

*Modern and Contemporary Galleries PDP*, December 17, 2018-May 2019

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Peter Hujar, American, 1934-1987  
*Ethyl Eichelberger as Auntie Belle Emme*, 1979  
Gelatin silver print  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2009.14

Here American drag performer, dramatist, and actor Ethyl Eichelberger (1945–1990) portrays Auntie Belle Emme, a play on the word antebellum. Looking woefully into a small casket, Auntie Belle wears a hoop skirt and layered sleeves, fully embodying the fictional Civil War–era character.

Eichelberger began his acting career in Providence’s Trinity Repertory Company. He wrote plays that cast him in both male and female roles, but he was most celebrated for his explorations into the complex lives of influential women throughout history. Photographer Peter Hujar—who, like Eichelberger, was a renowned figure in the downtown New York avant-garde of the 1970s and ’80s—is known for his sensitive depictions of LGBTQIA community.

Simeon Solomon, English, 1840-1905  
*Title unknown*, 1896  
Watercolor on paper  
Museum Collection 73.029

In this moody monochromatic portrait, one of Solomon’s late works, he gives the veiled head features reminiscent of Greco-Roman statuary: a square jaw, straight nose, and androgynously beautiful face. This image is probably allegorical. Solomon was creating other works at this time with titles such as *Night Looking upon Sleep Her Beloved Child*. The painting, cast in a blue light against a starry sky, may portray Night. English Pre-Raphaelite artists—of which Solomon was one—favored motifs found in the late medieval and early Renaissance art that inspired them. Solomon also explored issues connected to his personal identity, including gender ambiguity, queer sexual desire, and Jewish themes.



# RISD MUSEUM

Ralston Crawford, American, 1906-1978  
*Marching Band, New Orleans Images: 1950-1960, 1956*  
Gelatin silver print  
Gift of Neelon Crawford 2000.113.11

The traditional jazz funeral originally functioned in the African American community as a ceremony to honor the deceased, then evolved to become a more spontaneous parade heralded by a brass band. The grand marshal leads parade participants as they navigate the streets, clearing the way for the marching band (or first line) and those who inevitably join the procession (the second line).

Ralston Crawford made frequent trips to photograph the New Orleans jazz scene in the 1950s, when his attention turned to black social events and the cultural landscape of the city —primarily its cemeteries, musicians, and parades.



Ralston Crawford, American, 1906-1978  
*Grand Marshal, from the portfolio New Orleans Images: 1950-1960, 1956*  
Gelatin silver print  
Gift of Neelon Crawford 2000.113.3

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# RISD MUSEUM

André Kertész, American, 1894-1985

QED

*Heron, New York, André Kertész/Still Life, 1969*

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Susan and Peter MacGill 2015.136.1.10

In this image, the amusing lack of interaction between the taxidermied bird and the human recalls absurdist attempts to discover value and meaning in mundane situations. The apparent stillness of both subjects also draws attention to the contrast between the inanimate heron and the idle man. *Heron, New York* reflects André Kertész's abiding concern for the relationships between things and his interest in the nature of shapes and the formal qualities of objects.



Elizabeth Catlett, Mexican, b. United States, 1915-2012

*Homage to the Panthers, 1993*

Color lithograph on paper

TL93.2018

Known for her political activism and her depictions of African American figures, sculptor and printmaker Elizabeth Catlett evokes the spirit of black liberation in this lithograph. The co-founders of the Black Panther Party—Huey P. Newton (left near bottom) and Bobby Seale (right near bottom)—are prominently featured. Catlett also incorporates symbols related to the Black Power movement, including raised fists and a rifle, the latter alluding to the organization's belief in armed resistance, community-led patrols, and self-defense. Their adoption of paramilitary tactics continues to eclipse historical memory of the Black Panthers' progressive socialist agenda, and the group is often wrongly described as dangerous. Here, Catlett humanizes members of the group while communicating their formidable presence and unwavering focus.

# RISD MUSEUM

Claude Cahun, French, 1894-1954

Marcel Moore, French, 1892 - 1972

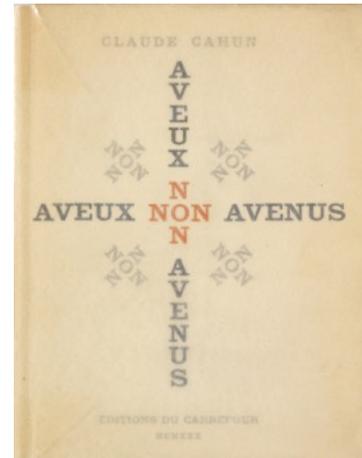
Carrefour Press

*Disavowals or Cancelled Confessions (Aveux non avenues)*, 1930

Illustrated book with eleven collotypes

Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.57

Part autobiography and part critique of that genre, Claude Cahun's text is accompanied by photomontages created by her partner, Marcel Moore, based on Cahun's designs. Placed at the introduction, conclusion, and in each of the nine chapters, the illustrations echo the fragmented nature and surrealist bent of Cahun's poems, aphorisms, and short reflections. The portraits of Cahun and the writing hold the artist's identity in flux, deliberately eschewing a fixed portrayal. The text in this image, written in French, translates to "Under this mask is another mask. I will never finish lifting these faces."



Rufino Tamayo, Mexican (Zapotec), 1899-1991

*Head of a Girl (Cabeza de Niña)*, 1942

Watercolor and gouache on paper

Museum Works of Art Fund 43.175

Painted in dark, muted colors, this striking portrait conveys a somber tone reinforced by the subject's facial expression. Her elongated and stylized face bears an empty gaze, as if she were lost in thought. The subject seems older than the title suggests, but that could reflect the past use of the term girl to refer to young women. Perhaps Rufino Tamayo was conveying the weight of existence during World War II. In 1942, Mexico entered the war. Tamayo, living in New York at the time, was also acutely aware of the war's toll on immigrant artists there.



# RISD MUSEUM

Rick E. Bartow, American (Mad River Band Wiyot), 1946 - 2016

Robert Franklin

*Crow Dance*, 1988

Color offset lithograph

Gift of the Brandywine Workshop and Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 2014.66.7

Although the crow's head is immediately apparent in this image, a closer inspection reveals a human face looking toward the viewer. Bartow often combined the male figure and the crow in his work; the man typically represents the artist, and the crow illustrates the spiritual force of his Indigenous ancestors. This composite figure seems to represent a transformation, with the energetic mark-making suggesting the urgency of Bartow's larger exploration of identity and his place in the world.



Jeanne Rij-Rousseau, French, 1870-1956

*Heightened Drawing (Dessin rehaussé)*, 1911

Charcoal and pastel with underdrawing in black colored pencil on laid paper

Gift of Stuart P. and Sue K. Feld 2008.117

In this shallow plane of angular shapes, a bowl-like form stands out. This is not only because of its central position, but because it contains some of the composition's only curved lines. Within the form are other more distinctly delineated objects that suggest this could be a still-life, a common subject for artists working in the Cubist style, as Jeanne Rij-Rousseau is, although her abstraction is quite extreme.

Rij-Rousseau exhibited in some of the major avant-garde exhibitions of the early 1900s, including the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne in Paris, but her work remains little known today.

Wangui Maina, American, b. 1989, (RISD MFA 2014, Printmaking)

*Waves on Swim (360)*, 2014

Etching and aquatint on Mitsumata paper

Gift of the artist 2014.69.2

This etching is printed on a transparent Japanese paper that echoes the softness of the floating circular shapes. The repeated pattern creates delightful rhythm against the smoky background.

Maina often takes inspiration from body adornments as an expression of a person's identity. The title refers to waves, a



# RISD MUSEUM

colloquial term used by African Americans to describe the close-cropped hairstyle that inspired the spiraling forms depicted here. For Maina, hair “can represent those parts of a person that are powerful, but fragile, and also curious, all at the same time. The hair then evolves into a kind of abstract, fantastical organism that seems to have a life of its own, separate from its owner.”

Amy Chan, American, b. 1978, (RISD BFA 2000, Painting)  
Lower East Side Print Shop  
*Views of the Mid-Atlantic (After Jean Julien Deltil)*, 2005  
Color screenprint on paper  
Gift of Carroll and Sons, Boston 2015.95

Inspired by designer Jean Julien Deltil’s 19th-century wallpaper *Views of North America* depicting landscapes of the American West, Amy Chan portrays an inhabited East Coast landscape in fragmented vignettes. She explains, “[H]uge glacial boulders . . . [are] found throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic. Too large to move . . . , they often become lawn ornaments and centerpieces for flowerbeds. In this piece, the wonders of Niagara Falls and the Natural Bridge appear to become the same kinds of ornaments, tamed and in danger of being overtaken by our suburban development.”

Chan’s bland colors recall modern commercial wallpapers. Her composition also refers to wallpaper production by creating a pattern that connects and repeats.

