**  
20th century

label: 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.; box: 6 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 6 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
Gift of Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914, AB 1915)  
Bryn Mawr College 82.47.b

1. Tōru Nakano, Youhe Zeng, and Suzanne Elizabeth Cahill, *Bronze Mirrors from Ancient China: Donald H. Graham Jr. Collection* (Hong Kong: Orientations Magazine, 1994), 20.

2. Ibid.

3. Schuyler Cammann, "In Memoriam Helen Burwell Chapin," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 70.3 (July–September 1950): 190.

4. For more information about the *liubo* board, see the catalogue entry for the earthenware *liubo* board and pieces in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art: [www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1994.285a-m](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1994.285a-m).

5. Ibid.

6. Nakano, Zeng, and Cahill, *Bronze Mirrors from Ancient China*, 20.

7. Ibid.

8. Jiang Sheng, "Images of *Liubo* and the Metaphorical Immortal Realm in Han Tombs," *Collected Papers of History Studies* 2 (2015): 18.

9. The original inscription, possibly transcribed by Helen Burwell Chapin, appears on the lid of the box that holds the mirror. The first phrase "zuo jia jing zhen da ru" is missing one letter. According to the inscription on another bronze from the same period, the letter "hao" might be misinterpreted as "ru." Therefore, the inscription should be read as follows: "zuo jia jing zai zhen da hao, shang you xian ren bu zhi lao, ke yin yu quan, ji shi zao, shou ru jin shi, wei guo bao xi." See "Zuo Jia Jing Zai" Compass Mirror, Beijing Poly International Auction Co., June 7, 2015, [www.polypm.com.cn/index.php?s=Auction%2Fview%2Fpccd%2-Fart5072166687#](http://www.polypm.com.cn/index.php?s=Auction%2Fview%2Fpccd%2-Fart5072166687#). See also Qi Wei, "A Brief Discussion on the Ornaments of Han Dynasty Bronze Mirrors," *Journal of Soochow University (Engineering Science Edition)* 25.3 (June 2005): 70.

10. Nakano, Zeng, and Cahill, *Bronze Mirrors from Ancient China*, 47.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 49.



### PLATE 3

Andrea Andreani (Italian, ca. 1558–1629), or possibly Niccolò Vicentinò (Italian, born ca. 1510), after a lost drawing by Perino del Vaga or Parmigianino

#### **The Christian Virtues: Prudence**

late 16th century

Two-color chiaroscuro woodcut

5 3/4 × 3 15/16 in. (14.6 × 10 cm)

Gift of Howard L. Gray,

Professor of History, 1915–40

Bryn Mawr College 1946.2

**3** The chiaroscuro woodcut illustrated here shows Prudence, one of the four cardinal virtues in the Christian tradition, personified as a woman representing wise judgment. Turning her head towards the mirror held in her left hand, she gazes at her reflection. In this allegory the mirror “bids us examine our defects by knowing ourselves,” according to 16th-century Italian iconographer Cesare Ripa.<sup>1</sup> In his influential emblem book, *Iconologia*, which published allegorical images alongside texts explaining their meanings, Ripa defined the emblematic image of Prudence that many artists used during the Renaissance period. In Ripa’s prototypical allegory of the cardinal virtues, Prudence gains

foresight into the future as she contemplates her face in a mirror where the past has left its traces; meanwhile, a serpent wound around a staff in her hand counsels caution, as in an illustration from a 1613 edition of *Iconologia* in Bryn Mawr’s Special Collections.<sup>2</sup>

The same mirror and serpent iconography appears in the second print illustrated here, after a composition by the Dutch artist Maarten van Heemskerck, *Justice and Prudence*, from the 1530s.<sup>3</sup> Holding a sword and a scale, Justice is the woman on the left, whose blindfolded eyes ensure her impartial judgment. Prudence, the woman on the right, with a serpent entwined around her

arm, holds a mirror showing the reflection of her face. The mirror, tilted toward the viewer, entices us to equate Prudence's reflection with our own face, urging us to be prudent and self-reflective—as all Bryn Mawrters must try to be.

While both the Italian and Dutch prints here depict Prudence, they were made by two different techniques and exhibit distinctive formal qualities. The single-figure allegory from *Iconologia* is a chiaroscuro woodblock print. The highlights in the print interact harmoniously with the dark areas of color, which render the curved silhouette of the female body and the supple folds of her garment. Unlike the Dutch engraving, in which areas of shadow are created by a dense network of parallel lines and cross-hatchings on a single copper plate, the chiaroscuro print is made with two woodblocks, each coated with a different color of ink, to achieve the pictorial effect of a tonal drawing. The brownish-red block imparts the print's primary image by rendering the outlines of the figure and shading them. The light brown middle-tone block defines the background and the figure. Some areas of the middle-tone block were carved away and remain unprinted, so that the paper's original color is revealed, while its brightness highlights areas of the image.<sup>4</sup>

The *Iconologia* woodcut was a gift from Howard L. Gray, a professor of history at Bryn Mawr for 25 years who donated over 40 Old Master prints to Special Collections. The woodcut was initially catalogued as an allegorical figure of *Vanitas*, because of its iconography of mirrors, beautiful women, and vain self-regard, and was originally attributed to Ugo da Carpi, who introduced the technique of the chiaroscuro woodcut in Italy in 1516.<sup>5</sup> However, based on my research in the conservation department of the Philadelphia Museum of Art,<sup>6</sup> the attribution to Ugo da Carpi is erroneous, and we may now tentatively reattribute the print to the late 16th-century publisher Andrea Andreani, who often reissued chiaroscuro woodcuts by earlier artists and sometimes recut blocks he had acquired.<sup>7</sup> This print appears to be a reissued and reversed copy of Niccolò Vicentino's *Prudence* from the 1540s.<sup>8</sup> Presenting a woman prudently contemplating her evanescent mirror reflection, the Italian woodcut has gained a fragile new selfhood in this exhibition.

**Lizhu Duanmu (Class of 2017)**



**FIG. 13**  
Cornelis Bos (Netherlandish, ca.1510–66), after a drawing by Maarten van Heemskerck (Netherlandish, 1498–1574)  
**Justice and Prudence**  
after 1537

Engraving  
3 1/2 × 2 3/4 in. (8.9 × 7 cm)  
Bryn Mawr College X.645

1. Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia, or, Moral Emblems* (London: Printed by Benjamin Motte, 1709), 63.
2. Liana Cheney, "Giorgio Vasari's Prudence: A Personification of Good Judgment," *Giorgio Vasari's Teachers: Sacred & Profane Art* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 179. See also Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia di Cesare Ripa Perugino, caure. de' Sti. Maurizio e Lazzaro* (Siena: Appresso gli heredi di Matteo Florimi, 1613), 166.
3. The Harvard Art Museums holds an original engraving of *Justice and Prudence* by Cornelis Bos; the print in Bryn Mawr's collection is the reverse of the Harvard example. The British Museum holds what may be another impression of the Bryn Mawr print, which is attributed to Cornelis Bos, after Maarten van Heemskerck.
4. E. Savage, "Color Printing in Relief," *Printing Colour 1400–1700: History, Techniques, Functions and Receptions* (Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2015), 23–24.
5. Achim Gnann, "Beginnings in Italy: Ugo da Carpi," *Chiaroscuro: Renaissance*

*Woodcuts from the Collection of Georg Baselitz and the Albertina, Vienna* (Royal Academy of Arts, London), 62.

6. I would like to thank Beth A. Price, senior scientist at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, for her assistance.
7. Gnann, "Developments in Italy," *Chiaroscuro: Renaissance Woodcuts*, 169.
8. The earliest chiaroscuro woodcut that bears the same design (in reverse) is *Prudence* (ca. 1539–45), attributed to Niccolò Vicentino (perhaps after Perino del Vaga), listed as no. 79 in Gnann's *Chiaroscuro: Renaissance Woodcuts*. The print in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections has the greatest resemblance to the print in the British Museum (not in reverse), which is attributed to Andrea Andreani (perhaps after a lost drawing by Parmigianino). Another example with the same image (in reverse) is at the Library of Congress, where the original print reissued by Andreani is attributed to da Carpi and Vicentino.



#### PLATE 4

Kikukawa Eizan (Japanese, 1787–1867)

**Mother Carrying Her Baby Son on Her Back by a Cistern**  
ca. 1810

Color woodblock

15 3/4 × 10 1/2 in. (40 × 26.7 cm)

Gift of Margery Hoffman Smith (Class of 1911)

Bryn Mawr College S.7.FA

## 4

A mother holds a baby pressed against her back, the two of them peering down into a *chozubachi*, or water basin, and staring at the reflected image. Mother and child pause to reflect on their image in the water, which is neither rippled nor distorted but as smooth a visual rendition as a mirror might provide. The baby appears to be smiling as he stares down at the reflection of his face—a quiet moment of contemplation for mother and son as well as the viewer. This is a handsome *ukiyo-e* print of the early 19th century by Kikukawa Eizan; it is one of almost 200 works of Asian art donated to the college by Margery Hoffman Smith (Class of 1911).

Mirrors and reflections are quite common in *ukiyo-e*. *Ukiyo-e*, which translates as “pictures of the floating world,” is a style of woodblock print that emerged during the Edo period (1615–1868) in Japan that represents the pleasures of daily life.<sup>1</sup> Famous landscapes, beautiful women, and popular actors are all depicted in this style. Mirrors in *ukiyo-e* prints often depict women primping and getting ready, as in Kunisada’s *Arranging the Hair* and Hiroshige’s print of the courtesan Takao, also in this catalogue (plate 5). Here the mirror is used as a vehicle of imitation and communication between a mother and her child,<sup>2</sup> who may be seeing his reflection for the very first time. Echoing the mirror stage of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan—the point at which a child first identifies with an external image of her or his body and begins to understand the concept of “I”<sup>3</sup>—a dialogue is now created as both mother and child experience the wonder of a human being who has only just begun to develop a notion of selfhood. “Look, Baby,” she might be saying, “that’s you!”

**FIG. 14**

Jessica Todd Harper  
(American, born 1975,  
Class of 1997)

**Sophia and Barbara**  
2012

Inkjet print on paper  
14 × 11 in. (35.6 × 27.9 cm)  
Bryn Mawr College 2016.6.108



Compare Eizan's 19th-century Japanese woodblock print to a newly acquired photographic print, *Sophia and Barbara* by Jessica Todd Harper (Class of 1997), a successful contemporary photographer.<sup>4</sup> In this large-format photograph from 2012, a mother focuses attentively on her child as she pulls her from a bath. A mirror hangs on the wall in the background, yet the child ignores it and stares directly into the camera, lips upturned in a smile reminiscent of Eizan's young boy. Art historian Deborah Goldberg has written of the *ukiyo-e* masters, "In developing new pictorial approaches to represent the reflection theme, artists also imitated the role of the mirror in their compositions: they cropped their images, showed close-up views of their subjects, and introduced magnification within the depicted mirrors."<sup>5</sup> Eizan and Harper both play with the depiction of reflection and the emergence of self in intimate images of mothers and children that span two centuries and half the globe.

**Sarah O'Connell (Class of 2017)**

1. Dora Amsden and Woldemar von Seidlitz, *Impressions of Ukiyo-e* (New York: Parkstone Press International, 2007). See also Sadao Kikuchi, *A Treasury of Japanese Wood Block Prints (ukiyo-e)*, trans. Don Kenny (New York: Crown Publishers, 1969).
2. Deborah A. Goldberg, "Reflections of the Floating World," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 21.4 (1990): 132–135.
3. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (1949), in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2006), 75–81.
4. Jessica Todd Harper, *The Home Stage* (Bologna: Damiani, 2014).
5. Goldberg, "Reflections of the Floating World," 135.





**PLATE 5**

Utagawa Kunisada (Japanese, 1786–1864)

**Arranging the Hair**, from the series **Fitting Accomplishments for Women (Fujin tashinami-gusa)**

ca. 1843–47

Color woodblock print  
15 3/4 x 10 1/2 in. (40 x 26.7 cm)  
Bryn Mawr College X.1004

**5** With the utmost care, a young woman combs her long, wet, black hair in front of a mirror. She is not elegantly dressed in a lavish, expensive kimono but rather a working-class robe with no intricate embroidery or gold threadwork.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the famous courtesan in Ando Hiroshige's print *Takao*, from the series *Ogura Imitations of One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets* (*Ogura nazorae hyakunin isshu*) (fig.15), also in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections, the young woman in *Arranging the Hair* neither has an exaggerated hairstyle nor does she expose her body to the viewer.<sup>2</sup>

*Bijinga*—pictures of beautiful women—is one of the most popular and influential themes of the Japanese *ukiyo-e* style of woodblock prints. Kunisada was a prolific woodblock master whose prints of graceful women were highly praised for their realism and vivid feminine beauty. However, due to censorship laws enacted in 1842 during the Tenpō Reform, Kunisada

redirected his work towards subjects that would not provoke the ire of the authorities.<sup>3</sup> He turned from depicting geisha and celebrated courtesans to depicting average women in everyday life, such as the humble Awabi fisherman's daughter in *Arranging the Hair*. The poem at the top of the print eulogizes the Confucian "Four Virtues" of women, inherited from Chinese culture: morality, diligence, proper speech, and modest manner.

This print is from Kunisada's five-part series, *Fitting Accomplishments for Women*, which depicts women's domestic virtues. In these popular images women are responsible for various forms of housework, from washing clothes to spinning thread, as well as taking care of their appearance. In *Arranging the Hair* the woman's act of self-fashioning in front of the mirror is a means to uphold the feminine virtues praised by Japan's imperial culture. According to the poem

FIG. 15

Ando Hiroshige (Japanese, 1797–1858)

**Takao**, from the series **Ogura Imitations of One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets (Ogura nazorae hyakunin isshu)**

ca. 1845–48

Color woodblock print

15 3/4 × 10 1/2 in. (40 × 26.7 cm)

Gift of Margery Hoffman Smith (Class of 1911)

Bryn Mawr College S.40.FA

inscribed on the print, the young woman is well-behaved: “The virtue of maintaining a modest manner means a woman has to sustain her honesty and chastity in her outlook. A woman must groom herself properly to inhibit the appearance of sexuality. She should not be liable to criticism from people by dressing up like a cheap and easy courtesan and prostitute.”<sup>4</sup>

The mirror in this print thus becomes an inspecting gaze. The young woman is depicted as inheritor of a culture of refinement who conforms to the image of “good wife and wise mother” from Confucian morals.<sup>5</sup> The mirror polices the woman’s appearance and behavior and promotes the widely accepted virtue of feminine modesty. Bending over to comb her hair according to patriarchal expectations, the woman internalizes the act of censorship. Kunisada places the viewer in intimate proximity as if the woman is suspended in her daily routine for the viewer’s inspection.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to its role in promoting virtue, the mirror also represents the male gaze of desire and voyeurism. The woman’s unawareness of this gaze exposes her vulnerability. Compare Kunisada’s print to another work in this catalogue, *The Coiffure* by Mary Cassatt (plate 7), which also depicts a woman styling her hair in the mirror. Heavily influenced by *ukiyo-e* masters like Kunisada, Cassatt incorporated many elements of Japanese style and subject into her work.<sup>7</sup>

Special Collections possesses nearly 400 Japanese woodblock prints from a number of alumnae donors, such as Margery Hoffman Smith (Class of 1911) and Elizabeth Cray Vining (Class of 1923). As an international student from China, I am very pleased to see that we have a rich collection covering artworks of different styles and from different regions around the world.

**Xiaoya Yue (Class of 2018)**



1. Louise Thorpes, “Kimono in the Edo Period,” *The Japan Society* 108 (winter 1987–88): 89–91.  
2. Henk J. Herwig and Joshua S. Mostow, *The Hundred Poets Compared: A Print Series by Kuniyoshi, Hiroshige, and Kunisada* (Leiden and Boston: Hotei Publishing, 2007), 29.  
3. Ibid.  
4. Special thanks to Professor Erin Schoneveld of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Haverford College, and her colleague Quintana Heathman, who works as a curatorial fellow in Japanese art at the Harvard Art Museums. Their expertise was a great help for the translation of the traditional Japanese poem. Special thanks also to Anna-Marie Moblard Meier, MA 2014, doctoral candidate in history of art at Bryn Mawr College, and my friend Koko Zhang for helping me to translate the inscription into English.

5. Sumiko Sekiguchi, “Confucian Morals and the Making of a ‘Good Wife and Wise Mother’: From ‘Between Husband and Wife There Is Distinction’ to ‘As Husbands and Wives Be Harmonious,’” *Social Science Japan Journal* 13.1 (summer 2010): 95–113.  
6. Anna Moblard Meier, “Beneath the Printed Pattern: Display and Disguise in Ukiyo-e Bijinga” (2013), accessed December 30, 2016, repository/bryn-mawr.edu/bmc\_books/25/.  
7. John W. Ittmann, *Post-Impressionist Prints: Paris in the 1890s* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1997), 19.



## PLATE 6

Fujiwara Shigeyoshi (Japanese, 19th century)

### Mirror

perhaps before 1859

Bronze

9 5/8 × 5 7/8 × 3/16 in. (24.5 × 14.9 × 0.4 cm)

Gift of Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914, AB 1915)

Bryn Mawr College TN.73

## 6

In a 1692 poem written near the end of his short life the great haiku master Basho reflected on what often goes unnoticed in daily life: “A spring no one sees— / Plum blossoms / On the back of a mirror.”<sup>1</sup> Marking the beginning of the new year, plum blossoms, here tipped in red, also grace the back of this mirror from the mid-19th century by the craftsman Fujiwara Shigeyoshi, who designates himself as *tenkaichi*, or “number-one under heaven.”<sup>2</sup> No one is depicted within the scene admiring the beautiful plum blossoms, but the user of the mirror may enjoy the representation of the fragile flowers if she but takes a bit of time to look.

A mirror is a utilitarian object whose primary function is to reflect an image; see the color-tinted photograph reproduced here of a geisha putting on make-up in front of a mirror (fig. 16). There is a power that lies in the dual nature of a functional object that is also a work of art. This mirror, since it is both art and personal possession, tells a story in a way more impersonal works of art do not. It is an intimate marker of a living history, its worn-down, oxidized areas allowing us to recreate a previous owner’s favorite grip, to speculate on what her life might have been like.

The decoration on the back of this mirror may be personal, revealing a story about the person who owned it. The bronze design depicts a well-worn *kamon*, or family crest, situated at the top, surrounded by a scenic view of a temple, a bridge, and pine trees, punctuated by Basho’s plums. Family crests signify the self-assertion of the individual who uses the mirror, whereas scenic motifs, sometimes of famous places, express the desire to travel.<sup>3</sup> This mirror may reflect the individual spirit of a wandering traveler, a fitting image of the period in which it was created.

The late 19th century in Japan saw the emergence of the modern woman, perhaps best exemplified by feminist writer and political activist Hiratsuka Raichō (1886–1971); she is the type of woman who might have been given this mirror by her family but who rejected the Meiji feminine ideal of “good wife, wise mother.”<sup>4</sup> Instead, Hiratsuka embraced modern notions of self-motivation, individuality, and a new concept of womanhood. Women started to think of their lives outside of the home sphere. Rather than being educated for the sake of strengthening the Japanese home, modern women like Hiratsuka sought education as a means of pursuing knowledge of self.



At the same time as Hiratsuka and other Japanese women were defining themselves in new ways, American women like Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914, AB 1915), the donor of this mirror, were also pursuing their own independent intellectual passions. As a largely self-taught scholar who traveled extensively in China, Korea, and Japan, Chapin assembled a large collection of Asian art, from which she donated almost 500 items as a resource for future scholars.<sup>5</sup> As an East Asian Languages and Cultures major at Bryn Mawr, I find myself coming back to this mirror often, staring at the places where ambitious modern women like Hiratsuka Raicho or Helen Burwell Chapin may have worn away the metal before me, wondering whether they too used to pause to stare at the back of this beautiful mirror.

**Sarah O'Connell (Class of 2017)**

1. Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Basho* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 50. In the case of this poem, the "spring no one sees" is the design of plum trees carved on the back of a mirror, pointing towards humanity's vanity. In our desire to see our reflections, we easily flip over the mirror and ignore the beautiful and painstakingly carved design on the back.
2. Many thanks to Professor Erin Schoneveld, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Haverford College, and Anna Moblard Meier, MA 2014 and doctoral candidate in the Department of History of Art at Bryn Mawr College, for their help in translating the inscription on the mirror.
3. Kubo Tomoyasu, "Bronze Mirrors with Handles in Japan," Kyoto National Museum, [www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/diction/kinkou/54doky.html](http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/diction/kinkou/54doky.html).
4. Erin Kelley, "Envisioning the 'New Woman': Seitō Magazine and Feminist Aesthetics in Modern Japan," *Modern Art Asia* 8 (2011).
5. Schuyler Cammann, "In Memoriam Helen Burwell Chapin," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 70.3 (1950): 189–191.

**FIG. 16**  
Unknown photographer  
**Geisha, Gion Street Kyoto**  
ca. 1865–1912

Albumen print on paper  
8 × 10 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (20.3 × 26.4 cm)  
Purchase, John Warren, November 1986  
Haverford College HC12-5533



**PLATE 7**

Mary Cassatt (American, 1844–1926)

**The Coiffure**

1890–91

Drypoint and soft-ground etching

14 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 10 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (36.5 × 26.7 cm)

Gift of Edith Finch, Class of 1922, from

the Collection of Lucy Martin Donnelly,

Class of 1893

Bryn Mawr College 1949.16

**7** The clash between the traditional view of women and Mary Cassatt's feminist beliefs creates a tension in this image of a woman's toilette. Here Cassatt repudiates the common theme of the voluptuous nude as the subject of male voyeurism, offering a more realistic vision of women's everyday activities.<sup>1</sup> It is inevitable, however, that Cassatt's women are still conditioned by the expectations of society. As noted feminist art historian Norma Broude wrote, Cassatt's work presents "revealing contradictions." "Despite Cassatt's own resistance to patriarchal norms of proper femininity ... she cloaks and masks those unseemly ambitions in conventional gendered language."<sup>2</sup>

In *The Coiffure* a woman sits in front of a mirrored armoire, styling her hair. She is half-naked, with a white towel wrapped around her waist. She does not look directly into the mirror but lowers her head to arrange her hair. Her submissive pose suggests that the mirror represents dominating male voyeurism, fixing its gaze on the woman and watching her every move. The woman's pose evokes Utawaga Kunisada's 19th-century print of a young woman, *Arranging the Hair* (plate 5). A great admirer of Japanese art, Cassatt was deeply influenced by the use of color and contour in *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints like Kunisada's. In an 1890 letter to her friend, the painter Berthe Morisot, Cassatt wrote:

“You could come and dine here with us and afterwards we could go to see the Japanese prints at the Beaux- Arts. Seriously, you must not miss that.... I dream of doing it myself and can't think of anything else but color on copper.”<sup>3</sup>

*The Coiffure* is not dominated by the implication of the male gaze and the patriarchal expectation of beauty and femininity. The details of the mirror's reflection largely reject the male ideology of the nude. In the reflection, the woman's breasts and face emphasize her femininity, but the contours of her body are so blurred that her nudity and femininity are neither seductive nor maternal.

Cassatt challenges the ways artists traditionally depicted women in front of their mirrors. In a typical composition by the 18th-century Dutch printmaker Simon Fokke (fig.17) an elegantly attired woman admires herself in a large wall mirror beneath the gaze of two seated gentlemen who admire her. In *The Coiffure*, however, there is no trace of this glamor and no connotation of self-fashioning as a form of art making. Rather, we see a working-class maidservant grooming herself alone in front of a plain mirror without decoration or expensive makeup tools. By overthrowing the glamorous image of a woman's toilette, Cassatt refutes the standard image of women in a world defined by patriarchy.

The tension in *The Coiffure* is generated by the contradiction between Cassatt's observation of tradition and her objection to it. Donated in 1949 by Edith Finch (Class of 1922), the fourth wife of the philosopher Bertrand Russell, after the death of their friend, Bryn Mawr English department head Lucy Martin Donnelly (Class of 1893), our eight examples of Mary Cassatt's color prints constitute one of the great treasures of Bryn Mawr's Special Collections.

### Xiaoya Yue (Class of 2018)

1. Susan Fillin Yeh, "Mary Cassatt's Images of Women," *Art Journal* 35.4 (summer 1976): 359.
2. Norma Broude, "Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman or the Cult of True Womanhood?" *Woman's Art Journal* 21.2 (autumn 2000–winter 2001): 36–43.
3. James N. Wood, *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in the Art Institute of Chicago* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 128.



**FIG. 17**  
Simon Fokke (Dutch, 1712–84)  
**Illustration for unidentified publication**  
18th century

Gray-black ink wash over pencil, metalpoint  
5 1/2 x 3 1/4 in. (12.9 x 8.3 cm)  
Bryn Mawr College 1984.32.j



**PLATE 8**

Aubrey Vincent Beardsley (British, 1872–98)  
**The Toilette of Salome II**  
 after a drawing of 1894

From *Salome, A Tragedy In One Act: Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde, with Sixteen Drawings by Aubrey Beardsley* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head; New York: John Lane Company, 1907)  
 Bryn Mawr College Rare Books Collection

**8** In this plate from a 1907 John Lane edition of Oscar Wilde’s scandalous play *Salome*, illustrator Aubrey Beardsley depicts Salome at her toilette and uses the mirror to signal her beauty and attraction. However, Salome’s confrontation with the mirror and the presence of a masked hairdresser foreshadow her hidden powers of manipulation and duplicity. Beardsley aligns Salome with the then-popular concept of the *femme fatale*, the deadly woman of beauty, and challenges the conventional portrayal of respectable femininity.

*The Toilette of Salome II* illustrates a scene Wilde excluded from his play, where Salome prepares to

perform the dance of the seven veils for her stepfather, King Herod of Judaea. In return, Herod promises to give her anything she wants, even half of his kingdom. Salome takes advantage of Herod’s lust to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a silver platter, avenging her mother, whose reputation had been tarnished when John the Baptist said it was not proper for the king to marry his late brother’s wife.

When the play opens, Salome is introduced as a virgin princess.<sup>1</sup> While preparing herself to dance before the king, Salome looks down as if to virginally deny the spectator’s gaze. Her ruminative smile suggests that she has complete control over the situation. Rather

than remaining the vulnerable and docile princess, Salome prepares to manipulate male desire.

Salome is nude in Beardsley's initial conception of the scene, but that composition is here identified as *The Toilette of Salome II* because in the first printed version of 1894, *The Toilette of Salome I* (fig. 18), Beardsley was forced by the censors to depict her fully clothed.<sup>2</sup> By depicting Salome so flagrantly nude, Beardsley completes her transformation from beautiful young daughter into deadly and powerful avenger. A sense of danger also lurks in the Pierrot figure of the masked hairdresser, the sad clown of stock comedies and pantomimes. According to Symbolist poet Arthur Symons, Beardsley reveals his personal obsession with the *femme fatale* in his *Salome* illustrations: "It is because he loves beauty that beauty's degradation obsesses him; it is because he is supremely conscious of virtue that vice has power to lay hold upon him."<sup>3</sup>

Defeated by the *femme fatale* at the end of Wilde's play, Herod regretfully confesses to Salome: "Your beauty has grievously troubled me, and I have looked at you too much. But I will look at you no more. Neither at things, nor at people should one look. Only in mirrors should one look, for mirrors do but show us masks."<sup>4</sup> Herod's pledge to refrain from voyeurism demonstrates the fascination of the gaze.

Although not published in the 1894 edition of the play, *The Toilette of Salome II* is included in the beautiful 1907 edition of the play in Special Collections. Beardsley's portrayal of Wilde's Salome strikingly differs from the late Victorian notion of virtuous, pure, asexual womanhood.<sup>5</sup> His illustrations have inspired contemporary artists, including Bryn Mawr's own Fritz Janschka, whose etched portrait of Wilde also appears in this catalogue (plate 22).

### Xiaoya Yue (Class of 2018)

1. Ewa Kuryluk, *Salome and Judas in the Cave of Sex* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1987), 221.
2. Arthur Symons, *Aubrey Beardsley* (London: At the Sign of the Unicorn, 1898), 20–26.
3. Chris Snodgrass, "Decadent Mythmaking: Arthur Symons On Aubrey Beardsley and Salome," *Victorian Poetry* 28.3–4 (1990): 65.
4. Oscar Wilde, *Plays of Oscar Wilde* (Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2000), 156.
5. Joan Perkin, *Victorian Women* (London: John Murray, 1993).



**FIG. 18**  
Aubrey Vincent Beardsley  
**The Toilette of Salome I**  
after a drawing of 1894

From *Salome, A Tragedy in One Act: Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde, with Sixteen Drawings by Aubrey Beardsley* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head/New York: John Lane Company, 1907)  
Bryn Mawr College Rare Books Collection





**PLATE 9**

John Singer Sargent (American, 1856–1925)

**Miss M. Carey Thomas**

1899

Oil on canvas

58 × 38 in. (147.3 × 96.5 cm)

Commissioned by Bryn Mawr College

Bryn Mawr College X.205

9 John Singer Sargent's *Miss M. Carey Thomas* represents a departure from the portraitist's body of work. Depicted in her academic robes with dark, commanding colors, Thomas—who was president of Bryn Mawr College between 1894 and 1922—is portrayed without the luxurious accouterments and feminine details that exemplified Sargent's celebrated society portraits. While sober female portraits appear sporadically throughout Sargent's oeuvre, Bryn Mawr's canvas is perhaps his most androgynous painting. While Thomas's uncoiffed hair, concealed bosom, and heavy brow minimize her feminine attributes, her stately separation produces a strikingly masculine effect—one that mirrors the stark chiaroscuro of *The Four Doctors*, a 1904 painting commissioned from Sargent by Johns Hopkins University. Thomas's black and blue vest-

ments create a strong juxtaposition between 19th-century womanhood and conventional signifiers of the academic world. Her chair deviates from the plush, ornamental sofas that appear in many of the artist's fashionable canvases; dark, substantial, and adorned only with brass rivets, it is utilitarian rather than decorative. Using carefully selected details, Sargent established a portrait typology that is both male and resolutely professional.

This masculine reading of *Miss M. Carey Thomas* is not unprecedented. In an 1899 letter to her friend and benefactor Mary Garrett, Thomas recalled Mamie Gwinn's assessment of the painting (Gwinn was Thomas's intimate companion): "She thinks it all very stately and full of the detachment of a great work of

art ... a youthful knightlike St. George conception of me."<sup>1</sup> Thomas, adopting the erect alertness of a monarch, is certainly more knightlike than queenly. In a personal memoir penned five decades later, Margaret Bailey (Class of 1907) recalled Thomas's "handsome intellectual face" in the portrait.<sup>2</sup> As recently as 1994, historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz acknowledged the figure's atypical representation, qualifying Thomas's portrait as "neither masculine nor feminine."<sup>3</sup>

Sargent's portrait signaled more than Thomas's personal transgression of gender boundaries and social systems; the portrait, as an institutional emblem, reflected Bryn Mawr's "male" educational agenda. Strongly opposed to the domestic sciences taught at other women's colleges, Thomas wished to debunk perceptions of female intellectual inferiority. During an address to the student body in the fall of 1899, the same season the portrait was unveiled, the President articulated her aim to produce "the type of Bryn Mawr woman which will ... become as well known and universally admired a type as the Oxford and Cambridge man."<sup>4</sup> By rejecting relegation to the feminine paradigm, Thomas judged her institution on equal terms with the most distinguished male schools.

While *Miss M. Carey Thomas* may mirror or mask the President's personal character, the exactitude of the sitter's likeness was not the issue at stake. Reporting in 1900 from Paris's Exposition Universelle, the *Boston Evening Transcript* identified the painting's typological capacity: "This portrait is at one and the same time a sort of unintentional apotheosis of the 'higher education' ... and a sort of terrible warning, equally unintentional, against it. It embodies all the glory and all the danger of the feminist movement by synthesizing the qualities of the most highly organized type of 'new woman.'"<sup>5</sup> Praised by another critic in the same year for "the mental power depicted in this counterfeit presentation of a brainy woman," the portrait validated the President's position as a powerful feminist administrator.<sup>6</sup> More than the optical reflection in *Miss Thomas's* dressing case mirror, also described in this catalogue, the painting served as a vehicle of self-construction, a mask of self-display. A sign of individual accomplishment and changing gender roles, Sargent's canvas exemplified a new standard of womanhood in defiance of social convention. *Miss M. Carey Thomas* was more than a mere facsimile: it fashioned a persona, affirmed an agenda, and announced the dawn of a shocking new era.<sup>7</sup>

**Dylan Kahn (Haverford College, Class of 2016)**



**FIG. 19**  
Frederick Hollyer (English, 1838–1933)  
**M. Carey Thomas cabinet card**  
ca. 1888

Bryn Mawr College Archives

1. M. Carey Thomas, letter to Mary Carrett, October 31, 1899. See "The Sargent Portrait: Sargent's Portrait of M. Carey Thomas," [www.brynmawr.edu/library/exhibits/sargent/portrait.html](http://www.brynmawr.edu/library/exhibits/sargent/portrait.html).  
2. Margaret Emerson Bailey, *Good-Bye, Proud World* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945), 263.  
3. Helen L. Horowitz, *The Power and Passion of M. Carey Thomas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 316.  
4. M. Carey Thomas, notes for the opening address at Bryn Mawr College, October 11, 1899, in *The Educated Woman in America: Selected Writings of Catherine Beecher, Margaret Fuller, and M. Carey Thomas*, ed. Barbara M. Cross (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965), 140.

5. Unknown author, "Painting in Paris: Brilliant Portraiture at the Exposition," *The Boston Evening Transcript*, 1900. The newspaper clipping for this source is located in the Tara Tappert Collection of Cecilia Beaux research materials (MS.054) at the Philadelphia Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.  
6. Francis Zeigler, "Sixty-Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts," *Brush and Pencil* 5 (1900): 262–263.  
7. Dylan Kahn, "Re-Picturing Masculine Death: John Singer Sargent, *Miss M. Carey Thomas*, and the New Woman," Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges, senior honors thesis, 2016, 4–35.



**PLATE 10**

Unknown artisan (Pennsylvania)  
**Mahogany dressing case with mirror**  
mid- to late 19th century

Wood and glass  
26 × 16 × 9 1/2 in. (66 × 40.6 × 24 cm)  
Bequest of M. Carey Thomas,  
President of Bryn Mawr College,  
1894–1922  
Bryn Mawr College Deanery.480

**10** When looking at the mirror of this dressing case one can imagine seeing in it the reflection of former Bryn Mawr president M. Carey Thomas as she prepared for the unveiling of her presidential portrait by John Singer Sargent in November 1899 (plate 9). Perhaps she sat before the mirror and practiced becoming the woman in the painting, anticipating just such a performance before an audience of students, alumnae, and faculty. She described her public enactment of the painting's pose in a letter to her close friend Mary Garrett who was abroad: "I took off my cap and assumed the attitude and the applause was of course tremendous and unending."<sup>1</sup>

This mirrored case is an excellent example of the objects from the Deanery, Thomas's campus home from the beginning of her career as the first dean of Bryn Mawr (1884–94) and through her term as the college's second president (1894–1922).<sup>2</sup> The shining

wood inlays on each side of the mirror display the craftsmanship of its maker. Most likely Pennsylvania German in origin, the wooden case is decorated with carnation and tulip motifs common to the Montgomery County area.<sup>3</sup> On the front of the main compartment, two birds, perhaps stylized eagles, flank flowers sprouting from a central vase.<sup>4</sup> During a close examination of the mirror, I discovered that missing inlays on the left side of the case reveal pieces of a German language newspaper, thus supporting my identification of it as Pennsylvania German. Compare this rustic dressing case mirror with the much more opulent vanity table of the actress Lynn Fontanne in a photograph in our collection of the bedroom of her Wisconsin estate by the author, editor, and composer John Seymour Erwin.

M. Carey Thomas may have acquired the mirror through her friend and favored designer Lockwood de Forest

(1850–1932). Thomas hired de Forest in 1897 to oversee renovations to the Deanery.<sup>5</sup> In later years, he designed the main entrance of Thomas Hall.<sup>6</sup> De Forest had an older brother, Robert Weeks de Forest, who was the fifth president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and an avid collector of Pennsylvania German decorative arts.<sup>7</sup>

President Thomas is held to have been one of the most progressive champions for women’s education,<sup>8</sup> however a complete assessment of her position in Bryn Mawr’s history must reflect our contemporary values, which make many of her views problematic. Her view of women’s education was limited to the white and wealthy. Her stance on college admissions prevented the acceptance at Bryn Mawr of women of color until 1927, she utilized anti-Semitic rhetoric, and she promoted the theories of eugenics.<sup>9</sup> While she appreciated the art and architecture of various cultures, she saw the world through racial categories that separated her as a white women from a non-white “other.” Thomas valued the cultural artifacts she acquired during her international travels, most of which she donated to the college at the time of her death.<sup>10</sup>

While our contemporary perspective on some of Thomas’s views complicates her legacy, it also humanizes her. She was not impervious to error, but she reminds us that we can always do and be better. As we contemplate our reflections in Thomas’s mirror, we seek to reconcile a more complex understanding of our past with the desire to effect change in the college community today. Former Bryn Mawr president Mary Patterson McPherson (PhD 1969) said of Thomas, whom she called a “complicated, difficult, genius of a woman,” “We are all the beneficiaries of that uncompromising vision that shaped the most independent, modern, demanding institution of higher education of its time, and it was done by and for women.”<sup>11</sup>

### Cassandra Paul (Class of 2018)

1. M. Carey Thomas, letter to Mary Carrett, November 20, 1899, box 20, folder 2, reel 22b M. Carey Thomas Personal Papers Outgoing Correspondence MEC June 1899–March 1900, Bryn Mawr College Archives, Bryn Mawr, PA.  
2. History of the Deanery, box 4, folder 1, M.129 Deanery Files, Bryn Mawr College Archives, Bryn Mawr, PA.

3. Joseph Downs, “The de Forest Collection of Work by Pennsylvania German Craftsmen,” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 29.10 (1934): 166.  
4. *Ibid.*, 165.  
5. Lockwood de Forest, box 1, folder 20, M.129 Deanery Files, Bryn Mawr College Archives, Bryn Mawr, PA.  
6. Mary Patterson McPherson, “A Century of Building at Bryn Mawr,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 142.3 (1998): 407.

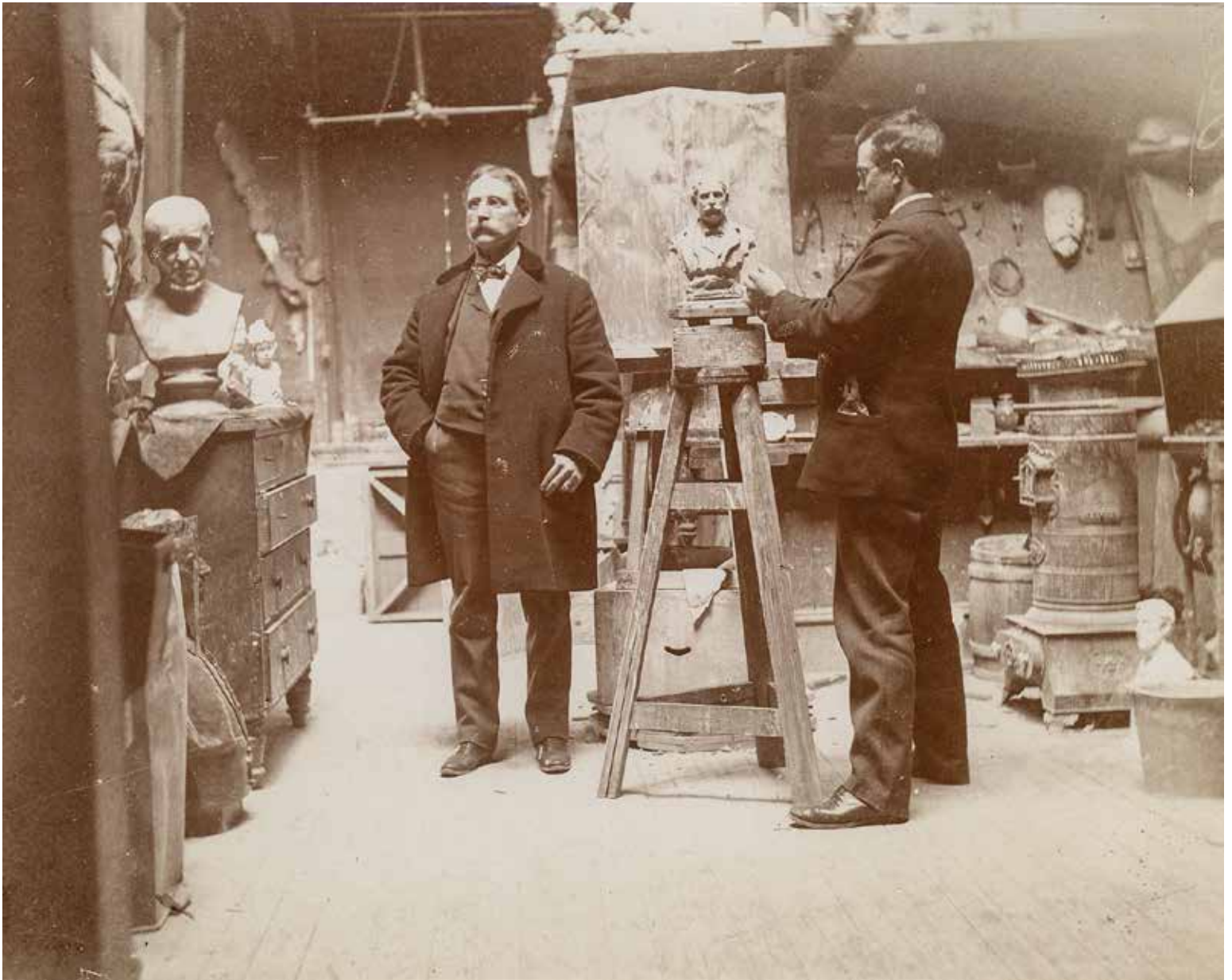
7. Aleksandr Gelfand, “This Weekend in Met History: October 20,” Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 18, 2013, [www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/features/2013/this-weekend-in-met-history-october-20](http://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/features/2013/this-weekend-in-met-history-october-20).  
8. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *The Power and Passion of M. Carey Thomas* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 320.  
9. M. Carey Thomas, “Address by President Thomas at the Opening of the College, October 4, 1916,” reprinted from *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Quarterly* 10.3 (1916): 102–103.

10. M. Carey Thomas, last will and testament, October 20, 1934, box 1, folder 18, M.129 Deanery Files, Bryn Mawr College Archives, Bryn Mawr, PA.  
11. “M. Carey Thomas Award presentation at the 105th Annual Meeting of the Alumnae Association June 3, 2002,” [www.brynmawr.edu/alumnae/bulletin/mctaward.htm](http://www.brynmawr.edu/alumnae/bulletin/mctaward.htm).



**FIG. 20**  
John Seymour Erwin (American, 1911–2000)  
**Ten Chimneys: View through Door of Vanity and Sconces**  
1950s

Gelatin silver print  
9 3/4 × 6 3/8 in. (24.7 × 16.2 cm)  
Gift of Theresa Helburn (Class of 1908)  
Bryn Mawr College 2005.15.233



**PLATE 11**

Thomas Eakins  
(American, 1844–1916)  
**Samuel Murray Sculpting  
Frank St. John**  
1900

Gelatin silver print  
3 5/8 × 4 1/2 in. (9.2 × 11.4 cm)  
Gift of Seymour Adelman  
Bryn Mawr College 2011.6.48

**11**

“Strain your brain more than your eyes,” Thomas Eakins advised.<sup>1</sup> One can imagine Eakins instructing Samuel Murray in this way while taking this photograph in their shared studio as Murray worked on a bust from a live model. Busts and furniture clutter the frame, with the hint of a mirror in the upper left, which is clearly visible in another photograph of the studio, *Thomas Eakins in his Chestnut Street Studio* (1890–92) taken, possibly, by his wife, Susan Macdowell Eakins (fig. 21). Another interesting object in the studio hovers on the wall behind Murray; it is a death mask, staring out of the photograph, along with portrait subject Frank St. John, his bust, and the other busts littering the studio. Four faces look out at us from the past.

According to Eakins expert William Innes Homer, Eakins saw art as “a rational process that depended on

measurement and absolute control,” whereby he sought to show a scientific truth.<sup>2</sup> Given the 19th-century promotion of photography’s scientific accuracy, it is no wonder he mastered this new medium. For Eakins photography “was a teaching device comparable to anatomical drawing.” More than 800 photographs are attributed to Eakins and his circle.<sup>3</sup> Seymour Adelman, who knew Eakins’s widow, gave 100 of these to Bryn Mawr’s Special Collections, where he served as Honorary Curator of Rare Books.<sup>4</sup>

Born in Philadelphia in 1844, Eakins attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts before studying in Europe.<sup>5</sup> After controversy over his teaching methods there in 1877,<sup>6</sup> Eakins resigned. Around that time he befriended Walt Whitman, with whom he bonded over their shared appreciation of the male form. Following Whitman’s death in 1892, Eakins and Murray cast the poet’s death mask.<sup>7</sup> A representation from death instead of from life, the mask now resides in Harvard’s Houghton Library. Given this photograph’s date and the mask’s bearded face, which resembles the hirsute Whitman, it is possible that this is a version of Whitman’s disembodied death mask, uncannily floating in the background.

Art historians have argued that death masks are the “image of origin” for portraiture, preserving one’s likeness beyond death.<sup>8</sup> In the 15th century, theorist Leon Battista Alberti asserted that a portrait “contains a divine force which not only makes the absent present ... but moreover make the dead seem almost alive.”<sup>9</sup> Placing his emphasis on the staging of the portrait in the artist’s studio, critic Harry Berger Jr. claims that it is a “referential illusion.”<sup>10</sup> Real subjects are thus reduced to fictitious objects.<sup>11</sup> We may think we witness this process here, as Murray turns St. John into a bust. Having sat for portraits by my father, I can attest to these fictions. In one, I appear as if in winter, wearing heavy clothing, when in fact I sat for 20 minutes in July.

This fictionalization process occurs in photography too. When posing before a camera, theorist Roland Barthes said, “I transform myself in advance into an image,” and experience “a micro-version of death.”<sup>12</sup> In Eakins’s photograph we observe a person becoming an art object, preserving a fictional representation of his identity and self, not like the direct molding of a death mask. However, which has the better claim to representation, the bust or the photograph? Surrounding the living St. John are the inert products of the artistic process staring out at us for posterity via this small photographic print.

**Alexa Chabora (Class of 2018)**



**FIG. 21**

Attributed to Susan Maccowell Eakins (American, 1851–1938)

**Thomas Eakins in his Chestnut Street Studio**  
1890–92

Gelatin silver print  
6 3/8 x 4 7/16 in. (16.2 x 11.3 cm)  
Gift of Seymour Adelman  
Bryn Mawr College 2011.6.11

1. William Innes Homer, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Art* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2002), 136.  
2. *Ibid.*, 15.  
3. Department of Photographs, “Thomas Eakins (1844–1916): Photography, 1880s–1890s,” *The Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004.  
4. Larry Rother, “Seymour Adelman, Collector Of Rare Literary Manuscripts,” obituary, *The New York Times*, April 30, 1985.  
5. Homer, *Thomas Eakins*, 17–23.  
6. H. Barbara Weinberg, “Thomas Eakins (1844–1916): Painting,” *The Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004.

7. Homer, *Thomas Eakins*, 213.  
8. Harry Berger Jr., “Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture,” *Representations* 46 (1994), 87–120.  
9. Joanna Woodall, “Introduction: Facing the Subject,” in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 8.  
10. Berger, “Fictions of the Pose,” 99.  
11. *Ibid.*, 100.  
12. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Geoff Dyer (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), 10–14.



**PLATE 12**

Max Beckmann (German, 1884–1950)

**The Barker, Self-Portrait**

1921

Etching and drypoint

13 1/4 × 12 5/8 in. (33.7 cm × 32.1 cm)

Gift of Jacqueline Koldin Levine (Class of 1946) and Howard H. Levine

Bryn Mawr College 2012.27.463

**12**

Max Beckmann's *The Barker, Self-Portrait* bespeaks an artistic career defined by mirror-like self-awareness as an "internal exile."<sup>1</sup> This work, one of 80 self-portraits that Beckmann made over the course of his career, reveals his desire to understand himself through the process of self-representation during the tumultuous years between World War I and World War II.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike this disturbing work, Beckmann's first self-portraits picture him as master of his own universe. Such "extreme individualism," as specialist of German art Jill Lloyd notes, gave way to a drastic interior shift in the years following World War I. Beckmann's service as a medical orderly during the war stimulated a nervous breakdown in 1916, which manifested itself in his graphic work with a focus on his interior life. His reliance on a "dry, linear, Gothic style" could be interpreted as an attempt to mine the essence of German art amidst the divisions of politics and war.<sup>3</sup>

From 1920 to 1922 Beckmann represented himself in numerous close-up poses that Harvard art historian Joseph Koerner reads as not only existential but “confrontational.”<sup>4</sup> It is as if he urgently needed to communicate his trauma to the viewer in his many prints of himself. Beckmann is often compared to Rembrandt van Rijn, the master of “ceaseless and unsparing” self-analysis, whose celebrated self-portrait as a draughtsman appears here (fig. 22).<sup>5</sup> *The Barker* offers a similar example of proximity to the viewer while allowing Beckmann’s gaze to fall to one side. Enigmatically, he rings a bell in front of a sign reading “Circus Beckmann.” The errant graphic striations of the etching disclose the artist’s inner trauma in their deviation from realism.

This print comes from a larger portfolio entitled *Der Jahrmarkt (The Fairground)* that exposes Beckmann as “an instigator and participant in this absurd carnival of life” in Weimar Germany between the wars.<sup>6</sup> Beckmann’s reference to the carnival symbolizes the alienation caused by modern warfare and the rise of the Nazi regime, under which his work was condemned as “degenerate.”<sup>7</sup> Although Beckmann self-reflectively reveals his suffering, he nonetheless beckons viewers to partake in the existential game. He forces us to acknowledge the fact that we, too, are implicated as internal exiles in this carnival through our viewing of it. The carnival, as a liminal threshold that juxtaposes the external mask of the political realm and the interior mirror of the spiritual sphere, presents us with a choice. As Beckmann would articulate in “On My Painting,” his famous philosophical lecture about his art, “I must leave it to you to decide which is the more important.”<sup>8</sup>

**Laurel McLaughlin (MA candidate, History of Art)**



**FIG. 22**  
Rembrandt van Rijn (Dutch, 1606–69)  
**Self-Portrait Drawing at a Window**  
1648

Etching with drypoint and burin  
7 × 5 in. (17.8 × 12.7 cm)  
Gift of Howard L. Gray,  
Professor of History, 1915–40  
Bryn Mawr College X.301

1. Jill Lloyd, *Max Beckmann, Self-Portrait with Horn* (New York, NY: Neue Galerie, 2008), 20.

2. Wendy Beckett, *Max Beckmann and the Self* (New York and Munich: Prestel, 1997), 9.

3. Lloyd, *Max Beckmann, Self-Portrait with Horn*, 13, 32.

4. Joseph Koerner, “Making Modernity: Max Beckmann’s Self-Portrait in Tuxedo,” *Harvard Magazine*, 2015, 44–47, 45.

5. Maria and Martin Bergmann, “A Psychoanalytic Study of Rembrandt’s Self-Portraits,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 93.6 (December 2006): 977–990, 981.

6. Lloyd, *Max Beckmann, Self-Portrait with Horn*, 32.

7. For more information on Beckmann’s perspective on WWI, see his wartime letters and “Creative Credo,” 1918, in *Max Beckmann: Self-Portrait in Words, Collected Writings and Statements, 1903–1950*, ed. Barbara Copeland Buenger (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

8. Max Beckmann, *On My Painting* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003). See also Friedhelm W. Fischer, “Max Beckmann: Private Thought and Public Utterance,” in *Max Beckmann* (Uxbridge, UK: Hillingdon Press, 1975), which explains Beckmann’s distinction between the world of spirit and politics in terms of his theosophical beliefs.





**PLATE 13**

Lotte Jacobi (German, 1896–1990;  
naturalized American citizen in 1940)

**Käthe Kollwitz**

1930

Celatin silver print  
6 3/4 x 9 1/4 in. (17.2 x 23.5 cm)  
Gift of Seymour Adelman  
Bryn Mawr College PA.1980.1.2

1. Lotte Jacobi, Marion Beckers, and Elisabeth Moortgat, *Atelier Lotte Jacobi, Berlin, New York* (Berlin: Verborgene Museum, 1998), 8.
2. Harry Berger Jr., "Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture," *Representations* 46 (spring 1994): 87.
3. Lotte Jacobi and Peter A. Moriarty, *Lotte Jacobi: Photographs* (Boston: David R. Godine, 2003), 12.
4. Ludger Derenthal, *Icons of Photography: The 20th Century*, ed. Peter Stepan (Munich: Prestel, 1999), 42.
5. Jacobi and Moriarty, *Photographs*, 11.
6. *Ibid.*, 12.
7. Jacobi, Beckers, and Moortgat. *Atelier Lotte Jacobi*, 132.
8. Marion Levenson Ross, "Lotte Jacobi," in *Jewish Women's Archive*, [jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/jacobi-lotte](http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/jacobi-lotte).

## 13

In this photographic portrait by Lotte Jacobi, the artist Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) looks out at us as if looking into a mirror—something she would have done hundreds of times in the making of her own self-portrait etchings and lithographs. Jacobi seems to borrow the composition of this photograph from Kollwitz's 1922 woodcut self-portrait and Kollwitz seems to borrow it back in her 1934 lithographic self-portrait, while cropping Jacobi's framing even more tightly to her face. The photograph's shallow depth of field and tight cropping allow for no context, drawing the viewer to the part of the photograph in clearest focus—the eyes. Directing us to lock eyes with Kollwitz, Jacobi constructs the effect of a mirror, in which the gaze is equal on both sides and the periphery fades away.

"My style," Jacobi once said, "is the style of the person I am photographing."<sup>1</sup> This method of taking on the identity of her subjects seems especially apparent in this portrait, in which Jacobi reproduces Kollwitz's style of self-portraiture. As Harry Berger Jr. writes, portraits are "representations of both the sitter's and the painter's self-representation."<sup>2</sup> As both were women, artists, mothers, and leftists targeted by the Nazi party, Jacobi saw many aspects of herself and her struggles reflected in Kollwitz and thus this dual representation was readily achieved.<sup>3</sup> The composition of the photograph reflects the identification that Jacobi may have felt with Kollwitz, as if she were her own mirror image.<sup>4</sup> Though this photograph is not a self-portrait, Jacobi identifies with Kollwitz through their shared direct stare.

*Head of a Dancer* (fig. 23), also in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections, is another photograph in which Jacobi takes on the style of the sitter. The wide curves of Russian dancer Niura Norskaya's hat in the portrait echo the movements Norskaya performed on stage in Berlin.<sup>5</sup> The distinction between this portrait and Jacobi's portrait of Kollwitz is the gaze. While Kollwitz's gaze is introspective and self-reflective, Norskaya's is bright and doll-like.<sup>6</sup> Although Jacobi takes on Norskaya's style, she does not seem to identify with it as she does with Kollwitz's reflective gaze.



**FIG. 23**  
Lotte Jacobi  
**Head of a Dancer (Niura Norskaya)**  
1929

10 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 13 in. (25.9 × 33 cm)  
Gift of the artist in memory of  
Seymour Adelman  
Bryn Mawr College, 2011.19.1

These two striking portraits are among the few that remain from the Weimar period, since Jacobi was forced to flee Germany, leaving behind many negatives and photographic plates.<sup>7</sup> Even though in 1935 the Nazis offered honorary Aryan status to the Jewish Jacobi, born Johanna Alexandra Jacobi Reiss, she still chose to flee with her son, first settling in London and then in New York. Bryn Mawr is fortunate to possess more than 100 photographs by Jacobi, given to the college by Seymour Adelman, longtime Honorary Curator of Rare Books.

The photograph of Kollwitz is one of many celebrity portraits Jacobi composed during her long life. Though she photographed many notable people of the time, such as Albert Einstein, Kurt Weill, and Max Liebermann, Jacobi once said of celebrities, "Don't they get dressed in the morning like the rest of us?"<sup>8</sup> Her intimate view of the renowned figures of interwar Germany allowed Jacobi to reflect herself in these compelling black and white portraits of the waning Weimar era.

**Maya Berrol-Young (Class of 2017)**



**PLATE 14**

Florence Vandamm (British, 1883–1966) and George R. Thomas, also known as Tommy Vandamm (American, ?–1944)

**Days Without End: Earle Larimore as John and Stanley Ridges (masked) as Loving**  
1934

9 5/16 × 7 5/16 in. (23.7 × 18.6 cm)  
Gift of Theresa Helburn (Class of 1908)  
Bryn Mawr College 2005.15.87

**14** Strong light coming from the left clashes with darkness overshadowing the right in this photographic portrait that the Vandamm Studio made for the Broadway production of Eugene O’Neill’s 1933 play *Days Without End*. Dramatic chiaroscuro highlights the faces of the actors in costume: Earle Larimore, on the right, plays John, and Stanley Ridges, on the left, is Loving. John’s heavy, jet-black eyebrows, drawn with sharp edges, are caricatured on Loving’s masked face as both wriggly and electrified. Fine lines on John’s forehead are dramatized as deep trenches carved into Loving’s mask.

In the beginning of the play, O’Neill describes John as possessing “the rather heavy, conventional American type of good looks—a straight nose and a square jaw, a wide mouth that has an incongruous feminine sensitiveness, a broad forehead, blue eyes.”<sup>1</sup> While performing the role, Larimore was expected to put on “the meaninglessly affable expression which is the American businessman’s welcoming face.”<sup>2</sup> His face already functions like a mask, a theatrical device. Yet as

a son, a businessman, a husband, and a writer, John the social chameleon is not dramatic enough for O’Neill’s “new masked drama.”<sup>3</sup> For O’Neill, a real mask is “more subtly, imaginatively, suggestively dramatic than any actor’s face can ever be.”<sup>4</sup> More dramatic is the masked Loving, John’s double and dark side personified—“one’s inner life passes in a solitude hounded by the masks of oneself.”<sup>5</sup>

This photograph was produced around the time Walter Benjamin wrote his canonical 1936 essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” When confronting this 1934 Vandamm photograph, we find no marks of the artist’s labor or the passage of time. In the process of scrutinizing the image, we share “the feeling of strangeness that overcomes the actor before the camera”—“the same kind as the estrangement felt before one’s own image in the mirror,” Benjamin writes, paraphrasing the 20th-century playwright Luigi Pirandello.<sup>6</sup> Captured by the camera, on the silver screen, on photographic paper, or in a mirror, where does the original self reside? When John

encounters Loving in O'Neill's drama, he confronts his estranged self—his mirrored other whose mask conceals his visage, reveals his unknown persona, and juxtaposes his light and dark sides.

Self-estrangement is rendered more explicit in *Jane Eyre*: Katharine Hepburn as *Jane Eyre*, looking in hand mirror (fig. 24), in which the famous Bryn Mawr alumna (Class of 1928) thoughtfully frowns while examining her reflection in a hand mirror. In this photograph of a 1936–37 touring production of *Jane Eyre* by the Theatre Guild that was never deemed ready for Broadway, here Hepburn's likeness, her mirrored self, her role as the orphan Jane Eyre, her identity as a woman and an actress at this precarious moment in her career are all estranged through Florence Vandamm's lens, even as these disparate aspects of a singular self are reintegrated and preserved in this commentary on the photograph.<sup>7</sup>

During Florence Vandamm's career as a photographer of record for Broadway from 1925 to 1950, she and her husband George Thomas (known as Tommy Vandamm) photographed more than 2,000 theatrical productions.<sup>8</sup> As a "reliable, untemperamental, and artistic"<sup>9</sup> recorder of theatrical productions, she was one of "the most prolific and widely published female commercial photographers of the early 20th century."<sup>10</sup> Her dexterous handling of camera angles and skillfully orchestrated effects of light and shade helped her gain a reputation as "one of the Rembrandts of modern photography."<sup>11</sup> There are more than 700 Vandamm photographs in Special Collections, a gift from Theresa Helburn (Class of 1908), literary manager, casting director, and co-producer with New York's Theatre Guild.<sup>12</sup> In this catalogue, Vandamm's theatrical photographs of mirroring and masking are presented alongside Japanese Noh masks and African tribal masks, non-Western forms of art that indelibly inspired the modern art of Broadway.

### Zichu Zhao (Class of 2018)

1. Eugene O'Neill, *Complete Plays 1932–43*, ed. Travis Bogard (New York: The Library of America, 1988), 11

2. *Ibid.*, 115.

3. Eugene O'Neill, "Memoranda on Masks," *The American Spectator* (November, 1932), 3.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 1936, trans. Harry Zohn, in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

7. Charlotte Chandler, *I Know Where I'm Going: Katharine Hepburn, A Personal Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 105.

8. Florence Vandamm, Broadway Photographs, [broadway.cas.sc.edu/content/florence-vandamm](http://broadway.cas.sc.edu/content/florence-vandamm).

9. *Ibid.*

10. Florence Vandamm, New York Public Library, [www.nypl.org/blog/2013/08/05/florence-vandamm](http://www.nypl.org/blog/2013/08/05/florence-vandamm).

11. *Ibid.*

12. The Theresa Helburn Theatre Collection, [www.brynmawr.edu/library/speccoll/guides/helburn/helburn.shtml](http://www.brynmawr.edu/library/speccoll/guides/helburn/helburn.shtml).



**FIG. 24**  
Florence Vandamm (British, 1883–1966)  
and George R. Thomas, also known as  
Tommy Vandamm (American, ?–1944)  
**Jane Eyre: Katharine Hepburn as  
Jane Eyre, looking in hand mirror**  
1936–37

Gelatin silver print  
9 3/4 × 7 13/16 in. (24.8 × 19.8 cm)  
Gift of Theresa Helburn (Class of 1908)  
Bryn Mawr College 2005.15.877



**PLATE 15**

Unknown artist (Japanese)

**Noh mask of a man**

probably 20th century

Wood

9 1/2 × 6 1/2 × 3 in. (24.1 × 16.5 × 7.6 cm)

Gift of Helen Burwell Chapin

(Class of 1914, AB 1915)

Bryn Mawr College 98.46

**15**

Place your hands over your eyes, leaving only the smallest of cracks between your fingers through which to see: this is what it is like to wear a Noh mask. A Noh mask, like these examples from Helen Burwell Chapin's gift of almost 500 works of Asian art to Bryn Mawr's Special Collections, is traditionally carved from wood and usually reproduces previous designs. The mask is carved in several stages, with the back first being hollowed out and the eye, nose, and mouth holes bored. Lacquer is thinly applied to the back of the mask so that it does not cover the chisel marks that identify the mask as the product of a particular artisan. The front of the mask is then carefully colored, and hair, eyes, or teeth may be applied. The process of making a Noh mask is as personal as wearing one, with carver and performer both feeling an intimate connection to the finely carved and decorated block of wood.<sup>1</sup>

As emphasized by Komparu Kunio, a famous Noh performer and scholar, the mask is more than a costume:

Just before going onstage the *shite* [the actor playing the leading part] sits before a mirror ... facing his own reflected image and puts on the mask. As he gazes intently through the tiny pupil eyeholes at the figure in the mirror, a kind of will-power is born, and the image—another self, that is, an *other*—begins to approach the actor's everyday internal self, and eventually the self and this other self absorb one another to become a single existence transcending self and other.<sup>2</sup>

Before appearing on stage, the actor is seated in the *kagami-no-ma*, or "mirror room," just outside the bridge that leads the actor to the main stage. The lead actor is already costumed and wearing a wig when he enters the mirror room. Here the actor puts on his mask and sits before the mirror to study the figure he has become. Thus the double meaning of the *kagami-no-ma* comes into play, as *kagami* (mirror) also evokes *kami* (God). The Noh actor does not merely reflect on his physical appearance in the mirror, but also on his true or ideal self.<sup>3</sup>

Based on a careful physical analysis of the Noh masks in Special Collections, I believe that they were not designed for performance but rather as decoration. The masks emulate designs already in the Noh repertoire, such as *rojo* (old woman) and *Okina*, an old man who is a god. The use of these masks in highly ritualized performances might connect them to the Sande society masks from West Africa also in this catalogue (plate 20), even as we recognize that their culturally specific performances serve very different purposes. If masks across these cultures can have transformative power for the person who wears them, what sort of power might they have exercised on a scholar and collector like Chapin, who may have hung them like a mirror on her wall, or for us, members of the Bryn Mawr community over 100 years later, as we gaze at them in this catalog?

**Sarah O'Connell (Class of 2017)**

1. Nomura Manzo, "Mask Making," in Rebecca Teele, *Nō/Kyōgen Masks and Performance* (Pomona, CA: Mime Journal, 1984,) 171–176.
2. Mikiko Ishii, "The Noh Theater: Mirror, Mask, and Madness," *Comparative Drama* 28.1 (1994): 56.
3. *Ibid.*, 43–66.



**FIG. 25**  
Unknown artist (Japanese)  
**Noh mask of a woman**  
probably 20th century

Wood  
7 1/2 × 5 × 3 in. (19 × 12.7 × 7.6 cm)  
Gift of Helen Burwell Chapin (Class of 1914,  
AB 1915) Bryn Mawr College 99.46



**PLATE 16**

Louis Muhlstock (Canadian, 1904–2001)

**Young Black Woman**

ca. 1930s

Pastel on paper

15 1/2 × 21 in. (39.4 × 53.3 cm)

Gift of Dr. S. Brand

Bryn Mawr College 1968.7

**16** According to Harry S. Berger Jr., art historians often say that a “portrait is an effect of the painter’s interpretation of the soul,”<sup>1</sup> but I want to use Louis Muhlstock’s portrait of a young black woman to suggest that it can also be understood as a mirror of the viewer, a mirror of myself as a young black woman. The pastel portrait behind glass and hanging on the wall becomes a kind of mirror in which I can see my own reflection. Looking out at the viewer, the woman is dignified and her gaze does not ask for pity—rather, it commands respect.<sup>2</sup> The careful, elegant lines of pencil around the subject’s face suggest a desire to preserve her identity. So tentatively drawn, it is almost as if Muhlstock wants to let this woman speak for herself.<sup>3</sup> Much the same generous artistic impulse animates the portrait of the

young African American woman named Jessica in this newly acquired photograph from 2016 by Kris Graves (fig. 26), for which the artist concedes to the sitter the selection of the light’s color under which she appears.

Muhlstock, a Jewish immigrant from Galicia in Eastern Europe, moved to Montreal in 1931, where he found Canada in the midst of the Depression. The subjects of his portraits were primarily the destitute, despised, and rejected—people who experienced hardship.<sup>4</sup> As an immigrant from humble beginnings, Muhlstock chose these subjects because he personally identified with them.<sup>5</sup> In 1947 Muhlstock said, “Painting and molding and carving the human figure [should be done] with the deepest love of form, color, and with the

greatest respect for mankind.”<sup>6</sup> Muhlstock’s choice to represent his subjects respectfully gives this portrait a sense of humanity. This portrait of a young black woman living in the Depression shows that beauty can come out of any situation, even the most difficult.<sup>7</sup>

Muhlstock’s subjects and style changed frequently throughout his artistic career. He painted portraits of hospital patients in the early 1930s, empty buildings and rooms in the second half of the decade, workers in factories and dockyards during the Second World War, and non-objective paintings in 1951.<sup>8</sup> In the rendering of Muhlstock’s *Young Black Woman*—which on the basis of style we can date to the 1930s—the pastel technique blurs the line between fixed and mobile space, thus placing the image in continuous oscillation. The layering of muted color and the rough, unfinished edges of the portrait create a vivid fleeting moment that unbinds the subject from time and place.

This woman exists in the time and place in which she is drawn, in the instant of the portrait’s creation, but as a young black woman viewing this portrait today I cannot help but see my own experiences reflected in the portrait, to see her moment as also my own. The very features that seem to date the portrait to a historical period also bring the portrait into the present when I stand in front of the work. Muhlstock’s empathy for his subjects and his use of color successfully capture what he calls “a moment in time only,” a fundamental idea embodied by his work.<sup>9</sup> The self for Muhlstock only exists in a moment, and in that moment, the depth of humanity appears. Today’s viewers are encouraged to relate to the woman in his portrait, to see in her the humanity they see in the fleeting moment of looking in the mirror every day.

### Alexandra Wilson (Class of 2017)



**FIG. 26**  
Kris Graves (American, born 1982)  
**Jessica**  
2016

Archival pigment print  
30 × 37 1/2 in. (76.2 × 95.3 cm)  
Bryn Mawr College 2016.6.107

1. Harry Berger Jr., “Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture,” *Representations* 46 (spring 1994): 89.

2. Charles C. Hill, *Louis Muhlstock: A Survey of 45 Years* (Windsor, Ontario: Curtis Company, 1976), 5.

3. *The Supermodel* by Marlene Dumas (plate 32) is another work that deals with black female identity. Dumas allows the face of a young black woman to speak to the “validity of black beauty,” just like the face of Muhlstock’s young black woman speaks for herself and her humanity.

4. Anne Newlands, *Canadian Art: From its Beginnings to 2000* (Canada: Firefly Books, 2000), 228.

5. Hill, *Muhlstock: A Survey*, 4.

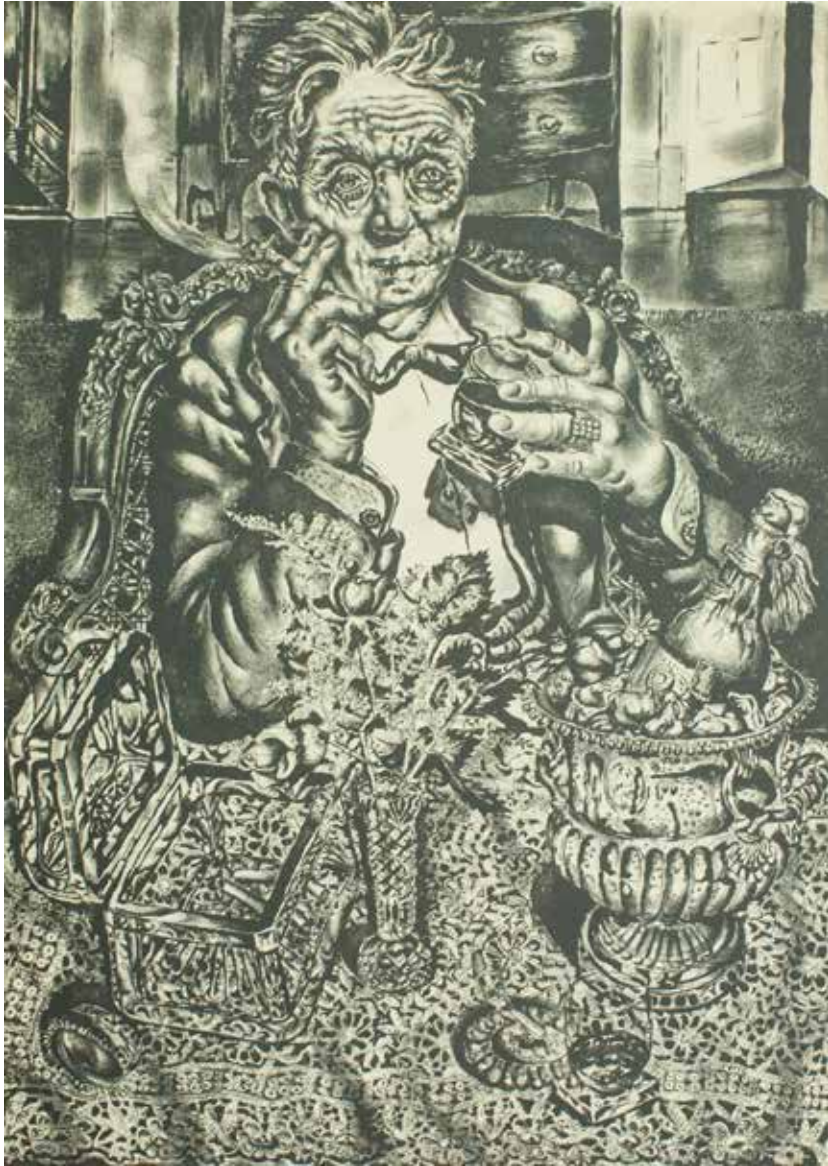
6. Newlands, *Canadian Art*, 228.

7. Hill, *Muhlstock: A Survey*, 5.

8. National Gallery of Canada, “Louis Muhlstock,” last modified 2016, [www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artist.php?iartistid=3890](http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artist.php?iartistid=3890).

9. Anne McDougall, “Louis Muhlstock,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified June 15, 2015, [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/louis-muhlstock/](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/louis-muhlstock/).





**PLATE 17**

Ivan Le Lorraine Albright (American, 1897–1983)  
**Self-Portrait at 55 East Division Street**  
 1947

Lithograph  
 14 1/4 × 10 3/16 in. (36.2 × 25.9 cm)  
 Bryn Mawr College 1986.13

**17**

In his 1947 *Self-Portrait at 55 East Division Street* Ivan Albright deliberately depicts himself looking beyond his 50 years and renders his face like a mask.<sup>1</sup> Rather than faithfully depicting his likeness as an artist—like Arthur W. Simpson does in another self-portrait in Bryn Mawr’s Special Collections (fig. 27), in which he proudly holds his brush and palette—Albright makes his body and his surroundings sites of corrosion, which the French artist Jean Dubuffet described as “a crumbling, rotting, grinding world of excrescences.”<sup>2</sup> In his right hand, where the masterly brush is customarily poised to preserve the form of the artist, a half-smoked cigarette is left burning and dissipating into formlessness. With strenuously arched eyebrows, and

solemn eyes sunken in wrinkles and dark circles, Albright chooses to distort his face, the emblem of self, and represent it as the process of aging and decaying personified and dramatized.

The array of dazzling objects in front of Albright’s figure in his portrait calls to mind Old Master paintings on the theme of *vanitas*, or *memento mori*, the reminder of death.<sup>3</sup> Using sharp chiaroscuro to paint this still life within a portrait, the artist compels the viewer into his “twilight world of shadow,” where there is no absolute darkness or brightness to impede us from seeing.<sup>4</sup> In the play of light and shadow, we see a crystal cigarette box, vase, ashtray, and glasses in their

accentuated delicacy and fragility. Balanced atop crooked stems, cut flowers are blooming as well as withering. Covered with condensed droplets of water, the ice bucket in its metallic sheen seems to perspire and even melt away. Although Albright denied that being a medical draughtsman during World War I had a direct impact on his art, knowledge of his military work depicting injuries and witnessing death close at hand helps the viewer better understand his artistic urge to bring dead objects to life and see in every living creature the signs of mortality and inevitable demise.

To make this piece, Albright looked at himself in a mirror and transferred his image from a lithographic stone onto paper. The original image of Albright is twice reversed—first in the mirror, and then by the lithographic stone—and thus restored to its original state, in a sense. Since Albright’s death in 1983, the printed image extracted from the artist’s living being in 1947 now symbolically serves as his afterlife. These seeming opposites—the original and the copy, life and death—are reconciled in Albright’s visual dialectics: “In any part of life you find something either growing or disintegrating. All life is strong and powerful, even in the process of dissolution.”<sup>5</sup> In Albright’s compelling visual philosophy we might see an analogy to Lao Tzu’s “natural way,” or Tao, which one should not and cannot resist. In this catalogue, Albright’s dissolute self-portrait is shown alongside Pele deLappe’s 1991 lithographic *Self-Portrait (On Being Female)*, which she executed at the age of 75 (plate 29). When relentless time has left corporeal beauty behind, like a mere pin-up backdrop, deLappe daringly removes her smooth, porcelain mask, reveals to us her wrinkled face, and gazes ahead with determination and dignity. Both deLappe and Albright kept making art until the very end of their long lives, Albright dying at the age of 88 and deLappe at 91. Throughout the artist’s lifelong process of creation, making art is the irresistible “natural way”—the Tao that transcends life and death.



**FIG. 27**  
Arthur W. Simpson (British, 1857–1922)  
**Self-Portrait**  
ca. 1910s

Etching  
11 15/16 × 8 3/8 in. (30.3 × 21.3 cm)  
Bryn Mawr College X.425

### Zichu Zhao (Class of 2018)

1. Wendy Wick Reaves, *Reflections / Refractions: Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, DC: Rowman and Littlefield, Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2009), 92–93.
2. Frederick A. Sweet and Jean Dubuffet, *Ivan Albright: A Retrospective Exhibition Organized by The Art Institute of Chicago in Collaboration with The Whitney Museum of American Art* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1964–65), 7.
3. Courtney Graham Donnell, Susan S.Weininger, and Robert Cozzolino, *Ivan Albright* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago; and New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1997), 61.
4. Sweet and Dubuffet, *Ivan Albright: A Retrospective*, 16.
5. Donnell, Weininger, and Cozzolino, *Ivan Albright*, 61.



**PLATE 18**  
Cuno Amiet (Swiss, 1868–1961)  
**Floral Still Life**  
1956

Lithograph, exhibition copy  
16 7/8 × 12 7/8 in. (42.9 × 32.7 cm)  
Gift of Jacqueline Koldin Levine (Class of  
1946) and Howard H. Levine  
Bryn Mawr College 2012.27.481

**18** Peering out from the upper-left corner of this lithograph, the small self-portrait of artist Cuno Amiet emerges as a strange dream from the surrounding still life scene, reflected in a mirror that makes the space of the image seem deeper than it is. His illuminated figure punctuates the otherwise hushed domestic still life.<sup>1</sup> Upon spotting Amiet's face, the viewer can only return his gaze with the uncanny knowledge that she is being watched by the artist—and the artist is watching himself.

*Floral Still Life* enacts a variation on the Lacanian mirror stage, in which the viewer registers the figure of the artist staring back at her, almost like a startled child recognizing her reflection in a mirror for the first time.<sup>2</sup>

One of 1,000 self-portraits that Amiet created over the course of his long career, this print utilizes the technique of lithography to perpetrate a mirroring effect in its transfer of the drawn image from lithographic stone to paper. The printing process doubles Amiet's already reflected self-portrait (as the artist looks out at himself from within the lithograph), adding a structural echo. Given Amiet's dedication to self-portraiture, and considering his psychic double present here, this work is also striking in its self-effacement.

The small figure of the artist appears to be faceless, as in many of the increasingly abstract self-portraits of his later years.<sup>3</sup> This dematerialization continues in the atmospheric quality of the lithograph's lines, in

contrast with the vivid color and hard geometry of post-impressionism and German expressionism, artistic movements with which Amiet was associated in his youth.<sup>4</sup> It shrouds the late lithograph in nostalgia.

In this floral still life, which Amiet made at the age of 88, the viewer catches the artist in a moment of existential retrospection.<sup>5</sup> A similarly eerie juxtaposition of a bouquet of flowers and a reflected head occurs in a drawing by the American artist Iona Fromboluti (fig. 28), also held in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections. Still lifes with flowers appear throughout Amiet's painted and graphic work, serving as a recurring *memento mori*, a reminder of death.<sup>6</sup> Next to the lively and centrally placed white flowers, his figure appears solitary as he considers his own existence, inspired by the flowers' ephemerality and the death of his wife just five years prior.<sup>7</sup> Set to the side of the still life, Amiet's self-portrait is decentralized from his own life—perhaps, as psychoanalyst Philip Bromberg posits in his study on narcissism, the artist is “stuck between ‘the mirror and the mask’—a reflected appraisal of himself” obscured by his own intense self-study.<sup>8</sup> Amiet's self-image is mirrored, transferred, reversed, and nearly disappeared in this print; five years after making it, he was dead.

**Laurel McLaughlin (MA candidate, History of Art)**



**FIG. 28**  
Iona Fromboluti (American, born 1953)  
**Flowers and Head**  
1991

Ink on paper  
15 1/2 × 13 in. (39.4 × 33 cm)  
The William and Uytendale Scott Memorial Study  
Collection of Works by Women Artists, gift of Bill Scott  
Bryn Mawr College 2006.1.10

1. Katharina Nyffenegger, “Jahreszeiten einer Gesichtslandschaft,” *Cuno Amiet: Ein Leben in Selbstbildnissen* (Langenthal, Switzerland: Merkur Druck AC, 1994), 40. Nyffenegger discusses how, later in Amiet's career, after his wife's death, interior spaces became his working spaces.

2. Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the ‘I’ Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” (1949), in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2006), 75–81.

3. See Toni Stooss, ed., *Cuno Amiet: De Pont-Aven à ‘Die Brücke’*, (Bern: Kunstmuseum, 1999–2000), for early examples of his self-portraiture and still lifes, in addition to a chronology of his life.

4. Paul Müller, “Cuno Amiet,” Swiss Institute for Art Research, accessed November 18, 2016, [www.sikart.ch/kuenstlerinnen.aspx?id=4000011](http://www.sikart.ch/kuenstlerinnen.aspx?id=4000011).

5. Pierre-André Lienhard, “Quelques réflexions à propos des autoportraits de Cuno Amiet,” *Cuno Amiet: Rétrospective, Musée Jenisch Vevey* (Lausanne: Lucien Gafner, 1995), 34.

6. “Amiet, ‘Joy of My Life’: The Eduard Gerber Collection,” (Bern: Kunstmuseum, 2011–12).

7. George Mauner, *Three Swiss Painters: Cuno Amiet, Giovanni Giacometti, Auguste Giacometti* (Lausanne: Presses Centrales, 1973), 14.

8. Philip M. Bromberg, “The Mirror and the Mask: On Narcissism and Psychoanalytic Growth,” *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 19 (1983): 359–387.



**PLATE 19**

Unidentified Yoruba maker (Nigerian)  
**Ile Ori (Head Shrine)**  
mid-20th century

Metal, mirrors, wood, cowry shells, sewn cloth, and leather  
19 x 9 1/2 x 9 1/2 in. (48.3 x 24 x 24 cm)  
Gift of Mace Neufeld and Helen Katz Neufeld (Class of 1953)  
Bryn Mawr College 99.3.105

1. See *House of the Head Shrine: Equestrian (Ile Ori)*, a head shrine by the workshop of Adesina in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed October 17, 2016, [www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/314971](http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/314971).
2. Conversation with Zoe S. Strother, November 14, 2016. Many thanks to Professor Strother, Class of 1982, of the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University, for her extremely informative presentation to our class.
3. Abraham Ajibade Adeleke, *Intermediate Yoruba: Language, Culture, Literature, and Religious Beliefs, Part II* (Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing, 2011).
4. Rowland Abiodun, *Yoruba Art and Language: Seeking the African in African Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 140.
5. *Ibid.*, 87.

## 19

The mirrored panels of this mid-20th-century Nigerian head shrine are a prominent but typical inclusion on an *ile ori* or head shrine. *Ori* translates from the Yoruba language as “head,” though two distinct aspects of the head are denoted. There is the *ori ode*, one’s physical outer head, which is visible to the eye and can be seen in the reflection of the mirror, and the *ori inu*, one’s inner spiritual head. As the *ile ori* represents this two-fold self, it serves owners to see their external image reflected in its mirrors and to see their inner head represented as a container.<sup>1</sup>

This representation of the physical and spiritual self is one purpose of the mirrored shrine, but its mirrors also serve to reflect light, giving this object a glistening effect. My conversations with Zoe Strother (Class of 1982), a visiting African art scholar, helped me understand the abundance of reflective surfaces and shells, as well as the large size of the object, as indicating the status of the owner.<sup>2</sup> The very time-consuming decoration of each *ile ori* can vary greatly. Cowrie shells in particular are markers of wealth and social status; this *ile ori* boasts an inordinate number of cowrie shells.<sup>3</sup> In addition to signifying monetary wealth, cowrie shells represent the symbolic wealth of personal fulfillment. There is a saying in the Yoruba language:

Tightly packed and plentiful is the money  
Used in making Ori’s house,  
But loose and free are the beads of the wealthy.<sup>4</sup>

But cowrie shells, because of their whiteness, also symbolize purity and good character, or *iwa*. Symbolic décor that testifies to the quality of the wearer’s soul is important to the owner of the *ile ori*, since the *ori* is understood as a “soul” or “guardian angel” in the Yoruba culture.<sup>5</sup>

An *ile ori* is fashioned for a Yoruba individual, regardless of gender, religion, or cult affiliation; it is thus a symbol of one’s individuality. This and another *ile ori*, also illustrated here, are among more than 270 African art objects donated to the college by Mace and Helen Katz Neufeld (Class of 1953). Other notable art objects from their collection include the *ndoli jowei* masks of the Sande society from Sierra Leone, also featured in this catalogue (plate 20). Just as former Bryn Mawr president M. Carey Thomas might have gazed upon her own image in the



**FIG. 29**  
Unidentified Yoruba maker (Nigerian)  
**Ile Ori (House of the Head Shrine)**  
mid-20th century

Sewn and beaded textile, mirrors, cowry shells, metal,  
and skin  
15 <sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (39.5 × 23.3 × 23.3 cm)  
Gift of Mace Neufeld and Helen Katz Neufeld (Class of  
1953)  
Bryn Mawr College 99.3.104.a-b

dressing-case mirror from the Deanery (plate 10), the owner of this Yoruba head shrine might have looked upon his or her appearance in these mirrors, reflecting on destiny and the soul.

**Maya Berrol-Young (Class of 2017)**



**PLATE 20**

Unidentified Mende maker  
(Sierra Leonean, 20th century)  
**Sande society helmet mask**  
mid-20th century

Carved, stamped, and applied  
wood and aluminum  
14 1/2 × 8 1/2 × 10 in. (37 × 21.6 × 25 cm)  
Gift of Mace Neufeld and Helen  
Katz Neufeld (Class of 1953)  
Bryn Mawr College 99.3.26

**20** This helmet mask from Sierra Leone serves to establish the ideals of the Sande society, a secret society for women in sub-Saharan Africa. The length and thickness of the mask's intricately carved wooden hairstyle is a mark of dignity for women. The large forehead symbolizes success and grace, accentuated on this mask by an unusual strip of shiny aluminum. The single conjoined brow represents a woman's good judgment and ability to take on the challenges of life. The possession of such a mask and participation in the initiation ritual that is required of girls seeking acceptance to the Sande society identify a woman who is equipped with the knowledge and capacity to manage the tasks of womanhood.<sup>1</sup>

According to art historian Zoe Strother (Class of 1982), "It is critical to note that the invention of masks always begins with the dance."<sup>2</sup> For this Sande mask, the

impetus for its invention is the public procession, feasting, and dancing that marks the end of each period during which women are initiated into a Sande lodge.<sup>3</sup> In a photograph of one such procession (fig. 30), from the papers of Jane Martin (Class of 1953), a dancer, or masker, is completely covered in black raffia fibers and wears the helmet mask on top of her head. In sub-Saharan Africa, the concept of a mask includes not only a headpiece but also the associated costume and ritual dance.<sup>4</sup>

Sande is the only masking society in Africa in which women are permitted to publicly wear and perform dances in masks.<sup>5</sup> Socially and culturally, Sierra Leonean women and men are divided into two groups: those who have been initiated into a secret society and those who have not. According to art historian Sylvia Boone, it is essential to be initiated into a society



**FIG. 30**  
Jane Martin (Class of 1953)  
**Sande society initiation ceremony**  
ca. late 1960s

Photograph 13.5, Jane Martin papers,  
Bryn Mawr College Archives

because knowledge and information are passed down through these organizations.<sup>6</sup> Boone, a leading scholar in the imagery of women in African art, became an icon for black women in the 1980s because of her consciousness-raising work, *Radiance from the Waters: Ideals of Feminine Beauty in Mende Art*. Maya Angelou once wrote, “My life has been enriched because of Sylvia Boone, and I know more about love, laughter, mercy and peace because of Sylvia Boone.”<sup>7</sup> There are 24 Sande masks in Bryn Mawr’s Special Collections, one of the largest holdings of Sande masks among universities.<sup>8</sup> Their presence here as gifts from both Neufeld and Martin, alumnae of this women’s college, may correspond to Boone’s promotion of them and the inspiring belief that these masks represented unique opportunities for women in that society. Like the women of Bryn Mawr College who perform the ritual of Lantern Night to gain entrance into the collegiate sisterhood, women in the Sande society perform private rituals to gain access to the practical and esoteric knowledge of their community.

**Maya Berrol-Young (Class of 2017)**

1. Sylvia Ardyn Boone, *Radiance from the Waters: Ideals of Feminine Beauty in Mende Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 84–189.
2. Zoe S. Strother, “Invention and Reinvention in the Traditional Arts,” *African Arts* 28.2 (spring 1995): 29.
3. There is international controversy regarding parts of the Sande initiation. See Jay Fisher and Anne Manning, “Crappling with Challenging Topics in Art Museums: Sande Society Masks at the BMA,” *BMA Blog*, May 29, 2015, [blog.artbma.org/2015/05/grappling-with-challenging-topics-in-art-museums-sande-society-masks-at-the-bma](http://blog.artbma.org/2015/05/grappling-with-challenging-topics-in-art-museums-sande-society-masks-at-the-bma).
4. Strother, “Invention and Reinvention,” 26.

5. Lynda Rose Day, *Gender and Power in Sierra Leone: Women Chiefs of the Last Two Centuries* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
6. Boone, *Radiance from the Waters*, 123.
7. Elise Jordan, “Yale Pays Tribute to Professor,” *Yale Daily News*, February 16, 2001.
8. Conversation with Zoe S. Strother, November 14, 2016. Many thanks to Professor Strother, of the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University, for examining Bryn Mawr’s holdings in African art with our class and for her vivid video presentation of African masking and dancing.





**PLATE 21**

Romare Howard Bearden  
(American, 1911–88)

**Carolina Memory (Tidings)**  
1973

Screen print  
15 7/8 × 23 3/4 in. (40.3 × 60.3 cm)  
Gift of Argosy Partners and  
Bond Street Partners  
Bryn Mawr College 1980.6

**21**

Like many works by Romare Bearden, including his 1964 collage *Prevalence of Ritual: Tidings*, this screen print, *Carolina Memory (Tidings)*, from 1973 is suffused with Bearden’s memories of his North Carolina youth. In this print we see a flattened, sprawling landscape with a train leaving the station in the background, which may represent Bearden’s early life in North Carolina and his eventual migration north to New York. Two figures in the bottom-right corner of the print are framed by a rainbow, as the winged figure on the left reaches out to offer a flower to the female figure on the right.

In this work Bearden combines his childhood memories of North Carolina with a striking image of the Annunciation. The Biblical reference lies in the interaction between the woman and the winged figure, which mirrors the encounter between the angel Gabriel and Mary before the birth of Christ. Bearden’s Gabriel is bringing good tidings to this Carolina Mary, evidenced by the flower and the rainbow—the knowledge that her future will be brightened by the

birth of her child. This Carolina woman may represent Bearden's mother, in which case the baby Jesus to come would be Bearden himself. By the happy accident of a generous gift from the distinguished collection of Roy R. Neuberger and Marie Salant Neuberger (Class of 1930), the college is also in possession of a major early oil painting by Bearden entitled *Madonna and Child* (fig. 31).

In many of Bearden's artworks, religious imagery interacts with history. The faces in Bearden's prints are saturated with history and "possess, even without the masks Bearden utilizes so deftly, masklike, stricken qualities."<sup>1</sup> The figures in *Carolina Memory* are no different. Bearden's layering of a photographic collage over the woman's face creates the effect of a mask. He reveals the soul of this woman by masking her, calling attention to her true spiritual identity by impeding the viewer's ability to see her face.<sup>2</sup> The mask worn by this woman also represents the everyday identity she wears for the world as a black woman in America. This was true in the 1910s during Bearden's Jim Crow youth, it was true in the 1960 and 1970s of the Civil Rights movement (the time period during which the image was created), and it is still true today, in the era of Black Lives Matter.

The woman's face is not only masked—it is also fragmented by its collaged surface. Rips and tears appear against the rich black and brown colors of the mask. These disparate fragments make up a precarious whole, an identity that does not exist in seamless unity. Through this fractured face, Bearden succeeds in his self-professed goal to "redefine the image of man" to include all facets of the human experience—black and white. According to John Williams, who knew Bearden personally and wrote a 1973 book about his art, the people in Bearden's images are composed of "fractures, flat colors, masks, and bits and pieces of photographs."<sup>3</sup> The self in modern America is similarly composed of many different elements of identity that do not make a coherent whole, but Bearden's compelling collaged compositions are a metaphor for America "at its best."<sup>4</sup>

Bearden's collage technique bears striking similarities to patchwork quilting, an art form that black slaves used to communicate coded messages.<sup>5</sup> Bearden's "patchwork cubism" shows the influence of African masks, much like the Sande women's helmet masks in this catalogue (plate 20).<sup>6</sup> Bearden's unique twist on cubism mixes modern art with African tribal art and African American folk art in a personal collage of his memories of growing up in the American South.<sup>7</sup>



**FIG. 31**  
Romare Howard Bearden  
**Madonna and Child**  
1945

Oil on canvas  
38 × 30 in. (96.5 × 76.2 cm)  
Gift of Roy R. Neuberger and Marie Salant Neuberger  
(Class of 1930)  
Bryn Mawr College 1948.3

*Carolina Memory* tells both a personal and a religious story and draws upon the global history of art, creating a liminal space where self and history intersect.

#### Alexandra Wilson (Class of 2017)

1. John A. Williams, *The Art of Romare Bearden: The Prevalence of Ritual* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1973), .
2. *Ibid.*, 17.
3. *Ibid.*, 18.
4. Roberta Smith, "Visions of Life, Built from Bits and Pieces," *The New York Times*, March 31, 2011.

5. "Romare Bearden," *The Art Story*, [www.theartstory.org/artist-bearden-romare.htm](http://www.theartstory.org/artist-bearden-romare.htm).
6. Hilton Kramer, "Romare Bearden Tied His Work to Race, But Was a Cubist," *New York Observer*, October 27, 2003.
7. *Ibid.*



**PLATE 22**

Fritz Janschka  
(Austrian, 1919–2016)

**Wilde**

1985

Color etching  
12 × 9 1/2 in. (30.5 × 24.1 cm)  
Bryn Mawr College  
2010.29.3.6

**22**

This color etching by Fritz Janschka caricatures Oscar Wilde as a dandy in ostentatious attire who is startled by his reflection in a mirror that he holds in his exquisitely gloved hand. The image is one of Janschka's commissioned illustrations for *Vom Denken der Dichter* (*From the Mind of the Poets*), a pocket book celebrating renowned authors in Western literature. Janschka has said that the illustrations are layered with symbolic references to the authors' lives and works. These hints helped him bring the particularities of each author "out of the darkness of the unconscious," he wrote in *Vom Denken der Dichter*.<sup>1</sup> In these author portraits, Janschka wrote, he tried "to point out what has been seen, what is present, and what is forgotten in the faces of the authors."<sup>2</sup> When I first encountered this etching, I saw a face that opens up possibilities of new experiences and new conversations.<sup>3</sup>

Janschka's etching is a witty reworking of one of Aubrey Beardsley's 1894 illustrations for Wilde's play *Salome*, "Enter Herodias" (see pp. 36–37 for more on Beardsley's *Salome* illustrations). Having shared some of the obloquy that the press poured on *Salome* and its author, Beardsley incorporated an unflattering characterization of Wilde in his illustration.<sup>4</sup> In a characteristically eccentric costume (an owl hat, a cane like a caduceus, and a clownish cloak), Beardsley's Wilde introduces *Salome* to the audience at the bottom-right corner of the stage. Onstage are Herod's wife, Herodias, whose sensuous nudity is barely veiled by a kimono-like robe, and two bizarre attendants: a naked youth and an old fetus-headed crone who serve the queen's adornment.

Rearranging the figures in Beardsley's illustration, Janschka designates Wilde as the central player in his etching and inscribes the onstage scene on the back of Wilde's mirror. Wilde, who notoriously declared, "I have never given adoration to anybody except myself," fixes his gaze on the mirror in Janschka's print.<sup>5</sup> This depiction of self-absorption echoes the famous egotism of the title character in Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). When Gray's portrait is first presented to him in Wilde's tale of vanity run amok, Gray is "motionless, dumbfounded, enraptured: these are the traits of the original mythological Narcissus, enamored of his own image."<sup>6</sup> However, unlike the water's surface that merely reflects Narcissus's corporeal beauty, Gray's portrait unmasks the inner corruption of his soul.<sup>7</sup>

Born in Vienna, Fritz Janschka was one of the founding members of the Vienna School of Fantastic Realism, which promoted a dream-like approach to image making. In 1949, on a one-year fellowship, Janschka came to Bryn Mawr as artist-in-residence, and remained at the college as a professor of fine arts for almost 40 years.<sup>8</sup> The college's Special Collections holds 40 of the original prints from the series of 100 aquatint illustrations that Janschka made for his pocket book of authors. A highlight of the research for this exhibition was a visit by Janschka's widow, Professor K. Porter Aichele of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, who received her doctorate in art history at Bryn Mawr in 1975. Professor Aichele told us how Janschka loved to make comical art and imitate other artists' pictorial styles, as he did for his exhibition *Fritz Janschka's Portrait Museum* in 2015.<sup>9</sup>

This portrait of Wilde expresses Janschka's belief in the artist's creativity and in the role of the viewer in completing the work of art. As Wilde wrote, "It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors."<sup>10</sup> Here, Janschka wittily envisions "Wilde receiving a Beardsley mirror"<sup>11</sup> and imprints this passing fantasy in a permanent image. The viewer brings his or her own imagination to Janschka's etching, which further unmasks the secret literary history of Wilde's works.

### Lizhu Duanmu (Class of 2017)

1. Fritz Janschka, "Über meine Arbeit," in *Vom Denken der Dichter: Mit 100 literarischen Selbstzeugnissen*, (Dortmund: Harenberg Kommunikation, 1986), 9: "das erst hervorgebracht wird aus dem Dunkel des Unterbewusstseins" (my translation).
2. *Ibid.*, 10: "in den Gesichtern der Autoren Gesehenes, Vorhandenes und Vergessenes aufzuzeigen."



**FIG. 32**  
Aubrey Vincent Beardsley (British, 1872–98)  
**Enter Herodias**  
After a drawing of 1894

From Oscar Wilde, *Salome, A Tragedy In One Act: Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde, with Sixteen Drawings by Aubrey Beardsley* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head/New York: John Lane Company, 1907)  
Bryn Mawr College Rare Books Collection

3. Richard Rushton, "What Can a Face Do?: On Deleuze and Faces," *Cultural Critique* 51 (spring 2002): 227.
4. Robert Ross, "A Note on 'Salome,'" *Salome: A Tragedy in One Act* (London and New York: J. Lane Co. and J. Lane, the Bodley Head, 1907), 15.
5. Steven Bruhm, "Taking One to Know One: Wilde and Narcissism," *English Studies in Canada* 21.2 (1995): 170.
6. *Ibid.*, 173.
7. Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 75: "This portrait would be to him the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul."
8. Dorothy Grafly, "Fritz Janschka," *The American-German Review* 20.1 (October 1, 1953): 6.
9. Bruce Buchanan, "Self-Portraits: Art World's First 'Selfies' on Display at Greenhill," *News & Record*, February 5, 2015.
10. Wilde, "The Preface," *Picture of Dorian Gray*, 3.
11. Janschka, "Über meine Arbeit," 10: "Oscar Wilde erhielt einen Beardsley-Spiegel."



**23** As the key to bodily self-fashioning, clothing in Japan during the late 19th century offered the means for an individual to proclaim his or her modernity by abandoning the kimono and traditional Japanese garb in favor of newly arrived Western clothes.<sup>1</sup> During the Meiji Period (1868–1912), the long-isolated people of Japan confronted the invasion of Western culture. In response, men wore frock coats and bowler hats, while women wore corseted waists and bustles. By imitating the dress of Europeans and Americans, 19th-century Japanese tastemakers were the new face of modern Japan.<sup>2</sup>

### PLATE 23

Unknown manufacture (Japanese)

#### Kimono

ca. 1940s

Textile

55 × 55 in. (139.7 × 139.7 cm)

Gift of Elizabeth Cray Vining (Class of 1923)

Bryn Mawr College 2005.6.16

This delicate kimono from the 1940s is entirely covered with clusters of blooming peonies in ivory, peach, and purple—decor characteristic of Japanese aesthetics. Kimonos like this one were criticized by progressive Japanese women for “glorifying a feudal ideal of woman as powerless chattel,” and in the late 19th century they became primarily a women’s garment, as most Japanese men turned to Western clothes.<sup>3</sup>

This kimono was given to Bryn Mawr’s Special Collections by the prize-winning children’s author Elizabeth Gray Vining (Class of 1923) along with dozens of other Japanese prints, garments, and scrolls. A portrait by Lotte Jacobi shows Vining sitting in front of her typewriter, perhaps preparing for one of her many voyages overseas (fig. 34). After World War II, Vining was selected by the Japanese imperial household and United States officials to tutor 12-year-old Crown Prince Akihito from 1946 to 1950.<sup>4</sup> The high esteem in which she was held in Japan is materialized in the piece of the *obi* of the empress of Japan that was given to her by the empire; the textile now resides in Special Collections.

In her book *Return to Japan*, Vining wrote of seeing “an enchanting little creature in a pale blue kimono whose flowered skirts, padded at the hem like wedding robes, trailed on the floor behind her.”<sup>5</sup> Following the war, young Japanese girls faced limited opportunities for education, and some trained to become geisha. The kimono, as a symbol of conservative cultural values, masked the harsh reality and lack of opportunity that young women encountered in postwar Japan.<sup>6</sup> Vining was gratified to see that Japanese girls’ lives were not totally grim—they could still wear flowered kimonos and “beauty was accessible to them all, and peace to some, gaiety and some luxury to others.”<sup>7</sup> Although the kimono might be viewed as constricting by contemporary feminists, Vining believed the aesthetics of the garment granted a certain power to these Japanese girls. The kimono went beyond its practicality to become an aesthetically powerful national symbol.<sup>8</sup>

Liza Dalby, a scholar of Japanese garments, wrote in her 1993 book *Kimono Fashioning Culture*, “No item in the storehouse of material culture maintains as strong a hold on the Japanese heart, mind and purse as kimono.” No matter how the materials or the design of the kimono may change over time, the cultural legacy of the kimono and its aesthetics are now appreciated on the same level as Western clothing.<sup>9</sup> “In Japan, clothing and wearer merge.... Once worn a kimono defines itself as part of the discourse of Japanese life,” Dalby wrote.<sup>10</sup> The kimono is not only a cultural object, but also an icon of the wearer’s self.

**Zixin Zeng (Class of 2018)**

1. Liza Crihfield Dalby, *Kimono Fashioning Culture* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 9.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 138.
4. Ann T. Keene, “Vining, Elizabeth Cray,” *American National Biography Online*, April 2004, [www.anb.org.proxy.bryn-mawr.edu/articles/16/16-03500.html](http://www.anb.org.proxy.bryn-mawr.edu/articles/16/16-03500.html).
5. Elizabeth Gray Vining, “Dedicated Girls,” in *Return to Japan* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1960), 97.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Dalby, *Kimono Fashioning Culture*, 141.
9. *Ibid.*, 3.
10. *Ibid.*, 4.



**FIG. 33**  
 Lotte Jacobi  
 (German, 1896–1990; naturalized American citizen in 1940)  
**Elizabeth Cray Vining**  
 ca. 1940s

Gelatin silver print  
 10 3/4 × 13 in. (27.3 × 33 cm)  
 Gift of James Tanis, Director of Libraries, 1969–96  
 Bryn Mawr College PA.1983.4.1

**FIG. 34**  
 Unknown manufacture (Japanese)  
**Piece of Her Majesty's obi**  
 ca. 1940s

Textile  
 25 × 12 1/2 in. (63.5 × 31.8 cm)  
 Gift of Elizabeth Gray Vining, Class of 1923  
 Bryn Mawr College 2005.6.10





**PLATE 24**

Deborah Deichler (American, born 1948)

**Dorinne in Kimono**

1986

Ink on paper

20 × 16 1/4 in. (50.8 × 41.3 cm)

The William and Uytendale Scott Memorial  
Study Collection of Works by Women Artists,  
gift of Bill Scott

Bryn Mawr College 2006.1.78

**24**

If a non-Japanese person wears a kimono, does this self-fashioning involve cultural appropriation? The fearless gaze of a woman named Dorinne replaces the absence of a Japanese body in this 1986 ink portrait by Deborah Deichler. As a departure from Utagawa Kunisada's traditional 19th-century *ukiyo-e* print of a kimono-clad Japanese woman (plate 5), Deichler's contemporary—and not at all traditional—portrait reignites the longstanding debate concerning the performance of cultural identity.

Deichler's portrait of her model wearing a kimono creates an intriguing juxtaposition between the attire and its wearer. Artist Carole Katchen wrote in an essay about Deichler's art, "In Deichler's portraits we always are aware of the subject, the appearance, personality and mood of whoever is posing, but at the same time we are also conscious of the artist sharing an emotional challenge or a subtle joke."<sup>1</sup> Instead of the restrained poses and facial expressions of the subjects in traditional *ukiyo-e* prints of Japanese women in kimonos, Deichler confronts the viewer head-on with Dorinne's defiant comportment. She stares at us audaciously, arms crossed in front of her chest and head tilted slightly to the left. We identify with Dorinne as if we are taking up a position in front of a mirror. Her posture reveals her confident appropriation of this attire, neither performing the stereotype of a Japanese woman nor drawing our attention to her culturally mixed appearance.

This is not the first time that a kimono appears on a non-Japanese wearer in a portrait. In 1876 French impressionist Claude Monet painted *La Japonaise*, a portrait of his wife, Camille, wearing a kimono. In 2015 the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, produced a series of "Kimono Wednesdays," where they hung *La Japonaise* and encouraged museum-goers to try on a replica kimono.<sup>2</sup> This programming fueled a debate about cultural identity and appropriation, as protesters accused the museum of encouraging participants to engage in a demeaning act of orientalism.<sup>3</sup>

Who gets to speak for the Japanese body beneath the traditional kimono? See this handsome example of the garment (fig. 35), given to the college by Ryoko Shibuya (MA 1957). Dorinne's face and body do not appear to be Japanese, and her pose is a direct confrontation with the viewer. Deichler's portrait does not reflect the traditional Japanese depiction of women as good mothers and wives.<sup>4</sup> In comparison to the kimono-wearing women in the traditional Japanese prints in this exhibition, Dorinne stands apart as an independent and autonomous figure wholly unconnected to Japan. Katchen wrote in her essay that Deichler picked the outfit in a "totally intuitive process."<sup>5</sup> It does not appear that Deichler intended to appropriate this cultural symbol of Japan as a racist gesture, but dressing Dorinne in this highly symbolic piece of attire highlights the tension between the self and the cultural "other." The kimono acts as both a mask concealing and a mirror revealing the cultural complexity of the self in Deichler's compelling drawing of Dorinne.

**Zixin Zeng (Class of 2018)**



**FIG. 35**  
Unidentified manufacture (Japanese)  
**Kimono**  
ca. 1980

Silk  
62 × 58 in. (157.5 × 147.3 cm)  
Gift of Ryoko Shibuya (MA 1957)  
Bryn Mawr College 2010.15.1.a-b

1. Carole Katchen, "Deborah Deichler," in *Painting Faces and Figures* (New York: Watson-Cuptill Publications, 1986), 74.
2. Julie Valk, "The 'Kimono Wednesday' Protests: Identity Politics and How the Kimono Became More Than Japanese," *Asian Ethnology* 74.2 (January 1, 2015): 379–399, 380.
3. *Ibid.*, 381.
4. Shizuko Koyama, "Ryōsai Kenbo Thought and the Public Education System," in *Ryōsai Kenbo: The Educational Ideal of "Good Wife, Wise Mother" in Modern Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 53.
5. Katchen, "Deborah Deichler," 74.





**PLATE 25**

Margaretta Gilboy  
(American, born 1943)  
**I'm Getting out of Lansdale**  
1986

Pastel on paper  
28 x 22 in. (71.1 x 55.9 cm)  
The William and Uytendale Scott  
Memorial Study Collection of Works by  
Women Artists, gift of Bill Scott  
Bryn Mawr College 2006.1.75

**25**

The mirror may provide “insight into the inner self” but it may also provoke “distortion and surface imagining.”<sup>1</sup> Margaretta Gilboy explores both of these aspects of the mirror in her complex self-portrait *I'm Getting Out of Lansdale*. Pastels offer her the immediacy of drawing what she sees, with the added benefit of vibrancy. Gilboy, who sat for hours in front of a “cheap, round, aluminum mirror” clipped to the edge of her drawing board, drew her reflection, as well as the space of the studio around her.<sup>2</sup>

Gilboy's reflection is enclosed by the circular frame of the mirror—a detail often omitted from self-portraits. Nancy Hagin's 1967 self-portrait (fig. 36) also acknowledges the artist's mirror; like Gilboy's portrait, it resides

in the William and Uytendale Scott Memorial Study Collection of Works by Women Artists, in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections. While Hagin executes the majority of her still-life paintings in acrylic, she adopts pencil for this portrait.<sup>3</sup> The pencil gives her self-portrait the immediacy of Cilboy's pastels.

What is the significance of the mirror in Gilboy's self-portrait? The mirror's enclosure acts as a sort of cage within which Gilboy is trapped, just as her uniform use of diagonal pastel strokes across the image's face and surroundings reinforce this sense of compression. The effect of this flattened confinement is compounded by the spatial disorientation of the piece. Influenced by cubism, Gilboy traps herself and subsequently the viewer in a space that is both "inside and out, up close and cropped," as she wrote to me in an email exchange.<sup>4</sup> Just below the mirror clipped to her easel, Gilboy's face is doubly framed by what appears to be a gold-framed painting inside her studio. But behind her reflected head, the mirror shows a grass lawn and a Weber grill, bringing the outdoors inside through what appears to be the third frame of a window. This spatial disorientation in the mirror embodies Gilboy's desire to escape the isolation of Lansdale, a small Pennsylvania suburb northwest of Philadelphia where I also attended high school before coming to Bryn Mawr. Utilizing the dual nature of this mirror, Gilboy expresses painstaking self-scrutiny as well as frustration at being stuck in Lansdale.

Raised and educated in Philadelphia, Cilboy loved the lively cultural scene and artistic community that the city offered. However, upon marrying her college sweetheart after graduating from the Philadelphia College of Art in 1965, she briefly resided in a condo that her husband rented in Lansdale, to which she never grew accustomed. There was "nothing stimulating" in Lansdale, far from her artist friends.<sup>5</sup>

As her title promises Gilboy did get out of Lansdale, moving to Boulder, Colorado, to teach, paint, and exhibit her art. Her two most recent solo exhibitions, in 2014 and 2016, featured figurative paintings of Asian subjects—based on photos she took from movies seen on her TV. The influence of Asian art, specifically Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints, has long been manifest in Cilboy's art. In this psychologically introspective self-portrait, Gilboy gets out of Lansdale by appropriating the flat patterns and spatial twists of the Japanese woodblock prints of women gazing into mirrors seen elsewhere in this catalogue (plate 5).<sup>6</sup>

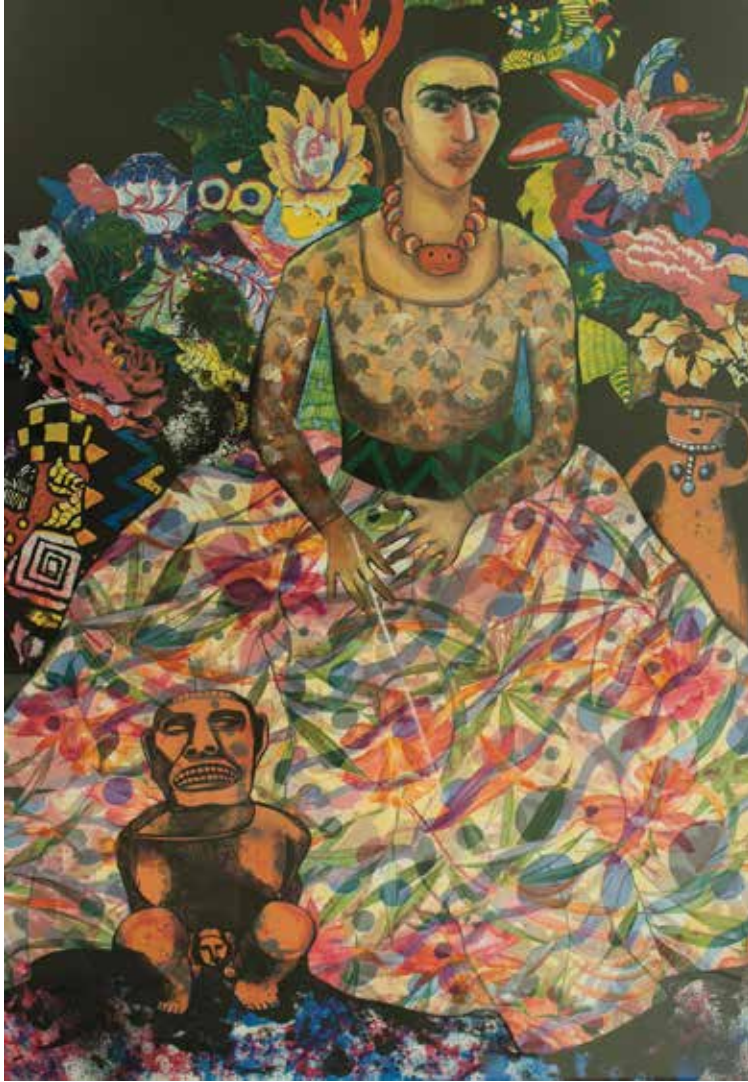
**Abigail Lua (Class of 2019)**



**FIG. 36**  
Nancy Hagin (American, born 1940)  
**Self-Portrait**  
1967

Pencil on paper  
12 3/4 x 9 1/2 in. (32.4 x 24.1 cm)  
The William and Uytendale Scott Memorial Study  
Collection of Works by Women Artists, gift of the artist  
Bryn Mawr College 2006.1.22

1. Helena Coscilo, "Vision, Vanitas, and Veritas: The Mirror in Art," *Studies in 20th- and 21st-Century Literature* 34.2 (summer 2010): 284.
2. Email from the artist, November 3, 2016.
3. "Nancy Hagin: Sumptuous Realist," *Persimmon Tree*, [www.persimmon-tree.org/v2/spring-2015/nancy-hagin-sumptuous-realist/](http://www.persimmon-tree.org/v2/spring-2015/nancy-hagin-sumptuous-realist/).
4. Email from the artist, November 3, 2016.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*



**PLATE 26**

Miriam Schapiro (American, 1923–2015)  
**Frida and Me**  
 1990

Planographic collage, color lithograph, paper,  
 cloth, and silk on paper  
 41 1/4 × 29 1/2 in. (106.4 × 75.4 cm)  
 Collection of Margaret M. Healy (PhD 1969)

**26**

When first looking at this large, electric print, one might mistake it for one of the self-portraits of the famous Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907–54). Upon closer inspection, one sees that the self-portrait is that of Miriam Schapiro, who masks herself in the iconic trappings of Kahlo. In Western culture, a mask is worn only over the face, but in other cultures, such as those of sub-Saharan Africa, a mask involves the entire body, from head to toe; see the Sande Society mask in this catalogue (plate 20).<sup>1</sup>

By wearing Kahlo’s personage as a mask, Schapiro connects Kahlo’s work to hers and thereby shows the connection she claims to all women artists. This connection is manifest through her use of *femmage*—a portmanteau word combining *femme*, the French word for “woman,” and “collage.” *Femmage* is a mixed-media art form created by Schapiro that

appears frequently in her works. *Frida and Me*, generously loaned to this exhibition by former Bryn Mawr College treasurer Margaret M. Healy (PhD 1969), is a prime example of *femmage* that combines fabric with paint and collage. Through her technique of *femmage*, Schapiro integrates the work of anonymous craftswomen, like the weavers of the fabric she uses, with the images made famous by celebrated women artists, preserving the masterpieces of female art history and aligning herself with an impressive feminist artistic genealogy.<sup>2</sup> The creation of *Frida and Me* was itself a collaboration between two women artists, with Schapiro working with master printer Eileen Foti to create the lithograph and honor their shared artistic heritage. See also Margo Humphrey’s *The History of Her Life Written across Her Face* (plate 28), also on loan from the Healy Collection, for another example of a mask-like self-portrait that examines identity.

Schapiro consolidates her act of *femmage* by combining features of her own face with Kahlo's iconic features.<sup>3</sup> Two selves come together to create one transpersonal, collective self that stands for countless female selves existing in and out of the art world. This reminds the viewer of the women artists forgotten in the canon of art history. The inclusion in the lower-left corner of a well-known sculpture of the Aztec goddess Tlazolteotl giving birth also strengthens Schapiro's bond with Kahlo, whose identity as a Mexican woman is at the forefront of her art. A haunting identification with the indigenous peoples of the Americas is also at the forefront of a self-portrait in our collection by Leah Rhodes, shown here, in which the artist dons the mask of the native warrior.

Kahlo represented a maternal figure for Schapiro, "the force that could make the world believe that even painting could belong to us."<sup>4</sup> Unlike other images from the series *Frida Kahlo and Me*, this work is not an exact replica of a specific self-portrait by Kahlo. It is instead an imagined self-portrait in a vibrant, overflowing floral garden that Schapiro crafted out of paint and fabric. Kahlo claimed to be part Jewish on her father's side, a detail that further personalizes their connection because of Schapiro's own Jewish ancestry. Schapiro was aware that Kahlo flaunted her femininity in a "masquerade of femaleness" to satisfy the desires of her husband, the painter Diego Rivera, but here Schapiro creates a fictional utopia in which the artistic and social creations of women are revered.<sup>5</sup> In the late 1970s, when Bryn Mawr art professor Fritz Janschka was on sabbatical leave, Schapiro taught for a semester in the fine arts department at Bryn Mawr, another utopia for women.

Schapiro began her art career in New York in the 1950s, in an art world largely dominated by male artists of the abstract expressionist school. In contrast to the hyper-masculine action paintings of Jackson Pollock and his peers, Schapiro's unique *femmage* works celebrate and preserve the legacy of women artists. The dichotomy between fine art and decorative art—the former usually associated with men and the latter with women—was problematic for Schapiro, and her work is evidence that art that is joyously ornamental can also be of the highest aesthetic quality and historical importance.<sup>6</sup> The power of *Frida and Me* emerges in Schapiro's unapologetic ownership of femininity as a source of creativity to be valued and shared.

**Alexandra Wilson (Class of 2017)**



**FIG. 37**  
Leah Rhodes (American, born ca. 1932)  
**Warrior Self-Portrait**  
1990

Oil pastel, charcoal, and graphite on wove paper  
30 × 22 in. (76.2 × 55.8 cm)  
The William and Uytendale Scott Memorial Study  
Collection of Works by Women Artists, gift of the artist  
Bryn Mawr College 2006.1.64

1. Z. S. Strother, "Invention and Reinvention in the Traditional Arts," *African Arts* 28.2 (spring 1995): 26.
2. Thalia Couma-Peterson, "Miriam Schapiro: An Art of Becoming," *American Art* 11.1 (spring 1997): 10–45.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Thalia Couma-Peterson, *Miriam Schapiro: Shaping the Fragments of Art and Life* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 127.
5. *Ibid.*, 128.
6. "Miriam Schapiro," National Museum of Women in the Arts, [nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/miriam-schapiro](http://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/miriam-schapiro).



**PLATE 27**

Rachel Bliss (American, born 1962)

**Self-Portrait**

1991

Mixed media on photographic paper  
3 1/2 × 4 3/4 in. (8.9 × 12 cm)

The William and Uytendale Scott Memorial Study Collection  
of Works by Women Artists, gift of Bill Scott  
Bryn Mawr College 2006.1.20

**27**

“Uncompromising and aggressive,” “angst-ridden,”<sup>1</sup> “totemic,”<sup>2</sup> “edgy,” and “haunting”<sup>3</sup>—Philadelphia-based artist Rachel Bliss has long been challenging local critics’ ability to articulate the raw expressiveness of her art. This masked self-portrait was executed in 1991 and given by Bill Scott to the college in 2006 as part of the William and Uytendale Scott Memorial Study Collection by Women Artists, which consists of more than 300 works.

This self-portrait was executed on photographic paper. As Bliss told me in an interview at her home, she likes to work on this durable paper, since it can bear her aggressive mark-making techniques, which include scratching, burning, and reworking. She “digs through” the paper’s emulsion (the light-sensitive chemical layer that coats photographic paper) to reveal the layers of blue, red, and yellow pigment underneath.<sup>4</sup> Working in her kitchen and dining space, Bliss frequently uses her stove and sink in the making of her art.

Her unique medium and unusual working process create a rich surface texture, which simultaneously hides and reveals a palimpsest of painterly and symbolic scrapes, scars, and faces. Her visage and mask both repel and alloy with one another. They battle for dominance of the painterly surface and fight to represent her identity. The carved vermilion eye sockets and protruding red lips of this portrait vehemently demand that the viewer reconsider the unstable compounds of a woman and the self—a cosmetic conundrum that also haunts us in an Egyptian death mask, the painted faces of traditional Chinese Opera, Willem de Kooning's 1954 abstract expressionist painting of Marilyn Monroe, and the made-up *Lovely Lady* in a 1977 photograph by Constance Maravell (Class of 1965) that is illustrated here (fig. 38).

Through repeated processes of adornment and self-adornment, representation and self-representation, a woman's identity is a collaborative creation of herself and others. "If I repeat the shape of my being enough times will that shape be seen?"<sup>5</sup> This question asked in the 1970s by Miriam Schapiro, whose masked self-portrait as Frida Kahlo is also in this catalogue, encapsulates the discourse on women's self-portraiture. They create themselves in their works. They live as and through their own creations.

Despite the made-up face of the figure, Bliss does not try to mask the pains and struggles of being a woman. Resembling a "worn icon,"<sup>6</sup> this self-portrait bears her nail polish, her hair, her creativity, her labor. Growing up in an artistic family, working and living in a North Philadelphia neighborhood that never lacks for struggle, conflict, or violence,<sup>7</sup> Bliss uses her art to vent both her own and other women's unsolvable predicaments.<sup>8</sup> Some of her friends and neighbors who had suffered from family abuse and sexual mistreatment would ask her to make portraits or narrative paintings for them so that by looking at these images they could expel their throes and be released from the pains of their past.<sup>9</sup> Her ferociously created portraits "shamanistically" speak to both our human distress and animalistic fear.<sup>10</sup> Bliss embraces all her identities—community activist, artist, and mother of three children.

### Zichu Zhao (Class of 2018)



**FIG. 38**  
Constance Maravell (American, born 1944; Class of 1965)  
**Lovely Lady**  
1977

Gelatin silver print  
6 9/16 × 4 7/16 in. (16.7 × 11.3 cm)  
Gift of the artist  
Bryn Mawr College 2014.18.25

1. Ilene Dube, "Pure Bliss," *The Artful Blogger*, June 25, 2009, [www.rachelbliss.com/documents/pure\\_bliss.pdf](http://www.rachelbliss.com/documents/pure_bliss.pdf).
2. R. B. Strauss, "Bliss Unveils her 'Ugly Beauty' at Snyderman," *Art Matters*, 2003, [www.rachelbliss.com/documents/ugly\\_beauty\\_strauss.pdf](http://www.rachelbliss.com/documents/ugly_beauty_strauss.pdf).
3. Robin Rice, "Education is Bliss," *Philadelphia City Paper*, June 16–22, 2005.
4. Interview with the artist on October 7, 2016.
5. Thalia Couma-Peterson, "Miriam Schapiro: An Art of Becoming," *American Art* 11.1 (spring 1997): 16.

6. James Dickinson, "Something Powerfully Beautiful: The Art and Illustration of Rachel Bliss," *A State of Bliss* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Rider University Gallery, 1997), 6.
7. *Ibid.*, 4.
8. Interview with the artist, October 7, 2016.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Susan Hagen, "Character Sketches," *Philadelphia City Paper*, November 22–29, 2001.



**PLATE 28**  
 Margo Humphrey  
 (American, born 1942)  
**The History of Her Life  
 Written Across Her Face**  
 1991

Lithograph  
 30 × 32 in. (81.3 × 74.9 cm)  
 Collection of Margaret M.  
 Healy (PhD 1969)

**28** With the minimum facial features, a pair of eyes, a nose, red lips, and black skin, Margo Humphrey's self-portrait *The History of Her Life Written Across Her Face* is not a mirror image of her face but instead presents the mask-like narrative of her life. Humphrey's narrative includes the meeting of a lover and the birth of twins—a life of intense trials and strong faith. Humphrey tells her dramatic story both in the hand-written inscription at the left edge of the print and through the rebuses and words that wind across her face. Together, words and images form a unique mask. Illustrating not only spatial but also psychic depth, Humphrey's visual and verbal mask constructs a beautifully imagined, symbolic self.

From an early age, Humphrey found herself surrounded by an artistic community that encouraged her to

cultivate her most expressive self. Born and raised in Oakland, California, Humphrey delved into the world of lithography during its West Coast renaissance in the early 1960s, receiving degrees in fine arts from the California College of Arts and Crafts and Stanford University.<sup>1</sup> Soon after graduating from Stanford, she began her academic career, arriving in 1989 at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she still teaches.<sup>2</sup> It was during her undergraduate and graduate art studies that Humphrey discovered figurative expressionism, a movement that allowed her to draw from her experiences as an African American woman to create art that is personal and empowering of others.

Although Humphrey believes in the empowerment of women, she has hesitated to embrace the mainstream feminist movement, which has not always been

inclusive of Black women. She participated in the Black Arts movement that emerged in the 1960s as she yearned to display the depth of African American culture through technically superior and emotionally profound art. As if to highlight the inclusion of African American women artists in the contemporary feminist movement, Margaret M. Healy (PhD 1969), the former treasurer of Bryn Mawr College and former president of Rosemont College, bought Humphrey's *History of Her Life* from the Brodsky Center for Innovative Print and Paper at Rutgers University; she loaned this piece and others to this exhibition. As she said during a class visit, Healy believes in the "worth and validity of women's work," including the work of African American women.<sup>3</sup> In this exhibition Humphrey's self-portrait shares a space with art by women who strive "to sustain a community diverse in nature"—a phrase from the Bryn Mawr College mission statement.<sup>4</sup>

In her self-portrait, Humphrey echoes Miriam Schapiro, whose self-portrait in the guise of Frida Kahlo is also on loan from Healy (see plate 26). Both women "challenge... the idea of identity as something stable, immediately apparent, and readily recognizable."<sup>5</sup> What does it mean, then, to be an African American woman artist in the 21st century? Humphrey's *History of Her Life* argues in its inscriptions that this woman must not keep to one world: she must look through both a "carnal eye" and a "spirit eye."<sup>6</sup> Crossing the physical and spiritual realms, Humphrey deconstructs boundaries to be her own woman; another inscription on *History of Her Life* reads: "Her faith kept her strong and she longed to be free. She had no choice but to dig in deep for a chance to make it happen. So she rose to the occasion screaming all the way. And fighting."<sup>7</sup> Humphrey has said that her radiant self-portrait "is about empowerment and the projection of oneself forward, about oppression as a vehicle for self-expression, and about the physical and inner beauty of African American women."<sup>8</sup> By way of comparison we feature here another striking example of the loving transmission of African American beauty from one generation to the next in a photograph by Carrie Mae Weems from the collection of Haverford College of mother and daughter doing their hair and applying makeup with the aid of their kitchen table mirrors (fig. 39).<sup>9</sup>

**Abigail Lua (Class of 2019)**



**FIG. 39**  
Carrie Mae Weems (American, born 1953)  
**Untitled (Mother and Daughter with Makeup)**, from **Kitchen Table Series**  
2010

Gelatin silver print on paper  
14 3/16 × 11 in. (36 × 28 cm)  
Haverford College HC14-5029

1. Adrienne L. Childs and Margo Humphrey, *Margo Humphrey* (Petaluma, CA: Pomegranate Communications, 2009), 13, 28.

2. University of Maryland Department of Art, [www.art.umd.edu/faculty/mhumphrey/](http://www.art.umd.edu/faculty/mhumphrey/).

3. Conversation with Margaret M. Healy, October 3, 2016.

4. "Mission," Bryn Mawr College, [www.brynmawr.edu/about/mission](http://www.brynmawr.edu/about/mission).

5. Thalia Gouma-Peterson, "Miriam Schapiro: An Art of Becoming," *American Art* 11.1 (spring 1997): 43.

6. Margo Humphrey, inscription on *The History of Her Life Written Across Her Face*, 1991.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Childs and Humphrey, *Margo Humphrey*, 64.





**PLATE 29**

Pele deLappe (American, 1916–2007)

**Self-Portrait (On Being Female)**

1991

Lithograph on paper

16 5/8 × 13 1/16 in. (42.3 × 33.2 cm)

Collection of Margaret M. Healy (PhD 1969)

**29**

Pele deLappe’s *Self-Portrait (On Being Female)* reveals a multivalent sense of identity in the artist’s gesture of masking and unmasking. DeLappe was 75 years old when she made this lithograph in 1991, and she continued to produce significant work until her death at 91. Born in 1916, deLappe lived through massive changes in American society, including the Great Depression, the Civil Rights era, and the 1960s counter-cultural revolution. These societal shifts, her leftist political views, and her relationships with politically motivated artists shaped both her artistic practice and her vision of herself as a woman.

Her father, Wes deLappe, a labor cartoonist and social activist, introduced his daughter to Marxist rhetoric and a sharp graphic style. These tools enabled her to answer

the question she posed in her memoir: “How was I going to amount to anything in a man’s world?”<sup>1</sup> She utilized the social realist style of her day to create art that discusses the political issues she deeply valued.<sup>2</sup> Art historian Bram Dijkstra characterizes deLappe’s work as “expressionist realism,” a confrontation, through emotion, with the “harsher realities of existence.”<sup>3</sup>

As deLappe’s daughter Nina Sheldon said on the occasion of her mother’s death, such political passion was deLappe’s lifelong motivation: “She was always on the side of the downtrodden. She spent her whole life dedicated to civil rights causes and to social movements.”<sup>4</sup> At 18 she was attending workers’ rights protests, and in the 1930s she officially joined the Communist Party. She drew illustrations for the *San Francisco*



**FIG. 40**  
 Fabio Herrera  
 (Costa Rican, born 1954)  
**Humanidad [Humanity]**  
 1990

Serigraph  
 13 5/8 × 21 3/4 in. (34.6 × 55.3 cm)  
 Gift of Howard H. Levine and  
 Jacqueline Koldin Levine (Class  
 of 1946)  
 Bryn Mawr College 2012.27.442

*Chronicle*, edited the San Francisco Communist Party papers *People's World* and *New Masses*, and worked for the *West Oakland Beacon*, a Bay Area African American newspaper, where she was the only white woman on staff.<sup>5</sup> One of few women working in this visual mode of political critique, deLappe enjoyed intimate relationships with left-leaning artists such as David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, and especially Frida Kahlo, whose iconic portraits inspired feminist artist Miriam Schapiro's *Frida and Me* (plate 26).<sup>6</sup> Illustrated here, a serigraph in Special Collections by the Costa Rican artist Fabio Hernandez (fig. 40) deploys a skull-like mask of despair in the midst of a company of political emancipators that includes Abraham Lincoln and Karl Marx.

In *Self-Portrait* we see the politically motivated deLappe turning her regard from the masses back onto herself. Taking off a mask's disguise and revealing an aged face, she looks not directly at the viewer, but off to the side. A drawing of a sumptuous nude behind her seems to be a reminiscence of her younger self. Underneath the mask is a conservative woman—not the bohemian we might have expected deLappe to resemble, but an elderly woman with curled white hair and pearls. DeLappe's courage in revealing the vulnerable markers of the self—the reality of her aging body, the symbolic mask of the political activist, and the imaginary ideal of herself as a beautiful woman—makes this remarkable self-portrait into a radical reconfiguration of femininity as plural and in flux.<sup>7</sup>

**Laurel McLaughlin (MA candidate, History of Art)**

1. Pele deLappe, *Pele: A Passionate Journey Through Art & the Red Press* (New York: Singer Printing, 1999), 2.
2. Gretchen Giles, "Love's Labor Won: Petaluma Artist Pele deLappe's Passionate Journey," *North Bay Bohemian*, September 12–18, 2002, 1.
3. *Ibid.* See also Bram Dijkstra, *American Expressionism: Art and Social Change 1920–1950* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 12.
4. Jonathan Curiel, "Pele deLappe—artist, journalist, and civil rights activist dead at 91," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 4, 2007.
5. Spencer Jon Helfen Fine Arts, "Pele deLappe," [www.helfenfinearts.com/index.html](http://www.helfenfinearts.com/index.html).
6. For more on American communist artists working in the WPA during the New Deal, see Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement 1926–1956* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 90. Hemingway discusses the rarity of female artistic participation, deLappe being one of the few women WPA artists.
7. The concepts of gendered masquerade and multiple femininities come from Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as Masquerade," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10 (1929): 303–313.



Art © Emma Amos/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

### PLATE 30

Emma Amos (American, born 1938)

#### **Giza, Emma, and Larry**

1993

Lithograph with chine-collé

22 x 30 in. (55.9 x 76.2 cm)

Collection of Margaret M. Healy (PhD 1969)

## 30

Emma Amos's collaged lithograph *Giza, Emma, and Larry*, on loan from Bryn Mawr treasurer emeritus Margaret M. Healy (PhD 1969) serves the artist as both mirror and mask.<sup>1</sup> On the left, the flailing figure of Giza falls through endless painted space; a strip of colorful kente cloth divides the frame in two, and a childhood photograph of the artist and her brother Larry clings to the lower right corner of the print. The complex lithograph integrates a self-reflective mirror of Amos's personal history with a wider political history of racial and gendered adversity that masks the autonomy of the self.<sup>2</sup>

*Giza, Emma, and Larry* is a palimpsest where Amos exposes the sedimentation of personal and political history.<sup>3</sup> This lithograph reproduces a photograph from her childhood alongside the falling representation of her former student, Giza Daniels-Endesha, who died of AIDS. Amos uses textiles and a mixture of graphic



**FIG. 41**  
Unknown weaver (West African)  
**Kente cloth**  
20th century

115 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 81 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (294 × 208 cm)  
Gift of Jane Martin (Class of 1953)  
Bryn Mawr College 2016.14.58

media to refer to multiple histories that both occlude her interiority, in the fashion of a mask, and divulge it, in the manner of a mirror. She describes her plan for *The Falling Series* as a means to re-animate her art with an empathetic imperative—to urge viewers of her work to engage with political issues concerning race, gender, and sexual orientation.

As viewers we are implicated in the fall through our empathy with Ciza's plight. We identify in a haptic way with the fingerprint-like marks on the edge of the lithograph that communicate a kinship with the falling figure. The mask-like quality of the old photograph, however, resists full empathetic connection in its past-ness. Although smiling faces gaze out of the family snapshot of Larry and Emma in their native Georgia, the sepia-toned photograph resonates as a loss across the endless gulf that separates the siblings from the plummeting body of Giza in AIDS-plagued New York. Together, photograph and drawn figure evoke a sense of communal loss faced by generations of African Americans, a topic that informs much of Amos's work.

Kente cloth, like this example from Bryn Mawr's Special Collections (fig. 41), sutures the disparate times and spaces of Amos's lithograph. The colorful cloth acts as a bridge between our immediate connection with the falling body and the memorial distance of the photograph. Woven in West Africa and representing proud familial lineage, kente cloth binds kin together across time and space, in spite of loss and even death.<sup>4</sup> Kente cloth is a symbol of hope that also appears in the work of Romare Bearden, an influential figure in Amos's

career. The dynamism of the woven fabric resists closure, as the falling figure never meets the ground and the two sides of the diptych-like composition never reach resolution. Amos thus inscribes unrest within the poignant layers of a work that provokes political urgency and honors historical reminiscence.<sup>5</sup>

#### Laurel McLaughlin (MA candidate, History of Art)

1. Wendy Steiner, "Postmodernist Portraits," *Art Journal* 46.3 (autumn 1987): 173–177. Steiner discusses the layered paradoxes at work within postmodern portraiture.
2. Courtney Martin, "Emma Amos in Conversation with Courtney J. Martin," *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* 30 (spring 2002): 104–113, 107.
3. Sharon Patton and Emma Amos, "Emma Amos," *Art by African Americans in the Collection of the New Jersey State Museum* (Trenton: New Jersey State Museum, 1998), 12.
4. Lisa Farrington, "Emma Amos: Bodies in Motion," *International Review of African American Art* 21.2 (2007): 32–44.
5. Sharon Patton, "Emma Amos: Art Matters," *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* 16–17 (fall–winter 2002): 40–47, describes the political resistance in Amos's work.



**PLATE 31**

David Graham (American, born 1952)

**Bud Burkhart as William Penn,  
Three Arches, Levittown, PA  
1993**

Chromogenic color print  
19 x 19 in. (48.3 x 48.3 cm)  
Gift of B. Herbert Lee and Margery  
Peterson Lee (Class of 1951)  
Bryn Mawr College 2007.12.9

**31**

There is a stilled quality to this image of historical reenactor Bud Burkhart masked as Pennsylvania's founder, William Penn (1644–1718), as if a movie has been paused. Burkhart stands at the end of a hallway, partially turned towards us, chin slightly out, actively posing. He confronts the viewer as one confronts a mirror. The sharp focus of this glossy photograph showcases Burkhart's costume: his Quaker hat, his waistcoat, and the quill he holds. However, several incongruities emerge, troubling the photograph's dramatic unity as we notice the red exit sign, the thermostat, even the candle, which is electric. A gift from Margery Peterson Lee (Class of 1951) and her husband, this photograph shares its subject with John Sartain's 19th-century mezzotint (fig. 42), also in Special Collections. Sartain's print is itself a reenactment since there is no authentic image of Penn from the prime of his life, perhaps as a result of Quakerly discretion. The portrait head is excerpted from

Sartain's engraved copy of a full-length portrait of Penn painted by Henry Inman in 1832 more than 100 years after the founder's death.<sup>1</sup>

The Penn photograph is one among many images of costumed historical reenactors in David Graham's oeuvre. Graham has taken portrait photographs of Americans with his 8-by-10 view camera for 35 years.<sup>2</sup> Travelling the United States, he captures "the colorful, sometimes surreal, and often bizarre," seeking subjects who "celebrate our singular freedom of expression in colorful roadside attractions and general oddities."<sup>3</sup> In a catalogue introduction, writer Andrei Codrescu asserts that Graham "makes Americans look foreign."<sup>4</sup>

Graham's style has affinities with what art historian Julian Stallabrass defines as ethnographic photography of the colonized Other.<sup>5</sup> This blank style of contemporary photography, Stallabrass argues, focuses "attention on the visual fact of the subject's passive body in all its particularities and peculiarities."<sup>6</sup> The resulting imaginary presence arises partly from the sheer size and rich color of such photographs.<sup>7</sup> This corresponds to Graham's goals for his camera: "I wanted to get the most out of it. So I loaded in detail, color, subject, structure, historical references, and humor—I wanted everything."<sup>8</sup>

At the heart of Graham's reenactment is the question of photography itself, for as theorist Susan Sontag wrote in *On Photography*, "photographs actively promote nostalgia"<sup>9</sup> by turning the past into an "object of tender regard."<sup>10</sup> Graham's photograph of William Penn expresses a longing for an idealized past that erases the specificity of colonial history, just as a mask obscures a wearer's face. "This *simulacrum* of the person portrayed thus functions as a surrogate presence."<sup>11</sup>

But this image of Burkhart as Penn disrupts the unity of space and time presumed to exist in photographs. The intrusion of modern technology into the colonial scene creates distance. Why does Graham trouble the viewer's mirror identification with the colonial founder, why does he remind us that William Penn is long gone and that soon enough Burkhart will be gone too? Graham emphasizes the oscillation of absence and presence, applying it to America itself. He acknowledges feelings of dread for the future and the desire to return to a greater past, sentiments strongly present in our current political landscape. Assuming a different American identity via the mask of the past might pacify these feelings and restore something lost, if it were not for the ominous incongruity of the exit sign.

**Alexa Chabora (Class of 2018)**

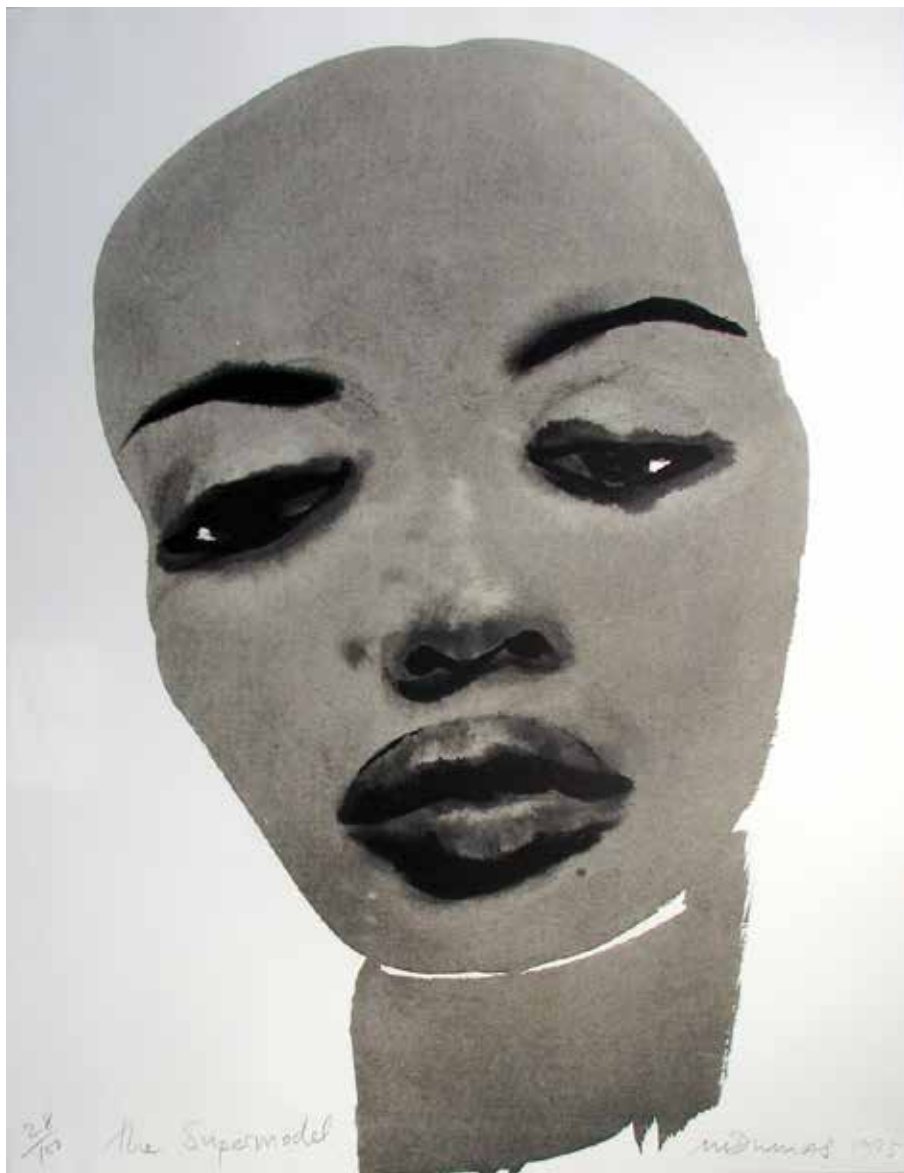


**FIG. 42**  
John Sartain (American, 1808–97)  
**William Penn**  
ca. 1830s

8 7/8 × 5 1/2 in. (22.5 × 14 cm)  
Gift of John Freas  
Bryn Mawr College SAR.79

1. Cary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 207. Thanks to Ellen C. Miles (Class of 1964) and Helena E. Wright (Class of 1968), both of the Smithsonian Institution, for their helpful advice on Sartain's portrait of Penn.  
2. David Rosenberg, "35 Years of Capturing America's Disappearing Quirk," *Slate Magazine*, February 14, 2014, [http://www.slate.com/blogs/behold/2014/02/14/david\\_graham\\_looking\\_back\\_at\\_35\\_years\\_of\\_photographing\\_the\\_unusual\\_side.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/behold/2014/02/14/david_graham_looking_back_at_35_years_of_photographing_the_unusual_side.html).  
3. "Biography," David Graham | Photography, <http://www.davidgrahamphotography.com/bio.html>.

4. David Graham and Andrei Codrescu, "Introduction," *Land of the Free: What Makes Americans Different* (New York: Aperture, 1999), 6–7.  
5. Julian Stallabrass, "What's in a Face? Blankness and Significance in Contemporary Art Photography," *October* 122 (2007): 71.  
6. *Ibid.*, 84–85.  
7. *Ibid.*, 84.  
8. Rosenberg, "35 Years of Capturing America's Disappearing Quirk."  
9. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 2001), 15.  
10. *Ibid.*, 71.  
11. Richard Brilliant, "Portraiture," *Oxford Art Online* (Oxford University Press), [www.oxfordartonline.com/article/opr/t234/e0413](http://www.oxfordartonline.com/article/opr/t234/e0413).



**PLATE 32**

Marlene Dumas  
(South African, b. 1953)

**The Supermodel**

1995

Three-color lithograph  
26 × 20 1/4 in. (66 × 51.4 cm)  
Gift of B. Herbert Lee and Margery  
Peterson Lee (Class of 1951)  
Bryn Mawr College 2007.12.8

**32** Although commercial makeup does not share the same artisanal form of manufacture as the Sande and Noh masks that appear elsewhere in this catalogue, makeup may also render the face a mask, as seen in Marlene Dumas's 1995 print *The Supermodel*. This striking lithograph was featured at Dumas's first solo exhibition in her homeland of South Africa: *Intimate Relations*, in 2007.<sup>1</sup> In *The Supermodel* the intimate relation in question is not primarily an encounter with another individual, such as the viewer, but rather the intimate relationship with the self in the mirror, the made-up self of the cosmetic and fashion industry.

Minimalistic in composition, *The Supermodel* depicts the isolated face of a black woman, stripped of hair

and other parts of the head, such as the ears, so much so that its outline resembles that of a handled mirror or a mask. These absences of feature, as well as the lack of depth in the face emphasize the expression of her eyes and lips, which Dumas heavily prints with dark ink. The thickly applied ink gives the appearance of a glamorous made-up face that is also a lifeless mask. The model's gaze drops slightly below the viewer's direct line of sight; her seductive mask does not hide the woman's gloomy expression but rather intensifies it.

Rife with political implications, Marlene Dumas's art challenges her viewers and questions societal conventions. Born and raised in apartheid-era South Africa,

Dumas attended art school in Cape Town in the 1970s, where she learned about the power of political art. However, it was not until she went to the Netherlands in 1976 that Dumas was able to use art to respond to the injustice of South African apartheid. This unique position “between exile and integration,” between Western Europe and South Africa, heightened Dumas’s sensibilities regarding the political unrest wrought by apartheid.<sup>2</sup> Realizing that as a white South African she was, in her own words, “part of the wrong system,” Dumas resolved not to create art through a “victimized” point of view.<sup>3</sup> Instead, she intends to disrupt racist ideologies that oppress millions of people on account of the color of their skin.<sup>4</sup>

For women of color, Western beauty standards revolving around whiteness have clouded any attempt to display their beauty, even if they wear the same made-up mask as white women. Romantic poets, for instance, “equated beauty with sun and light,” while even earlier Western authors saw ugliness as “the dark, disagreeable, unpleasant and sorry face of evil,” generating a binary opposition between light and dark skin.<sup>5</sup> As seen in the poignant positioning of the black face of the supermodel against an empty, white background, there is a tragic push and pull between the black individual’s desire to be beautiful and the seemingly universal beauty standard of whiteness. This white background surreptitiously seeps into the supermodel’s portrait at the jawline, as if choking her. As a result, the relationship with the self becomes an act of psychological estrangement as the “veneer of perfection” focused on whiteness is rendered taunting yet unreachable despite the commercial mask of cosmetics.<sup>6</sup>

Confronting negative attitudes towards blackness, Dumas uses *The Supermodel* to declare the validity of black beauty. Although Western beauty standards are seemingly ingrained in societies around the world—exemplified here by a photograph of the famous fashion model Twiggy applying false eyelashes—*The Supermodel* reasserts that beauty is not confined to one norm but is ever shifting.<sup>7</sup> As a young woman of color, I appreciate that Dumas critiques not the idea that whiteness is beautiful but the idea that blackness is not beautiful. The intimate relation with the cosmetically fashioned self can be emotionally and psychologically challenging, but *The Supermodel* asserts that this woman of color is beautiful with or without the mask.

**Abigail Lua (Class of 2019)**



**FIG. 43**  
Unknown photographer  
**Twiggy Putting on Eyelashes**  
1966

Gelatin silver print on paper  
9 3/8 × 7 1/16 in. (23.9 × 18 cm)  
Purchase through Fogel Photography Fund, October 2014  
Haverford College HC14-5416

1. Emma Bedford and Marlene Dumas, *Marlene Dumas: Intimate Relations* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2007), 33.
2. *Ibid.*, 34.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Anthony Synnott, “Truth and Goodness, Mirrors and Masks—Part I: A Sociology of Beauty and the Face,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 40.4 (December 1989): 625, 622.
6. Bedford and Dumas, *Intimate Relations*, 42.
7. *Ibid.*





**PLATE 33**

Sigmund Abeles  
(American, born 1934)

**NL/SA, Couple, Fits Like A Glove**  
1999

Pastel on paper  
41 x 34 1/2 in. (104.1 x 87.6 cm)  
Collection of Nora Lavori (Class of 1971)

**33**

“Chronicling the meeting of the most special woman in my life,” the American artist Sigmund Abeles drew a pastel double portrait of himself and Nora Lavori (Class of 1971), a prominent New York attorney and former trustee of Bryn Mawr College.<sup>1</sup> The romantic metaphor in the title, that the couple fit one another like a hand fits a glove, is visualized in Abeles’s symbolic gesture of pulling on a glove on his right hand, the same hand he uses to make his art. Through a “penetrating analysis of the outward appearance of essential inner self,” this double portrait shows Abeles’s reflection on his life as a man and as an artist.<sup>2</sup> His selfhood is actualized

through the intimate link with the other, either the partner portrayed in the pastel or the viewer standing in front of it.

This pastel was exhibited in Abeles’s hometown retrospective *From Whence I’ve Come* in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in 2007. Abeles wrote a short autobiographical caption for each work, recounting the subject, the circumstance, the reason for making the image, and any special attitude or feeling he might have towards the work.<sup>3</sup> In these texts, he acknowledged his intention to dress himself up in this self-

image: “While I do not daily prescribe to the black outfits many city folks do, here I look downright rabbinical, my heritage.”<sup>4</sup> Standing at Abeles’s right hand is Lavori, in her green coat and bright orange gloves. Unlike Anders Leonard Zorn’s double portrait etching with his wife from 1890 (fig. 44), in which the light partially illuminates the couple immersed in the darkness of hazy crosshatching, Abeles’s portrait emphasizes the vivid presence of his subjects, whose solidity is built up by layers of rich pastels in saturated colors against a white background.

Abeles’s frontal double portrait is supplemented at the bottom of the paper with a scene of miniature figures that add a sense of disorientation: miniature versions of Lavori and Abeles meet on a sidewalk, as seen from the perspective of “city heights,”<sup>5</sup> which the artist derives from having lived in New York high-rise apartments since the late 1950s. In this virtuoso gaze downwards, Abeles sees the couple as metropolitan strollers and active spectators in the urban scene. Mixing differently scaled figures and different perspectives attests to Abeles’s extraordinary artistic skill.

During his childhood Abeles was a silent observer, sitting on the stairs of his mother’s Myrtle Beach rooming house. Watching people coming and going, he was “attuned to the actions and rituals of humans going about daily life.”<sup>6</sup> “Capturing the truth of human experience in all of its emotional, psychological and intellectual reality,”<sup>7</sup> Abeles’s intensely felt portrait echoes Louis Muhlstock’s pastel *The Portrait of a Young Black Woman* (plate 16).

Abeles calls the bottom scene in his drawing a “predella panel,” using the Italian term for small narrative paintings that run along the bottom of altarpieces.<sup>8</sup> Naming himself heir to the artistic tradition of the Renaissance, Abeles makes a manifesto of being a modern figurative artist with a life-long dedication to the classical genre. He thus casts himself in a dramatic confrontation with his abstract expressionist contemporaries who dominated the New York art scene when he was a young artist. This trend did not stop Abeles practicing figurative art, for he was inspired by Rembrandt, Degas, and Lucian Freud.<sup>9</sup> Engaging in conversation with many generations of figurative artists, Abeles transforms his imagery from a snapshot of his personal story in the transient urban scene to a timeless bearer of artistic tradition extending back centuries.

**Lizhu Duanmu (Class of 2017)**



**FIG. 44**  
Anders Leonard Zorn (Swedish, 1860–1920)  
**Zorn and His Wife**  
1890

Etching  
16 1/16 × 10 13/16 in. (40.8 × 27.4 cm)  
Gift of Clarissa Compton Dryden (Class of 1932, MA 1935)  
Bryn Mawr College 1988.3

1. Sigmund Abeles, *From Whence I’ve Come* (Myrtle Beach, SC: Franklin C. Burroughs—Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum, 2007), n.p.
2. George Keyes, “Portraiture—Mirror or Mask?” *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 83.1–4 (2009): 5.
3. Thomas L. Johnson, “Sigmund Abeles: A Retrospective,” in *From Whence I’ve Come*, n.p.
4. Abeles, *From Whence I’ve Come*, n.p.
5. *Ibid.*

6. Sara Sobota, “A Gracious Host: Sigmund Abeles Exhibit Highlights Artist’s Lifelong Creative Insights,” *Grand Strand* (October–November 2012), 43.
7. Johnson, “Sigmund Abeles: A Retrospective,” n.p.
8. Abeles, *From Whence I’ve Come*, n.p.
9. Craig Brandhorst, “Sigmund Abeles: Measuring Up,” *Carolynian: University of South Carolina Alumni Magazine* (fall 2015), 17.



**PLATE 34**  
Merrill Mason  
(American, born 1949)  
**Blocking the Light**  
2000

Chromogenic color print  
20 × 24 1/2 in.  
(50.8 × 62.2 cm)  
Gift of the artist  
Bryn Mawr College  
2004.18.2

## 34

A woman in a sumptuous red robe sits at a metallic vanity, her hand raised to block the harsh light that illuminates two mirrors, one modern, one antique, though neither one reflects an image. Despite *Blocking the Light*'s lush red color, the surrounding black void signals something sinister. Mason casts familiar objects—including brushes, perfume bottles, and mirrors—in iron, so that “transparent becomes opaque, soft becomes hard, reflective becomes light-absorbing,” as she said in a 2008 interview. The hand of the woman in the photograph seems translucent, adding “another material oddness.”<sup>1</sup>

For Mason, her Red Robe series of large-scale photographs “is about picturing a woman in a private, personal space.”<sup>2</sup> Commissioned by the Kohler Arts Center in Wisconsin, the series features seven interconnected scenes depicting the iron vanity, the woman, the mirrors, and other intimate toiletry objects in iron. Only *Blocking the Light*, the third photograph in the series, suggests an intruder in the woman’s personal mind-space. The artist gave five of the photographs in the series to Bryn Mawr after she participated in the college’s exhibition *Picturing Women* in 2004. Mason cites Baroque artists such as Vermeer and Caravaggio

as influencing the series, saying, “I was thinking of Dutch still lifes and interiors ... but with a little bit of mystery and decadence.”<sup>3</sup> She also evokes the “strange, frightening, hallucinations” she had as a child, adult reminiscences of which may lend the photographs their eeriness.

In the Red Robe photograph entitled *Entrance* (fig. 45), Mason again juxtaposes cold metal objects “with the implied life of the skin beneath the red velvet robe,” calling this an example of *vanitas*.<sup>4</sup> Latin for emptiness, *vanitas* was a popular painting genre in 17th-century Europe, focusing on human fragility through symbolic objects like skulls, flowers, and candles.<sup>5</sup> This allegorical theme of transience coincided with the artistic tradition of depicting women at their toilettes. Dating to the Renaissance, these portraits depicted women applying makeup and adorning themselves.<sup>6</sup> They also demonstrated women’s lack of privacy and associated women with the evanescence of mirror imagery.<sup>7</sup> In the 17th and 18th centuries, women of the French court held public enactments of their toilette, like Madame de Pompadour in François Boucher’s mid-18th-century painting, which art historian Melissa Hyde discussed in a 2010 article. As Hyde explained, makeup was viewed in French society as a “vehicle for fashioning and repre-

**FIG. 45**  
Merrill Mason  
**Entrance**  
2000

Chromogenic color print  
20 × 24 1/2 in.  
(50.8 × 62.2 cm)  
Gift of the artist  
Bryn Mawr College  
2004.18.1



senting identity” as well as a “vehicle for feminine deceit.”<sup>8</sup> As a young woman today, I find that makeup is still viewed by many in our culture as essential to feminine self-representation, yet as potentially deceitful as well.

Mason troubles the toilette tradition by showing a woman in a defensive position unable to see any reflection of her “self” in this intimate mental space. Photography has been described by theorist Susan Sontag as violating its subjects’ privacy “by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have.”<sup>9</sup> As viewers of Mason’s photographs, we have access to an image of the woman that she can never have. She sits in front of non-reflective mirrors, unable to literally see herself or parse her identity. The two very different mirrors that appear in both of Mason’s photographs here attest to conflicting ideas of feminine identity, one simple and sleek, the other ornate and glamorous. Mason admits she photographed several models for the *Red Robe* series, to create “a fictionalization” rather than an idealized woman.<sup>10</sup> This multiplicity speaks to the well-known practices of contemporary photographer Cindy Sherman and her idea that “femininity is multiple, fractured,” that every morning women are faced with

a multitude of images they can wear.<sup>11</sup> The woman’s defensive gesture in *Blocking the Light* appears as a reaction to the constant societal interrogation that women face in their bathroom and bedroom mirrors. Mason’s compelling images suggest that the self, like the plot of the *Red Robe* series, is equally enigmatic and ambiguous.

#### Alexa Chabora (Class of 2018)

1. “Red Robe: Short Story:” Interview with Merrill Mason,” in *Re-framing Representations of Women*, ed. Susan Shifrin (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK; and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 281–282.
2. “Bryn Mawr Now: Artist Merrill Mason to Speak About Identity,” *Bryn Mawr Now*, April 15, 2004.
3. “Red Robe: Short Story,” 281–282.
4. *Ibid.*, 284.
5. Hans J. Van Miegroet, “Vanitas,” *Grove Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T087870>.
6. Elise Goodman-Soellner, “Poetic Interpretations of the ‘Lady at Her Toilette’ Theme in Sixteenth-Century Painting,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14.4 (winter 1983): 426.
7. Alissa J. Rubin, “La Toilette: 500 Years of Watching Women Undress in Art,” *The New York Times*, June 22, 2015.
8. Melissa Hyde, “The ‘Makeup’ of the Marquise: Boucher’s Portrait of Pompadour at Her Toilette,” *The Art Bulletin* 82.3 (September 2010): 453–458.
9. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 2001), 14.
10. “Red Robe: Short Story,” 280.
11. Judith Williamson, “A Piece of the Action: Images of ‘Woman’ in the Photography of Cindy Sherman,” in *Cindy Sherman*, ed. Johanna Burton (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 51, 39.

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**MIRRORS AND MASKS  
REFLECTIONS AND  
CONSTRUCTIONS  
OF THE SELF**

March 23–June 15, 2017  
Class of 1912 Rare Book Room  
Canaday Library  
Bryn Mawr College

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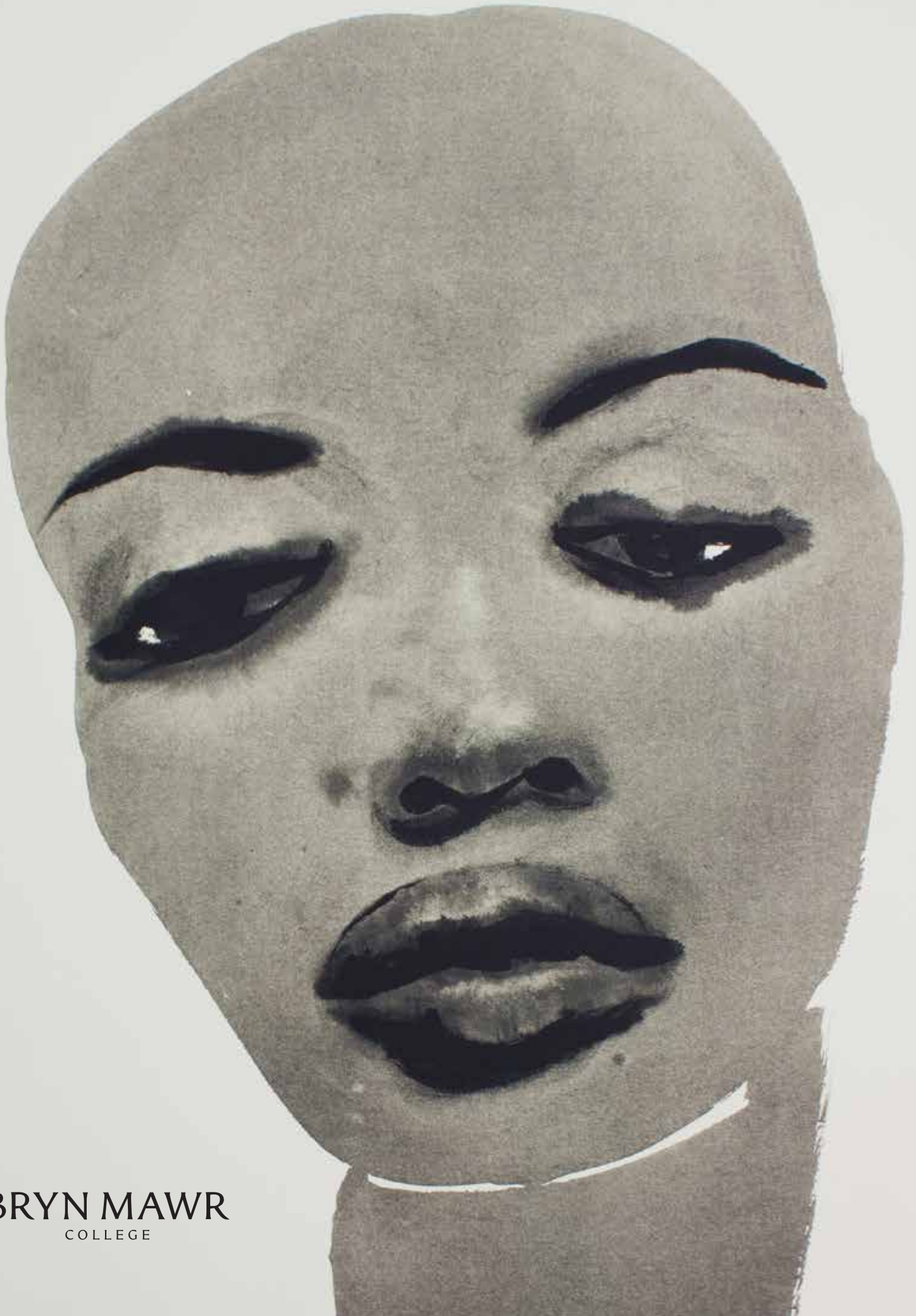
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**360° Class Visit to  
National Portrait Gallery,  
Washington, DC**  
October 21, 2016

BACK COVER  
See plate 32, page 84





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