

Spring 2024

Yale University

Art Gallery



From the Director



AS WE WELCOME THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING, I encourage you to enjoy all that the Gallery has to offer this season. Awaiting you in the James E. Duffy Gallery is a must-see installation of prints, drawings, and photographs, including many recent acquisitions. Among my favorites is a large oil stick on paper by the 20th-century American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat that provides a powerful commentary on the interplay of race and sports in America (see p. 18). In the European galleries, stellar paintings from the Yale Center for British Art are now hung alongside our own permanent collection, creating provocative and visually compelling juxtapositions. Meanwhile, our curators of Asian art and Indo-Pacific art have teamed up to expand the narratives presented in the Ruth and Bruce Dayton Gallery, encompassing Javanese shadow puppets as well as thematic displays of Chinese and South Asian painting.

We are excited to share three special exhibitions this semester. *Year of the Dragon* celebrates 2024, which is linked to the dragon in the Eastern Zodiac calendar, with a consideration of the long, complex, and persistent artistic tradition around this fantastical creature. *Munch and Kirchner: Anxiety and Expression* features prints by the Expressionist artists Edvard Munch and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner largely drawn from the collection of Nelson Blitz, Jr., and Catherine Woodard and from the Gallery's holdings. As the exhibition demonstrates, both artists experimented with color and abstraction to convey their own visions of modern life. The socially conscious and politically responsive output of the graphic designer, public artist, and educator Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, B.F.A. 1963, M.F.A. 1964, is the subject of the exhibition *Sheila Levrant de Bretteville: Community, Activism, and Design*. De Bretteville directed the Yale School of Art's Graphic Design program for over 30 years. Her posters and broadsheets, along with models of her public art installations, are on view in this first-ever monographic exhibition.

This spring, we launch our *Yale Collections* series. The affordably priced publications include new research on some of the Gallery's most notable objects. The inaugural book in the series, *The Naseby Cup: Coins and Medals of the English Civil War*, by Benjamin D. R. Hellings, the Jackson-Tomasko Associate Curator of Numismatics, offers a deep dive into this exquisite Victorian-era cup—currently on display in the Bela Lyon Pratt Gallery—that commemorates the 17th-century Battle

of Naseby. The second book, *Celadon on the Seas: Chinese Ceramics from the 9th to the 14th Century*, by Denise Patry Leidy, the Ruth and Bruce Dayton Curator of Asian Art, will appear this fall. We continue to celebrate the rolling release of the Gallery's first born-digital publication, *Italian Paintings at the Yale University Art Gallery*, by Laurence Kanter, Chief Curator and the Lionel Goldfrank III Curator of European Art, and Pia Palladino, formerly Associate Curator of the Robert Lehman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. New entries have recently been uploaded and can be accessed for free at artgallery.yale.edu/italian-paintings. Once complete, the catalogue will be the most comprehensive resource on one of the largest and richest collections of early Italian painting in the world.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on what feels like a watershed moment for us. As a result of the hard work and dedication of Gallery staff, we are seeing an ever-increasing number of visitors from around the globe, both in person and online. Our educational initiatives and innovations in scholarly research are making possible new ways of looking at the collection, and we continue to expand digital access. Finally, we have made great progress in positioning the West Campus Collection Studies Center as a hub of interdisciplinary study and cutting-edge conservation techniques.

Be sure to explore our Smartify app when you visit next, and remember that it also serves as a tool for searching and viewing our holdings remotely, from anywhere. Likewise, our website is a vital resource, whether for perusing the collection or for conducting scholarly research. There you will find a full calendar of our public and educational programs. For example, John Walsh, B.A. 1961, Director Emeritus of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, returns this April with his lecture series *Matisse Up Close and All Around* (see p. 7 for more details).

Please come and visit us often this spring and summer!

Stephanie Wiles
The Henry J. Heinz II Director

Happenings

Arts in Mind

Arts in Mind is a monthly virtual program for individuals with Young-Onset Alzheimer's or in the early stages of memory loss, along with their care partners. This online program connects art making with looking at works from the Gallery's collection. Participants spend the first part of the session viewing art together, and the second creating their own art in response to what they see. The sessions are led by Jessica Sack, the Jan and Frederick Mayer Curator of Public Education; art therapist Angel Duncan; and Wurtele Gallery Teachers. Registration required; for more information and to register, contact the Gallery's Education Department at yuag.education@yale.edu or 203.436.8831.

Teen Program

Wednesdays from 3:00 to 4:30 pm

Teens ages 13–19 are welcome to bring friends to the Gallery, explore the museum's diverse collection, and make art. The program provides participants with art supplies, snacks, and bus passes. Sessions are facilitated by Wurtele Gallery Teachers. No registration required; meet by the couches in the Gallery lobby.

Teacher Leadership Program

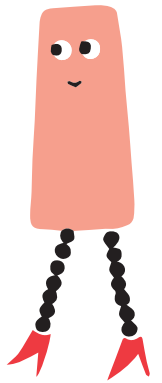
First Thursdays at 4:00 pm EST/EDT on Zoom (during the academic year)

The Teacher Leadership Program offers educators an opportunity to look closely at art, have conversations, and develop projects that encourage critical thinking through museum-education pedagogies and activities. Educators of all levels and disciplines are welcome to join the sessions, which are led by Jessica Sack, the Jan and Frederick Mayer Curator of Public Education, and Wurtele Gallery Teachers. This year's topics include helping students learn to look, connecting writing with drawing, and thinking about connections between history and technology. These workshops provide tools for teaching both online and in person. Registration required; for more information and to register, scan the QR code below.

Getting StARTed

Second Saturdays at 11:15 am

Join us in person for our new family program, in which we offer engaging activities to guide families in looking at art together. The 30-minute sessions focus on a range of works from the collection and build in time for participants to try the month's activity on their own. Each month highlights a new part of the museum. This program is ideal for younger visitors who are learning to look at art. Registration required; for more information and to register, scan the QR code below.



Stories and Art

First Sundays at 1:00 pm



Join us in person for our family program Stories and Art, in which we tell folktales, myths, and other exciting stories from around the world while looking at art together. Held in English and another language, each

session is designed to inspire children of all ages to view art in new ways by encouraging drawing along with close looking and listening. Stories and Art videos are also available in English and Spanish on our YouTube channel. For the most up-to-date schedule for this family program, scan the QR code below. No registration required; meet by the couches in the Gallery lobby.



The Anxiety of Influe



EDVARD MUNCH (1863–1944) and ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER (1880–1938) met only once, and even then just briefly. Both were included in a 1912 exhibition of modernist artists held in Cologne, Germany. While Munch had his own very large room and was presented as a pioneer alongside Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne, only two works by Kirchner were included in a display by members of the Expressionist group *Die Brücke* (The Bridge). By chance, Munch and Kirchner met in the galleries and took a stroll together. Though they came to share friends, dealers, and patrons, this was their first and last amicable encounter. The younger and extremely ambitious Kirchner repeatedly tried to distance himself from Munch, declaring, “He is the end, I am the beginning.”

The exhibition *Munch and Kirchner: Anxiety and Expression*, on view through June 23, explores the fascinating overlaps in the creative output and personal biographies of the artists—starting with the two works shown here. Kirchner appears to have modeled his own self-portrait on Munch’s, likely looking to a series of paintings and prints in which Munch had represented himself in the act of smoking and, in doing so, had signaled his persona as a radical and modern artist. By directly

FREYDA SPIRA

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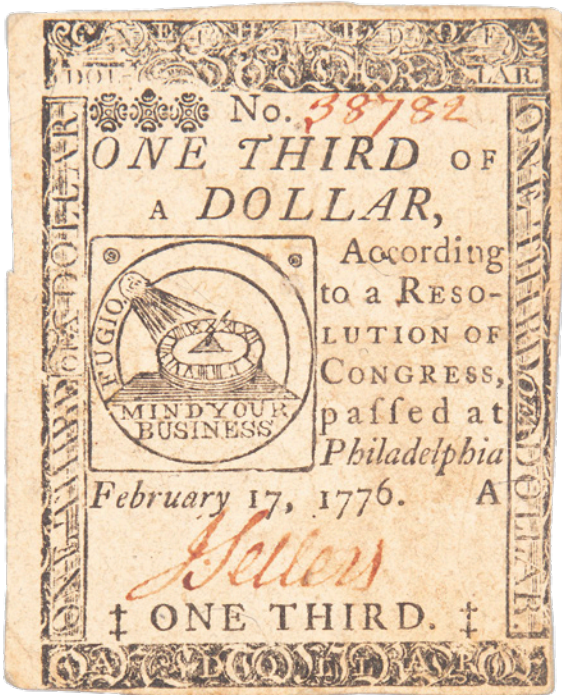
referencing Munch, Kirchner placed himself squarely within the same framework.

Notably, when Munch exhibited a large-scale painted version of his *Self-Portrait with a Cigar* in 1895, one observer decried the work as a glamorization of moral corruption and psychological degeneration, traits that, at the time, were associated with the frowned-upon custom of smoking. Indeed, for middle-class inhabitants of the European centers in which Munch was active—Kristiania (now Oslo), Paris, and Berlin—smoking was a signifier of the subversive social and sexual exchanges taking place in local cafés, cabarets, and dance halls. In such spaces, men and women freely interacted, promoting the doctrine of free love and discussing progressive politics with a concern for collapsing not only gender but also class differences. Smiling slyly in his self-portrait, Kirchner seems to be acknowledging the transgressive role of smoking as part of these thriving bohemian circles—where, in parallel, both he and Munch enthusiastically engaged with fellow artists and intellectuals.

Freyda Spira is the Robert L. Solley Curator of Prints and Drawings.

Catalogue available. For more information or to purchase, visit artgallery.yale.edu/publications.





The Engravers Circle

EMILY PEARCE SEIGERMAN



SINCE THE 19TH CENTURY, Yale University has collected and cultivated numismatic objects—coins, tokens, paper currency, medals, and related materials—resulting in holdings that span from the invention of money to the present day. In 2024 the Yale University Art Gallery opens a new chapter in this long collecting history with the launch of the Engravers Circle, the first patron group dedicated to furthering the field of numismatics at the museum.

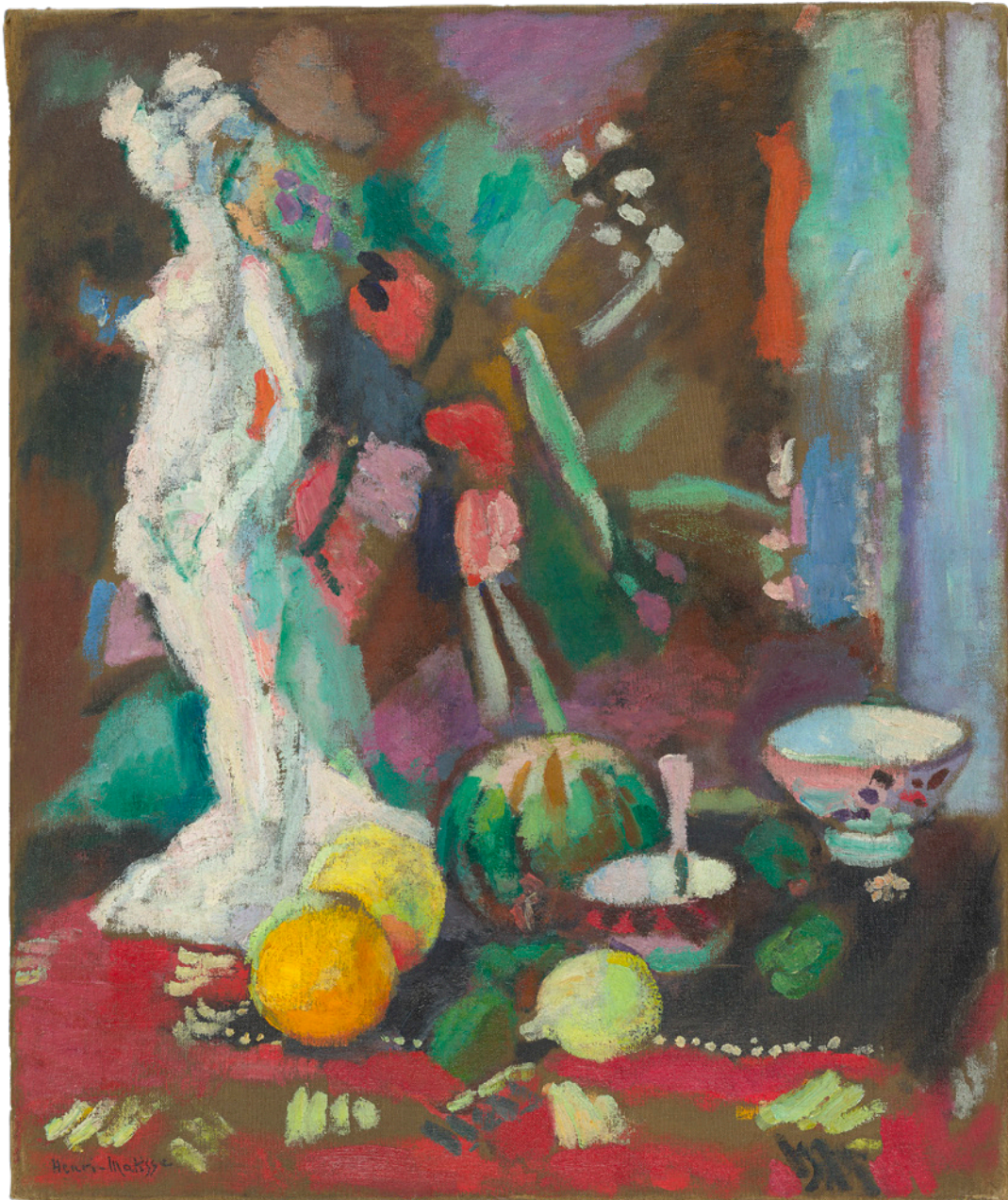
Engravers, artists who incise decorative designs into flat surfaces, are indispensable to the making of coins, medals, and currencies. Their art form is as old as money itself, with the earliest examples dating to the 7th century B.C. Named to honor this essential role in the creation of numismatic objects, the Engravers Circle invites participants to advance related initiatives across the University and beyond.

Membership in the group supports the continued development and display of these global and timeless holdings at the Gallery, as well as the pursuit and publication of associated scholarship. Members enjoy special events, lectures, and behind-the-scenes visits—all approaching numismatic objects as works of art. To join the Engravers Circle, scan the QR code below or email numismatics@yale.edu.

Emily Pearce Seigerman is the Ben Lee Damsky Assistant Curator of Numismatics.



artgallery.yale.edu/support/giving/engravers-circle



John Walsh Lecture Series Matisse Up Close and All Around

ORGANIZED IN COLLABORATION WITH JOHN WALSH, B.A. 1961, Director Emeritus of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, this lecture series approaches Henri Matisse through a close examination of four works, each reachable on a day trip from New Haven, and each revealing the achievement of a phase of the artist's long career. Matisse began in Paris as a traditional realist, before discovering the colors of the South of France and becoming one of the radical innovators of early modernism—a so-called Fauve or “wild beast.” In the 1910s, his experiments with figures and with pictorial space rivaled the discoveries of his contemporary Pablo Picasso. In search of emotional and spiritual satisfaction through painting, Matisse settled on the Riviera, where, for most of a decade, he produced images of women—whether clothed or nude—in luminous, well-furnished rooms. From the beginning, his drawings and sculptures were an important aspect of his work. With a lifelong interest in large decorative projects, he received commissions for murals later in life and invented new methods, such as paper cutouts, for designing such large-scale works. His career ended with spectacular prints in color and an entire cycle of stained-glass windows for a Catholic chapel near Nice.

An installation of Matisse's prints will be on view in the Gallery's lobby during the lecture series.

Over the past 10 years, John Walsh has delivered more than 50 public lectures at the Yale University Art Gallery on European and American paintings.

Generously sponsored by the Martin A. Ryerson Lectureship Fund and the John Walsh Lecture and Education Fund.

April 2, 4, 9, and 11
at 1:30 pm EDT

In person and on Zoom

No registration required for in-person attendance. The doors to the Robert L. McNeil, Jr., Lecture Hall open at 12:30 pm. Space is limited.

Registration required for virtual attendance; to register, scan the QR code below. On Zoom, closed captions will be available in English.



Henri Matisse, *Nature morte à la statuette* (Still Life with Plaster Figure), 1906. Oil on canvas. Yale University Art Gallery, Bequest of Kate L. Brewster. ©2024 Succession H. Matisse/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

yale.zoom.us/webinar/register/N_wChQqHZcQu-FJTrgxijECg



Performance and Court in Indonesia

A New Display for the Department of Indo-Pacific Art

RUTH BARNES

In 2017 the museum received a magnificent donation of more than 20,000 Indonesian puppets and related objects. The collection had been amassed by Walter Angst, a Swiss scientist who spent much of the 1970s studying primates in western Indonesia.

During that time, he became deeply interested in the shadow-puppet performances he observed there. He began collecting the puppets, but rather than bringing together a variety of examples, he acquired complete sets, which were needed to perform plays drawn from the many cultural traditions within the region: not only Indigenous Indonesian tales but also stories from Islamic and Chinese backgrounds as well as Indian epics like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. A new display showcases some of these fascinating puppets.

At the center is a screen depicting a setting from the *Mahabharata*, a story that has long been popular in Javanese shadow-puppet theater, or *wayang*. The scene from the epic will change every six months. The accompanying set of more than 300 puppets (*wayang purwa*) is shown in a wooden box behind the screen, as though ready to be handled by the *dhalang*, or puppeteer, in the traditional all-night performances. Joined by a percussion orchestra called a gamelan, the *dhalang* would sing, improvise dialogue, move the puppets, and provide sound effects by striking a metal knocker either on the wooden puppet box or on a metal plate attached to it. Some spectators might watch the shadows on the front of the screen, while others might watch from behind to appreciate the brightly colored puppets in action. As an art form, *wayang* reached its height in the royal courts of central Java in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The set featured in the display is known as *Kyai Nugroho* (Honorable Blessing of Happiness). It was commissioned by a son of Sultan Hamengkubuwana VII of Yogyakarta in 1908, though additions and modifications were made in subsequent decades.

The other objects on view help situate the royal set within the wider context of courtly life. These include luxurious goldwork and ceremonial textiles, as well as a sculpture of the rice goddess Dewi Sri and her consort that was commissioned to bless the marriage of an aristocratic couple. A colorful Chinese-Indonesian glove-puppet stage offers a glimpse into the multicultural world of *wayang*.

Ruth Barnes is the Thomas Jaffe Curator of Indo-Pacific Art.

Sheila Levrant de Bretteville *Community, Activism, and Design*

An Interview with the
Exhibition Cocurators

Roland Coffey, Director of Communications, sat down with John Stuart Gordon, the Benjamin Attmore Hewitt Curator of American Decorative Arts, and independent curator Brooke Hodge to discuss their experience co-organizing the first-ever museum exhibition devoted to the work of the renowned graphic designer, public artist, and educator Sheila Levrant de Bretteville (b. 1940, B.F.A. 1963, M.F.A. 1964). The show is on view at the Yale University Art Gallery through June 23.

Roland Coffey: How did this retrospective exhibition come about? Why now?

John Stuart Gordon: The Yale School of Art wanted to celebrate Sheila's incredible tenure as chair of the M.F.A. program in Graphic Design. The dean of the school, Kimberly Pinder, reached out to



the Gallery to brainstorm ideas, and we decided to focus on an exhibition chronicling Sheila's career. My experience is in design and architecture, but not graphic design, so I felt the project would benefit from a collaborator. Susan Sellers, who has taught in the Graphic Design program at Yale for many years and serves as the creative director of the New York-based studio 2x4, recommended Brooke. We immediately bonded over the strength of Sheila's work.

RC: How did you work together, as one of you is in New Haven while the other is in Palm Springs, California? Did this create any challenges or present opportunities for creativity?

Brooke Hodge: It was surprisingly easy, and lots of fun. We did our own initial research, met on Zoom, and had a series of intensive working sessions together in New Haven. Pamela Hovland, Senior Critic in Graphic Design at the Yale School of Art, helped us navigate Sheila's archive. The three of us spent a lot of time with Sheila—hearing her fascinating stories while looking through the rich array of posters, books, photographs, and other objects she had pulled from storage.

RC: The exhibition is divided into four thematic sections. How did you develop them?

BH: As we made our way through Sheila's archive, we identified key periods in her career and used these to anchor thematic groupings of work. To reflect her creative output over more than five decades, the exhibition highlights early professional work; feminist and women-led initiatives; teaching; and public art projects.

JSG: One challenge for us was how to present material that had been deliberately ephemeral or site specific. We opted for an installation that feels informal and spontaneous, to capture the spirit of the works.

RC: Are there any works you find to be especially pertinent or relevant today?

JSG: So much of Sheila's work is still fresh and powerful today. For example, her 1974 poster *Pink* explored the color from a feminist viewpoint, yet pink continues to be a potent color in our society. It inspired us to create a space in the exhibition where visitors can share their thoughts about pink. Alumni of the Graphic Design program and others have also made contributions to this area of the show.



RC: I'm sure it's hard to pick favorites, but are there any objects, projects, or designs that you feel particularly drawn to? What about them captivates you?

BH: I'm drawn to projects that reveal the ways Sheila uses design as an activist tool, sometimes subversively—like the *reticenza omertà complicità* (reticence silence complicity; image above) poster she made and put up in her window in Milan in the late 1960s to protest censorship in the Italian media.

JSG: Mounting an exhibition involves people from all across the Gallery, and

it's been fascinating to see how individuals are drawn to particular works, and each for a different reason. There is such variety.

RC: What do you hope visitors will take away with them after coming to see the exhibition?

BH: Sheila's important work, and its impact, over such a long and illustrious career is number one.

JSG: But we also hope visitors will be inspired by design in general and realize what an important tool it can be for communication, on many levels.

COMING
SOON

The Dance of Life

THERESA FAIRBANKS HARRIS,
PAUL PANAMARENKO,
CYNTHIA SCHWARZ,
AND KELSEY WINGEL



Conserving Artists' Preparatory Studies

Opening at the Yale University Art Gallery in September 2024, *The Dance of Life: Figure and Imagination in American Art, 1876–1917* presents more than 100 figural studies related to major civic commissions for the Boston Public Library, the Library of Congress, the Pennsylvania State Capitol, and other institutions.

The exhibition showcases preparatory works in a wide range of media by Edwin Austin Abbey, Edwin Howland Blashfield, John La Farge, Violet Oakley, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and John Singer Sargent, among many others, that were produced during a transformative period in U.S. history, spanning from the nation's centennial year to World War I. Long overlooked, they are often the most compelling expressions of the ideals of this era—even more so than the final large-scale murals and monuments, which were largely executed by assistants. Many of these intimate and engaging artworks, in particular those never before exhibited, have required innovative conservation treatment to prepare them for display.

The Gallery's conservation team collaborated with Mark D. Mitchell, the Holcombe T. Green Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture and organizer of the exhibition, on treatment plans for the works in the show. Their primary focus was a group of Abbey's studies for his mural cycles at the Boston Public Library and the Pennsylvania State Capitol, in Harrisburg, that came to Yale as part of the artist's estate. Abbey was prolific in creating studies, developing his early concepts on paper as well as on canvas. He brilliantly executed drawings in colored pastels, watercolors, chalks, and ink on a variety of richly colored and textured papers. These include a preparatory sketch for *The Apotheosis of Pennsylvania*, a mural completed in 1911 in the House of Representatives Chamber of the state capitol. Conservation staff unfolded, cleaned, and restored to its original dimensions this large and fragile drawing. Tears were mended and large areas of missing paper were reconstructed to fill the losses, stabilizing the drawing and making the composition whole again.

Abbey's painted studies, with their rich and dynamic surfaces, exemplify how such works can capture an artist's approach to problem-solving and to thinking through a design. Left mostly untouched since their creation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the paintings retain delicate and sometimes ephemeral traces of the artist's process, such as charcoal grids, chalk lines, drips, splatters, and even fingerprints. Preserving the freshness and immediacy of the original surfaces, which can easily be lost through interventive treatment, was paramount to the conservation team. From cleaning grime and hazy efflorescence off sensitive paint layers to meticulously consolidating friable chalk media, the endeavor proved laborious but rewarding.

The efforts of the Conservation Department often extend beyond the surfaces of the artworks. Frames must also be fabricated. These oft-overlooked structures serve both to protect the artwork and to enhance our experience of it. Some objects require especially creative solutions. In this case, Abbey's 12½-foot-diameter painted study for his mural *The Hours* (image on opposite page) will have a special three-piece frame with a cove profile that will be painted and gilded to complement the work's stunning surface.

The exhibition has provided not only an opportunity to use updated, state-of-the-art techniques but also an excellent training ground. Within the subfield of paintings conservation, for example, the department's interns and fellows learned about the structural treatment of works on canvas, including humidifications, lining, and edge lining, as well as tear mending. The practice of lining paintings, or adhering an additional support canvas to the reverse of a surface, was once considered a regular part of any treatment. Traditional lining methods have fallen out of favor over the past 50 years, making it difficult for students to learn this type of structural intervention. Being exposed to innovative conservation techniques along the way, the department's interns and fellows—three pre-program trainees (Sarah Schlick, Olav Bjornerud, and Kyler Brahmer), three graduate school interns (Julianna Ly, Amanda Kasman, and Nikita Shah), and two postgraduate fellows (Anna Vesaluoma and Tirza Harris)—have made invaluable contributions to the show. Indeed, the large number of works included in *The Dance of Life* has made this project the most labor intensive in the recent memory of the Conservation Department.



Theresa Fairbanks Harris is Senior Conservator of Works on Paper at the Gallery and the Yale Center for British Art; Paul Panamarenko is Museum Technician; Cynthia Schwarz is Senior Associate Conservator of Paintings; Kelsey Wingel is Associate Conservator of Paintings.

Picture This!

Welcoming New Students to Campus through the Arts

ALICE MATTHEWS

This past August, the Yale University Art Gallery partnered with the Yale Center for British Art (YCBA) and the Center for Collaborative Arts and Media (CCAM) to produce and run the inaugural Camp Yale Arts, offering incoming students a robust experience of the arts found across campus and Greater New Haven.

The program is one of the nine electives within Camp Yale, a required orientation that aims to create a sense of belonging and community for first-year and transfer students. Camp Yale Arts—or “C’YA,” as the participants affectionately came to call it—received 39 students in its first-ever cohort. A team of eight undergraduate leaders from across disciplines and years were trained to mentor the new students and guide them through the roster of activities.

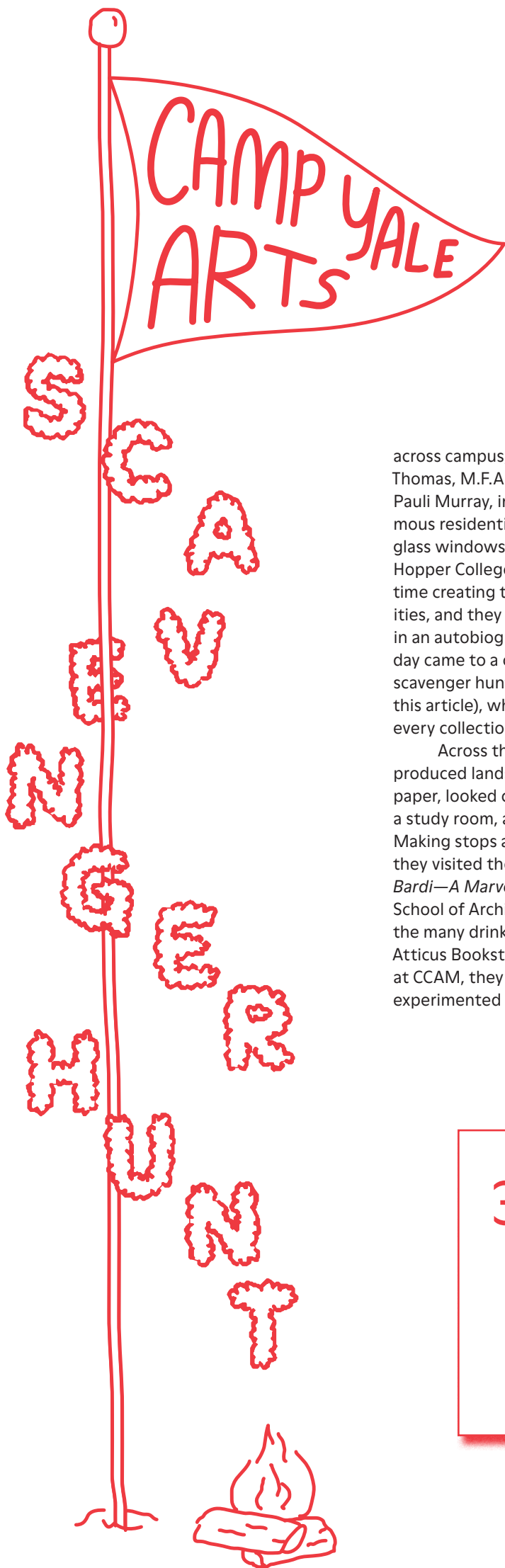
As codirector of Camp Yale Arts, I organized the week to begin with an evening at Edgerton Park, where the students gathered with popcorn and treats on picnic blankets to enjoy, from the front row, the Elm Shakespeare Company’s riotously funny performance of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Before the cast came onstage, the students were met with a warm welcome to New Haven by the company’s producing artistic director and with a round of applause from the audience.

The next morning, the cohort split into preassigned groups of 13, plus two student leaders, with the goal of building familiarity and rapport with one another. Over the next three days, each group rotated through the partnering institutions, spending one day at each. At the Gallery, students met with collection curators, learned about paintings conservation, cowrote poems on a tour through the galleries, and visited outdoor sculpture. In addition, they engaged with site-specific artworks

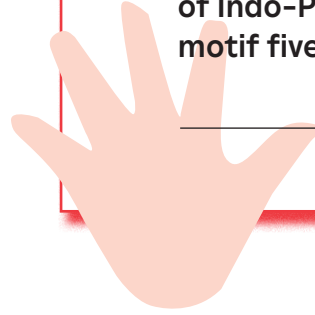


- 1 Find the *Naseby Cup* in the Bela Lyon Pratt Gallery of Numismatics. **How many coins, counters, badges, and medals are integrated into the silver trophy?**

Led by staff from the Gallery’s Education Department, Camp Yale Arts participants visit *The Women’s Table* (1993), a work of outdoor sculpture by Maya Lin, B.A. 1981, M.Arch. 1986.



2 Can you lend a helping hand? **This object in the Kubler-Thompson Gallery of Indo-Pacific Art features a hand motif five times on the front alone.**



across campus, including a mural by Mickalene Thomas, M.F.A. 2002, of the civil rights activist Pauli Murray, in the dining hall of Yale's eponymous residential college, as well as the stained-glass windows by artist Faith Ringgold at Grace Hopper College. The participants also spent time creating together through drawing activities, and they practiced sharing and listening in an autobiographical writing exercise. The day came to a close with a graphically designed scavenger hunt (see sample questions around this article), which took the students through every collection area of the Gallery.

Across the street at the YCBA, students produced landscape drawings on scrolls of paper, looked closely at collection objects in a study room, and created comic-art strips. Making stops along Chapel and York Streets, they visited the exhibition *Isaac Julien: "Lina Bo Bardi—A Marvellous Entanglement"* at the Yale School of Architecture and got acquainted with the many drinks to sip and books to read at the Atticus Bookstore Café. Just around the corner at CCAM, they learned about motion capture, experimented with directing actors for the

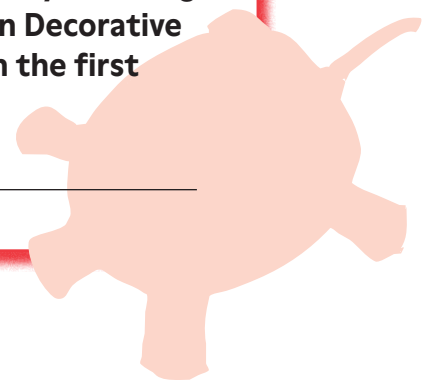
camera, and attended an artist's talk, among other dynamic activities.

During the grand finale, the entire cohort gathered together again—this time, noticeably, without the nervous trepidation induced by unfamiliar places and faces—on the green at Cross Campus. The students were greeted with a Ben and Jerry's truck serving towering scoops in waffle cones, alongside a station at which to decorate T-shirts commemorating the very first run of Camp Yale Arts. As they waited for their fabric creations to dry, they laughed, recalling favorite memories from the week; made plans to return to exhibitions and events at the Gallery, YCBA, and CCAM; and shared excitement with one another about the start of college.

Here's to future years of the program, and "C'YA" in 2024!

Alice Matthews is the Jock Reynolds Fellow in Public Programs.

3 What's green and has four legs, a tail, and no head? **This object in the Lulu C. and Anthony W. Wang Galleries of American Decorative Arts before 1900, on the first floor of Street Hall.**



Year of th



SADAKO OHKI

In the East, the dragon has long been seen as a powerful being that pours out blessings from the celestial realm in the form of rainwater over swirling wind. Though the dragon's attributes have shifted throughout East Asian history, the creature's association with good fortune, achievement, and prosperity has remained constant. A new exhibition at the Yale University Art Gallery celebrates 2024, the Year of the Dragon, with objects largely drawn from the museum's collection that span from the 17th century to the present.

Attributed to Kaihō Yūshō, *Pair of Screens with Dragons and Waves*, Japan, Momoyama period, ca. 1600–1615. Ink on paper. Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Rosemarie and Leighton R. Longhi, B.A. 1967

e Dragon



One of the highlights is a pair of monumental folding screens attributed to Kaihō Yūshō (1533–1615) representing the motif of the dragon as god of wind and water. At the left, one dragon wraps its body around a craggy rock on the beach, while the other dragon—separated from its counterpart by a torrent—hovers on dark clouds over the waves. The two are depicted with the usual attributes: glaring eyes, sharp horns, wiry whiskers, prickly scales, sharp claws, and a winding body. They seem to be in the middle of a dispute. Dragons are considered sacred beasts in many countries, and one might expect them to look honorable and stately even in their rage. Yet, surprisingly, here the dragon at the right growls with a wide-open mouth at the one at the left, who, with its mouth closed, seems to consciously dismiss the challenge by rolling its eyes. This seemingly humorous scene is in fact rooted in the Buddhist practice of expressing the word *a-un* (in Sanskrit, *a-hūm*), with the mouth open for the first sound and closed for the second, which is equivalent to the Western idea of alpha and omega, the beginning and end.

Yūshō was a celebrated painter born into a high-ranking samurai family during the turbulent Momoyama period (1573–1615). He spent part of his childhood as an acolyte at Tōfuku-ji Temple in Kyoto, and thus he alone was spared when his older brothers were killed in the warfare of

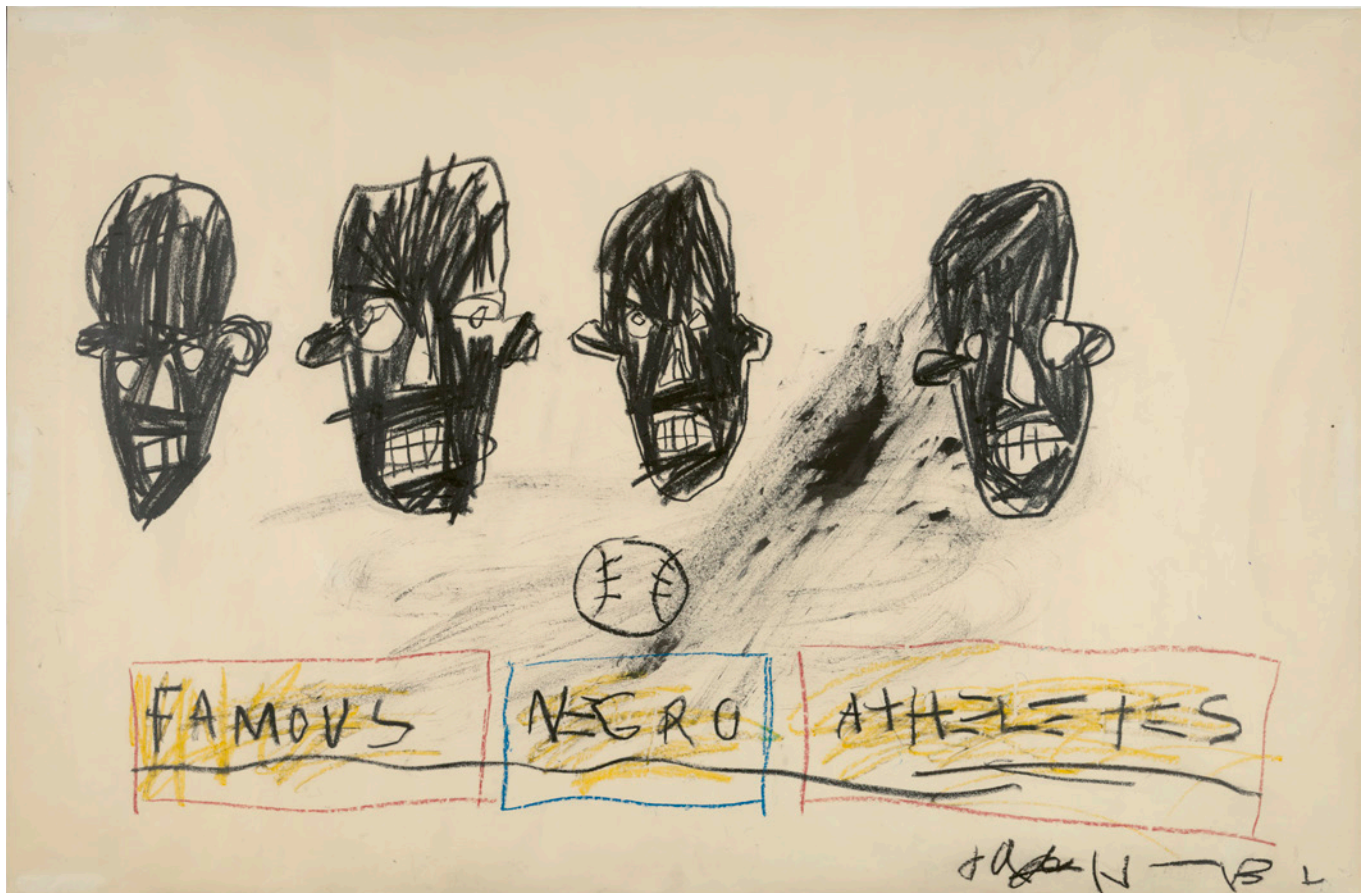
the time, before the transition into the long and peaceful Edo period. He established his inimitable style after studying the paintings of the dominant Kanō school and became famous for his monochromatic, sharply rendered ink paintings of the dragon theme. The abundance of waves and clouds in the pair of screens evokes a sense of gratitude for the dragon, believed to preside not only over the water element but also over the weather.

The dragon continues to fascinate many artists of East and Southeast Asian descent working today, as the selection of 21st-century works in the exhibition illustrates. Some take up the dragon's perceived relationship with wind and water to address issues related to environmental crisis. A fresh interpretation of the theme can be observed in the Chinese artist Qin Feng's *Civilization Landscape No. 073* (2004). Qin's dragon appears to writhe around in agony or in rage; one can almost hear its cry of lament as it suffers the effects of civilization's contamination of nature. Taken together, the works in the *Year of the Dragon* demonstrate a long, complex, and persistent artistic tradition around this fantastical creature.

Sadako Ohki is Japan Foundation Associate Curator of Japanese Art.

Before Basquiat Was *Basquiat*

ELISABETH HODERMARSKY



ON VIEW THIS SPRING in the James E. Duffy Gallery for Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, on the museum's fourth floor, is a fierce and captivating oil stick on paper by the eminent 20th-century American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–1988), titled *Famous Negro Athletes*. This arresting work demands the viewer's attention; it is not possible to pay it a quick glance and move on. The drawing is a most generous recent gift of Nelly Bly, B.A. 1994, and Michael Arougheti, B.A. 1993, which coincides with the 30th reunion of their graduations from Yale College.

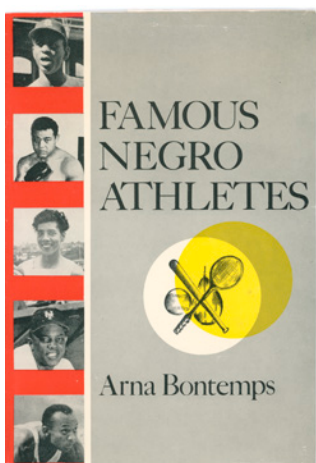
Famous Negro Athletes descends from the collection of Glenn O'Brien, a renowned art critic and seminal figure in the SoHo art scene of the 1970s and '80s. O'Brien met Basquiat in 1979, when the artist was just 19, and became an early promoter of his work. At the time, Basquiat was gaining recognition as a street artist under the tag "SAMO@" (pronounced "same-oh," as in "same old"). O'Brien, who was writing a piece on graffiti art for *High Times*, interviewed Basquiat and subsequently invited him to appear on his cable-TV show, *Glenn O'Brien's TV Party*. They remained close until Basquiat's untimely death in 1988.

Of the origins of this drawing, O'Brien wrote: "One day I walked by the tire store near my apartment and there was a huge mural with three angry black

faces and the legend 'FAMOUS NEGRO ATHELETES' [sic]. When I saw [Basquiat] later, I said: 'That's the best thing I've ever seen.' The next day he brought me one on paper." Note Basquiat's deliberate use of the antiquated term "Negro" instead of "Black" in the title, as well as the intentional misspelling of "athletes"—which the artist chose to do for both graphic and phonetic purposes.

The source material for the drawing is the cover design for a 1964 young-adult book of the same title by the American poet, novelist, and librarian Arna Bontemps, which focused on famous Black sports stars such as the boxer Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) and the baseball players Jackie Robinson and Hank Aaron. Rather than echoing the vertical configuration on the book's cover, however, Basquiat chose to arrange his athletes horizontally—as historians have noted, in a format resembling a police lineup. Heightening this sinister effect is Basquiat's mugshot-like portrayal of their grimacing faces. The piece is a fantastic example of Basquiat's genius in manipulating culturally loaded signs and symbols in his brutal visual scrutinizing of an American society in which there remain few professions that empower minorities to do well. *Famous Negro Athletes* is a pivotal work in Basquiat's career, relating directly to one of his early tags and created on the eve of his meteoric rise to fame, and just seven years before his devastating death at the age of 27.

Elisabeth Hodermarsky is the Sutphin Family Curator of Prints and Drawings.



The Naseby Cup

Coins and Medals of the English Civil War

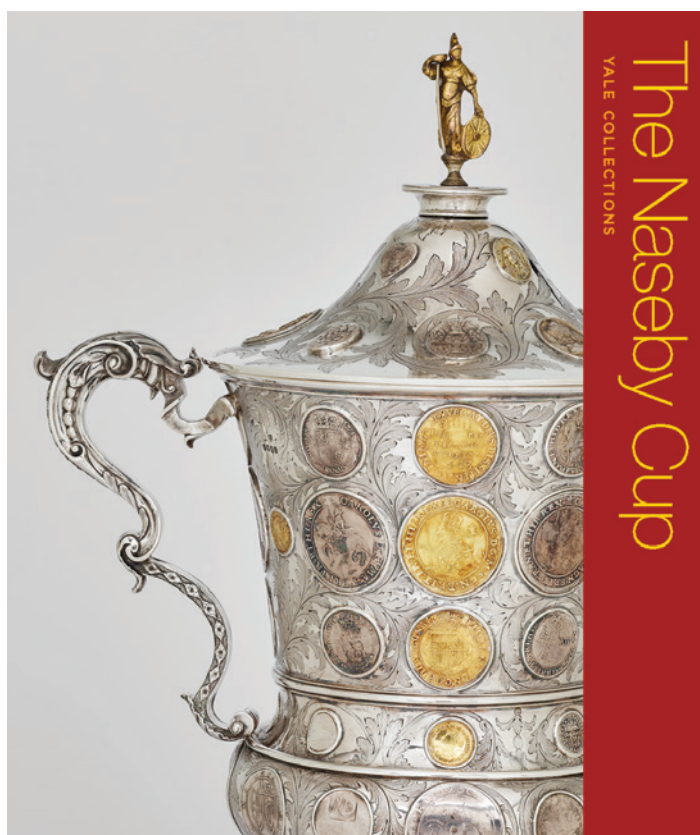


BENJAMIN D. R. HELTINGS

THE NASEBY CUP HAS BEEN described as among Yale University's most prized possessions due to its numismatic, artistic, and historical significance. This assessment holds true to this day, and the cup is now recognized as one of the most exceptional numismatic objects—not just at Yale but in the world. After being transferred to the Yale University Art Gallery from the Yale University Library, the *Naseby Cup* spent many years in storage before going on view in 2017. It has since been on continuous display as a treasure of the museum's collection.

This intriguing object was completed in 1839 on a commission from John and Mary Frances Fitzgerald, Lord and Lady of the Manor at Naseby, in Northamptonshire, England. It commemorates the Battle of Naseby on June 14, 1645, during which the forces of the English Parliament, led by Oliver Cromwell and Sir Thomas Fairfax, defeated the Royalist army of King Charles I. The intricately decorated Victorian cup stands more than two feet tall and features 72 coins, medals, badges, and counters from around the time of the English Civil War (1642–51). Many of these numismatic pieces are extremely rare, such as a New England shilling from 1652. The cup was innovatively designed by the silversmiths Charles Reily and George Storer so that both the front and back of each piece are visible—one on the cup's exterior, one on its interior. In acknowledgment of this object's significance, over the last few years the Gallery has been acquiring complementary material, such as the *Medal of Sir William Parkhurst* (image above), which was completed in 1644 by one of the greatest medalists of the period, Thomas Rawlins, whose work also figures on the *Naseby Cup*. *The Naseby Cup: Coins and Medals of the English Civil War* offers an in-depth look at this spectacular numismatic object and explores its many layers of meaning.

Benjamin D. R. Hellings is the Jackson-Tomasko Associate Curator of Numismatics.



The Naseby Cup: Coins and Medals of the English Civil War will be available in spring 2024. It is the inaugural publication in the Gallery's *Yale Collections* series, which brings the museum's renowned collection to life in short, accessible, and affordable publications that present significant new research on an object or a small group of objects. For more information or to purchase, visit artgallery.yale.edu/publications.

Artfits



Clockwise, from top left: Erika Giovanna Klien's painting *Abstraction* (1926). Gift of Katherine S. Dreier to the Collection Société Anonyme. ©Estate of Erika Giovanna Klien | Hans Hofmann's painting *Fortissimo* (1956). Gift of Richard Brown Baker, B.A. 1935. © Hans Hofmann Trust/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | A 16th-century Iranian silk panel with floral arabesques and medallions. Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore | A 19th-century Indian robe with a paisley pattern and flowers. Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore | An untitled painting by Mark Rothko (1954). Katharine Ordway Collection. ©2024 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | An untitled painting by Kerry James Marshall (2009). Purchased with the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund and a gift from Jacqueline L. Bradley, B.A. 1979. ©Kerry James Marshall. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York | A late 19th-century set of wooden sliding doors by the Japanese artist Mori Kansai. Gift of David Drabkin, LL.B. 1968, in honor of David Ake Sensabaugh, mentor and curator



Visitors, students, and staff don their best “artfits” in the galleries. Looking for inspiration? Check out our website for on-view works in advance of your visit. We would love to see what you come up with!





The Yale Center for British Art at the Yale University Art Gallery

ALTHOUGH THE YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART (YCBA) remains closed to the public for building conservation through 2024, visitors can still enjoy seeing highlights from its collection just across the street at the Yale University Art Gallery. A new installation presents over 25 paintings from the YCBA intermingled with works throughout the second-floor European art galleries and the galleries of American paintings and sculpture. YCBA masterpieces such as Joseph Mallord William Turner's *Dort or Dordrecht: The Dort Packet-Boat from Rotterdam Becalmed* (1818) and John Constable's *Stratford Mill* (1819–20) share the walls with Gallery touchstones including Jean-François Millet's *Starry Night* (ca. 1850–65), Gustave Courbet's *Great Bridge* (1864), and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's *Harbor of La Rochelle* (1851).

Alongside logical groupings—such as couplings of works by George Stubbs or by Sir John Everett Millais that normally live on opposite sides of Chapel Street, or the placement of James McNeill Whistler's *Nocturne in Blue and Silver* (1872–78) in the context of his American contemporaries—one particularly surprising juxtaposition is that of Thomas Gainsborough's *Mary Little, later Lady Carr* (image top left) from the YCBA and the Gallery's recently acquired *Portrait of a Boy with a Book* (image top right) by the French artist Nicolas de Largillière. Though the paintings were produced three generations apart in different countries, one is immediately struck by similarities in the sumptuous clothing of both sitters, the attention paid to rendering fine details and textures, and the noble bearing and calm demeanor of the subjects. This rich pairing is only one of many at the Gallery that underscore the fascinating connections and parallels in the broader story of European art revealed by the felicitous mingling of Yale's two premier art collections.

The magazine is published two times per year by the Yale University Art Gallery.

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Gallery Membership

At the Yale University Art Gallery, membership is for everyone. Our free membership program reflects a commitment to community accessibility and invites all audiences to develop meaningful connections with the Gallery's collections, exhibitions, and programs. As a member, you enjoy a subscription to the Gallery's magazine, online newsletter, and monthly Note to Members, as well as discounts on Gallery publications in the Museum Store.

Learn more about membership and sign up online by visiting artgallery.yale.edu/join-and-support/free-membership. For more information, contact art.members@yale.edu.

Reciprocal Organization of Associated Museums

Donate \$100 or more to the Gallery and receive access to the Reciprocal Organization of Associated Museums (ROAM). This program includes over 400 museums across the U.S. and Canada, providing free admission to members while traveling. ROAM is continually expanding, so check the list on the Gallery's website for new and exciting additions.

Gallery Patrons

With the involvement of many staff members as well as partnering institutions, the Gallery Patrons program fosters opportunities to participate fully in the daily life and activities of the museum. This past year's events included private exhibition tours, daylong art excursions, visits to professionalized art fairs, and opportunities for international travel.

Gallery Patrons play a vital role in the museum's vision of activating the power of art to inspire and create a more inclusive world. To become a Gallery Patron, contact gallery.patrons@yale.edu.

The program offers individuals a way to strengthen their relationship with the Gallery and to meet a diverse group of artists, benefactors, collectors, and enthusiasts.

There are three annual tiers:

Patrons Circle: \$1,500
Curators Circle: \$5,000
Director's Circle: \$10,000

Are in-person group tours available?

Yes. Check our website for the most up-to-date information on scheduling guided and self-guided group visits.

Does the Gallery offer public programs?

Yes. Check our online calendar and social media accounts for information and updates on in-person, virtual, and hybrid programs.

Connect with the Gallery on Social Media

Follow the Gallery on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn for the latest news about exhibitions and programs, behind-the-scenes photos, and exclusive content. Watch videos of past lecture series, artist talks, and more on the Gallery's YouTube channel. Share your favorite Gallery experiences and artworks with us by tagging your posts and photos @yaleartgallery. To learn more, visit artgallery.yale.edu/connect.

Parking

Visitors can park in metered spaces on nearby streets or in the Chapel-York Garage, conveniently located at 150 York Street.

Land Acknowledgment

Yale University acknowledges that Indigenous peoples and nations, including the Eastern Pequot, Golden Hill Paugussett, Mashantucket Pequot, Mohegan, Niantic, Quinnipiac, Schaghticoke, and other Algonquian-speaking peoples, have stewarded through generations the lands and waterways of what is now the state of Connecticut. We honor and respect the enduring relationship that exists between these peoples and nations and this land.

Printed at GHP in West Haven, Connecticut Typeset in LL Moderne

The Yale University Art Gallery is grateful to its supporters for helping to make its exhibitions and programs possible. In addition to specific grants noted herein, the Gallery's educational offerings are supported in part by: anonymous; Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Nolen, B.A. 1948; Ms. Eliot Nolen, B.A. 1984, and Mr. Timothy P. Bradley, B.A. 1983; Christian Nolen, B.A. 1982; Malcolm Nolen, B.A. 1983; Allan S. Kaplan Memorial Fund for Undergraduate Programs; Alva Gimbel-Greenberg Family Fund; Carol and Sol LeWitt Fund for Education; Cogger Family Fund for Education; David Kruidenier, B.A. 1944, Fund; Education and Outreach Fund; Frederick and Jan Mayer Education Curatorship Fund; Jane and Gerald Katcher Fund for Education; Jock Reynolds Director's Resource Endowment Fund; John Walsh Lecture and Education Fund; Kempner Family Endowment Fund; Manton Foundation Public Education Fund; Margaret

and Angus Wurtele, B.A. 1956, Fund for Education; Martin A. Ryerson Lectureship Fund; New Haven School Children Education Fund; Robert E. Steele, M.P.H. 1971, Ph.D. 1975, and Jean E. Steele Endowment Fund; Rosalee and David McCullough Family Fund; Seedlings Foundation Public Education Fund; Shamos Family Fund in Support of Student Outreach Programs; Vincent Scully Fund for Education; William Bernhard Class of '54 Education Fund; and Yale University Art Gallery Fund for Education.

For information on how to support the Gallery's programs, contact Brian P. McGovern, Director of Advancement and External Affairs, at 203.436.8400 or b.mcgovern@yale.edu.

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Munch and Kirchner: Anxiety and Expression

On view through June 23, 2024

Exhibition and publication made possible by the Robert Lehman, B.A. 1913, Endowment Fund. Organized by Freyda Spira, the Robert L. Solley Curator of Prints and Drawings, with the assistance of Joseph Henry, the Florence B. Seiden Fellow, Department of Prints and Drawings.

Sheila Levrant de Bretteville: Community, Activism, and Design

On view through June 23, 2024

Exhibition made possible by the John F. Wieland, Jr., B.A. 1988, Fund for Student Exhibitions and the Yale School of Art. Organized by Brooke Hodge, independent curator, and John Stuart Gordon, the Benjamin Attmore Hewitt Curator of American Decorative Arts, Yale University Art Gallery, with the assistance of Pamela Hovland, Senior Critic, Graphic Design, Yale School of Art.

Year of the Dragon

On view through November 10, 2024

Organized by Sadako Ohki, Japan Foundation Associate Curator of Japanese Art, Department of Asian Art.

COMING SOON

The Dance of Life: Figure and Imagination in American Art, 1876–1917

September 6, 2024–January 5, 2025

Exhibition and publication made possible by Jerald Dillon Fessenden, B.A. 1960; the Henry Luce Foundation; the Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz Foundation for the Arts, Inc.; the Wyeth Foundation for American Art; the Rosalee and David McCullough Fund; the Eugénie Prendergast Fund for American Art, given by Jan and Warren Adeison; the Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz Foundation for the Arts Fund; and the Friends of American Arts at Yale Exhibition and Publication Endowment Funds. Organized by Mark D. Mitchell, the Holcombe T. Green Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture.