



**Grinnell College**  
Museum of Art

# ANNUAL REPORT 20/21

# A YEAR OF BEAUTY, IDEAS, CHALLENGES, AND INSPIRATION.



Installation view of *Our Voice: Celebrating the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Awards*, organized by the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature, Abilene, Texas, Summer



Installation view of Jacob Lawrence: *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture*, Fall 2020.

### Possibilities

22 years ago, on September 25, 1999, we opened GCMoA to the public. We had a staff of five, 7400 square feet of exhibition space, a generous budget, a small but impressive collection, and wide open possibilities. I had curated the inaugural show in just 4 months, Milton Severe designed the moveable walls still in use today, and Dan Strong and I were racing to fill the exhibition schedule with content that would excite the campus and let the world know that a serious new museum existed in Iowa.

Over the years, we've presented old master drawings and contemporary sculpture; video art and Chinese woodblock printing; Swiss bridge design and Japanese baskets; and installations made of popcorn, cardboard, and a bathtub. We've worked with artists from Brazil, Estonia, Morocco, South Africa, the Netherlands, China, Germany, Japan, Portugal, Sweden, and Denmark. Dan Strong brought photography to the fore in our collecting and exhibitions, and we carved out an important role in supporting contemporary artists from the Midwest. An abiding touchstone has been to create a museum that serves the entire campus, working with faculty and students to find ways to use the collection, and to engage with — even co-curate — exhibitions.

In 1999, we had so many possibilities before us and we've had the joy of realizing many ideas. As I prepare to retire in December, I know GCMoA is well positioned for new opportunities. We are an important part of the academic life of the College. We are an anchor for the cultural life of campus and our community. Through our curatorial and professional work, Grinnell College and GCMoA are recognized for arts and culture regionally, nationally, and even internationally.

When I came to Grinnell 22 years ago, I wanted to establish a museum that offered others

a sense of possibilities. I'm so proud to have former students who have worked with us now pursuing museum work or bringing art into their careers whatever their professional pursuits. I'm moved that we have positive partnerships with many departments on campus and organizations in Grinnell. It's been a joy for me to curate, to teach, and to oversee the work of the Museum.

We have done so very much because of the talents of the staff, who have been extraordinary over the past year, making sure we could provide beauty, and ideas, and challenges, and inspiration to people stuck at home. For a group who are used to creating exhibitions, events, and opportunities for live experiences, the staff continued to find ways to be active, be creative, and be present in the virtual realm. Thank you Jodi Brandenburg, Peggy Brown, Amanda Davenport, Jocelyn Krueger, Milton Severe, Dan Strong, and Tilly Woodward for being the heart and soul of GCMoA.

Thank you as well to the Museum's Leadership Council and our campus network for supporting the work we have done. From the Dean's office to Development and Alumni Relations to our close allies in the Grinnell Libraries, we've been able to push forward with important work behind the scenes.

We don't yet know how the upheavals since March 2020 will affect museums in the future. What we collect, how we think of exhibitions, how we serve our audiences, and who we want sharing our work are all under examination. There is no doubt the pandemic and the racial awakening and political turmoil of this year will profoundly affect art. But all these elements open more possibilities. I look forward to meeting my successor and seeing what unfolds.

**LESLEY WRIGHT, DIRECTOR**



## EXHIBITIONS AND VISITORS

GCMoA reopened on September 15 with the return of the students to campus. Milton Severe, director of exhibition design, devised exhibition installations that protected both our guards and patrons. We used an appointment system, and added visits from the public in March. Our attendance numbers were very low, but the Class of 2024 gets the prize for the highest attendance during their time in residence.

Dan Strong, associate director and curator of exhibitions, created two major exhibitions using the collection, and good digital assets allowed us to develop on-line talks, programs, and class assignments using the art on view. In late June, we finally opened *Our Voice*, originally scheduled for Summer 2020, and threw open the doors to all visitors.

September 15 – December 11, 2020 (14 weeks)  
[\*\*Let Yourself Continue\*\*](#)  
Curated from the collection by Daniel Strong  
Work by women artists

And  
[\*\*Jacob Lawrence: The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture\*\*](#)

Highlight exhibition of the Museum's recent acquisition of 13 prints by Lawrence telling the story of the life of famed Haitian revolutionary.

February 1 – April 11, 2021  
[\*\*Face Forward\*\*](#)  
Curated from the collection by Daniel Strong  
Portraits and figure studies, including new acquisitions

April 23 – May 28, 2021  
[\*\*BAX\*\*](#) Bachelor of Arts Exhibition  
Annual exhibition by 3rd and 4th year studio art majors, with on-site and digital components

June 25 – August 15, 2021  
[\*\*Our Voice: Celebrating the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Awards\*\*](#)

Over 100 works by Africa-American children's book illustrators from the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature, Abilene, Texas.

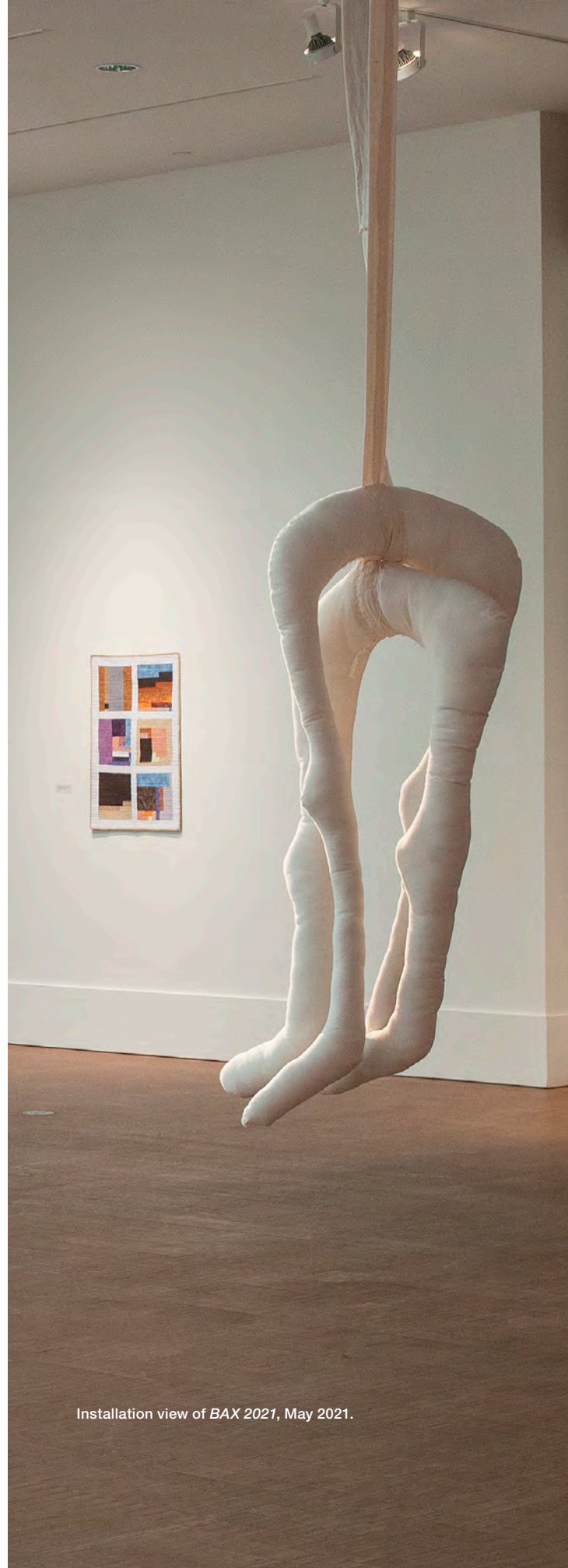
And  
[\*\*Children, Family, Friends\*\*](#)  
15 works from the collection representing dignity, joy and challenges of youth.

Installation view of *Let Yourself Continue*, Fall 2020.

## TEACHING

With classes entirely online, Museum staff provided resources and instruction to 16 different courses. Faculty in art history, anthropology, English, French, history, and studio art engaged with exhibitions or the collection for classes ranging from Innovation in the Art Market, to Bio-determinism and the Myth of Race, to Traditional African-American Literature. Staff provided images, met with classes, and helped build assignments.

The most robust assignment, with Assistant Professor Fredo Rivera's art history class, resulted in [16 videos](#) about works in the collection based on student research and script development. These and additional videos created by Museum interns and staff become part of the permanent records for the collection and will enrich learning for years to come.



Installation view of BAX 2021, May 2021.

## PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### Online Programs

Like museums across the country, GCMoA took its programming online with one-time events and an ever-increasing amount of online content. Over the year, we did nine online talks with staff, faculty, and visitors, 16 yoga classes, and 5 events for targeted student audiences (SOL/ Student Organization for Latinos/Latinas, NAMI/ National Alliance on Mental Illness—Grinnell chapter, and both the Art History and Studio Art SEPC/Student Education Policy Committees).

Dan Strong created exhibition-specific content for *Let Yourself Continue*, such as his [“Introduction” video](#) and others on GCMoA's pages on the College website. He also ventured further afield via the Artlogic web platform to create online viewing rooms (OVRs) for course-specific remote-learning, as well as for the exhibitions [Face Forward](#) and fall 2021's [Queer / Dialogue](#).

Online events attracted audiences in Grinnell and from coast to coast, an exciting new opportunity for outreach. All of the yoga classes exist on our [YouTube channel](#) and include instruction by Jackie Hutchison and images from the collection. Three of the online talks were recorded and can be found on YouTube:

- Fredo Rivera, assistant professor art history, and Petrouchka Moise, Mellon postdoctoral fellow in the Grinnell Libraries, spoke on Jacob Lawrence's *Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture*.

- Fredo Rivera moderated a conversation with guests fari nzinga and Mikhaile Solomon on “Curating Black Art Today.”
- Conner Stanfield '21 gave a talk on his mentored advanced project research in theatre and its relationship to works in *Face Forward*.

In total, Tilly Woodward, curator of academic and community outreach, and her student staff produced 66 videos, a six-fold increase in our YouTube content from the 11 videos that existed previously.

### Smithsonian Affiliation

As a Smithsonian Affiliate, GCMoA in partnership with the Office of Community Enhancement and Engagement worked with the community to present the Smithsonian poster exhibition [Votes for Women: A Portrait in Persistence](#). To make it available during the pandemic, we used a local designer to format it to live on the windows of an empty storefront downtown for sidewalk viewing, and created a digital version online. We were also able to offer several Smithsonian happy hour talks to our community.

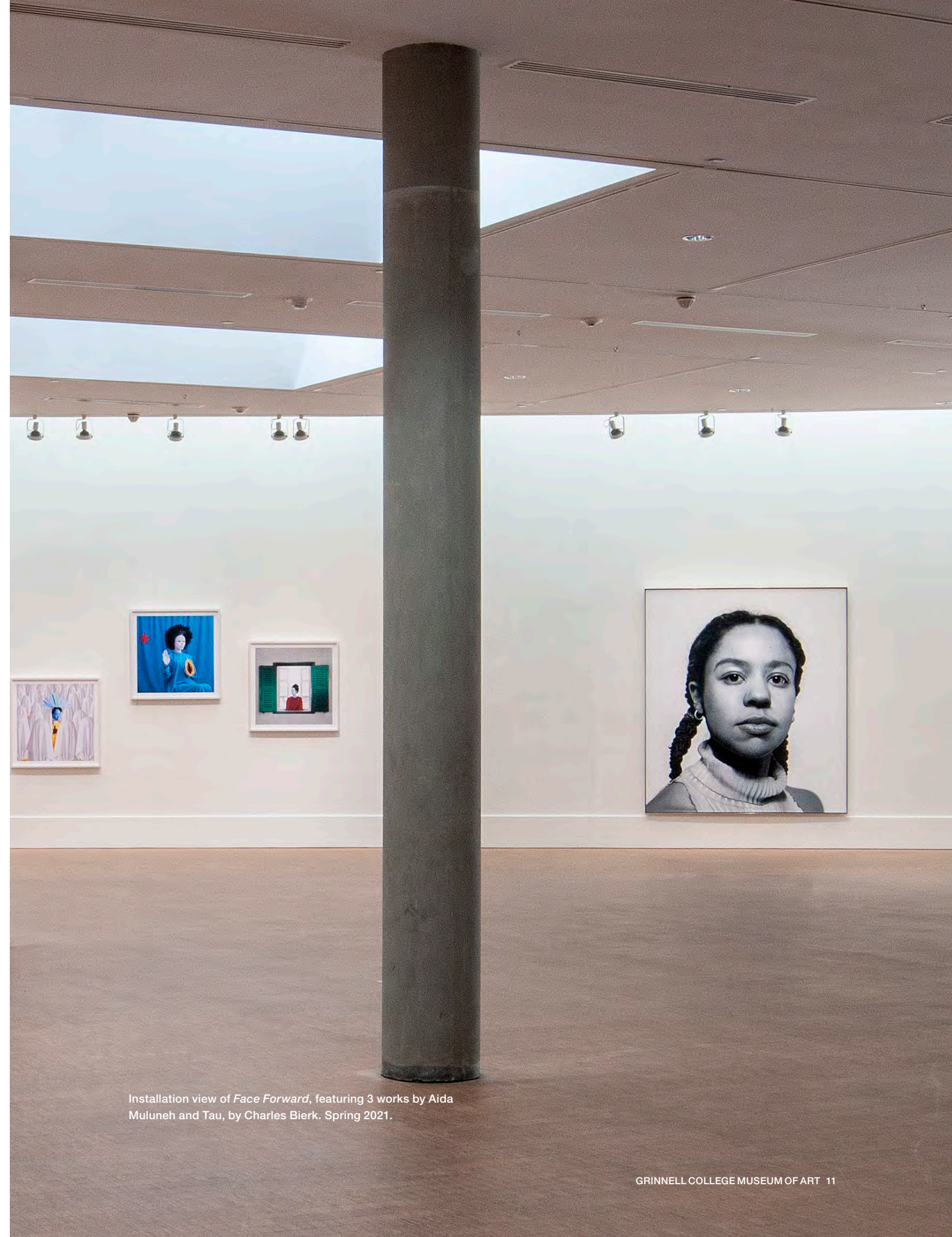
## OUTREACH WITH STUDENT INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

Every summer, GCMoA partners with the Drake Community Library, Grinnell Education Partnership, Grinnell-Newburg School District and others to provide high quality art activities across the community that contribute to visual and verbal literacy. This year, we extended our efforts to serve many groups and hundreds of young people throughout the year, taking most of our programming online. (We were able to resume in-person enrichment activities in June 2021 with modified, safe versions of Art in the Parks and programs for area summer groups.) Tilly Woodward, curator of academic and community outreach, working with 6 student interns and AmeriCorps/Vista workers and 16 Grinnell student volunteers ran a total of 19 different programs and offered a total of 458 sessions (387 online, 71 in person in summer 2021).

Fueling these efforts were multiple grants from the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation via the Presidential Grant for public humanities administered by Grinnell College. Success with online programs required breaking activities into smaller units, offering multiple sessions of each

unit, training students in online teaching, and uploading content in advance. In addition to sessions intended to boost learning and provide respite for busy families, the Museum and Drake Community Library also provided activity bags filled with art making materials, activity guide cards, images from the Museum's collection, and books. Between July 2020 and June 2021, the Museum prepared and distributed 1,860 activity bags. The [45 activity guides](#) are available to download on the Museum's website.

Tilly worked with 16 student volunteers around the U.S. and even a few working internationally who offered enrichment sessions for local kids. These opportunities were a welcome break both for children in Grinnell and for students attending college from their homes. She also coordinated with numerous partners and individuals in the community to reach children, overcome technology obstacles, solve problems, and connect with programs eager for content. A special shout out to Karen Neal, assistant director at Drake Community Library, for her remarkable partnership with us throughout the past year.



Installation view of *Face Forward*, featuring 3 works by Aida Muluneh and Tau, by Charles Bierk. Spring 2021.



## COLLECTION

A silver lining to the pandemic is the opportunity it afforded for behind-the-scenes work with the collection. When she couldn't be on site, Jocelyn Krueger, collections manager/registrar, made significant progress in updating and improving EmbARK, which made the system much more robust for the support of online teaching. Once Jocelyn was allowed back on campus, she reorganized sections of the collection vault and sorted a backlog of papers and documents, while supporting active teaching from the collection and ongoing exhibitions. We relied heavily on the collection for our exhibitions this year, curating 130 works into 4 different exhibitions. Several students were able to support our work with the collection remotely using EmbARK and Web Kiosk, our collection management platform.

### Purchases

The Museum continued to develop the collection with 18 purchases. These include a C-print by Catherine Opie, seven Archival Pigment prints by Paul Mpagi Sepuya, 3 fine art prints by Prince Gyasi, a Ghanaian artist, 2 mixed media collages by Carrie Moyer, and 5 prints by South African Diane Victor. Both Opie and Sepuya will be featured in our Fall 2021 exhibition [\*Queer / Dialogue\*](#), curated by Dan Strong and Greg Manuel.

New acquisition: Prince Gyasi, *Projection*, 2018, C-print on Fuji crystal paper, Dibond, 24 x 18 1/8 in. GCMoA, Marie-Louise and Samuel R. Rosenthal Fund.

### Gifts

We received another 21 gifts of art including works by Leonard Baskin, Richard Diebenkorn, Larry Homolka '63, Sol Lewitt, and Man Ray. We thank Keith Jantzen '80 and Scott Beth, Kent Tool '60, and Paul V. Turner for these works of art. The Homolka works from Paul Turner came with an archive of Homolka's correspondence with Turner over the years and materials he collected about his friend. These documents contribute to our strong repository of the Homolka's work and papers at Grinnell.

### Public Art

Late in the year, we installed two digital prints by Damon Davis in HSSC. These were purchased with the Public Art Fund generated by the Museum's Leadership Council. Under the direction of Milton Severe, the Museum also had the pleasure of working with President Anne Harris and Professor Michael (Mac) Mackenzie to install selected works from the collection in the President's house where they will soon be enjoyed by their guests. Phinn Lloyd '22 worked with Lesley and Jocelyn to research and write documentation about the art on view.

# BY THE NUMBERS

JULY 1, 2020 TO JUNE 30, 2021

New acquisitions: **21 gifts and 18 purchases**

Works from the collection used this year: **130**

Attendance: **4,445** (Museum closed July 1, 2020 – September 14, 2020)

Falconer Gallery: **370** | Print room: **42** | Off-Site events: **1,607** | Online events **2,426**

Departments using the Museum: **5** (**16** classes in all)

Exhibitions: **6, 5** with online versions as well

Works loaned to the Museum for exhibition: **102**

One-time programs: **14** online

Off-campus organizations we work with: **14**

Recurring programs: **13** virtual programs (in **387** sessions),  
and **6** in-person programs (June 2021, in **71** sessions)

Activity Bags distributed: **1,860**

Grants administered: **4**

Visiting artists, curators, scholars: **4**

Grinnell faculty and staff who spoke or performed: **4**

Social media posts: **183**

Reach (Average): **510**

YouTube Views: **3,802** (a total of **50** videos)

On Art Online: **2,379** | Virtual Exhibition Talks: **936** | Virtual Yoga: **376** | Virtual Gallery Talks: **111**

Number of student employees and interns: **12**

Number of student volunteers: **16**

**We thank all our student employees, assistants and interns!**

## **Programming**

Cally Carr '21

Athena Frasca '23

Chloe Gonzalez '23

Kate Kwasneski '21

Molly Skouson '21

Aubrie Torhorst '23

## **Collection**

Phinn Lloyd '21

Sophie Wojdylo '22

Kendall Yim '24

## **BAX**

Clara Dingle '21

Tess Kerkhoff '21

Tommy (Guhn) Lee '22

## **Volunteers**

Miraya Baid '23

Nicole Cabe '23

Francesca Dalla Betta '22

Steph Dos Santos

Nicole Haenke '23

Ella Hennager '23

Elizabeth Hunt

Esme Kayim-Yanko '22

Lila Podgainy '23

Alyssa Radakovich '22

Mary Sallie Sevier '23

Tenzing Sherpa '22

Abigail Smith '23

Isaac Thronson '23

Tinotenda Tongogara '22

Aubrie Torhorst '23



**Staff:**

Jodi Brandenburg, *Museum Guard*

Peggy Brown, *Museum Guard (through June 2021)*

Amanda Davenport, *Administrative Assistant*

Jocelyn Krueger, *Collections Manager/Registrar*

Milton Severe, *Director of Exhibition Design*

Daniel Strong, *Associate Director and Curator*

Tilly Woodward, *Curator of Academic and Community Outreach*

Lesley Wright, *Director*

**Stay connected with the Museum:**

[Grinnell.edu/museum](http://Grinnell.edu/museum)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/FalconerGallery/](https://www.facebook.com/FalconerGallery/)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/gcmuseumofart/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/gcmuseumofart/?hl=en)

TikTok: [www.tiktok.com/@gcmuseumofart?lang=en](https://www.tiktok.com/@gcmuseumofart?lang=en)

Twitter: [twitter.com/GCMuseumofArt](https://twitter.com/GCMuseumofArt)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCdGw5Ye13d83gmVYSxSLpVg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdGw5Ye13d83gmVYSxSLpVg)

Grinnell College is now a Smithsonian Affiliate. Follow our partnership at [www.grinnell.edu/campus-life/arts-culture/smithsonian-exhibits](http://www.grinnell.edu/campus-life/arts-culture/smithsonian-exhibits)

Cover: Installation view of *Let Yourself Continue*, Fall 2020.

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