

This Is a Thing: Recent Gifts to Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, 2020–2025

August 23, 2025 - February 15, 2026

At their core, museums of art and design are collections of a great variety of things acquired in different ways over time. *This Is a Thing* explores some of the works on paper given to the RISD Museum's Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Department between 2020 to 2025. Made between 1774 and 2022, these gifts are examples of thing-ness: object studies, built creations, still-lives, figures posed with or as objects, and things from the natural world.

Across this presentation, we delight in the many meanings of the word *thing*. Before it became a noun, *thing* was an Old English verb, used in the 1100s to suggest the action of meeting, assembly, or discussion. Its current dictionary definition spans 39 entries, holding contradictory truths. By gathering objects into these galleries and inviting conversations around them, we enact *thing's* original meaning. *Things* are actions and objects, creatures, ideas, and entities. *Thing* is a chameleon, something quite specific while also holding space for whatever cannot be precisely described.

The thing is, museums rely on a complex network of support to do the things that they do, including the development of meaningful and relevant collections. *This Is a Thing* draws attention to some of the great things that have recently made their way to the RISD Museum. It also explores why they were entrusted to us and celebrates the critical action of some of the many people who help us do the things we do.

[CM] Conor Moynihan, associate curator, Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Department, with curatorial assistance from

[PSS] Page Sonnet Sullivan (RISD BFA 2025, Photography | department assistant 2023–2025)

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CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Kevin Zucker (RISD BFA 2000, Painting; RISD faculty, Painting)
b. 1976; works in New York
Untitled; from the *Google Image Tragedy Studies, set 3*, 2007
Graphite, watercolor and inkjet on printed drafting aid
Gift of Van Doren Waxter **2020.19.2.1**

Interpretation

In these nine drawings by Kevin Zucker, shelves support what appears to be a random assortment of things, ranging from a book titled *Roman Hat Mystery* and a black sock to a field of tulips and a human corpse being pecked at by birds. Zucker used printed drafting-aid papers to give a sense of depth to the space, then drew in the shelves. After conducting a Google image search for “tragedy,” Zucker inkjet-printed some of the results and placed them on the shelves.

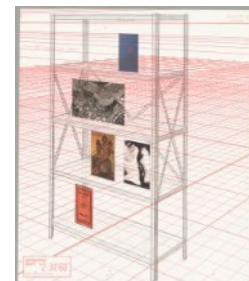
Acquisition note

These works by Kevin Zucker, who is both a RISD alum and a current RISD faculty member, were included in Zucker’s 2007 solo exhibition with Van Doren Waxter; the New York gallery then gifted the prints to the RISD Museum in 2020. While the museum’s collection holds examples of objects from all over the world and covers thousands of years of history, we take into consideration work by RISD alumni and faculty when making acquisitions or accepting gifts.

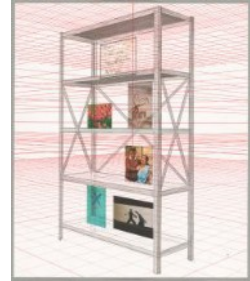
[CM]



Kevin Zucker (RISD BFA 2000, Painting; RISD faculty, Painting)
b. 1976; works in New York
Untitled; from the *Google Image Tragedy Studies, set 3*, 2007
Graphite, watercolor and inkjet on printed drafting aid
Gift of Van Doren Waxter **2020.19.2.2**



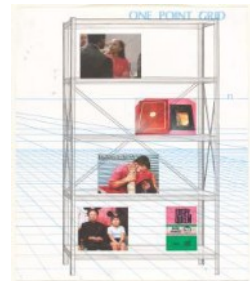
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b. 1976; works in New York
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Graphite, watercolor and inkjet on printed drafting aid
Gift of Van Doren Waxter 2020.19.2.3



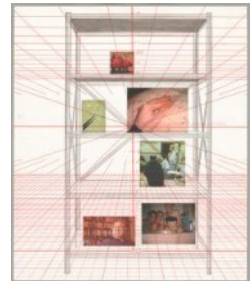
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Gift of Van Doren Waxter 2020.19.2.4



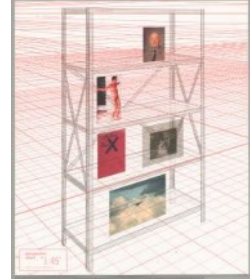
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Gift of Van Doren Waxter 2020.19.2.5



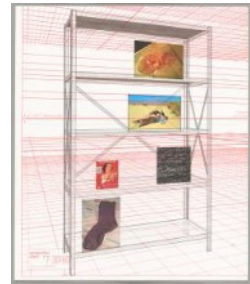
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Gift of Van Doren Waxter 2020.19.2.6



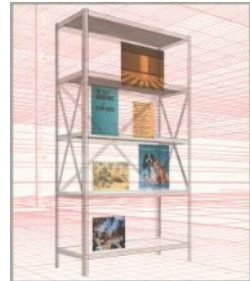
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Gift of Van Doren Waxter 2020.19.2.7



Kevin Zucker (RISD BFA 2000, Painting; RISD faculty, Painting)
b. 1976; works in New York
Untitled; from the *Google Image Tragedy Studies, set 3*, 2007
Graphite, watercolor and inkjet on printed drafting aid
Gift of Van Doren Waxter 2020.19.2.8



Kevin Zucker (RISD BFA 2000, Painting; RISD faculty, Painting)
b. 1976; works in New York
Untitled; from the *Google Image Tragedy Studies, set 3*, 2007
Graphite, watercolor and inkjet on printed drafting aid
Gift of Van Doren Waxter 2020.19.2.9



Donnamaria Bruton (RISD faculty 1992–2012, Painting)
1954–2012; b. in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; worked in Rhode Island
Domestic Series: Broom, ca. 1994
Monotype on gray paper
Gift of Cade Tompkins Projects and the Estate of Donnamaria Bruton
in honor of Jan Howard **2020.65.1**



Donnamaria Bruton (RISD faculty 1992–2012, Painting)
1954–2012; b. in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; worked in Rhode Island
Domestic Series: Pink Purse, ca. 1994
Monotype on gray paper
Gift of Cade Tompkins Projects and the Estate of Donnamaria Bruton
in honor of Maureen O'Brien **2020.65.2**



Interpretation

In these monotypes from Donnamaria Bruton's *Domestic Series*, headless figures are surrounded by an apron, broom, bowl, purse, and heels. Bruton both honors and critiques housework here, recognizing its importance while calling to mind the inequities of gender, class, and race it often reveals. Bruton's grandmother worked as a maid, personally informing the artist's understanding of domestic work.

To make these prints, Bruton applied pastel to a non-porous plate, overlaid it with paper, and ran it through a press.

Acquisition note

These prints from Donnamaria Bruton's *Domestic Series* came to the museum as gifts from Cade Tompkins Projects, a Providence gallery, while another two prints from the series were purchased from Tompkins. Museum curators and gallerists often work together over time, and combining gifts and purchases is not uncommon.

These works were acquired as the museum was developing the exhibition *Shahzia Sikander: Extraordinary Realities* (2021–2022). Sikander and Bruton were close friends and their practices informed each another.

[CM]

Keith Vaughan

1912–1977, b. in Selsey, West Sussex, UK; worked in London

Landscape, ca.1954

Opaque watercolor on paper

Gift of D. Patrick Maley and Nancy B. Turck **2021.19.8**



Cecil Collins

1908–1989; b. in Plymouth, Devon, UK; worked in London

The Approach, 1939

Soft-ground etching on paper

Gift of D. Patrick Maley and Nancy B. Turck **2021.19.13**



Interpretation

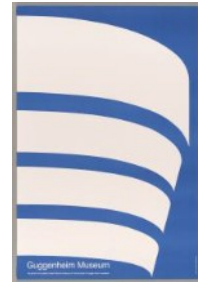
These works by British artists Keith Vaughan and Cecil Collins take two very different approaches to depicting the landscape. Vaughan (left) breaks it into rectangular forms and loose brushwork, suggesting a scene through his careful arrangement of simplified elements. Collins (right) demonstrates his engagement with surrealism: his landscape is populated by a grid of uncertain things lying on the ground.

Acquisition note

D. Patrick Maley and Nancy B. Turck gave the RISD Museum these and 12 other works in 2021. With the exception of one, all were by British artists. The RISD Museum has a strong collection of British works on paper from before the 1900s, as well as strong representation in modern and contemporary art by British artists. Many of these more recent works were given to the museum by the collector Richard Brown Baker, offering a wonderful context for Maley and Turck's gift.

[CM]

Malcolm Gear (RISD faculty 1960–1998, Graphic Design)
1931–2016; b. in Mill Springs, Kentucky; worked in Providence
Malcolm Gear Designers; 1960–ca. 2021; Providence, Rhode Island
*Guggenheim Museum: Issued on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary
of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1987*
Offset lithograph on paper
Gift of Malcolm Gear Designers **2021.69.8.1**



Malcolm Gear (RISD faculty 1960–1998, Graphic Design)
1931–2016; b. in Mill Springs, Kentucky; worked in Providence
Malcolm Gear Designers; 1960–ca. 2021; Providence, Rhode Island
*Guggenheim Museum: Issued on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary
of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1987*
Offset lithograph on paper
Gift of Malcolm Gear Designers **2021.69.8.2**



Malcolm Gear (RISD faculty 1960–1998, Graphic Design)
1931–2016; b. in Mill Springs, Kentucky; worked in Providence
Malcolm Gear Designers; 1960–ca. 2021; Providence, Rhode Island
*Guggenheim Museum: Issued on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary
of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1987*
Offset lithograph on paper
Gift of Malcolm Gear Designers **2021.69.8.3**



Interpretation

Here bold background colors offset and emphasize the white form depicting the Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Malcolm Gear, an influential graphic designer, designed this poster. It was released in 1987 to commemorate Wright's 150th birthday and the 50th anniversary of the Guggenheim Museum. Gear's studio did the Guggenheim's graphic-design work for 25 years.

Acquisition note

These works were given to the RISD Museum by Malcolm Gear Designers, the graphic-design studio founded in Providence in 1960. In addition to these and other posters it created, the studio gave the RISD Museum posters made in 1970 by RISD and Brown students on strike in protest of the Vietnam War. Protest posters, a strength of the RISD Museum's collection, are frequently researched by students.

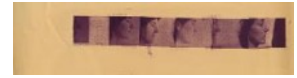
[CM]

Francesca Woodman (RISD BFA 1978, Photography)
1958–1981; b. in Boulder, Colorado; worked in Providence, New York,
and Rome

Profiles of some possible modern day caryatids, ca. 1980

Diazotype

Gift of Katy Homans and Patterson Sims in honor of Betty and George
Woodman 2022.15



Interpretation

Francesca Woodman made this print using paper coated with liquid containing diazonium compounds, which are sensitive to ultraviolet light. She overlaid the sheet with a positive transparency of a photograph she had taken, resulting in the diazotype, or blueprint, as this process is sometimes called.

In this work, five women's faces are seen in profile. Woodman casted her friends as caryatids, the Greek statues of women that serve as columns for buildings. Distinct from her other photographs, Woodman's temple blueprints feel peaceful. They may reflect the physical and metaphorical support she felt in her friendships.

Acquisition note

Active participants in the world of art, design, and curation, Katy Homans and Patterson Sims gave this work in honor of Francesca Woodman's parents, Betty and George Woodman, both of whom were also artists. Francesca Woodman graduated from RISD in 1978 with a BFA in photography, and diazotypes represent a notable part of her practice. This was the first of her blueprints to enter the RISD Museum's collection.

[PSS]

Aaron Siskind (RISD faculty 1971–1976, Photography)
1903–1991; b. in New York; worked in Chicago, New York, and
Providence
Viterbo Broom 49, 1967 (printed later)
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Joseph A. Chazan, MD 2022.71.10



Aaron Siskind (RISD faculty 1971–1976, Photography)
1903–1991; b. in New York; worked in Chicago, New York, and
Providence
Viterbo Broom 22, 1967 (printed later)
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Joseph A. Chazan, MD 2022.71.11



Interpretation

The striking abstract forms in these photographs are actually the natural fibers of broom bristles. Influenced by the bold energy of Abstract Expressionism, Aaron Siskind celebrated the interaction of light, structure, and texture in his photos. By focusing so closely on this object without otherwise manipulating it, Siskind invites us to see it not as an ordinary tool, but as a dynamic composition.

Acquisition note

Dr. Joseph A. Chazan (1935–2024) made a lasting impact on the RISD Museum, giving or helping the museum acquire more than 700 works. A devoted supporter of Rhode Island's arts community, he collected a number of photos by RISD faculty member Aaron Siskind (1903–1991). In 1983, Siskind himself funded the museum's Aaron Siskind Center for Photography, where students can explore photos such as these.

[CM]

RISD MUSEUM

Weimer Pursell

1906–1974; b. in Tennessee; worked in Chicago

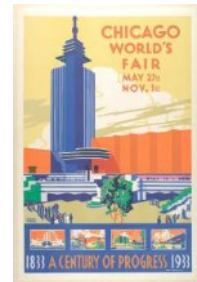
Neely Printing Company, publisher, 1922–before 1996; Chicago, Illinois

Chicago World's Fair - Hall of Science, 1933

Color lithograph on paper

In Memory of Vincent M. Love, Brown University, Class of 1954

2022.73.3



Interpretation

This poster uses simplified blocks of color to depict the Hall of Science at the Chicago World's Fair. The building housed exhibits that commemorated 100 years of American innovation in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geology, and medicine. A celebration of Chicago's centennial, the 1933 world's fair emphasized progress, showcasing technological advancements against the stark backdrop of a nation struggling with unemployment, food insecurity, and other societal issues that marked the Great Depression.

Acquisition note

This and seven other world's fair posters were recently given to the RISD Museum as a bequest from the estate of New York collector Vincent M. Love (1931–2020). Love, who completed his undergraduate studies at Brown University in American civilization, had two main focuses in his collection: shipping disasters, especially the Titanic, and world's fair posters. The RISD Museum has around 1,000 posters in its collection, with subject matter areas including government messaging and wartime propaganda, protest and activism, and world's fairs.

[CM]

RISD MUSEUM

Robert Heinecken

1931–2006; b. in Denver; worked in Los Angeles and Chicago

"Smells like nothing . . . Works like Crazy", 1972

Advertisement for Dial deodorant in October 1971 *Redbook* Magazine, with an offset-press print of a semi-nude woman overlaid by Heinecken

Gift of Jan Daniele 2022.110.2



Ruth Bernhard

1905–2006; b. in Berlin; worked in New York and California

Configuration, 1962

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Susan Ehrens 2022.111.1



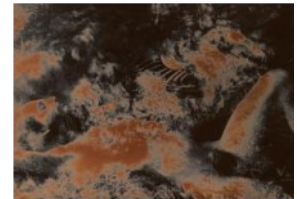
Edmund Teske

1911–1996; b. in Chicago; worked in Chicago and Los Angeles

Jeffrey Harris, in the role of Shiva, 1983

Gelatin silver print, duotone solarization composite

Gift of Leland Rice 2022.112.7



Interpretation

Nude bodies are often viewed as objects of desire rather than as subjects of erotic power, but these works use layering to complicate that perspective. In Ruth Bernhard's image, a shadow stretches across a woman's bare torso. Robert Heinecken combines a pornographic image and a deodorant advertisement to critique the commodification of sex. Edmund Teske references Hindu mythology in his depiction of a man lying beside animal bones. Across these portraits, things—and the shadows of things—hold active roles.

Acquisition note

Based in the San Francisco area, collectors Susan Ehrens, Leland Rice, and Jan Daniele know one other and have given photographs to the RISD Museum in concert with one another. A photo historian born in Rhode Island, longtime museum supporter Ehrens has given important photographs in part due to her affection for her home state. Rice, a photographer, has likewise donated work to the museum over the same two decades, whereas Daniele has connected with the RISD Museum more recently. Gifts like theirs have shaped the museum's photography collection in important ways.

[PSS]

Anne W. Brigman
1869–1950; b. in Nuʻuanu Pali, Hawaii; worked in California
The Dying Cedar, 1906
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Susan Ehrens in honor of Jan Howard **2022.111.5**



Interpretation

Consider how the woman blends into the dying tree, her arms becoming bent branches and her dress a dark hollow. In Anne W. Brigman's photographs, women are not separate from nature, but a powerful part of it. Contrasting with the rigid norms of gender and domesticity in the early 1900s, the nude women in Brigman's images belong to the wild natural world. Brigman's photos feel like tributes to the lives of trees, the beauty of her friends, and the larger spirit of freedom they envision.

Acquisition note

Art historian Susan Ehrens is a specialist on the work of Anne W. Brigman. Brigman influenced a number of photographers in the RISD Museum's collection, including Imogen Cunningham, Judy Dater, and Laura Aguilar, but prior to Ehrens's 2022 gift of this print, the museum had no examples of Brigman's work. Ehrens made this donation in honor of someone—a common practice—in this case Jan Howard, the museum's curator emerita for prints, drawings, and photographs. Ehrens also gave the photograph by Ruth Bernhard (on the adjacent wall to the left).

[PSS]

Jack Pierson

b. 1960 in Plymouth, Massachusetts; works Southern California and New York

Self Portrait #28, 2008

Pigment print

Gift of Avo Samuelian and Hector Manuel Gonzalez **2023.66.10**



Interpretation

Surrounded by the tools of portrait photography—lights, pedestal, backdrop—a figure gazes out at us, both desirable and desiring. The model, contrary to the title, is not the artist; Jack Pierson's self-portrait series actually depicts a variety of other people at different stages of life. Highlighting the act of representing the self while revealing the mechanics that go into it, Pierson is perhaps ruminating on crafting himself as the object of desire—photographically akin to how a sculptor might work.

Acquisition note

Since 2017, collectors Avo Samuelian and Manuel Gonzalez have given 177 objects to the RISD Museum, primarily to the departments of Contemporary Art and Prints, Drawings, and Photographs. Their collection emphasizes young and emerging artists, providing critical support at the early part of their careers.

Gifts from Samuelian and Gonzalez were central to the recent RISD Museum exhibitions *Any distance between us* (2021–2022), *Variance: Making, Unmaking, and Remaking Disability* (2022), and *The Performative Self-Portrait* (2023).

[CM]

Peter Winslow Milton

b. 1930 in Lower Merion Township, Pennsylvania; works in New Hampshire

Interiors IV: Hotel Paradise Café (state 10), 1987

Resist-ground etching and engraving

Gift of John Szoke **2023.100.3**



Peter Winslow Milton

b. 1930 in Lower Merion Township, Pennsylvania; works in New Hampshire

Interiors V: Water Music, 1987

Resist-ground etching and engraving

Gift of John Szoke **2023.100.4**



Interpretation

These prints present spaces somewhere between reality and dream, where vibrant activity has suddenly been frozen. Artist Peter Milton works only in black ink—a practice he has committed to since discovering he has red-green colorblindness, or deuteranopia—but he nonetheless demonstrates the incredible work a single color can do. While the figures pull us in, it is the many things in these prints that heighten their fantastical qualities, whether the sparkling champagne glasses in the print on the left or the shimmering, floating mirage of a whale at right.

Acquisition note

These works, accompanied by three other prints by the same artist, were given to the RISD Museum by John Szoke, whose gallery specializes in prints by Pablo Picasso and Edvard Munch. Szoke worked with art historian Ann Schafer to place his gift here at RISD, a school with a strong printmaking program.

[CM]

Friedrich St.Florian (RISD faculty 1963–2005, Professor of Architecture)
1932–2024; b. in Graz, Austria; worked in Providence and Rome
Imaginary Architecture Exhibition, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1969
Color photograph transparency on acrylic mount
Gift of the artist **2023.101.13**



Friedrich St.Florian (RISD faculty 1963–2005, Professor of Architecture)
1932–2024; b. in Graz, Austria; worked in Providence and Rome
Imaginary Architecture Exhibition, 1969
Gelatin silver print
Gift of the artist **2023.101.14**



Interpretation

Bright light silhouettes the people shown in these photographs, including architect Friedrich St.Florian himself in the image on the right. In the 1960s, St.Florian explored imagined architecture projects, highlighting the conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of the built environment. In those works, he designed spaces defined by laser beams. This approach posed challenges, however, as laser beams are not visible in pure air. To solve this, St.Florian created hazy conditions to make the light visible, which included encouraging gallery staff to smoke in the exhibition spaces.

Acquisition note

These photographs were part of a 2023 gift of 58 objects from Friedrich St.Florian. An architect with significant international, national, and local projects, St.Florian was a longtime RISD faculty member. He left the RISD Museum his archive, which spans imaginative projects, built projects, and design concepts, so that students and historians could learn from his work. Architectural drawings of his home and studio are on view in the next gallery. St.Florian passed away in 2024.

[CM]

Friedrich St.Florian (RISD faculty 1963–2005, Architecture)
1932–2024; b. in Graz, Austria; worked in Providence and Rome
St.Florian Studio Residence, First Design Version (Interior View of Studio), 1988

Graphite, color pencil, and ink on tracing paper

Gift of the artist **2023.101.23**

Friedrich St.Florian (RISD faculty 1963–2005, Architecture)
1932–2024; b. in Graz, Austria; worked in Providence and Rome
St.Florian Studio Residence, First Design Version (Cross Section through Entrance Hall), 1988

Graphite, color pencil, and ink on tracing paper

Gift of the artist **2023.101.24**

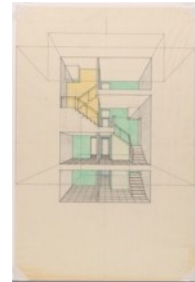
Interpretation

Friedrich St.Florian carefully delineated the interior of his Providence home and workspace in these cross-section drawings, which use lines that recede to a center point to create a sense of space. The architectural renderings prepared the way for St.Florian's design to be constructed. St.Florian lived and worked in this Providence home along with his wife Livia Campanella, an abstract painter.

Acquisition note

These design drawings were part of a gift of 58 objects that Friedrich St.Florian gave to the RISD Museum in 2023. An architect who designed significant international, national, and local projects, St.Florian was a longtime faculty member in the Architecture Department at RISD. He left the RISD Museum his archive, which spans imaginative projects, built projects, and design concepts, so that future scholars and historians could learn from his materials. Two photographs from his "imaginary architecture" practice are on view in the next gallery. St.Florian passed away in 2024.

[CM]



Edward Grazda (RISD BFA 1969, Photography)
 b. 1947 in Queens, New York; works in Providence
Mycroyan Apartments, Kabul, Afghanistan (housing projects built by the Soviets), 1992
 Gelatin silver print
 Gift of Virginia Beahan **2023.155.12**



Edward Grazda (RISD BFA 1969, Photography)
 b. 1947 in Queens, New York; works in Providence
Mycroyan Apartments, Kabul, Afghanistan (the apartments were one of the front lines during the civil war (1992-1996), 1997
 Gelatin silver print
 Gift of Virginia Beahan **2023.155.13**



Edward Grazda (RISD BFA 1969, Photography)
 b. 1947 in Queens, New York; works in Providence
Kabul, Afghanistan (people moving back into Mycroyan apartments), 1997
 Archival pigment print
 Gift of Virginia Beahan **2023.155.14**



Interpretation

These images, taken over a period of five years, highlight how architecture reflects human struggle and resilience. They document apartments in Kabul, Afghanistan, before, during, and after the 1992 overthrow of the Soviet-backed regime. The buildings appear ordinary in the first image, bombed out in the second, and repaired and returned to life in the third. Edward Grazda has photographed extensively in Afghanistan and Afghan communities around the US since 1980.

Acquisition note

Photographer Virginia Beahan collected this work by her friend Edward Grazda. She gave these images to the museum because of Grazda's connection to RISD, and also to ensure that future generations of photographers and visitors could study them in our print classrooms and in the galleries. A relatively early graduate from RISD's photography program, Grazda studied with Harry Callahan, who established a photography concentration within RISD's Graphic Design Department in 1957 before he created the photography MFA program in 1963.

[CM]

Geneviève de Nangis Regnault, French, 1746–1802

Nicolas-François Regnault, French, 1746–ca. 1810

Le Domte—Venin

From the book *La botanique mise à la portée de tout le monde (Botany Brought into Reach for Everyone)*, 1774–1780

Engraving with hand-coloring and letterpress on paper

Gift of Steven G. Levine and Freeman T. Freeman **2024.4.9**



Geneviève de Nangis Regnault, French, 1746–1802

Nicolas-François Regnault, French, 1746–ca. 1810

Le Melilot

From the book *La botanique mise à la portée de tout le monde (Botany Brought into Reach for Everyone)*, 1774–1780

Engraving with hand-coloring and letterpress on paper

Gift of Steven G. Levine and Freeman T. Freeman **2024.4.10**



Interpretation

These images depict the plants commonly known as white swallow-wort and sweet clover, describing them from root system to bloom to seed and detailing how they can be used. The prints were originally plates in a book by artist, physician, and botanist Nicolas-François Regnault and Geneviève de Nangis Regnault, his wife. While some of the plates were made by Nicolas-François after Geneviève's drawings, Geneviève engraved many of the plates herself, including these two here.

Women played a sizable role in the field of botany in Europe in the 1700s. The subject matter was considered suitable for their gender, and they could hone their drawing skills through diligent observation.

Acquisition note

Collectors Steven G. Levine and Freeman T. Freeman have long held direct relationships with the RISD Museum: Levine served as a docent for many years and Freeman was a conservation volunteer in preparation for the 2019 exhibition *Gorham Silver: Designing Brilliance 1850–1970*. The wide-ranging art collection they built over their five-decade relationship reflects their varied tastes, interests, and travels. In 2024 they gave a portion of their collection to the museum, promising more works in the future. These prints reflect the couple's early focus on botanical studies. Levine passed away in 2025.

[CM]

Florence Cary Koehler
1861–1944; b. in Jackson, Michigan; worked in Kansas City, Chicago,
London, Paris, and Rome
Floral Arrangement with Red and White Flowers, ca. 1900–1944
Tempera on paper
Gift of The Sharpe Family **2024.41.3**



Nell Warren Blaine
1922–1996; b. in Richmond, Virginia; worked in New York and
Massachusetts
Center Street Studio, printer; 1984–present; Milton, Massachusetts
Gloucester Bouquet, 1986
Etching on paper
Gift of Joseph and Pamela Yohlin **2024.105.4**



Interpretation

These works explore floral bouquets in different ways. On the left, Florence Cary Koehler emphasizes color through her broad brushstrokes, whereas Nell Blaine reduced her composition to all black lines. This print was a test proof; Blaine went on to print from this plate in multiple colors.

Primarily remembered as a jeweler, Koehler also drew and painted. Blaine, a painter and printmaker, was initially drawn to abstraction. Both works show how artists can use conventional subject matter to deploy their unique styles.

Acquisition note

These two works share common subject matter, but they come from different donors. Across several generations, members of the Sharpe family have generously supported the RISD Museum and championed the work of Florence Cary Koehler, a family friend. In 2024, the Sharpes gave more than 100 examples of Koehler's work to both the RISD Museum and Fleet Library. Joseph and Pamela Yohlin recently connected with the museum, promoting the post-1960s American artists in their collection.

[CM]

Sheng Qi 盛奇

b. 1965 in Anhui, China; works in London

My Left Hand (Mother), 2004

Chromogenic print

Gift of Larry Warsh and Museum purchase: gift of Mark Pollack (RISD BFA 1976, Textiles) **2024.97.11**



Interpretation

Here artist Sheng Qi 盛奇 holds a black-and-white photo of his mother in his left hand. His pinky finger is notably missing against a background of vivid red, a color symbolizing warning. In response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square political protests, Sheng cut off his finger and buried it in a pot of Chinese soil before departing on a self-imposed exile, allowing part of him to remain in the country he loved. This work embodies memory and loss, as well as defiance and self-determination. Sheng has noted: "Cutting off my finger was my proudest moment."

Acquisition note

Art collector Larry Warsh began acquiring contemporary Chinese photography in the 1990s—a pivotal time for the medium in China. He recently gave the RISD Museum 26 works by Chinese artists active in the 1990s and early 2000s, including this work and four photographs by Cang Xin 蒼鑫. These are the first examples of contemporary Chinese photography to enter the RISD Museum's collection. Administrative support for Warsh's gift was generously provided by RISD alum and donor Mark Pollack.

[CM]

Cang Xin 蒼鑫

b. 1967 in Inner Mongolia, China; works in Beijing

Untitled

from the *Communication Series II* (交流系列 2 Jiaoliu xilie 2), 1999

Chromogenic print

Gift of Larry Warsh and Museum purchase: gift of Mark Pollack (RISD BFA 1976, Textiles) **2024.97.14.1**



Cang Xin 蒼鑫

b. 1967 in Inner Mongolia, China; works in Beijing

Untitled

from the *Communication Series II* (交流系列 2 Jiaoliu xilie 2), 1999

Chromogenic print

Gift of Larry Warsh and Museum purchase: gift of Mark Pollack (RISD BFA 1976, Textiles) **2024.97.14.2**



Cang Xin 蒼鑫

b. 1967 in Inner Mongolia, China; works in Beijing

Untitled

from the *Communication Series II* (交流系列 2 Jiaoliu xilie 2), 1999

Chromogenic print

Gift of Larry Warsh and Museum purchase: gift of Mark Pollack (RISD BFA 1976, Textiles) **2024.97.14.4**



Cang Xin 蒼鑫

b. 1967 in Inner Mongolia, China; works in Beijing

Untitled

from the *Communication Series II* (交流系列 2 Jiaoliu xilie 2), 1999

Chromogenic print

Gift of Larry Warsh and Museum purchase: gift of Mark Pollack (RISD BFA 1976, Textiles) **2024.97.14.6**



Interpretation

Only showing the bottom of his face, Cang Xin 蒼鑫 captures himself licking a series of things: a glass sphere, a bronze artifact, a portrait of the Chinese chieftain and military strategist Nurhaci (1558–1626), and three wooden seals.

Cang began his four-part *Communication Series* in 1995, in the wake of the Chinese government's response to his radical artistic practice. During that period of isolation and anxiety, he suddenly felt the strong urge to lick everything around him as an alternative way to communicate. In his series, he focused on objects that relate directly to Chinese culture.

Acquisition note

Art collector Larry Warsh began acquiring contemporary Chinese photography in the 1990s—a pivotal time for the medium in China. In 2024, he gave the RISD Museum 26 works by Chinese artists active in the 1990s and early 2000s, including these works and the photograph by Sheng Qi 盛奇 at the entrance to this gallery. These are the first examples of contemporary Chinese photography to enter the RISD Museum's collection. Administrative support for Warsh's gift was generously provided by RISD alum and donor Mark Pollack.

[CM]

Bo Joseph (RISD BFA 1992, Painting)
b. 1969 in Berkeley, California; works in New York
Holding Spaces: Domesticated Animism, 2022
Oil pastel, acrylic, and tempera on joined paper
Gift of the artist 2025.33

Interpretation

Dominated by the color red, this drawing uses line to describe both the space in the work and the shapes within it. In his Holding Spaces series, Bo Joseph references photos of public and private collections of “tribal art,” in particular the sculptural arts of Africa and Oceania, which are directly tied to colonialist histories. After working out his composition, Joseph applied and removed media to sheets of paper by coating, scraping, and rinsing. He then reassembled the sheets and added more line work with oil pastel.

It can be hard to discern what is being depicted here. Joseph has commented that his work shows “cultural objects that have come into purview because of societal friction points, conflict, and outright plunder throughout history.”

Acquisition note

Bo Joseph studied under Alfred DeCredico, who taught drawing at RISD for many years. DeCredico had a lasting impact on Joseph, and they maintained a close and collaborative relationship after Joseph’s graduation. With this gift of his own work, Joseph also gave nine works by DeCredico.

In his teaching, DeCredico underscored that drawing can be just as important and vital as painting and sculpture, a conviction clearly evident in Joseph’s work.

[CM]

