

Recent Acquisitions: Inclusive and Diverse, February 18, 2000-April 16, 2000

For more than a century, The RISD Museum has been actively collecting art from all ages and cultures. This is consistent with the shared mission of the Museum and School of Design to promote "the general advancement of public Art Education, by the exhibition of works of Art ..." In any given year, several hundred objects enter the permanent collection through donation, purchase, and bequest. The Museum's holdings included approximately 80,000 artworks at last count. Visitors often wonder why museums acquire some works of art and not others. This exhibition presents a selection of objects acquired over the past five years by the Museum's six curatorial departments: Ancient Art, Asian Art, Costume and Textiles, Decorative Arts, Painting and Sculpture, and Prints, Drawings, and Photographs. Other recent acquisitions are displayed in the Museum's various permanent collection galleries.

For this exhibition, the labels accompanying each object take a new approach. In addition to identifying the artist, date, materials, and donor's name, each label explains why a particular object is an appropriate addition to the Museum's collection. Among the often cited reasons for acquiring works of art are:

- to augment existing collection strengths
- to extend the range of holdings into new areas of collecting and to respond to an expanding and culturally diverse audience
- to support teaching at the School of Design, a priority that sets The RISD Museum apart from many other art museums
- to present works of strong visual impact -- beauty as its own reward

There are many objects whose fragility does not allow extended exposure to light and air (for example, textiles, watercolors, and silver). Such works make brief appearances in special exhibitions and permanent gallery rotations. It is hoped that our visitors will return to see the Museum's new works of art, as they in turn become the context for future acquisitions.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Greek

Female Figurine, ca. 500 BCE

Terracotta; ceramic

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Jerry Nagler 1999.60

Seated and standing goddesses were common subjects for terra cotta figures in the Archaic Period. Although the function of these objects remains elusive, this bust and others with similar characteristics were most likely used as votive figures representing the Greek goddesses Demeter and/or Persephone. Votive figures are gifts offered to the gods in thanksgiving for blessings received or as incentives for desired outcomes. Such pieces were typically molded as two hollow parts, front and back, then joined. RISD's bust is composed of a front only, suggesting that it may have been placed on a shelf in a god's sanctuary.

The bust fills a gap in the Museum's collection of ancient terra cottas, most of which come from the Greek mainland and date to the 7th, early 6th, and post-5th centuries BC. Of special interest to our audience of RISD students and faculty is that this work clearly illustrates the molding techniques used to make terra cotta figures in the late 6th century BC.



Celtic

Neck ring (torque), ca. 1300-1000 BCE

Gold

Gift of Drs. Arnold-Peter C. and Yvonne S. Weiss 1999.80

This rare and perfectly preserved gold torque will surely become a favorite with the Museum's audience for its elegant beauty and technical virtuosity. It was made during the Middle Bronze Age in Ireland, then a center of gold jewelry production. Torques may have been used as ceremonial jewelry or as a special form of currency. They were often found in hoards (groups of valuable objects often buried for safekeeping) in sites in Ireland, Britain, and France.



This is possibly the only intact torque of its type in the United States today. It extends the range of the Museum's jewelry collection into an earlier period and another part of the ancient world, broadening knowledge of the ancient gold industry and jewelry-making. Although

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the twisted neck ring looks simple, its mode of manufacture remains elusive. With help from the Museum's unique resource, RISD's Jewelry and Light Metals Department, it may be possible to replicate this rare object, thus providing a better understanding of its construction.

Greek
Stater, ca. 390-360 BCE
Silver
Gift of Drs. Arnold-Peter C. and Yvonne S. Weiss 1997.42.1

These silver coins are important not only for their esthetic value and relative rarity, but also for their art-historical significance as early examples of Greek realistic portraiture. These spectacular staters complement and extend RISD's collection of ancient Greek coins.

Coins first appeared in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) during the 7th century BC, and their use spread quickly from there throughout the ancient Greek world. These six silver coins are from Lycia, a mountainous country now part of southwestern Turkey. True portraiture, emphasizing highly individualized features, developed in Lycia in the second quarter of the 4th century BC. The two coins on the left are portraits of Mithrapata, and the fourth and fifth coins (from left) are portraits of Perikles. Mithrapata and Perikles were Lycian rulers.

Greek
Stater, ca. 390-360 BCE
Silver
Gift of Drs. Arnold-Peter C. and Yvonne S. Weiss 1997.42.2



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Greek
Stater, ca. 390-360 BCE
Silver
Gift of Drs. Arnold-Peter C. and Yvonne S. Weiss 1997.42.3



Greek
Stater, ca. 390-360 BCE
Silver
Gift of Drs. Arnold-Peter C. and Yvonne S. Weiss 1997.42.4



Child's dress, 1850s
Wool; plain weave, printed
Gift of Cora Ginsburg 1999.63.21

Cora Ginsburg is well known as one of the foremost scholars, collectors, and dealers in the field of costume and textiles. Now in her 80s, Mrs. Ginsburg has nurtured the talents and molded the tastes of generations of scholars and collectors. The Department of Costume and Textiles was immensely fortunate that Mrs. Ginsburg offered to the Museum as a gift her personal collection of 19th- and early 20th-century children's clothing. Curators chose 25 pieces from the more than 50 offered. With this extraordinary gift as the nucleus, the Department will begin to plan an exhibition of children's clothing.

Greek
Stater, ca. 390-360 BCE
Silver
Gift of Drs. Arnold-Peter C. and Yvonne S. Weiss 1997.42.6



Hugh Cornwall Robertson, American, 1845-1908
Dedham Pottery, American, fl. 1896-1943
Vase, ca. 1896
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nutt 1997.75.2

Hugh Robertson's obsession with Chinese glazes eventually bankrupted his first business venture, the Chelsea Ceramic Art Works. The coarse "volcanic" glaze on this vase represents one of his many experiments with the accidental effects of high kiln temperatures on metallic oxides. Eventually, he was able to satisfy investors by producing more conventional tableware at the Dedham Pottery. Experimental wares like this vase are vivid reminders of a creative genius and his belief in "art for art's sake."



Hellenistic
Miniature lamp, 1st century BCE
Terracotta
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath in memory of David B. Heath
1999.79

Daylight directed daily life to a much larger extent in antiquity than it does today. Activities after sundown required oil lamps. Mold-made lamps, such as the one shown here, were manufactured in large quantities to satisfy the needs of the general populace. Ceramic lamps often imitated more costly metal counterparts; however, this small-scale lamp shows no sign of conventional use. It is possible that it was used for ceremonial purposes or as a child's toy. A welcome addition to the Museum's collection of Greek and Roman lamps, its



tiny scale also places it squarely in the category of our small collection of Greek miniature vessels.

Chinese

Eighteen-armed Guanyin figurine, 1700s

Porcelain

Bequest of Ethel B. Barton 1996.20

This very impressive piece of Chinese ceramic sculpture depicts a female form of the *bodhisattva* (saved being) Guanyin (Sanskrit, *Avalokitesvara*). In Buddhism, Guanyin is a merciful and compassionate figure associated with Amitabha, the Buddha of the Western Paradise, whose image appears in Guanyin's headdress.

This devotional figure, which was probably used for private worship in a domestic setting rather than a temple, is typical of Dehua wares from the Qing dynasty. The Museum owns one other vessel of a different type from the Dehua kilns, which produced a variety of white ceramics for popular consumption. The Guanyin also relates well to the other Buddhist objects in the Museum's collections.



Kobayashi Kiyochika, Japanese, 1847-1915

Matsuki Heikichi, Japanese

Braving the bitter cold, our troops set up camp at Yingkou (Eiko no genkan o okashite wagagun roei o haru no zu), 1895

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Roger S. Keyes and Elizabeth Coombs 1998.72.3

Kiyochika's powerful triptychs of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) commemorate the efforts of the Japanese army and their decisive victories during their occupation of Korea and the Liaodong Peninsula in Manchuria (northeastern China). Effective use of light and shadow in the areas surrounding the two campfires in this print reflects Kiyochika's interest in Western printmaking and his emphasis on the creation of a unified space through light-dark effects.



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The Museum's holdings of Meiji period (1868-1912) prints was limited. The gift that includes this triptych was presented by benefactors who know RISD's Japanese prints collection and desired to strengthen this area.

Yan Han, Chinese, b. 1916
Peasants Defending Their Grain (against the Japanese and the Puppets), 1943
Woodblock print
Gift of Colonel Marcellus and Emily Duffy 1994.097.8



Beginning in the 1920s, Chinese artists of the intellectual left revived and reformatted the traditional art of woodblock printing, which had been used for a millennium in popular secular and religious works and for book illustrations. By combining native practice with influences from the West, especially those of German Expressionists like Kathe Kollwitz, they produced powerful social and political commentaries on the contemporary Chinese scene.

These prints are part of a group of 16 presented to Colonel Marcellus Duffy in 1945 (?) during his stay in Yan'an, the Communist stronghold and base of operations in the northwest. It was from this center that Mao Zedong launched his campaign for the Communist take-over of China between 1945 and 1949. By this time, the woodcut medium had become a significant political tool for the Communist Party. These are the first examples of modern Chinese prints from this period to enter the Museum's collection. Their thematic relation to Western polemical printmaking makes them a nice complement to the Museum's extensive holding of politically inspired works in the Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs.

Gu Yuan, Chinese, b. 1919
Winter Schooling, ca. 1942-44
Woodblock print
Gift of Colonel Marcellus and Emily Duffy 1994.097.4



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Italo-Greek

Oil container (askos) in the form of a boar, late 300s BCE-early 200s BCE

Terracotta

Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 1996.98

Askoi (singular *askos*) are perfume jars made in many shapes, but almost always small in size, as the scented oils they held could be costly. The RISD *askos* is one of twelve known in the shape of a wild boar. Among the twelve, those whose place of excavation is sure were found in graves in Italy.

This perfume jar strengthens RISD's solid collection of vessels from the Greek colonies in Southern Italy, while also enriching our small group of sculpted vases. The latter bridge the gap between sculpture and vessel forms, illustrating the often close collaborations between vase makers and sculptors working in terra cotta during ancient Greek and Roman times.



Greek

Stater coin, 390-360 BCE

Silver

Gift of Drs. Arnold-Peter C. and Yvonne S. Weiss 1997.42.5



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Ben Nicholson, English, 1894-1982
Deep Persian Lilac, 1955
Oil on canvas
Gift of Richard Brown Baker 1996.11.37

Richard Brown Baker described himself as "inadequately experienced" when asked to comment on the collection of contemporary art that he exhibited at RISD in 1959. The Providence native had recently narrowed his collecting focus to "art since 1945," but had already assembled an international sampling of artists such as Jackson Pollock, Ad Reinhardt, Lionel Feininger, Hans Hofmann, and Robert Motherwell.

Over the next four decades, Baker continued to collect, and the RISD Museum had numerous occasions to celebrate his passion for contemporary art. In 1997, Baker's gifts were the focus of an exhibition that honored his generosity to RISD and his long involvement as a member of the Museum's Fine Arts Committee. His love of British art is demonstrated by David Hockney's exuberant *Plastic Tree Plus City Hall* and Ben Nicholson's enigmatic *Nov. 55 (Deep Persian Lilac)*, two of hundreds of works of art that have been given to RISD by Baker.



South African; Zulu
Beer Fermentation Vessel, 1900s
Earthenware, burnished with incised decoration
Museum purchase: anonymous gift 1999.52

The technical virtuosity of the unknown Zulu artist who made this pot, the striking decoration, and the fact that the Museum's collection contains very few African ceramic objects of any kind were all considered when a friend of the Museum offered to purchase this jar for RISD. Its universal esthetic appeal was the primary reason for acquiring it. Hand-built from coils of clay, rather than turned on a potter's wheel, it is a remarkably elegant object.



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pendant, 1900

Gold, pearls, frosted green glass, diamonds, enamel and rubies
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1997.80

By the end of the 19th century, Gorham is believed to have been the world's largest manufacturer of silverware. The company also produced jewelry, which today is far more rare than its silver. Because RISD has extensive holdings of Gorham silver but not a single example of Gorham jewelry, it made perfect sense to acquire this pendant at auction in New York. The combination of materials and flowing lines recalls designs by René Lalique and other French designers working in the Art Nouveau style, the height of fashion at the turn of the century.



Codman & Codman
Celery dish, 1904-1905
Silver

Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 1997.85

Recent research by Samuel Hough has identified the makers of this dish and solved the mystery of their touchmark with entwined codfish. Edwin and Frank Codman were sons of William Christmas Codman, head designer for Gorham Manufacturing Company at this period. For one year, between stints at Gorham, study in Paris, and returning home to England, the brothers formed a partnership in Providence, where they designed, made, and sold hand-wrought silver. This serving tray, a rare example of their work, resembles the martelé (hand-hammered) silver developed by their father at Gorham. It demonstrates the highest quality of workmanship by his sons and represents previously unknown silversmiths within the Museum's collection of American silver, which includes pieces by their father.



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George C. Richter, American, 1861-1944
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Scandinavian Berry Spoon, ca. 1898
Silver, gilding, enamel
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 1999.4

According to research by Samuel Hough in the Gorham archives preserved at Brown University, the "Scandinavian" pattern was limited to 16 different serving utensils, ranging from cheese scoops to ice cream slicers. This broad spoon was for serving berries, ever a popular dessert. The pattern was first recorded in 1898. It was expensive to make and costly to buy. It was probably produced under the supervision of George C. Richter, an Austrian-born artist who was director of the enameling department at Gorham from 1895 to 1907.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Smelling salt bottle, 1898
Silver, copper, gilding, amethysts
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 1999.13

Since receiving the Gorham Collection of more than 1,000 pieces of silver as a gift from Textron Inc. in 1991, the Museum is in a position to present a nearly complete range of the firm's production since its founding in 1831. This small bottle may be unique, a sample of an unusual plating technique called "wallpaper amalgam" that was never put into production. It combines irregular patches of copper and two gilding processes on silver. Similar decoration may be found on smaller objects, such as match safes, but is not known on anything this large.



Bob Stocksdale, American, b. 1913
Bowl, 1994
Brazilian rosewood
Gift of Daphne Farago 1996.62.4

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Interest in turned wooden objects has grown considerably in the past decade, and woodturning is rapidly emerging as an art form in itself. Bob Stocksdale, a pioneer in the field, is unquestionably the "old master" of American turners. Self-taught, he has an uncanny instinct for the inner beauty of wood, which he reveals in his lathe-turned bowls. In recent years, his wife, Kay Sekimachi, has formed exquisite paper vessels molded around these wooden bowls. Their collaboration was the subject of a 1995 RISD Museum exhibition, **Marriage in Form**. In honor of the artists, Daphne Farago subsequently presented two bowls by Bob Stocksdale to the Museum.

Boeotian; Greek
Goat, 5th century BCE
Terracotta
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1997.19

This expertly modeled figurine of a goat is from the region of Boeotia, long considered the most important center of terra cotta production in ancient Greece. Although Boeotian figurines are among the most thoroughly studied of ancient terra cottas, their function is still hotly debated. Children may have used animal figurines like this goat as toys, while those discovered in sanctuaries may have been intended as votive gifts to the gods.

This piece was acquired for its exceptional quality (note the elegant forms of the horns, legs, and body) and its remarkable state of preservation. It also fills a gap in the Museum's collection of Greek terra cottas. Along with our Boeotian goddess, horse and rider, and the female figurines from Tanagra, the Museum can now show the stylistic development and iconographical range of Boeotian terra cottas from the early 6th to the 2nd centuries BC.



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David Hockney, British, b. 1937
Plastic Tree Plus City Hall, 1964
Acrylic on canvas
Gift of Richard Brown Baker 1996.11.21

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Christopher Dresser, Scottish, 1834-1904
Old Hall Earthenware Company, English, ca. 1861-1886
Pitcher, ca. 1881
Earthenware with transfer-printed enamel
Edgar J. Lownes Fund 1997.36

The unorthodox design of this pitcher, with its intersecting triangles and random patterns of decoration, is believed to be by Christopher Dresser, one of the most innovative industrial designers in Britain in the late 19th century. In 1876, he traveled to Japan as a representative of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and also as a buyer for Tiffany and Company, New York. The lessons Dresser learned from everyday Japanese objects inspired him to design simple forms with ornament abstracted from nature. The more conventional fans and flowers used to decorate this pitcher suggest that some buyers still clung to traditional motifs, even on the most daring designs. This is the first ceramic object by Dresser to enter the Museum's collection, which previously contained only his glass and metalwork.



George Peter Alexander Healy, American, 1813-1894

Portrait of Miss Sneyde, ca. 1866

Oil on canvas

Gift of Jack M. Bethards 1999.90

Healy was the best known American portraitist in Paris in 1867. He was a close friend of leading French painter Thomas Couture and a contributor to the fine arts sections of an unbroken succession of 19th-century Universal Expositions. His subjects included European statesmen and women of high breeding, such as Miss Sneyde, portrayed here. According to Healy's biography, Miss Sneyde's hopes of serving as a lady-in-waiting in the court of Napoleon III were dashed by the Empress Eugenie, who distrusted her husband's appreciation for fair young Englishwomen. Americans also sought out Healy when they arrived in Paris, either to commission portraits or to ask his advice about improving their own artistic skills.

Healy often returned to America, and he visited Providence and Newport in the 1840s and 1850s to paint portraits of distinguished individuals. Although there are works by his contemporaries in the Museum's collection, there were no paintings by Healy prior to this gift from his great-grandson.

Isabel De Obaldia, Panamanian, 1957

Captive Spirit, 1999

Glass, kiln-cast, lathe-engraved

Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 2000.7

Isabel de Obaldia studied architecture at the University of Panama and drawing at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris prior to graduating from RISD in 1979. She explored cinematography, graphic design, and painting before turning her attention to glass in 1987, when she began a transition to three-dimensional work after studying at the Pilchuck Glass School, founded by Dale Chihuly (RISD MFA 1967; faculty, 1968-73). In her small but unmistakably monumental work, opaque and luminescent colors are fused in the casting process, producing figural forms that evoke early Greek or pre-Columbian sculpture. Attracted to glass as "an analogy with the fragility of Man," she produces works like **Espiritu Cautivo**, in which a captive spirit is held prisoner by a transparent but weighty human form. By acquiring **Espiritu Cautivo** from the artist's recent one-person show in New



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York, the Museum has added the work of a contemporary glass sculptor to its renowned collection of modern Latin American art.

Chinese

Armchair, ca. 1805

Asian hardwood, cane seat

Museum purchase: Gift of Mrs. Carolyn C. Brooke in memory of General and Mrs. Everitte Saint John Chaffee

Collection of the Heritage Trust of Rhode Island 1999.57.2

This armchair and oval tray represent significant "firsts" in the Museum's collection. Originally purchased in China by Colonel Edward Dexter of Providence, these objects are among the earliest known furniture imported from China by an American. Because furniture was so bulky to ship, it was never a profitable commodity in the China Trade; however, foreign traders living in Canton generally furnished their own residences and then returned with such possessions as part of their "privilege," or private cargo.

Records at the Rhode Island Historical Society suggest that these objects may have sailed with Dexter aboard the ship **India Point**, which returned from Canton in 1805. They probably furnished Dexter's house, now standing at 72 Waterman Street (coincidentally the house occupied a century later by collector and Museum benefactor Charles Pendleton). The initials EAD on the lacquer serving tray are those of Dexter and his wife, nee Abigail Smith. They were married in 1793, after which Dexter became a partner with his brother-in-law, Henry Smith, in the shipping business.

Chinese

Serving Tray, ca. 1804

Asian hardwood; lacquer; gilding

Museum purchase: Gift of Mrs. Carolyn C. Brooke in memory of General and Mrs. Everitte Saint John Chaffee 1999.57.4

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Chinese

Plate, ca. 1800-1810

Porcelain, overglaze enamels, gilding

Gift of Mrs. Robert H. Ives Goddard, Jr. 1996.24

This beautifully decorated plate, part of a larger tea and coffee service, originally belonged to Edward Carrington of Providence, the city's leading China Trade merchant in the early 19th century. His house and office still stand on Williams Street, complete with wallpaper that he imported from China. Over the years, numerous examples of porcelain imported by other local families have entered the Museum's collection. This plate expands the range of locally documented wares and offers further evidence of the era's richly decorated interiors filled with imported goods from China.



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American
Dress, ca. 1795
Plain weave silk
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1998.21

This dress was probably worn by Sarah Murdock Smeers of Maine, according to a note found with its companion dress, which the Museum decided not to purchase. Its silk fabric, called "lutestring" or "lustrings" for its deep luster, may date to earlier in the 18th century. Documented American dresses of this date are rare indeed, and this one is a fine addition to RISD's collection of 18th-century apparel, which is small and needs to be expanded. This dress will play a familiar dual role in the Museum's collection, since it may be used both for classes in historic apparel and for display.



Gertrud Natzler, American, 1908-1971
Otto Natzler, American, 1908-2007
Vase, 1957
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Small, Jr. 1999.71.1

Otto Natzler and his late wife, Gertrud, worked as a team to design and produce elegant and sophisticated ceramics for nearly four decades. Austrian emigres, they settled in Los Angeles, where they became pioneers of the post-World War II craft movement in this country. Gertrud had received formal training as a ceramist in Vienna, and it was she who created the clay forms on the potter's wheel. Otto experimented with glaze formulas and firing techniques to produce a wide range of colors and textures, such as the "earth crater" glaze on this vase from the 1950s.

Considering the Natzlers' impact on subsequent generations of studio potters, this recent gift of three pieces represents a major expansion of RISD's 20th-century ceramics collection, which begins with the Arts and Crafts movement in Europe and America and now continues into the 21st century.



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Yizhak Utzy Elyashiv, Israeli, b. 1964

Handful of Grains Map, 1996

Ten-sheet monoprint; drypoint, stamping, engraving with unpigmented ink and brown ink

Museum purchase: Gift of the Artists' Development Fund of the Rhode Island Foundation 1997.87



The Artists' Development Fund of Rhode Island Foundation has enabled curators to purchase works by artists living and/or working in Rhode Island. Elyashiv is an exciting contemporary artist who pushes the limits of printmaking by producing works of large size that are experimental in nature and innovative in technique. To create *Handful of Grains Map*, the artist placed 60 steel plates on his studio floor. He tossed a handful of wheat grain across the plates, marking the place where each grain landed with an ink marker. He next incised the grain marks with a special tool resembling the shape of grain, which he fashioned for this purpose. Using a drypoint needle, he drew lines between the grain marks to form sections with triangles. Elyashiv measured the distance between each grain and stamped each distance on the "map." A table of measurements was tabulated and added to indicate the ideal distribution for planting grain. The plates were sprayed with water and allowed to rust. An unpigmented ink was rolled onto the plates to print the rusted areas using an etching press. The artist's approach to understanding the idea of randomness captured the imagination of the RISD Continuing Education students during a course Elyashiv taught.

Elaine Anthony, American, 1943 - 1996, (RISD BFA 1996)

Freedom Field I, 1996

Oil, wax, tin, and mixed media on canvas

Gift of Virginia Lynch and friends of the artist 1996.80



Elaine Anthony was a painter and printmaker who intended her works to be read as intimate, timeless landscapes. Her painting evolved from fabric collage designs (executed during a 12-year sojourn in Mexico in the 1970s and early 80s) into larger mixed-media constructions. In *Freedom Field I*, her last major work, Anthony embedded remnants of correspondence in a visually dense and tactile surface of layered pigment and wax. She explained that "each painting symbolizes entry; crossing the threshold of uncertainty and discovery-over floor, through room, over field-arriving in a sacred space."

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Ellis W. Ruley, American, 1882-1959

King Going Up the Military Academy, 1940-1959

Oil on paperboard

Museum purchase: Mary B. Jackson Fund and gift of Alice K. Miles
1996.102



Ellis Ruley was an unschooled African-American artist who worked as a laborer near his home in Norwich, Connecticut. The son of a slave who had come north after the Civil War, he probably began painting in the 1930s when his settlement from a traffic accident allowed him to buy a secluded 3-acre property on a hilltop overlooking Norwich's harbor. He often painted while sitting on his bed with the afternoon sun on his easel, using house paint and poster board as medium and support. Many of his subjects -- harvests, waterfalls, lions, hunters, moose -- were taken from nature, but others, like *King Going Up the Military Academy*, appear to interpret images from popular magazines or from movies. Although Ruley sold some of his paintings at local art fairs, the unique qualities of his artistic imagination did not become known and appreciated until after his death.

Brian Blow, British, late 20th century

Rocket Press, English

Jonathan Stephenson, British

Iron Chords, 1997

Woodcut

Gift of Cindy and Scott Burns 1998.37.2

The RISD Museum has amassed a collection of about 300 artist's books, albums, scrapbooks, and rare volumes. (The RISD Library holds an additional 900 or so artist's books.) One collector-couple's passion for books published by small British presses has swelled the number of artist's books in the Museum's collection over the past several years. The Rocket Press is among the few British establishments still operating full-time for the design and production of high quality letterpress, publishing three or four books a year on their own in addition to commissioned work.

These two examples are quintessential artist's books: intimate, thoughtful, and ever so nicely bound. *Iron Chords*, printed by Jonathan Stephenson at The Rocket Press, is a book of bold, abstract

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color woodcuts by Brian Blow printed in a long, accordion-fold format without text.

The Vacant Frame was first published in 1899 by Robert Brough in an anthology of poems entitled *Tips for Typos, or, Rhymes to Rub off Rust*. The Rocket Press published the verse in 1983 as a portfolio of linocuts by John Robert Smith accompanied by the poem, beautifully housed in a box with four compartments containing the prints, *Walker's Book* (which is the size of a matchbox), and several pieces of metal type. The 1983 version is a book about the art of printing and bookmaking.

Marta Maria Perez Bravo, Cuban, b. 1959
Para la entrega [For the Offering], 1994
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 1998.16.2

In 1964, the Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art was established at the RISD Museum as a family memorial. Over the past 36 years, Latin American material has continually been added to the collection through several sources. Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain, avid collectors of various media, have generously donated this work by Cuban-born artist Marta Maria Perez Bravo, who currently lives in Mexico. Bravo is one of several important Latin American photographers recently added to the RISD collection; others include Luis Gonzalez Palma and Geraldo Suter. Inspired by Afro-Cuban religion, Bravo here transforms her body into an altar and ritually offers her hair in a sheet held as a vessel. The cultural significance of hair is a theme explored by Bravo and other contemporary Latin American and African American female artists.



John R. Smith, British, 1752-1812
Robert Brough, British, 1872-1905
Rocket Press, English
The Vacant Frame, 1983
Linocut
Gift of Scott and Cindy Burns 1999.11.3

The RISD Museum has amassed a collection of about 300 artist's books, albums, scrapbooks, and rare volumes. (The RISD Library holds an additional 900 or so artist's books.) One collector-couple's passion for books published by small British presses has swelled the number

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of artist's books in the Museum's collection over the past several years. The Rocket Press is among the few British establishments still operating full-time for the design and production of high quality letterpress, publishing three or four books a year on their own in addition to commissioned work.

These two examples are quintessential artist's books: intimate, thoughtful, and ever so nicely bound. *Iron Chords*, printed by Jonathan Stephenson at The Rocket Press, is a book of bold, abstract color woodcuts by Brian Blow printed in a long, accordion-fold format without text.

The Vacant Frame was first published in 1899 by Robert Brough in an anthology of poems entitled *Tips for Typos, or, Rhymes to Rub off Rust*. The Rocket Press published the verse in 1983 as a portfolio of linocuts by John Robert Smith accompanied by the poem, beautifully housed in a box with four compartments containing the prints, *Walker's Book* (which is the size of a matchbox), and several pieces of metal type. The 1983 version is a book about the art of printing and bookmaking.

Cristóbal Balenciaga, Spanish, 1895-1972

Chemise dress, ca. 1957

Wool bouclé yarn twill weave

Museum purchase with funds from the Fine Arts Committee and Mary B. Jackson Fund 1997.83

When Cristobal Balenciaga, a couturier known for elegant, simple, but perfectly tailored clothing, introduced a new silhouette in 1957, no one was prepared for the controversy it aroused. The chemise, or sack, as it was dubbed in the press, was a far cry from the narrow shoulders, tight waists, and full skirts popularized by Christian Dior in his 1947 "New Look." Women who adopted the chemise were ridiculed in the press, and the style was condemned as unfeminine and ungainly. Ready-to-wear manufacturers who produced thousands of dresses derived from Balenciaga's originals lost money, as many women were unwilling to try the new style. After a few seasons, however, the discord died down, and chemise styling filtered into the fashion mainstream.

Balenciaga is considered by many to be the most important couturier of the 1950s. This chemise represents both a pivotal moment in fashion and the perfection of line and cut that was Balenciaga's trademark. For all these reasons it is a prized addition to the



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Museum's extensive collection of costume and textiles, which is also relied upon in the teaching of costume history and fashion design at RISD.

Mary Cassatt, American, 1844-1926
Under the Horse Chestnut Tree, 1896-1897
Drypoint and aquatint
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1996.101

It was important that the Museum, with over 20,000 works on paper, possess at least one color print by Mary Cassatt. Although she did not make prints until twenty years into her career, they were an important part of her oeuvre. In the 1890s, Cassatt started using aquatint with drypoint. According to legend, Cassatt experimented with this image and printed the three unique impressions on a small etching press at her country estate in Beaufresne, France. Later, Cassatt collaborated with a professional printer to incorporate a few bright colors and to publish a small edition of forty-five prints; thus it is considered rare and important work.



Félix Bracquemond, French, 1833-1914
L.M. and Company, French, ca. 1866-1875
Two Plates from the "Rousseau" Service, 1866-1875
Earthenware, transfer-printed and enameled
Museum Purchase: Gift of David G. Carter in memory of Elmina Malloy 1997.37.1

One of the most gratifying aspects of building a collection is to find works of art that make connections across different media. The connections may be purely visual, or perhaps technical, historical, or even personal. This plate designed by Felix Bracquemond was an obvious candidate for acquisition because several prints by Bracquemond are already in RISD's holdings, including his famous portrait of Edmond de Goncourt, a leading collector of Japanese art in France in the 1870s. Bracquemond's design for this plate is based on his own studies of Japanese woodblock prints, another area of strength of the Museum's collection. Finally, Bracquemond's "Rousseau Service" was a major milestone of the Art Nouveau style in



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Europe, which makes this plate valuable for both teaching and display. The funds to purchase it were provided by a former director of the Museum in honor of a former registrar.

Sam Gilliam, American, b. 1933

Louis Stovall, 1937

Workshop, Inc.

Providence (On the 6:36 at 9:00), 1999

Color screenprint on paper

Gift of the Printmaking Department, Rhode Island School of Design
1999.49.3



The gift of three prints by Sam Gilliam demonstrates some of the ways that the School and the Museum work together on various projects. Gilliam spoke during the Museum's 1997-98 lithography exhibition **Working the Stone**, itself a collaboration between a curator and a visiting artist at RISD. Gilliam is known for the textural quality of his abstract paintings and is associated with the Washington Color Field School. His work, while informed by 20th-century modernism, also shows the influence of African American music -- jazz, blues, and gospel--and textiles.

Providence was created as a demonstration for Henry Ferreira's screen-printing class last spring. Gilliam collaborated with Louis Stovall, founder and master printer of The Workshop, Inc., Washington, D.C. Stovall utilized hand-cut stencils and 38 colors to express Gilliam's celebration of African American culture. This gift adds to the collection a piece from an important workshop specializing in screen-printing as a fine art.

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Jasper Johns, American, b. 1930

Donn Horatio Steward, American, 1921-1986

Universal Limited Art Editions

Numbers, From the Portfolio, 1st Etchings, 2nd State, 1967-1981

Etching and open-bite with pen and ink and brush and wash on cream paper

Gift of Malcolm G. Chace, Jane Chace Carroll, and Eliot Chace Nolen, in memory of their parents Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Chace, Jr. 1997.14

Since 1960, Jasper Johns has consistently produced art in collaboration with master printers at several workshops. At the time of this gift, there were 15 prints by the artist in RISD's collection; however, this etching proof with ink additions is unique for a variety of reasons. *Numbers* is a theme that Johns had explored in paintings dating back to the 1950s. Prints provided Johns with another medium to modulate the same subject. Johns had to resolve different problems when he utilized lithography to produce his number series *0 Through 9* in 1960, and others still for the etching series *1st Etchings, 2nd State: Numbers, 1967-81*. This print amplifies the Museum's ability to show the artist's various ways of working, which is of interest to RISD students.



Louis Lozowick, American, b. Russia, 1892-1973

Luna Park, ca. 1929

Chalk, ink, pencil, and conté crayon on paper

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stambler 1994.091

This image complements the Museum's strong holding of modernist drawings executed in America between 1910 and 1940, a period of originality that was influenced by technological, political, and social change. Lozowick first came to the U.S. in 1906, returned to Europe in 1920, and was back in New York in 1924. While in Europe, he joined the German *Novembergruppe*, which included El Lissitzky and Kasimir Malevich, and began to exhibit in 1921. This drawing depicts Coney Island, which was built in 1920 as an amusement park for New Yorkers. Lozowick executed a number of images that portray people engaged in a variety of urban activities.



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Denny Moers, American, b. 1953
Scrub Brush I, 1996
Gelatin silver print, selectively fogged and toned
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan 1998.99.5

The first photograph by Denny Moers entered the Museum's collection in 1978. The recent gift that includes these and others works offers an overview of his artistic development in the last two decades. Since 1977, Moers has nurtured an interest in combining etching and photographic techniques. *Scrub Brush I* and *Scrub Brush II* were both developed from the same black-and-white negative. Between developing and fixing, the black-and-white print was selectively fogged and exposed to incandescent light, causing changes in the color tone. The subtle restructuring of the two photographic images demonstrates the relationship between control and accident, which Moers has mastered.



Denny Moers, American, b. 1953
Scrub Brush II, 1996
Gelatin silver print, selectively fogged and toned
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan 1998.99.6



Johann Gottlieb Prestel, German, 1739-1808
Adriaen van der Werff, Dutch, 1659-1722
The Dismissal of Hagar, ca. 1770s
Color aquatint on paper
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 1997.68

This print was purchased primarily because it relates to a painting in the Museum's collection: *Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael* by Adriaen van der Werff (1659-1722), Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund, 59.063. Johann Gottlieb Prestel and his wife Maria Catharina Prestel created many prints that reproduced drawings from various collections, working exclusively in the color aquatint process soon after it was patented in the 1760s. Aquatint is a tonal etching technique in which tiny grains of resin are fused to the metal plate with heat. The resin resists the acid bath, and the fine pitting formed around the grains holds ink below the surface to render a rich,



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velvety texture when printed. In 1786, the artist and his wife separated, and Johann went to work in London.

Paul Cadmus, American, 1904-1999

Male Nude, TS5, 1954

Graphite and casein on tan-toned paper

Museum purchase: Mary B. Jackson Fund and gift in memory of Courtland Roach by his friends 1999.6.2



Cadmus, like his contemporaries Reginald Marsh (1898-1954) and Edward Hopper (1882-1967), painted the American urban scene. Marsh and Hopper are well represented in the Museum's collection, but until the acquisition of this piece, Cadmus, a social realist with a satirical bite, was not; thus this purchase fills an important gap. The artist is known for his independent figure studies on toned paper. His short parallel strokes describe anatomy and musculature. Curatorial research and patience located the best available example of his works on paper. This drawing had been in the private collection of Lincoln Kirstein, Cadmus's brother-in-law and founding director of the New York City Ballet. The drawing entered the Museum's collection shortly before the artist's death in 1999.

American

Center table, ca. 1850

Oak and other hardwood, ebonized and gilded; ormolu (gilded bronze) mounts

Museum purchase: bequest of Eliza Taft, by exchange 2000.4

For most of the 20th century, interest in "Victorian" furniture was generally overshadowed by the prevailing taste for modern design and manufactures. Over the past 25 years, the Museum has made a concerted effort to collect 19th-century furniture, a natural complement to its superb collection of American painting from the same era. This elaborate center table displays the talents of several skilled craftsmen: carvers, gilders, cabinetmakers, bronze founders, and inlay makers. Probably made in New York, it resided in Boston for nearly a century. The eclectic mix of historical ornament was popular

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in all the arts of the 1850s, a time of rising incomes, increasing ease of transatlantic travel, and the immigration of thousands of skilled European craftsmen to American cities.

Sheila Hicks, American, b. 1934
Mapped Satellite, 1990
Linen; half-hitch knotting
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1998.67

Because RISD trains artists in textile and fiber art and design, the Museum tries to acquire recent and contemporary work for their inspiration. Thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and to generous gifts from artists, a small collection has been formed over the last 30 years. The Museum usually adds one or more significant examples each year.

Sheila Hicks is one of the most famous of American fiber artists, indeed one of the founders of the movement. This piece is the sole work by her in the collection to date, thus it fills an important gap. The artist made "ropes" of linen threads, then sewed or "couched" them to a linen backing, a time-honored technique. Hicks here shows how contemporary artists are inspired by historical practices to come up with new ways of making art for today.



Kay Sekimachi, American, b. 1926
Ikat Box, ca. 1989
Hand-woven weft ikat-dyed linen
Gift of Daphne Farago 1997.45

A recent addition to our small but growing collection of fiber art, this miraculous box serves as wonderment and inspiration to our students and public, especially when they discover how it was made. Sekimachi was inspired by Japanese forms familiar from her second-generation Japanese-American background in San Francisco. She wove it on the loom as one four-layered piece, called quadruple cloth, using soft, single-ply linen. The sides and top were patterned by printing on the warp to emphasize structural planes in the finished piece, which she unfolded into its box shape once it had been taken



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off the loom. The clarity of the resulting box is deceptively simple, yet sculptural, translucent, and elegant. Master designer Jack Lenor Larsen commented in a recent catalogue essay that the form is "impossible of reduction in any way."

Indian; or; Portuguese
Marriage Quilt (Colcha), 1700s
Silk plain weave with silk chain-stitch embroidery
Jesse Metcalf Fund 1996.99

Once in a while, the Museum has the opportunity to purchase a masterpiece of great beauty. This 18th-century quilt, embroidered by women either in Portugal or in India for the Portuguese market, is just such an object. Quilts had been popular in Portugal since the 16th century, but the 18th century was the "golden age" of these embroideries. They were indispensable items in a bride's trousseau at all social levels, and examples exist from both rural and urban Portugal. This coverlet is of great elegance, made in silk instead of the more commonly used linen.

RISD's quilt is especially important because its source is known: it came from the collection of Portuguese Comandante Ernesto Vilhena, which was formed in the mid-20th century and sold in 1995. Several *colchas* from this collection are in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon, Portugal. In addition to its beauty, the coverlet gives an insight into the lives of Portuguese women in the 18th century, whose descendents are numerous in our own community today.



Yokuts; North American Indian
Oval Basket, 1800s
Deer grass (foundation), sedge root, redbud, dyed bracken fern root;
bundle coiled
Anonymous gift 1997.24.9

This oval basket came with a gift of 23 Native American baskets from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the best period for the most skilled western basketmaking tribes.



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This gift expands exponentially the range and quality of our already good American Indian basket collection, and allows us to show beautiful examples from many areas and many periods. Yokuts baskets are known for their texture, the result of coiling bundled plant material. The design of 45 figures holding hands is extremely charming and is characteristic of these oval baskets made in California's central valley.

Felix Huntington, American, 1749-1822

Side chair, ca. 1780-1810

Mahogany, maple, leather, gilding

Gift of Carolyn Darrah Cumming 1999.67

At first glance, this chair appears to be in such poor condition (torn seat cover, discolored repairs) that one might reasonably ask why it belongs in a museum. However, recent research indicates that it is one of only two 18th-century American chairs known to retain their original Dutch gilt leather upholstery. (The other chair is in the collection of the Lyman Allyn Art Museum, New London, Connecticut.) In this case, rarity outweighed condition as a factor in the acquisition process. Both wood and leather can be conserved by professionals in this field. Once treated, the chair will be a stunning reminder of economic prosperity and cultural ambition in 18th-century New England.



American

Chest of drawers, ca. 1770-1790

Mahogany; white pine

Gift of Helen Byram 1999.69.1

For nearly a century, the Museum's renowned collection of American furniture has included pieces with "blocked" and "swelled" drawer fronts, a specialty of Boston-area and Newport cabinetmakers; but until the presentation of this gift, the Museum had no example of a serpentine design. It was popular in Boston and Salem just after the Revolutionary War, when this mahogany chest of drawers was made for a member of the Byram family of Massachusetts. The donor is a RISD alumna in whose family it descended. Because American furniture is a particularly strong area of the Museum's holdings, it is unusual for a gap to be filled at the same level of quality as the furniture already in the Pendleton and Radeke collections (now on display on level 5 in the Main Gallery).

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French

Plate, ca. 1781

Copper, silver-plated

Jesse Metcalf Fund 1998.69.1

Because Pendleton House is dedicated to the display of early American decorative arts, its curators are always searching for additions to the collection, particularly objects that were either made or owned locally. In this sense, The RISD Museum's collecting goals occasionally overlap with those of the Rhode Island Historical Society, although our priority remains esthetic and theirs historical.

This glass tumbler is unusual for having the name of its original owner and the date 1783 prominently engraved across the front. According to early census records, Samuel G. Fowler was living in Newport by 1790, and this kind of glass is typical of English wares found there in the late 18th century.

The plate is one of several ordered from France by John Brown in 1781, shortly before his brick mansion on Providence's Power Street was completed. The Museum holds several Chinese export porcelain plates owned by the Brown family, but this is a rare instance of documented silver tableware from the 18th century. Its shape also mimics creamware plates made in Liverpool and imported to Newport in the same decade.

Chelsea Porcelain Factory, English, ca. 1745-1784

Serving Dish, ca. 1754

Porcelain with glaze and enamels

Museum purchase: Gift of the Museum Associates in honor of Mary Jackson 1999.16

There are hundreds of works of art displayed throughout the Museum's galleries that were presented as memorial gifts or purchased by the Museum to honor individuals. (This information is recorded in the "credit line" at the end of every label.) Last year, the Museum Associates enabled RISD to purchase this platter in honor of the volunteer group's founder and longtime supporter, Mary Hilliard Jackson. The object was made around 1750 at Chelsea, the first factory in England to produce porcelain (previously made only in China and at Meissen, Germany). For friends who recall Mary



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Jackson's green thumb and book illustrations of flowers with human attributes, the exotic flower spreading across this serving platter is an appropriate tribute to a dear friend of the Museum for nearly 50 years.

English

Tumbler ("Samuel G. Fowler"), 1783, 1700s

Lead glass

Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 1999.54

Timothy S. Philbrick, American, b. 1952

Asymmetrical Table, 1998

Cuban mahogany

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan 1999.87.1

Timothy Philbrick often takes inspiration from furniture created by the Townsends and Goddards, Newport's legendary master craftsmen of the 18th century. In this table, two drawers form a deeply curved front rail that recalls one of John Goddard's most distinctive table designs. At the same time, the graceful shape of the legs recalls French Art Deco furniture of the 1920s.

The mastery of such different sources of inspiration and the ability to combine them in an original design has earned Philbrick a national reputation as one of the leading furniture craftsmen of his generation. Within RISD's collection, which spans approximately three hundred years of American furniture, few pieces bridge the centuries so effectively or express so well the presence of the past in contemporary furniture design.



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Charles Eames, American, 1907-1978
Ray Eames, American, 1912-1988
Evans Products Co., American, 1946-49
Herman Miller Furniture Co., American, 1923-
FSW (Folding Screen Wood), 1946
Molded plywood, birch veneer, canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 1999.56

The multi-talented Charles Eames and his wife, Ray, created some of the most innovative furniture of the modern era. They were pioneers in the use of molded plywood, which they used after World War II to create a wide range of products, from leg splints to lounge chairs. This six-panel folding screen, called the "FSW" (folding screen wood), has become a classic object of post-war industrial design. It combines the warmth of wood with the undulating curves of abstract sculpture. Deceptively simple, it relies on a canvas hinge for flexibility, which allows it to fold upon itself for compact storage. When open, it serves as a portable room divider.

This screen formed part of the original furnishings of a house designed by Providence architect Ira Rakatansky for his sister and brother-in-law. A student of Walter Gropius at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, Rakatansky prescribed the most up-to-date furniture and lighting fixtures, thus fulfilling the Bauhaus ideal of inexpensive, well-designed houses and interiors for all.

Waldemar Raemisch, German, 1888-1955, (RISD Faculty Head of Department 1946-1954, Sculpture)
Vase, ca. 1940
Nickel silver, plated gold
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 1997.62

In addition to showing current RISD work in its Faculty Biennial exhibitions, the Museum often seeks to acquire objects created by alumni and former faculty for its permanent collection. This strikingly modern vase is the work of Waldemar Raemisch, a German silversmith who served as professor at the State Academy of Fine and Applied Arts in Berlin until he was forced to step down in 1937. He toured the United States the next year and in 1939 accepted an appointment to teach at RISD in the Sculpture Department. He became head of the department in 1946 and taught here until 1954.

Several years ago, the Museum purchased a classically inspired silver tea service by Raemisch that was exhibited in Berlin in the 1920s. This



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vase is a more expressive work on a larger scale. It may reflect Raemisch's interest in African art and certainly speaks for an experimental freedom that he gained after moving to the United States.

John Prip, American, 1922-2009, (RISD Faculty 1963-1980)
Reed & Barton, American, 1824-2015
Dimension tea and coffee service, 1960
Silverplate with vinyl-wrapped handles
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 1999.15



John Prip came to RISD in 1962 as head of the Department of Jewelry and Light Metals. Trained as a silversmith in Denmark, he began teaching in 1948 at the School for American Craftsmen in Rochester. He was also a regular exhibitor at Shop One, an innovative retail outlet for contemporary crafts that he helped to establish in Rochester. Together with Tage Frid, head of the furniture design program at RISD, these Danish-trained craftsmen transformed their respective departments, set high standards for design and technique, and instructed a generation of artists who lead their fields today.

In addition to his legacy as a teacher, Prip is known for his work as Designer/Craftsman in Residence at Reed and Barton. During the 1960s, he produced a number of successful tableware patterns that brought distinction to the company and an affordable Danish Modern style to American dining rooms. Several patterns are still in production today. The onion shapes of this tea service grew out of forged silver prototypes that Prip had been working on for several years prior to their production.

William Arthur Smith Benson, English, 1854-1924
Teapot on Stand, 1914
Silver with fruitwood and cane
Gift of Jane and Phillip Johnston 1999.42

This impressive silver tea kettle on stand was made by a friend and business associate of William Morris, the most important English social and design reformer of the 19th century. Trained as an architect, Benson is best known for the design and manufacture of

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metal light fixtures, fireplace equipment, and tableware. By 1890, he had established workshops in London for machine production on a large scale. Benson's designs were highly influential at the turn of the century. They were widely admired in Europe and the United States, published in *House Beautiful*, and exhibited in France, Germany, Italy, and Scandinavia.

The Museum's silver collection is strong in American work, but weak in European silver of the early 20th century. This tea kettle combines traditional details (the spout recalls historical silver of the 1740s) with a modern form devoid of ornament. The leaf-shaped ends of the feet are a distinctive feature of Benson's other metalwork, but are rarely seen in sterling silver.

Cheryl Warrick, American, b. 1956
Suburban Evening (Langston Hughes Suite), 1996
Acrylic and graphite on paper
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1998.46

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a curator is to discover and nurture emerging talent. Cheryl Warrick came to the Museum's attention through the National Black Arts Fair, New York City. Later, her gallery and then her studio were visited. This object was selected after viewing a large and diverse body of consistently high quality work. Warrick is interested in the effects produced by layers of mixed media: acrylic, graphite, oil stick, and mica in *Suburban Evening*. The process of adding and removing the various materials renders sumptuous surfaces. This triptych drawing was inspired by childhood memories of her father reading poems by Langston Hughes to her. "Suburban Evening" by Langston Hughes:

*A dog howled.
Weird became the night.
No good reason
For my fright-
But reason often
May play host
To quiet
Unreasonable
Ghosts.*

Chinese

Portrait of Captain Samuel Snow of Providence, RI, wearing the Order of the Cincinnati, ca. 1800

Watercolor on ivory, gold, plaited hair

Elizabeth T. & Dorothy N. Casey Fund 1998.22

As museums consider and prepare for future exhibitions, opportunities arise to acquire relevant works of art, often as word spreads of an institution's growing interest and expertise in a specific area. At the same time, research adds to specialized knowledge that may help curators identify works of art that others have overlooked. In the course of research for an exhibition on the China Trade in Rhode Island, RISD curators were able to help a London art dealer identify the subject of this miniature portrait as Captain Samuel Snow of Providence.

An 1782 graduate of Brown University, officer in the Continental Army (entitling him to wear the prominent badge of the Society of the Cincinnati), and the second U. S. Consul to Canton, Snow was one of Rhode Island's most prominent merchants, but he eventually lost his fortune and died in obscurity. Snow Street in downtown Providence marks the site of his house. Miniature portraits of Americans painted in China are rare, and this is the first object of its kind to enter the Museum's collection. Intended as a keepsake for relatives at home, the back of the locket contains a length of Snow's hair.

