



SURFACE
portraits re-examined



W

*hat is real is not the external form, but the
essence of things . . . it is impossible for
anyone to express anything essentially real
by imitating its exterior surface.*

Constantin Brancusi
Sculptor and Photographer (1876-1957)



sur{face}•portraits re-examined
9•14•2022 | 2•1•2023

This catalog is dedicated to Shelle Barron, professor emerita of graphic & interactive design and foundations, and Charlotte H. Wellman, professor emerita of art history. Respected and sought after as teachers, both have been generous collaborators on dozens of Art Department projects (from ALOHA to VASE)—as well as colleagues and friends since September 1996.

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BRUCE GALLERY

Pennsylvania Western University, Edinboro Campus
Doucette Hall, G-17, 215 Meadville Street, Edinboro, PA 16444
www.BruceGallery.info

surFACE

portraits re-examined

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Professor of Asian Religions and Philosophy, Castleton University

[L.A.] Lisa Austin
Professor of Foundations, Sculpture, Gallery Management and Director, Bruce Gallery, PennWest University



sur{face} at the bruce gallery | lisa austin



In Webster's dictionary, "surface" is defined as the "exterior boundary of an object or body; an external layer;...or the superficial aspect of something."^[1] In *Sur{face}: Portraits Re-Examined*, the second syllable of the title is isolated using parentheses. These grammatical bookends lead readers to anticipate the subject of this small exhibition—portraiture. *Sur{face}* isolates a key theme in art history and expands the strategy initiated in Bruce Gallery's 2021 *LINE* show which invited visitors to reconsider a visual element central to art making.

As the title also suggests, *Sur{face}* invites us to "re-examine" portrait conventions. A typical portrait presumes that the sitter's face projects their character, temperament, and power; accessories might emphasize a subject's wealth or taste. In this show, artworks by Murjoni Merriweather, Madeline Schwartzman and others have been gathered to expand our understanding of "portrait" conventions.

Murjoni Merriweather underscores race and gender as a means of placing the Black body—rendered invisible in much of art's history—front and center: Amy Sherald, whose painting of Michelle Obama hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, commented that she wants her portraits to "create a space where blackness can breathe."^[2] Merriweather's surface is skin, which she deploys as a historically charged membrane. Merriweather's use of braided synthetic hair, jewelry, and glitter; like Sherald's paintings, expands the Western canon to include Black experience.

Depth must be hidden. Where? On the surface.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929)

Madeline Schwartzman uses organic matter as a mask or aperture through which to re-view people's place in the natural world. Artist Ana Mendieta also immersed herself in nature, often leaving traces of her body on the landscape. Through earth-body performative works documented in photographs and videos, Mendieta addressed her spiritual and physical connections to the earth and stars. Mendieta commented, "my art is the way I reestablish the bonds that tie me to the universe."^[3] By interacting with plants and lichen, Schwartzman builds references to nature that are fraught with meaning in an age addressing climate change and the fate of the planet.

In addition to the works by Merriweather and Schwartzman, *Sur{face}* includes artwork by 19 other artists, most of which are borrowed from the gallery's permanent collection. Two works in the show are by alumni, Edward Eberle's porcelain bowl and Carole Werder's mixed-media painting.

Dennis Doyle recreated a work for *Sur{face}*. Like its predecessor, Doyle's sculpture will be discarded at the closing of the show. Doyle's work literally embodies the artist's microbes. Doyle's decomposing bread, like Schwartzman's use of organic matter, reinforces themes of mortal decay. In contrast, Eberle's loosely painted glaze and the vigorous carving of the African mask provide a tangible record of the artist's hand. Other themes connect the works. The African mask introduces themes of masking and ritual also explored in Schwartzman's films, prints and photographs, in the show's Tibetan and Japanese prints and in Picasso's poster, *Exposition de Vallauris*.

Françoise Gilot is an artist long overshadowed by the fame of her abusive former husband, Picasso. In *Sur{face}*, Gilot's large, blue monochromatic lithograph, *Flora*, celebrates an allegorical figure drawing together woman and nature. Gilot invokes Flora to insist that women have a place at the table not only by serving as mythological subjects, but also by creating a feminine iconography as artists themselves. Speaking about her work, Gilot said, "I'm color oriented and what you might call a composer: I'm not pouring my guts out, I keep them inside."^[4]

Hugo von Hofmannsthal remarked that "Depth must be hidden. Where? On the surface." In a 2018 essay titled "*On surface. Promise of Self*," Heini Lehtinen noted that the surfaces von Hofmannsthal considers can provide a path for a "deeper connection and relationship with an object" or can be "a medium for contemplation on the object, its purpose, and also its creator."^[5] Each of the works gathered in *Sur{face}* lends weight to the implications of von Hofmannsthal's statement.

When eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree.

Vietnamese Proverb

The works gathered for *Sur{face}* span a century and are drawn from around the globe. That such an exhibition is possible in rural Pennsylvania is largely due to the art faculty at Edinboro who established the permanent collection in the 1950s and to those who made additional acquisitions over subsequent decades. Founded in 1870, the Edinboro Art Department was merged in July 2022 with the art departments at Clarion and California Universities to form the PennWest University Art Department.

To provide long-term stewardship of the collection, plans are underway to relocate the work to a secure, environmentally stable exhibition space in the soon-to-be renovated Baron-Forness Library on the Edinboro campus.

Funding for the Bruce Gallery and the *Sur{face}* exhibition and catalog was provided by Erie Arts and Culture, the PennWest Art Department and most generously by the Edinboro Student Government Association (EUSGA).

Due to the pandemic, the university closed the gallery to the public in September 2020. In response, art historian Charlotte H. Wellman and I organized the Bruce Gallery Zoom series *Illuminating the Collection* featuring Kilolo Lockett, the founding director and chief curator of the ALMA| LEWIS gallery and artist residency in Pittsburgh. In conversation with artists, alumni, graduate students, faculty, and other arts professionals, Lockett discussed works from the Bruce Gallery permanent collection during Spring 2021. As a part of this project, Lockett introduced the university audience to the Baltimore sculptor Murjoni Merriweather. Merriweather was subsequently invited to be featured in the *Sur{face}* show along with NYC artist Madeline Schwartzman.

Thanks to the scholars who contributed essays to the *Sur{face}* catalog. Rhonda Matthews, a Bruce Gallery board member and professor of political science at PennWest Edinboro, responded to Murjoni Merriweather's work. Ann C. Collins, a NYC film editor and contributing writer to *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Degree Critical* and *Variable West*, wrote about Madeline Schwartzman's work. Céline Gauge, a student of art historian Matt Levy at Penn State, the Behrend College, composed the wall labels for 18 works. James E. Hagen, professor of Asian religion and philosophy at Castleton University in Vermont, provided the description on the Tibetan woodblock print of *Vajrapani*. Lauren Leving, curator at moCA Cleveland, spent Labor Day at The Bruce Gallery and then composed the main catalog essay on the *Sur{face}* exhibition.

Fred Scruton, professor of photography at PennWest Edinboro, provided installation images and documented artworks from the collection. Fred Parker and Rosalie Pekelnicky, both Edinboro University alumni, re-matted and re-framed 16 works from the collection at Parker's Framing Gallery, 111 Erie Street, Edinboro, PA. Vance Lupher, museum preparator, installed the show and beautifully handled the challenge of suspending Schwartzman's work across a 30-foot span. Lupher was assisted by more than a dozen student volunteers. Derek Wituski, graphic and interactive design professor at PennWest Edinboro and Bruce Gallery board member, organized, printed, and installed the wall labels and vinyl signage.

Mary Elizabeth Meier, art education professor at PennWest Edinboro and Bruce Gallery board member, helped select works from the collection for the show. Charlotte H. Wellman, professor emerita of art history at Edinboro University and Bruce Gallery advisor, offered curatorial and editorial guidance, including valuable feedback on this essay. Shelle Barron, professor emerita of graphic design and foundations at Edinboro University and Bruce Gallery advisor, also offered curatorial guidance and has most generously designed this catalog. ☸

Lisa Austin, Director
Bruce Gallery, PennWest Edinboro

December 20, 2022

^[1] "Surface," *Webster's Dictionary*, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/surface>

^[2] E.C., "Amy Sherald, The World We Make," Hauser & Worth, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://airmail.news/arts-intel/events/amy-sherald-the-world-we-make-6861>

^[3] "Ana Mendieta," The Art Story, Accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.theartstory.org/artist/mendieta-ana/>

^[4] Dodie Kazanjian, "Life After Picasso: Françoise Gilot," *Vogue* (April 27, 2012), accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.vogue.com/article/life-after-picasso-franoise-gilot>

^[5] Quotes taken from Heini Lehtinen, "On surface. Promise of self," RWWII, Raven & Wood Agency, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://medium.com/ravenandwood/on-surface-promise-of-self-736cc0299d8e>

As one of the oldest art forms, portraiture is situated at the intersection of personal narrative and collective history, uniquely able to capture a moment in time. It was once predominantly linked to status and wealth, used as a tool for the most privileged to show off their success. This is exemplified through the tradition of British royal portraiture where members of the monarchy commissioned artists to create romanticized versions of their likeness. Though these images were often idealized depictions that served as political propaganda, they also act as an archive of the societies in which they were created.

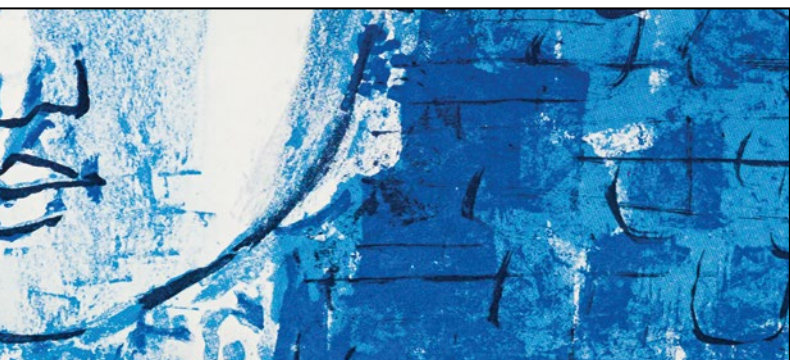
In recent centuries, portraiture has become more democratized. Artists challenge the genre's history of affluence, making work that highlights experiences beyond the upper class. Within these shifting dynamics, artists have the opportunity to decide which elements of the stories shaping the work are concealed and revealed. *Sur{face}: Portraits Re-Examined*, on display in the Bruce Gallery on PennWest University's Edinboro campus (formerly Edinboro University), places the work of 21 artists in dialogue to investigate the complex histories of portraiture. Many of the works presented were culled from the university's permanent collection, demonstrating the school's investment in portraiture as an art form. However, as it is essential to cultivate a conversation that expands outside of the institution, the exhibition has integrated work loaned by contemporary artists.

At first read, the artwork in *Sur{face}* is unified through visual representation, but the exhibition digs deeper, excavating the inspiration that shapes each piece. Here theology, explorations of self, and societal impact emerge





beneath the surface lauren leving



details, from top: Bill Fick: *Pretty Boy Clyde*;
Françoise Gilot: *Flora*;
Ayanah Moor: *i love hip-hop and hip-hop loves me*;
Jenny Schmid: *Fast Girl, Knocked Up*

as key themes, all of which are woven together to construct multidimensional portraits that encapsulate the subject, the maker, and the context from which they have emerged.

Symbols of religion and mythology regularly appear in portraiture, reflecting artists' decisions to demonstrate both the collective and personal meaning that stems from a single influence. This can be seen in the work of French-born artist, Françoise Gilot. Always captivated by Greek mythology, Gilot has a history of portraying deities in her work. She created *Flora* (1965) at a pivotal point in her life, soon after the release of her memoir; *Life with Picasso*, which details the couple's turbulent relationship. This was a period of liberation for Gilot, who had recently succeeded in publishing her story after a barrage of lawsuits from Picasso. She was taking extended trips to Greece, contemplating her relationship with the culture's mythology. It was during this time that she made *Flora*, an elegant representation of the goddess of the same name and an emblem of flowers, fertility, and the blossoming of springtime. This work is perhaps also an allegorical self-portrait, highlighting Gilot's rebirth after living in the shadow of her former partner. She shares that her artistic explorations of Greek mythology "allow [her] to confront [her] inner anxieties with some joy. History teaches lessons, but legends feed the species. They transcend all to reveal the primal truth, the only one that lasts. More than what to do, they help us to discover who we are."^[1] Many of the mythologically focused works Gilot made in the years prior to *Flora's* creation were abstractions, and we are left contemplating her return to figuration. A possible glimpse of Gilot's transcendence, this image, uniting elements of allegory with those of herself, reveal the artist reveling in her self-discovery.

Similarly toeing the line between self-portraiture and sacred depiction, Dennis Doyle responds to transubstantiation, a Catholic practice in which it is believed that during the Eucharist, a wafer of unleavened bread and wine are transformed into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. As Doyle was studying recipes used to make these wafers, they were struck by the ways that language was wielded and how it recalled notions from the proverb, "cleanliness is next to Godliness." Their constantly decaying sculpture, *Body of Substance* (2020), rejects Catholic ideals of purity that have historically "othered" identities that exist outside of the cis-heteronormative canon. In its original

iteration, *Body of Substance* was a pillar of bread, stacked to the artist's height. In *Sur{face}*, the sculpture is confined in plexiglass, a terrarium used to expedite and contain the process of microbial transubstantiation. A living, breathing body, the bread crumbles and molds. It perspires; droplets of sweat bead down the vitrine's walls. At the same time challenging and embracing Catholicism's positioning of queerness as impure, this work reveals itself as both a portrait of the artist and one of regeneration, the doughy spores exemplifying how the unclean becomes a site of new life.

Like Doyle, Madeline Schwartzman is drawn to materials of impermanence to explore ecologic lifecycles. Her series *Face Nature* is emblematic of how humans and nature are intrinsically linked, demonstrating the ways that the individual and collective come together to shape a multifaceted portrait of the artist, the subject, and the world around them. In this body of work, Schwartzman photographs herself with plant life ornamenting her face. Vibrant hues of freshly plucked leaves and the roughness of bark become part of her as if they are a second skin. The artist's images raise questions about the Anthropocene—about land ownership, climate change, technologic growth, and environmental impact. *Face Nature* is a reflection on civilization, using relatable and recognizable imagery to force us to think about human interventions in nature and the indelible footprint of our existence. We are transported to a place of discomfort, teetering in a space of simultaneously knowing too much and not enough.

Artists often find creative solace in this in-between space, confidently walking into the unfamiliar and pushing us to question convention as we move outside of our comfort zones. Using satirical portraiture as a vehicle to unpack sociopolitical themes, printmaker Bill Fick relies on these spaces of apprehension to connect with his audiences. His oozing, pustular portraits are visual manifestations of distress, the monsters of our nightmares. Through his work, Fick encourages us to face our metaphorical demons head on, urging us to sit with our unease rather than running from it, as growth and acceptance stem from discomfort. In his linocut, *Pretty Boy Clyde* (2004), a pockmarked portrait advertises Fick's 2005 visit to the former Edinboro University campus. Glowing red eyes match the ember of the character's lit cigarette and a worm-like wound creeps up his neck. This image, framed by promotional language, prompts inquiry about Fick's visit. Was he a first-time guest, expressing his anxieties about how he would be received by the school? Or perhaps this work was intended to draw audiences in, a grotesque invitation beckoning students to come closer:

Fick printed *Pretty Boy Clyde* at Egress Press & Research (EPR), the printmaking and publishing entity within the Edinboro campus' art department. *Sur{face}* places multiple prints made at EPR in conversation, in particular showcasing work that interrogates Westernized society's influence on the genre of portraiture. Like Fick, fellow EPR visiting artist Jenny Schmid's work bridges the gap between lowbrow and fine art, stating that it is "an inexpensive means to disseminate ideas, question authority through humor or make the personal political."^[ii] *Fast Girl, Knocked Up* (2002) mines aesthetics of medieval portraiture—its earthy color palette and somber expressions—to critique heteronormative portrayals of gender that have historically been uplifted by European cultures and in which women are seen as sexualized objects of desire. Here, Schmid pushes against art historical tropes of the passive, reclining nude. She instead creates a portrait of a woman clutching a vine that is emerging from her body; each of its sprouting buds is an embryo containing possibilities of life. Droplets of sweat fall from her forehead and vines sprout from her ears, suggesting links between the body

and mind and equating the value of the reproductive and intellectual labor of women.

In the exhibition, *Pretty Boy Clyde* and *Fast Girl, Knocked Up* flank *i love hip-hop and hip-hop loves me* (2003), a lithograph and screenprint by Ayanah Moor that use her self-portrait as the focal point. These three works draw on printmaking's tradition of social commentary to highlight the multifaceted ways in which portraiture functions as a representation of identity. Moor extends the work out from herself, using hip-hop as a microcosm of Black culture to explore how Black creative practices have been appropriated by and influence widespread popular culture. The artist's inescapable gaze, encircled by the faces of others and layered atop text reading "Rap Head," elicits considerations of cultural ownership. Within this work, Moor uses portraiture as a tool to orchestrate a face-to-face confrontation that encourages us to reflect upon society's unrestrained power to manipulate and erase cultural legacies.

Together, *Pretty Boy Clyde*; *Fast Girl, Knocked Up*; and *i love hip-hop and hip-hop loves me* form the edges of a portrait of a school in motion. Each created in the early 2000s, the prints serve as a freeze frame documenting a chapter in the university's history, exemplifying a structure of support, and preserving a custom of artistic exploration.

Peppered throughout the gallery, acting as a connecting element that traverses the space and positioned in dialogue with the aforementioned prints, Murjoni Merriweather's busts challenge European standards of beauty. She uses her work to uplift the Black community, drawing inspiration from the people around her. To the artist, materiality is equally as important as accurate depictions of facial features. Drawing on elements of Black aesthetics, her sculptures foreground materials that hold personal and cultural significance, a tangible way of working that is not unlike the ways Françoise Gilot relies on Greek mythology to represent herself and a wider community. Merriweather's sculptures are made with braided synthetic hair and gold luster grills, signifiers of contemporary Black culture. Layering these materials on ceramic, a common sculptural backbone, the artist disrupts the Western canon of art, using her work as a vehicle to normalize, embrace, and uplift the Black experience.

The breadth of portraiture is infinite. The genre, along with the artist's role, has shifted over time, each individual artwork becoming a marker of the society in which it was made. While it would be nearly impossible to develop an exhibition that holistically encompasses portraiture's journey through art history, *Surface}: Portraits Re-Examined* advances essential discussions about creative influence. The selection of work included in the exhibition reveals the persistence of spirituality, self-perception, and social discourse within portraiture, and underscores how a work of art is not sealed in a vacuum, but rather a snapshot within a continuum. ❁

^[i] Françoise Gilot, "Myths and Mythology," The F. Gilot Archives, accessed September 19, 2022, <http://www.francoisegilot.com/themes-8.php>.

^[ii] Jenny Schmid, "About bikini press international," bikini press international: The Artwork of Jenny Schmid, accessed September 19, 2022, <https://www.jennyschmid.com/About-bikini-press-international>.

Lauren Leving is a curator, writer, and program organizer at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland and Co-Curator of the US Pavilion at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale. Leving's exhibitions and programming are designed to reduce barriers to cultural institutions. Her interests, research, and curatorial practice highlight the relationships between contemporary art, performance, and experimental pedagogy.

FOR OVER 400 YEARS, BLACK PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TREATED AS SUBHUMAN. WE WERE INTRODUCED TO THE UNITED STATES AS PROPERTY, AFTER BEING CAPTURED, ENSLAVED, AND SOLD LIKE ANIMALS OR PRODUCTS IN HIGH DEMAND. HUNDREDS OF YEARS LATER, WE WERE “LIBERATED.” HOWEVER, THE HOPES OF EQUALITY AND FREEDOM THAT ACCOMPANIED LIBERATION WERE ONLY IDEAS. THE QUEST FOR TRUE FREEDOM HAS BEEN A CONSTANT FIGHT. FOR GENERATIONS WE’VE FOUGHT FOR OUR MOST BASIC RIGHTS. STILL, WE FIND OURSELVES SHOVED INTO THE MARGINS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE ARE STILL VIEWED AS INFERIOR. WE ARE FORCE FED THE FALSE CONCEPT OF INFERIORITY FROM EVERY ANGLE. THE IDEA THAT WE ARE LACKING AND THAT WE ARE UGLY AND UNWORTHY HAS BEEN ETCHED INTO EVERY ASPECT OF OUR CULTURE. IT SHOWS ITS FACE IN THE LACK OF ACCESS AND REPRESENTATION TO THE SAME SPACES AS OUR NON-BLACK COUNTERPARTS. THIS INCLUDES OUR WORK SPACES, EDUCATIONAL SPACES, THE MEDIA, AND WITHIN THE PAINFUL DISPARITIES THAT PLAGUE OUR SYSTEMS. EVEN TODAY, WE ARE CONSTANTLY SINGLED OUT AND JUDGED BECAUSE OF THE COLOR OF OUR SKIN, THE TEXTURE OF OUR HAIR, OUR CHOICE OF STYLE, THE WAY WE GREW UP, ETC. • MY WORK FOCUSES ON ADDRESSING AND ELIMINATING THE NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES OF BLACKNESS THAT STILL EXIST BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

murjoni merriweather | artist statement

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, THIS STARTS WITH ERASING THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS OF BEAUTY FROM BLACKNESS WHILE ALSO PUSHING AND NORMALIZING BLACK CULTURE. OUR HAIR, OUR SKIN, OUR FEATURES ARE NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF. IT IS ALSO ABOUT SHOWING APPRECIATION FOR DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF OUR CULTURE (IE: HAIR CULTURE, GRILL CULTURE, NAIL CULTURE) AND EMBRACING THEM WITH CONFIDENCE. • MY PIECES ARE CREATED TO TAKE UP SPACE AND TO UNAPOLOGETICALLY GIVE THEIR OWN PERSONALITIES AS HUMAN BEINGS. EACH PIECE IS NAMED AFTER SOMEONE BLACK OR NAMED BY SOMEONE WHO IS BLACK. EACH PIECE HAS ITS OWN SPIRIT AND PURPOSE, JUST LIKE EVERY HUMAN BEING. THEY STAND TALL AND PROUD AS A REPRESENTATION OF AN UNFORGETTABLE AND PROMINENT CULTURE. THIS GATEWAY OF CREATION UPLIFTS THE IDEA OF SELF LOVE, CONFIDENCE AND APPRECIATION. MY WORK IS FOR BLACK PEOPLE. IT IS CREATED TO DISPLAY OUR INNATE BEAUTY AND TO ENCOURAGE US TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE.

murjoni merriweather





Murjoni Merriweather (1996-)

from left:

SHANNON, 2021

Ceramic, hand-braided synthetic hair
29" x 9" x 10"

NICO, 2021

Ceramic, paint
20" x 6 ½" x 8"

LUNA, 2021

Ceramic, glitter
19" x 6" x 8 ¼"

MONICA, 2022

Ceramic, hand-braided synthetic hair
23" x 9 ½" x 11"

ANTOINE, 2021

Ceramic, glitter
17" x 7" x 8"

JAZZELLE, 2018

Mixed media over hand-built ceramic form
22" x 8" x 10"

All works loaned by the artist



I am a political sociologist who also studies popular culture media, its effects, uses, and abuses, in U.S. culture. I am an academician who understands that disciplines do not live in artificially constructed silos. The importance of politics and sociology in the discipline of physics may seem disconnected until discussion turns toward an examination of the development, deployment, and aftermath of the atomic bomb. Albert Einstein knew. It is, therefore, not unusual for a political sociologist to discuss art, especially since I also bring to the analysis my perspective as a Black woman.

In the midst of the survival, Black people, diverted children of The Diaspora, are maligned and beloved in the fevered imaginations of Western, capitalist, cultures. This peculiar feature of social interaction is the contradictory fashion of oppressors. It displays itself in the most ordinary of interpersonal interactions and in the most mundane of institutional processes. We, the stolen and conscripted, whose ancestors (alongside the millions of others of the global majority, brought to this continent for the labors of our bodies and the fruit of our imaginations) built the very country in which we still stand and, yet, are most often accused of sloth. We whose cultures, by and large, did not industrialize institutions of degradation, are most often accused of barbarism. We, whose families are torn apart by the manifest and latent intentions of widely deployed social systems, are most often accused of not loving our children, our neighbors, ourselves.

These interactions are a part of the social fabric of a country that insists that its

undefeated, indefatigable, unstoppable. (on murjoni merriweather) rhonda matthews



citizens “pull themselves up by their bootstraps” (a physically impossible task) while setting up institutional structures that place barriers above us. It is in the midst of these socio-political interactions and unremitting realities that Murjoni Merriweather transforms the metaphorical clay of societal expectations into something else real—Black joy—using the physical clay of her medium.

Her work is important.

Her pieces, upon first visitation, ring a bell in the memory center of the brain that is recalled long after the visit. It does not stop. It is not the raucous, shattering, peal of steeple bells. No. It is the beautifully, modest, whispered, “ding” of a treasured memory—a call back to joy—that elicits the slight, knowing smile that accompanies a moment of happiness. You see, sometimes Black people must be reminded of the *inherent* joy of being—*our* being. In Murjoni’s work, we are gently called to remember the shiny pleasure, and pop of surprise, at the glint of a gold tooth that appears when surrounded



above: photo by Yana Mazurkevich
www.isthisiana.com IG: @isthisiana

by laughter and beautiful, brown, skin. Her work projects vivid images into the mind—vibrant snapshots of the ways that our hair curls to form architectures of magnificence resting gently upon our heads—or the way that a bald head upholds pride. The work of her hands compels us to dwell, for a just minute, upon the ways that the butters, cocoa and shea, and the oils, baby and jojoba, glisten upon our skin, bring rhythm to the light and make it dance. It is only for a minute, because sometimes, a minute is all a person needs to remember the power of existence. Ms. Merriweather’s art reminds us that it is we who make the adornments beautiful, not the other way around. They are precious jewels because we wear them.

Miss Merriweather’s luminous sculptures are active depictions of the joy of Black people. While we do not constitute a monolith, our joy is, in fact, a unitary monument and living testament to our continued survival. Rendered as a clay mirror to Black audiences, Merriweather’s busts represent exuberant depictions of the inner lives of the people that U.S. systems steadily attempt to erase. For those whose ethnic backgrounds are not rooted in Blackness, Ms. Merriweather’s work is a portent—a reminder that, for even in the midst of oppression, joy comes with the morning.

Murjoni Merriweather is the daughter of imagination. Through her work, she presents the possibility, the power, strength and beauty of the Black experience in the United States, simply because through it, she imagines us free. Her sculptures guide the viewer away from the vise of oppression and toward this unified cultural message:

Black joy is undefeated, indefatigable, and unstoppable still. ☸

Dr. Rhonda Matthews is an associate professor of political science and women’s studies at Penn West Edinboro. Using tenets of intersectional analysis, her primary areas of academic interest include gender & women’s studies, sociological theory, popular culture and stratification. As a result of previous work as a sexual assault survivor counselor, Dr. Matthews is dedicated to the advocacy and empowerment of women and children.

Madeline Schwartzman
Archival pigment prints on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 310
25"x 20"
All works loaned by the artist



ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY THE ARTIST

clockwise from top left:
Face Nature with Burning Bush, 2021
Face Nature in Burning Bush, 2021
Face Nature with Burrs, 2020
Face Nature with Milkweed, Oak, Fall Flowers, 2020
Face Nature with Honey Locust, 2022
Face Nature with Coneflower Seed Heads, Amur Maple 1, 2021

I MAKE MY WAY ON MY FAVORITE TRAILS IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS AND BEYOND, LITERALLY TOUCHING, CLIPPING, SMELLING, DISSECTING, ORGANIZING, AND VIDEOTAPING PLANT MATTER THROUGH THE SEASONS. I THEN EXPLORE HOW TO INTERFACE BETWEEN THE STRUCTURE OF THE FACE AND THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE BOTANICAL SPECIMENS, SOMETIMES USING A MEDIATING PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, TECHNOLOGY, OR THE INTIMACY OF GLUE OR TAPE. THE RESULTING INSTALLATION IS SHORT-LIVED. I PHOTOGRAPH AND RECORD THE RESULTS, OFTEN WITH MY VISION OBSTRUCTED; THEN I DESTROY THE WEARABLE ASSEMBLAGE. FOR THE WEARER, *FACE NATURE* AWAKENS THE SENSES. IT EMBEDS THE LOCAL ECOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE DIRECTLY ONTO THE BODY—SOMETHING AKIN TO WHAT NATURALIST BARRY LOPEZ CALLED THE “INTERIOR LANDSCAPE” (*ARCTIC DREAMS*). FOR THE VIEWER, *FACE NATURE* SHAKES UP THE COMPLACENT SENSE OF WHAT THE HUMAN FACE IS AND WHAT IT MIGHT BE. IT SHOWS A MORE MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN NATURE—A KEY TO THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET.

madeline schwartzman | artist statement

I ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO “FACE NATURE” THROUGH POSTING THE PROCESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND THROUGH EXHIBITIONS AND WRITING. WITH CLIMATE ANXIETY AT A PEAK, SMALL GESTURES LIKE FACING NATURE ARE A FORM OF ACTION. THE HOPE IS THAT THE MOVEMENT WILL GROW. WE’VE INHERITED A 19TH CENTURY NOTION THAT NATURE IS “OVER THERE.” WE NEED IT TO BE HERE, IN FRONT OF US, AROUND US, ALWAYS.

*Face Nature with Coneflower Seed Head,
Japanese Maple, Ginkgo, 2022*
Archival pigment print on Belgian linen
62"x42" Ed.7+2AP



Face Nature with Japanese Maple, Sweet Gum, 2021
Archival pigment print on Belgian linen
62"x42" Ed.7+2AP



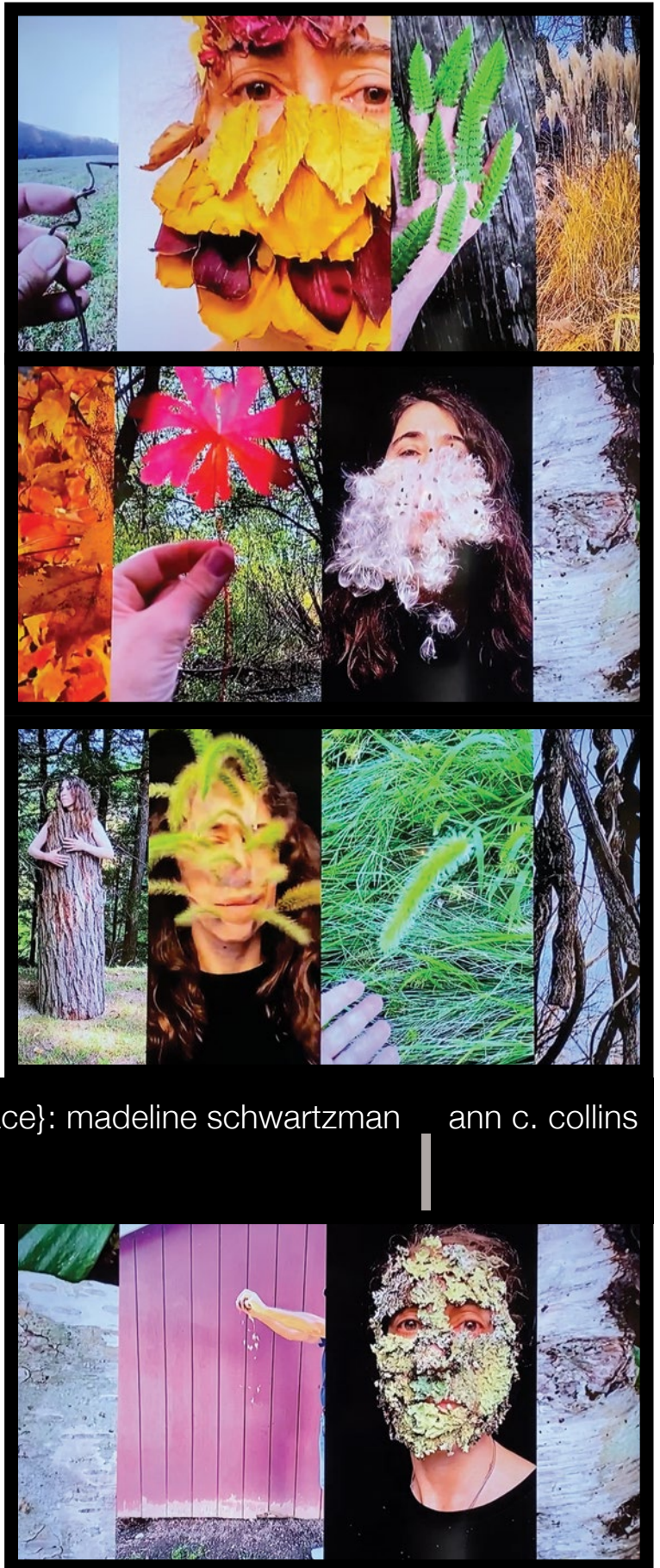


Face Nature Through Birch Bark, 2022
Archival pigment print on Belgian linen
62"x42" Ed.7+2AP

D

id it begin with a furrow in the ground? A hand parting the soil, poking a hole, planting a seed? In breaking the surface of the earth, cultivating the land to produce only what we desired in sections we walled off and weeded, we split ourselves from Nature. Some say we entered the Anthropocene—the geological epoch in which we live, dominating the biosphere and the very chemical composition of the planet—twelve thousand years ago, with the taming of the wilderness into gardens and farms. Maybe it started with the crossing of an ocean and the transport of species that would take root to produce the homogenous, the known. Or maybe it began with the steam engine, tracks crossing the planet like stitches over a wound as industry picked up speed until it broke the sound barrier.^[1] In the Anthropocene, humans exist as middling gods; not creators of the world, but exalted stewards of the universe, managers of earth, sea, the sky and all its objects. Yet we fail to tend or nurture; instead we plow, drill, gouge, burn down, pave over.^[2] We have turned away from the earth just as we have reclaimed it as a vast factory of food and fuel. A global pandemic has locked us indoors, zooming from safe cocoons, tethered to screens by ethernet cables. We no longer go outside. Instead we live on what Paul Virilio predicted would be “the expanse of a planet that is not only polluted but also shrunk, reduced to nothing, by the tele-technologies of generalized interactivity.”^[3]

And so it is unlikely for an artist to anchor their practice in walking, but that is what Madeline Schwartzman has done. Like Thoreau, she enters the woods with great deliberation, seeking what it has to teach her.^[4] Her work starts with the rhythm of her footfall along her favorite Berkshire hiking trails as she forages for what appeals to her; a magpie looking for treasures. Leaves, petals, sheets of bark, a seed pod—



film stills from: *Face Nature*, 2.25 minutes, 2021

Seasonal, 38 seconds, 2022

Forage, 1.36 minutes, 2022

Schwartzman attunes herself to their colors and textures, the scents they carry, their curves and angles, documenting her expeditions in video. At home in her studio, she investigates what she has gleaned, allowing her materials to guide her in the creation of biomorphic works in which the artist adorns herself with her specimens, using the architecture of her face to shape and stabilize elaborate hybrids of botanical and human form.

Photographing herself from within the constructions, oftentimes blinded by her applications, Schwartzman creates *Face Nature*, a series of portraits that blur the boundary between local ecology and the body, the individual and the collective, eliminating the manufactured split between nature and human endemic to the Anthropocene. In *Face Nature with Milkweed, Oak, Fall Flowers* (2020), the artist poses in profile against a black backdrop bedecked in an abundance of leaves, burrs, and pods. A cluster of dried flowers crowns her head, while seed pods and leaves radiate from her face like a mane. The juxtapositions are sublime as colors and textures integrate and collide with the known contours of a woman's face. In some images, the artist disappears altogether; re-formed as an entirely new species arising from the blending of plant and animal. In *Face Nature in Burning Bush 2* (2021), she camouflages her face and torso with magenta and red leaves as she stands among the scarlet branches of the shrub from which she collected them. The scarlet burst of color captivates the viewer as the figure of the artist recedes into its surroundings. *Face Nature with Honey Locust* (2020) shows Schwartzman standing concealed behind a veil of yellow leaves glued in horizontal bands across her face. Only her eyes, lips, and the rims of her glasses can be seen as she peers at the viewer through her disguise.

In other works, the adornment of flora transforms her into a priestess or spirit of the woods. Schwartzman serenely stares from behind a veil of tiny leaves in the duotone photograph *Face Nature with Coneflower Seed Heads, Amur Maple 1* (2021). Prickly seed heads tangle her hair into a regal up-do. *Face Nature with Japanese Maple, Sweet Gum* (2021) is among several large-scale prints on Belgian linen which hang from suspended rods, translucent when lit from behind. Dark leaves spread across the artist's face while a pair of seed heads nestle in her hair: Her gaze is enigmatic—is she smiling? Is she sad? Mostly she is restored to a person deeply engaged in forgotten intimacies with the natural world.

Mimetic of all life-forms, the installations shown in her photographs are short lived—things wilt, crumble, decay. Schwartzman destroys them at the end of her process, allowing what she has conjured to die, thus giving her work the temporality of a life cycle. What remains is a series of images that jolt the viewer into an awareness of what existence was like before flight corridors and superhighways, website shopping carts and high-speed modems began to cloud our consciousness; the world as we seldom remember it. ☼

^[1] Matt Edgeworth et al, "Diachronous beginnings of the Anthropocene: The lower bounding surface of anthropogenic deposits," *The Anthropocene Review*, Vol 2, issue 1 (January 8, 2015): #33-58, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2053019614565394>

^[2] Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 4-5.

^[3] Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, Translated by Julie Rose (New York: Verso, 1997), 21.

^[4] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (New York: Literary Classics of the U.S. reprint 1985), 68.



Ayanah Moor (1973–)
i love hip-hop and hip-hop loves me, 2003

Photo-lithograph and screenprint 15" x 18¾"
 Egress Press & Research
 Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

Ayanah Moor's lithograph and the African mask, both in Edinboro's Permanent Collection, invoke issues of accommodation and resistance. The mask, probably crafted by a men's secret society in West Africa, reflects communally held beliefs in higher powers. Deployed during funeral ceremonies, this mask would have been worn exclusively by men; women were not invited to actively participate.^[1] Moor's bold print argues for women's contributions to Black cultural expression. Her head is encircled by a half-dozen phallic faces which underscore the male origins of rap and hip-hop. Moor's prints resist the "boys' club atmosphere of hip-hop," laying claim to women's place in seminal music genres beyond the misogynist "booty call" endemic to music videos.^[2] Moor's prints fulfill Nicole R. Fleetwood's call for "hypervisibility" as a "performative strategy for black female cultural producers." [C.W.]

^[1] Stephanie Van Bramer draws together key sources on the "spitfire" mask in her entry, "Learn More: Senufo Fire Spitter Mask," accessed 5 December 2022, <https://www.plu.edu/africanartcollection/masks/firespitter/learn-more-firespitter/>

^[2] The phrase is used in a short review of an exhibition of Moor's prints, called "Representin'." The author is not identified. Mako Fitts references the booty call in her essay, "Drop It Like It's Hot. Culture Industry Laborers and Their Perspectives on Rap Music Video Production." *Meridians* Vol 8: No. 1 (1 September 2008), 211. Both sources are included in the same link. Accessed 5 December 2022. <http://www.ayanah.com/press/ml9i2xlabsg2ib8q9iqgu23boolzam>

i love hip-hop and hip-hop loves me presents a collage-like exploration of African American culture. The lithograph calls attention to rap music and its connection to the characterization and categorization of Black people in society based on collective stereotyping. In Moor's print, our attention is focused on the artist's face and hair; emphasized by the numerous male faces surrounding her made up of only eyes, noses, and mouths. *i love hip-hop and hip-hop loves me* seems to present the question of how much we assume about someone's identity based on racial stereotyping. Words in the background read "rap head," which is slang for someone who is an enthusiast about rap music. It could also be a play on the words "headwrap," another culturally significant object for African American individuals.^[1] Despite the hints towards rap music as one means of stereotyping, the title suggests there is a possible comfort in rap as a celebration of Blackness and embraces what is often used to label the African American as "other." About her work and hip-hop, Moor has stated, "The aesthetics of the hip-hop generation is to be in conversation with the previous generation's creative work...you're in conversation with the artists that your parents listen to, and you're trying to tease out your own aesthetic from their available material, and I think I approach my painting in that way."^[2] Moor portrays this complex relationship by utilizing the atmosphere of rap music itself with bold lettering and grainy photographs. In this print, Moor addresses the assumptions we make when we see a Black woman by framing her image with her handwriting. [C.G.]

^[1] Artyfactory, "African Masks—Senufo Mask," accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.artifactory.com/africanmasks/masks/senufo.htm>

^[2] Cleve Carney Museum of Art (February 11, 2022). *Ayanah Moor: I Wish I Could Be You More Often* [Video], accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikav3lu35b8>



While the origins of this wood carving are unknown, it closely resembles a helmet mask from the Senoufo civilization that spreads across the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Burkina Faso, and South Mali.^[1] While “spitfire” masks were originally conceived for community-based rituals, others may have been designed to appeal to tourists. The mask incorporates myriad animal features, including the thin feminine face and horns of an antelope and horned snout of a warthog. The spitfire mask, its people believed, had the power to connect with the supernatural, including deceased ancestors. One of the most valued ancestors worshiped by the Senoufo is “Kolotyolo,” or “Ancient Mother.” Though some masks represent a feminine deity, masks were worn by men whose role was to educate boys within the tribes. The Senoufo mask is a captivating example of how one face can convey something powerful to many people. To many cultures, the mask is a conduit for transcending the natural world, its power matched only by the hands of the artists who craft these artifacts. [C.G.]

^[1] Artyfactory, “African Masks - Senoufo Mask,” <https://www.artfactory.com/africanmasks/masks/senufo.htm>.

Anonymous African Artist
Mask, undated

Wood carving, possibly mahogany 27¾" x 11" x 9"
Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection



Françoise Gilot (1921–)

Flora, 1965

Lithograph Ed 100 32"x25"

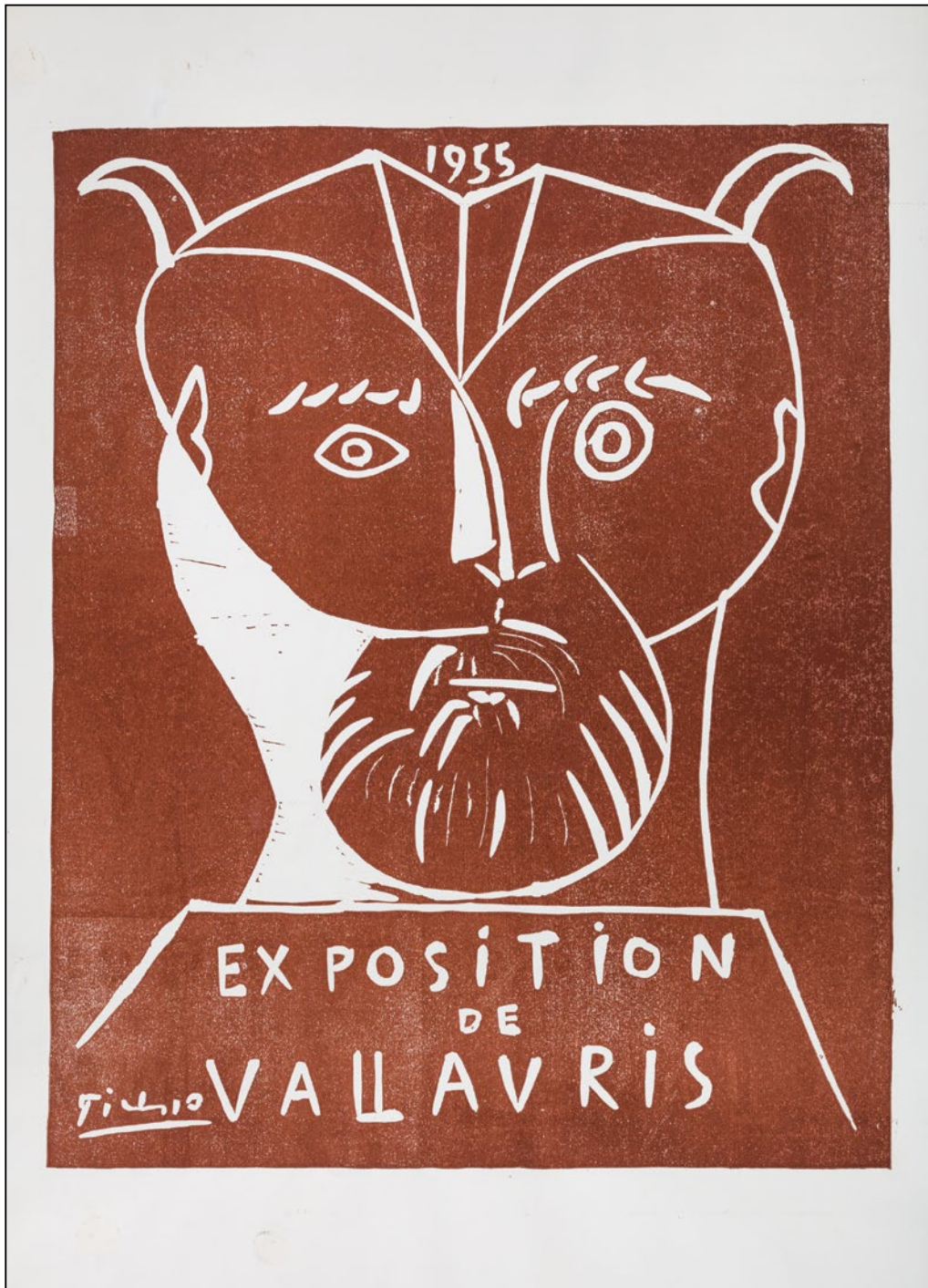
Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

Françoise Gilot's *Flora* displays the image of the Roman goddess by the same name, identified by the crown of flowers she wears on her head. Flora is the goddess of nature and spring, though the French painter's portrait of the goddess sheds the mythological reference and instead focuses on the simplicity of the female presence.^[1] Flora also represents the Roman myth of Juno seeking revenge on her husband Jupiter, perhaps alluding to the themes of female spite and marital revenge, as Gilot's own troubled marriage played a large role in her public perception as the former, estranged wife of Pablo Picasso (1881–1973).^[2] Gilot's painting harbors no anger; just a blue scene of calmness and the humble depiction of womanhood. She described her use of mythology as a form of escapism and a way to explore her own personal anxieties. She says, "History teaches lessons, but legends feed the species. They transcend all to reveal the primal truth, the only one that lasts...they help us to discover who we are."^[3] *Flora* captures the power of portraiture as a form of transformation of the artist's life into something that transcends time and narratives. [C.G.]

^[1] Ed Whalen, "Flora, Goddess of Spring, and Her Festival Floralia," *Classical Wisdom* (April 2, 2021), <https://classicalwisdom.com/mythology/gods/flora-goddess-of-spring-and-her-festival-floralia/>.

^[2] Jillian Steinhauer, "Fire and Brimstone: The entwined lives of Françoise Gilot and Pablo Picasso," *The Nation* (December 23, 2019), accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/francoise-gilot-life-with-picasso-book-review/>.

^[3] Mel Yoakum, "Myths and Mythology," The F. Gilot Archives, 2020, <https://www.francoisegilot.com/frames.html>.



Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
Exposition de Vallauris, 1955

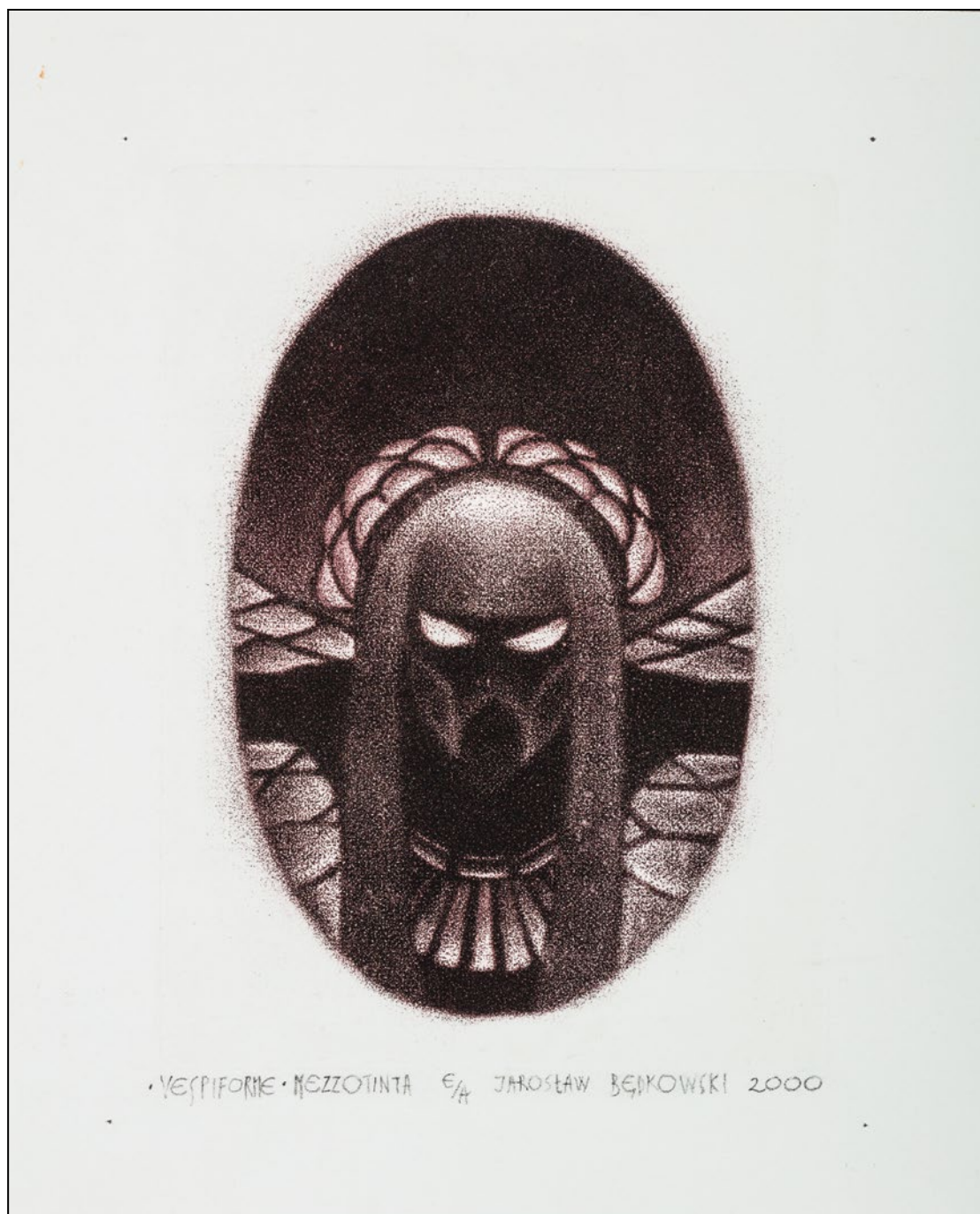
Linoleum cut 39½" x 26¼"
Hidalgo Arnéra, Printer
Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

In *Exposition de Vallauris*, Pablo Picasso used aspects of cubism to create an asymmetrical, mysterious face that is recognizably human, but not quite. This poster is one of several Picasso created to support Vallauris, a small town in southeastern France, that he first visited in 1946. Vallauris was a community famed for its ceramics that is credited with sparking Picasso's interest in working with clay, a medium he continued to explore for the remainder of his life.

Picasso lived in Vallauris for eight years—a time of transition for the town from a tradition of beautiful cooking pottery to producing non-functional pieces emphasizing the fine arts.^[1] Vallauris is still known for its pottery and clay artworks and travelers all over the world continue to seek the town's astonishing handcrafted ceramics. [C.G.]

^[1] Yaneff Gallery, accessed December 7, 2022,
<https://www.yaneff.com/products/exposition-vallauris-57>

Jaroslav Bedkowski
Vespiforme, 2000
Mezzotint Artist Proof 5" x 6"
Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

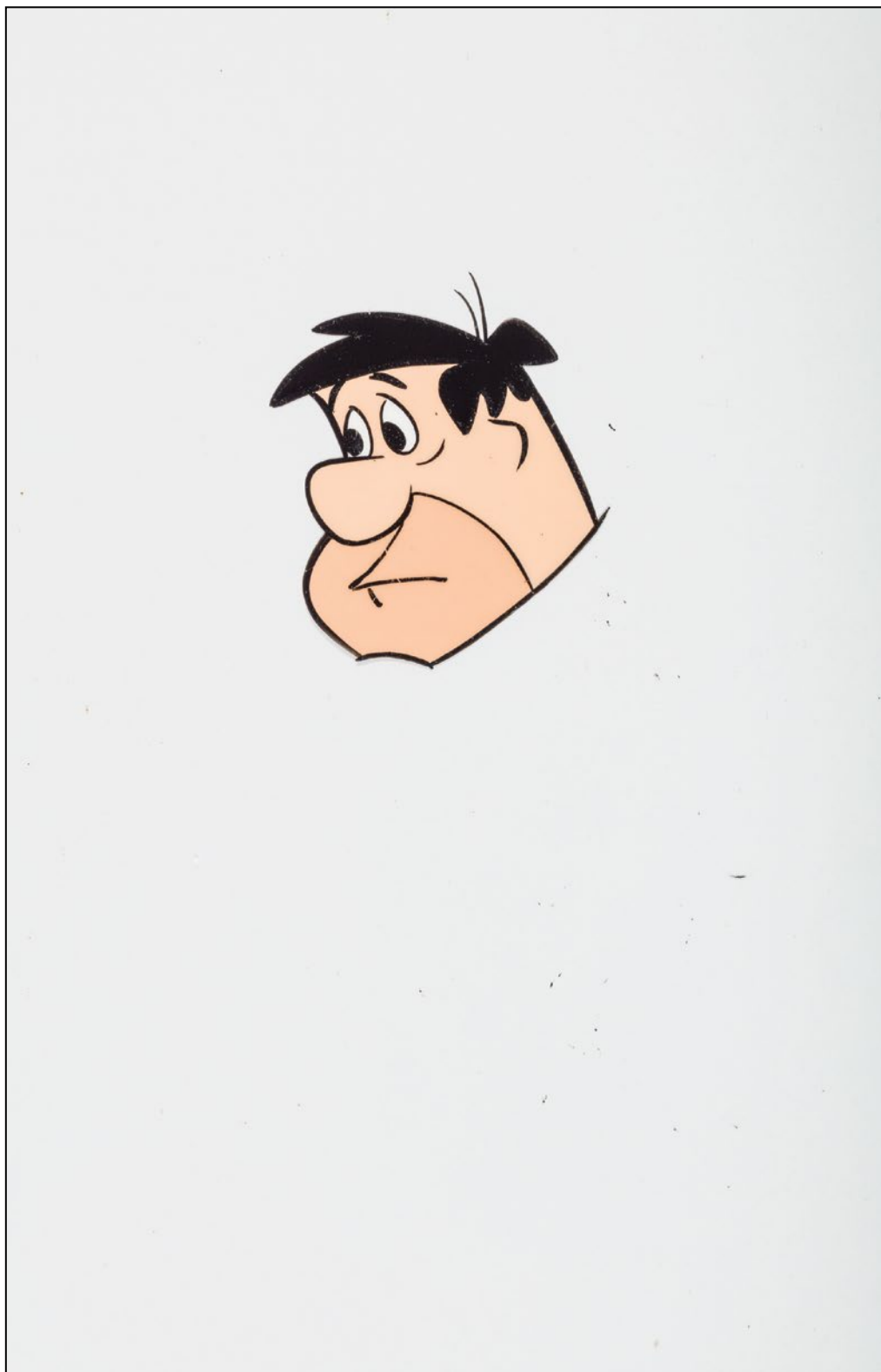


Jaroslav Bedkowski utilizes the mezzotint process to create the atmospheric presence of a dark, insectile figure. The authoritative title of *Vespiforme* alludes to *Temnostoma vespiforme*, the species name for a type of hoverfly that feeds off decaying wood. Using a toothy “rocker,” the artist painstakingly pitted the surface of the soft copper plate to hold ink and create a solid, rich black. Then, using a burnishing tool, Bedkowski rubbed the rough surface, creating a range of tones to build his image. Because of its ability to reproduce subtle values, mezzotint became widely favored in 18th century England for its use in portrait painting.^[1] While the method appears antiquated, the illustration itself feels modern and inspired by images in pop culture today. The figure stares intensely out of the frame, eyes narrowed and mouth gaping ominously, blurring the recognizable features of the common bee-like insect with the dystopian design of the figure. *Vespiforme* illustrates the contradictions that can exist in one single gaze, combining the recognizable and the unknown into one image. Bedkowski masterfully demonstrates the power of visual signals to prompt emotions. [C.G.]

[1] Tate, “Mezzotint,” accessed December 7, 2022,
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/mezzotint>

Even if you have never seen *The Flintstones*, you are likely to recognize the dark hair and shaded beard of Fred Flintstone. Just one feature of the character elicits a wide range of memories, personal to each viewer: Each 25-minute episode of the beloved 1960s TV show would take seven months to create, as animators would have to generate a sequence of frames using a collage-like assemblage of animation celluloids, or “cels,” like this example.^[1] Taken together, these individual cels function much like a flip book, transforming the still image into time-based motion. Every subtle change in a character’s behavior would require a different cel, demonstrating how much care and patience the cartoonists invested in the shows they helped bring to life. In this cel, representing only a millisecond of action, Fred is frowning, eyebrows raised in concern or worry. One can only imagine the numerous entertaining situations this one cel played throughout the six seasons of the show. Animation has evolved since *The Flintstones*, but we will always have animation cels to remind us of how far the art form has advanced and the dedication present since the beginning. [C.G.]

^[1] Kristen McCormick and Michael R. Schilling, “Animation Cels, Preserving a Portion of Cinematic History,” The Getty Conservation Institute, accessed December 7, 2022, https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/29_1/animation.html



Anonymous cartoonist, Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, Inc.
Fred Flintstone TV Series, 1960-64

Acrylic or gouache image (2"x2") on cellulose acetate sheet 11"x14"
Edinboro Animation George Nicholas Collection

Edward Eberle, a western Pennsylvania native and Edinboro Art Department alumnus, is a celebrated ceramic artist who evokes a contradictory sense of vulnerability and endurance unique to his work. Using delicate porcelain clay to contrast with the jagged, imperfect lines of contemporary art, Eberle gives viewers a sense of imperfection in unexpected places, trading the fine lines of traditional porcelain for something more gestural. The uneven eyes, sharply zig-zagged nose, and simple mouth creates a face that asks its audience what makes a face, and what makes a ceramic plate. There is a fragility not only in the medium, but also in the process of defining the piece of art itself. Eberle has described his art process as “a spoiling of the canvas.”^[1] In this spirit, Eberle rejects the pressures of perfect creation, and instead classifies his art as something ruinous, further adding complexity to how the craft itself should be perceived. As you stare into the face of *The Man on The Moon*, Eberle seems to ask you to find meaning in the contradictory and identity in the flawed. [C.G.]

^[1]Bill Rogers, “Edward Eberle Retrospective at Society for Contemporary Craft,” CFile Capsule, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://cfileonline.org/exhibition-edward-eberle-retrospective-at-society-for-contemporary-craft/>



Edward S. Eberle (1944–)
***The Man in The Moon*, 2006**
Porcelain bowl 5¼" x 16¾" x 16¾"
Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection





Carole Werder (1951–)
Juel, 2022
Mixed media on wood 17"x14"
Loaned by the artist

Carole Werder uses the beauty and intensity of mixed media to capture not only the appearance of a young man but also the excitement of possibilities. The fiery image of unlit matches that surround the boy's shoulders and the green atmosphere above his head spread like a bright aura of aspiration. The raised level of the canvas emphasizes the outward spread of Juel's presence. Werder, Edinboro native and alumna, told Christians in the Visual Arts, "I work as a sculptural painter to explore and interpret the identities of ordinary people I know and to tell their stories...My painting structures come off the wall to diminish emotional distance with the viewer."^[1] Werder painted *Juel* to acknowledge his significance and to encourage him. She has painted this young man surrounded by "the green of new possibilities and the red of purpose and empowerment to overcome obstacles."^[2] *Juel* captures much more than just the image of a person, but also the essence of life that encompasses him. As the viewer looks into Juel's eyes, there is an apparent sense of hope in what is to come for the young man. [C.G.]

^[1] CIVA: Christians In Visual Arts, accessed August 18, 2022, <https://www.civa.org/2021-featured-artists/carole-werder/>

^[2] Object label for *Juel*, Erie Art Museum 99th Annual Spring Show, viewed August 18, 2022.

Photographer Bill Sanders lives and works in Detroit, a city that inspires countless of his subjects.^[1] While Sanders developed both fine and commercial bodies of work, his fine art photographs break boundaries and photographic conventions. In *The Seer*, Sanders photographs four objects positioned in front of a black sheet. He presents a pipe, a half-burnt candle, an eye, and a painted arm. Each item implies that body part's associations, whether it be the reach of arm, sight, smoke, or scents. Even the shadows cast by Sanders' objects suggest an aura, each contradictory light source throwing the viewer's vantage point on Sanders' composition into question. *The Seer* asks us to consider our senses, how we feel the world around us. While they suggest a figure, the disparate objects gathered here remain oddly separate. Sanders' digital prints are surprising presentations of the everyday world, a visual form of poetry whose purpose is to make the familiar unfamiliar: [C.G.]

^[1] Sherry Arts, "Bill Sanders," accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.sherryarts.com/bill-sanders>



Bill Sanders (1947-)

The Seer, Undated

Digital print Ed.100 13¾"x 18"

Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection



Dennis Doyle (1997–)
Body of Substance, 2020

Flour; water; and microbes from the artist's skin
 Dimensions variable
 Loaned by the artist



PHOTO CREDIT: THE ARTIST

Dennis Doyle's *Body of Substance* unites the dark and shocking appearance of the natural world with the sanctity of religious ritual, obscuring our perception of what is sacred and what is profane. Doyle alludes to Catholic transubstantiation, the belief that when the Eucharist is eaten, one is consuming the flesh of Christ. Doyle quite literally conjoins the moisture of their own flesh with the bread featured in *Body of Substance* through the molecular exchange of their skin and the bread. They write, "Responding to the term transubstantiation...I considered how my traditional unclean, queer body, could be manifested in bread, to be substantial."^[1] As each element of the bread, skin, and environment mixes and mold arises, the bread begins to have the visual appearance of something rotten, despite the process itself being one of religious sanctity. Doyle is perhaps alluding to the traditional, often religious practice of pathologizing queer bodies. Doyle embraces the mold as a miraculous, scientific expansion of oneself. "The clean becomes unclean and unleavened, unyeasted, unliving bread becomes a site of new life." [C.G.]

^[1]Dennis Doyle, "Body of Substance," Dennis Doyle Art, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.dennisdoyleart.com/body-of-substance>.

Anonymous Tibetan Artist
Vajrapani, Undated

Block print on Nepalese rice paper
Ed. 14 16¾"x12-12½"
Barbago Collection 1977
Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection



This Tibetan woodblock print represents the Buddhist deity Vajrapani. Vajrapani is one of the principal bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism and can be recognized by two objects: a vajra/scepter and a bell. To come closer to enlightenment, one needs to actualize both compassion and wisdom.^[1] The vajra is a ritual object symbolizing a thunderbolt and male energy of compassion, and power. The bell symbolizes the female aspect of transcendental wisdom. Vajrapani functions as a protector figure standing in the ‘warriors’ pose in the center of a fire-flame aura that burns away ignorance and misconception. Vajrapani is described as “a wrathful protector; but one who represents the potential of tantric practice for full awakening rather than just worldly benefits.”^[2] Through their facial expressions, stance and objects they hold, deities like Vajrapani guided the actions of those within the culture. Artists represented the deities and their power as perceived by those who worship them. This print, from a souvenir set of gods and goddesses, utilized the intense appearance of the deities to encourage purchases from both believers and tourists. [C.G.] [J.H.]

^[1] Britannica, “Vajra,” accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/vajra>

^[2] The Rubin, “Vajrapani Trampling Snakes,” *Masterworks of Himalayan Art*, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://rubinmuseum.org/collection/artwork/vajrapani-trampling-snakes>

Jenny Schmid's work is a love letter to printmaking as the art of rebellion, drawing on the satirical political prints of Medieval and Renaissance artists to create images that shock viewers, question authority, and draw on contemporary cultural politics. Schmid enjoys subverting the Western standard of gender in art by depicting women—with their particularly big heads—relaxing while men are gazed at and observed. In *Fast Girl, Knocked Up*, we see images of female youth, sexuality, and anatomy surrounded by mythical half-man, half-bird creatures who invade the spaces between figures. The print is full of allusions to medieval motifs, each one grotesquely altered to fit the satirical tone typical of Schmid's work as it acts to dismantle the Western characterization of gender. Schmid remarks, "The accessibility of printmaking has

Jenny Schmid (1969–)

Fast Girl, Knocked Up, 2002

Lithograph Ed.40 19"x21½"

Egress Press & Research

Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection



made it a deviant media, historically employed when confronting authority and exploring taboo subjects.”^[1] The taboo is not only included but embraced in *Fast Girl, Knocked Up*, the mesmerizing elegance of printmaking colliding with a striking absurdity distinctive to Jenny Schmid. [C.G.]

^[1]Jenny Schmid, "About bikini press international," *bikini press international*, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.jennyschmid.com/About-bikini-press-international>



Pinchas Litvinovsky (1894–1985)

Henrietta Szold, Undated

Lithograph Ed. 250 26¾" x 20⅞"

Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

Pinchas Litvinovsky worked in Jerusalem in the 1930s, often switching between paintings related to his Jewish faith and paintings of everyday intimacy, a duality of the spiritual and the sensual. Despite being one of Litvinovsky's less abstract artworks, *Henrietta Szold* reflects the artist's gravitation towards the expressionist artwork from 1930 Paris and his connection to the Jewish community of artists.^[1] The subject herself, Henrietta Szold, was the first editor of the *Jewish Publication Society*. Szold gained permission to enter the male-only rabbinical school by promising she would not seek ordination. In 1942 Szold founded Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. Hadassah funded hospitals, medical schools, soup kitchens, and other resources for Jewish and Arab citizens of Palestine. She eventually immigrated to Palestine and helped to lead a program that saved an estimated 30,000 children from Nazi Europe.^[2] Both Litvinovsky and Szold devoted themselves to Jewish lives and culture. In this portrait, Litvinovsky's subtle use of expressionism captures the gentleness of Szold's love for her faith matched with the compelling look of a leader devoted to the welfare of those around her. [C.G.]

^[1] Beloosesky Gallery, "Pinchas Litvinovsky," accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.beloosesky.com/artists/>

^[2] Michael Brown, "Henrietta Szold," Jewish Women's Archive, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/author/brown-michael>

Gustave Moreau (au petit chapeau) (“Gustave Moreau in The Little Hat”), is the endearing title given to Rouault’s portrait of his late mentor, Gustave Moreau. Before working under Moreau, Rouault studied the art of stained glass-making. Influenced by Moreau’s tutelage, Rouault impacted the major art movements of his lifetime. Though his art diverged from Moreau’s style, Rouault became the curator of the Moreau Museum, where he was exposed to artists like Henri Matisse, who inspired Rouault to explore Expressionism and Fauvism.^[1] When the lithograph was published in Rouault’s book *Souvenirs Intimes*, French poet André Suarès stated in the preface, “More different from [Moreau] than anyone else, you were his dearest pupil; he even surrounded you with a predilection which did not end with his life and which still follows you. Nothing seems to me more beautiful than him and you!”^[2] *Gustave Moreau (au petit chapeau)* illustrates both the intense sorrow of Rouault’s loss of his greatest mentor while capturing the charm that made their relationship so captivating to their contemporaries. [C.G.]

^[1] MoMA, “Georges Rouault,” accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.moma.org/artists/5053#works>

^[2] André Suarès, “Georges Rouault,” in *Souvenirs Intimes* #7, accessed December 7, 2022



Georges Rouault (1871–1958)

Gustave Moreau (au petit chapeau), 1926

Lithograph published in *Souvenirs Intimes*, 13" x 10"

Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

Kabuki Actor depicts the facial expressions of performer named Kataoka Nizaemon captured in a print made by using a series of wooden blocks, each meant to be inked in its own separate color. To complete the image perfectly, each block must be exactly matched to the others. In Japan, this process of wood-blocking is called “ukiyo-e.” The word translates to “pictures of the floating world,” and is meant to capture images of everyday life, including Kabuki. Established in the 17th century, Kabuki is still performed by male actors who combine their skills of dancing, miming, and singing to portray characters on stage. Originally, Kabuki stood out from other forms of traditional Japanese theater because of its purpose in connecting with the working-class of Japan.^[1] While other Japanese styles of performance emphasize an elegant and regal way of storytelling, Kabuki focuses on raw, intense movements that resonated with a wider audience. The most prolific aspect of the theatrical style is the facial expressions, usually characterized by the dramatic movement of the eyes, eyebrows, and mouth. In Kabuki, control over these facial gestures is regarded as a valuable and rare skill, as the face of the actor plays the most important role in telling the story.^[2] To this day the artform is highly beloved in Japanese culture and is often even regarded as religiously significant in Buddhism. *Kabuki Actor* captures a performer in the height of his expertise, masterfully capturing the look that allows Kabuki actors to entrance audiences everywhere. [C.G.]

^[1] David McElhinney and Brooke Larsen, “What is Kabuki? 8 Things You Need to Know About Kabuki Theater,” *Japan Objects*, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://japanobjects.com/features/kabuki/#culture>

^[2] The Editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica, “Kabuki,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Kabuki>

PennWest Edinboro Professor William Mathie added in an email to Gallery Director Lisa Austin on December 7, 2022: *This print was printed by Seihachi Takenaka, a fourth-generation master printer in Kyoto, Japan—the father of my sensei, Kenji Takenaka. This print was created as a test for the quality of print that could be created using shina plywood (instead of the traditional boards of cherry wood.) The Takenaka Woodblock Print studio was established in 1891. This print was a gift from Kenji Takenaka and their print shop. When I visited Kyoto in 2009, Seihachi Takenaka was the Grand Grand Master Printmaker in Kyoto. There are ten Grand Master Printmakers in Kyoto, and ten in Tokyo, and one Grand Grand Master in each city.*



Utagawa Toyokuni (1769–1825)

21st century re-carving of original design by Hiroshi Fujisawa, rub-painted by Seihachi Takenaka

Kabuki Actor Kataoka Nizaemon VII as Fujiwara no Tokihira

Shina plywood blocks printed on Echizen Houshou paper made by national treasure paper artist Echibeï Iwano Woodblock, Limited Ed.100 15 5/8" x 11"

Gift of William Mathie, Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

Translation of Japanese characters, top to bottom: toyo, kuni: name of the artist; egaku: painting/picture

Edinboro University Student Art League and EUSGA Inc are proud to present

Bill Fick



Lecture and Slide Presentation
Doucette Hall Room 119
Thursday March 3, 2005 @ 8:30pm
+ making a lithograph with Egress Press and Research

2005

Bill Fick (1963-)

Poster for Bill Fick Visit, 2005

(featuring linocut *Pretty Boy Clyde*, 2004)

Silkscreen, Linocut 18¼"x12½"

Egress Press & Research

Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

This piece highlights Bill Fick's advertisement of his 2005 visit to the Loveland Hall art studios at Edinboro University. Fick, a printmaker, often presents the face or head of a character in a satirical manner. *Poster for Bill Fick Visit* features *Pretty Boy Clyde*, a rendering with drips, blemishes, and folds offering an intimate, grotesque portrait. As the lit cigarette burns between the character's protruding teeth, he himself is melting. His bright eyes and smile showcase the character as a willing participant in his own disintegration. He and the cigarette burn as one. As the smoke blurs into the border of the image, so does our perception of where the character ends and where Fick himself begins. Aside from being one of the most complex aspects of being an artist, self promotion is often a way for artists to share a glimpse of their own understanding of how they fit into such a commodifying world. Just like the character in his image, Fick plays a role in his own undoing. [C.G.]

Raphael Soyer (1899–1987)
Self-Portrait, 1979
Lithograph Ed. 250 11" x 8"
Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection



Raphael Soyer is best known for his work as a Social Realist, creating portraits of men and women in everyday settings throughout the United States, especially the working class in New York City as they suffered through the Great Depression.^[1] However, Soyer also had an affinity for portraiture of his contemporaries and friends, as well as himself. Throughout the years he made many self-portraits, usually recording himself behind an easel. At the time of this work, Soyer was 80 years old and had a long, accomplished career as a socially conscious, figurative artist. Soyer was hard-set against abstract art, prioritizing representing life as it looks in the everyday world. In this sense, looking at *Self-Portrait* allows viewers to see Soyer exactly as he saw himself. Whether he intended to portray a deeper meaning in the haziness of the world surrounding him or in the shadows covering his eyes, Soyer clearly wanted to capture a particular moment in his life. [C.G.]

^[1] Smithsonian American Art Museum, "Raphael Soyer," accessed December 7, 2022, <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/raphael-soyer-4566>

In *Self-Portrait*, Degas stands alone surrounded by a shadow. The French Impressionist is predominantly known for his career-long voyeuristic role as an artist painting his subjects in vulnerable, intimate moments such as dancers off-stage and women bathing.^[1] However, *Par Lui-Même* predates this shift and instead represents a time of exploration for Degas, who made many self-portraits in the style of Renaissance masters. After the early 1860s, Degas did not return to self-portraiture until the mid- to late- 1890s. With the advantage of hindsight, the hazy figure looking out of the painting can be seen as hauntingly foreshadowing the man who would become known for his pessimistic understanding of his role as an artist. Famously, Degas disclosed his own persistent solitude. He is quoted as writing “I frequently lock myself in my studio. I do not often see the people I love, and in the end, I shall suffer for it . . .”^[2] Degas’ honest perception of himself paired with the self-portraits of his youth evokes both excitement and dread of what was to come for the eager new artist, and how his art would drive him away from himself and back again. [C.G.]

^[1]R. J. Kendall, “Edgar Degas,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edgar-Degas>

^[2]Museyon Guides, “Art+Paris Impressionists and Post-Impressionists: The Ultimate Guide to Artists, Paintings and Places in Paris and Normandy,” accessed December 7, 2022



Edgar Degas (1834-1917)
***Self-Portrait (Par Lui-Même)*, 1855**
 Etching from a canceled plate* 9 1/8" x 5 3/4"
 Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

*Canceled plate: After pulling an edition, the printer marks the plate in a visible way (canceled) so that any subsequent prints made using the canceled plate can be easily identified, thus securing the value of the original edition.



Jasper Johns (1930–)
Cup 2 Picasso, 1973

Lithograph Ed.11 10"x8¾"
Bruce Gallery Permanent Collection

Using distinct light and dark silhouettes, Jasper Johns creates the illusion of two mirrored profiles of the same face and the chalice between them. *Cup 2 Picasso* is reminiscent of Rubin's vase, an illusionary image coined by a 1915 Danish psychologist to display the brain's process and identification of images according to the relationship between figure and ground. The reference is characteristic of Johns' career-long thematic gravitation towards pre-existing images and the role of perception in art. In a 2015 interview with *Interview Magazine*, Johns remarks that "painting . . . organizes vision in a certain way or suggests that certain things be paid attention to and certain other things not be paid attention to."^[1] The profile used to create the shape of the cup is Picasso's, who died the same year as the piece's creation. In addition to commemorating Picasso's impact on Johns' art, the lithograph is inspired by artist Marcel Duchamp's *Self-Portrait in Profile*.^[2] Johns' use of facial silhouettes captures the perceptive nature of art he used throughout his career and provides a collage-like glimpse of the relationship between an artist's work, influences, and identity. [C.G.]

^[1] Philip Smith, "New Again: Jasper Johns," *Interview Magazine*, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/new-again-jasper-johns>

^[2] "Jasper Johns 'Cup 2 Picasso,'" Oklahoma State University Art Collection, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://osumawordpress.com/2011/04/04/jasper-johns-cup-2-picasso-1973/>

Egress Press & Research

Bill Mathie, Director, EPR,

Loveland Hall, PennWest Edinboro, December 2022

Three works in the *Surface* show were created at Egress Press & Research by Jenny Schmid in 2002, Ayanah Moor in 2003 and Bill Fick in 2005.

Founded in 1998 by Edinboro University Professors John Lysak and Franz Spohn, *Egress Press & Research* (EPR) is a fine art publishing component of the printmaking program at PennWest Edinboro. EPR invites artists to visit the Edinboro print studio and create a fine art print. Students observe the artists working and assist in the printing of an edition after the artist leaves. EPR has worked with 29 artists to produce more than 40 editions.

Jenny Schmid, founder of *bikini press international* and an original member of *Highpoint Center for Printmaking*, teaches at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Her artwork deals with the construction/destruction of identity, and often features active adolescent female characters and lounging adolescent male figures. Her 2002 EPR print, *Fast Girl, Knocked Up* utilizes thin layers of photo-lithography to create subtle colors and graphic black lines to capture the feeling of a 19th century novel. In this tale our fast girl with her meaty arms and legs remains all powerful over her scrawny winged male suitors.

Ayanah Moor teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Moor uses text and image to address contemporary Black cultural expression. With provocatively shaped collaged Black male heads that harken back to works by Romare Bearden, the 2003 EPR work, *i love hip-hop and hip-hop loves me* deals with hip hop's complex path, constructing work that reflects the battle of disenfranchised men staking their claim. This print uses photo-lithography with one subtle layer of screen printing black text on black. The image appears to be printed on black paper; but is actually on white paper with a printed black border. This helps to make the image "pop" on the page.

Bill Fick, founder of Cock-eyed Press and a member of the Outlaw Printmakers, teaches at Duke University. He is a co-author of *Printmaking: A Complete Guide to Materials and Process*, the finest book on contemporary printmaking processes. He is known for creating large, often black-and-white, linocuts of gnarly faces. The 2005 EPR print included in *Surface* is a poster created from one of his prints to announce his lecture at Edinboro. ☼

Acknowledgements

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Acknowledgements • Sur{face} Exhibition

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Shelle Barron, Emerita, Graphic & Interactive Design
Mary Elizabeth Meier, Art Education
Charlotte H. Wellman, Emerita, Art History

CATALOG DESIGN

Shelle Barron, Emerita, Graphic & Interactive Design

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sur{face}•portraits re-examined
9•14•2022|2•1•2023

featuring:

Murjoni Merriweather
ceramic mixed-media sculptures

Madeline Schwartzman
performance photographs & videos

including works by:

Jaroslaw Bedkowski+Edgar Degas
+Dennis Doyle+Edward Eberle+
Bill Fick+Jasper Johns+Françoise Gilot
+Pinchas Litvinovsky+Ayanah Moor+
Pablo Picasso+Georges Rouault
+Bill Sanders+Jenny Schmid+
Raphael Soyer+Utagawa Toyokuni
+Carol Werder+works from Africa
and Tibet+Hanna-Barbera Cartoons



bruce gallery, doucette hall
on the edinboro campus
of pennwest university
215 meadville st. edinboro, pa

web: www.brucegallery.info
email: laustin@pennwest.edu
art office: 814•732•2406



front cover: image created by dall-e as a response to the prompt:
an extreme close-up of skin in a thickly painted portrait oil painting
on canvas in renaissance style.