

# Mirabile Dictu

The Bryn Mawr College Library Newsletter



*Harrison Fisher, 1918, American Lithographic Co. N.Y.*

*Fall, 2014*

*Issue 17*

# Mirabile Dictu

## The Bryn Mawr College Library Newsletter

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### Calendar

2 Sept. 19 (Friday) - ***Rare Gifts: An Exhibition in***  
3 ***Celebration of the Library's Friends.*** Opening. Second  
4 Floor Gallery, Canaday Library  
5 Sept. 26 (Friday) – ***Friday Finds: World War I.*** Elizabeth  
5 Reilly 2014 and Marianne Hansen. 3:00 pm. Special  
5 Collections Seminar Room, Second Floor, Canaday Library  
6 Sept. 30 (Tuesday) – ***Carolee Schneemann at Bryn Mawr.***  
6 Opening. The show runs September 30-December 12, 2014  
7 7:00 pm Performative lecture by Carolee Schneeman.  
7-8 Hepburn Teaching Theater  
8:00 pm Reception. Class of 1912 Rare Book Room  
Gallery, Canaday Library

Oct. 7 (Tuesday) – ***Slavery By Another Name.*** Abridged  
film screening, featured talk, and discussion. Ruth Wilson  
Gilmore. Carpenter Library B21

Oct. 24 (Friday) – ***Friday Finds: Gifts of Jacqueline***  
***Koldin Levine, Class of 1946, and Howard H. Levine.***  
Shannon Steiner, graduate student. 3:00 pm. Special  
Collections Seminar Room, Second Floor, Canaday Library

Nov. 5 (Wednesday) – **Lecture by Melissa Ragona**  
(Carnegie Mellon University) - *Carolee Schneemann at*  
*Bryn Mawr* exhibition event. 12:30 pm. Visual Culture  
Colloquium. Thomas Hall 224

Nov. 8 (Saturday) – **Screening of *Breaking the Frame* and**  
**Gallery Talk**  
2:00 pm. Screening at Bryn Mawr Film Institute, 824  
Lancaster Avenue, Bryn Mawr. Admission charged  
5:00 pm. Informal gallery talk by Brian Wallace in the  
*Carolee Schneemann at Bryn Mawr* exhibition. Class of  
1912 Rare Book Room Gallery, Canaday Library

Nov. 21 (Friday) – ***Friday Finds: African Art Collection.***  
Whitney Lopez 2015. 3:00 pm. Special Collections  
Seminar Room, Second Floor, Canaday Library

Jan. 22 (Thursday) – ***Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab***  
***World Uprisings.*** Opening  
7:30 pm. Lecture by exhibition curator Christiane Gruber.  
Carpenter Library B21

### Friends of the Library Board Members 2014-2015

Teresa Wallace '79, Chair  
Alexa Aldridge '57  
Judith L. Bardes '53  
Sandra Berwind MA '61, PhD '68  
Jeannine Cattie, MA 2008  
Michèle Cahen Cone '51  
Margaretta Frederick, PhD '96  
Margery Peterson Lee '51  
Elisa Tractman Lewis, MA '95  
Maxine Lewis '58  
Joanna Semel Rose '52  
Steven D. Rothman  
Mary Scott MA '86 (Emerita)  
Barbara Teichert '75  
Jane Miller Unkefer '55  
Trina Vaux

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Canaday Library, 101 N. Merion Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA  
19010, published once a year.  
To join the Friends of the Library or renew your  
membership, please visit our website:  
<http://www.brynmawr.edu/library/fol.html>  
Editor and Layout: Marianne Hansen



## From the Director

Dear Friends of the Library,

As I started to write and describe this year's exciting events, I became curious about the Friends' history. Some fascinating time spent in the Archives revealed a tradition of generosity that has made so much possible for the libraries and library programs of this Scholarly Sister.

The *Alumnae Bulletin* records the establishment of the Friends of the Bryn Mawr College Library in 1951: "The purpose of the group is to interest book-lovers all over the country in the development of the M. Carey Thomas Library; to secure, through their contributions, an income for the purchase of books and periodicals, and to encourage donations of special collections and rare books." From the very beginning, the Friends was conceived as a national and international group of alumnae and "non-Bryn Mawr neighbors, many of whom already know and use the library and some of whom have wanted to do something in return."

The Mariam Coffin Canaday Library opened in 1970, made possible by the gift of Ward and Mariam Canaday and the gifts of many other Friends. Mariam Canaday 1906 said at the ceremony, "Would you believe that in 1902 all the library we had was the top floor of old Taylor Hall? ... In 1905, the M. Carey Thomas Library with its baronial hall and its cloisters was to be the last word in libraries. But knowledge 'grew from more to more,' as it must do, and so did books on all sorts of subjects.... Now at last, it is a tribute to Katherine McBride [herself a life member of the Friends of the Library] that splendid gifts of rare and of valuable and of essential books are already flowing into this spacious new library."



*Endymion comes home*



It has been a joy to see many of our current Friends appearing in letters and meeting minutes in the archives over decades. Continuing a rich tradition, this year you have contributed to the conservation of such treasures as the Endymion statue recently moved into Carpenter Library, and many wonderful exhibits, including the special exhibition to be mounted as part of President Kim Cassidy's inauguration on September 20, 2014.

We have received a generous gift this summer from Margery Peterson Lee, Class of 1951, endowing a fund to be used in unrestricted support of the Bryn Mawr Libraries and library programs. Margery is a life member of the Friends and a member of the Friends Board since 1986. Her dedicated service and contributions of time, resources, and leadership over the years have meant much to the Libraries. Thank you, Margery, for your gift and for helping to keep the Libraries vibrant as we roll forward.

With *Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab World Uprisings*, opening in January 2015, we launch a new Friends program of inviting individual sponsors to lead the way in funding particular exhibits. The lead sponsor for this exhibit and its associated programs will be Teresa Wallace, who is celebrating ten generous years as President of the Friends. Many thanks to Teresa for initiating this new sponsorship model. Please let us know if you'd like to consider sponsoring an upcoming event.

We hope to see you at the Inauguration, the exhibits, and gatherings throughout the year, and we hope you will bring along a few neighbors and new Friends!

With deep appreciation,  
Gina Siesing  
Chief Information Officer & Constance A. Jones  
Director of Libraries

## Carolee Schneemann at Bryn Mawr: video sculptures, photographs, manuscripts, and a performative lecture

Carolee Schneemann has worked for over fifty years as a solo artist and with other individual practitioners and groups. Her paintings, photo-documents, installations, writings, performances, and other works address the aesthetic, political, and personal dimensions of sexuality and self through thoughtfully provocative juxtapositions of images and ideas.

This exhibition shows an artist focusing on the contradictions and connections engendered in the cultural and the personal body she inhabits, identifies, and constantly homes in on. *Venus Vectors* (1987) is the centerpiece of the exhibition. This large sculptural work incorporates transparent acrylic panels displaying iconographic images of the human body and other organic forms with two video monitors showing edited performances of Schneemann's *Fresh Blood: A Dream Morphology*. The work glitters with reflected and generated imagery, implicating the viewer and the surrounding space into the experience of the work. *Fresh Blood* insists upon what the artist articulates as a vulva-centric approach to explore menstrual blood and taboos which set the female body apart.



Carolee Schneemann, *Vulva's Morphia*, 1995, courtesy the artist and P.P.O. W. Gallery

In *Vulva's Morphia* (1995), a “visual grid with text,” stacked horizontal bands of ironic text and depictions of vulvas encapsulate a sensitive young individual's encounters

with the powerful ideologies that structure language, education, self-awareness, and philosophy. “Vulva deciphers Lacan and Baudrillard and discovers she is only a sign, a signification of the void, of absence, of what is not male...” says one of the texts.

In the artist's book *Cézanne: She Was A Great Painter* (1975-76) Schneemann admits that in her youth she mistakenly believed that the Post-Impressionist artist was a woman named something-Anne. The lessons she drew from the process of accommodating to historical fact while maintaining

psychological and creative independence range from the bitterly regretful to the luminously optimistic and address the fundamental tenets of doctrinal art history.

Along with other photographic, print, and sculptural works, the exhibition will include three film/video works: *Water Light/Water Needle* (Lake Mah Wah, NJ) (1966), *Body Collage* (1967), and *Mysteries of the Pussies* (1998-2010). Each shows the artist working alone or with others, to enact her personal and cultural knowledge of embodiment – and to reveal the personal and cultural embodiment of knowledge. These artistic tactics are consistent across Schneemann's career and have inspired many of today's contemporary practitioners, critics, and audiences.

*Carolee Schneemann at Bryn Mawr* will run September 30 - December 12, 2014 in the Class of 1912 Rare Book Room Gallery, Canady Library. A performative lecture by Schneemann in the Hepburn Teaching Theater followed by a gallery reception will mark the opening of the exhibition. During the exhibition, the Bryn Mawr Film Institute will screen *Breaking the Frame* (2012), a documentary on Schneemann's work and life directed by Marielle Nitoslawska; exhibition curator Brian Wallace will give a gallery talk; and the Center for Visual Culture will present a lecture by Carnegie Mellon scholar Melissa Ragona on the artist's complicated relations with feminist theory and practice.



Victoria Vesna, Carolee Schneemann with “Venus Vectors,” ca. 1985; gelatin silver print; courtesy Carolee Schneemann



## *Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab World Uprisings*

This winter, Bryn Mawr will host the traveling exhibition *Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab World Uprisings*. The exhibit explores the visual arts and other expressive media from the recent political unrest in the Arab World, often known as the Arab Spring. The opening will feature a talk by exhibition curator Christiane Gruber at 7:30 pm on January 22nd in Carpenter Library B21. Gruber is Associate Professor of Islamic Art and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Art History at the University of Michigan, the author of two books and numerous articles on Islamic art, and is actively engaged with contemporary art in the Middle East. She is the editor, with Sune Haugbolle, of *Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East: Rhetoric of the Image* (2013), and has written on political art in Turkey and post-revolutionary Iran.

The curators of *Creative Dissent* wrote the following on the importance of art in the Arab Spring: "Images are often used as communicative devices to present politicized messages. During the recent Arab World uprisings ... activists, protesters, artists, and other individuals adopted the expressive media – including videos, photographs, painted and digital images, as well as slogans, music, and even puppets – to create visualized and performed modes of dissent within public space, both in the streets and online."

The exhibition will open Thursday, January 22, 2015 and will run through Friday, March 6, 2015. Additional lectures and film showings will be announced later this fall. The exhibition was originally shown at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan from November 2013 to February 2014. The website for the exhibition can be found at <http://artsoftheArabWorldUprisings.com/>.

*Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab World Uprisings* is a collaboration between the Arab American National Museum and guest curators, Christiane Gruber and Nama Khalil of the University of Michigan. This exhibition is made possible in part by The Kresge Foundation. The exhibition at Bryn Mawr is made possible by support from the Friends of the Bryn Mawr College Library, and particularly exhibition sponsor Teresa Wallace, member of the Class of 1979 and President of the Friends of the Library.

## *Ancient Life on Greek Pottery*

Greek pottery is one of the major areas of the Art and Artifact collection, and research into the College's holdings is an ongoing focus of activity in the department. Along with digitization of records and images (go to <http://triarte.brynmawr.edu/> and search "Greek pottery") the College has hosted investigators looking at the vessels' aesthetics, manufacture, distribution, and significance to their original audiences and to the generations who rediscovered and continue to interpret them.

One of these researchers, classical archaeologist and Bryn Mawr College research associate Robert Sutton,

professor emeritus at Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis (and Haverford College Archaeology 1969), has been working with the collection for two years, sharing his knowledge of classical culture, of the entwined histories of archaeology and collecting, and of the pots themselves. Sutton is curating an exhibition that brings better- and lesser-known examples from the collection into dialog in order to show how various disciplinary approaches to

Greek pottery combine to reveal a complicated portrait of the people and the cultures associated with these wares. From personal items to ritual objects, from pristine examples to enigmatic fragments, and from intimate depictions to mythic expressions, Sutton's selections will illustrate the breadth and the scope of the collection and offer insights into an ancient world that can seem simultaneously remote and familiar.



*Finger puppet of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Courtesy of Masasit Mati, 2013 and the Arab American National Museum*

### **Friday Finds!**

New this year – a series of informal talks by students, staff, and faculty on highlights of our collections, Friday afternoons, at 3:00 pm once a month. Look for Elizabeth Reilly 2014 on our World War I diaries and manuscripts (Sept. 26), Shannon Steiner on her work on the art donated by Jacqueline and Howard Levine (Oct. 24), and Whitney Lopez 2015 on the African art collection.

## A New Phase in the Work of the Greenfield Digital Center

In July 2014, Monica L. Mercado joined the Bryn Mawr College Libraries as the second Director of The Albert M. Greenfield Digital Center for the History of Women's Education. Monica earned a Ph.D. from the Department of History at the University of Chicago, with a focus on women and American religion. From 2007-2014, Monica worked with the University of Chicago's Special Collections Research Center on two campus history projects, and brings that experience to Bryn Mawr where she will connect the Center to digitization projects at the Library and expand the Center's scholarly outreach. Monica has been awarded a Council on Library and Information Resources Postdoctoral Fellowship in Academic Libraries, and will teach a Spring semester class on the history of women's education, drawing on the resources of the College Archives. She first became acquainted with the Center in 2013 as a presenter at our inaugural conference, *Women's History in the Digital World*, and looks forward to organizing our second national conference at Bryn Mawr in 2015.



Monica Mercado

We are also delighted to announce that in April 2014, the Library was awarded a one-year planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support the development of a collaborative project with Barnard College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, Vassar College, Wellesley College, and the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University. Launching in 2015, our *History of Women's Education Open Access Portal Project* will gather letters, diaries and scrapbooks from the first generations of "Seven Sisters" students, offering researchers new access and insights into the experiences of women at our institutions in their founding years and beyond. Scholarly and public use of the collections is currently impeded by their dispersal across the seven campuses and by limited digitization of the items. We also hope the project will provide a model for similar multi-repository collaborations, with long-term goals of developing common standards for cataloging, transcription, and digitization of student materials so that they might be accessible through a single site. The grant will be directed by Eric Pumroy, Seymour Adelman Head of Special Collections, and came out of the work of the Center and its former director, Jennifer Redmond.

Over the past year the Center has also produced new content for our website and blog (<http://greenfield.brynmaur.edu/>), including digital exhibitions about the Summer School for Women Workers in Industry and the experiences of students and staff of color. The latter project, entitled "A Point of Difference: Diversity at Bryn Mawr College," was organized by Alexis De La Rosa

2015 and Lauren Footman 2014 in the summer of 2013. This summer, our TriCoDH intern Brenna Levitin 2016 has been mining the College Archives and conducting oral histories to document the history of Bryn Mawr's LGBT community for a digital exhibition that will be published later this year. These undergraduate research projects suggest to us ways in which the Center can be part of a conversation about student life, and how it is documented in the College Archives. We encourage readers to visit the site and share comments on these and other initiatives as the Center looks forward to its third year!

### *Created Equal* Series Continues

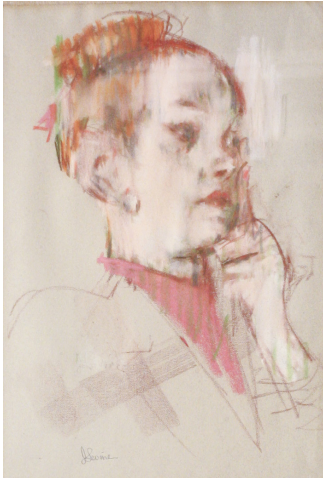
The *Created Equal* film series continues this year with an abridged screening of *Slavery by Another Name* followed by a talk by Ruth Wilson Gilmore, CUNY, and a discussion. Based on the Pulitzer-Prize winning book by Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery By Another Name* tells the story of the immense system of forced, unpaid labor that lasted from the post-Civil War era until World War II in the American South. Professor Gilmore, the Greater Philadelphia Women's Studies Consortium 2014 Scholar in Residence, will present a lecture, "Mass Incarceration Today: Understanding the Present Conjuncture," discussing the current categories, characterization, and consequences of abolition versus incremental reform in order to develop a useful analysis of the prison-industrial complex. The screening begins at 4:30 pm, October 7, 2014, in Carpenter Library B21.

The *Created Equal* film series is made possible through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. The event is free and open to the public. Read more at <http://www.brynmaur.edu/library/createdequal>.

## Building the Collections – Two Highlights Among Many

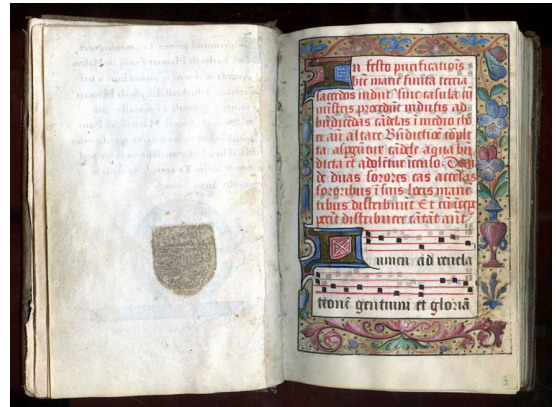
This past year, a group of Bryn Mawr students, faculty, and staff marked the 100th anniversary of the Armory Show – the exhibition that brought modern art to the American public – with a course-and-exhibition project made possible by the loan of artworks by long-time College supporters Joanne D’Elia (A.B. 1975, M.A. 2009) and John Whitney Payson. As a capstone to this extraordinary year, the Paysons made a generous gift to the college of thirty-one works by important American artists including Isabel Bishop, Paul Cadmus, Doris Rosenthal, Ben Shahn, and Bernarda Bryson Shahn. The work of these artists, diverse in many ways, shares a profound concern for humanity, from the classically-inflected figure studies of Paul Cadmus to the carefully observed street reportage of Isabel Bishop.

This donation, significant in its own right, builds on



*Jack Levine. Red Haired Woman, 1958*  
Gift of Joanne D. Payson, Class of 1975 and MA 2009,  
and John W. Payson (2014.12.1)

other recent donations of modern and contemporary European and American artwork, enhancing Special Collections’ ability to support ongoing research by faculty and students, and providing staff and students with the challenges and opportunities that come with working together to investigate, catalog, share, and care for important objects.



*Processional (Use of the Dominican nuns of Poissy)*  
Seymour Adelman Fund Purchase

Among many works we were able to purchase this year through endowed funds established by past friends is this small manuscript volume of liturgical music and prayers from northern France. It was copied in the fifteenth century for a nun in the royal abbey of St.-Louis at Poissy. “Processionals” like this were probably the most important devotional books for the individual nuns. The volume contains the plainchant music for the Dominican observance, and the portable format of the book reflects its use in the daily processions of the choir and the hours spent holding it, singing the liturgy. There are also prayers and musical texts for special events, including the reception of a new nun into the convent. There is evidence that this book was not only used within the convent, but created there, written out by one of the nuns.

This processional, never published or fully described, will serve as the major project of Nava Streiter, who has been appointed Graduate Assistant in Collections this year. She will work on this book and on the contemporary Italian book of prayers we purchased last year.

### Reconnecting with the Bryn Mawr Deanery

Part of my work in Special Collections this summer has been to make more information about the importance and beauty of the Deanery accessible to a wider audience through two large projects: the completion of a Wikipedia article on the Deanery; and the creation of wall text and labels for objects from the Deanery now displayed in Wyndham... After the Deanery was demolished in 1968, Wyndham became the new alumnae house and the new home for a large number of pieces from the Deanery. Special Collections was interested in creating labels for many of these pieces, as well as several other objects of interest in Wyndham...

Emily Moore, Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology

Read more at <http://specialcollections.blogs.brynmawr.edu/2014/09/05/reconnecting-with-the-bryn-mawr-deanery/>



*19th-Century Chinese Cloisonné Vase, from the Deanery. Now on display in Wyndham (W.719)*



## Best of the Blog - Internships and Special Projects

### Introducing RTI Photography to the Collections

The Special Collections of Bryn Mawr College holds an extensive collection of Greek pottery, both decorated and undecorated. This summer I was granted one of the curatorial internships to study vases with painted and incised inscriptions. Some of these are difficult to identify even when working closely with the objects. Alex Brey, another graduate student, suggested the use of Reflectance Transformation Imaging, or RTI, which he had previously utilized on some of our coins. He graciously demonstrated the process to me and Friends of the Library undergraduate intern, Katy Holladay 2016, who is interested in archaeology and has a strong interest in technology. RTI is a technique that uses sequential photography of an object with variant locations for the light source; the photographs are then combined using a program to produce a manipulative image, which allows for the exploration of the surface of the image with gradient lighting.

One person can do the process alone, but a second person is very helpful. After becoming more familiar with the process, we captured images of complete vases; their size and the curving surfaces presented challenges as these objects reflect the light differently. The files we created can provide better access to the objects for scholars unable to physically visit the collections and can be used as educational materials. Katy will be working with Rachel Appel, the Digital Collections Librarian, in hopes of finding a way of making the RTI images available via our online database...



Danielle Smotherman, Ph.D. Candidate in Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology

Read more at <http://specialcollections.blogs.brynmawr.edu/2014/07/22/introducing-rti-photography-to-the-collections/>

### *Letters and Photographs from the Battle Country, 1918 and 1919*

"There has never been anything real about my life over here. I can't believe that it is I who am seeing it with my eyes, living in something that is a reality and not a dream. It worries me sometimes for I am afraid it will disappear out of my memory like a dream and I just don't know what to do to hold on to it." This is one of Margaret Hall's more poignant moments as she reflects on her service for the Red Cross during World War I. Her



experience so strongly affected her that she compiled her correspondence and photographs into a typed, bound manuscript: *Letters and Photographs from the Battle Country, 1918 and 1919*. I had the opportunity to read an original copy. As a recently graduated history major/nerd, I was excited to actually hold the historic manuscript and learn about WWI through the eyes of Margaret Hall.

July 28, 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Great War, so it is appropriate that the Massachusetts Historical Society currently has an exhibition, *Letters and Photographs From the Battle Country: Massachusetts Women in the First World War*, featuring Hall's writings. There are only four known copies of Margaret Hall's book. Bryn Mawr College Special Collections, the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Cohasset Historical Society each own one...

Elizabeth Reilly 2014

Read more at <http://specialcollections.blogs.brynmawr.edu/2014/07/14/letters-and-photographs-from-the-battle-country-1918-and-1919-2/>

FRIENDS  
OF THE LIBRARY  
AT BRYN MAWR COLLEGE