



Allen Memorial  
Art Museum

# AT THE ALLEN

SPRING 2023 / EXHIBITIONS, EVENTS & MORE



Song Jiamin  
2010  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 100 cm  
Allen Memorial Art Museum  
Purchase with funds from the  
Allen Memorial Art Museum  
Fund, the Allen Memorial Art  
Museum, and the Allen Memorial  
Art Museum Endowment Fund.  
© 2010 Song Jiamin. All rights  
reserved. Photo: Allen Memorial  
Art Museum. Photo credit: Allen  
Memorial Art Museum.

87 North Main Street  
Oberlin, Ohio 44074  
440-775-8665  
amam.oberlin.edu

**Tue–Fri** / 10 am–5 pm  
**Sat** / 1–5 pm  
**Sun, Mon** / Closed  
*Always Free*

#### THE CAUSE OF ART IS THE CAUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Those words by William Morris, inscribed in stone above the museum's front entrance, exemplify our longstanding mission to bring the power of art to the greatest possible number of people. Your support for the museum continues this important tradition of connecting art and the public. Learn more at [amam.oberlin.edu/support](https://amam.oberlin.edu/support).

#### CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE ALLEN?

Search the entire collection online:  
[amam.oberlin.edu/collection](https://amam.oberlin.edu/collection)

Take a deep dive into highlights from the collection with the Allen App:  
[allen.stqry.app](https://allen.stqry.app)

Visit the galleries, changing exhibitions, and the Frank Lloyd Wright house virtually with Allen Augmented Reality:  
[amam.oberlin.edu/aar](https://amam.oberlin.edu/aar)

#### DON'T MISS A THING

Follow us @allenartmuseum



Sign up for our e-newsletter:  
[amam.oberlin.edu/e-news](https://amam.oberlin.edu/e-news)

#### GROUP TOURS

Free guided tours are available for adults and K–12 visitors. For information, please call **440-775-8166** or email [education.amam@oberlin.edu](mailto:education.amam@oberlin.edu).

Cover: A visitor looks at Zēng Fánzhì 曾梵志 (Chinese, b. 1964), *Mask Series #7*, 2000. Oil on canvas. Ruth C. Roush Contemporary Art Fund, 2002.24. Photo by Mike Crupi.

This page: Marie-Elisabeth Lemoine (French, 1761–1811), *Self-Portrait with Straw Hat and Palette*, ca. 1790–95. Oil on canvas. R. T. Miller Jr. Fund, 2022.23.

Top right: María Josefa Sánchez (Spanish, active mid-17th century), *The Crucified Christ*, 1652. Oil on cross-shaped panel. Oberlin Friends of Art Fund, 2016.31.

Bottom right: Sofonisba Anguissola (Italian, ca. 1532–1625), *Double Portrait of a Boy and Girl of the Attavanti Family*, 1580s. Oil on panel. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1961.84.



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is a pleasure to address you here in the opening pages of the debut issue of the museum's semiannual magazine, newly-designed in a larger, more inviting, and more informative format than that of the past.

The redesign was masterminded by Stacie Ross, who joined the museum's staff in August as Communications Manager. In addition to her reconceptualization of print materials, Stacie has already made significant contributions to our marketing strategies and to the presentation of information both inside and outside the museum's walls. I know you will enjoy reading about—and, given that we are a visual arts institution, *seeing*, through more and better images—what's happening at the Allen, in this issue and in those to come.

As 2023 gets underway, so too does work as part of the museum's new strategic plan, a living document that sets out our institutional direction during the next five years. The plan was conceptualized during the past two years with input from the entire museum staff, as well as from the Visiting Committee, students, faculty, College staff and alumni, volunteers, community partners, and members of our broader public, ably assisted by a specialized consultant and with the guidance and support of Dean David Kamitsuka. I will share with you more in future issues about this work, which aims to center inquiry, collaboration, and care in all that

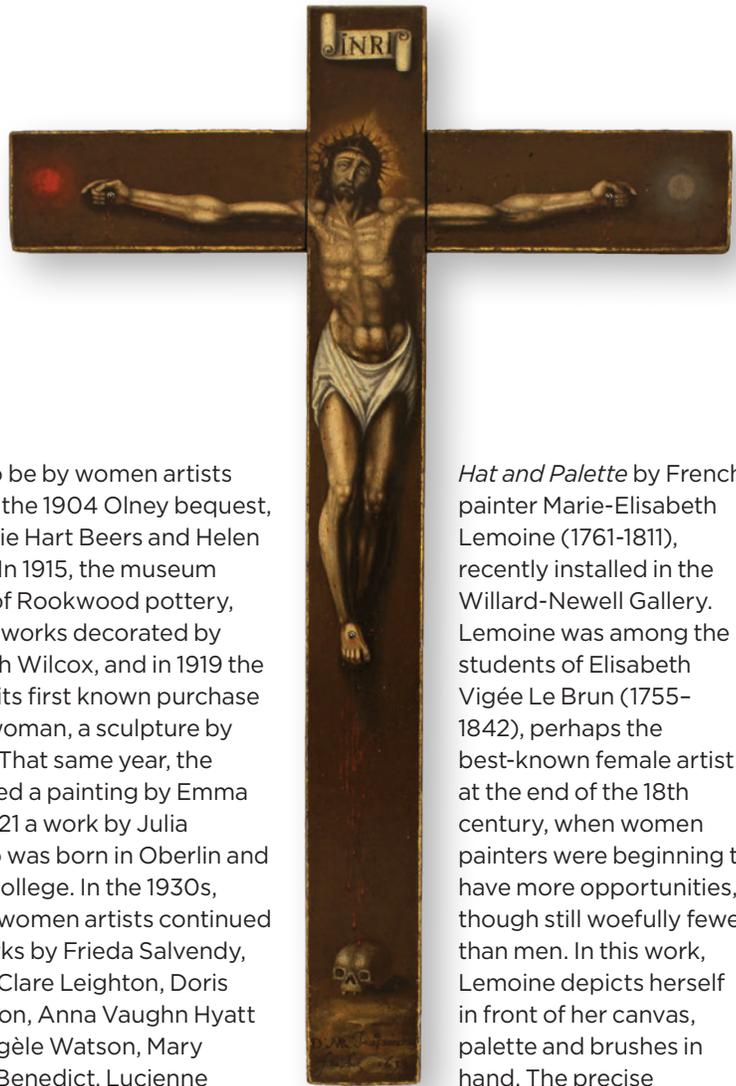
we do—while naturally supporting the experience of Oberlin College students and engaging with our visitors (whether they visit us in person, or virtually). As part of the plan, we are also looking ahead to envisage future growth of the museum, as we communicate its impact and seek to ensure its long-term sustainability. You, our supporters and visitors, will be key partners with us, and we are grateful for your sustained interest in the museum’s programs, outreach, and future.

Among the activities we have set for ourselves in the new plan is to continue to collect strategically, to acquire artworks that expand the stories we can tell, and that represent the rich diversity of the world’s artists and cultures. This is, in fact, something the Allen has been doing since its founding. Thanks to the collecting habits of 19th-century Oberlin College alumni, including Charles Martin Hall, and major donors Charles Olney and Charles Lang Freer, the earliest works to enter the collection were predominantly Asian; African and Indigenous American works also have been present, and have been consistently acquired, since our founding. The first works accessioned into the collection



that we know to be by women artists came as part of the 1904 Olney bequest, paintings by Julie Hart Beers and Helen Elizabeth King. In 1915, the museum received a gift of Rookwood pottery, including some works decorated by Harriet Elizabeth Wilcox, and in 1919 the museum made its first known purchase of a work by a woman, a sculpture by Janet Scudder. That same year, the museum received a painting by Emma Ciardi, and in 1921 a work by Julia Severance, who was born in Oberlin and studied at the College. In the 1930s, acquisitions by women artists continued apace, with works by Frieda Salvendy, Käthe Kollwitz, Clare Leighton, Doris Lee, Peggy Bacon, Anna Vaughn Hyatt Huntington, Angèle Watson, Mary Cassatt, Enella Benedict, Lucienne Bloch, Mily Possoz, and Pop Chalee entering the collection, along with those by lesser-known Amelia Schlosser and Rosalie James.

In recent years, we have made it even more of a priority to acquire works by women—especially, when we can, from periods and cultures in which it is sadly rarer to find them. Older European oil paintings by women artists have not been well-represented in the Allen’s collection—for many years, the only one was the *Double Portrait of a Boy and Girl of the Attavanti Family* by Sofonisba Anguissola, from the 1580s, a gift in 1961 from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. In 2016, the Allen acquired *The Crucified Christ*, signed and dated 1652 by Spanish artist María Josefa Sánchez, and we were thrilled to acquire Giovanna Garzoni’s *Portrait of Zaga Christ* (not an oil painting, but a miniature in watercolor and bodycolor) in 2021. Now we are delighted to further add to our holdings through a new acquisition, *Self-Portrait with Straw*



*Hat and Palette* by French painter Marie-Elisabeth Lemoine (1761-1811), recently installed in the Willard-Newell Gallery. Lemoine was among the students of Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842), perhaps the best-known female artist at the end of the 18th century, when women painters were beginning to have more opportunities, though still woefully fewer than men. In this work, Lemoine depicts herself in front of her canvas, palette and brushes in hand. The precise

meaning of her gesture towards her painting table is unclear, but she certainly draws our attention, proudly, to her tools. Lemoine’s paintings, along with those of her three sisters and female cousin, all artists, are only recently becoming better known, and we look forward to continuing research on this and other less-studied works.

Just in looking through this magazine, and at the themes of current exhibitions—as well as a few other new acquisitions, pictured on the back cover—you’ll be able to appreciate the diversity of the Allen’s holdings, and the great pride our curators and other staff take in collecting broadly, and in presenting timely, topical stories and varied viewpoints through the works entrusted to our care and the programs we put forth. We hope you’ll come to the museum soon to experience all that the Allen offers. And as ever, we thank you for your support.

**Andria Derstine**

John G. W. Cowles Director

ON VIEW / STERN GALLERY  
JAN 24–JUN 11

## RIDING THE STRONG CURRENTS: 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY CHINESE PAINTINGS FROM THE AMAM COLLECTION



The past century has been a turbulent one for people in China, as they have confronted the challenges of Western and Japanese imperialism, Civil War, Revolution and its aftermath, and, since the 1980s, have experienced reform, stability, and economic success.

Riding the currents on a rushing river seems to be a good metaphor for this period, one taken from an inscription by painter Huáng Bīnhóng (1864–1955). This exhibition brings together works by Huáng and many other Chinese painters who navigated the volatile currents of 20th and early 21st century history and reflected in their art the dynamic character of the times. Made up of works in the Allen's permanent collection of modern and contemporary Chinese painting, begun in 1957, the exhibition includes familiar favorites and new acquisitions,

many shown here publicly for the first time. *Riding the Strong Currents* presents a wide range of subjects and styles that demonstrate the creativity and diversity of this most recent phase of Chinese painting, a tradition extending back over two millennia.

The exhibition is divided into four thematic sections. The first, addressing the question “What is Modern Chinese Painting?” covers the first half of the 20th century, a time when traditional forms of Chinese painting were being challenged and refreshed by new ideas. Many Chinese artists began to

experiment with styles and techniques from the West, in a process similar to earlier European and American painters borrowing and adapting aspects of Japanese art in Western art movements like Impressionism. Some, like Chang Dai-chien and Huáng Bīnhóng, maintained deep roots in tradition; some, like Wú Chāngshuò and Wáng Zhèn, picked elements of Western art, such as new color palettes and ways of representing space, light and shade, and adapted them to traditional subjects and mediums. Others, like Zao Wou-ki and Liú Hǎisù,



Opposite: Wáng Guǎngyì 王广义, (Chinese, b. 1956), *Chanel*, from the *Great Criticism Series*, 1994. Oil on canvas. Oberlin Friends of Art Fund, 2001.20.

Left: Liú Hǎisù 刘海粟 / 劉海粟, (Chinese, 1896–1994), *Landscape After Mi Fu*, 1972. Ink and color on paper. Gift of the Shih-Yen Wu (OC 1954) Family, 2016.28.1.

Above: Zao Wou-Ki (Zhào Wújí) 趙無極 / 趙無極, (French, born in China, 1921–2013), *Landscape*, 1951. Oil on canvas. Gift of Norbert Schimmel, 1957.65.

dived more fully into Western painting, studying abroad, and making these styles and methods fully their own.

The river of history splits into two strong currents in the next two parallel sections. One, titled “Cogs and Wheels: Socialist Realism and Political Art” looks at paintings from the 1970s done in a style known as “Socialist Realism,” introduced from the Soviet Union and understood as a tool of political propaganda used for educating and mobilizing the people. It includes an important portrait of Chinese Premier Zhōu Ēnlái by Shěn Jiāwèi, exhibited with the artist’s preparatory sketches. The other current, titled “Guóhuà: Ink Painting is National Painting” considers paintings from roughly the same period, but more connected to earlier Chinese

painting traditions. Known as *Guóhuà*, or “National Painting,” it made use of traditional materials, usually ink and opaque watercolors painted on paper or silk, and various conventional subjects, such as landscapes, birds, and flowers. Styles of *Guóhuà*, however, ranged widely and allowed a greater creative freedom than was found in Socialist Realism.

The final section of the exhibition, titled “The Reform Era and Beyond” covers the decades since the beginning of China’s economic reforms in 1978. In the arts, the relative loosening of restrictions on artists during the Reform Era has led to an unprecedented explosion of creativity in all artistic forms and mediums, and artists from China have become a major force in global contemporary

art. Some, like Wáng Guǎngyì and Zēng Fǎnzhi, are based in the PRC, some, like Hung Liu and Mansheng Wang, have emigrated to other countries, and some, like Xú Bīng, work both in China and internationally. The works on view, paintings made from the 1990s to the present, illustrate some of the remarkable diversity, originality, wit, and expressive power found in Chinese contemporary art.

*Organized by Kevin R. E. Greenwood, Joan L. Danforth Curator of Asian Art, with contributions from Mengchen Xu (OC 2016), Zimeng Xiang (OC 2018), Milin Zhou (OC 2019), Jingyi Yuan (OC 2021), and Kai Li, Oberlin College Senior Instructor in Chinese. Special thanks to the Shih-Yan Wu Family and Driek (OC 1965) and Michael (OC 1964) Zirinsky.*



ON VIEW / ELLEN JOHNSON GALLERY / JAN 17–JUL 16

## LIKE A GOOD ARMCHAIR: GETTING UNCOMFORTABLE WITH MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

This exhibition examines the racial, ableist, gendered, and ageist politics of who gets to sit, when, and how.

The Allen is fortunate to have a permanent collection with enough breadth to be able to speak to complex and nuanced topics, even in the context of a routine gallery rotation. This exhibition uses contemporary thinking around the body to revisit the impact and significance of some of the most cherished works in the collection alongside lesser-known ones.

In 1908, the painter Henri Matisse wrote that art should offer “a soothing, calming influence on the mind, something like a good armchair which provides relaxation from physical fatigue.” Yet, as the 20th century progressed through World Wars, decolonization, and social upheaval, one of the major contributions of vanguard art has been its ability to challenge viewers to question their assumptions and routines.

Each thematic section of the exhibition is anchored by chairs and chair-adjacent artworks, several on view for the first time. Rather than a chronological survey, the exhibition focuses on the racial, ableist, gendered, and ageist politics of who gets to sit, when, and how.

Artworks by George Grosz, Yayoi Kusama, and Shannon Finnegan foreground disability and the ways that bodily variation conditions our experiences of the built environment. Berthe Morisot, Eva Hesse, Alice Neel, Nan Goldin, and Diane Arbus examine the way women are encouraged to sit and pose—often with legs crossed and a pleasant or downcast gaze. Renée Green, Alison Saar, Kara Walker, and Margarita Cabrera present chairs and seated bodies as vessels of intergenerational trauma as well as wisdom and resilience. Their works respond both to the

wreckage of colonization and the flourishing of ancestral traditions in the diaspora.

Andy Warhol's candy-colored prints of an electric chair offer a meditation on capital punishment and the sensationalization of news imagery. Frank Lloyd Wright-designed stools from the Weltzheimer/Johnson House serve both as seating in the gallery and an iconic example of midcentury design with a rich Oberlin history.

Regular visitors and alumni may be familiar with chairs in the Allen's collection by artists such as Jim Dine, Scott Burton, and Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. Other artworks featured in the exhibition, such as a multipart sculpture by the Cuban artist José Bedia, have never been displayed in an exhibition at the Allen. These works will be shown alongside new acquisitions in the Allen's growing decorative arts collection by Art Deco designer Gilbert Rohde and the contemporary artist-designer Norman Teague.

Developed in conversation with current Oberlin students and faculty, this exhibition presents the seemingly ordinary act of sitting as an unsuspecting expression of privilege and identity. *Like a Good Armchair* invites visitors to move beyond the passivity in Matisse's claim that art should offer relaxation, and instead investigates the generative thoughts and feelings evoked by the experience of discomfort.

*Organized by Sam Adams, Ellen Johnson '33 Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, with Fudi Fickenscher (OC 2023).*



ON VIEW / EDUCATION HALLWAY / JAN 25-AUG 20

## THE LANGUAGE OF THE STREETS

Last fall, Michelangelo Lovelace's *These Urban City Streets* sparked conversations about place and belonging through its honest and loving depiction of inner-city Cleveland. In Lovelace's painting, vibrant signage animates streets full of faceless people, bringing them to life through the energy of the text.

This exhibition responds to Lovelace by looking at how we engage with the words that surround us, whether that be advertising copy created for commercial gain or emotion-based human language. Four artworks by David Drebin, Walker Evans, Jenny Holzer, and Ernest C. Withers help us become aware of the conversations happening silently around us through the language of the streets.

*Organized by Julia Alexander (OC 2022), Curatorial Assistant in Academic Programs.*

---

Opposite: Jess T. Dugan (American, b. 1986), *Caprice, 55, Chicago, IL, 2015*, from the portfolio *To Survive on this Shore: Photographs and Interviews with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Older Adults*, 2018. Archival pigment print with text (interview). Richard Lee Ripin Art Purchase Fund, 2019.7.9A-B.

Left: Jim Dine (American, b. 1935), *Hanging Chair #2*, 1960. Oil on three-legged chair with pieces of jewelry, purse, undershirt, plastic and string. Gift of Tom Wesselmann, 1972.90.

Above: Ernest C. Withers (American, 1922-2007), *Daddy, I Want To Be Free Too: William Edwin Jones pushes daughter Renee Andrewnetta Jones during protest march on Main Street, Memphis, August, 1961*, from the portfolio *I am a Man*, 1961. Gelatin silver print. Oberlin Friends of Art Fund, 2004.6.3.



ON VIEW / SOUTHWEST AMBULATORY / JAN 26–AUG 22

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS: STEPHANIE SYJUCO

Stephanie Syjuco (*See-WHO-ko*) is a multimedia artist whose work often examines and challenges standard narratives of history and the legacies of empire. Her art is bold and inventive, energized by sharp insight and sly wit. Syjuco has worked in diverse forms and mediums, including photography, sculpture, textiles, social practice, and installation.

On view in this exhibition are recent AMAM acquisitions that represent the artist's earlier and more recent photography-based work. *Black Market* draws attention to global flows of capital and hidden economies. A more recent series, *Afterimages*, was developed out of a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. Born in the Philippines, Syjuco used the fellowship to support her search for evidence of the Philippines, Filipinos, and Filipino-Americans in various national and state archives. The fragmentary and biased character of the records she uncovered reveals the limited historical American vision of the Philippines, which was a U.S. colony from 1898 to 1946.

*Organized by Kevin R. E. Greenwood, Joan L. Danforth  
Curator of Asian Art, with special thanks to Driek (OC 1965)  
and Michael (OC 1964) Zirinsky.*

---

Above: Stephanie Syjuco (Filipino-American, b. 1974), *Afterimages (Interference of Vision)*, 2021. Photogravure printed on gampi paper mounted on black paper. Museum Friends Fund, and gift of Driek (OC 1965) and Michael (OC 1964) Zirinsky, 2021.12.1.1.

ON VIEW / NORTHWEST AMBULATORY / JAN 27-AUG 22

## WHERE IS CONSENT IN ART (MUSEUMS)?

Does beholding an image of desire or sexual violence implicate us in that image's power dynamics? When a figure looks directly at us—as if to acknowledge our presence—how do we look back?

In this experimental installation, we explore the ethics of presenting images of power and sexuality. In doing so, we acknowledge the harm that images can cause when we obscure sexual violence with terms like “amorous” or prioritize symbolic meaning and artistic style. Artworks are not passive—they reflect and impact our lived experiences and contribute to our shared values.

Juxtaposing images of sexual violence with positive examples of consensual desire by artists utilizing Black, feminist, and queer frameworks allows us to think critically about sexual power dynamics that appear throughout art. Considered together, we hope these works help us develop trauma-informed ethics for interpreting imagery in art museums and our broader visual culture.

*Organized by Hannah Wirta Kinney, Curator of Academic Programs and Sam Adams, Ellen Johnson '33 Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art.*



Above: Roman, *Torso of Pothos*, 1st–2nd century CE. Pentelic marble. R. T. Miller Jr. Fund, 1941.43.

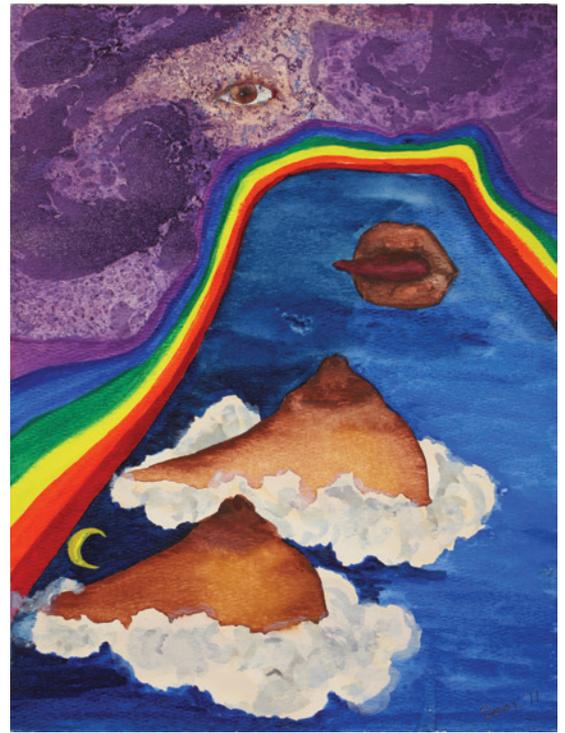
Right: Mickalene Thomas, (American, b. 1971), *You're Gonna Give Me the Love I Need*, 2010. Collaged handmade paper with silkscreened pigmented paper pulp, pochoir, digital print, and glitter and cloth appliqué. Ruth C. Roush Contemporary Art Fund, 2014.45.

## FEMME 'N ISMS, PART I: BODIES ARE FLUID

*Bodies Are Fluid* is the first in a series of exhibitions over the coming semesters that celebrate women, femmes, and the feminine at the Allen Memorial Art Museum. Like most art collections, the Allen's formed around deceptively neat categories that are both art historical—Realism, Impressionism, Abstract Expressionism—and based on social groups and identities—man/woman, religious/secular, young/old, fat/skinny. This intergenerational constellation of artworks presents a capacious spectrum of individuals and experiences that the “isms” of art have long failed to grasp.

Many of the art practices represented in this exhibition emerged amid second-wave feminism, a movement that largely neglected the intersections of sex discrimination with race, class, and gender diversity. For more than a century, Black feminists—from Mary Church Terrell (OC 1884) to bell hooks (OC professor 1988 to 1994)—have shown how those forces of oppression are interlocking and compounding. This exhibition suggests a reassessment of feminist artmaking with a commitment to learning from intersectional femininities that are nonwhite and non-cis-heteronormative.

Organized by Sam Adams, *Ellen Johnson '33 Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, with Fudi Fickenscher (OC 2023).*



Betye Saar (American, b. 1926), *Untitled*, 1971. Watercolor and gouache on paper. Gift of the Louis and Annette Kaufman Trust, 2016.36.33.



Unidentified Persian Artists, *Leaf from a Shahnameh (Book of Kings), from the story of Bizhan*, early to mid-16th century. Tempera and ink on vellum. Bequest of Parks and Christie Campbell, 2020.17.25.

## BETWEEN PAGE AND PICTURE: HISTORY AND MYTH IN THE PERSIAN BOOK OF KINGS

The *Shahnameh*, or “Book of Kings,” is an epic written by the Persian poet Albo'l-Qasem Ferdowsi (940–ca. 1025). A partly historical and partly mythical tale, the *Shahnameh* was written to preserve the historical imprint of the ancient glory and vast influence of the civilization of Persia (today’s Iran). The text follows the creation of the world and the first man, to the rise and fall of the Persian Empire, to the subsequent Muslim conquest of Greater Iran in the early 7th century.

The lengthy epic, consisting of 50,000 couplets—or paired rhyming lines—also serves as a political, religious, and moral treatise. The poem includes battles of good against evil, sons against fathers, and heroes against tyrants or beasts. There are tales of love and loss, the rise and fall of power, and the ultimate corruption of man. All of the characters in the narrative are bound by the inescapable shackles of fate.

A few hundred years after the *Shahnameh* was written, artists and calligraphers began to produce beautifully illustrated and written versions of the text. This exhibition presents examples of illustrated *Shahnameh* pages from the 15th to the 17th centuries, along with contemporary works by the Iranian-American artist Ala Ebtekar, whose work draws from this tradition.

Organized by Roya Ahmadi-Moghadam (OC 2023) and Kevin R. E. Greenwood, *Joan L. Danforth Curator of Asian Art, with special thanks to Selin Ünlüönen, Oberlin College Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Art History, and Driek (OC 1965) and Michael (OC 1964) Zirinsky.*

## FIGURAL REPRESENTATION IN ISLAMIC ART

Does Islam forbid making images of people? Various Muslim societies have interpreted the religion's prohibition of idolatry—specifically worship of statues—in different ways.

Despite this rich variety, some widespread customs in representation have developed over time. Mosque decoration, for example, is often without human figures and includes vegetal, stylized, or geometric designs. On the other hand, traditional book illustrations often depicted people. This exhibition showcases different types of representation in Islamic art and includes textiles, prints, and works by contemporary artists Shirin Neshat and Burhan Doğançay.

*Organized by Selin Ünlüönen, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Art History in the field of Islamic art, architecture, and material culture, with Kevin R. E. Greenwood, Joan L. Danforth Curator of Asian Art.*

---

Shirin Neshat (Iranian, b. 1957), *Ghada*, from the series *Our House is on Fire*, 2013. Digital pigment print. Gift of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 2016.1.2.



---

### HIGHLIGHT / A TUESDAY TRADITION

## LOCAL ARTIST MADE TEACUPS

Since 2012 the Allen's Tuesday Teas have been enlivened by a set of 50 beautiful tea cups by local artist Mari Kuroda. Kuroda, who specializes in sculpture and functional pottery, created unique designs drawing inspiration from flowers, leaves, and Japanese patterns.

Kuroda grew up in an artistic family and moved to America alone in her early twenties. That journey “made me acutely aware of the value of family,” she says. “Each piece expresses my appreciation and love for them.” Her work also connects her to the natural world, particularly her signature pressed leaf designs.

The Allen commission remains one of her favorites. “What’s more amazing,” she adds, “is that none of the cups have broken yet after 10 years!”







HIGHLIGHT / ACADEMICS

# SHARED ART BUILDING COMMUNITY

Can a single work of art build community? Does art show us how place shapes us?

Started in 2021, the Shared Art Program uses a shared experience of looking at art to start conversations about who we are and where we have come from.

During orientation week, the entire first-year class is introduced to the Allen at the Shared Art Block Party—that's nearly 1,000 new college students all in one place for a three-hour party! The students participate in activities and crafts, listen to music, take student-led tours, and get a sneak peek of the Art Rental collection. A main feature of this gathering is the first look at the artwork selected by a committee of students to serve as this year's Shared Art.

Later in the week, students participate in facilitated conversations with their cohorts and advisors about the Shared Art work, allowing them to engage with the perspectives of their peers. This shared experience establishes a communal space where students of all backgrounds can begin their Oberlin journey together and helps them recognize the multifaceted ways in which people make meaning.

In addition to providing a starting point for self-reflection and growth, the Shared Art Program underlines that the Allen is an integral part of the Oberlin experience for all students, regardless of their major. The Shared Art work is on view throughout the semester to allow students to return, look again, and discover how their own views shift as they grow academically and personally at Oberlin.

The work for the class of 2026 was Cleveland artist Michelangelo Lovelace's *These Urban City Streets* shown above.

# INSIDE THE ALLEN



## LEARNING OUTSIDE THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

Curator Kevin Greenwood works with Parker Niles (OC 2023) to examine several Himalayan gilded bronze statues currently on display at the Allen. Niles, also a Gallery Guide at the museum, is writing their senior capstone on Tibetan Buddhist consecration rituals. They search for a symbol on the underside of the statues that indicates they had been properly consecrated.

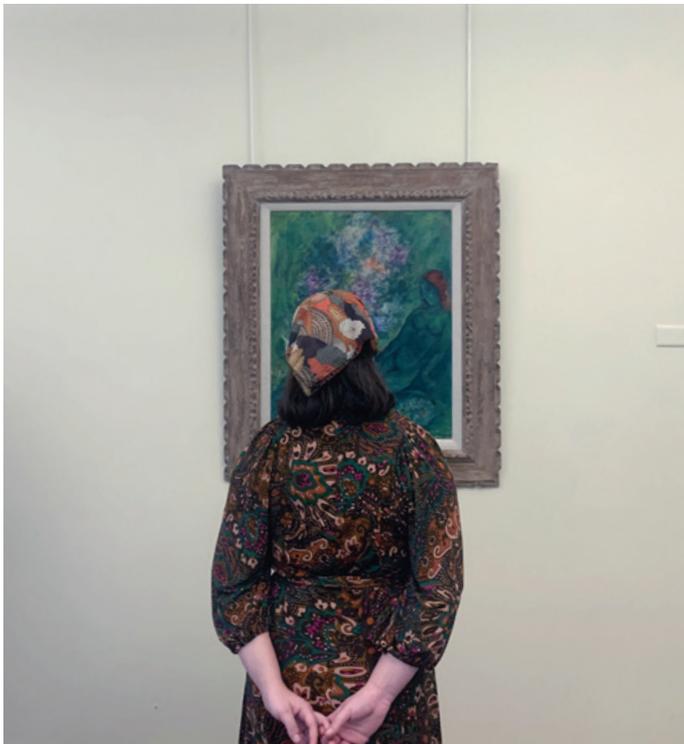
## BUILD-A-BARRICADE

Community Day is a free family-friendly event offered each semester. Open to art lovers of all ages, the Allen's Education Department creates an activity inspired by a work of art on view in the museum and offers tours designed to spark creativity. During the fall semester's event, visitors created their own barricades in relation to *Bakunin's Barricade* by artist Ahmet Öğüt then on view.

Don't miss our next Community Day on April 15. See page 19 for more details.



JONATHAN CLARK (OC 2025)



## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF JEWISH STUDIES AT OBERLIN

Oberlin's Jewish Studies Program celebrated its 50th anniversary in October. To mark the occasion, the Allen hosted a two-part workshop with attendees including Oberlin students, staff, and faculty, alumni, and community members. Curator Sam Adams facilitated a conversation on Jewish identity in 20th century art that ranged from Camille Pissarro's sephardic-Caribbean background to the transatlantic movement of modernist styles through Alfred Stieglitz, Lotte Jacobi, Ben Shahn, Marc Chagall, Eva Hesse, and others. The takeaway message for many was that, although Jewish artists may not explicitly address Jewish themes in their work, their religious and cultural backgrounds impacted the course of their lives and the modernist traditions to which they contributed.

A student examines a painting in the Print Study Room at the Allen.

Marc Chagall (French, born in Russia, 1887-1985), *Green Dream*, 1945. Oil on canvas. Gift of Joseph and Enid Bissett, 1956.24.

## INDIGENOUS OBJECTS

During a visit to Oberlin this fall, an updated tribal affiliation for two pairs of moccasins was provided by Hunter Old Elk (Crow/Yakama), Assistant Curator, Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Old Elk, along with Hannah Wirta Kinney, Curator of Academic Programs, and Amy Margaris, Associate Professor of Anthropology, examined items in the Allen's collection. Old Elk was able to provide recommendations on appropriate storage and additional details about the objects. Continuing to learn and to provide responsible stewardship for indigenous items in our collection is a goal of our institution.



A student reads a revised label in the exhibition *Divergent Paths*.

Unrecorded Apsáalooke (Crow) artisan, **Pair of moccasins with buffalo horn motif**, late 1800s. Leather and multi-colored beads. Courtesy of the Oberlin College Ethnographic Collection, OCECxxx.C1.qdm.0308.A&B.

Brings tears to my eyes (of joy) to see old favorites of mine from 60+ years ago... and to remember Ellen Johnson who's class I audited (at 8:00 a.m.) and changed my life!

—Beth Bullard (OC 1960)  
*Noted in the Allen's visitor book*



**DAY WITHOUT ART** December 1 is observed as World AIDS Day and, since 1989, Day Without Art. It is a chance to pay tribute to the immense impact that the AIDS epidemic has caused among artistic communities. This year, the Allen and students in Professor Jan Cooper's first-year seminar on "The Rhetorics of HIV-AIDS" held an awareness campaign in Wilder Hall. The Allen contributed a slideshow of images from its permanent collection that address this topic, from Emma Amos and Creighton Baxter to Keith Haring and David Wojnarowicz.

Emma Amos (American, 1937–2020), *Giza, Emma & Larry*, 1992. Lithograph with chine collé. Gift of the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper, Art Rental Collection Transfer, 2021.36.

## FOR EDMONIA

Artist yétúndé ɔ́lágbaǰú visited Oberlin for a week of artistic programs honoring Edmonia "Wildfire" Lewis. After the lecture at the Allen, visitors were invited to participate in a collective activity and performance creating a string of marble beads—marble being the material in which Lewis often worked. ɔ́lágbaǰú then added the object to a collaborative artwork created during their visit, which is now displayed on campus at the Edmonia Lewis Center for Women and Transgender People.





## STACIE ROSS

Stacie Ross joined the Allen this summer as the Communications Manager. She has more than 25 years of experience in marketing and communications. In 2008, Ross founded her own branding firm, Impel Creative. Her clients have included many nonprofits such as Beck Center for the Arts, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Natural History Museum, Cleveland Botanical Garden, Vassar College, and West Point Association of Graduates. She holds a BA in Art History and a MA in Visual

Communication Design, both from Kent State University. She is also a strong believer in building better communities at the grassroots level, and has volunteered with various organizations including Moms Demand Action.

Ross is excited to bring her years of experience in design to the position. "I grew up in the area, visited the museum as a teenager, and have stopped in many times over the years," she says. "Working at the Allen feels like a full-circle event to me."

TANYA ROSEN-JONES

## JESSICA LEAR

The Allen welcomed Jessica Lear to the staff as the museum's administrative assistant this fall. Lear completed her BA in English Literature from Heidelberg University in 2021, and continues to take classes at LCCC each year. She has worked at Oberlin since 2009 in various positions, first in Printing Services and most recently as a technician in the Registrar's Office.

She looks forward to gaining new experiences and expanding her skill

set at the museum. "I am a people person," Lear says, and working in a public-facing position is important to her. She has a lovely, supportive family, and is happy to continue to be a part of the Oberlin community. "I love Oberlin; the students, the faculty, and the many wonderful colleagues I have met throughout the years," she says. "I am very much looking forward to taking in all the artwork and culture that comes with my new position."



ALEXANDRA ROMAN



Gallery Guide Ruby Kim (OC 2024) presents a talk to museum visitors about the installation *Bakunin's Barricade* by artist Ahmet Öğüt.

## LAUNCHING CAREERS

The museum's Gallery Guide program is a natural extension of the Practicum in Museum Education, a winter term course taught by Jill Greenwood. During this intensive, four-week class students are introduced to a range of theories and practices in gallery teaching, conduct research on the AMAM collection, practice public speaking and giving inquiry-based tours, and learn from staff and other professionals about museum and arts-related careers. This experience has launched many students into museum careers as educators, curators, directors, and collection managers. Additionally, having students as an integral part of the staff provides an important perspective to what we do here at the Allen.

JONATHAN CLARK (OC 2025)

## HANDS-ON LEARNING

Jill Greenwood, Eric & Jane Nord Family Curator of Education talks about the Allen's Education Collection

### What is the Education Collection?

It's a collection of objects meant to be handled that supplement works of art at the Allen. Some of these are the raw materials from which art is made, some are high-quality reproductions, and others are works of art in their own right but not something the Allen would accession into the collection for various reasons, such as condition.

### Why did you start this collection?

It's a fabulous way to expand our understanding about the artwork in our collection! If you can see a semi-precious stone like lapis lazuli before it is ground up to create the ultramarine pigment used in numerous paintings, it's not only interesting, but you can understand its color intensity and why it was so highly valued by artists for centuries. Also, haptic, or hands-on, experiences engage multimodal learning. When you hold something in your hand, you feel its weight and texture, which broadens your



Alyssa Traster, Curatorial Assistant in the Education Department, shows students an example of *kintsugi*, a traditional Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with a lacquer resin mixed with gold—examples of which can be seen in the case behind her. These pieces are used in teaching the ideals of *wabi-sabi*, an admiration for impermanence and imperfection.



A student examines an *inro*, a small container used in Edo period (1615–1868) Japan to hold personal items such as coins, tobacco, etc. After a day of exploring the museum and using the Education Collection, students made projects inspired by nature in the Growing Artists summer camp partnership with Oberlin Community Services.

understanding. We also try to make it relevant to kids today. You should see their faces light up when I explain the lapis lazuli in their hands is the origin of the blue building material “lapis” in the video game Minecraft. Making these connections is what it's all about.

### How did the collection start?

It started in 2017 with a loan from The Getty. They had just completed an exhibition on manuscripts and offered us a box of 18 raw materials, including gold leaf, malachite, lead white, azurite, and more. After writing a letter to explain how we had used the materials on tours with kindergarten to college students, they generously donated the kit to us. Since then, the collection greatly expanded through donations and through a grant from the Freeman Foundation, to include reproductions of ancient Chinese bronzes and jades; Japanese *inro*, *netsuke*, and ceramics; as well as materials to supplement topics related to Asian theater masks, *Hanji* papermaking, printmaking, and more.

### How is the collection used?

We use the Education Collection on tours, in-school visits, and special programs. To overcome some of the challenges for school visits to the museum, such as scheduling and budgets, we now bring our programs to them hoping to inspire students to visit with their families. We recently participated in Langston Middle School's Literacy Night by highlighting the Education Collection with stations related to Chinese calligraphy.

### What is your favorite part of the collection?

That's a hard one! In terms of raw materials, I like the sample of cochineal insects, which are dried and ground to make the pigment red lake. It is amazing to see these rather dull brownish-purple bugs turn into a brilliant, fire-engine red. In terms of use, we have used the collection on tours with individuals with limited sight and it's been an honor to share the collection and learn from them about the importance of tactile experiences.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



**JAN 26, FEB 23, MAR 16, APR 27 / 12:15 PM**  
**MINDFUL MEDITATION**

Clinical therapist Libni López leads sessions of intentional mindfulness centered around a work of art followed by a discussion facilitated by Ellis Lane, Curatorial Assistant in the Allen's Education Department.

To attend one of the Zoom sessions, register at [bit.ly/allen\\_meditation](https://bit.ly/allen_meditation).

**FEB 14 / 3 PM**

**TUESDAY TEA / SONGS, SIGNS, AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE STREETS**

Julia Alexander, Curatorial Assistant in the Office of Academic Programs, will explore how protest music, signage, and other creative acts of dissent in historical social justice movements relate to images of urban environments like those on view in *The Language of the Streets* (page 7).

**FEB 16 / 5:30 PM**

**ALLEN AFTER HOURS / AFRICANA ROCKING CHAIR: A CONVERSATION AND PERFORMANCE WITH NORMAN TEAGUE**

Norman Teague is a Chicago-based artist and designer who is changing the field for young Black creatives. Teague's community-based practice addresses systemic inequities and the complexities of urban experience through design,

pedagogy, and collaboration. The co-founder of *blkHaUs Studios* and founder of *Norman Teague Design Studios*, Teague will represent the United States in a group exhibition at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale. Join us for a conversation between Teague and Sam Adams, Ellen Johnson '33 Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. Following the talk, Teague will inscribe *Africana Rocking Chair*, a recent Allen acquisition featured in *Like a Good Armchair* (page 6).

**MAR 9 / 5:30 PM**

**ALLEN AFTER HOURS / ART AND ARTLESSNESS: THE AESTHETICS OF LIFE AND ART**

In the *Analects*, Confucius remarked, "Wildness results when nature overpowers refinement. Superficiality results when refinement overpowers nature. One can only become a gentleman when refinement and nature are balanced." While Confucius was reflecting on how to live one's life, practicing artist Mansheng Wang believes this philosophy applies equally to art. Join us for a talk in which Mansheng discusses a balance between the refined and the natural—between art and artlessness—as the aesthetic sense he strives for in his artistic practice.

Left: Shannon Finnegan, *Do you want us here or not (MHR)—Bench*, 2021. Plywood, paint. Museum Friends Fund, 2022.38.

Below: Yorùbá peoples, Nigeria, *Helmet Mask (Gelede)*, 20th century. Wood, paint, and kaolin. Gift in honor of Alexandra Gould (OC 2011), 2011.26.47.

**MAR 14 / 3 PM**

**TUESDAY TEA / OUR MOTHERS**

The *Helmet Mask (Gelede)* in the Allen's collection is part of a larger ensemble with which men in southern Nigeria embody and reenact the divine life-creating force of "our mothers," women who having passed their reproductive years are the source of both humans and gods in Yorùbá cosmology. Visiting assistant professor Fernanda Villarreal Lamoza will discuss how Gelede festivals provide a conceptual framework to engage with our mothers as an abstract principle. In doing so, she will outline an in-depth analysis of the intricate arrangement of snakes, birds, and knives layered in tiers in this mask, as a form of coiffure framing the serene facial features distinctive of Gelede.

**APR 6 / 5:30 PM**

**ALLEN AFTER HOURS / ACCESSIBILITY DREAMS**

Join us for a presentation by Shannon Finnegan, an artist experimenting with forms of access that intervene in ableist structures with humor, earnestness, and rage. Through their art practice, Finnegan thinks about how we, as communities, can move towards more nuanced and more transformative approaches to access. Instead of focusing on compliance and doing the



**ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION** These events are held in a wheelchair- and rolling walker-accessible building. The lecture space is wheelchair accessible, with moveable seating, and near wheelchair-accessible restrooms. Restrooms are gender-specific; visitors are invited to use the restroom of their preference. Listening devices will be available for use during the presentation, but ASL interpretation will not be offered. Most talks will be recorded and available with closed captions on the museum's Vimeo page after the event. Please email access questions to Jill Greenwood, [jgreenwo@oberlin.edu](mailto:jgreenwo@oberlin.edu).

minimum, what if we approach access creatively and attentively, centering disability cultures?

In addition to the accessibility information on page 18, this lecture uses a slide presentation and all content from the slides will be read aloud or described. Shannon has requested that attendees wear masks, but we are unable to require masks, so be advised this may not be a fully masked event.

APR 11 / 3 PM

### TUESDAY TEA / A SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT RESEARCH

Oberlin College students often research AMAM objects and museum practices as part of their coursework, bringing new insights to our collection. Join us for an afternoon showcasing several of the students and their projects as they share new discoveries and approaches to how museums steward collections.

APR 15 / 1:30–4 PM

### COMMUNITY DAY

Come make art with us! This free family-friendly event is open to art lovers of all ages. We will provide all of the supplies for an activity inspired by a work of art in the museum. The Allen's Education Department will provide tours designed to spark your creativity.

MAY 4 / 5:30 PM

### ALLEN AFTER HOURS / CELEBRATIONS OF PLACE: AN EVENING WITH LOCAL ARTISTS

Join us as Cleveland-based artists explore place and belonging in an evening of creative response to the current exhibition *The Language of the Streets* and Michelangelo Lovelace's *These Urban City Streets* (pages 7 and 13), a painting of Cleveland and the focus of the 2022–2023 Shared Art Program. Shared Art uses a work of art from the museum collection to establish a communal space where students of all backgrounds can begin, and continue, their Oberlin journey together.

MAY 9 / 3 PM

### TUESDAY TEA / ONLY COGS AND WHEELS? CHINESE SOCIALIST REALIST ART IN THE AMAM

Highlighting works in *Riding the Strong Currents: 20th and 21st Century Chinese Paintings from the AMAM Collection* (page 4), Joan L. Danforth Curator of Asian Art Kevin R. E. Greenwood will discuss 1970s-era Chinese art in the AMAM collection in a style called Socialist Realism. Developed in the Soviet Union and promoted by the government of the People's Republic of China beginning in the 1950s,

Socialist Realism was an idealized, colorful, and dynamic form of art made to convey political messages to the public. The challenge today in evaluating these works lies in confronting a vision of this art as only a tool of propaganda. Can we appreciate Socialist Realist paintings despite their political messages?



Mansheng Wang (*Wáng Mǎnshèng* 王满晟), (American, born in China 1962), *The Breath of Autumn*, 2017. Ink, walnut ink, tempera, acrylic on poster paper. Oberlin Friends of Art Fund, 2022.30.

FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL EVENTS VISIT [AMAM.OBERLIN.EDU/EVENTS](https://amam.oberlin.edu/events)



FLW HOUSE / REOPENS APR 2

## WELTZHEIMER/ JOHNSON HOUSE

The Weltzheimer/Johnson House designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is an example of Wright's Usonian style. Completed in 1949, the home exemplifies mid-century modern living for a middle class family.

Open on the first Sunday of the month from April through November, presentations are offered on the hour at noon, 1, 2, 3, and 4 pm. Upcoming open houses are on Apr 2, May 7, Jun 4, Jul 2, Aug 6, Sep 3, Oct 1, and Nov 5.

Admission is \$10 per adult and free to students under 18 or with OCID.

To purchase tickets or for more information, including private tours for groups of 10 or more, visit our website: [amam.oberlin.edu/flw](https://amam.oberlin.edu/flw).



1

2



3



4



HIGHLIGHT / RECENT ACQUISITIONS

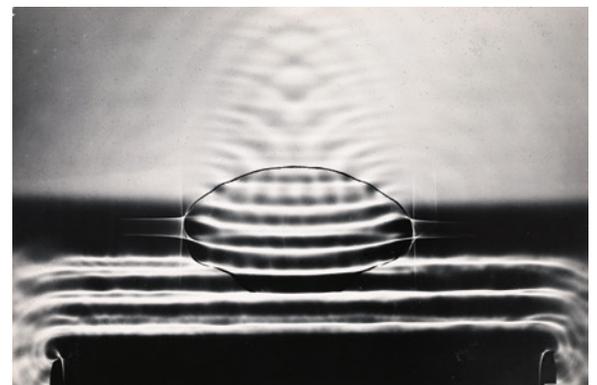
1. Uuriintuya Dagvasambuu (Mongolian, b. 1979), *Pandemic Diptych*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas. Oberlin Friends of Art Fund, 2022.19.

2. F. Bien-Aimé (Haitian, 20th century), *Untitled (Generals Signing a Document)*, before 1975. Oil on board. Gift of Ana C. Cara, 2022.18.3.

3. Sharona Franklin (Canadian, b. 1987), *Nest Egg for Transient Childhoods*, 2020. Cotton, linen, velvet, silk, polyester, vinyl, metal, and plastic. Gift of Peter Frumkin (OC 1984) in memory of his parents Allan and Jean Frumkin, 2022.24.

4. Sonya Clark (American, b. 1967), *Confederate Surrender*, 2022. Mixographia® print on handmade paper. Gift of Peter Frumkin (OC 1984) in memory of his parents Allan and Jean Frumkin, 2022.33.

5. Berenice Abbott (American, 1898-1991), *Focusing Water Waves*, 1958-61. Gelatin silver print. Gift of Carl Read Gerber (OC 1958) in memory of John Andrew Gerber (OC 1961), 2022.28.2.



5