

2004

## Hair: Untangling a Social History

Penny Howell Jolly

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### Recommended Citation

Jolly, Penny Howell, "Hair: Untangling a Social History" (2004). *Art History Faculty Scholarship*. 8.  
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# HAIR

## UNTANGLING A SOCIAL HISTORY

**Penny Howell Jolly**

WITH ESSAYS BY

**Gerald M. Erchak, Amelia Rauser,  
Jeffrey O. Segrave, and Susan Walzer**

THE FRANCES YOUNG TANG  
TEACHING MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY  
AT SKIDMORE COLLEGE

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Jolly, Penny Howell.

Hair : untangling a social history / Penny Howell Jolly ; with essays  
by Gerald M. Erchak ... [et al.].

p. cm.

Catalog of an exhibition at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and  
Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Jan. 31–June 6, 2004.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-9725188-3-5 (alk. paper)

1. Hair—Social aspects—Exhibitions. 2. Hair in art—Exhibitions.  
3. Hairstyles—History—Exhibitions. 4. Frances Young Tang Teaching  
Museum and Art Gallery—Exhibitions. I. Erchak, Gerald Michael. II.  
Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. III. Skidmore  
College. Art Gallery. IV. Title.

GT2290.J65 2004

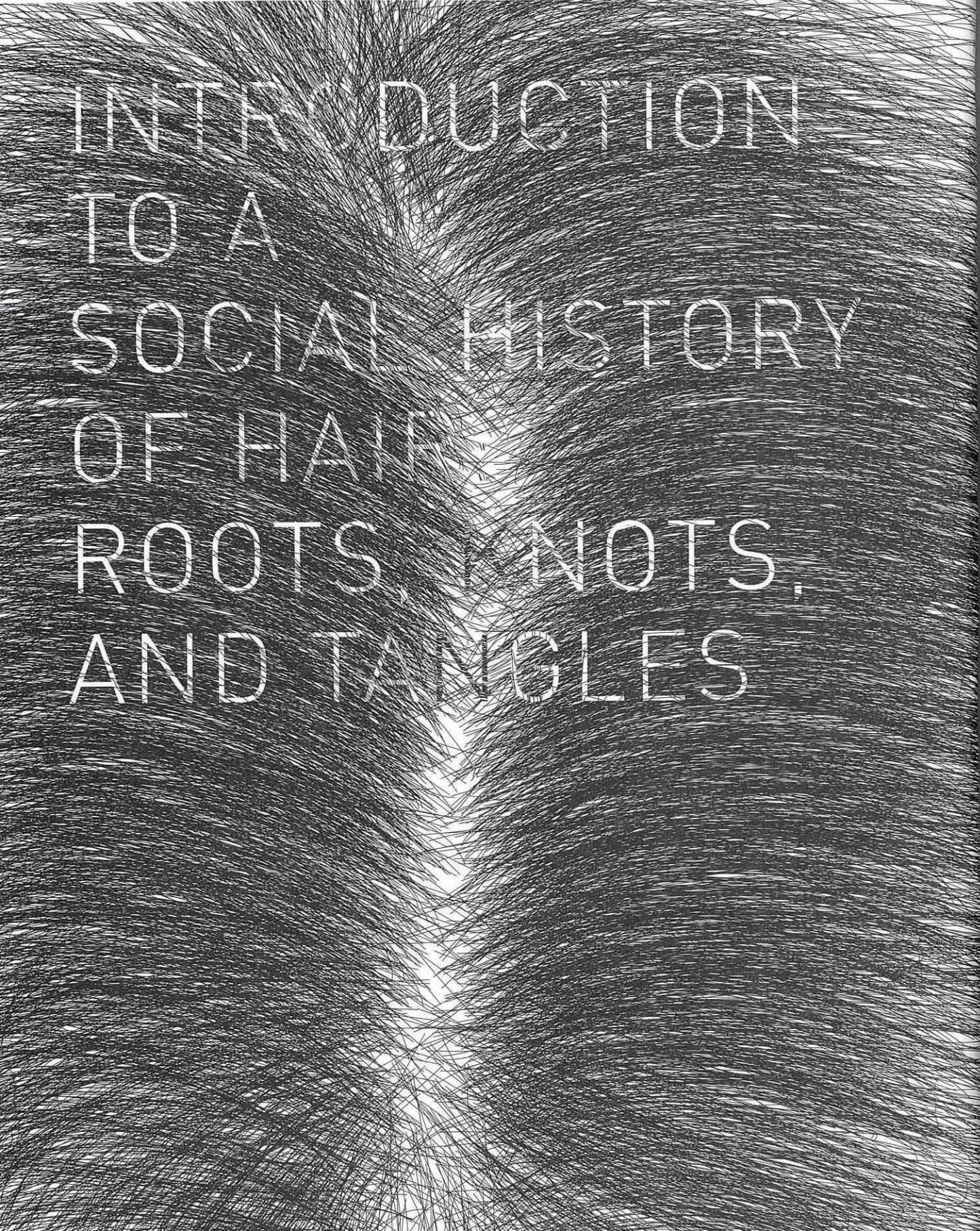
391.6—dc22

2003026335

*To Jay Rogoff, for all his help and support*

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INTRODUCTION  
TO A  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
OF HAIR  
ROOTS, KNOTS,  
AND TANGLES

Penny Howell Jolly

WE WASH IT AND DRY IT, bleach it and dye it. It grows—where we want it and where we don't—and we curl and straighten it, shave and transplant it, grow it long or tweeze it, cover it with wigs and tame it with nets. We buy conditioners, wax treatments, wigs and switches, frosting kits, blow dryers, razors, curling irons, powders, and sprays. One person waxes his moustache, while another plucks and bleaches hers. Growth of body hair tells us we are mature, and its loss signals our decline.

Hair grows on select parts of our bodies, and we—like our ancestors before us—manipulate it to tell our world who we are. Before we say a word to a new acquaintance, our visible hair identifies us by announcing our gender, class, religion, or politics. Hair styles and body hair grooming form a semiotic system, creating a series of signs legible to those in our social groups. The meanings of these visual codes, of course, change over time and according to social context, and are more dependent upon *difference*—long vs. short, shaved vs. hirsute—than any system of stable meaning. Shifts in hair style typically reflect major political and social movements, as when hippies in the 1960s grew long hair and beards to separate their counterculture from the finely coiffed establishment, feminists in the 1970s stopped shaving legs and axillary (underarm) hair, and black men and women wore Afros to signal their return to their racial roots.

By nature, almost all humans have visible hair: on the tops of heads, as eyebrows and eyelashes, as axillary hair, and pubic hair. In addition, most areas of human skin produce hair, typically finer in women and more noticeable in men. Even in people of least hairy appearance, only a few areas of dermis are truly hairless (called glabrous skin):



fingertips, palms, soles of feet and toes, lips, nipples, and highly sensitive parts of the male and female genitalia. Some people are born totally or partially hairless, a condition called alopecia, while others have excessive hair all over their bodies: hypertrichosis. The cross-sectional shape of the hair shaft determines its texture: perfectly round hairs are straight and more coarse, oval ones are silky and wavy, while flatter shafts are kinky. Hair color is determined by the varied proportions of melanins of different color, called melanocytes, at the base of the hair follicle. Red hair, a recessive trait and the least common hair color (only 2–5 percent of humans worldwide), results from the presence of an iron compound; gray and white hair results from decreased melanin production and its replacement by air bubbles in the shaft. Typically, people start growing gray hairs in their twenties, and about half the population is gray by age fifty.

But no person's hair is truly "natural." In societies worldwide, differing social circumstances determine the appearance of head and body hair. For instance, religious institutions frequently control hair: Christian monks shave their head hair into tonsures and Muslim women cover theirs, while Hasidic men grow payis and their wives wear wigs in public. Hair styling also reinforces class and political differences. In France, powdered wigs initially distinguished seventeenth- and eighteenth-century aristocrats—giving rise to the term "bigwig"—but were then sported by the rising bourgeoisie, only to be finally overturned by the revolutionaries' assertion of republican "naturalism" following the Revolution. For Fidel Castro, the beard identified his followers, setting them apart from the defeated, clean-shaven Cuban army: "Your beard does not belong to you. It belongs to the Revolution."<sup>1</sup> Today neo-Nazi skinheads, by their almost bald pates, signal a return to fascist politics, and Hitler's Aryan blonde ideal is revived—an ideal which never existed within the actual German population of the 1930s.<sup>2</sup>

With rare exception, head and body hair styles work to exaggerate differences between the sexes rather than downplay them. While these physical differences between males and females are not in fixed opposition, social conventions work to make them distinct: in one era, men's hair may be longer and more elaborately dressed than women's—the lovelocks of seventeenth-century England or elaborate wig styles of early eighteenth-century France—while in another, the women's outshines the men's—as in Renaissance Italy, when women entwined and braided jewels in their hair, or in the early 1960s with the bouffant. When women's legs were suddenly visible due to 1920s fashions, they needed to differ from men's, and shaving became fashionable. Hair further distinguishes stages in the life cycle of both males and females, as moustaches and beards separate pre-adolescent boys from mature males, a biological difference; or, in a socially constructed difference, long, flowing hair marks the fertile vir-

gin, ripe and ready for marriage, and distinguishes her from the properly married matron whose hair is bound up. When women began bobbing their hair in the 1920s, some men feared the end of all civilization, apparently associating flowing locks with actual fertility.

Hair color similarly carries meaning—consider the stereotypes of the "dumb" blonde and the sultry but unpredictable redhead—as does hair's overall form. Heinrich Hoffmann's moralizing children's book from 1845, *Struwwelpeter (Slovenly Peter)*, offers cautionary tales that link proper grooming to proper behavior; Peter's wild hair and unclipped fingernails clearly reveal his naughtiness. Long, sinuous hair on a female signals her highly sexual nature, and metaphors abound of men being captured in its tangles, warning of the power of hair (and women) over men. Baldness in men has traditionally implied impotency. Hirsute Samson's loss at the hand of Delilah only reinforces that myth, as does the practice of cutting or shaving the hair of defeated foes—prisoners, enemy collaborators, concentration camp victims—as a sign of humiliation and subjection. Locks of hair, on the other hand, remain intimate reminders of absent loved ones.

Hair styling—for both women and men—does not come inexpensively, and supports a multibillion-dollar industry, including both hair salons and modern do-it-yourself home hair care products that have flooded the market to make change increasingly easy. Throughout history, formulas, equipment, and personnel for manipulating hair have flourished. Our exhibition, which focuses on the Renaissance to the present, demonstrates the ubiquitous nature of products and tools related to hair care. Particularly famous ad campaigns from the twentieth century are represented: the Gillette Company's invention of the safety razor, the Breck Girl campaign for shampoo, and Burma Shave's famous roadside jingles.

The essays in this volume treat a number of these issues in closer detail, and from a variety of disciplines. Gerald M. Erchak, in his "*Homo Hirsutus: The Evolution of Human Hair Growth Pattern*," approaches questions concerning the role of human hairiness in males and females from biological and anthropological perspectives. My own essay, "The Fashionable Man," considers ways that male humans manipulate their head and facial hair—the wig and the beard play important roles—to express identities and ideologies. Amelia Rauser's essay, "Sex and Sensibility: Hair in the Macaroni Caricatures of the 1770s," focuses on satirical prints of the eighteenth century, exploring how hair functioned as a signifier in the visual arts, specifically for figures of the foppish macaroni. Using a sociological perspective, Susan Walzer explores the loss of head hair (and self-esteem) in men in "The Trouble with Larry: Social Meanings of Male

Baldness." Is it better to be authentically bald, or to cover up with a comb-over, transplant, or toupee?

In the subsequent essay, I trace "The Ideal Woman" from the Renaissance to modern times, interrogating why fashions change and why some ideals—such as the blonde—remain relatively consistent. My "Hair Power" essay then turns more specifically to sexually potent hair, to meanings attributed to body hair, to the role of hair in memory and mourning, and finally to the importance of hair in African-American experience. Michael Jordan's shaved African-American head is the multi-layered subject of the final essay in this volume, Jeffrey O. Segrave's "(H)Air Jordan: Excavating His Royal Baldness." Segrave's analysis ranges broadly from consideration of racial and sociopolitical issues in America today to sports, consumerism, and marketing.

1. Quoted by David Kunzle in *Che Guevara* (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum, 1997), 49. I thank Jennifer Jolly for this reference.

2. On Nazi "race science" and bloneness, see Pat

Shipman, *The Evolution of Racism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), especially chapter 8; and Joanna Pitman, *On Blondes* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), especially 155–165 and 183–201.

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## CHECKLIST

Dimensions in inches. height x width x depth

### PAINTINGS

#### Attributed to CORNEILLE DE LYON

*Portrait of the Count d'Angoulême*,  
c. 1560  
Oil on wood panel  
8 1/4 x 6 1/4 inches  
The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls,  
New York, 1971.14

#### PAOLO CALIARI VERONESE

*Rebecca at the Well*, c. 1570  
Oil on canvas  
18 1/2 x 22 inches  
The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls,  
New York, 1971.57

#### CORNELIUS JOHNSON

*Portrait of a Man, probably Sir Francis  
Godolphin*, 1633  
Oil on canvas  
31 x 24 1/2 inches  
Yale Center for British Art, Paul  
Mellon Collection, B1973.1.28

#### JOHN SMIBERT

*William Lambert*, 1734  
Oil on canvas  
35 7/8 x 28 1/8 inches  
Addison Gallery of American Art,  
Phillips Academy, Andover,  
Massachusetts, museum purchase,  
1958.55

#### Attributed to JOHN HEATEN

*Jeremias Van Rensselaer*, c. 1745  
Oil on canvas  
48 x 39 inches  
Albany Institute of History & Art,  
Albany, New York, Gift of Mrs.  
Ledyard Cogswell, Jr., 1972.59.1

#### JOHN HESSELIUS

*Eleanor Addison*, c. 1773–75  
Oil on canvas  
30 1/8 x 25 1/8 inches  
Addison Gallery of American Art,  
Phillips Academy, Andover,  
Massachusetts, gift of Mrs.  
Cornelius N. Bliss, 1944.78

#### ADOLPH U. WERTMULLER

*Edmond Charles Genet*, 1784  
Oil on canvas  
26 x 21 3/8 inches  
Albany Institute of History & Art,  
bequest of Nancy Fuller Genet,  
1978.6.1

#### GILBERT STUART

*George Washington*, after 1796  
Oil on canvas  
26 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches  
Sterling and Francine Clark Art  
Institute, Williamstown,  
Massachusetts, 1955.16

#### THOMAS SULLY

*Tom Wharton*, 1800–10  
Oil on canvas  
30 1/8 x 25 1/8 inches  
Addison Gallery of American Art,  
Phillips Academy, Andover,  
Massachusetts, museum purchase,  
1969.15

#### JAMES PEALE

*Jane Ramsey Peale*, c. 1802  
Oil on canvas  
28 1/8 x 20 7/8 inches  
Addison Gallery of American Art,  
Phillips Academy, Andover,  
Massachusetts, gift of the Collection  
of Waldron P. Belknap, Jr., 1958.57

#### BENJAMIN WEST

*Venus Lamenting Adonis*, 1803  
Oil on panel  
15 1/2 x 16 3/4 inches  
Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum  
Rutgers, the State University of New  
Jersey, ZAM purchase

#### EZRA AMES

*Edmond Charles Genet*, c. 1809–10  
Oil on wood panel  
30 1/8 x 23 inches  
Albany Institute of History & Art,  
Bequest of George Clinton Genet,  
1909.21

#### ANONYMOUS, FRENCH

*Lady with Giraffe-Inspired Hair Style*,  
c. 1830  
Oil on canvas  
24 x 19 5/8 inches  
Collection of Alfred L. Chatelain and  
Nancy L. Rudick

#### ANONYMOUS, FRENCH

*Portrait of Mme. De Lapeyriere*,  
c. 1830  
Oil on canvas  
9 x 7 1/2 inches  
Collection of Alfred L. Chatelain and  
Nancy L. Rudick

#### Attributed to FRANCES ALEXANDER

*Laura Spencer Townsend*, c. 1840  
Oil on canvas  
30 x 25 inches  
Collection of Henry Peltz,  
Courtesy of the Albany Institute of  
History & Art

#### CHARLES LORING ELLIOTT

*Erastus Corning, Jr.*, 1864  
Oil on canvas  
27 x 22 inches  
Albany Institute of History & Art,  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Francis W.  
Rawle, Jr., 1981.6

#### *Governor Reuben Fenton*, 1866

Oil on canvas  
52 5/8 x 40 inches  
Albany Institute of History & Art,  
Permanent Deposit by the City of  
Albany, 1971.12.9

#### J.P. Mc L. WATTERS

*Francis Brooks*, 1887  
Oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston A.  
Shuman Collection, 1982.324

#### JOHN SLOAN

*Sunday, Women Drying Their Hair*,  
1912  
Oil on canvas  
26 1/8 x 32 1/8 inches  
Addison Gallery of American Art,  
Phillips Academy, Andover,  
Massachusetts, museum purchase,  
1938.67

#### GEORGE GROSZ

*Portrait of a Lady (On the Subway)*,  
1933  
Watercolor on wove paper  
26 3/8 x 19 inches  
Addison Gallery of American Art,  
Phillips Academy, Andover,  
Massachusetts, gift of Lillian and  
Peter Grosz (PA 1945) in  
memory of Michael Grosz (PA 1974),  
1992.24

#### LUIGI LUCIONI

*Portrait of a Young Man*, 1933  
Oil on canvas  
22 x 18 inches  
Courtesy of James Graham & Sons,  
New York

#### *Milli Monti*, 1941

Oil on canvas  
49 1/2 x 33 inches  
Courtesy of James Graham & Sons,  
New York

#### CHARLES SHELDON

*Breck Girl (Roma Whitney)*, 1937  
Oil on panel  
43 x 32 inches  
National Museum of American  
History, Behring Center, Smithsonian  
Institution

#### H. LEE HIRSCHIE

*Blue Necklace*, 1973  
Acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 inches  
Collection of Lori Gladstone

#### FRANKLIN ALEXANDER

*Mara's Morning*, 1973  
Oil on canvas  
59 x 48 1/8 inches  
Albany Institute of History & Art,  
Bequest of Catherine H. Campbell,  
1989.24

#### KERRY JAMES MARSHALL

*De Style*, 1993  
Acrylic and collage on canvas  
104 x 122 inches  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Purchased with funds provided by  
Ruth and Jacob Bloom

#### RUTH MARTE

*Fire*, 2002  
Egg tempera on wood  
13 3/4 x 14 1/2 inches  
Collection of Tressa Melaura Love,  
New York

#### *Ogun*, 2002

Egg tempera on wood  
10 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches  
Collection of Roger P. Thomas

#### *Muscle*, 2003

Egg tempera on wood  
12 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Adam  
Baumgold Gallery

#### *Time II*, 2003

Egg tempera on wood  
11 1/2 x 15 1/2 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Adam  
Baumgold Gallery

### SCULPTURE

*Human Hair Wreaths*, late 19th  
century  
Hair, gilded wood frame  
Dimensions variable  
New York State Museum, Albany,  
New York

#### WHEELER WILLIAMS

*Portrait of Sylvia*, 1923  
Bronze  
12 3/4 x 7 1/2 x 7 3/4 inches  
Courtesy of James Graham & Sons,  
New York

#### *Head of a Black Man*, 1924

Bronze  
8 1/16 x 4 1/8 x 5 1/16 inches  
Courtesy of James Graham & Sons,  
New York



**MARIO J. KORBEL**

*Female Torso*, 1927

Marble

39 x 15 3/4 x 9 5/8 inches

Courtesy of James Graham & Sons, New York

**EDWARD McCARTAN**

*Portrait of a Young Woman*, 1934

Terracotta

11 3/4 x 6 1/2 x 7 inches

Courtesy of James Graham & Sons, New York

**EDWARD KIENHOLZ**

*Bunny, Bunny, You're So Funny*, 1962

Mixed media

31 1/2 x 33 x 12 1/2 inches

Williams College Museum of Art, Gift of Susan W. and Stephen D. Paine, Class of 1954, 85.44

**MILLIE WILSON**

*Museum of Lesbian Dreams*, 1990

Mixed media

Dimensions variable

On extended loan to the Tang Teaching Museum from a private collection

**DEBRA PRIESTLY**

*Lookin Glass #4*, 1999

Mixed media on birch

76 x 96 x 6 inches

Collection of the artist

**BIRGIT DIEKER**

*Beasty Girl*, 2001

Human hair, lamb's wool, glass

eyes, epoxy

70 x 24 x 12 inches

Collection of Susan Crossley and Timothy Collins

**JEWELRY**

*Mourning Brooch*, c. 1790

Human hair, gold

2 1/4 x 1 7/8 inches

Albany Institute of History & Art,

U1978.253

possibly by **EZRA AMES**

*Ludlow Mourning Locket*, c. 1800

Watercolor on ivory, human hair,

gold case

3 3/8 x 2 3/8 inches

Albany Institute of History & Art,

Purchase, 1973.41

*Egberts Mourning Locket*, c. 1800

Watercolor on ivory, human hair,

gold case

3 1/2 x 2 3/8 inches

Albany Institute of History & Art,

Gift of the estate of Miss Evelyn

Newman, 1964.31.50

*Brooch*, c. 1840s

Human hair, mother of pearl, gold

1 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches

Albany Institute of History & Art,

U1978.256

**LE MONNIER & CIE. PARIS**

*Bracelet*, c. 1860s

Human hair, gold

1 1/8 x 7 5/8 inches

Albany Institute of History & Art, Gift

of Mary De Camp Banks Moore,

1972.81.10

Two pins, 19th century

Human hair, metal, and stones

1 x 1 inches each

Collection of Beverley Armsden

Daniel

**COLLINGWOOD & CO.**

Gold tie pin, 1883

3 x 1 inches

Gernsheim Collection, Harry Ransom

Center, University of Texas-Austin

Collection of hair jewelry, 19th century

Dimensions variable

New York State Museum, Albany,

New York

Collection of hair jewelry, 19th century

Dimensions variable

Historical Society of Saratoga

Springs, Saratoga Springs, New York

**WIGS**

Replica, Lady's wig, c. 1774

Replica, Grizzled man's wig, c. 1774

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Replica of c. 1750 gentleman's

powdered wig

Replica of c. 1780 gentleman's

powdered wig

New York State Museum, Albany,

New York

Wig of Harpo Marx, c. 1930

Wig of Bozo the Clown, c. 1960

Wig of Celia Cruz, c. 1980

National Museum of American

History, Behring Center, Smithsonian

Institution

**HAIR STYLING TOOLS AND PRODUCTS**

Collection of shaving tools

including razors, strops, brushes,

and comfort kit, early 20th century

Dimensions variable

New York State Military Museum and

Veterans Research Center, Saratoga

Springs, New York

Collection of hair styling tools

including curling irons, hair dryers,

crimpers, and receivers; hair styling

products including powders, dyes,

pomades, restorers, and shampoos;

and shaving tools including

razors, strops, and mugs, 19th and

20th centuries

Permanent Wave machine, early 20th

century

Beauty salon chair with attached

dryer hood, mid-20th century

Barber's chair with child's extra seat,

c. 1930

Dimensions variable

New York State Museum, Albany,

New York

*Gillette "Khaki Set" U.S. Army Issue*,

1917-18

Razor, blades, mirror, box

2 x 4 1/4 x 1 3/4 inches

*Imperial Rolls Razor No. 2*

Blade, hone, strop, strop dressing

2 x 6 3/4 inches

Collection of Virginia Gooch Puzak,

Skidmore Class of 1944

Barber's vest of Nathaniel Mathis

(Nat the Bush Doctor), c. 1970

curling iron set, razor

Dimensions variable

National Museum of American

History, Behring Center, Smithsonian

Institution

Collection of hair styling tools

Dimensions variable

Collection of Bonny Thornton, Wilton,

New York

Hot oil hair straightening comb, 1950s

9 1/4 x 1 1/4 x 1 inches

Collection of David Rubin, New York

**ADVERTISEMENTS**

*Breck Girl (Donna Alexander)*, 1974

16 3/8 x 13 3/8 inches

*Hall's Hair Renewer and*

*Buckingham's Dye*

14 x 11 1/2 inches

*Hall's Hair Renewer*

13 7/8 x 11 inches

*Dr. Dickes' Shampoo*

15 x 12 1/4 inches

*Brass Hair Straightening Combs and*

*Pressers*

11 5/8 x 11 1/8 inches

*Seven Sutherland Sisters' Hair*

*Grower*

9 x 11 1/2 inches

*Colgate's Shaving Lather*

13 3/8 x 10 1/2 inches

*Gillette Safety Razor*

14 1/8 x 9 3/8 inches

*Madam Jones Seven X Hot Comb Oil*

3 3/4 x 7 1/8 inches

*Sweet Georgia Brown Hair Glower*

1 5/8 x 6 1/8 inches

*Burma Shave*

Paint on wooden boards

40 x 18 1/4 inches each

National Museum of American

History, Behring Center, Smithsonian

Institution

**PRINTS**

**ANONYMOUS**

*Mlle. des Faveurs à la Promenade à*

*Londres*, 18th century

Hand-colored etching

13 1/2 x 10 15/16 inches

Print Collection, Miriam and

Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints

and Photographs, The New York

Public Library, Astor, Lenox and

Tilden Foundations

**WILLIAM HOGARTH**

*A Midnight Modern Conversation*,

1732-33

Etching and engraving

13 1/2 x 18 5/8 inches

Print Collection, Miriam and

Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints

and Photographs, The New York

Public Library, Astor, Lenox and

Tilden Foundations

*The Bench*, 1758

Etching and engraving

13 1/2 x 9 1/4 inches

The Tang Teaching Museum,

Skidmore College, Gift of Edwin de

Turck Bechtel, 1957.50

- The Five Orders of Periwigs*, 1761  
Etching and engraving  
12 1/4 x 9 inches  
The Tang Teaching Museum,  
Skidmore College, Gift of Edwin de  
Turck Bechtel, ND.109
- Published by **WILLIAM HUMPHREY**  
*Beauty's Lot*, n.d.  
Engraving  
12 3/4 x 7 7/8 inches  
Library of Congress, Washington,  
D.C., Prints and Photographs Division
- PHILIP DAWE**  
*The Enraged Macaroni*, 1773  
Mezzotint  
12 5/8 x 9 3/4 inches  
Library of Congress, Washington,  
D.C., Prints and Photographs Division
- The Macaroni. A Real Character at  
the Late Masquerade*, 1773  
Mezzotint  
13 7/8 x 10 inches  
Print Collection, Miriam and  
Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints  
and Photographs, The New York  
Public Library, Astor, Lenox and  
Tilden Foundations
- Published by **R. SAYER & J.  
BENNETT**  
*What Is This My Son Tom*, 1774  
Mezzotint  
13 7/8 x 9 7/8 inches  
Library of Congress, Washington,  
D.C., Prints and Photographs Division
- Published by **MATTHEW AND  
MARY DARLY**  
*Oh Heigh Oh – Or a View of the  
Back Settlements*, 1776  
Engraving  
13 7/8 x 9 7/8 inches  
Library of Congress, Washington,  
D.C., Prints and Photographs Division
- The Vis a Vis Bisected, or the Ladies'   
Coop*, 1776  
Etching and engraving  
9 3/4 x 13 3/4 inches  
Print Collection, Miriam and  
Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints  
and Photographs, The New York  
Public Library, Astor, Lenox and  
Tilden Foundations
- Published by **W. HUMPHREY**  
*The Modern Paradise or Adam and  
Eve Regenerated*, 1780  
Etching  
9 3/4 x 3 3/4 inches  
Library of Congress, Washington,  
D.C., Prints and Photographs Division
- ISAAC CRUIKSHANK**  
*Ladies Wigs!*, 1798  
Hand-colored etching  
14 3/8 x 19 1/2 inches  
Print Collection, Miriam and  
Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints  
and Photographs, The New York  
Public Library, Astor, Lenox and  
Tilden Foundations
- EDWARD WILLIAM STODART**  
*Lolita*, 19th century  
Stipple engraving  
17 3/4 x 13 inches  
The Tang Teaching Museum,  
Skidmore College, ND.184
- Sweet Little Mary Pickford*, 1914  
13 3/4 x 10 5/8 inches  
*Coquette*. 1928  
12 3/16 x 9 1/8 inches  
National Museum of American  
History, Behring Center, Smithsonian  
Institution
- FEDERICO CASTELLÓN**  
*From the Masque of the Red Death*  
series, 20th century  
Lithograph  
15 x 11 inches  
The Tang Teaching Museum,  
Skidmore College, 1969.14.1
- PHOTOGRAPHS**
- CHARLES EISENMANN**  
*Illumara the Egyptian, Age 19*, c. 1860  
Albumen print carte-de-visite  
International Center of Photography,  
New York
- ANONYMOUS**  
*Unidentified Portraits*, c. 1920  
Gelatin-silver prints  
International Center of Photography,  
New York
- ROBERT CAPA**  
*Nazi Conspirators*, 1944-45  
Gelatin-silver print  
International Center of Photography,  
New York
- BRUCE DAVIDSON**  
*Brooklyn Gang*, 1959  
Gelatin-silver print  
8 1/4 x 12 1/2 inches  
International Center of Photography,  
New York
- PHILIPPE HALSMAN**  
*Portrait of Marilyn*, 1952  
(from "Halsman/Marilyn," 1981)  
Gelatin-silver print  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
Williams College Museum of Art,  
Gift of Marjorie Neikrug-Raskin
- GARY METZ**  
*Hair Piece*, 1977  
Twenty gelatin-silver prints  
14 x 11 inches each  
Courtesy of the artist
- GARRIE MAE WEEMS**  
*Snow White-Mirror Mirror*, 1987  
Gelatin-silver print  
20 x 16 inches  
On extended loan to the Tang Teaching  
Museum from a private collection
- JEANNE DUNNING**  
*Head 8*, 1990  
Laminated cibachrome mounted  
on plexiglass  
30 x 19 inches  
On extended loan to the Tang Teaching  
Museum from a private collection
- STEPHAN CARAS**  
*Victor Trevmo in Swan Lake, Act II*,  
1997  
Color photograph  
19 1/4 x 15 inches  
National Museum of Dance and Hall  
of Fame, Saratoga Springs, New York
- VIK MUNIZ**  
*Medusa Marinara*, 1999  
Photograph on plate  
12 1/2 inches diameter  
On extended loan to the Tang Teaching  
Museum from a private collection
- BOOKS**
- LOUIS DU GUERNIER AND  
CLAUDE DU BOSC**  
Illustration for canto III, from  
Alexander Pope, *Rape of the Lock*,  
1714  
7 1/2 x 4 3/4 inches  
Special Collection of the Schaffer  
Library at Union College
- HEINRICH HOFFMAN**  
*Der Struwwelpeter, oder lustige  
Geschichten und drollige Bilder*, 1845  
Collection of Mary Constance Lynn,  
Saratoga Springs, New York
- Slovenly Peter or Cheerful Stories and  
Funny Pictures*, 20th century  
Collection of John Anzalone,  
Saratoga Springs, New York
- Godey's Fashions for February 1864*  
from *Godey's Magazine*, February  
1864  
Special Collection of the Lucy  
Scribner Library at Skidmore College
- DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI**  
*Buy From Us With a Golden Curl and  
Golden Head by Golden Head*  
from Christina Rossetti, *Goblin  
Market and Other Poems*, 1862  
6 1/2 x 4 1/4 inches  
Special Collection of the Schaffer  
Library at Union College
- Godey's Fashions for July 1864*  
from *Godey's Magazine*, July 1864  
Special Collection of the Lucy  
Scribner Library at Skidmore College
- GUSTAVE DORÉ**  
*Samson and Delilah and Penitent  
Mary Magdalene*,  
from *La Sainte Bible*, 1874  
Special Collection of the Lucy  
Scribner Library at Skidmore College
- AUBREY BEARDSLEY**  
Illustration for "J'ai Baisé ta Bouche,  
lokanaan," from Oscar Wilde,  
*Salome: A Tragedy in One Act*, 1894  
Collection of John Anzalone,  
Saratoga Springs, New York
- The Comedy of the Rhinegold*  
from *The Savoy*, December 1896  
Special Collection of the Lucy  
Scribner Library at Skidmore College
- The Rape of the Lock*  
from *The Savoy*, April 1896  
Special Collection of the Lucy Scribner  
Library at Skidmore College
- RALPH BARTON**  
Illustration for *But a Diamond  
Bracelet Lasts Forever*,  
from Anita Loos, *Gentlemen Prefer  
Blondes: The Illuminating Diary of a  
Professional Lady*, 1925  
7 1/4 x 5 inches  
Collection of the Schaffer Library at  
Union College
- Compiled by **LEIGH HUNT**  
Hair of Famous Writers (Elizabeth  
Barrett Browning, Robert Browning,  
John Keats, Richard Henry Lee,  
John Milton, Mary Shelley, Percy  
Bysshe Shelley, George Washington)  
Human hair, prints  
Each page 14 1/2 x 10 3/4 inches  
Harry Ransom Center, University of  
Texas at Austin



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Hair: Untangling a Social History* began as an idea from Professor Penny Jolly for a project at the museum that would look at the many facets of hair imagery and its ramifications throughout western culture. To condense this imposingly large topic, Prof. Jolly organized a senior week symposium at the Tang Museum in the spring of 2002. The symposium was a full day of presentations from a variety of Skidmore faculty that included papers on the biochemistry, anthropology, literary history, art history, and sociology of human hair. These engaging talks, often punctuated with hilariously be-wigged presenters, helped form the content of this catalogue and exhibition.

The exhibition includes objects from a wide variety of sources, from Final Touch Hair Salon to the Smithsonian Institution, and we are very grateful to the many individuals and institutions that helped locate materials, offered advice, and generously loaned us their objects. Thanks to: Adam Weinberg, Susan Faxon, Denise Johnson, James M. Sousa, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts; Christine Miles, Tammis Groft, Mary Alice Mackey, Diane Shewchuck, Sarah Bennet, Albany Institute of History & Art, Albany, New York; Kathy Gaye Shiroki, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; John Anzalone, Skidmore College; Alfred L. Chatelain, L'Époque Romantique, French and American Antiques, Queensbury, New York; Ruth Copans, Nancy Rudick, Lucy Scribner Library, Skidmore College; Tim Wiles, W.C. Burdick, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Cooperstown, New York; Michael Conforti, Brian Allen, Monique LeBlanc, Katherine Price, The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Elizabeth Myers, Thomas E. Redd, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia; Susan Crossley and Timothy Collins, San Francisco, California; Volker Diehl, Annkatrin Steffen, Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin, Germany; Beverly and Warren Daniel, Wayland, Massachusetts; Ms. Lori Gladstone, Baltimore, Maryland; Robin Graham, Cameron M. Shay, Priscilla Vail Caldwell, Marisa Mele, James Graham & Sons Gallery, New York; Mrs. Nancy Hirsche, Sarasota, Florida; Erin Doan, Historical Society of Saratoga Springs, New York; Randall Suffolk, Erin Coe, Robin Blakney-Carlson, The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York; Willis E. Hartshorn,

Barbara Woytowicz, Cynthia Young, International Center of Photography, New York, New York; Howard Fox, Nancy Thomas, Michele Ahern, Cheryl T. Robertson, Giselle Arteaga-Johnson, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California; Sara W. Duke, Margaret Brown, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Mary Constance Lynn, Skidmore College; Gavin McKeirnan, Gary Metz, Providence, Rhode Island; Malcolm Rogers, Elliot Bostwick Davis, Kim Pashko, Lisabeth Dion, Annie Pickert, Courtney Peterson, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; David Shayt, Shelly Foote, Lisa Graddy, Fath Ruffins, Dwight Bowers, Roger White, Pat Mansfield, Lynne Gilliland, Carol Slatick, Margaret Grandine, Kay Peterson, Dave Burgevin, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.; Garret Smith, National Museum of Dance, Saratoga Springs, New York; Roberta Waddell, Roseann Panebianco, Tom LeSante, The New York Public Library, New York; Michael Aikey, Christopher Morton, New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center, Saratoga Springs, New York; Anne Tyrrell, Ronald Burch, Craig Williams, Geoffrey Stein, New York State Museum, Albany, New York; Debra Priestly, New York, New York; Virginia Gooch Puzak, Skidmore College Class of 1944; Gregory Perry, Cathleen Anderson, Rutgers, State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, New Jersey; Bonny Thornton, Final Touch Beauty Salon, Wilton, New York; Paul Tucker; Julianna Spallholz, Schaffer Library, Union College, Schenectady, New York; Tara Wenger, David Coleman, Deborah R. Armstrong-Morgan, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin; David Rubin; Jack Shainman; Gordon Thompson, Skidmore College; Linda Shearer, Vivian Patterson, Stephanie Jandl, Diane Hart, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Amy Meyers, Timothy Goodhue, Melissa G. Fournier, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut; and an anonymous private collector. Special thanks to Skidmore students Emily Shultz, Stephanie Greene, and Haley Cohen, who assisted with research.

Important support from the Gillette Corporation and the Nathalie Potter Voorhees '45 memorial fund have made

this project possible. Also thanks to the Office of the Dean of the Faculty at Skidmore College, and to the Faculty Development Committee who awarded this project a Tang Exhibition Award. Thanks to Barry Pritzker, Stephanie Van Allen, Mary Jo Driscoll, Tracy Barlok, Barbara Melville, and Elizabeth Laub, also at Skidmore.

This catalogue includes new essays by several faculty members whose engaging contributions exemplify the potential of a teaching museum as a site for interdisciplinary collaboration. Thanks to Gerald Erchak, Professor of Anthropology at Skidmore College; Amelia Rauser, Associate Professor of Art History at Franklin and Marshall College; Jeffrey Segrave, Professor of Exercise Science and Director of Athletics at Skidmore; and Susan Walzer, Associate Professor of Sociology at Skidmore. The design of this volume is the creative work of graphic designers Barbara Glauber and Beverly Joel of Heavy Meta, New York. Thanks to Arthur Evans for his new photography and Kathryn Gallien for her keen editing.

As always the entire Tang Museum staff has contributed greatly to the success of this project. Special thanks are due to former Director Charles Stainback for his early support and important creative work on this project; Elizabeth Karp, Registrar, who managed the shipping of the many loans; Chris Kobuskie, Chief Preparator, for his work framing and building the exhibition; Susi Kerr, Assistant

Director for Education and Public Programs, who managed the many lectures, films and events held in conjunction with this project and Ginny Kollack who recorded "Hair Clips" from many members of the Skidmore community. Also thanks to staff members: Tyler Auwarter, Helaina Blume, Jill Cohan, Ginger Ertz, Lori Geraghty, Gayle King, Barbara Schrade, and our installation crew: Sam Coe, Shaw Fici, Torrance Fish, Jefferson Nelson, Patrick O'Rourke, Chris Oliver, Alex Roediger, and Joe Yetto.

Curatorial Assistant Gretchen Wagner deserves great thanks for her tireless work on all aspects of this complex and detailed project. She visited with lenders, managed loans, organized reproductions, and attended to everything in between. The project would not have been possible without her savvy and determination.

Lastly, thanks to guest curator, Penny Jolly. Professor Jolly is the William R. Kenan Chair of Liberal Arts and Professor of Art History at Skidmore College. She has served as curator, researcher, writer, and editor, and has paved the way for future ambitious projects at the Tang. Her concept to look at images of hair and the cultural implications that inform those images fits perfectly with our mission as a museum based on ideas, and this exhibition and catalogue show how those ideas can open the door to many disciplines. We are most grateful for her intellectual engagement and her energy that has made this project a great success.

**IAN BERRY**

*Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs/Curator*

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition

## HAIR: UNTANGLING A SOCIAL HISTORY

January 31–June 6, 2004

The Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery  
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Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
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www.skidmore.edu/tang

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ISBN 0-9725188-3-5

Catalogue Editor: Ian Berry  
Text Editor: Kathryn Gallien

Designed by Barbara Glauber and Beverly Joel  
Heavy Meta

Printed in the United States by  
John C. Otto Company, Inc.

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Plate 43: Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin, photo by Jurgen Baumann.

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Plate 50: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California 2003 Museum Associates/LACMA.

Plate 52: Courtesy of Debra Priestly, photo by Manu Sassoonian.





# THE IDEAL WOMAN

Penny Howell Jolly

**TWO IDEALS CONCERNING WOMEN'S HAIR** have had remarkable longevity in western society: it should be long and its color should be blonde.

With regard to length, women's hair—with rare exception, as noted below—was understood to be “naturally” long; however, it was still to be appropriately controlled in accordance with social codes. For example, in fifteenth-century Europe, young unmarried women wore their hair long and flowing, a signal of their sexuality but also of their virginity—the appropriate state for the prospective bride; instead of today's symbolic white gown, brides in wedding images symbolically wear their hair down. Once actually married, European women wore their hair fastened up on their heads, sometimes in elaborate braids and interwoven with pearls and ribbons, as in Florence, or, in Flemish cities, in paired horns called *cornes*.<sup>1</sup> Like the modern wedding band, these hair styles marked the woman as unavailable to suitors. Pearls signaled chastity, as did the decorous binding of the hair: often even ears were chastely covered by a cap or braid, because of the belief that Mary conceived Christ through her ear.<sup>2</sup> Veils or other coverings protected the wife's hair from public view. Her hair would be unbound in private, signaling her openness to her husband; movies today still use a woman's letting down of her hair as a signal of sexual surrender. In addition to hair pulled up away from the face, plucked hairlines and eyebrows accentuated a smooth, rounded forehead.

Thus Renaissance images of the Virgin Mary, where she is frequently shown with long, flowing hair, even in public settings, immediately signaled her status as both

Virgin and Bride of Christ. Modern viewers of the long-haired Mary holding or even nursing the infant Christ might simply see her hair as a mark of her youthfulness and femininity. To Renaissance viewers, however, her hair was socially and theologically significant. By symbolizing her virginal state, her hair reminded viewers of the miraculous nature of the Incarnation: a Virgin has given birth. Thus the wonder of the divine event was enhanced by the wonderfully contradictory message of her hair: here is an untouched Virgin mother who nurtures her child.

Italian Renaissance writers also established the blonde as the perfect female, her fairness expressive of innocence and purity. Of course this was a difficult ideal for predominantly dark-haired Italian women to attain.<sup>3</sup> Even today in our country, with its wide-reaching ethnic mix, no more than 17 percent of women are natural blondes.<sup>4</sup> Following the lead from classical and medieval sources favoring bloneness, the fourteenth-century poet Petrarch expressed the preference for fair hair that prevails through much of modern western tradition. Praising his beloved Laura, he writes of "Those tresses of gold, which ought to make the sun go filled with envy," and how "Amid the locks of gold Love hid the noose with which he bound me."<sup>5</sup> In his *Dialogue on the Beauty of Women* of 1548, Agnolo Firenzuola has his protagonist, Celso, state: "You know that the proper and true color of hair should be blonde."<sup>6</sup> How did Italian women respond? Like their classical sisters before them, they turned to bleaching and dyeing processes; to powdering hair with pollen or even gold dust; to applying lemon juice and saffron concoctions, and spreading hair out over wide-brimmed, crownless straw hats to dry in the sun, as courtesans in Venice did; or to wearing wigs made of northern Europeans' hair. Processes could be dangerous or unpleasant—both lye and horse urine were sometimes used—as Giovanni Marinelli warns in his censorious *On the Adornments of Women* of 1562.<sup>7</sup> Churchmen, of course, decried the vanity and deceptive unnaturalness of such doings; monk and reformer Savonarola burned wigs in his bonfires of the vanities in Florence as early as the 1490s, and in 1585 Philip Stubbes, who calls dyed hair an "ornament of pride," complains of people manipulating children into selling their "faire hair."<sup>8</sup> As is often the case, fashion and religion were at odds.

Artists also helped to promote bloneness, as many a Renaissance Italian portrait shows an ideally beautiful woman, but perhaps with deceptively blonde hair. In all time periods, images can represent imaginary ideals or symbolic ideas rather than mirror true practice. Sixteenth-century Venice particularly celebrated the blonde, as documented in countless images by Titian and his followers; probably these women would be unrecognizable in real life as compared to their portraits. The ideal extends to narrative imagery as well, as in Paolo Veronese's *Rebecca at the Well* from circa 1570–1580

(plate 23). Even though Veronese depicts an Old Testament scene where Rebecca is chosen as wife for Isaac while drawing water from the well, he represents this Hebrew beauty as a sixteenth-century blonde in Venetian finery. She wears her golden hair raised and curled upon her head, as all Veronese's heroic females do. By contrast, red hair was reserved for evil figures, especially Jews. Judas was supposedly a redhead, as was Cain, the first murderer, and Jacob's "ruddy" and hirsute brother, Esau.

Sixteenth-century Europe included a number of developments regarding hair. In 1545, the first metal hairpins were used in England, and by the later sixteenth century, changing fashion encouraged women to supplement their natural hair by combing it over pads or wire frames.<sup>9</sup> Wigs also returned briefly, after centuries of being out of fashion. Although popular in ancient cultures, not until the late sixteenth-century court of Elizabeth I did highborn women turn to wigs, especially blonde ones. Once the Queen's natural reddish-blond hair began to gray and thin, she acquired as many as eighty wigs to maintain an appearance of perpetual youth and virginity. At her court, wig snatching became a crime.<sup>10</sup>

The seventeenth century ushered in a number of changes with regard to women's hair, as blonde went out of fashion in favor of dark hair with elaborate ringlets and curls; again, it was the French court, especially Louis XIV's, that established the new fashion, and stylish women in England and elsewhere followed suit. By contrast, women in Protestant Holland wore their hair held tightly to their scalps and covered by a small cap; fashions were similarly less elaborate in the New World colonies. This was also a time when wigs were more important to men—who routinely wore them to create their long, fashionable styles—than to women, although females certainly used false curls and smaller hairpieces, especially for the more elaborate "tower" styles of the late century, where one's hair and false curls were arranged over a wire foundation.

But it was in the 1750s through 1770s that hair styles became perhaps their most extravagant, and wigs became common on upper-class European women. Unfortunately, the pomades used to help shape and hold their hair constructions were typically lard-based, and the powder was edible flour. There are not only tales of mice, lice, and other vermin living in these greased and floured "nests" of hair, but also descriptions of various ornaments attached to the elaborate erections, such as ships, wagons, flowers set in bottles of water to remain fresh, and even glow worms.<sup>11</sup> Thus, to improve hygiene most cut their natural hair short and resorted to wigs, leaving some hair as a base for attaching the heavy devices. These pretentious styles encouraged the biting satires published in England in the later eighteenth century, mocking the French-inspired hairdos and customs of upper-class women and men. The 1780 English etching



of *The Modern Paradise, or Adam and Eve Regenerated* depicts the first couple wearing outrageously large powdered hairdos, Eve's even including feathers and horns. The anonymous writer refers to them as "Sir and Madam" and assures the reader these "Modern Adams and Eves" are so "Improved in each Vice and each Folly that's going... That They capable seem to impose on the Devil."<sup>12</sup> Hunters shoot at birds and animals that unknowingly nest in women's elaborately towering hair artifices, mistaking them for trees (plate 19), while other women crouch down on the floors of carriages, the seats having been removed so they can actually fit inside without crushing their high coiffures. Actual accounts reveal that hair structures could be as tall as three feet, and so some were partially removable, allowing women to travel to social affairs, where the hair could be restored before entering.

Of course, the aristocratic fashion for elaborate, powdered hair did not survive the French Revolution, for women as well as men by the 1790s determined to express their political ideologies via dress and specifically by changing to less contrived and unpowdered hair styles.<sup>13</sup> Like men, women adopted the Titus hair cut and generally simplified their *toilettes* in a return to what was seen as a more natural and austere fashion, one suggestive of youth, purity, and innocence. We see a fine example of this "republican" style, now transplanted to the newly formed United States—also a post-revolutionary context—in James Peale's *Portrait of Jane Ramsey Peale* from about 1802 (plate 25). Not only is her make-up simplified in comparison to earlier aristocratic styles and her white muslin dress of the new high-waisted, low-cut bodice style, based on Greco-Roman precedents, but shorter hair frames her face in light unpowdered ringlets, the whole held together by a casually tied head scarf. Although conceived within an ideology of *liberté, égalité, et fraternité*, the revolutionary dress and hair style quickly became fashionable, and was emulated by the rising high society of early nineteenth-century Europe and America.

Early nineteenth-century fashion celebrated a return to natural hair color, and thus being a brunette—the most common hair color for humans in nature—became fashionable throughout much of the century in western culture: it was in 1854 that Stephen Foster wrote his famous "I Dream of Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair." But while brunette remained the preferred color, men quickly complained regarding the lack of femininity in the new century's short styles, and professional hairdressers protested that the simple hairdos were driving them out of work. What began in the 1810s as simple topknots developed, in the 1820s and 1830s, into elaborate mounds of hair with loops and curls, knobs that imitated those of giraffes, and flowers and ribbons (plate 26). Hairdressers were back in business, as long hair returned to style, and false

curls and hairpieces were once again displayed in fashion books as necessary for women. While fashion continued to change dramatically in mid-century, to hair that was low and sleek on the crown and typically parted in the middle, curls and braids were still added, but now to the backs and/or sides, often covering the ears.

Examples of such fashions are found in the *Godey's Lady's Book*, a monthly fashion, housekeeping, craft, and general advice magazine for women, begun in 1830 and calling itself "America's first magazine."<sup>14</sup> It claimed to bring the newest of French fashion to this country, for Paris was still the fashion capital. Although Edgar Allan Poe's *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature, Art and Fashion* had in fact preceded it by almost four years, *Godey's* did remain the most popular American fashion publication of the century. Each month, a hand-colored plate displayed the latest in dress, accessories, and hair styles, for both women and children. Already in the sixteenth century, fashion plates were printed to circulate contemporary fashions. But by the mid-nineteenth century, more than one hundred fashion periodicals were in publication in Europe alone; in this country, eighteen women's magazines were produced in the 1880s. The *Godey's* illustrations, seen by 150,000 subscribers across the nation, offered women up-to-date styling for their dress and their hair—including suggestions for clustering curled ringlets at the nape of the neck and looping multi-colored ribbons through the hair.

The market for hair products and artificial hair, including chignons, ringlets, and curls, boomed during the nineteenth century, with major hair traders and marketers centered in Paris. In 1856, 11,954 chignons were exported from France to England, while in 1862, approximately one hundred tons of hair was sold, with French and Italian hair most desirable, and white or gray hair the most expensive.<sup>15</sup> In 1859–1860 in the United States, 200,000 pounds of hair was imported for the making of hairpieces.<sup>16</sup> Throughout this time period brunette hair remained favored, and dyes proliferated, along with pomades, ointments, hair restorers, and tonics: of course dark hair colors were easier to obtain than light, and dark brown and black dyes were most popular. For women, luxuriant length was greatly prized, as seen in advertisements in this exhibition for hair care products featuring women such as Martha Matilda Harper (1857–1950)—an enterprising hair tonic and shampoo producer and beauty salon owner who began marketing her products in 1888 and established her Harper Method salon franchise in 1891—or the Hall's Hair Renewer (plate 27), or the Seven Sutherland Sisters. These latter actually began their careers in the 1880s, traveling as singers with Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth. But their real appeal was their amazingly long hair: collectively, the length of their hair measured thirty-seven feet; Victoria's

alone weighed about eleven pounds. In 1885, their father began bottling and distributing a tonic called The Seven Sutherland Sisters Hair Grower, with images of the sisters on the labels and in advertising copy. Between 1886 and 1887—using slogans like “Remember! It’s the Hair – not the Hat, that makes a Woman Attractive”—they sold \$180,000 worth of the new product, and quickly added a scalp cleanser, a comb, and “hair colorators” to their list of successful products. When their business career ended in 1924, as the popularity of the “bob” grew, sales had reached almost \$3 million.<sup>17</sup>

By the later nineteenth century, blonde hair was once again in ascendancy, as witnessed by the Pre-Raphaelites’ paintings and verse, fairytale heroines, and also by published complaints: an 1867 article in *Leisure Hour* protested the new fashion for lightening hair.<sup>18</sup> But rather than representing the innocent ideal, now often the blonde suggested danger and sexuality. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882) warned, “Often treachery lies/ Underneath the fairest hair.”<sup>19</sup> But the sense of blonde innocence also prevailed, as in Christina Rossetti’s 1862 poem *Goblin Market*, illustrated by her brother Dante, where blonde Laura, enticed by the evil goblins to buy their fruits nightly, pays by cutting and giving them her golden hair. As she sinks deeper and deeper into temptation and sin, her glorious hair grayed and “dwindled,” until finally her sister Lizzie rescues her.

Besides the return to blondeness, other major changes occurred with regard to women’s hair at the end of the nineteenth century. Up until this time, women had cared for their hair in their own residences, assisted by male *coiffeurs* or female house servants, if wealthy, or by family if not. Now in the later 1800s the first women’s public salons began to open, arising literally millennia after men had been regularly using barbershops for everything from their personal grooming and surgical needs to political mongering. Because long wavy hair was preferred, Marcel Grateau in the 1880s in Paris introduced the “Marcel wave,” a system using curlers and heated irons without chemicals, and Karl Nessler followed in 1906 in London with the first permanent wave machine; Nessler later established himself at a salon in New York under the name Charles Nestlé. His device, which used electrified rods and curlers dangling down on wires, was both expensive and dangerous; probably it was not much different from the machine displayed in this exhibition. Drying such long hair was of course an issue, and innovative hair dryers proliferated, some using boiling water contained in a metal brush-like tool that heated the hair and claimed to dry it in minutes rather than hours, and others relying on newly available electricity.

Perhaps the most notable revolution in women’s hair occurred in the early twentieth century, with the introduction of the bob.<sup>20</sup> Rarely had women worn short hair

in western culture. It is reported that Antoine of Paris, in 1910, styled the first bob for actress Eve Lavallière, making her appear immediately younger; by 1913 the famous ballroom dancer Irene Castle was the first well-known American with a bob, followed by the sensational Josephine Baker and others in the 1920s.<sup>21</sup> With regard to bobbed hair, the word “revolution” is no hyperbole: the church, the business world, and even husbands objected to the bob: stories read, “Bobbed hair leads to suit for divorce,” and “Shocked husband shoots himself when wife bobs her hair.”<sup>22</sup> Women, responding to the liberating freedom brought by short, easy-to-care-for hair, replied: “Unlike Samson who lost his strength in losing his mane, we may gain total power in cutting our hair”<sup>23</sup>: what was emasculation for men became emancipation for women. In the post-war decades, women of all classes turned to the bob, whether because they were busy working women who welcomed its ease, they appreciated it as representing political and social liberation, or they simply liked the style. At about the same time women threw off their corsets, shortened their dresses, and adopted more casual and boyish styles by designers like Coco Chanel of Paris. A whole new definition of “the modern woman” pervaded European and American society, as seen in Edward McCartan’s *Portrait of a Young Woman* (plate 29) in terra cotta or Wheeler Williams’s bronze *Portrait of Sylvia* from 1923 (plate 28). The fresh boyishness of the former and hints of clean modern abstraction in the latter became the hallmarks of this new American creature who not only voted, but would gain additional social freedoms as the century progressed.

However, this new woman dangerously blurred gender distinctions, both physically and socially, as suggested by this 1927 male complaint: “The species feels itself endangered by a growing inversion. No more hips, no more breasts, no more hair.”<sup>24</sup> Others predicted baldness would follow the bobbing, along with the end of motherhood and inability to nurse babies, and generally associated the style with infertility. A Catholic pamphlet warned, “Your children will suffer because of you, and the future generation, product of an age of pleasure, will not know to conserve what our soldiers have defended.”<sup>25</sup> Clearly, the human race was about to end, with hair once more at the center of a debate regarding womanhood, manhood, and social and political liberation. For many women, however, the bob became “the clearest symbol of female emancipation.”<sup>26</sup>

In 1920, F. Scott Fitzgerald published in the *Saturday Evening Post* his short story “Bernice Bobs Her Hair,” a satiric tale of a hopelessly inept eighteen-year-old from Wisconsin who, caving in to peer pressure, gets a liberating but not fully successful “remake” from her selfish cousin out East. Soon after, America’s sweetheart, Mary Pickford, joined the bandwagon of the newly emancipated. Long celebrated in



movies as virginal "Sweet Little Mary Pickford" and shown with long, brunette ringlets curling down over her bodice, in the 1920s she shifted her image to a more updated, modern woman by not only bleaching her tresses blonde, but styling her hair into the fashionable short bob. Despite the risk of so dramatically altering her public image, she won a best actress Oscar for her aptly-named first talkie, *Coquette*, where she played a flirtatious southern socialite in a blonde bob.

In 1925 Anita Loos wrote *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. Not only was her heroine Lorelei Lee boyishly bobbed—as illustrated in the first edition by Ralph Barton—demonstrating her liberation from social conventions, but her blondeness functioned as a synthesis of the innocent, pure, youthful but sexy stereotypes of preceding centuries. Amusingly, the famous Lorelei from German literature was a siren with long golden tresses whose music seduced sailors and led them to their deaths in the Rhine; this Lorelei, with her bobbed blonde good looks and gold-digger mentality, was perhaps even more dangerous, especially to wealthy men.

Hollywood quickly picked up on the blonde craze. The appearance of "the blonde bombshell" Jean Harlow in the movie *Platinum Blonde* in 1931 encouraged American women to try the double-process blonding system developed in the 1920s that led to the clearly artificial color, platinum blonde. No longer was there any subtlety about being blonde, nor pretense of naturalness; now the color was clearly chemically created. Harlow, who died at age twenty-six, so abused her hair with peroxide, household bleach, soap flakes, and ammonia, that she eventually had to resort to a wig.<sup>27</sup> Other platinum screen stars mixed comedy with a blend of innocence and sex, and over time the "fast-talking dames" or "dizzy blondes" of the 1930s, such as Mae West, Carole Lombard, and Ginger Rogers, were replaced by the "dumb blondes" of post-war America: Judy Holliday, Carol Channing, and Marilyn Monroe.<sup>28</sup> The latter two both revived the role of Lorelei Lee, Channing on Broadway in 1949, and Monroe in the 1953 movie co-starring Jane Russell.

For many, of course, Marilyn Monroe remains the quintessential blonde of the twentieth century. Born a brunette, Monroe dyed her hair "Dirty Pillow Slip" blonde, and became the sensation of 1950s Hollywood. Relying on the same colorist who produced Jean Harlow's sensational peroxide tresses, Monroe best embodied the dumb blonde, one symptom of the post-war backlash against increasingly independent women.<sup>29</sup> Acutely aware of her physical features, Monroe realized her face was covered with unusually downy, silvery hair, quite visible in Philippe Halsman's 1952 photograph. She took pains to manipulate lighting, makeup, and accessories to enhance its luminous effect on her skin.<sup>30</sup>

Hair coloring companies played a major role in the transformation of women to blondes, with L'Oréal (founded by Eugene Schueller in 1911) dominating the European market, and Clairol (founded by Lawrence Gelb in 1931) the American. In 1950 Clairol developed a combination bleaching and coloring one-step process for those wishing to lighten their hair only several shades—peroxide was still necessary for major color shifts. Their 1950s ad campaign, with the famous slogan "Does she or doesn't she? Hair color so natural only her hairdresser knows for sure," created sales in the millions, and encouraged women to take the plunge and test their other teaser: "Is it true blondes have more fun?" Clairol followed this up in the 1960s with the astonishingly successful "If I have but one life to live, let me live it as a blonde."<sup>31</sup> While it is estimated that only between 5 and 17 percent of American women are natural blondes, more than 40 percent of American women process their hair to be blonde. Even in Japan, 25 percent of L'Oreal's hair coloring products now sold are for producing blonde hair. The advent of do-it-yourself products greatly expanded women's and men's desires to color their hair, in an industry that today reaps \$1.4 billion a year—with the men's coloring market growing twice as fast as the women's.<sup>32</sup>

Breck took advantage of the blonde craze when creating an advertising campaign for their liquid shampoo, invented in 1908. In 1936, Edward Breck, son of the founder, commissioned artist Charles Sheldon to create oil and pastel portraits of striking women, most of them blonde, including the first Breck Girl Roma Whitney, who became the famous profile in the company's logo. Sheldon continued to produce these idealized images of the perfect American girl until succeeded by Ralph Williams, who finally in 1974, under the influence of the civil rights and Black is Beautiful movements, portrayed the first African-American Breck Girl. In a remarkable advertising shift, Donna Alexander, a veterinary student at the University of Pennsylvania, sports a modest Afro while promoting Gold Formula Breck. As home hair care products proliferated—dyes, perms, gels, conditioners—the whole fashion scene became increasingly democratized.

Hair color matters, as research confirms. Blonde females, whether natural or dyed, are represented in higher numbers than they appear in real life in literature, the media, and even Miss America contests, and are clearly associated with positive concepts like beauty, innocence, purity, perfection, and youth.<sup>33</sup> With regard to the last, infants are frequently blonde, and only later develop darker tresses. Thus being blonde realizes western societies' goal of perpetual youthfulness, but also may feed male desires for women who appear controllable. In the Renaissance, women typically married at about age fifteen or sixteen, while men averaged twenty-eight or thirty; men

were thus significantly more mature and experienced than their wives and could better function as heads of household. For some, blondeness may reflect those halcyon days of childlike women. By contrast, redheads, perhaps because of their relative rarity and sense of difference, since the time of ancient Greece and Rome have been associated with negative stereotypes, including the wearing of red wigs by Roman actors playing slaves and the tradition for clowns to be red-headed: comedienne Lucille Ball's dyed hair and Bozo's red wig (plate 51) are actually part of a long tradition of seeing red-heads as foolish and predictably out-of-control.<sup>34</sup>

1. M. Madou, "Cornes et Cornettes," *Flanders in a European Perspective*, ed. M. Smeyers and B. Cardon (Louvain: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1995), 417–426.
2. Joanna Woods-Marsden, "Portrait of the Lady, 1430–1520," in *Virtue and Beauty*, ed. David Brown (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2001), 67.
3. See Joseph Manca, "Blond Hair as a Mark of Nobility in Ferrarese Portraiture of the Quattrocento," *Musei Ferraresi* 17 (1990/1991), 51–60.
4. According to *Glamour* magazine, as quoted in Barnaby Conrad, *The Blonde* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1999), 25.
5. *Rime sparse*, as quoted in Joanna Pitman, *On Blondes* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 71; from *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Durling (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 100 and 136.
6. Konrad Eisenbichler and Jacqueline Murray, trans. and eds., *On the Beauty of Women* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 45.
7. See Pitman, *On Blondes*, 98–102; and Richard Corson, *Fashions in Hair: The First Five Thousand Years* (London: Peter Owen, 1971), 172–174.
8. *Anatomie of Abuses*, 3rd ed. (1585; reprint, London: W. Pickering, 1836), 60–61.
9. Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 171.
10. Mary Trasko, *Daring Do's: A History of Extraordinary Hair* (Paris: Flammarion, 1984), 34.
11. Trasko, *Daring Do's*, 67.
12. On these satires, see Diana Donald, *The Age of*

- Caricature* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), especially chapter 3.
13. For changes in dress and hair style in revolutionary France, see in particular Paul Gerbod, *Histoire de la Coiffure et des Coiffeurs* (Paris: Larousse, 1995), 132–135 and 155–160; and Valerie Steele, *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998), 43–53.
  14. For information on *Godey's* and other fashion magazines, see *Eighty Godey's Full-Color Fashion Plates: 1838–1880*, ed. JoAnne Olian (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Pubs., 1998), iii–v. *Godey's* was founded in 1830 by Louis Antoine Godey, who brought in Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale to serve as editor from 1837 to 1877. She, the first female editor in the United States and friend of both Emma Willard and Harriet Beecher Stowe, had already been editing *The Ladie's Magazine*, which Godey bought.
  15. See Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 472–485.
  16. Trasko, *Daring Do's*, 97.
  17. I thank Brandon Stickney for information on the Sutherlands.
  18. Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 480, quotes from that article.
  19. Quoted in Wendy Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 76.
  20. On the bob, see Mary Louise Roberts, "Samson and Delilah Revisited: The Politics of Women's Fashion in 1920s France," *The American Historical Review* 98 (1993): 657–684.
  21. Trasko, *Daring Do's*, 109. Other writers believe the bob was established only after World War I, when indeed the new style became popular.

22. Trasko, *Daring Do's*, 111.

23. French feminist Henriette Sauret, who also called short hair "a gesture of independence." See Roberts, "Samson and Delilah Revisited," 664 and 662.

24. Roberts, "Samson and Delilah Revisited," 670, quoting literary critic Pierre Lièvre.

25. Roberts, "Samson and Delilah Revisited," 671–672, referring to Dr. François Fouveau de Courmelles in 1919, and quoting a natalist Catholic pamphlet from 1920.

26. Roberts, "Samson and Delilah Revisited," 676, quoting journalist Paul Reboux, 1927.

27. Pitman, *On Blondes*, 207.

28. On these earlier blonde bombshells, see Maria DiBattista, *Fast-Talking Dames* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), especially 85–131, and her discussion of "Blondes Born Yesterday," 325–335.

29. Pitman, *On Blondes*, 225–226.

30. I thank David Shayt for pointing this out to me in the

Christie's 1999 sales catalogue of Monroe memorabilia.

31. See Conrad, *The Blonde*, 39–43 and 25, on the Clairol ads and development.

32. See Conrad, *The Blonde*, 25–27; Stanley Frank, "Brunette Today, Blonde Tomorrow," *Saturday Evening Post*, 9 September 1961, 20–21 and 45; and Bruce Horowitz, "Sales Spotlight Blond Ambition," in *USA Today*, 27 August 2001.

33. Melissa K. Rich and Thomas F. Cash, "The American Image of Beauty: Media Representations of Hair Color for Four Decades," *Sex Roles* 29 (1993): 113–124.

34. On red hair, see Ruth Mellinkoff, "Judas's Red Hair and the Jews," *Journal of Jewish Art* 9 (1982): 31–46, as well as her chapter on hair in *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Dennis E. Clayton and Micol R. C. Maughan, "Redheads and Blonds: Stereotypic Images," *Psychological Reports* 59 (1986): 811–816.

# THE FASHIONABLE MAN

Penny Howell Jolly

**IT IS ERRONEOUS TO BELIEVE** only women think about their hair. Much of people's concept of masculinity revolves around hair, whether head, facial, or body; thus throughout history, men have devoted significant time and energy to it. Today, one out of every twelve men colors his hair, whether to cover gray or "add excitement" to a tedious life (and 57 percent of women surveyed say this is fine with them). Among male teens and twenty-somethings, Bleach Blond, Sandstorm, Black Jack, and Red Rum are the currently popular dyes. And the men's hair coloring industry consumed \$200 million in 2001.

Changes in personal grooming—women's and men's—are subject to fashion, and fashion responds to many factors. For example, the French aristocrat (probably the Count d'Angoulême) in the circa 1560 *Portrait* attributed to Corneille de Lyon (plate 4) wears his hair short-cropped, but along with a moustache and short, square-cut beard. The newly desirable short hair on males, not fashionable in the preceding century, arose from an accident to Francis I, King of France, in the 1520s: when the injury required his hair to be shaved, he demanded his entire court be shorn. This new French style spread quickly, as demonstrated by Henry VIII's English court, as did another newly fashionable display of hair—the beard. In previous centuries, beards differentiated foreigners, especially Easterners, from Europeans. But the beard's introduction following Francis I's accident may have served as a compensation for the lack of head hair, and its meaning was quickly established, making it indispensable. The Renaissance beard, popular beginning about 1540 and in vogue for at least a



century, carried specific connotations regarding masculinity.<sup>1</sup>

As confirmed by medical treatises and essayists, as well as English poets and dramatists who punned on “hair” and “heir,” hair in general and the beard specifically, once head hair was shorter, signified the wearer’s virility. It was believed that the beard’s hair was linked specifically to the production of semen. As Marcus Ulmus’s treatise on beards declares, “Nature gave to mankind a Beard, that it might remaine as an Index in the Face, of the Masculine generative faculty.”<sup>2</sup> According to the ancient theory of the humors, men were superior due to their naturally hot and dry natures, while women were cold and wet. Being without beard resulted from lack of heat: “Because they [women] want heate, as it appeareth also in some effeminate men, who are beardles for the same cause, because they are of the complexion of women.”<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, and quite inconsistently, women’s excessive head hair was understood to result from their cold, moist temperaments, as did their small and inferior brains. Thus, like the rational brains produced by men’s hot natures, beards additionally indicated wisdom. Social circumstances also intervened, adding further prestige to beards: Elizabeth I of England set a tax on beards, effectively limiting them to upper-class males.<sup>4</sup> In modern times, beards still connote authority and influence: the CIA plotted to poison Fidel Castro’s cigars in hopes of depilating and simultaneously deposing him.<sup>5</sup>

Men’s hair fashions changed dramatically when eight-year-old Louis XIII ascended the French throne in 1610. His beardless face and long curly hair, parted in the middle, began the new fashion that quickly spread beyond France’s borders. Following premature hair loss by the 1620s, Louis donned artificial hair and wigs in order to maintain the new fashion; his own scraggly beard led him in 1628 to limit his court’s facial hair to moustaches and tiny chin tufts. Louis XIV continued the rage for long, elaborate hair, and when his “natural glory” began to thin at about age thirty-five, he similarly turned to hairpieces and wigs, employing as many as forty wigmakers; in 1665 the guild of wigmakers was established.

The English court followed French fashion, but already at James I’s court there were complaints: “Men wearing long haire like vnto women, and women cutting off their haire like vnto boyes.... Oh monstrous, oh monstrous.”<sup>6</sup> However, English courtiers enthusiastically adopted the French *cadennette*, or lovelock, an extra long curl of hair—or even five or six—usually falling over the left shoulder, the side “closer” to the heart; sometimes ribbons or jewels, love tokens offered by a lady, were attached. Cornelius Johnson’s portrait from 1633 (plate 3), probably of Sir Francis Godolphin, depicts one of Charles I’s courtiers in fashionable doublet with elaborate

lace collar. Typical of English gentlemen up until the 1660s—when wigs became fashionable—his long hair is his own; the low collar allows his stylish lovelock to hang over his shoulder.

Associated with fashionable Royalists, lovelocks and long hair became sites for political as well as religious and moral controversy. The lovelock was trammelled by moralizing Christian writers for its effeminacy and degeneracy. William Prynne, in his 1628 *The Unlovelinesse, of Love-lockes. Or A summarie Discourse, proving: The wearing, and nourishing of a Locke, or Love-locke, to be altogether unseemely, and unlawfull unto Christians*, not only condemned men for “the Womanish, Sinfull, and Unmanly, Crisping, Curling, Frouncing, Powdring, and nourishing of their Lockes, and Hairie excrements,” but also took the opportunity to criticize women’s “whorish Cutting and Crisping of their Haire... the very badge and character of their subjection both to God and Man.”<sup>7</sup> The religious split became political as “Round-Heads”—a term first applied during the winter of 1641–1642 to Puritans and other supporters of Parliament who typically wore short, conservative haircuts—were at odds with the long-haired “Cavaliers,” the sometimes raffish supporters of the King.<sup>8</sup> A pastor named Thomas Hall printed his *Loathsomnesse of Long Haire* in 1653, wherein he stated that “long haire is one of the sinfull customes and fashion of the wicked men of the world.”<sup>9</sup> Similar pronouncements appear in the New England Colonies: in 1655 Harvard University outlawed long hair, and Massachusetts pastor Nicholas Noyes (1647–1717) wrote “An Essay Against Periwigs,” wherein he condemned wigs while pondering significant questions regarding boundaries between young and old, women and men, humans and animals.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, Samuel Pepys succumbed to wearing a long-haired periwig in 1663, although when his wife attached extra locks to her hair, he forbade her the practice. But Pepys was no Puritan. While some women did sport periwigs, generally speaking wigs were articles of male dress and, like the Renaissance beard, signified masculinity and authority, connotations still alive today in England’s judicial and political systems.<sup>11</sup>

Elaborately powdered wigs worn over fully clean-shaven faces continued in popularity into the eighteenth century (plate 7), although the problems caused by insects (the powder used was often flour) and fear of spreading the plague did discourage some. Wigs also became objects of political and social satire. William Hogarth’s 1761 engraving, *The Five Orders of Periwigs* (plate 5), parodies Vitruvius’s famous treatise on architectural orders, and simultaneously mocks the aristocracy by highlighting the pretentiousness surrounding wigs’ authority and importance. His 1732–1733 *A Midnight Modern Conversation* (plate 21) shows a bawdy group of so-

called gentlemen at a drinking house, a number of whom have lost their wigs and thus have symbolically shed civilization itself. Even here in the colonies, proper wigs conveyed orderliness and control, as documented in portraits of American merchant class families (plate 6). Men carefully balanced pious Puritan complaints against wigs with their desires to demonstrate prosperity and upward mobility. Thus male wigs needed to be appropriately modest in style, befitting conservative American society, and most colonial women dressed their natural hair, avoiding wigs altogether (plate 24).<sup>12</sup> Some men eschewed wigs entirely. George Washington (plate 34) refused to wear them, a practice too aristocratic for him, and was dismayed that Martha, a wealthy woman when he married her, was ordering wigs from abroad.

Economics and politics put an end to fanciful periwigs. In England in 1795, a famine year, Pitt's Tory government imposed a tax on flour for hair, and their opposition Whigs promptly cut off their pigtails and ceased powdering; powdered heads quickly went out of fashion. In France in the 1790s, supporters of the Revolution distinguished themselves from the establishment by eschewing wigs and returning to short, more natural hairstyles based on ancient Roman styles, as seen in Roman republican portrait busts and some later imperial images. Apparently inspired by an actor playing the role of Titus, Napoleon and others popularized this new "à la Titus" cut, which allowed for short, loose, lightly curled hair combed forward over the temples and forehead, and down the neck; finally dark colors, especially black hair, were in style. Established first in France, the now fashionable Titus cut spread across Europe to England and on to the newly formed United States. We see this, for example, in Thomas Sully's *Portrait of Tom Wharton* (plate 8) from the first decade of the nineteenth century. Even here there are political overtones to the new style, as, for example, followers of Thomas Jefferson cut their hair to contrast with the long-haired Federalists.<sup>13</sup>

While fashionable men's hair remained relatively short for the duration of the nineteenth century, countless portraits document the return of facial hair. Moustaches, beards, and even elaborate sideburns appear, the latter a popular style named after Ambrose Burnside, a Union general during the Civil War, who originated the fashion in the United States (plate 9).<sup>14</sup> This hirsute style coincides with the sale of numerous hair preparations promising luxuriant growth of hair and related products such as dyes and curling irons for whiskers and moustaches (plate 10).

But an enormous change occurred within the following two decades. Already by the sixteenth century, men had typically been shaven either at home by servants, or in public barbershops by barbers using a straight-edged razor (plate 12). Not until

the early nineteenth century was there a serious movement afoot to encourage self-shaving by creating a so-called safety razor: an instrument where the skin was shielded from all but the edge of the blade. Finally, in 1895, in this country, King C. Gillette invented a safety razor with a pre-sharpened, disposable, one-use-only blade: man's morning *toilette* was now revolutionized. The patent was granted in 1903 and production began; by 1905, 90,000 razors and 2.5 million blades were produced and sold here and in Britain. It is estimated that today North American males spend an average of 3,000 hours shaving during their lifetimes—about four months of their lives.<sup>15</sup>

The twentieth century, then, is the period of increasing "do-it-yourself" options regarding hair. Gillette's enormously popular safety razor and those of competitors were instantly widely used. One company marketed a sharpenable blade where a strop was pulled through the razor alongside the blade's edge; such variants are on display in this exhibition. World War I helped to familiarize young men with the new tool, as safety razors were issued to soldiers, allowing them to maintain a clean-shaven face on the battlefield (plate 11). This was not an aesthetic decision; helmets and gas masks, for example, fit much better over smooth, hairless faces and chins. Throughout the century blades improved: carbon steel was replaced by stainless steel blades, and double- and triple-track razors were invented. The barbershop, once a place for political discussion and man-to-man social interaction, became a place for only infrequent visits.

Jacob Schick in 1923 patented the first electric razor, which—after a number of modifications—moved into significant use during the 1930s. In our exhibit is a highly successful competitor from 1925, the "New Improved Vibro-Shave" (plate 13). It looks like a normal double-edge safety razor, but plugs in, using electricity to vibrate the blade in its head. The so-called "dry razor," requiring no water source or lather, developed throughout the rest of the century. On the brink of World War II, companies like Remington and Sunbeam joined in to promote this gadget as most appropriate for the "modern man," and cordless, battery-powered razors followed the war, along with light-weight plastic models. The twentieth century, then, was mostly a time favoring clean-shaven, short-haired men (plate 15), although the hippie movement among the rebellious youths of the 1960s discouraged any hair management systems at all. As always, hair is manipulated to signal social and political difference.

1. See Will Fisher, "The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 155–185.
2. From his *Physiologia Barbae Humanae* of 1603, as quoted in Fisher, 174.
3. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Problemata*, as quoted in Zirka Z. Filipczak, *Hot Dry Men/Cold Wet Women* (New York: American Federation of Arts, 1997), 69.
4. Paul Gerbod, *Histoire de la Coiffure et des Coiffeurs* (Paris: Larousse, 1995), 66.
5. Edmundo Desnoes, "'Will You Ever Shave Your Beard?'" in *On Signs*, ed. Marshall Blonsky (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1985), 12–13. For Castro, beards signaled commitment to the Revolution.
6. Thomas Stoughton, in his *The Christians Sacrifice of 1622*, as quoted in A. R. Jones and P. Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 79.
7. London, 1628, unpaginated; quotes from the Norwood, N.J.: Walter J. Johnson, 1976 reprint.
8. See M. Dorothy George, *English Political Caricature: A Study of Opinion and Propaganda* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), I, 24–25.
9. Richard Corson, *Fashions in Hair: The First Five Thousand Years* (London: Peter Owen, 1971), 210–215.
10. Reprinted in John Demos, ed., *Remarkable Providences* (New York: G. Braziller, 1972), 213–220.
11. Marcia Pointon, "The Case of the Dirty Beau: Symmetry, Disorder, and the Politics of Masculinity," in *The Body Imaged*, ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 175–189, discusses the wig and masculinity.
12. Massachusetts in 1721 outlawed extravagant wigs. See Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 262. On American colonial hair styles and attitudes toward wigs, see Wayne Craven, *Colonial American Portraiture* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), especially chapter 3.
13. Bill Severn, *The Long and Short of It: Five Thousand Years of Fun and Fury over Hair* (New York: McKay Co., 1971), 87.
14. On fashions for men's facial hair, see Dwight E. Robinson, "Fashions in Shaving and Trimming of the Beard: The Men of the *Illustrated London News*, 1842–1972," *American Journal of Sociology* 81 (1976), 1133–1141.
15. G. Bruce Retallack, "Razors, Shaving, and Gender Construction: An Inquiry into the Material Culture of Shaving," *Material History Review* 49 (1999): 4.



# HAIR POWER

Penny Howell Jolly

## **DANGEROUS HAIR**

TRESSES OF WOMEN'S HAIR have long signaled women's power to entrap men, as seen in the literary and visual arts, as well as in popular culture. It is a motif that repeats throughout western culture, not just since the Renaissance.

While biblical accounts make no mention of Eve's hair, artists frequently depict her with sinuous curls, alluding to the popular notion that Eve seduced Adam into sin: a narrative element not present in the original Genesis text. We see such an Eve in Albrecht Dürer's *Fall of Man* from 1504: while the anatomically perfect Eve and Adam stand unmoving in an Eden where no tree leaf even whispers with movement, Eve's long, curly hair capriciously flows out behind her, as though blown by some unseen wind that disturbs nothing else. Sinuous and curving like the serpent, her hair forms an entangling trap for Adam. John Milton's description of Eve reveals her as a blonde, and her hair foreshadows the serpent entwining the Tree of Knowledge: "She, as a veil down to the slender waist/ Her unadorned golden tresses wore/ Disheveled, but in wanton ringlets waved,/ As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied/ Subjection, but required with gentle sway."<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice* imagines that Portia's hair could be "A golden mesh t' entrap the hearts of men/ Faster than gnats in cobwebs."<sup>2</sup> The German poet Goethe, in his 1810 *Faust*, has Mephistopheles warn of Lilith: "Beware/ That lovely hair of hers, those tresses/Which she incomparably delights to wear!/ The young man whom she lures into their snare/ She will not soon

release from her caresses."<sup>3</sup>

The association of sinful women with entangling hair is found as well in images of Mary Magdalene, although her hair transforms in meaning over the course of her saintly narrative. At first, it marks her worldly and sensual nature, since she was popularly understood to have been a prostitute. But hair is also the vehicle of her transformation, for she uses it in her penance and humility to wash Christ's feet. Later, after she has exiled herself to a solitary and possessionless existence in the desert, her hair confirms her sanctity, as it grows miraculously to cover her nakedness. Albrecht Dürer's woodcut of the *Assumption of Mary Magdalene* shows her in this final stage of life, as angels transport her daily in order to feed on celestial fare. But her hair retains this triple significance that encapsulates her story: sin, penitential cleansing, and rebirth.

By contrast, Edvard Munch's *The Sin* from 1902 shows no such transformation. Shameless, a half-length female stands naked before the viewer, her luxuriant red hair tousled and hanging unkempt down to her waist. Red hair has consistently been seen as a negative in western tradition and on females frequently suggests dangerous and untrustworthy sexuality and lust; it was even believed a mark of witches. Her disheveled state reaffirms her uncontrolled nature. Even in Ireland, where a large percentage of the world's population of redheads lives, popular folklore warns, "To meet a red-haired woman is a sure omen of misfortune."<sup>4</sup> And despite the ascent of stars like Rita Hayworth, an "exotic" Latina whose sexuality and stardom were enhanced when she dyed her hair red—as for her famous 1946 "Put the Blame on Mame" number—research shows that today redheads still carry negative stereotypes.<sup>5</sup>

Associating the femme fatale with long, unbound hair remains a commonplace in the western tradition, and among its longest-lived examples are versions of the Medusa myth.<sup>6</sup> Even Vik Muniz's light-hearted photographic reworking in pasta and marinara sauce of Caravaggio's painting of the ancient myth—his *Medusa Marinara* from 1999—evokes the horror associated with viewing directly the dangerous and literally "fatale" Medusa. Anyone who beheld her serpent hair turned to stone. Other examples of women who were fatally attractive—the Sirens, the Rhinegold Maidens—similarly had entangling hair that led men to their deaths, as seen in Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for Wagner's *Das Rheingold* in the December 1896 edition of the *Savoy*. At about the same time, Beardsley also illustrated Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, where the highly sexed Salome has just performed her dance of the seven veils in order to seduce Herod into beheading John the Baptist. In his famous image, Salome's serpentine hair reaches upward like tentacles, at the same time seemingly dripping to the floor, like the blood that flows from John's severed neck. The play between serpents, hair, and blood

at the moment that Salome kisses the Baptist's head mixes sexuality and bloodthirstiness in a terrible tangle of danger and carnality.

The association of removal of hair with the stripping of power is another consistent theme, for both women and men. It can be depicted in a humorous light, as in Hogarth's *A Midnight Modern Conversation* (plate 21). The drunken reveler at the rear, toasting with his glass, has removed his wig, visible in his left hand. Given the connotations of masculine authority and class associated with wigs, their inappropriate removal was a certain sign of impotency. But far more humiliating is the practice, found throughout history, of forced removal of hair as a punishment or as a signal of defeat, for example, when vanquished foes are shaved by conquerors. While sometimes other reasons may be proffered—improved hygiene in prisons, or ease of equipment wearing in the military—nonetheless, when a prisoner's or new recruit's hair is shaved almost to the scalp, the message of authority and power is clear: we control you. Following World War II, suspected collaborators on both sides were punished and shamed by public shaving, especially women who were believed to have consorted with the enemy, whether Allied or Axis. A broadside in Linz warned: "We'll watch you on the street, we'll cut your hair, and we'll tear off your clothes and send you running naked for home."<sup>7</sup> Robert Capa's famous photograph of a Nazi collaborator captures the venomous hostility of this aggressive action, which typically involved more than just cutting by scissors. By contrast, as a consensual act, for example following religious practices, the self-inflicted shaving of hair can indicate celibacy or self-denial, thus a voluntary sacrifice to a higher power.

But certainly the most famous narrative of power-wielding hair and its forcible removal is that of Samson from the Book of Judges in the Old Testament. At first, Samson's hairiness signals his extreme virility and unnatural strength: body and head hair grew prolifically, it was believed, due to heat produced in men; colder and moister women suffered a deficiency in this area, and thus were relatively hairless and hence weak. Such ancient beliefs may figure in modern men's fear of baldness. Thus in Dürer's *Samson Fighting the Lion* woodcut, the hero's hirsute appearance assures the viewer of his eventual victory: the lion, while overall more hairy, remains a beast, and Samson's physical and moral superiority remains clear. Yet, while more than a match for the lion, Samson is defeated—as the story is popularly told, although not as recounted in Judges 16—by the wiles of a woman who seduces him and cuts off his hair, leaving him symbolically castrated. Interestingly, in Gustave Doré's illustrated bible from 1874, when Delilah approaches Samson he already appears "castrated," in that Doré has feminized him: Samson leans languidly on a seat while pulling on his

luxuriant tresses, exposing a prominent earring; by contrast, Delilah stands, her head and body modestly veiled.

### BODY HAIR

The prepubescent child eagerly awaits the arrival of body hair: girls typically grow pubic hair around age eleven, and axillary hair soon follows; boys of about twelve begin sprouting pubic hair, followed in the next three or four years by chest and body hair, and finally within another year by facial hair. As a biological marker of maturity, development of body hair is almost unparalleled. What we then do with it culturally—how we manipulate it by growing it here and shaving or waxing it there—reflects many of our socially and politically formed ideas about who we are. The degree to which images reflect real social practices is difficult to determine, however, as artists' handling of body hair is conditioned by artistic conventions and meanings, and may not reflect actual body hair management.

The practice of shaving body hair is largely a twentieth-century development, although early western cultures from the Egyptian to the Roman practiced it. Ancient Egyptians valued smooth, hairless bodies for both women and men, and utilized abrasives like pumice to effect that result. Pubic depilation—whether by singeing or plucking—was practiced in ancient Greece, although vase paintings of prostitutes, or even sexualized scenes of rape, were likely to include pubic hair as an erotic element.<sup>8</sup> But for the Christian Middle Ages, evidence of body hair removal seems absent, although some suggest that aristocratic women for a time beginning in the late Middle Ages practiced pubic depilation, influenced by Crusaders returning from Muslim harems. In the Renaissance, there is some evidence for this practice. Jean de la Montagne in 1525 remarked that to be elegant, a woman should be completely shaven, while Erasmus, writing his 1509 *In Praise of Folly*, mocks old women who “pluck and thin their pubic bush.”<sup>9</sup> However, pubic depilation was apparently ended by Catherine de' Medici, Queen of France, in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>10</sup> No evidence suggests removal of hair from underarms or legs.

In the Renaissance, artists like Dürer and Hans Baldung Grien depicted witches, as the anti-witchcraft craze hit Europe by the early sixteenth century, and prominent hair is one of their signs. Baldung's *Witches' Sabbath* of 1510 shows six naked witches brewing their infernal potions, surrounded by pitchforks, bones, and their familiars: two goats and a cat. Whether they are flying through the air or stirring their pots, their long hair whips out behind them, signaling their potent sexuality. It was

believed that, in order to fly, witches would rub the staffs of their pitchforks or their own bodies with nefarious potions “under the arms and in other hairy places.”<sup>11</sup> According to the 1487 *Malleus maleficarum* (*The Witches' Hammer*), a Dominican text explaining how to combat witchcraft, when a suspected witch was arrested, the first act should be to shave her entire body. Clearly the removal of all body and head hair by inquisitors was an attempt to diminish the unnatural creatures' powers. This may be why some sixteenth-century images of witches, including Baldung's famous painting *Weather Witches* in Frankfurt, are among the very rare Renaissance depictions of axillary—that is, underarm—hair, and also frequently show pubic hair.

Even women who were not witches, if they were “rough and thick grown with hair” in their “secret privities,” were judged insatiable for sex by nature, even lecherous.<sup>12</sup> We see this association between pubic hair and vain earthly pleasures in later art, for example in Castellan's print of Edgar Allan Poe's *Masque of the Red Death*, where a female figure with luxuriant pubic hair and grotesque head represents one of the wanton phantasms or dreams present at Prince Prospero's “voluptuous” masquerade.

The shaping or total depilation of women's pubic hair, a trend increasingly popular today in this country, could, like the blonde ideal, be a symbolic depowering of women: such denuding does infantilize mature bodies. By contrast, contemporary artist Millie Wilson, in her *Museum of Lesbian Dreams* from 1990–1992, pays particular attention to female pubic hair and empowers it by literally enhancing it. In one section of the work, *Merkins*, she makes a series of elaborately curled and manipulated wigs, each named for a different woman. Merkins, a term probably derived from “maulkin,” itself a slang term for a lower class woman, are pubic wigs worn by women—usually prostitutes originally—at least as early as the seventeenth century, possibly to cover signs of disease, to replace hair lost in illness, or to cover bald pudenda shaved in an effort to reduce lice. Today, merkins most typically are worn in theatrical and cinematic circumstances as a modesty cover, by cancer patients to replace hair lost due to radiation therapy, or for erotic enhancement. In another part of her *Museum*, Wilson again focuses on female genitalia, but this time making a visual play between a typology of eighteenth-century male wigs, itself a satire by Hogarth included separately in this exhibition (plate 5), and an actual page from Dr. George W. Henry's 1948 *Sex Variants: A Study of Homosexual Patterns*, his search for deviant physical manifestations of homosexuality in female genitalia. Using a reproduction of a Louis XIV style wig in the center to link the two taxonomies of male wigs and female genitals, she juxtaposes these images of supposed authority and power. Hogarth mocks the “bigwig”; Wilson similarly reveals to the viewer the ridiculousness of Henry's no-longer authori-



tative typology that claimed deviance. This suggestion of “inversion,” a psychiatric term used in the past for homosexuality, subverts the power of both images, and at the same time empowers lesbian sexuality.<sup>13</sup>

The typical Renaissance nude in art generally lacks pubic hair, although exceptions exist, particularly among works by Flemish and German artists and in depictions of males, for example, Michelangelo's *David*.<sup>14</sup> In some images, visual body hair seems simply to result from the meticulously detailed style of an artist: Jan van Eyck's almost life-sized, virtuoso Adam and Eve in the Ghent Altarpiece of 1432 sport not only pubic hair, but also leg and arm hair, wrinkles, fingernails, surface veins, and other body details often omitted by artists. Dürer depicted pubic hair on both Adam and Eve in his engraving, a somewhat unusual choice, as more commonly pubic hair is included in images more openly stressing excessive sexuality than these: besides witches, images of Venus, Vanitas, the goddesses in the Judgment of Paris, or other sensual women—even including Lucretia, who is raped.

However, the academic tradition for depicting males and especially females with fully idealized, hairless bodies continues into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even though by then many artists routinely eschewed academic notions of beauty. In this exhibition, we see smooth-bodied, academic nudes in Benjamin West's classically inspired 1803 *Venus Lamenting the Death of Adonis* (plate 42) and in Mario Joseph Korbel's lovely marble *Female Torso* from 1927 (plate 44). In this sculpture, the white of the marble reinforces the ideally smoothed flesh, as no hint of imperfection—or hair!—is created. What a contrast, then, with Edward Kienholz's *Bunny, Bunny, You're So Funny* (plate 45), an assemblage that was censored in 1963 and removed from an exhibition at San Fernando Valley State College.<sup>15</sup> Kienholz aggressively mixes the organic female form with sharp metallic materials, as his nude half torso wears chicken-wire red mesh stockings held up by metal garters, and its amputated limbs end in metal doorknobs instead of feet. The torso itself is supported by a metal stand, and contains a plastic baby doll that can be spun by a mechanical crank appended to the hip of the figure. But perhaps most shocking of all is the figure's pubic hair: it is formed from steel-wool.

Another potentially shocking female torso is Birgit Dieker's *Beasty Girl* from 2001 (plate 43): an extremely naturalistically posed woman standing attentively with hands on her hips, her inset blue eyes seemingly alive, but whose entire body is covered with hair, some human and some sheep's wool.<sup>16</sup> Quite in contrast to Korbel's sensual *Torso*, which is raised on a pedestal even while tempting the viewer to touch it, *Beasty Girl* subverts the traditional idealized female nude by substituting a fright-

eningly monstrous form: life-sized and in our space. But Dieker also here returns to her Germanic roots, for there a tradition exists, especially popular in late medieval and Renaissance Germany, for depicting Wild Men and Women. We see these for example in Martin Schongauer's engravings from about 1470, which even include a Wild Woman nursing a small Wild Child. The meaning of these hirsute figures varies over time, but in Schongauer's day was generally relatively positive, quite unlike our werewolf horror fantasies.<sup>17</sup> These wild people, although less than human, are natural people, associated with superhuman strength and virility (the males) and fecundity and fertility (the females). Schongauer's tamed examples, both of whom support coats-of-arms, are subservient to their noble “masters” and transfer to them their protection, strength, and promise of fertility.

For many contemporary women, hairless bodies remain the ideal, and shaving or waxing a regular ritual. Except among feminists, some of whom refuse to remove body hair, American women typically shave both their axillary and leg hair; bikini waxes are also increasingly popular. But these are relatively recent developments, widespread only post-World War II, and it is ironic that the “smoothing” of underarms and legs, as it was often called in the 1910s and 1920s, dates to the era when women began bobbing their hair as a sign of liberation.

Newfound freedom in one arena of personal hygiene thus left women open to slavish attention in another. The first push for the shaving of underarms began in May of 1915, when ads in *Harper's Bazaar* alerted women to problems of unsightly hair occasioned by the new, sleeveless fashions; these were soon followed by ads concerning “limbs.”<sup>18</sup> When Sears marketed dresses with sheer sleeves for the first time in 1922, they simultaneously offered a woman's décolleté safety razor, a slightly smaller version of a man's, in different packaging.<sup>19</sup> Advertising encouraging hairless legs continued into the 1920s, “necessitated” by short skirts, sheer stockings, and more revealing bathing costumes; but, as with the boyish bob from the '20s, moral issues concerning “bad” women discouraged some. Nevertheless, by World War II sexy legs were in, and they needed to be hairless; by 1964, 98 percent of American women aged fifteen to forty-four removed body hair.<sup>20</sup> Not until the women's movements of the late 1960s and 1970s did women refuse to shave for ideological reasons. Indeed, shaving of body hair not only heightens sexual difference, but simultaneously infantilizes women, making their bodies once again seem eternally youthful and immature.<sup>21</sup> At exactly the periods when women were becoming freer—the 1920s with its unisex styling, the 1940s with Rosie the Riveter—pressure was increased to keep women feminine.

### THREADING HAIRS OF MEMORY AND MOURNING

It should not be surprising that hair fulfills many roles relevant to memorializing deceased persons, given its malleability on the living and durability following death. Many cultures worldwide prescribe hair rituals when mourning the dead, such as purposeful deranging of the hair by pulling, cutting, or even shaving. Hair itself is already dead as soon as it has grown from the follicle, so even when cut from the body of the deceased, it retains its color and form over centuries. As a writer in the 1850 volume of *Godey's Lady's Book* noted, "Hair is at once the most delicate and lasting of our materials and survives us like love."

Hair is also intimate and personal: we don't share our hair with our friends, nor touch other people's hair, except in especially close relationships. Thus cutting a lock from one's lover is akin to acknowledging intimacy. When Robert Browning asked Elizabeth Barrett for "what I have always dared to think I would ask you for...a lock of your hair," she replied, "I never gave away what you ask me to give you, to a human being, except my nearest relatives & once or twice or thrice to female friends."<sup>22</sup> He did eventually receive that treasure. Locks of both Brownings are included in this exhibition (plates 36 and 37), from a *Collection of Hair* compiled by English poet and friend of John Keats, J. H. Leigh Hunt (1784–1859).

Alexander Pope's famous mock-epic poem *The Rape of the Lock* depends upon implied sexual violence incurred by the unauthorized taking of a lock of hair. Pope's satire derives from an incident in 1711, when Robert, Lord Petre, clipped hair from an unmarried twenty-two-year-old, Arabella Fermor (fictionalized as the Baron and Belinda, respectively, in the poem). First written in 1712 at the request of John Caryll, a relative of Lord Petre, and dedicated to Ms. Fermor, the poem was conceived as a means of lending humor to a tense situation and relieving stress between the two families. Pope revised and expanded his comic-heroic epic in 1714 and again in 1717 and published—under a pseudonym—the *Key to the Lock*, a mock critique of his own work. In Aubrey Beardsley's illustration for the April 1896 *Savoy*, the Baron steals up behind the innocent Belinda, and reaches toward her elaborately curled hair. It is, of course, the intimacy associated with hair—"th' inestimable Prize" becomes the virtue of the young, innocent woman—that makes so intolerable the Baron's act of displaying it in his finger ring to "gazing Eyes."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, it was already customary in mid-seventeenth-century England for lovers to exchange rings with locks of hair.

Many pieces of jewelry embellished with human hair functioned as mourning jewelry (plates 38–41), examples of which are included in this exhibition. In the seven-

teenth century, people wore *memento-mori* rings encasing hair and inscribed with the date and name or initials of the deceased, while in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, women wore mourning brooches and pendants as well.<sup>24</sup> Hair in these could take the form of locks formed into a curl; plaited, woven, or twisted strands of hair; or even hair that was dissolved or ground up, mixed with the paint medium, and used for painting allegorical scenes with willow trees, tombstones, and other motifs symbolic of mourning. Such jewelry became astonishingly popular in the nineteenth century, especially during the Civil War in this country and in England following the 1861 death of Queen Victoria's beloved Prince Albert. Victoria gave and received countless gifts of hair tokens, many memorializing Albert, but others using her own hair. As one popular rhyme expressed, "If I should from this world/ Depart you'd have a bit of my/ Hair my hand and heart if we/ Could no more each other see/ You could still remember me."<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the most ambitious example of hairwork associated with Victoria was a life-sized portrait of the queen, entirely of hair, exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1855.<sup>26</sup>

By the second half of the nineteenth century, changes in fashion and technique produced hair jewelry that allowed the hair to touch the body of the wearer directly. Following cleansing of the hair by boiling it in borax and water and then scraping it, hair workers wove a few strands of hair at a time, weighted on a weaving table, over variously designed molds made of wood, wire, or metal. Formed into openwork patterns, the hair dried into hollow geometrical shapes that could be glued and attached to gold fittings, then made into earrings, bracelets, necklaces, or watch chains. While one could provide friends' or relatives' hair, manufactured pieces were often created from hair purchased from convents or lower class women selling their hair to earn money; the makers were professional jewelers, some of whom became quite famous for this specialty. But women also learned to make hair jewelry. For example, the popular *Godey's Lady's Book* from December 1850 included the first published instructions in America for making hairwork on a home braiding table, and one of the device's selling points was that the owner could be assured of the hair's authenticity.<sup>27</sup>

Making one's own hair wreath similarly assured the accurate identification of the hair, as women's skills included forming delicate flowers from their own family's tresses and mounting them onto shaped bases. Hair was collected daily from combs and brushes and placed in personal receptacles called hair receivers; several examples are in this exhibition. Popular particularly in later nineteenth-century America, these large hair wreaths were constructed over a period of time, eventually memorializing generations within a family. Framed in boxes and displayed in domestic settings, some were even provided with labels or diagrams identifying each flower's source. Although

generally made while the donors were living, over time these hair wreaths became memorials to the deceased. But by the early twentieth century the practice faded, partly due to fears of contagion, as the hair began to be considered unhealthy; many examples of hairwork were burned.

Hair of famous individuals has long fascinated historical and literary buffs. An interesting example of the nineteenth-century obsession with hair is the album compiled by J. H. Leigh Hunt, parts of which are on display (plates 35–37). Hunt, part of the Romantic circle of writers, focuses in particular upon the literary giants of his day—Keats, the Shelleys, Wordsworth, Charles Lamb—but also includes other famous figures: Napoleon and George Washington.

It is interesting here to juxtapose the iconic portrait of the first American president, one of Gilbert Stuart's own replicas of his original from 1795–1796 (plate 34), with a lock of George Washington's actual hair. Which is the more potent visual experience? Which creates a more powerful sense of presence? Washington himself refused to wear a wig, associating it with upper class ambitions, and was dismayed that Martha, a wealthy woman when he married her, was ordering wigs from France. We see him in Stuart's portrait wearing his own hair, now white and perhaps powdered, styled in a simple *queue*, similar to wigs of the period; replicas of gentlemen's more elaborate *queue* wigs are included in the exhibition. Hunt's lock of Washington's hair, though, is surprisingly powerful. Like a bone or other bodily fragment displayed for meditation by the faithful in a medieval reliquary, this rare physical remnant of the legendary Father of our Country is met with quiet respect from today's viewers.

Hair is associated with mourning and death in other ways, as it is often manipulated exceptionally at important moments of transition. For example, a male might disregard shaving, thus indicating the suspension of social order during a period of mourning. Similarly, the practice of pulling at, shaving, or even tearing out one's hair as a mourning gesture is an ancient one, especially associated with women.<sup>28</sup> Signaling a clear discontinuance of normal deportment while grieving for a deceased spouse, a married woman in mourning might let her hair down; the bonds of marriage are literally being loosed and disarranged. We see this long-standing western tradition visualized in Benjamin West's marvelous painting *Venus Lamenting the Death of Adonis* from 1803 (plate 42). This goddess of love is no blonde; West had just been to Paris, where dark-haired beauties reigned. She here finds her young lover, Adonis, who has ignored her warnings and been slain by a wild boar; from his blood the anemone sprouts. Overcome with grief, Venus falls to her knees and arches her back; her long sinuous hair, conventionally an expression of her beauty and sexuality, she here pulls out in despair, while

her attendants gently restrain her. As Ovid describes, in George Sandys' elegant 1632 edition: "Downe jumping from the skies, at once she tore/ Her haire and bosome: then her brest invades/ With bitter blowe."<sup>29</sup>

#### HAIRITAGE: AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCES.<sup>30</sup>

Hair has always been important to African-Americans, as demonstrated by the ubiquity of hair narratives by contemporary black writers, but also by accounts written about African-American slaves and their particular interest in hair grooming as early as the later eighteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Even before the Civil War, the use of blacksmithing tools as straighteners anticipated the later development of the hot comb (plate 49). Thus long before Madam C. J. Walker's heyday at the opening of the twentieth century, there was a powerful black beauty culture in this country, whether it involved weaving cotton through the prongs of a fork to comb and clean the hair, rubbing chopped corn into the scalp as a cleanser, using lard or butter as a conditioner, or shaving parts of the crown while leaving other hair long and combed up high over the forehead.<sup>32</sup>

Many African-Americans today recount childhood memories of hair toiletry rituals: mothers heating hot combs on a stove, the use of concoctions of grease, the difficulty of dealing with the "kitchen"—the densest hair at the nape of the neck—and the smell of singed hair and tenderness of burned scalps that inevitably occurred.<sup>33</sup> Painful and difficult as these processes sound, for many they formed a rite of passage that cemented their sense of belonging within a community, even as it simultaneously could reflect a desire to appear more like women and men in the mainstream white culture. In 1992, it was estimated that African-Americans purchased 19 percent of all toiletries and cosmetics sold but 34 percent of all hair care products—three times that of other Americans.<sup>34</sup> Even today, an estimated 70–75 percent of black women in the United States straighten their hair.<sup>35</sup>

Beauty products and processes proliferated in the twentieth-century African-American community, and entrepreneurs arose to manufacture those products. Certainly the most famous is Madam C. J. Walker (1867–1919), née Sarah Breedlove, a self-made millionaire who established herself in Indianapolis in 1910, but whose black hair-care and cosmetics products were sold nationally through her franchise: the Madam C. J. Walker Hair Culturists Union of America.<sup>36</sup> She employed thousands of African-Americans as profitable "hair culturists" and sales agents, and became a leader within the black community. Already in the early twentieth century there were voices who spoke against hair straightening, seeing it as reflecting a desire to appear



white, and these complaints resurfaced in the black nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. But Madam C. J. Walker, while credited with popularizing the straightening comb around 1905, never used the word “straightener” in her advertisements, instead emphasizing that her products were to encourage hair growth, and also self-esteem: “Right here let me correct the erroneous impression held by some that I claim to straighten hair. I deplore such impressions because I have always held myself out as a hair culturist. I grow hair...I want the great masses of my people to take a greater pride in their appearance.”<sup>37</sup>

Photographs of African-Americans from the twentieth century here document the variety of hair styles used by fashionable women and men, most of it straightened or “conked” to create more wavy styles. George Grosz’s watercolor of a well-dressed lady on the subway in 1933 shows her wearing the newly fashionable bob from the 1920s, her hair sleek and close to her head; she most likely has straightened her hair. Conking, a process widely used during the big band and jazz eras of the 1930s, ’40s, and ’50s, derived its name from “congolene,” a mixture of sodium hydroxide (lye) and starch, and was popular for men’s hair styling.<sup>38</sup> Kobena Mercer argues the conk was a specifically black hair style, and not one imitative of Caucasian styles.<sup>39</sup>

That hair styling has political overtones for African-Americans is perfectly clear.<sup>40</sup> The Afro, the Bush, the Black Pride movement, Black is Beautiful—all of these reflect the importance of hair and identity, and these concerns continue today, as seen in objects in this exhibition. Nat Mathis (b. 1946), an Afro specialist known as the Bush Doctor, opened his first beauty salon in Washington, D.C., in 1969, and in 1970 patented his special hair-styling aprons, one of which is in this exhibition; he was the first African-American to win the coveted International Hair Styling Competition, in Cairo, in 1981.<sup>41</sup> The Afro, a style long worn by African-Americans, was transformed into a political statement by activists like Angela Davis and the Black Panthers. As A.B. Spelman observed, “Big bushy Afros on the sisters and hardbop in the air.... Hair was pride you could grow.”<sup>42</sup> For Gloria Wade-Gayles, “[a]n activist with straight hair was a contradiction. A lie. A joke, really.... I decided to wear an Afro.”<sup>43</sup> Lee Hirsche’s *Blue Necklace* (plate 46), a portrait of an African-American with the classic Afro, dates from 1973, only one year after Angela Davis was acquitted on charges of murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy. Likely for Hirsche’s young sitter, the cut was meaningful. But like earlier political styles, Afros became stylish, and were worn by white Americans as well as black.

Contemporary African-American artists still see hair as a site for cultural discourse and establishment of identity, as seen in many contemporary works. Kerry James Marshall’s monumental painting *De Style* (plate 50), from 1993, pictures both

well-dressed and casually attired African-American men in a barber shop, surrounded by hair products, mass media images, and their own reflections in the shop’s mirror. They look at us looking at them, their strikingly unusual hair styles signaling their individuality and expressing their desire to have “style.” Similarly Debra Priestly’s *Lookin Glass #4* (plate 52) from 1999 shows consciousness of being looked at, but complicates the question by juxtaposing jars and bottles, such as would hold tonics, with dreadlocks, a “natural” style of hair.

Head and body hair remains one of humans’ most important means of expression, whether with regard to issues of identity and class status, politics and gender, or moral character and self-esteem. Believing that what is on the outside reflects what is inside, we manipulate our hair to reveal to others who we are, or at least who we want to be.

1. *Paradise Lost*, 4. 304–308.

2. *Merchant of Venice*, 3.2.122–123, as noted in Elisabeth G. Gitter, “The Power of Women’s Hair in the Victorian Imagination,” *PMLA* 99 (1984): 936.

3. *Walpurgis Night*, 4119–4123, trans. G. M. Priest (New York: Knopf, 1941), 119. See Virginia M. Allen, “‘One Strangling Golden Hair’: Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *Lady Lilith*,” *Art Bulletin* 66 (1984): 286, on the original text.

4. Ruth Mellinkoff, “Judas’s Red Hair and the Jews,” *Journal of Jewish Art* 9 (1982): 33 n. 23.

5. See Dennis E. Clayson and Micol R. C. Maughan, “Redheads and Blondes: Stereotypic Images,” *Psychological Reports* 59 (1986): 811–816; and Melissa K. Rich and Thomas F. Cash, “The American Image of Beauty: Media Representations of Hair Color for Four Decades,” *Sex Roles* 29 (1993): 111–124.

6. See Susan Koslow, “How Looked the Gorgon Then. The Science and Poetics of the *Head of Medusa* by Rubens and Snyders,” in *Shop Talk: Studies in Honor of Seymour Slive* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Art Museums, 1995), especially 148, on the connections between serpents and women’s hair, including pubic hair.

7. See P. Biddiscombe, “Dangerous Liaisons: The Anti-fraternization Movement in the U.S. Occupation Zones of Germany and Austria, 1945–1948,” *Journal of Social History* 34 (2001): 611–647, and 620 for the Linz placard.

8. M. Kilmer, “Genital Phobia and Depilation,” *Journal of*

*Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982): 104–112.

9. Trans. Clarence H. Miller (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), 49.

10. See Wendy Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 114–115. In Islam, according to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, adult women and men are expected to have clean-shaven underarms and pubic regions.

11. Dale Hoak, “Art, Culture, and Mentality in Renaissance Society: The Meaning of Hans Baldung Grien’s *Bewitched Groom* (1544),” *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 449, quote from Dominican theologian Jordanes de Bergamo, ca. 1470–71.

12. Levinus Lemnius, *Touchstone of Complexions*, published in London in 1633, as quoted in Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 45.

13. I thank Katie Hauser for her suggestions regarding the meaning of this work.

14. Anne Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 136–148, offers an excellent discussion of conventions regarding the female nude and pubic hair in art.

15. See Gerald Silk, “Censorship and Controversy in the Career of Edward Kienholz,” in *Suspended License*, ed. E. Childs (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1998), 259–298.

16. See Ellen Heider, "Autopsy of the Beautiful," in *Birgit Dieker: Kardio* (Berlin: Galerie Volker Diehl, 2002), 12–39.
17. On the complexities of these hirsute beings, see Roger Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).
18. Christine Hope, "Caucasian Female Body Hair and American Culture," *Journal of American Culture* 5 (1982): 93–99, discusses these ads and the history of shaving.
19. Hope, "Caucasian Female Body Hair," 95.
20. Hope, "Caucasian Female Body Hair," 97.
21. Hope, in "Caucasian Female Body Hair," 98–99, discusses gender implications of body hair removal. On women's and men's attitudes toward body hair, see J. M. Lewis, "Caucasian Body Hair Management: A Key to Gender and Species Identification in U. S. Culture?," *Journal of American Culture* 10 (1987): 7–14; and Susan A. Basow, "The Hairless Ideal: Women and Their Body Hair," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 15 (1991): 83–96, and Basow and Amie C. Braman, "Women and Body Hair: Social Perceptions and Attitudes," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 22 (1998): 637–645.
22. As quoted in Gitter, "The Power of Women's Hair," 943.
23. Canto IV, 113, 114.
24. Diana Scarisbrick, "A Becoming Mourning," *Country Life* 184 (1990): 58–60, discusses English seventeenth-century rings; Davida T. Deutsch, "Jewelry for Mourning, Love, and France, 1770–1830," *Magazine Antiques* 155 (1999): 566–575, discusses later jewelry and includes additional bibliography.
25. Quoted in Irene G. Navarro, "Hairwork of the Nineteenth Century," *Magazine Antiques* 159 (2001): 485.
26. Gitter, "The Power of Women's Hair," 942.
27. Navarro, "Hairwork of the Nineteenth Century," 492.
28. R. Bartlett, "Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* ser. 6, vol. 4 (1994): 53–56, discusses various classical and medieval practices and offers additional sources.
29. *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, ed. K. Hulley and S. Vandersall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 473.
30. *Hairitage* was the title of a 2002 exhibition on hair in African-American experience produced by the Amistad Foundation, based at the Wadsworth Atheneum, and co-curated by Deirdre Bibby and William Frank Mitchell.
31. See Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of Southern History* 61 (1995): 45–76, as well as numerous recently published accounts in, among others, *Tenderheaded*, ed. Juliette Harris and Pamela Johnson (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001); Lisa Jones, *Bulletproof Diva: Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair* (New York: Doubleday, 1994); and Henry Louis Gates's essay "In the Kitchen" from his memoir *Colored People* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 40–49.
32. See Willie Morrow, "A Short History of Early Hair Straightening," in *Tenderheaded*, 125–128, and descriptions of hair on slaves in White and White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture," especially 54–56.
33. See for example Natasha Trethewey, "Hot Comb," or bell hooks, "Straightening Our Hair," both in *Tenderheaded*, 108–109 and 111–116; and Malcolm X's chapter on hair in his *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, with Alex Haley (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), where he talks about the conking process for making kinky hair wavy.
34. Noliwe M. Rooks, *Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture, and African American Women* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 117. See also Deborah R. Grayson, "Is it Fake? Black Women's Hair as Spectacle and Spec(tac)ular," *Camera Obscura*, 36 (1995): 13–30.
35. *Tenderheaded*, 95 and 103.
36. Much is published about Walker, including a recent biography by her great-great-granddaughter, A'Leia Bundles, *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker* (New York, London: Scribner, 2001). See also Rooks, *Hair Raising*, especially 51–74.
37. Quoted in Bundles, *On Her Own Ground*, 268–269.
38. *Tenderheaded*, 102.
39. Kobena Mercer, "Black Hair/Style Politics," in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, Russell Ferguson, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 258–261.
40. In addition to Mercer, "Black Hair/Style Politics," 247–264, and other books noted above, see Angela Y. Davis, "Afro Images: Politics, Fashion, and Nostalgia," in *Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography*, ed. Deborah Willis (New York: The New Press, 1994), 170–179; and Ayana D. Byrd and Lori L. Tharps, *Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001).
41. The Nathaniel Mathis Collection of Barbering and Beauty Culture is housed in the Smithsonian Institution Archives.
42. Quoted in *Tenderheaded*, 199.
43. Quoted in Rooks, *Hair Raising*, 6–7.