HOOD MUSEUM OF ART

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Spring 2008
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

One of the most exciting aspects of directing the Hood Museum of Art is my access to the brilliant students of Dartmouth College. They are talented, questioning, studious, and fun to be with, especially as museum interns and part-time staff members, when we come to know them better. Nearly all were at the very top of their classes in high school, and now they partake of an intellectual ferment in rural New Hampshire. The museum’s role is to promote visual literacy on the campus and in the community by creating opportunities for direct engagement with works of art, and we strive to inspire, educate, and collaborate with all of our audiences. The New York Times recently featured Hanover, New Hampshire, in a half-page article promoting its virtues and particularly the extraordinary opportunities in lifelong education, such as the museum, provided by the presence of Dartmouth College.

A museum exhibition of the scale of Black Womanhood, our major traveling show for this spring/summer, has seen many interns from different classes involved with it. Our talented and skilled exhibition curator, Barbara Thompson, had the opportunity to mentor some very bright people, who will take their experiences with their art out into the world and, we trust, help to make its societies more visually literate as well. The Hood’s teaching method based on a multistep process—look, describe, analyze, and interpret—is to me one of the most exciting things an art educator and curator could ever learn about, and I have loved being involved with it.

We are especially proud of those students who create Space for Dialogue exhibitions for our museum foyer. These are the first works of art one sees when visiting our museum, and as I write this the forty-second such show has just been mounted by Virginia Deaton ’08 with works relating to the aftermath of the American Civil War. Each student’s accompanying brochure and public lecture provide focal points for our community to affirm why we are here—simply put, to teach with works of art from our extensive and eclectic collections. Other student interns assist curators with exhibitions or professors with preparations for classes in our study-storage areas. They complete object research, help out with public affairs, develop education programs, assist with the museum’s Web site, and arrange student parties and other campus and community events.

It was a great joy to us in December 2007 when Adam Levine ’08, who has worked for several years at the Hood Museum of Art, was the recipient of a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University, where he will study for a doctoral degree in classics. He is a triple major at Dartmouth in anthropology, art history, and mathematics and social sciences. He told a journalist recently: “I love the fact that a museum exhibit can change the way people look at the world.” As well as his work at the Hood, he has been an intern and research assistant at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and an intern in the pre-Columbian art, African and Oceanic art, and antiquities departments of Sotheby’s in New York. It is a great joy to know that the Hood Museum of Art has been an important part of the formation of such wonderfully gifted young people.

BRIAN KENNEDY
Director
BLACK WOMANHOOD: IMAGES, ICONS, AND IDEOLOGIES OF THE AFRICAN BODY
April 1–August 10, 2008

Organized by the Hood Museum of Art, this major traveling exhibition examines the historical roots of a charged icon in contemporary art: the black female body. Only through an exploration of the origins of black womanhood’s prevalent stereotypes can we begin to shed new light on the powerful revisionism occupying contemporary artists working with these themes today. The exhibition features over one hundred sculptures, prints, postcards, photographs, paintings, textiles, and video installations presenting three separate but intersecting perspectives: the traditional African, the colonial, and the contemporary global. Together they reveal a common preoccupation with themes of ideal beauty, fertility and sexuality, maternity and motherhood, and identities and social roles, enabling us to look beneath the stereotypes of black womanhood from the nineteenth century to the present. This approach offers a deeper understanding of the ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality that inform contemporary responses—both the viewers’ and the artists’—to images of the black female body. A fully illustrated catalogue published by the Hood Museum of Art and the University of Washington Press accompanies the exhibition.

RUSCHA AND POP: ICONS OF THE 1960S
April 12–June 15, 2008
Harrington Gallery

Highlights from the Hood’s pop art collection reveal the intersection between life and art through the appropriation of media, commercial, and popular culture imagery. Focused around Ed Ruscha’s Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas (1963), Ruscha and Pop explores aspects of pop art including the transformation of the everyday object into art, the popular interest in consumerism and commercial architecture, and the collapsing of boundaries between high and low art and culture. The charged cultural environment of the 1960s fills the work of first-generation pop icons including Ed Ruscha, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein, as well as artists immediately following them, including Mel Ramos and Stephen Shore.

DRESSING UP CULTURE: MOLAS FROM KUNA YALA
Gutman Gallery
Opens May 17, 2008

Colorful, playful, and visually enticing, the appliquéd molas that Kuna women sew onto their blouses yield an astounding array of traditional and contemporary themes. These stitched cloth panels feature abstract and figurative motifs derived from Kuna legends and culture, political posters, labels, books, the natural world, mass media and popular culture, cartoons, and everyday life. Having initially developed from pre-Hispanic body arts, mola making in Kuna Yala, an archipelago that runs along the Caribbean coast of Panama, has become an important women’s economic enterprise that also preserves Kuna cultural and ethnic identity.

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

The Hood preserves approximately 65,000 works of art representing a broad range of cultural areas and historical periods. Selections that are always on view encompass ancient, Asian, Native American, Oceanic, and African collections, European old master prints and nineteenth-century paintings, American colonial silver, portraiture, drawings, watercolors, and paintings, as well as major works of modern and contemporary art.

Unknown artist, Kuna, Panama, mola with pelicans, mid-20th century, cotton. The Alice Cox Collection, given by her daughter Mrs. Barbara Vallarino; 177.9.25726. Photo courtesy Hood Museum of Art.
or some time now, museum exhibitions of contemporary art have focused on issues of identity and race. Few curators, however, have sought to investigate these themes by juxtaposing historical and contemporary perspectives. *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body* looks at the historical roots of a charged icon, the black female body, bringing to light how contemporary artists are challenging historic and often stereotypical images that present black women as the alluringly beautiful Other, the erotic fantasy, or the super-maternal mammy.

The most detailed investigation of this theme to date, *Black Womanhood* presents over one hundred sculptures, photographs, prints, paintings, and installations by African, European, American, and Caribbean artists. Displayed in three separate but intersecting sections, these objects present traditional African, Western colonial, and contemporary global perspectives on the subject. Linked through the common themes of beauty, sexuality and fertility, maternity and motherhood, and identity and social roles, this tripartite organization allows each moment in time and each cultural milieu to tell its own story. Taken together, they peel back the entangled layers of cultural, racial, and gender politics that have informed Western perceptions of black womanhood from the nineteenth century to the present.

In the Words of the Artists

**BERNI SEARLE**

In many cases, my identity has been “made” for me . . . The self is explored as an ongoing process of construction in time and place . . . reflecting [reflecting] a desire to present myself in various ways to counter the image that has been imposed on me.

**NANDIPHA MNTAMBO**

I have been preoccupied with questioning and unseating perceptions of desire, attraction, sexuality, sensuality, and beauty, as all these are both subjective and ever changing. These aspects are interpreted in varying ways and cannot be condensed to one acceptable viewpoint. The subjective nature of individual interpretations and experiences, and how this influences life in general, has always been central to my production.

**MAUD SULTER**

This whole notion of the disappeared, I think, is something that runs through my work. I’m very interested in absence and presence in the way that particularly black women’s experience and black women’s contribution to culture are often erased and marginalized. So that it’s important for me as an individual, and obviously as a black woman artist, to put black women back in the center of the frame—both literally within the photographic image, but also within the cultural institutions where our work operates.

**JOYCE SCOTT**

I can’t be complacent about the world I live in . . . . It’s important to me to use art in a manner that incites people to look and then carry something home—even if it’s subliminal—that might make a change in them.

When I first began conceiving Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body, I was asked why this, why now, and especially why the combination of traditional African, colonial, and contemporary representations of the black—mostly unclothed—female body? Working as an Africanist for more than a decade, I had observed a growing dialogue between long-standing African art traditions and new developments in contemporary African and Diaspora arts. In more recent years, the rise of feminist voices among these contemporary artists revealed their growing interest in understanding the impact that historical images have on their own (and their viewers’) responses to images of the black female body. Although feminist researchers have examined these issues in various publications on race and gender since the 1980s, the subject has for the most part evaded exhibitions of traditional African, Western colonial, and contemporary global art.

As an exhibition, Black Womanhood therefore treads on new and difficult terrain. While some visitors might be familiar with traditional African representations of womanhood only through figurative sculpture, others may never have questioned the fact (or fiction) of colonial representations of Africa’s women. For yet others, the very notion of placing contemporary art together with historical art may seem contradictory, as seldom do these two categories share the same space. However, as I hope to demonstrate through the exhibition, representations and perceptions of black womanhood are as much grounded in and intersecting with tradition and history or art and ethnography as they do with contemporary life and society.

Notions of black womanhood have been constructed differently over time and across cultures but are often interconnected in unexpected ways. For example, since the end of the nineteenth century the Mangbetu woman, with her elongated forehead and halo-like coiffure, has been an icon of the seductive yet forbiddingly exotic beauty of the African woman. This is due as much to the Western colonials who portrayed the beauty of Mangbetu women in widely disseminated photographs and postcards as to innovative Mangbetu artists who capitalized on this European fascination by sculpting female heads onto their otherwise non-figurative arts. Today, contemporary artists such as Magdalene Odundo and Carrie Mae Weems are recycling these very same historic images of the Mangbetu woman to suggest new ways of thinking about and reading these colonial-era icons.

ANGÈLE ETOUNDI ESSAMBA

Living as an African woman in a Western world has developed in me a strong need to consistently focus on the African self-image. My images express a part of myself; they develop a personal view free from all anthropological, ethnographic, exotic, and romantic blemishes of the colonial era and media that are embedded in the Western consciousness. . . . In the mystery that the body in general represents—and the black body, in particular, with its own codes—I am using stereotypical images and clichés in my work to give back the bodies and faces their independence, freedom, strength, and pride—and their awareness too. It is a need, a call to immortalize the black woman, and to celebrate her inner and outer beauty. . . . Aesthetics is my instrument to attract attention and enable the viewer to see beyond [stereotypical] forms and familiar references.
depictions. While Odundo, who was born in Kenya, creates ceramic sculptures that celebrate the enduring beauty of Mangbetu womanhood, her highly abstract vessels point also to the cultural specificity of ideals of beauty. American artist Weems, on the other hand, critiques the exploitative nature of colonial-era photography by manipulating a famous photograph of the Mangbetu woman Nobosodru and images of African American slaves in her photo-based installation From Here I Saw What Happened . . . and I Cried. Without some acquaintance with the ideologies, histories, and meanings inscribed into the Mangbetu imagery and the colonial obsession with Mangbetu beauty and sexuality, the poignant messages embedded in Odundo’s and Weems’s work cannot be fully embraced.

A single exhibition could not feasibly present the whole gamut of images of the black female body in Western and African art history. However, a selection of particular works created within different cultural, social, and chronological contexts, such as those featured in Black Womanhood, can indeed demonstrate that multiple, overlapping, and at times contradictory perspectives co-exist. The manner of presenting three different perspectives thereby throws into question the “truths” and uncontested “histories” that charged images of the black female body carry within them.

The first section, “Icons, Ideals, and Ideologies of Womanhood: The African Perspective,” presents a selection of African art created within the traditional cultural setting. The scholarly literature (and past museum exhibitions) generally approach expressions of womanhood in African art via the analysis of the female form in iconic and mostly figurative sculptures that, due to the widespread gender division of labor in Africa, are made primarily by men and for women. This has left little room for understanding the role of the mostly abstract and non-figurative representations of womanhood made by and for African women. The combination of male and female arts and perspectives therefore presents a more balanced view of how cultural and gender-specific ideologies are conveyed differently by men and women through the traditional arts that continue in some cases to play a role in defining womanhood in Africa today.

My self-portraits were initially informed by the history of portraits made by male photographers of their wives, lovers and muses . . . Turning the camera on myself I sought to capture the intimacy of those unguarded moments . . . I realized that my body could never be simply formal, or emotional, or personal. Most viewers would always see a black body regardless of my intent . . . Through juxtapositions of nineteenth-century images and texts on racial differentiation and categorization with contemporary self-portraits, I hope to suggest to the viewer that such precedents, while seemingly absurd and outdated, still contain a great deal of resonance and power with respect to the way that we read and respond to contemporary images of African American women.

WANGECHI MUTU
Females carry the marks, language, and nuances of their culture more than the male. Anything that is desired or despised is always placed on the female body.
As a woman and an artist, I find myself part of a community that in the nineteenth century began to assert its historical and artistic presence and confront (mis)representations by others. Colonial depictions of women have bequeathed an artistic legacy to the “West” that has been restricted to the types of images that fill museums and art books. It is only in the second half of the twentieth century that these images have been critiqued in the social sciences and humanities. In the twenty-first century, the voices of women artists have also joined in, insisting on their multiple identities. I insist on my multiple identities and demand that all of my identities be respected—they geographic, cultural, faith-based, or artistic—since they demonstrate that I am part of a cosmopolitan world with its joys and sorrowful aspects.

The third section, “Meaning and Identity: Personal Journeys into Black Womanhood,” features works by contemporary African and African-descended artists who consciously recycle and critique the very same images, icons, and ideologies presented in the historical sections. While some of these artists build upon the foundations laid down by former feminist and black art movements, others are creating new visual narratives that arise from the multicultural and transnational experiences of today’s global society. Contributing their personal perspectives to this fraught yet inspiring arena are African-based artists such as Emile Guebbeh, Senzeni Marasela, Zanele Muholi, Penny Siopis, and Malick Sidibé, African and African-descended artists based in Europe such as Hassan Musa, Sokari Douglas Camp, Etiyé Dimma Poulsen, and Fazal Sheikh, African American artists such as Renée Cox and Kara Walker, and the American-based Cuban artist María Magdalena Campos-Pons.

It is our sincere hope that the art and perspectives presented in Black Womanhood will generate further questions and promote debate about how meaning has been and continues to be inscribed upon the black female body. Certainly we are all familiar with popular and often stereotypical images of black womanhood as they appear on television and in the movies, music videos, news, popular magazines, and the Internet. But how often do we actually stop to question the forces that inform our reading and consumption of these images? The artistic voices and visual narratives in Black Womanhood seize this moment to reflect upon these forces and to promote the revision and reclamation of power, voice, and choice over the imaging—and imagining—of the black female body in art and society today.

BARBARA THOMPSON
Curator of African, Oceanic, and Native American Collections

LALLA ESSAYDI
As a woman and an artist, I find myself part of a community that in the nineteenth century began to assert its historical and artistic presence and confront (mis)representations by others. Colonial depictions of women have bequeathed an artistic legacy to the “West” that has been restricted to the types of images that fill museums and art books. It is only in the second half of the twentieth century that these images have been critiqued in the social sciences and humanities. In the twenty-first century, the voices of women artists have also joined in, insisting on their multiple identities. I insist on my multiple identities and demand that all of my identities be respected—they geographic, cultural, faith-based, or artistic—since they demonstrate that I am part of a cosmopolitan world with its joys and sorrowful aspects.
**MARCH**

28 March, Friday, 5:30 P.M.
*Arthur M. Loew Auditorium*
**Artist Lecture**
**WILLIAM YANG: ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY**
Chinese-Australian photographer and storyteller William Yang will talk about his work as a freelance photographer for the social pages of glossy magazines and a chronicler of marginalized groups, including Sydney’s gay community and the Australian Chinese. Presented in conjunction with the artist’s residence and performance of *Shadows* at the Hopkins Center for the Arts on Saturday, March 29, at 8 P.M. in Spaulding Auditorium. *Shadows* is an eloquent account of two Australian communities haunted by dispossession: Aboriginals in the Outback and German immigrants interned during both world wars. Call the Hopkins Center Box Office at (603) 646-2422 for tickets. Contains adult themes.

**APRIL**

2 April, Wednesday, 6:00 P.M.
*Arthur M. Loew Auditorium*
**Film**
**THING WITH NO NAME** (1:23)
This feature-length documentary presents an intimate portrait of two Zulu women in rural South Africa and their struggle to survive HIV/AIDS. The film elucidates the clash of tradition and cultural taboo with Western medical treatments for this growing yet unspoken epidemic. Producer and director Sarah Freidland will introduce the film and participate in a panel discussion led by Aine Donovan, Executive Director of Dartmouth’s Ethics Institute, following the screening. Kenneth Yalowitz, Director of the Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth, will also participate on the panel.

The film is presented by Spheris Gallery and cosponsored by the Ethics Institute, the Dickey Center for International Understanding, the Infectious Disease Department at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, the Hood Museum of Art, and the Dartmouth Coalition for Global Health.

5 April, Saturday, 2:00 P.M.
*Hood Highlights Tour*
Explore a selection of objects in the museum’s collection with an experienced guide.

15 April, Tuesday, 12:30 P.M.
*Second-Floor Galleries*
**Gallery Talk**
**PERFORMING WOMEN: WOMEN AS ARTISTS AND SUBJECTS IN AFRICAN MASKED DANCE**
Alexander Bortolot, Visiting Assistant Professor

18 April, Friday, 4:30 P.M.
*Arthur M. Loew Auditorium*
**Lecture**
**PALLADIO AND THE POLITICS OF CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE**
Tracy Cooper, Associate Professor, Tyler School of Art, Temple University
This lecture commemorates the five hundredth anniversary of the birth of the most famous architect in the history of European art, Andrea Palladio (1508–1580). It also coincides with small displays of the architect’s original treatise, *The Four Books of Architecture*, later editions, and other related publications from the Renaissance to the neoclassical era in the Hood Museum of Art and Rauner Special Collections Library.

**SPECIAL EVENT**

11 April, Friday, 4:30 P.M.
*Arthur M. Loew Auditorium*
**Opening Lecture**
**DE/SCRIBING BLACK WOMANHOOD: VISUAL NARRATIVES AND THE AFRICAN BODY**
Barbara Thompson, Curator of African, Oceanic, and Native American Collections.
Reception to follow in Kim Gallery.

12 April, Saturday
*Arthur M. Loew Auditorium*
**Symposium**
**BLACK WOMANHOOD: IMAGES, ICONS, AND IDEOLOGIES OF THE AFRICAN BODY**
This symposium is being held in conjunction with the exhibition *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body* and is cosponsored by the Hood Museum of Art, the Emma and Alan Leslie Center for the Humanities at Dartmouth College, and the Allen and Joan Bildner Endowment for Human and Intergroup Relations.

9:00 Walk-in registration

9:30–9:45 Welcome and Opening Remarks
**WELCOME**
Brian Kennedy, Director, Hood Museum of Art
**OPENING REMARKS**
Barbara Thompson, Curator of African, Oceanic, and Native American Collections

9:45–12:00 Critical Discourses of Black Womanhood
“Still Embattled, Yet Emboldened: Contesting Black Female Embodiments”
Deborah K. King, Associate Professor of Sociology, Dartmouth College
“Beyond Orientalism: Contemporary Women’s Art from Northern Africa”
Cynthia J. Becker, Assistant Professor of Art History, Boston University
“Beyond Gendercentric Interpretations: In Praise of Mother, the Ultimate Artist?”
Oyeronke Oyewumi, Associate Professor of Sociology, Stony Brook University

1:30–4:30 Artist’s Perspectives on Black Womanhood
Joyce Scott, Baltimore
Sokari Douglas Camp, London
Hassan Musa, Domessargues, France
Roundtable discussion to follow.
23 April, Wednesday, 6:00 P.M.
Arthur M. Loew Auditorium
**Films**

26 April, Saturday, 2:00 P.M.
**Introductory Tour of Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body**

27 April, Sunday, 12:00 NOON—5:00 P.M.
**FAMILY DAY**
*I Spy: Riddles and Searches at the Art Museum*  
Where in the Upper Valley can you find 3,000-year-old sculptures, an entire wall of stripes, and a work of art that swings? Come to the museum and spend the afternoon as an art detective, solving riddles and searching for fascinating objects. In the studio, you will find a variety of materials to create your own unique work of art. For children ages 6 to 12 and their adult companions. No pre-registration required. For information, call (603) 646-1469.

30 April, Wednesday, 6:00 P.M.
Arthur M. Loew Auditorium  
**Films**  
*Becoming a Woman in Okrika*, directed by Judith Gleason and Elisa Mereghetti, Niger, English, 27 minutes, and *The Desired Number*, directed by Ngozi Onwurah, Nigeria, 1995, English subtitles, 28 minutes.

**MAY**

7 May, Wednesday, 6:00 P.M.
Arthur M. Loew Auditorium  
**Artist Lecture**  
RENEE COX  
Co-sponsored with the Allen and Joan Bildner Endowment for Human and Intergroup Relations.

10 May, Saturday, 2:00 P.M.
**Hood Highlights Tour**  
Explore a selection of objects in the museum’s collection with an experienced guide.

13 May, Tuesday, 12:30 P.M.
Harrington Gallery  
**Lunchtime Gallery Talk**  
ICONS OF THE 1960s: POP ART AT THE HOOD  
Kristin Monahan Garcia, Curatorial Assistant for Academic and Student Programming

17 May, Saturday, 2:00 P.M.
**Introductory Tour of Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body**

**JUNE**

7 June, Saturday, 2:00 P.M.
**Special Introductory Tour of Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body**  
with exhibition curator Barbara Thompson, Curator of African, Oceanic, and Native American Collections

**ARTVENTURES**  
Interactive tours for children ages eight and older are offered on the first Saturday of each month, October through May. Limited to 20 children on a pre-registration basis. For information, call the museum’s Education Department at (603) 646-1469.

**GROUPTOURS**  
Free guided tours of the museum’s collections and exhibitions are available by appointment. Contact us at (603) 646-1469 or hood.museum.tours@dartmouth.edu.

The museum is open every Wednesday evening until 9:00 P.M., so please visit after work!

All museum exhibitions and events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For the safety of all of our visitors, the Hood Museum of Art will enforce legal seating capacity limits at every event in accordance with RSA 153:5 and Life Safety Code 101.

Assistive listening devices are available for all events.

The museum, including the Arthur M. Loew Auditorium, is wheelchair accessible. For accessibility requests, please call 603-646-2809 or e-mail Access.Hood@Dartmouth.edu.
As aspiring art student Ed Ruscha drove the now mythic Route 66 from Oklahoma City to Los Angeles in 1956, the world around him was changing rapidly. A postwar economic boom had brought abundance for many and supported a burgeoning consumer society, while new technology delivered information (and images) with a previously unimagined speed and scope. These developments, especially in the economy, were furthered through prolific advertising and branding. It was this trip, and the subsequent treks Ruscha would make between his Oklahoman roots and his life as an artist in Los Angeles, that laid the groundwork for a new look at both modernity and art. The movement Ruscha would come to be associated with, pop art, appropriated imagery from the popular imagination and everyday life, exploring in the process how culture had become mediated by graphic art, consumerism, and media imagery. The works of art on display in Ruscha and Pop: Icons of the 1960s represent the changing American landscape, both literally and culturally, during this era, with Ruscha’s Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas (1963) as their centerpiece.

Gifted to the Hood Museum of Art by James Meeker, Dartmouth Class of 1958, in memory of Lee English, Class of 1958, scholar, poet, athlete and friend; P.976.281


Class of 1958, and inspired by one of Ruscha’s cross-country trips, Standard Station captures an essential moment in Ruscha’s personal artistic journey and oeuvre. It retains a vital position in the context of 1960s pop art as a work that helped create and then define one of the most influential art movements of the twentieth century. The graphic nature of Standard Station is immediate and strong, with its hard lines, crisp, primary colors, and commanding size all alluding to popular commercial art. Ruscha’s mythologizing of a simple, everyday structure in this way monumentalizes it. Breaking with the intellectual and emotional constructs of abstract expressionism and the heroic gestural painting of the previous decade, pop art pioneers like Ruscha celebrated the banality of what they had inherited as their modern American landscape.

Like Ruscha’s Standard Station, other works on view in this exhibition reflect the changing landscape of the time as pop artists explored methods of appropriating and integrating popular culture into their pictorial language. Allan D’Arcangelo’s Hello and Good-bye (1964) depicts a highway disappearing into the horizon with hints of foliage on the sides of the road. A reversed view of the road is reproduced in a car’s rear-view mirror attached to the top of the painting, referencing car culture and the literal appropriation of the everyday.

Borrowed images, from the comic-book styling of Roy Lichtenstein’s Crying Girl (1963) to the magazine- and newspaper-based content in Andy Warhol’s Birmingham Race Riot (1964), evoke the media inundation of the early years of pop art while commenting upon the mechanical processes used to propel it. High art also provides fodder for the pop artists, as in Lichtenstein’s Cathedral #4 (1969) and Mel Ramos’s Olympia (1974), as they call into question past painterly traditions, the artistic canon, and ultimately pop art’s place within it.

The scenes may look familiar—they are, after all, uniquely American landscapes, portraits, and still lives. Looking to the world around them for inspiration—and reflecting the influence of their surroundings—the first generation of pop artists immersed themselves in urbanization and commercial culture. Ruscha and Pop: Icons of the 1960s presents a distinctly modern landscape through artworks that are at once standard and anything but.

Kristin Monahan Garcia Curatorial Assistant for Academic and Student Programming
New Publications

This spring, we at the Hood are delighted to announce three major museum publications. Together they comprise the latest of our book-length efforts to satisfy an ongoing strategic imperative: to accompany every Hood collection–related exhibition with a publication.

**Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body.** This book addresses the complex and often competing forces behind self-presentation and the representation of others through an examination of images of the black female body from the nineteenth century to the present. Presenting such themes as beauty, fertility and sexuality, maternity, and women’s identities and social roles through a prism of perspectives, this exhibition catalogue reveals how the overlap, synthesis, and intermingling of images, icons, and artistic voices informs artistic responses to notions about black womanhood today.

Contributing editor Barbara Thompson, Curator of African, Oceanic, and Native American Collections, has compiled more than two hundred historical and contemporary images to accompany essays and statements by artists, curators, and scholars including Ifi Amadiume, Ayo Abiétou Coly, Christraud Geary, Endi Suldron, Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, Carla Williams, and Deborah Willis. This compelling volume makes a valuable contribution to ongoing discussions of race, gender, and sexuality by promoting a deeper understanding of past and present readings of black womanhood, both in Africa and in the West. It has been supported by a grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and by Hood board member Hugh J. Freund ’67, P’08.

**Wenda Gu at Dartmouth: The Art of Installation.** This fully illustrated catalogue chronicles avant-garde artist Wenda Gu’s creation of two installations, united nations: the green house and united nations: united colors, commissioned by the Hood Museum of Art in partnership with the Dartmouth College Library, and one world premiere, Forest of Stone Steles: Retranslation and Rewriting Tang Dynasty Poetry, a series of large books of rubbings from the artist’s massive stone steles. Part of the artist’s fourteen-year global conceptual human hair sculpture series, the green house and united colors were made from hair collected from the Dartmouth community, combined with colored hair from other parts of the world. This catalogue demonstrates the profound scope of the ongoing united nations series as well as the creation and production of these two new works, from community hair collection to the works’ installation and the subsequent local, national, and critical response. Contributing essayists include Hood director Brian Kennedy, Hood assistant director Juliette Bianco, scholars David Cateforis and Allen Hockley, and writer and critic Eleanor Heartney. The publication has been supported by LEF New England.

**Sean Scully: The Art of the Stripe.** In the publication related to last winter’s exhibition, Brian Kennedy, curator and Hood Museum of Art director, explores the artist’s pursuit of multiple variations on the theme of the painted stripe, bar, and block. Scully has asserted that the stripe is “a signifier of modernism.” Kennedy first establishes some basic principles about the stripe motif that Scully has been using consistently since 1969, when he was enthralled on a visit to Morocco by colored strips of cloth used for making tents. In a detailed biographical essay, Kennedy elaborates upon the ways in which the stripe has changed throughout four decades of Scully’s art making. Transcripts of two interviews conducted with Scully present a general discussion of the artist’s use of the stripe and a detailed analysis of the stripes in each of the paintings included in the exhibition. While there have been many books published on Scully’s art, none has been so focused on his base motif. Both the exhibition and the publication had the full cooperation of the artist. The publication has been supported generously by Yoko Otani Homma and Shunichi Homma M.D. ’77, Judson Bemis and Carol Bemis ’76, and Judy Oxman and Thomas E. Oxman M.D. ’71. Nick Homma and Carol Bemis are current members of the Hood Museum of Art Board of Overseers, and Tom and Judy Oxman are longtime supporters of the museum.

**Nils Nadeau**
Publications and Web Manager

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

British painter Joseph Blackburn (active 1752–78) provided a pivotal example of the British rococo to colonial America, where he worked from 1754 to 1762. He was among just a handful of portrait painters active in New England before the ascent of native-born John Singleton Copley (1738–1815), who matured as an artist in the late 1750s under Blackburn’s influence. Copley’s emergence as a serious competitor likely persuaded Blackburn to move to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, by 1760. In 1763, Blackburn returned to England, and he remained active there and in Ireland until at least 1778.

Little is known of Blackburn’s origins, but his poses and his skill in painting lace and other clothing details point to a familiarity with high-style British portraiture. He first appears in the record in 1752 in Bermuda, where he painted many of the island’s leading families. He worked briefly in Newport, Rhode Island, before moving in 1755 to Boston, where to his good fortune he found little competition in the field of portraiture and quickly developed a large and devoted clientele of prominent sitters.

His portrait of Jonathan Simpson (1711–1795), 1758, is one of the artist’s boldest and most compelling male portraits. Simpson was born to a prominent Boston family of merchants and followed his father, Deacon Jonathan Simpson, into the family’s shopkeeping business. The younger Simpson married Margaret Lechmere (b. 1719) and established a home on the site of the old Boston Music Hall, now the Orpheum Theater. In 1757, Deacon Simpson commissioned Blackburn to paint his portrait (Springfield [Mass.] Museum of Fine Arts), and the following year Jonathan Simpson followed suit, sitting not only for the present portrait but also engaging Blackburn for a second likeness along with a pendant portrait of his wife (both in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). A loyalist, Jonathan Simpson moved in 1778 to Bristol, England, where he remained until his death. His son, Jonathan Simpson, Esq. (1750–1834), moved his own family to Halifax, Nova Scotia, but later returned to Boston.

In contrast to some of Blackburn’s earlier work in the Colonies, such as his 1755 portrait of Isaac Winslow and his family (see illustration), the portrait of Jonathan Simpson retains only vestiges of the decorative rococo style. Although the angle of Simpson’s body and the placement of his right arm derive from the earlier work, Blackburn presents Simpson in a more natural stance and within a composition that includes little adornment beyond the sumptuous fabric of Simpson’s beautifully tailored suit. Blackburn also portrays Simpson with more convincing volume than is seen in many of his previous works and projects the illuminated figure forward by silhouetting it against a dark background. With his direct gaze and slight smile, Simpson conveys a stately yet pleasant aura of confidence and ease. As much as Blackburn had powerfully influenced the maturing Copley, this portrait suggests that by 1758, the tables had begun to turn. Blackburn’s Simpson is a flesh-and-blood figure rendered in a polished manner associated with Copley’s evolving style.

In the portrait also magnificently portrays the typical attire of an older, upper-class gentleman as seen in Boston and Europe in the late 1750s. Simpson wears a wig (a practice that was beginning to go out of favor among younger men around this time) and carries a tricorne hat in the characteristic fashion, under the arm. His dress suit is of the finest brown silk satin, with a white lining and...
the wide cuffs popular during the era. No braid or trim adds further adornment to the exquisite, luminous fabric. (Textiles were among the most valuable and prevalent imports from England, and the satin Simpson wears is his most obvious marker of wealth.) The present picture, which retains its original frame, descended in the Osgood family of Salem and Boston, Massachusetts, until 2007. It is the earliest American painting in the Hood’s collections.

The Hood Museum of Art recently acquired by purchase and gift from Marion MacKaye Ober a group of photographs that descended in the family of dramatist and poet Percy MacKaye (1875–1956). MacKaye was an active member of the Cornish, New Hampshire, art colony and is best known locally and nationally for having played an important role in reviving interest in poetic drama in the early twentieth century. A large collection of his papers is in Dartmouth’s Rauner Special Collections Library. Among the photographs acquired by the Hood are portraits of MacKaye family members by Doris Ulmann and Arnold Genthe, including a rare Genthe autochrome (the earliest viable color photography process) of MacKaye’s daughter Arvia in its original viewing case. The photograph by Alice Boughton (1865–1943) illustrated here depicts the Fuller sisters, singers from Dorset, England, who were pioneers in the collection and performance of folk songs from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. On their frequent American tours they visited Cornish several times, initially at the invitation of Percy and Marion MacKaye. Boughton, a pictorialist photographer of celebrities, captures in this image the picturesque mid-nineteenth-century costumes and dramatic poses of the sisters, who made movement an important aspect of their performances.

One of the most talented and influential American painters and teachers active at the turn of the twentieth century, William Merritt Chase (1849–1916) excelled at portraits, still lifes, and landscapes. This work, a gift of Hood board member Jack Tamagni, Class of 1956, is characteristic of Chase’s fluid, sketch-like response to the sun-dappled landscape near his villa in Fiesole, outside Florence, Italy, where he spent part of each summer from 1907 until at least 1911. In contrast to the artist’s taut earlier landscapes, such as his 1893 view of New York’s Shinnecock canal in the Hood’s collections, this Italian subject conveys the sense of a much more intimate, spontaneous response to his environs and was almost surely painted outdoors. In this and other paintings from late in his career, Chase applied paint in an all-over, agitated manner that reveals his debt to French impressionism and accentuates Tuscany’s brilliant, fleeting effects of sunlight and shadow.

American painter, photographer, and printmaker Ben Shahn (1898–1969) is known for his poignant, often strident images that point to social and political injustices. According to the artist, his inspiration for this print of New York skyscrapers under construction was the personal pain he experienced upon “seeing the city I grew up in being covered by the new wave of concrete and glass.” Shahn’s affection for New York reveals itself in his more detailed renderings of the old buildings in the foreground, which he enhanced with applied colors. Vertical lines of text quote the Alexandrian mythographer Maximus of Tyre (fl. second century CE). By including the ancient writer’s reference to the revered
Greek sculptor Phidias, whose greatest works did not survive, Shahn links the ill-fated old New York with art well worthy to last the ages. Living outside New York City by this time in rural Roosevelt on Long Island, Ben Shahn created a work that reflects fond memories of his youth and evocatively portrays one of the persistent quandaries of contemporary American life.

In 1994, the Hood Museum of Art presented an exhibition of the photographs of Barbara Morgan (1900–1992) in conjunction with the residency of the Martha Graham Dance Company at Dartmouth. Morgan photographed Graham and her company from the mid-1930s until the mid-1940s and in the process became one of the most esteemed dance photographers of the twentieth century. The Hood recently received a generous gift of twenty-one photographs by Morgan from her grandson and daughter-in-law, Nils and Kara Morgan, including vintage photographs of Graham and dancers in her company including Merce Cunningham and Pearl Lang (illustrated here), portrait studies, a botanical study, and two of her surrealism-inspired compositions.

The sculptor Larry Fane’s interest in engineering and the three-dimensional language of the functional object is apparent in the Hood’s new acquisition Mill Piece, a remarkable work constructed of various kinds of wood. Fane exploits the texture, color, and grain of the wood, which he has fashioned into forms that evoke New England’s industrial past. Born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1933, Fane studied at Harvard and the Boston Museum School and, after an apprenticeship to the sculptor George Demetrios, moved to New York, where he has worked for the past forty years.

Known as the Wabanaki, or “People of the Dawn,” the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac, and Maliseet tribes of northern New England have excelled for thousands of years in basketry woven from the leaves of sweet grass and splints from the brown ash tree. Today, both older and younger generations of Wabanaki basket makers continue the tradition, making “fancy” and utilitarian baskets that merge age-old techniques of material gathering and weaving with contemporary forms, designs, and iconographies. Pam outdusis Cunningham, a leading basket maker from the Penobscot Indian Nation of the Turtle Clan, belongs to the younger generation of Maine Indian artists, whose “fancy baskets” are based on the new basket forms created for non-Native consumption in the late nineteenth century. Cunningham’s baskets are characterized by their clearly thought-out design, which juxtapose shape, color, line, texture, and form. As she explains, “I love every aspect, every step of my basket making. I relish the fact that, in most ways, I am following in the footsteps of my ancestors. Many of the oldest and simplest traditions continue, from splitting and gauging fiber from the ash tree, to hand weaving each basket, to picking sweet grass and then braiding it for weaving into my baskets.” Cunningham hand selects and harvests brown ash from the North Maine Wood and collects sweet grass that grows along the riverbanks of the Penobscot River, surrounding Indian Island, Maine, the heart of the Penobscot Indian Nation.
A SPACE FOR DIALOGUE: Fresh Perspectives on the Permanent Collection from Dartmouth’s Students

Now in its seventh year, A Space for Dialogue affords Hood Museum interns the opportunity to curate a small exhibition centered on a theme with objects from the permanent collection. Working closely with museum staff, interns determine a focus, select artwork, write objects labels and a brochure, consider design elements, and deliver a public gallery talk. For the first Space for Dialogue installation of this academic year, Ben O’Donnell ‘08 curated The Art of Drinking: Four Thousand Years of Celebration and Condemnation of Alcohol Use in the Western World, presenting his gallery talk on January 16, 2008. The exhibition’s overview of changing attitudes toward alcohol consumption over the course of Western history included varied objects from the Hood’s collection, ranging from a c. 2250 BCE Egyptian beer jar to eighteenth-century engravings by William Hogarth to photographs of the New York City club scene in 1978 and 1990. The next Space for Dialogue exhibition, installed in mid-February, examined reconstruction-period art in the South. In “Bringing the Thing Home: The Aftermath of the War Between the States in Consumer-Driven Art,” Virginia Deaton ’09, incorporated wood engravings by Winslow Homer, woodcuts by Thomas Nast, and sculpture by John Rogers, among other objects.

The Friendship Fund Award was initiated by an individual associated with the previous membership program (the Friends of Hopkins Center and Hood Museum of Art) who had a strong interest in the wellbeing of students and teachers. The award was made in 2000. For information on how to make a contribution, contact the Hood Museum of Art Membership Program at (603) 646-2808.

A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

People’s Picks!

This past fall the museum inaugurated a series of major permanent collection exhibitions with American Art at Dartmouth: Highlights from the Hood Museum of Art. It was exciting to have so much of our outstanding American collection on view—six galleries full of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, and works on paper. To encourage visitors to engage with the works of art in a meaningful, personal way, ballots were made available and visitors were invited to “cast a vote” by picking their favorite piece of American art and telling us why they chose it.

Over 120 ballots were cast by visitors ranging from four-year-olds to college students and retired adults. Occupations included registered nurse, journalist, English professor, lawyer, machine operator, anthropologist, retired engineer, and many others.

Voters selected fifty-six different works of art in the American collection as their favorites. While the comments people shared about their selections varied enormously, some responses came up repeatedly: the piece evoked memories or experiences, particularly relating to specific places; people were struck by composition and formal qualities such as light and color; they admired the artist’s technical skill; they were interested in the historical or social issues being depicted; they appreciated the drama or beauty of a piece.

In addition to publishing the results of the voting on the museum’s Web site and in the exhibition reading area, staff members used voters’ choices and comments to shape four People’s Picks tours. In the first tour, Bonnie MacAdam, Curator of American Art, focused on the three works of art that received the most votes: Shotgun Hospitality by Frederic Remington; Hunt Farm (Daybreak) by Maxfield Parrish; and Beaver Meadow by Paul Sample. Subsequent tours focused on the personalities behind the portraits people chose as their favorites, works chosen because they spoke to social issues, and works that evoked one or more of the senses.

Thank you to everyone who participated in People’s Picks by casting a ballot or attending a tour.

Staff News

Juliette Bianco, Assistant Director, will present at the American Association of Museums annual conference in Denver in April in a session titled “From the Academy to the Community: Modeling Innovative Programming.”

Kris Berquist, School and Family Programs Coordinator, will present at the National Art Education Association (NAEA) conference in New Orleans in March in a session titled “Off-Site but On Target: Opportunities, Challenges, and Goals of Off-Site Programs.”

Lesley Wellman, Curator of Education, will present in two sessions at the NAEA conference, titled “Mission Evaluation: An Intentional Approach to Museum Practice” and “Educator Roles in Institutional Planning.” Lesley is Director-elect of the NAEA Museum Division.

Shop News

In response to your requests and to celebrate spring, the Hood Museum of Art is publishing sixteen new postcards of images from the collection! These popular images are printed in full color and varnished on high quality paper. Visit the Hood Museum Shop to choose from this growing selection of reproductions from the collection.
General Information

Group Tours
Guided tours of the museum are available for groups by appointment. Call (603) 646-1469 for information.

Museum and Shop Hours
Tuesday–Saturday: 10 A.M.–5 P.M.
Sunday: 12 noon–5 P.M.
Wednesday evening to 9 P.M.

Assistive listening devices are available for all events.

The museum, including the Arthur M. Loew Auditorium, is wheelchair accessible.

Admission and Parking
There is no admission charge for entrance to the museum. Metered public parking is available in front of the museum on Wheelock Street and behind the museum on Lebanon Street. All day public parking is available at the Parking Garage on Lebanon Street.

For more information about exhibitions and programs and for directions to the Hood Museum of Art, please call (603) 646-2808 or visit our Web site: www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu

Advertising for the Hood Museum of Art's exhibitions and programs has been generously underwritten by the Point and the Junction Frame Shop.

This spring at the Hood:

BLACK WOMANHOOD: IMAGES, ICONS, AND IDEOLOGIES OF THE AFRICAN BODY
April 1–August 10, 2008

RUSCHA AND POP: ICONS OF THE 1960S
Harrington Gallery
April 12–June 15, 2008

DRESSING UP CULTURE: MOLAS FROM KUNA YALA
Gutman Gallery
Opening May 17, 2008

Ray Lichtenstein, Crying Girl, 1963, offset lithograph on wove paper. Gift of Prof. John Wilmerding; PR.967.3
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