

S P R I N G 2 0 2 0

Cantor



INSIDE TEN YEARS OF COLLECTING • MARK DION • NEW CURATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY & NEW MEDIA

"This brightly colored, monumental piece has something to say—and not just because it's a play on words. One thing we hope it conveys to students and visitors is a good-natured 'Come in! You are welcome here.'"

Susan Dackerman *John & Jill Freidenrich Director of the Cantor Arts Center*



Susan Dackerman



Yo, Cantor!

The museum's newest large-scale sculpture, Deborah Kass's *OY/YO*, speaks in multicultural tongues: *Oy*, as in "oy vey," is a Yiddish term of fatigue, resignation, or woe. *Yo* is a greeting associated with American teenagers; it also means "I" in Spanish and is used for emphasis

in Japanese. "The fact that this particular work resonates so beautifully in so many languages to so many communities is why I wanted to make it monumental," artist Kass told the *New York Times*.

Learn more at
museum.stanford.edu/ooyo

Cantor

SPRING 2020



PAGE 8 *Paper Chase*: the Cantor's major spring exhibition includes prints from Pakistani-born artist Amreen Butt, whose work contemplates issues of power and autonomy in the lives of young women.



PAGE 14 Now on view: Mark Dion's reinstitution of the Stanford Family Collections comprises more than 700 objects

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This publication is produced twice annually for members of the Cantor Arts Center and includes highlights from the neighboring Anderson Collection at Stanford University. All rights reserved.

COVER AND PAGE 2 Deborah Kass (U.S.A., b. 1952), *OY/YO*, 2019. Aluminum, polymer, and clear coat, 96 x 194½ x 52 in. Gift of Debi and Steven Wisch and the Rehmus Family, 2019.53. Installation view at the Cantor. Cover photograph by Johanna Arnold

EDITOR Heidi Sigua Campbell,
Cantor Arts Center, Stanford

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News, Acquisitions & Museum Highlights



Gifts of Art In celebration of the museum's fifth anniversary and in advance of her October 2019 death, Mary Margaret "Moo" Anderson donated **Jackson Pollock's *Totem Lesson 1* (1944)** and **Willem de Kooning's *Gansevoort Street* (c. 1949)** to the Anderson Collection at Stanford. The works are now on view.

"By donating two of the most sought-after New York School paintings in private hands to Stanford, Moo Anderson continues to exemplify her strong conviction that art is to be shared and to be lived."

Stanford University President Marc Tessier-Lavigne



Moonrise The 2019 gala marked the first time the signature event benefited both the Cantor and the Anderson Collection, and celebrated honorees—artist Jordan Casteel and supporters Roberta and Steven Denning. It also featured a new after-party, changed its name to **Museums by Moonlight**, and raised more than \$1 million in support for the museums' free exhibitions and programming.

A San Franciscan Comes Home

The work of Chinese American painter **Martin Wong** blends social realism, visionary styles, and cross-cultural themes. His 1992 work *Untitled (Dragon with Two Children)*, depicting the Chinatown district in San Francisco, a city he considered to be home, was acquired by the Cantor as a gift from the artist's estate. It will be on view in June.



Martin Wong (U.S.A., 1946–1999), *Untitled (Dragon with Two Children)*, 1992. Acrylic on canvas. Gift of The Estate of Martin Wong, 2019.202



Ian Cheng (U.S.A., b. 1984), *Emissary Sunsets the Self* (installation view), 2017. Live simulation and story. William Alden Campbell and Martha Campbell Art Acquisition Fund, 2019.200

New Media Shortly after joining the Cantor team in late September 2019, Maggie Dethloff (see page 18) helped the museum acquire one of its first works of new media. “Ian Cheng’s live simulation artwork *Emissary Sunsets the Self*, the third in the artist’s *Emissaries* trilogy, is a foundational acquisition toward the Cantor’s goal of building a dynamic collection of new media art,” Dethloff explained. “In this ‘video game that plays itself,’ [the character] MotherAI, in the form of an oceanic substance that governs the ‘Atoll environment’ of the simulation, sends a puddle of itself to ‘drone,’ or inhabit, a local plant mutation and experience incarnated life. This emissary develops independent consciousness in order to survive the animosity of the Atoll’s inhabitants. Cheng’s expression of theories of evolution

and the development of consciousness through video game technology produces an artwork that speaks very clearly to how digital technology, artificial intelligence, and new media artwork should not be seen as separate from—and are, in fact, crucial to—contemporary scientific and humanistic inquiries into the nature of human life.”



20 Years of Rodin at the Cantor To mark the 20th anniversary of the reopening of the university’s encyclopedic museum, its namesake Iris B. Cantor cut the ribbon on the **Cantor Commons**, a new public space adjacent to the Rodin Sculpture Garden.

Q&A

“What’s your favorite work on display at the museums?”



Untitled (c. 1954)
by Ruth Asawa

Dylan Sherman, '20
Art & Art History and Dance

“I love this work because it can be studied through many historical references, from modern dance to basket-weaving techniques, but it still holds a singular, magical presence in the gallery today.”

Learn more about Asawa’s work on page 17.

Ruth Asawa (U.S.A., 1926–2013), *Untitled*, c. 1954. © Estate of Ruth Asawa. Private collection

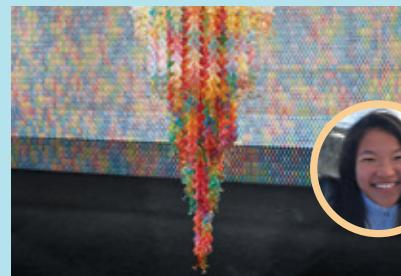


Hoarding My Frog Food (1982)
by David Gilhooly

Savannah Mohacsi, '20
Human Biology and Art Practice

“*Hoarding My Frog Food* is my favorite piece to tour because its absurdity defies what you would expect to see in an art museum; however, the quirky ceramic frogs reveal so much more about societal themes, and are used as satirical tools for Gilhooly to reflect on the conditions of human nature.”

David Gilhooly (U.S.A., 1943–2013), *Hoarding My Frog Food*, 1982. Gift of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson, and Mary Patricia Anderson Pence



Cause & Effect (2007)
by Do Ho Suh

Ashley Song, '20
Economics and Earth Systems

“Do Ho Suh’s work is so eye-catching, and the three pieces that the Cantor has been fortunate enough to show tell such a beautiful story. Whenever I tour the objects, people are blown away by how he represents the interconnectedness of community, generations, and society through his installations.”

Do Ho Suh (South Korea, b. 1962), Details of *Cause & Effect*, 2007, and *Screen*, 2005. © Do Ho Suh. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong. Installation view at the Cantor Arts Center. Photograph by Johnna Arnold

“Photo-texts”: Literature Meets Art at the Museum

Students of Fiction Experience Wright Morris’s Work On and Off the Page

JUDITH GORDON



Sara Houghteling

Last October, lecturer Sara Houghteling accompanied her six students to meet with Maggie Dethloff—then the Capital Group Foundation curatorial fellow for photography, now the Cantor’s assistant curator of photography and new media—and explore the Cantor’s trove of original images by Wright Morris. Houghteling’s *Photography in Fiction* course (English 182E) looks at fiction writers like Morris who transcend the boundary between the written word and other art forms. An American novelist, short-story writer, essayist, and photographer, Morris pioneered “photo-texts,” books in which he paired his photographs with his own writing.

What was it like to view these images outside the classroom?

When you enter the Cantor, especially a study room like the Wilsey, the rest of the world falls away. You can be completely in the moment, examining the physical object in front of you. Maggie had arrayed the original images along the wall so we could peer at them closely from different angles.

His photographs are absent any people, yet seem somewhat haunted.

At the start of our visit, Maggie presented a terrific lecture on Morris, establishing him within the context of his contemporaries—the most immediate comparison being Walker Evans—and defining Morris’s differences—say, a sense of intimacy rather than intrusiveness. We learned about Morris’s photographic production process and his use of the Rolleiflex camera, which is held at waist height and has a large view finder. But beyond that, she spoke about Morris’s personal life, how the early loss of his mother shaped his work. She died six days after his birth, and he often seems to be searching for her presence among the worn objects in the lived-in rooms he photographs.

Do you recall anything else that made this experience memorable?

Beyond the rare pleasure of seeing original Wright Morris images up close, Maggie—along with Class Visit and Tour Coordinator Kwang-Mi Ro and Director of Academic and Public Programs Peter Tokofsky—escorted us into the museum through the staff entrance. We certainly felt like honored guests entering a special place.

How did the visit expand your students’ perspectives?

You could perceive where his hand was in his artistic process. For class, we read his early novel *The Home Place*, from 1948. Because the Cantor has many of [the book’s] original images, we could scrutinize them closely. For example, in *Drawer with Silverware*, one student noticed that in Morris’s original at the Cantor, the date on the newspaper lining the drawer is visible. In the version Morris selects for his novel, he crops off the date. Why? We talked about how this adds to a sense of timelessness or announces the concept of a single time stamp as simplistic or mundane. It’s not part of his artistic project. I think it gave all of us the chills, to almost discern Morris’s presence in the room, in the photographs, and in the books, and to discover the choices he made based on his aesthetic aims and literary and even philosophical ideals.



TOP Wright Morris (U.S.A., 1910–1988), *Old Photographs of Train Depot and Portraits, Nebraska, 1947*. Gelatin silver print. Cantor Arts Center Collection, The Capital Group Foundation Photography Collection at Stanford University, 2019.46.35

Outside Looking In: John Gutmann, Helen Levitt, and Wright Morris

January 22–April 26

RUTH LEVISON HALPERIN GALLERY

Several examples of Wright Morris’s photography are on display in the second of a three-part exhibition series highlighting the Cantor’s recent acquisition of 1,000-plus photographs from the Capital Group Foundation.

Art & Influence in Persia's Safavid Empire

Graduate Student Alexandria Brown-Hejazi Explains Her New Exhibition

JUDITH GORDON

The Safavid era (1501-1722) is a fascinating epoch in Iranian history, yet unfamiliar to many. When the Safavids came to power, they brought a huge expanse of territory—stretching from modern day Iraq to Afghanistan—under their control. With different cultures and ethnicities under their reign, the arts played a key role in developing a cohesive Safavid visual identity. At the same time, contact between Iran and Europe was accelerating. This exchange, and the opening of new diplomatic and commercial routes between Persia and Europe, is the centerpiece of Stanford University art history PhD student Alexandria Brown-Hejazi's exhibition *Crossing the Caspian: Persia and Europe, 1500-1700*, which is part of the Cantor and Art & Art History Department's joint Mellon Curatorial Research Assistantships program funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

How did your educational experience lead you to explore this topic?

My discovery of Safavid art began in 2015, while enrolled in Stanford's Ubaldo Pierotti Professor of Italian History Paula Findlen's seminar *Coffee, Sugar, and Chocolate: Commodities and Consumption in World History*. I wrote a paper on an unidentified Persian manuscript in the Cantor's collection for my final project. I later learned it was a 17th-century manuscript of the poetry of Rumi, made in the Safavid capital of Isfahan. Ever since then, I have been hooked. That research led to my dissertation topic, artistic exchange between Safavid Persia and Italy.

Is the exhibition primarily drawn from the Cantor and other Stanford resources?

When I applied for the curatorial fellowship, I was unsure whether there would be enough material related to Persia at Stanford. It turns out we have a wealth of remarkable material right here on campus—Persian miniature paintings, blue-and-white Safavid porcelain, drawings of Persian figures, themes made by European artists, and much more. From Special Collections, we included two very rare European books and two beautiful maps of the Safavid kingdom that illustrate the dramatic change in the geographical knowledge of Persia during this period. We're fortunate to have some wonderful objects on loan from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, as well.



Alexandria Brown-Hejazi

Are there examples of how diplomacy and artistic exchange intersected?

Absolutely. Without a shared spoken language, visual art became the primary vessel of intercultural communication, often accomplished through the exchange of diplomatic gifts, such as silk textiles, portraits, books, and paintings—but also through the visual documentation and memorialization of those diplomatic visits, recorded in palatial frescoes, circulated prints, news pamphlets, and so on.

What insights would you like visitors to take from this exhibition?

My fervent hope is that this exhibition sparks curiosity and wonder in the arts of Persia and encourages people to delve more deeply into its connection to the global sphere. As many of us seek to overcome social, racial, and religious stereotypes, I believe it is more important now than ever to highlight the agency of art as a mediator of difference and an instrument of exchange, knowledge, and collaboration.



Artist unknown (Persian, Iran), *Scene from the Shahnameh: Rustam Battling with the White Demon*, c. 1588. Gouache and gold leaf on paper. Committee for Art Acquisitions Fund, 1985.137

Crossing the Caspian: Persia and Europe, 1500-1700

January 22-April 26

LYNN KRYWICK GIBBONS GALLERY



1 Wesaam Al-Badry (U.S.A., b. Iraq, 1984), *Hermes #V*, 2018. Archival pigment print. Gift of Pamela and David Hornik, 2019.3
2 Carrie Mae Weems (U.S.A., b. 1953), *You Became Mammie, Mama, Mother, Then, Yes, Confidant-Ha*, 2014. Chromogenic print with text sandblasted on glass. Museum purchase made possible by a gift from Pamela and David Hornik, 2014.107.1

3 Paul Gavarni (Hippolyte-Guillaume-Sulpice Chevallier) (France, 1804–1866), *Self-Portrait Holding a Cigarette*, 1842–45. Lithograph on chine collé. Given in memory of R. E. Lewis by Betsy G. and David Fryberger, 2019.126
4 Frank Marshall (South Africa, b. 1985), *Ghost*, 2010. Archival digital print. Gift of Charles and Diane Frankel, 2016.15



5 Ambreen Butt (Pakistan, b. 1969), *Untitled*, 2008. Soft-ground etching, aquatint, spitbite aquatint, lift-ground aquatint, drypoint, and chine collé. Palmer Gross Ducommun Fund, 2011.38.2 **6** Jess T. Dugan (U.S.A., b. 1986), *Sky, 64, Palm Springs, CA*, 2016, 2018. Color archival pigment print. Fenton Family Fund, 2019.51.1 **7** Diego Rivera (Mexico, 1886–1957), *Self-Portrait*, 1930. Lithograph. © 2020 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Robert E. and Mary B. P. Gross Fund, 2012.189

Paper Chase

As a Decade Closes, the Cantor Showcases Works on Paper Collected in the Last Ten Years—Some for the First Time

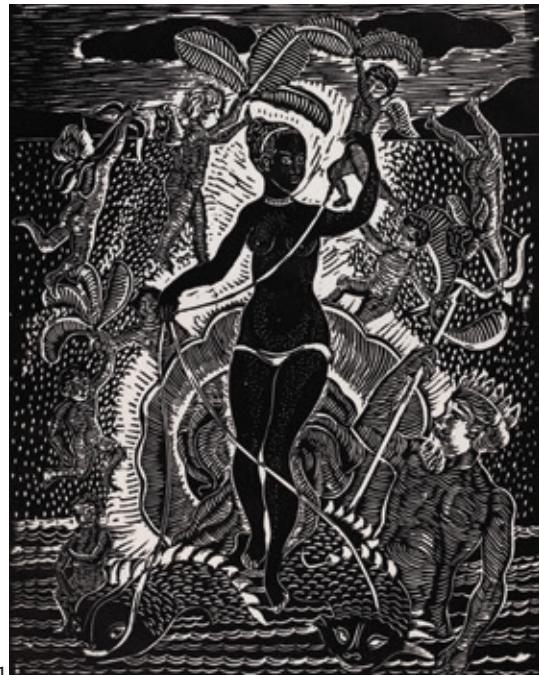
LAURIE LAULETTA-BOSHART

Archival pigment print. Soft-ground etching. Gelatin silver print. Black acrylic. Art on paper can take on myriad forms and expressions, each work revealing a glimpse into the struggles and beauty of so many different worlds. Over the last decade, Burton and Deedee McMurtry Curator Elizabeth Mitchell, who oversees prints, drawings, and photographs, has acquired a diverse collection of unique artworks on paper by artists working in the United

States, Latin America, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East that will be displayed in the exhibition *Paper Chase: Ten Years of Collecting Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Cantor*. Running from April through August, this much-anticipated installation features many objects that have never before been exhibited at the Cantor, including multiple works by major artists from a host of different cultures, backgrounds, and countries, such as Lee Friedlander

April 3–August 9

FREIDENRICH FAMILY GALLERY



1 Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs (U.S.A., 1915–2010), *Black Venus*, 1957. Linocut. Robert E. and Mary B. P. Gross Fund, 2017.119



2 Diego Rivera (Mexico, 1886–1957), *Nude with Beads (Frida Kahlo)*, 1930. Lithograph. © 2020 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Robert E. and Mary B. P. Gross Fund, 2011.5



3 Rufino Tamayo (Mexico, 1899–1991), *Man and Woman (Hombre y mujer)*, 1926. Woodcut. © 2020 Tamayo Heirs / Mexico / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Robert E. and Mary B. P. Gross Fund, 2012.190

(U.S.A., b. 1934), José Clemente Orozco (Mexico, 1883–1949), Carrie Mae Weems (U.S.A., b. 1953), and Malick Sidibé (Mali, 1936–2016). The installation showcases the range and depth of the recent acquisitions and illuminates how university museums build collections for exhibitions, teaching, and research.

“These works can be presented in so many different ways that they are great for teaching, whether it happens in a classroom or an exhibition,” says Mitchell.

Associate Professor of Religious Studies Anna Bigelow agrees, and has endeavored to get students to engage with understanding cultures beyond their textual expressions. She views this exhibition as an opportunity to do that. “To see artistic productions of an individual artist or objects that are circulated within a particular

culture makes things more real,” she says. “It helps to connect us more broadly beyond what we think we know.”

With a particular interest in Islam and material culture, Bigelow is intrigued by a variety of visual and material productions that help examine different Islamic cultures around the world, and is encouraged by the range of artistic impressions represented in the exhibition. “Including a more global and diverse body of artists in any conversation about what is the state of contemporary works on paper—and simply normalizing the idea that Muslim artists are part of that conversation—is extremely valuable,” she says.

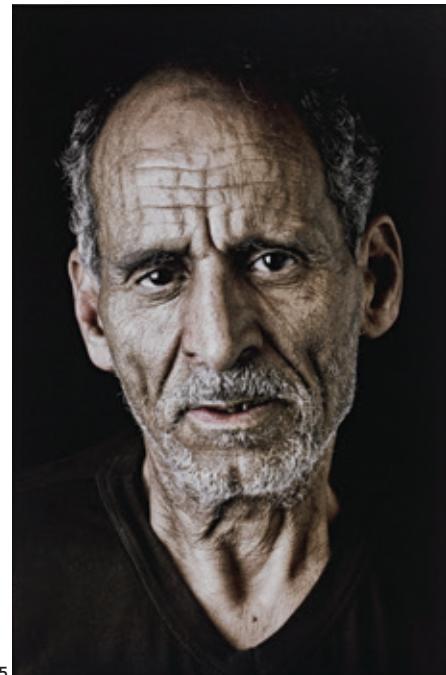
The objects in *Paper Chase* are installed in areas and sequences that build on a narrative that moves from individuals to collective identities to the effects of different social forces on the environment. The installation is executed around themes, including the measure of time, the study of nature, man’s relationship to the landscape, portraits, self-portraits, political identities, war, migration, and women’s experiences. The exhibition opens with a broad introduction to the collection and features objects that acquaint guests with themes that emerge later in the presentation. A small concentration of objects



Elizabeth Kathleen Mitchell
Burton and Deedee McMurtry Curator

“These works can be presented in so many different ways that they are great for teaching, whether it happens in a classroom or an exhibition.”

Elizabeth Kathleen Mitchell
Burton and Deedee McMurtry Curator



4 Pierre-Alexandre Aveline (France, 1702–1760), *The Sign (L'Enseigne)* (detail), c. 1732. Etching and engraving. Robert E. and Mary B. P. Gross Fund, 2011.17
5 Shirin Neshat (U.S.A., b. Iran, 1957), *Sayed*, 2013. Digital pigment print. Gift of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 2016.2

that deal with collecting is also included. A section about bodies and different identities addresses topics such as gender, sexual orientation, age, and religion, and has a concentration of images that tell stories of women's lives, with many of the works by women artists. Another section relates to politics and social justice through political portraits, presidential portraits, and narrative objects that deal with matters of war, migration, assimilation, and freedom of the press. The last section focuses on the built environment, nature, and man's interventions into the landscape.

The installation contains roughly 125 objects, with the vast majority dating to the 20th century. Objects from multiple periods are presented in conversation to show the long trajectory of ideas, concepts, forms, and ways in which the exhibit uses historical objects to address contemporary issues. "The Cantor has a micro-encyclopedic collection that it has been building for 120-plus years," says Mitchell. "My job as a curator here is to continue to push that process forward to help thoroughly represent the past, while finding objects that enable people to engage with what's important to us right now."

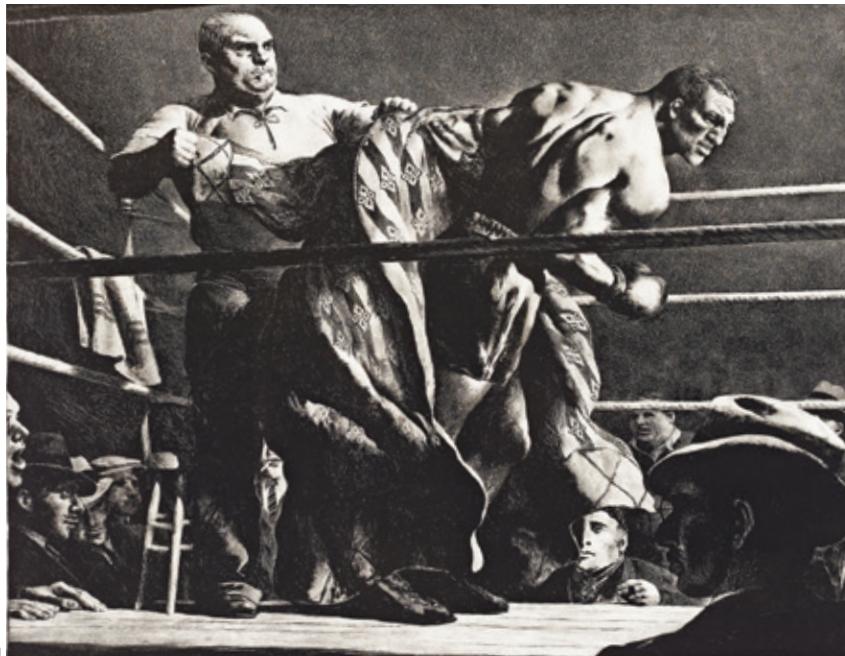
The conversations sparked by exhibiting related but seemingly dissimilar objects may surprise people. Pictures by famed African American photographer Weems that examine facets of contemporary American life are juxtaposed with haunting images by Pakistani-born artist Ambreen Butt that present the hyper-reality of young Pakistani women being used as human shields by the Taliban. Works by Iranian American photographer Shirin Neshat that expose human faces and stories through intricate frontal portraits of two Iranian citizens appear alongside Iraqi-born Wesaam Al-Badry's provocative covered female faces.

"There's not one way I want people to feel or think when they visit this exhibition," says Mitchell, "but I want them to see you can put a lot of different works in one gallery and all these incredible conversations can come out of them."

Paper Chase: Ten Years of Collecting Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Cantor

April 3–August 9

FREIDENRICH FAMILY GALLERY



1

2

PAPER CHASE 1 Robert Riggs (U.S.A., 1876–1970), *Club Fighter*, c. 1933–34. Lithograph. Robert E. and Mary B. P. Gross Fund, 2016.38
2 John Wilson (U.S.A., 1922–2015), *Worker (Trabajador)*, 1951. Lithograph. Robert E. and Mary B. P. Gross Fund, 2011.18.2

History Reimagined

Tom Mullaney, professor of modern Chinese history, is leading the effort to expose more students to primary source archival materials through archive-based teaching and university collections. The goal is to simulate the real-world work of professional historians.

"We are trying to make this an everyday experience, where students are exposed from the very first classes they take in history," Mullaney explains.

In partnership with Stanford University Libraries, Mullaney is introducing students to Stanford's vast archival collections at the Cantor Arts Center, the Hoover Library & Archives, the Branner Earth Science Map Library collections, and the Stanford Library special collections. The approach, known as "Massively Multiplayer Humanities," encourages students to gather and examine archival sources to broaden and enrich their academic experience.

"We want them to investigate primary, historical materials and develop questions that matter to them as young scholars,

rather than just the questions that we assign to them as their instructors," Mullaney says.

So far, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. At first, students are often confused when confronting the new materials, but they quickly learn the value of how to ask more empirically founded questions. Mullaney often prompts students by asking, "What are you concerned with?" "What do you want to research?" and "What matters to you?"

One student in his *Modern History of China* class asked a question that Mullaney characterized as extremely basic but brilliant: "Did China ever fail to pay back its loans, and what did the foreign lenders do in cases of default?" The student went into the archives and

tabulated various instances of defaults on loans by Chinese borrowers against foreign lenders, and then researched the responses on both sides and what it meant for the economy and the ability of the country to modernize.

"Through this process, we are teaching students how to navigate materials, trust their own instincts, and figure out what they were worried about, and then get out of their way," Mullaney says.

"They come up with things you could never in a thousand years have even thought to assign. And I tell them, 'Now you know how to do history.'"



Tom Mullaney

"We want them to investigate primary, historical materials and develop questions that matter to them as young scholars, rather than just the questions that we assign to them as their instructors."

Tom Mullaney *Professor of Chinese History*

Richard Diebenkorn at Stanford

Experts share their perspectives on viewing the artist's work at the Cantor and Anderson Collection

Across Stanford's art museums, guests can experience a mini-survey of works by famed Bay Area artist and Stanford alumnus Richard Diebenkorn, '49, that range from large-scale abstract paintings to smaller, figurative pieces. An ongoing installation at the Cantor includes innovative, interactive displays showing the underpainting beneath *Window* (1967), discovered by Stanford undergraduate Katherine Van Kirk, '19, and high-resolution, digitized copies of Diebenkorn's 29 sketchbooks, which were gifted to the museum by Phyllis Diebenkorn, Richard's wife, in 2014.

1 Katharine Fulton-Peebles
Richard Diebenkorn Foundation
Manager of Online Services

"Richard Diebenkorn was a lifelong learner. He understood the importance of education and professorship, and he championed continuous artistic exploration throughout his entire career. He valued the search, once writing on a scrap of paper in his studio, 'Do search. But in order to find other than what is searched for.' In 1942, Diebenkorn enrolled in his first college art classes as a sophomore at Stanford University, where his professor, Daniel Mendelowitz, became an early mentor and advocate of the young artist."



Stanford University, Office of Development,
Richard Diebenkorn, 1963–64. Photograph.
Courtesy of Department of Special Collections, Stanford Libraries

2 Susi Housman
Cantor Arts Center
Docent

"Notice the colors, the brushstrokes, the multiple layers. Take a minute of silence to just look at the work and observe its nuances, as well as the immediacy of its scale. Looking at *Window* (1967) gives us the opportunity to think about and share where we, the viewers, actually are and what we are looking at. There are no right or wrong observations, [but we're asked to] define our perspective: Where are we as the viewers? Are we inside or outside?"



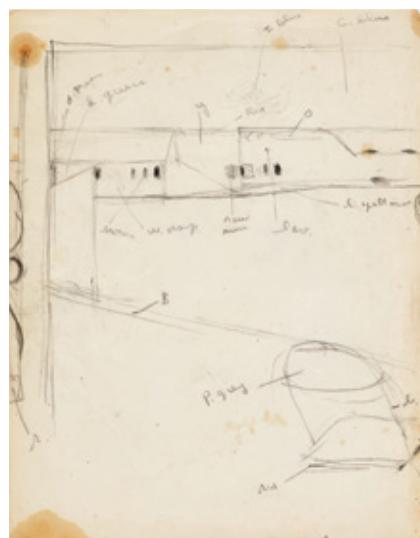
Director Susan Dackerman and curatorial assistant Jessica Ventura review Richard Diebenkorn's *Window*.

Richard Diebenkorn (U.S.A., 1922–1993), *Window*, 1967. Oil on canvas. © Richard Diebenkorn Foundation. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Diebenkorn and anonymous donors, 1969.125

See Diebenkorn's
sketchbooks online at
[stanford.edu/dept/suma/
diebenkornsketchbooks](http://stanford.edu/dept/suma/diebenkornsketchbooks)

3 Jessica Ventura
Cantor Arts Center
Curatorial Assistant

"In his sketchbooks, Diebenkorn worked out familiar themes and structures seen later in his paintings. For example, there is a study drawing in *Sketchbook #15* of the painting *Window*, one of Diebenkorn's first large-scale paintings and the first to be completed in his studio in the Ocean Park neighborhood of Santa Monica, California. The model in a resting pose in *Sketchbook #24* is similar to the figure in the painting *Resting*, a painting last shown in 1954 at an exhibition in London and now on view at the Cantor."



Richard Diebenkorn (U.S.A., 1922–1993), Drawing from *Sketchbook #15*, 1943–93. Graphite on paper. © Richard Diebenkorn Foundation. Gift of Phyllis Diebenkorn, 2014.15.3

A Cabinet of Cantor Curiosities

Artist Mark Dion reinstalls the Stanford Family Collection—and discovers new stories within it—in *The Melancholy Museum: Love, Death, and Mourning at Stanford*, now on view.



1 As the centerpiece of the exhibit, the mourning cabinet is modeled after a similar case from the Victorian era, when Leland Stanford Jr.'s death at age 15 catalyzed his parents to transform their sorrow into the founding of the university and museum.

2 Dion categorizes the mourning cabinet by four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—encouraging visitors to question how objects are traditionally organized and how knowledge might shift if they were ordered differently.

3 During Leland Jr.'s first trip to Europe in 1880 and 1881, he enthusiastically acquired relics of war and read tales of ancient Rome's destruction. In 1882, he translated that interest into the basis of a curated collection, filling a room in the family home with a cannonball from Fort Sumter, a Persian helmet, swords, faux medieval armor, and other artifacts.



4 The exhibit comprises more than 50 interactive drawers; this one contains a black ostrich feather fan from Jane Stanford's wardrobe. PhD candidate Juliana Nalerio suggests it symbolizes both her delicacy and her strength.

5 Objects in *The Melancholy Museum* aren't individually labeled—the artist prefers for viewers to be able to create their own meaning. Accordingly, the galleries act as a lab for future study and scholarship.

Curious? Learn more at
[museum.stanford.edu/
 melancholymuseum](http://museum.stanford.edu/melancholymuseum)

ABOVE The interactive Victorian mourning cabinet created for the exhibition *Melancholy Museum* by artist Mark Dion. Photograph by Johnna Arnold

LEFT OF CENTER

Left of Center is a collaborative exhibition that brings together the diverse interests of seven graduate-student curators who together worked to rehang the permanent collection at the Anderson Collection at Stanford University. In celebration of the fifth anniversary of the collection, the rehang was designed to reinvoke the permanent collection galleries, creating fresh insights through new groupings of paintings, sculptures, and multimedia works. The Anderson's robust collection of California-based and affiliated artists led us to settle on the theme of the West Coast as both a mythic place and an important site of art production in the 20th century.

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The organization and research process, spearheaded by Amber Harper and co-curated by Linden Hill, Beatrice Simgasiewicz, Christian Whitworth, and Jennie Yoon, was highly collaborative. We first selected which pieces we wanted to include, rotating in works that had been in storage alongside mainstays of the collection, such as Jackson Pollock's *Lucifer*, visited often by art history and studio art classes, and experimented with different arrangements of paintings and sculptures using the Anderson's gallery model, a dollhouse-like construction that includes tiny versions of every artwork in the collection.



Kelly Filreis



Jennie Waldow

In the middle of *Left of Center*

Student Curators Reflect on Their Experience Reinstalling the Anderson's Permanent Collection

KELLY FILREIS AND JENNIE WALDOW, STANFORD PHD CANDIDATES IN ART & ART HISTORY

The co-curators then divided into small groups to curate thematic spaces in the exhibition. We both study Los Angeles art from the postwar period, so our section includes Light and Space art of the 1960s and 1970s. Many of these works, such as Ronald Davis's *Spoke* and Billy Al Bengston's *Lux Lovely*, have reflective surfaces, so one challenge was to come up with a floor plan that would minimize unwanted shadows and glares. Our curatorial decisions and wall labels written for the Los Angeles section highlighted the spirit of technological and material-based experimentation, as well as complemented the histories of American abstraction, which reverberate throughout the museum's collection.

We hope the exhibition will allow visitors and students to see the collection from an alternative vantage point, with a renewed focus on the West Coast roots of sprawling 20th-century artistic movements. Alongside recent additions, including Moo Anderson's generous gift of Pollock's *Totem Lesson 1* and Willem de Kooning's *Gansevoort Street*, the works in *Left of Center* evidence the visual variance, playful sensibility, and ambitious scope of the Anderson Collection.

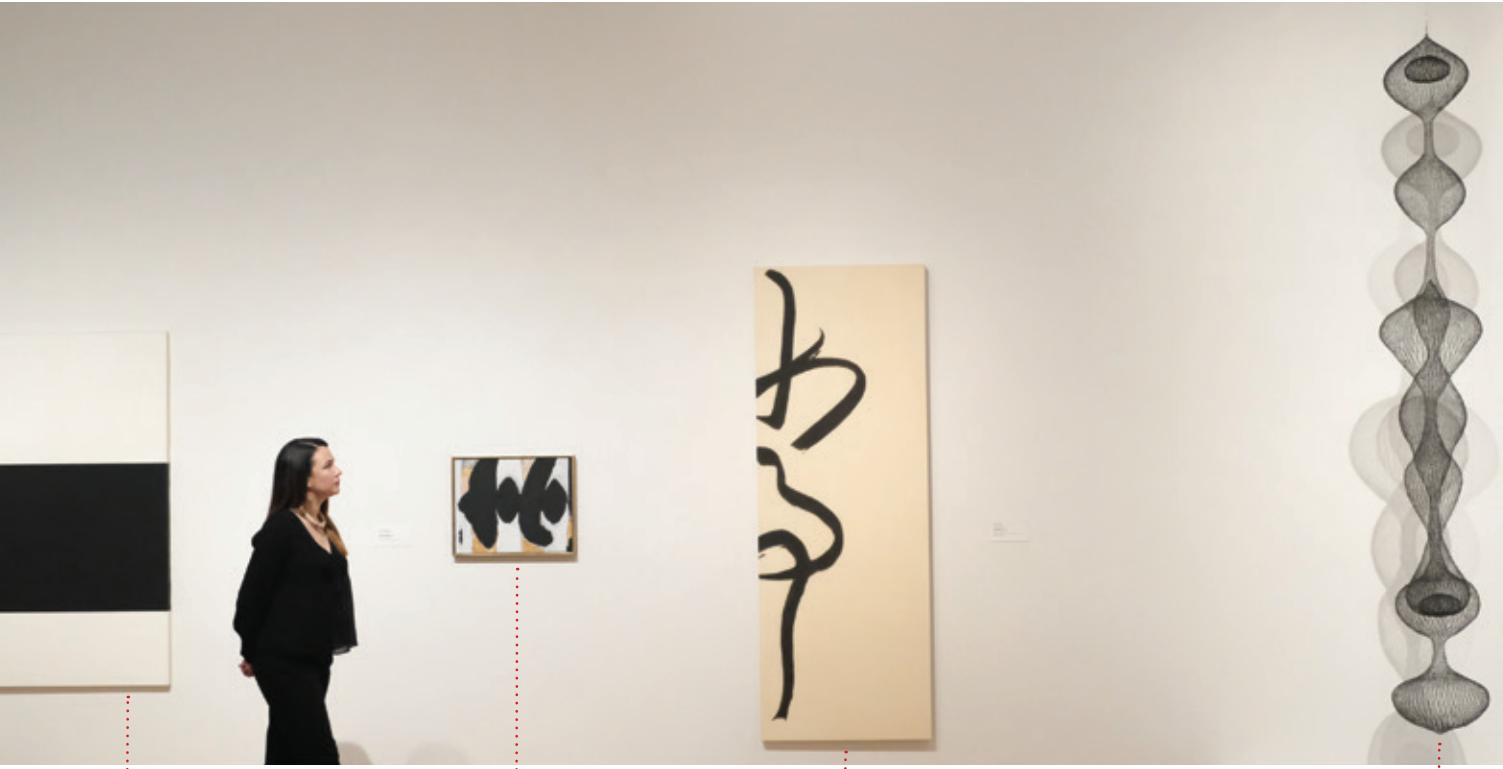
Left of Center: Five Years at the Anderson Collection at Stanford University

September 20, 2019–Ongoing

Seeing Between the Lines

Assistant Curator of American Art Aleesa Alexander Explores Marks and Material

Using works created since 1950, *The Medium Is the Message*—an exhibition whose second rotation is currently on view at the Cantor—explores the relationship between subject, content, and material in an artwork. One of the exhibition's walls presents four distinct pieces, ranging from hard-edged to fluid in shape, that invite the viewer to consider each artist's use of line, whether in acrylic, oil paints, or wire. In that spirit, we asked Assistant Curator of American Art Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander, who organized the exhibition, to provide a few lines about each.



John McLaughlin
Untitled #14

"McLaughlin was a California abstract, hard-edge painter interested in Japanese Zen Buddhism. You can see that reflected a bit in this work—it's something totally abstract and about visual meditation.... It offers a kind of aesthetic moment where you're not thinking about anything else other than the work of art."

John McLaughlin (U.S.A., 1898–1976), *Untitled #14*, 1969. Oil on canvas. Gift of the artist, 1969.231

Robert Motherwell
Untitled (Elegy)

"I really love this Motherwell because it is very small, and though he made more than 200 *Elegy* paintings over the course of his life, this one he made a year before he died. There's something very profound thinking about the fact he was making this then."

Robert Motherwell (U.S.A., 1915–1991), *Untitled (Elegy)*, 1990. Acrylic on canvas. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Gift of Professor Will Leben, 2003.81

Zhou Tiehai
Calligraphy

"Tiehai is a contemporary artist who plays with your expectations of him as a Chinese painter. For instance, in this work—which is airbrushed, not done by hand—he's cropped [his composition] so even if it references a letter, you can't see it. He abstracts the form completely. In that way, you can perhaps see other things, like more figurative forms."

Zhou Tiehai (China, b. 1966), *Calligraphy*, 2005. Acrylic on canvas. Gift of Mr. & Mrs. L. S. Kwee, in honor of Thomas K. Seligman, 2012.214

Ruth Asawa
Untitled

"This is my favorite piece in the series, which, of course, is by the great artist Ruth Asawa. It is a line rendered three-dimensional in all of its possibilities. She's taken the line and carried it and repeated it and overlapped it over itself and, in doing so, created a sculpture out of something you could otherwise consider to be purely two-dimensional."

Ruth Asawa (U.S.A., 1926–2013), *Untitled*, c. 1954. © Estate of Ruth Asawa. Private collection

Meet Maggie Dethloff

Five Questions for the New Assistant Curator of Photography and New Media

HEIDI SIGUA CAMPBELL

The former Capital Group Foundation curatorial fellow started her new role in December 2019 to further advance the Cantor's vision of a 21st-century museum. Maggie sat down with our content lead, Heidi Sigua Campbell, to discuss book recommendations, time travel, and hypothetical dinners with deceased artists.

1 If you could have dinner with any artist, deceased or otherwise, who would it be and why?

Lately I've been thinking about how great it would have been to meet Robert Heinecken (1931–2006). Heinecken pushed the boundaries of the medium of photography. I like his idea of "analytical facture," which refers to choosing a medium or artistic process based on how well it's suited to working through a particular concept. Process informs content as much as—and sometimes more than—subject matter.

2 What emerging formats and/or contemporary topics are most exciting to you?

I am most excited about existing formats being used in new ways. In photography, for instance, since digital processes have threatened to make analog photography "obsolete," there has been a resurgence of artists using not only 20th- but also 19th-century photographic processes, often in unusual and exciting ways. I am interested in exploring how innovations in emerging technologies also lead to innovations in existing technologies and how both reflect contemporary life.



3 If you could teach a class about anything at Stanford, what would it be?

It would be neat to teach an interdisciplinary course on the materiality of medium. We would read theory and criticism, like Clement Greenberg's argument for medium specificity, alongside texts from chemistry, geology, and environmental studies that explain the materials that comprise artistic mediums, and their impact on human life and the environment. It's important that artworks are objects that exist in the world and are part of economies of material and labor.

4 Let's time-travel to 100 years into the future. What do you think will be different about how we experience and appreciate art? What will remain the same?

Technologies like virtual reality (VR) are already being used to create art that we experience in newly immersive ways. VR and 3-D imaging will also allow more people all over the world to see artworks in great detail on the Internet. The appeal and value of viewing original artworks in person will never disappear, though, and the fundamental role of art to express and interpret the human condition will remain the same.

5 Fill in the blank: I'm currently reading...

Alex Nemerov's *Silent Dialogues* is what I'm reading at work. It's about the photographer Diane Arbus and her brother, Howard Nemerov, the poet. At home, I just finished *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens, which is a heartbreakingly beautiful novel about loneliness and the balm of nature, learning, art, and poetry.

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Kass pictured during the fabrication of OY/YO for the Cantor.
Photo courtesy of the artist

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“The fact that this particular work resonates so beautifully in so many languages to so many communities is why I wanted to make it monumental.”

Artist Deborah Kass