

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE DAVIS MUSEUM AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE EXAMINES POSTWAR ART COLLECTING TRENDS IN *FRAGMENT: A MUSEUM'S MID-CENTURY LEGACY*



WELLESLEY, Mass. – The Davis Museum at Wellesley College will present *Fragment: A Museum's Mid-century Legacy*, an exhibition highlighting artworks collected by the Museum during the mid-20th century. Originally parts of larger works of art, these objects provide significant information about the roles that they played in mid-century modernism. The exhibition, co-curated by Dr. Meredith Fluke, Kemper Curator of Academic Exhibitions and Affairs, and Dr. Amanda Gilvin, Assistant Curator, will be on view in the Morelle Lasky Levine '56 Works on Paper Gallery from February 13 through June 10, 2018.

“When studying the Davis’s collections, we discovered a significant influx of fragments during the 1950s. The objects stood out to us because they included many works from our respective areas of specialization: medieval European architectural fragments in my case, and West African art for Dr. Gilvin,” said Dr. Meredith Fluke.

The exhibition comprises approximately 20 disparate works of art—including a West African royal portrait, a South Asian Buddha, and a 17th-century Austrian angel—that come from many different times and places. These objects were removed, stripped, chiseled, ripped, and cleaned into presentable and aestheticized works of art. They came into the Wellesley College collections during the mid-20th century, an influential period for art collecting, museum growth, and art history throughout the United States due to the influx of new art, capital, and ideas from Europe.

Fragment also addresses how the collecting of historical art intersected with the rise of abstract expressionism. “During and after World War II, many Europeans moved to the United States, often bringing their collections and tastes in collecting with them,” said Dr. Amanda Gilvin. “At mid-century, American private collectors and galleries juxtaposed African sculpture with abstract painting, a trend that began in Europe.”



Organized in themes entitled: *The Accessible Object*, *The Limits of a Fragment*, *Authenticity in Pieces*, and *Becoming Whole*, the design and layout of the exhibition are consciously reminiscent of the clean, white aesthetic of the modernist period. The presentation also emulates the style of Wellesley College’s own Jewett Arts Center—an icon of architectural modernism designed by Paul Rudolph, which opened in 1958—and home to the College’s art collection before the Davis Museum was built by Rafael Moneo in 1993.

Fragment: A Museum's Mid-century Legacy is accompanied by a Davis mobile app tour providing additional information on each of the fragments presented in the exhibition. Download the app at <http://app.thedavis.org>.

Fragment is presented with generous support from The Mary Tebbetts Wolfe '54 Davis Museum Program Fund.

RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Spring Opening Celebration

Tuesday, February 13

5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.

5:30 Keynote Lecture:

Collins Cinema

"The Poetry of the Everyday: Clarence H. White and the Creation of American Art Photography, 1895-1925"

Anne McCauley, David Hunter McAlpin Professor of the History of Photography and Modern Art, Princeton University, and curator of the exhibition, *Clarence H. White and His World*, will trace how a young man from Newark, Ohio, taught himself photography and within five years was exhibiting in London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and elsewhere. White's melding of the ideals of Arts and Crafts movement and American socialism with the new demands of advertising and magazine illustration resulted in innovative compositions that defined what "modernism" in photography would be in the 20th century.

6:30 - 9 p.m. Reception

Davis Lobby and Galleries

Join the Davis to celebrate the opening of the Spring 2018 exhibitions: *Clarence H. White and His World: The Art and Craft of Photography, 1895-1925*; *Fragment: A Museum's Mid-century Legacy*; *Soulful Stitching: Patchwork Quilts by Africans (Siddis) in India*; *Artists Take Action! Recent Acquisitions from the Davis*; *Intermezzi: The Inventive Fantasies of Max Klinger*; *Ria Brodell: Butch Heroes*; and *David Teng Olsen: Smoked My Head on Yes Waters*.

Symposium: Fragments and the Modernist Aesthetic

Friday, February 16

2 p.m.

Collins Cinema

The fragments collected by Wellesley from the 1940s until the 1960s reflected modernist tastes that encompassed not only African masks, Mediterranean antiquities, and medieval architectural elements, but also abstract painting, inventive architecture, and sleek design. Guest speakers and attendees will examine the role fragments played in the mid-century modernism shaped by artists, collectors, and museums. This afternoon symposium will include presentations by art historian and critic Aruna D'Souza and Ithaca College Assistant Professor Risham Majeed, with discussion led by Wellesley College Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Anthropology Elizabeth Minor.

Gallery Talk: Fragments from the History of the Davis

Tuesday, February 27

4 p.m.

Join Meredith Fluke and Amanda Gilvin for a discussion on the fragments of artworks that came into Wellesley collections during the mid-twentieth century, an influential period for art collecting, museum growth, and art history at Wellesley and in the United States.

ABOUT THE DAVIS MUSEUM

One of the oldest and most acclaimed academic fine arts museums in the United States, the Davis Museum is a vital force in the intellectual, pedagogical and social life of Wellesley College. It seeks to create an environment that encourages visual literacy, inspires new ideas, and fosters involvement with the arts both within the College and the larger community.

ABOUT WELLESLEY COLLEGE AND THE ARTS

The Wellesley College arts curriculum and the highly acclaimed Davis Museum are integral components of the College's liberal arts education. Departments and programs from across the campus enliven the community with world-class programming— classical and popular music, visual arts, theatre, dance, author readings, symposia, and lectures by some of today's leading artists and creative thinkers—most of which are free and open to the public.

Since 1875, Wellesley College has been the preeminent liberal arts college for women. Known for its intellectual rigor and its remarkable track record for the cultivation of women leaders in every arena, Wellesley—only 12 miles from Boston—is home to some 2,400 undergraduates from 49 states and 58 countries.

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Image Credits: Greek, *Fragment of Foot*, 4th century. Marble, Gift of Harriet W. Allen (Class of 1924) 1952.9.b.

Guggenbichler, Johann Meinrad (Austrian) (b. 1649, Einsiedeln, Switzerland – d. 1723, Mondsee, Austria), *Angel (from the Parish Church of St. Wolfgang, Austria)*, 1706 Polychromed wood with and gilding overall: 15 7/8 in. x 7 1/4 in. (40.3 cm x 18.4 cm) Gift of Professor and Mrs. John McAndrew 1956.25

Additional resource: *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity*, a book written by art historian Linda Nochlin.

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High-resolution images and interviews available upon request