Art at Vassar

A publication for the members of
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
Fall/Winter 2013/14

Broadening Our Worldview

The art history curriculum at Vassar and the growth of its art collection during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (as with most American museums) was rooted in what was known as the Western Classical Tradition, the progression from the classical roots in Greece and Rome (and to some extent, Egypt) culminating in the flowering of European cultures which were then exported to North America and informed our own. To this was added a smattering of collecting of Asian art, primarily that of Japan and China, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reflecting the vogue of the Westerner's "discovery" of these highly advanced cultures and their artistic production. The art collection at Vassar has always reflected the curriculum and because the curriculum focused on this so-called "Western tradition," that point of view has dominated our holdings and program.

The late twentieth century witnessed the expansion in our academic focus to include more of what we still choose to call (somewhat chauvinistically) "non-Western" courses of study. This, in turn, was a reflection of a world that was growing closer in contact via technology and economic development and answered the need for understanding our global neighbors better as we evolve together as a species. Broader Asian, African, and Middle Eastern studies proliferated here and on other campuses, and art museums responded to these apparent long-term trends (as opposed to short-term fashions) by expanding curatorial fields, exhibition programs, and collecting initiatives into these and other areas of the world. Objects that might have once been treated as the kinds of cultural artifacts destined for the natural history style of museum became increasingly a vehicle for understanding the artistic creativity of a land and its peoples. Now it is common to see an art museum in our Upper Midwest advertising an exhibition of textiles from the Hmong peoples of Southeast Asia or a museum in the southern United States adding a curatorial position in African art as these institutions assert their roles as cultural leaders by reflecting the greater global consciousness of the moment.

This issue of *Art at Vassar* explores a few non-Western directions that the Art Center has considered recently. From the acquisition of ancient Chinese bronzes and sculpture by generous gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation to our exhibition schedule that will feature this year superb Japanese woodcuts, intriguing Inuit objects and, to the Western eye, wonderfully eccentric African photographic portraiture, this is a year of expanding our horizons, figuratively and geographically. Each one of these objects or exhibitions plays parallel to a curricular need and indicates the ever-expanding and diverse nature of intellectual inquiry at Vassar College.

James Mundy,
The Anne Hendricks Bass Director

Stylish Heroes and Adventurers
Genji's World in Japanese Woodblock Prints

September 20 – December 15, 2013

While *The Tale of Genji* dates from the eleventh century it continues to influence Japanese arts and literature greatly, inspiring everything from paintings, prints, short stories, plays, and operas, to movies, symphonies, manga, video games, and anime. Court lady Murasaki Shikibu wrote about the life and loves of Prince Genji for an audience of aristocratic women, and her story has not only grown to be considered perhaps the greatest work of classical Japanese literature, but is also often called the world's first modern novel. Imagery associated with the tale was first featured in scroll paintings in the twelfth century, and then followed in Japanese prints beginning in the seventeenth century.

Genji's World in Japanese Woodblock Prints is the first exhibition outside Japan focused on Genji prints. The exhibition was organized by the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps College (Claremont, CA), and curated by Scripps professor Bruce Coats. Most of the fifty-seven eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock prints and books on view come from the extensive collection of Paulette and Jack Lantz in Pasadena, considered the foremost group of works in this genre. The exhibition also features several prints from the Williamson Gallery's collection. The complete display includes single sheets, diptychs, and triptychs, as well as book illustrations.

The Tale of Genji is a lengthy fictional story told in fifty-four chapters. Probably written during the first two decades of the eleventh century during the Heian period, the novel is known today from fragments and copies. Through the years, manuals guided artists on how best to depict episodes from the most popular chapters, resulting in a standardized set of recognizable scenes.

Parodies and retellings of the classic Genji story were particularly popular in the nineteenth century among artists working in woodblock prints and illustrated books. For instance, the famous Utagawa School artists Kunisada (1786–1865), Kuniyoshi (1797–1861), Hiroshige (1797–1858), and Yoshiiku (1833–1904) produced more than forty sets of prints depicting either the romantic exploits of Prince Genji or of the handsome Mitsuuji, hero of the hugely popular satire *A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki* written by the poet Ryutei Tanehiko (1783–1842).

In the nineteenth century the majority of Genji prints portrayed not the classic tale but the parody *A Rustic Genji*, which was published in installments and was light and

Utagawa Fusatane (active ca. 1850–1891)
Published by Tsujiokaya Bunsuke
Bird (Tori), from the series *Genji and the Flowers and Birds, Wind and Moon (Genji kachō fūgetsu no uchi)*, 1867
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection, Pasadena

entertaining like the popular fiction of the period. Kunisada, working from Tanehiko's sketches, illustrated the pages of the numerous installments of the *Rustic Genji*, and his designs in these booklets established the format for his and others' brilliantly colored, large-format sheet prints inspired by the great popularity of this bestseller. This abundance of new Genji prints in effect created a new genre of woodblock print and led to renewed interest in the original *Tale of Genji*.

Seeing both kinds of Genji prints in this exhibition provides extraordinary insight into nineteenth-century efforts to revive Japanese classical culture and yet infuse those traditional images with a lively and sometimes satirical commentary on contemporary society. In fact, the majority of works in this exhibition feature characters from the re-told satire *A Rustic Genji*. In these works, images of beautiful, idealized women and opulent dress predominate and communicate a message of harmony and sensual pleasure. A few even make reference to the West, and to the impending changes that would soon overtake Japanese society and culture at the end of the nineteenth century. The exhibition also includes prints with erotic aspects by artists who were often pushing the limits of government censorship on woodblock prints.

New views of Genji, not directly depicting scenes in the books, are also in the exhibition and feature seasonal themes, floral references, famous places, annual festivals, and theater. Not only were these new views of *A Rustic Genji* linked to several centuries of poetic traditions about flowers and the changing seasons, but they also allowed the artists to feature the latest fashions in garments for both men and women. *Rustic Genji* prints thus became popular with stylish individuals who wanted to see the newest kimono designs and fabric patterns. Depictions of both Genji figures traveling to famous places in Japan—especially to well-known sites around Edo (modern-day Tokyo)—were also popular and were often produced in sets as a marketing strategy. Annual festivals were frequently featured in Kunisada's prints as part of a revival of religious celebrations.

In the last few years, international conferences and museum exhibitions in Europe, Japan, and the United States have been celebrating the 1000th anniversary of the writing of *The Tale of Genji*. But little attention has been given to the numerous nineteenth-century woodblock print versions of *Genji* and *A Rustic Genji*, which are often witty and charming parodies or interpretations of the original novel. Some of these prints were limited-edition deluxe productions designed for wealthy clients, but many were published widely and more cheaply for a mass audience of fiction readers and print collectors. Even Genji game boards were created for adults and children to play. These stories also proved extremely popular for kabuki theater performances during the nineteenth century in Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto, starring some of the most famous actors of the day. Several print sets by Kunisada and his followers were both illustrations of the original texts and advertisements for well-known actors. At a time when government censorship greatly restricted artistic expression, some of the illustrations for these stories were also used for subtle political and social protests, to be deciphered by sophisticated viewers.

An extensive full-color scholarly publication on Genji prints accompanies the exhibition. Edited by Andreas Marks with additional writing by Coats and fellow scholars Michael Emmerich, Susanne Formanek, Sepp Linhart, and Rhiannon Paget (Brill/Hotei, 2012), this volume is the first in any language devoted solely to this Genji print phenomenon; like the exhibition, it broadens awareness of how important these Genji narratives and parodies were to nearly all levels of Japanese culture in the nineteenth century.

Columbia University professor of Japanese literature and culture Haruo Shirane spoke on the role of *Genji* in Japanese society for the opening lecture on September 20. Shirane has authored or edited numerous texts on Japanese literature, including *Envisioning The Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production* (Columbia, 2008) and *The Bridge of Dreams: A Poetics of The Tale of Genji* (Stanford, 1987).

The presentation of *Genji's World in Japanese Woodblock Prints* at Vassar benefits from the support of the Evelyn Metzger Exhibition Fund.

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

Toyoharu Kunichika (1835–1900)
Published by Yorozuya Magobei
Illustration of a Cool Breeze at Takanawa in Tokyo (*Tōkyō Takanawa fūryō zu*), 1870
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection, Pasadena

Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1865) and
Utagawa Hiroshige II (1826–1869)
Published by Moriya Jihei; cut on the block by Koizumi Minokichi
Enoshima in Sagami Province (*Sōshū Enoshima*), 1861
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection, Pasadena

FACULTY CHOICE

Portrait of a Marriage Carved in Stone: The *Stele with Seated Buddha* from Medieval China

The *Stele with Seated Buddha*, a recent gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, is an eloquent testament to a successful marriage between disparate worldviews that converged on China. The front side of the thirty-inch-tall stone slab is replete with Buddhist symbols from India, the birthplace of Buddhism, as well as with forms that originated within China. By around the sixth century when this stele was carved, Buddhism had been comingling with indigenous Chinese religions for half a millennium, ultimately transforming into an amalgam of Buddhism and various native Chinese religions—primarily Daoism and Confucianism. The stele celebrates exemplary piety in visual terms that reflect this new, syncretic form of Buddhism.

Chinese, Northern Wei dynasty, 386-589 or Eastern Wei dynasty, 534-550
Stele with Seated Buddha
Sandstone with pigment
2012.19.4

The central image of the stele is Buddha Sakyamuni, literally an "Enlightened One from the Sakya clan." Representing the Indian sage on stone tablets was one of the ways in which early Chinese Buddhists integrated the foreign religion into indigenous customs, as the stele had been a familiar medium for the medieval Chinese viewer. The Chinese started erecting steles for commemoration of sacrifices to local earth gods as early as the eleventh century BCE. By the turn of the first millennium CE, steles had become a common feature found at ancestor rituals, court ceremonies, and gatherings for honoring local officials.

The present work preserves these traditional functions of the stele. According to the inscription on the reverse side of the stele, its carving was commissioned on the occasion of the Buddha's birthday (eighth day of the fourth month) in honor of a certain lay devotee whose generous support of a Buddhist temple and its religious activities enabled the local lay Buddhist community and the clergy to pray for the souls of their ancestors, including deceased and living parents. In other words, this medieval stele was made in order to honor a local paragon of virtue, to promote his and his community's filial piety, as well as for veneration of a local god.

Though now a "local god" of a Chinese village, the foreign origin of the Buddha is made clear by retaining some of the key iconographic markers of a Buddha as they were originally formulated in India. The central icon is seated on a support that resembles an hourglass, representing Mt. Sumeru—a summit at the center of the universe, according to early Indian Buddhists. Thus enthroned, the Buddha presides over the inconceivably vast universe as its lord. On top of his head, a topknot-like protrusion called *usnisa* signifies extraordinary wisdom. The earlobes are stretched down, indicating the bejeweled princely life that he had led until his renunciation of the privileged life. His hands are in meditation *mudra*—a hand gesture of religious significance. Fifteen centuries following the creation of the stele have eroded away other common signs of a Buddha, including tight knots on the head, and a tuft of hair between the eyebrows indicating penetrating insight.

To these distinctly foreign features, the Chinese sculptor added easily recognizable Chinese elements. Gone are the deep-set almond-shaped eyes, high and straight nose, and plump lips of Indo-European Gandharan images such as the *Stone Head of the Buddha* (1976.68.20) on display in the same gallery. Instead, the facial features of this figure are distinctly East Asian: eyes that slant upward at the outer corners, lower and wider nose, and thinner lips. Also omitted are the bare-torsoed coverings of Buddha images from warmer South Asian regions, or the "wet drapery" of Gandharan Buddhas that show Hellenistic influence. This Buddha wears a robe of a Daoist-Confucian gentleman, with an inner garment showing at the chest. Both shoulders are fully covered by an outer robe that falls symmetrically to cross just above the abdomen in a perfect U-shaped neckline, echoing several other arches, including: the artificially perfect curves outlining the folded right leg before draping over the left arm, the hemline of the central fold of the skirt, the arch of the face, and the upside-down arches of the head and its protrusion. These reverberating curves help the eyes glide across the

surface of the divine image, enhancing the overall sense of balance and harmony that early Chinese aesthetics prioritized. Together with the perfect isosceles triangle of the Buddha's overall silhouette, the insistence on visual symmetry and balance creates a sense of mysterious divinity.

Other elements of the composition reinforce the impression of perfect balance. The male donor, the paragon of piety according to the stele inscription, carries an incense burner on the Buddha's left—the privileged side in Chinese culture. Two females, probably his wife and consort, flank the Buddha to his right. The difference in the scale of the male and female figures balances out the difference in their numbers. *Yin* (female, positive, dark, etc.) and *yang* (male, negative, light, etc.) are balanced, as the Chinese aesthetic usually demands. Even the combined techniques of carving—partly in the positive (carving out the background of the Buddha) and partly in the negative (carving out the outlines of the symbols to the Buddha sides)—enhances the overall sense of balance of the contained universe.

The presentation of a male exemplar with two female figures before an authoritative figure is also a coded combination that many sixth-century Chinese viewers would have recognized. During this century, the Chinese government propagated Daoist-Confucian legends about famous sons whose filial piety was deemed exemplary. Among the most commonly pictorialized legends was that of a man whose devotion to his parents was reportedly rewarded by two heavenly maidens. The image of the Buddhist donor and his wives on Vassar's Buddhist stele most likely relies on the visual habits of the sixth-century viewer, who would have conjured up the popular fable upon seeing the donor images.

Finally, the two symbols that flank the Buddha above the donor figures also present an interesting juxtaposition of the old and the new in medieval Chinese visual culture. Both forms evoke the *vajra*, a Buddhist ritual implement that symbolizes the indestructibility of the Buddha's Teaching. But the one on the Buddha's left, the top of which is shaped like a lotus, has a Buddhist origin, while the one on the opposite side with a top resembling the mushroom of immortality (*lingzhi*) comes from a Daoist visual repertoire. The lotus symbolizes purity—like white lotus that emerges pure and clean from muddy water—while the mushroom evokes the notion of eternal life so valued in Daoist philosophy. The pairing of these Buddhist and Daoist symbols to represent the respective ideals is just as fascinating as the hierarchy of Buddhism and Daoism that the triadic placement implies; the indigenous beliefs are now expedient tools with which Buddhism is taught to the Chinese.

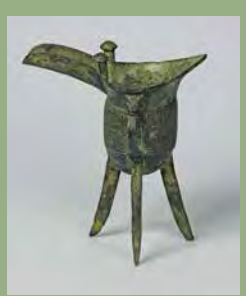
The marriage between Buddhism and native Chinese philosophies was not always harmonious. There were periods of rejection and contention, as there were periods of reconciliation leading to extraordinary productivity. The *Stele with Seated Buddha* provides a snapshot of a crucial moment in the history of Buddhism in China when the intercourse between the foreign and indigenous religions was producing a whole new set of ideals and pictorial vocabulary that were truly local and of the moment.

Karen Hwang-Gold
Assistant Professor of Art History

Chinese, Late Shang dynasty, 16th–11th centuries BCE or early Western Zhou dynasty, 11th century–771 BCE
Gui (ritual food vessel)
Bronze
Gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation in honor of Laura Sackler Tancredi, class of 1995, and Barbara Manfrey Vogelstein, class of 1976, 2012.19.3

Chinese, Han dynasty, 206 BCE–220 or Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220
Hu (ritual wine vessel)
Bronze
Gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation in honor of Laura Sackler Tancredi, class of 1995, and Barbara Manfrey Vogelstein, class of 1976, 2012.19.2

The Chinese *Stele with Seated Buddha* is one of four remarkable gifts of Chinese art made this past year by the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation in honor of Laura Sackler Tancredi, class of 1995, and Barbara Manfrey Vogelstein, class of 1976. Taken together, they have immeasurably strengthened our Chinese collection. The other works from this gift are pictured here.



Chinese, Shang dynasty, 13th–12th centuries BCE
Jue (ritual wine vessel)
Bronze
Gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation in honor of Laura Sackler Tancredi, class of 1995, and Barbara Manfrey Vogelstein, class of 1976, 2012.19.1

We are grateful to the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation for its support of the teaching of Asian art at Vassar.

EXHIBITION FEATURE

Modern Mali
Malick Sidibé: Chemises

January 24 – March 30, 2014

"Too often is Africa's image linked to pain, poverty, misery, but Africa is not only that, and this is what I've always wanted to depict in my images."

— Malick Sidibé

Malick Sidibé is a West African photographer celebrated internationally for his portraits and candid photographs from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s that bear witness to the social, cultural, and political transformation of Mali, which gained its independence from France in 1960. The youth culture of music, dancing, and fashion exploded in this once-conservative nation and Sidibé's ubiquitous lens chronicled this rapid shift. Photographing in nightclubs and at parties in the capital city of Bamako, Sidibé developed a uniquely loose and improvisational style that reflected the excitement of the events and his lively and stylish subjects. This exhibition includes various forms of Sidibé's output including more than fifty recent enlargements of studio portraits, a group of small vintage prints displayed in hand-painted frames, and numerous small proof prints of party scenes mounted on colored office folders, the *chemises* of the exhibition's title.

From early in his professional career, Sidibé's approach to portraiture, and photography in general, was notably distinct from that of more traditional studio photographers. He was one of the first in Bamako to embrace the spontaneity afforded by the 35mm camera. Sidibé's style was improvised as he responded to the energy of the rock music and spirited mood of the parties and nightclubs he attended. The naturalism of his photographs, which stands in stark contrast to the artifice of most studio portraiture, is due in part to the connection Sidibé made with his subjects. Of the parties he said, "When young people dance they're spellbound by the music. In that atmosphere, people didn't pay any attention to me anymore."

Malick Sidibé (Malian, b. 1936)
Here Is My Watch and My Ring, 1964
Gelatin silver print
©Malick Sidibé/Gwinzegal/diChroma Photography

Sidibé's party photographs depict typical youth from the region and express a more universal notion of young people and their sense of camaraderie and rebellion. Many of the parties Sidibé photographed occurred after curfew and the music played and clothing worn was deemed provocative by a dominant conservative culture. Not only did Sidibé satisfy his subjects' desire to be seen as fashionable and cosmopolitan, he also showed them connecting with an international youth culture through music, fashion, and an attitude of vibrant optimism, a sign of the changing times.

Sidibé would often photograph parties late into the night and then return to his studio to process and print his film so his clients could come by and place orders the next morning. Because the 35mm contact sheets were often too small to view, Sidibé adhered small proof prints to colored office folders, called *chemises* (which translates from French as "shirts" or "sleeves"), and laid them out in front of his studio for his clients' perusal. He grouped each of the *chemises* by club or event and the individual proofs were meticulously numbered to facilitate orders. Sidibé's clients frequently purchased photographs of themselves and their friends as souvenirs of the previous night's revelry; among his best customers were young men who would buy the photographs as gifts for their dates, hoping the images might become precious mementos.

By the 1970s, inexpensive cameras proliferated in Bamako. As a result, people were able to make their own snapshots, and Sidibé's business photographing parties began to diminish. To compensate, he shifted his focus to studio portraiture. Sidibé's reputation had been built on a dynamic snapshot aesthetic that seemed to capture

the true personality of his youthful subjects. In his portrait work he deftly transposed the spontaneity and informal qualities of his party photographs into the studio. Sidibé treated the studio as a stage where his clients could present their ideal selves or even play roles and reinvent themselves before the camera. His clients often wore their finest clothes or posed with a prized possession, such as a watch, a record, or a motorcycle, as a sign of their wealth, status, or familiarity with the latest trends. Sidibé collaborated with his sitters to create poses that mimicked action or highlighted their discriminating sartorial taste. By eliciting a particular gesture or expression, Sidibé helped to arouse his clients' imaginations and assisted them in presenting a carefully crafted persona to the world. Together, photographer and subject actively constructed an image that not only portrayed a pleasing likeness, but also reflected the sitters' inner life and aspirations.

Despite his current status in the international art world, Sidibé did not always think of himself as an artist *per se*. In 1960s Bamako, photographers were akin to other tradespeople, such as tailors and beauticians, whose skills enhanced their clients' personal appearance. Sidibé reached the pinnacle of his craft by gratifying the self-image of his sitters. He described his technique as "emphasizing what it was they wanted to show: their dress, their distinguished tailoring, their wealth and I added to this which gave them the image of a real star."

The exhibition was organized by diChromA Photography in collaboration with DePaul Museum of Art.

Mary-Kay Lombino,
The Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and Richard B. Fisher Curator and Assistant Director for Strategic Planning

Malick Sidibé (Malian, b. 1936)
The Two of Us on a Motorcycle, July, 1970
Gelatin silver print
©Malick Sidibé/Gwinzegal/diChroma Photography

FLLAC Collection Travels Near and Far

The next several months present an extraordinary opportunity to see works from the Art Center's collection in a number of high-profile exhibitions at home and abroad. Francesco Vanni's *Study for Sant'Ansano Altarpiece* (1995.1r) will be featured in a solo show of the artist's work at Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, Sept. 27–Jan. 5, while the Ed Ruscha print *News* (1979.27.d) will be on view at the International Print Center in New York, Sept. 5–Oct. 19. *La semaine des quatre jeudis* (1994.9.1) by Balthus will take a break from our twentieth century galleries to be shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Balthus: Cats and Girls* exhibition, Sept. 25–Jan. 12; it then travels to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art for the exhibition *Balthus and Japan*, Apr. 19–Sept. 7, 2014. If you happen to be traveling to Rome or Paris, you can see the Art Center's Cezanne *Landscape* (1961.7) at the Complesso del Vittoriano, Oct. 4–Feb. 2, or, in the spring, *La défense de Paris* (1972.2) by Gustave Doré at the Musée d'Orsay, Feb. 11–May 11.

Reconsidering Contemporary Indigenous Art

Decolonizing the Exhibition: Contemporary Inuit Prints and Drawings from the Edward J. Guarino Collection

December 4, 2013 – February 2, 2014

This fall the Focus Gallery at the Art Center will become the site for a unique display of Indigenous peoples' art. Over the past six years, the Art Center has been enhanced with a rich collection of Indigenous works donated by collector Edward J. Guarino. With his vast knowledge of the works and close relationships with the artists, Mr. Guarino has brought his expertise to Vassar and significantly contributed to the growth of its Native American Studies program. From this relationship, Assistant Professor of English and Native American Studies Molly McGlennen has developed a course that explores alternative approaches to the study and presentation of Indigenous art by utilizing a set of important contemporary Inuit works from Mr. Guarino's collection. The course will culminate in *Decolonizing the Exhibition: Contemporary Inuit Prints and Drawings from the Edward J. Guarino Collection*, a student-curated exhibition running from December 4, 2013, through February 2, 2014. Prior to the formal exhibition, additional contemporary Inuit works from Mr. Guarino's collection will be installed in the Focus Gallery in October and November for the students to study and for the public to view. The Interim Coordinator of Academic Affairs Anna Mecugni and other staff at the Art Center have been assisting Professor McGlennen on this provocative project. The collector, Mr. Guarino, will actively participate in the course as well.

Historically, Indigenous art has been collected and exhibited in limiting ways by framing objects as nameless crafts or curios and by rendering Native peoples and their histories through a romanticized and fated past. With *Decolonizing the Exhibition*, Professor McGlennen and her students aim to unsettle this enduring curatorial tradition by using the stories, writings, and theorization of Indigenous artists and scholars to contextualize the Inuit works of art. The exhibition will foreground a particular group of North American Indigenous artists, specifically Inuit artists from Cape Dorset and Baker Lake (in Arctic regions of Canada), that share distinct languages, homelands, and worldviews, rather than homogenously exhibiting a cross-section of tribal groups through the lens of cultural stereotypes. McGlennen and her class hope to reveal the complex dialogues these artists have created and maintained with the Western art world by creating multiple object labels that reflect various perspectives on each work.

Pitaloosie Saila (Inuit, Cape Dorset, Canada, b. 1942)
Strange Ladies, 2006
Lithograph, 36/50
Collection of Edward J. Guarino
Reproduced with the permissions of Dorset Fine Arts

Stylistically, the eight works on paper in the exhibition run the gamut from spare abstractions to cartoonish figurations and detailed narratives. They feature a broad spectrum of subjects—from dreamlike, surreal compositions to witty still-lifes to scenes inspired by autobiographical events. Techniques include watercolor, pencil, ink, paper collage, and various printing methods: historical European, mid-twentieth century North American, and contemporary local. Primarily executed between 2006 and 2009, these works were made for the international art market.

Decolonizing the Exhibition fulfills the Art Center's mission to serve as an essential component of the academic curriculum for Vassar faculty and students across disciplines. Revealing a portion of one of the most prominent and daring collections of Indigenous art in the Northeast, this exciting exhibition will offer the Vassar community, as well as the broader community of museum visitors, a unique opportunity to experience and think critically about Indigenous peoples and their art in the present tense.

Anna Mecugni
Interim Andrew W. Mellon Coordinator of Academic Affairs

Molly McGlennen
Assistant Professor of English and Native American Studies

High-Speed Photography in the Nineteenth Century

Reiji Esaki, one of the most prominent commercial portrait photographers in late-nineteenth-century Japan, studied under Shimooka Renjo in 1871. Esaki opened his own studio in the Shiba district of Tokyo the same year, moving to the Asakusa district the following year. This was very soon after photography studios established a commercial footing in Japan and most were known for portraiture. A decade later, photographers had begun to divide their business between taking portraits of paying customers and selling ready-made scenic photographs. Within a few years of moving to Asakusa, Esaki had established himself as one of the capital city's leading photographers on both fronts. He was one of the first Japanese photographers to use negatives on gelatin dry plates, which were imported in 1883 from the West where they had been in use since 1879. Dry plates were much faster than ambrotypes, which use a wet collodion process and require a longer exposure time. Taking advantage of that feature, Esaki famously photographed a column of water created by an experimental detonation of a mine on the Sumida River in Tokyo in 1883. From then on, he marketed himself as "the high-speed photographer" and became the standard bearer of dry plate photography.[1]

(Detail)

In 1893, Esaki completed *Collage of Babies, One Thousand and Seven Hundred Children that in Three Years Came to My Shop*, a dazzling photomontage that he used to promote his portraits and to advertise his aptitude for adopting novel approaches to photography. The collage portrays 1,700 of his portrait studio's infant clients (all younger than 15 months old) who visited his studio over a three-year period. The extraordinary image, renowned in the history of Japanese photography, illustrates the photographer's skill with such notoriously temperamental subjects, as well as the precision of the collaged faces, packed tightly into the composition. Many of the 1,700 tiny faces are looking directly into the camera and while some look a bit surprised, the majority of them seem calm and content. There is not one crying baby among them. The faces range in size from a miniscule two millimeters to approximately fifteen millimeters, with the average measuring around five millimeters. Each head is expertly cut and seamlessly pasted into the intricate composite, and then the whole collage is rephotographed for a finished look and for ease of reproduction. While some of the subjects are dressed in traditional clothing, most are seen bare-chested, revealing the fragile figures of the babies. The composition as a whole is captivating not only for the charm of its subject matter but also for the individual expression and outstanding craftsmanship of the photographer.

Reiji Esaki (Japanese, 1845–1910)
Collage of Babies, One Thousand and Seven Hundred Children that in Three Years Came to My Shop, ca. 1893
Albumen print on lithographic mount
Purchase, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Fund
2005.2

The photograph is mounted to a lithographic sheet that depicts miniature children's images—festive objects such as toys, kites, rattles, masks, balls, and pinwheels—arranged in a whimsical composition that provides a one-inch wide frame around the image. Also along the edge are inscriptions in English and Japanese with the name, date, place, and subject of the photograph as well as the artist's slogan, "fast photographer." Vassar's print, which was purchased in 2005 with funds from the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, is believed to be unique in that the untrimmed photograph remains attached to the studio's lithographed display mount.

Mary-Kay Lombino,
The Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and Richard B. Fisher Curator and Assistant Director for Strategic Planning

[1] Anne Wilkes Tucker, *The History of Japanese Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 33.

Membership

The following list represents members who joined or renewed their membership between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013.

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center would like to recognize the generosity of each of its members whose dedication is essential for continuing its 150-year tradition of quality exhibitions and educational programs, community outreach, and a strong teaching collection. We humbly thank our volunteers and members whose time and resources uphold the Art Center's reputation for institutional excellence.

Our members are part of a special piece of Vassar history, as the Vassar 150: World Changing *campaign came to a successful close on June 30, 2013, surpassing the $400 million goal with over $431 million raised. Supporters of the Art Center were vital to the success of this campaign, and this support has not gone unnoticed. During the campaign our members contributed approximately $1,011,000, and over 1,100 works of art were gifted to the museum. Thank you for ensuring that this treasured resource will be available to students, faculty, and art lovers well into the next 150 years.*

Director's Circle ($5,000+)

Mary Pick Hines '53 P '81
Arthur Loeb
Mary Ellen Weisl Rudolph '61 P '98
Lynn Gross Straus '46

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Joseph A. Coplin '88
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Frances Beatty Adler '70
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Anne Hendricks Bass '63 P '94
Anne Holton Bushman '44
Sheila ffolliott '67
Julia Amster Fishelson '46*
Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 P '88 and John Alexander P '88
Nancy Gail Harrison '74
Anne Hoene Hoy '63
Bettie Schroth Johnson '56
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Sarah Henry Lupfer '45-4 P '81
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Linda Carr Milne-Tyte '62
Lucy Claire Mitchell-Innes P '13 and David John Nash P '13
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Rebecca Schmitt Richardson '52
Geraldine Poppa Schechter '59
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Christopher R. Tunnard
Anne Henoch Vogel '63
Matla Wiener '69

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Mary W. Lunt
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Ann Kieswetter Morales '58
Maribeth Ortega P '13 and Alan Peter Segal P '13
Marian Phelps Pawlick '47
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Katharine Clapp Ruhl '59
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Nancy Schwartz '52
Innis Shoemaker '64
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Milbrey Rennie Taylor '68
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Martha Baer '61
Betsy Shack Barbanell '61
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Cynthia Hawkins Baughman '68
Joan Dreyfuss Baumrind '51
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Jane Cohen Bergner '64
Laurie Stein Bigley '68 and Michael Bigley
Beverly Blatt '65 and David H. Filipek
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Margaret Reid Boyer '87
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Frances Jones Brooks '40
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Barbara Philen Chase '56
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Jo Ann Citron '71
Dumont Clarke '74
Robin Rowan Clarke '60
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Judith A. Dollenmayer
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Rita Effron and Jack Effron
Marygrace Elson '78
Eleanor Morss English '41 P '76
Mary Lloyd Estrin '66 P '01 P '06
Naomi Goldstein Feldman '52 and Franklin Feldman
Joanne Bluestone Feuerman '64
Elisabeth West FitzHugh '47
Sarah Ann Winter French '54
Mary Meeker Gesek '58 P '86
Miriam Mendlovitz Gold '53 and Burton Gold '50
Paula Gottlieb P '14 and Michael H. Gottlieb P '14
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Margery Groten and Arthur Groten
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Louise Lipsey Harpel '58
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Sue Peirce Hartshorn '62
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Eugénie Aiguier Havemeyer '51
Sydney Elliot Henderson '41*
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Michael Kenny
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Jean Humason McCullough '51
Gail Levy McGlinchey '64 P '91 P '95 and Thomas J. McGlinchey P '91 P '95
Pamela Cottam McGuire '69 and Eugene G. McGuire

**Deceased*

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Christine Gibbons McKay '70
Bonnie MacInnes Meagher '62
Beatrice Berle Meyerson '52 P '77 P '78 and John LeMoyne Ellicott P '77 P '78
Ellen Elting Michelman '58 P '83
John S. Mihaly '74
Cecelia Morris
Ann Lawrance Balis Morse '59 and Andre Starrett
Suzanne Ferrell Nicholson '66
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Cebert S. J. Noonan '84
Mary Holl Oldshue '73
Lynda Wallace Painton '61 P '89 P '92
Suzanne Patterson '57
Antoinette Aiguier Pearman '45 P '80
Judith Lieberman Pestronk '42
V. Colleen Ball Plantinga '45-4
Letitia McClure Potter '59
Nikki Poulos '89 and James G. Poulos
Nancy Purdy '51
Linda Rapp and John Rapp
Ethel Richardson '70
Nancy Bailey Riegel '57
Lauren Robinson '86
Maxine Aaron Rosston '46
Deborah Menaker Rothschild '71 and David Rothschild
Audrey Lewis Ruge '73
Mary Hyman Samuels '40 P '80
Mark Schwartz and Bettina Katz
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Paula H. Sherwood and David W. Sherwood
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Meg Harlam Soifer '72 and Warren Soifer
Jill Spiller '63
Phoebe Rentschler Stanton '50 P '76
Nancy Raab Starnbach '61 P '87 and Howard Starnbach P '87
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Susan Koelle Bell '61
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Lois Dalis Blumenfeld '48
Deborah Boldt '69
Sally Bourrie '80
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Irene Brocks and Eric Brocks
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Alice Ramsey Bruns '31
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Rosemary Klineberg Coffey '57
Judith Simon Cohen '59 P '84
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Anne Goheen Crane '63 P '94
Nancy Fryer Croft '69
Maria Marta Martinez Cullen '61
Rochelle Rudolph Cyprus '61 P '84 P '88
Ziva Eckstein Dahl '65
Jennifer Sachs Dahnert
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Pamela Miller Gerard '56
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Mia Goldman '77
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Ron Green P '01
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Sarah S. Johnson
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Juliana Boyd Kim '69
Michelle Lamuniere '88
Mary Gibbons Landor '51 P '79
Kathleen Holman Langan '46 P '82
Thor Larsen
Carol Lawton '71
Jane Levenson '61
Karen Joy Lewis '68
Sherry Rabbino Lewis '54 P '89
Marion Siskind Liebowitz '54
Elaine C. Lipschutz
Ann Hume Loikow '70 P '08
Alison Luchs '70
June Ross Marks '49
Anna O. Marley '96
Carol Ann Buettner Marley '64 P '96
Natalie Junemann Marshall '51
Deborah Masterson '78
James Mastrangelo
Elizabeth Maze '84
Amy McCarthy '71
Phoebe Dare Anderson McCarthy '69 P '10
Leatrice Goldfine Mendelsohn '57
Susan Mischler '70
Caroline Morris '65
Lois Mound '63
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Evan T. Neufeld '86
Danna C. O'Connell
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K. Gillet Thomas Page '56
Katherine Hibbs Pherson '72 and Randolph H. Pherson
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Judy Sanford
Sally Saul P '01 and Peter Saul P '01
Perle Klausner Scope '51
Nancy Row Scott '70
Elayne Seaman
Anne Munger Seavey '42
Barbara Seril '71
Susan Tousley Shaw '69
Kimberly Shuck Cowan '87
Beverly LeBov Sloane '58
Donald Spanel
Elizabeth Bigelow Stewart '44
Barbara Finch Stock '53
Mary Worley Stone '48
E. Anne Parks Strain '56 P '82
Bernadette Symanski
JoAnn Tervenski
Mary Aamot Thierheimer '67
Ardra Todd
Judith Fiedler Topilow '63
Freda Coffing Tschumy '61 P '97
John Veres P '11
Maria L. Verven
Caroline Gregson Wabl '95
Harriett Gordon Wagman '54
Katharine Stevens Ward '44
Estelle Miller Weedon '64
Sue Gotshal Weinberg '51
Emilie Welles '55
Laura Allersmeyer Werner '63
Annmarie Westermann
Margaret Whelan
Lynda M. Willingham
Barbara Yanavage '84
Anne H. Young '81
Susan Babson Young '61
Xuewu Zheng

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Nadia Jihad '08
Chelsea Emelie Kelly '09
Emily J. Kloppenburg '11
Stephen J. McCarthy '10
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Danielle Bukowski '14
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Theresa Coolidge Ceruti '36*

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Anne Hoene Hoy '63
James K. Kloppenburg '77 P '11 P '14
Elizabeth Cabot Lyman '64
Bannon Jones McHenry '52
Ann Lawrance Balis Morse '59
Bryna Horuvitz Sweedler '61
Julie P. Tobey and David M. Tobey
Artur Walther
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Benjamin Krevolin '89 and John Sare
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Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn '89
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Judith Loeb Chiara '49
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Zipporah Schefrin
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Elizabeth Cabot Lyman '64
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Ann Lawrance Balis Morse '59
Bryna Horuvitz Sweedler '61
Artur Walther

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Nancy Smith
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Museum Guard

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Museum Guard

Manfred Schunzel
Museum Guard

**Deceased*

The Art Center Welcomes Kate Williams

Please join us in welcoming Kate Williams as the new Membership Coordinator for the Art Center. Kate is already very familiar with the membership program as she began her career at Vassar College in August 2012 as the Membership Administrative Assistant. She assumed her new role this June and is excited to carry on the fine work of the previous Membership Coordinator, Danna O'Connell.

Kate has her BS in Mathematics from Elmira College and her MBA in Marketing from Rochester Institute of Technology. She is passionate about higher education and believes the Art Center is a valuable resource for Vassar's students, alumnae/i, faculty, and the local community. "Our members' support is vital in continuing the Art Center's tradition of art education," Kate says. "It is a privilege to form relationships with our loyal supporters who help make so much possible. I'm looking forward to working with Director James Mundy and our curators to plan engaging events that will keep our members connected with the Art Center for years to come."

Member Event: Chinese Contemporary Art in the Hudson Valley

This October, our members were welcomed on a tour of the art space and private residence of Dr. John Tancock and Christopher Mao of Chambers Fine Art of New York and Beijing. Located in Salt Point, New York, only a short drive from the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, ArtFarm is truly a cultural gem in the Hudson Valley. The structure, designed by HHF Architects and renowned Chinese artist and architect Ai Weiwei, has been featured in numerous architectural magazines and won the Gold Medal for the annual "Best Architects 10" prize in 2009 for its design concept.

Photo: ©Iwan Baan

ArtFarm is unique from every angle. The building's minimal form stands out against the rolling hills of the surrounding rural landscape. Inside, the soft insulation that drapes the ceilings directly contrasts with the building's rigid exterior. The bright white walls and ceilings create an ideal gallery setting. The tour provided our members with an intimate look at Tancock and Mao's collection of contemporary Chinese art, which demonstrates their impressive expertise and years of collecting experience. Christopher Mao once explained Chinese contemporary art as "a reflection on China's changes: economic, political, social and cultural" (*3 Dots Water*, 2011). The visit to ArtFarm allowed us an incredible opportunity to better understand and appreciate contemporary Chinese art through the eyes of the collector and to gain a unique perspective on recent events in the non-Western world.

The tour concluded with light refreshments on the patio, overlooking the beautiful grounds and picturesque Hudson Valley foliage. We thank Dr. Tancock and Mr. Mao for their kind hospitality and look forward to organizing stimulating member events like this in the future.

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The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
Vassar College
124 Raymond Avenue
Poughkeepsie, New York 12604
http://fllac.vassar.edu

The Art Center is open Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday/Saturday from 10am to 5pm, Thursday from 10am to 9pm, and Sunday from 1pm to 5pm.

CURRENT AND UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

Genji's World in Japanese Woodblock Prints
September 20 – December 15, 2013

Malick Sidibé: Chemises
January 24 – March 30, 2014

Mastering Light: From the Natural to the Artificial
April 11 – June 29, 2014

FLLAC EXHIBITION TRAVELS:

The Polaroid Years: Instant Photography and Experimentation, organized by Art Center curator Mary-Kay Lombino, will travel to the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, FL, where it will be on view December 19, 2013 – March 23, 2014.

John Maggiotto (American, b. 1955)
Untitled (Superman), 1983
Polaroid SX-70 print
Collection of William Currie; © John Maggiotto

Art at Vassar

A publication for the members of
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
Fall/Winter 2013/14

On the cover:
Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1865)
Published by Iseya Ichiemon
The Courtesan Takigawa of the Kukimanjiya Reading A Rustic Genji (Kukimanjiya nai Takigawa), 1838 (detail)
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection, Pasadena