

AROUND THE block

ACTIVITIES OF THE MARY AND LEIGH BLOCK MUSEUM OF ART • NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY • WINTER 2012

L'homme propose, Et dieu dispose. N° 159



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GREETINGS FROM THE BLOCK MUSEUM

A new year brings big changes to the Block Museum. After guiding the Museum through a decade of growth, David Alan Robertson has stepped down as the Ellen Philips Katz Director. Lisa Graziöse Corrin, formerly of the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA), becomes the new Ellen Philips Katz Director on February 1.

Lisa brings extensive leadership and curatorial experience and deep knowledge of contemporary art to the Block. As the Class of 1956 Director of the WCMA from 2005 to 2011, she raised the museum's campus profile and deepened its commitment to its teaching mission. Under her direction the WCMA presented more than 75 exhibitions, several of which travelled nationally and internationally. Prior to the WCMA, Lisa held directorial and curatorial positions at the Seattle Art Museum, the Serpentine Gallery in London, and the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore.

We hope you will join us in welcoming Lisa to the Block and to Northwestern during upcoming programs this year.

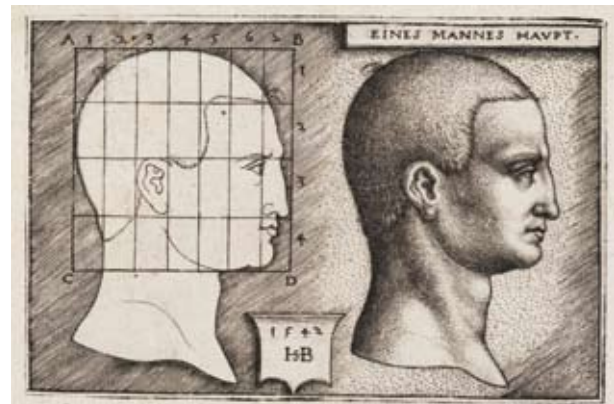
Also new in 2012 is the Block Museum's website. Reorganized to focus more clearly on our core areas—exhibitions, collections, programs, and Block Cinema—the site now includes the Block Muse, a special section on visual art and cinema at the Museum, Northwestern, and in the Chicago area featuring content provided by students, faculty, and Block curators. We invite you to explore the site at blockmuseum.northwestern.edu.

One thing that will never change at the Block is our commitment to bringing you exciting exhibitions and dynamic programming. This winter we are delighted to present *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge*

in *Early Modern Europe*, an examination of the contributions by celebrated Northern Renaissance artists to scientific inquiry in the 16th century. Organized by the Harvard Art Museums in collaboration with the Block, the exhibition features treasured objects from collections around the world and is accompanied by a host of events, including gallery talks, tours led by our community and student docents, and an international symposium on January 20.

Meanwhile, Block Cinema will be turning up the heat with Saturday matinees of rare and risqué Hollywood films from the early 1930s and a series of daring, complex, and often deeply personal films by Hollywood insiders such as Orson Welles, Nicholas Ray, and Dennis Hopper.

This winter, as we hope you will agree, there are plenty of reasons to return to the Block again and again—both in person and online at blockmuseum.northwestern.edu. We look forward to your visits.



WINTER 2012 EXHIBITIONS Admission to exhibitions is free of charge

Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe

January 17–April 8 • Main and Alsdorf Galleries

Featuring rare and treasured prints, drawings, books, maps, and scientific instruments from around the world, this exhibition demonstrates how celebrated Northern Renaissance artists contributed to the advancement of knowledge during the 16th century. In-gallery digital displays, videos, an audio guide, an iPad/iPhone app, and interactive replicas of sundials, globes, and other tools add exciting hands-on components. Visit our website for a preview—blockmuseum.northwestern.edu. An illustrated catalogue (\$60) is available at the Museum book shop.

Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe was organized by the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in collaboration with the Block Museum. The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue are made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Mrs. Arthur K. Solomon, Lionel and Vivian Spiro, Walter and Virgilia Klein, Julian and Hope Edison, Novartis on behalf of Dr. Steven E. Hyman, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Barbara and the late Robert Wheaton, the Goldman Sachs Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

Support for its presentation at the Block Museum is provided by the Myers Foundations; Lyrica Endowment; Netherland-America Foundation; Samuel H. Kress Foundation; Alumnae of Northwestern University; Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; IFPDA Foundation; Robert Lehman Foundation; Alsdorf Endowment; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; and the Evanston Arts Council.

Theo Leffmann: Weaving a Life into Art

Ongoing exhibition January 17–April 8 • Theo Leffmann Gallery

PROGRAMS

Knowledge | Replication: Early Modern Sciences in Print
Friday, January 20, 10:30 AM–5 PM

Scholars from the United States, Canada, and Europe will expand the thematic, geographical, and chronological territory charted in *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge* in a symposium organized by Northwestern art history professor Claudia Swan. Participants include Daniela Bleichmar (University of Southern California), Susan Dackerman (Harvard Art Museums), Matthew Hunter (McGill University, Montreal), Adrian Johns (University of Chicago), Eric Jorink (Huygens Institute, The Hague), Elmer Kolfin (University of Amsterdam), I. B. Leemans (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam), and Lawrence Lipking (Northwestern).

Generously supported by the Myers Foundations, Department of Art History, Block Museum, Science in Human Culture program, and Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities.

Gallery Talk—Geometry and the Artist-Scientist
Thursday, January 26, 6 PM

Northwestern art history graduate students Kathleen Tahk, a contributor to the *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge* catalogue, and Stephanie Glickman focus on Nuremberg goldsmith Wenzel Jamnitzer's quest to establish himself as a scientific thinker.

Picturing and Observing the Night Sky
Wednesday, February 1, 7 PM • Dearborn Observatory,
2131 Tech Drive, Northwestern University, Evanston

Join us for an evening of stargazing! Hear Michael Smutko, distinguished senior lecturer in physics and astronomy at Northwestern, and Block Museum senior curator Debora Wood discuss how early astronomers mapped the stars. Then view the night sky through Dearborn Observatory's historic telescope. Limited to 30 participants. Preregistration is required at blockeducation@northwestern.edu or 847.491.4852. Rain date is February 15.

Dearborn Observatory is not ADA accessible. The dome is not heated, so please dress appropriately.

Gallery Talk—Of Flowers and Autopsies:
Making Early Modern Science
Wednesday, February 8, Noon

Claudia Swan, associate professor of art history at Northwestern and an essay author for the *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge* catalogue, investigates the role of botanical and anatomical illustration in the development of the natural sciences.

Gallery Talk—Printed Scientific Instruments
Wednesday, February 29, 6 PM

Suzanne Karr-Schmidt, the Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Fellow in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago, and Bruce Stephenson, curator at the Adler Planetarium, explore sundials, globes, and navigational and time-keeping devices from the 16th century.

The Elizabeth and Todd Warnock Lecture Series: Seeing Global
Thursday, March 1, 4 PM

Susan Buck-Morss, professor of political philosophy and social theory at Cornell University, examines global transformation in collective imagination with regard to recent practices and histories of art.

Gallery Talk—Exhibition Overview and Highlights
Thursday, March 29, 6 PM

Block Museum senior curator Debora Wood offers an informative exploration of *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge*.

COVER IMAGE: Hendrick Goltzius, *Portrait of Nicolaus Petri van Deventer*, 1595, engraving. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of John S. Newberry, M6486. LEFT: Detail from Hans Sebald Beham, *Man's Head and Woman's Head*, 1542, engravings from two plates on single sheet. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gray Collection of Engravings Fund, G8908. RIGHT: Jan Sadeler I, after Maarten de Vos, *Astronomy*, from the series *The Seven Liberal Arts*, after 1575, engraving. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Belinda L. Randall from the collection of John Witt Randall, R4919. Photos: Department of Digital Imaging and Visual Resources, Harvard Art Museums, © 2011 President and Fellows of Harvard College.

TOURS

New! Self-Guided Family Tours: Compass Quest
Available daily during Museum hours, January 21–April 8

Walk in the footsteps of an explorer! Discover navigational tools, maps, and prints featured in *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge* with our family tour kit, available for free checkout at the Museum book shop. Recommended for families with children ages 6 to 12.

Docent-Led Exhibition Tours
Saturdays and Sundays, January 28–April 8, 1 PM

Join Block Museum docents for an introduction to *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge*. Tours for classes or groups of eight or more people at other times can be booked in advance. Fill out the request form at blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/visit. You may also email us at blockeducation@northwestern.edu.

New! Northwestern Student Docent Exhibition Tours
Thursdays, February 2–March 8 and April 5, 6 PM

How can you tell time in multiple countries using a folded piece of paper? Find out the answer to this and other fascinating questions during informal and interactive 45-minute tours of *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge*, hosted by the Block's student docents. New topics are introduced every week.

RELATED EVENTS

Renaissance Artists: Illustrations of Science and Art
February 17–May 13 • Lenhardt Library, Chicago Botanic Garden,
1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe

Herbals were among the most popular books in the Renaissance. This display of rare books shows how artists, publishers, and scientists worked together to produce accurate descriptions of plants. Lenhardt Library curator Ed Valauskas presents a related talk Saturday, March 17, at 2 p.m.

Admission is free; public parking is \$20 per car. Visit chicagobotanic.org.



Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE



The Block's winter exhibition reconsiders the role of art in scientific investigations of the 16th century, challenging the perception that artists were mere illustrators in the service of scientists and demonstrating art's function as both research instrument and agent of knowledge dissemination.

For a preview of *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge*, we spoke with its curator, Susan Dackerman, the Carl A. Weyerhaeuser Curator of Prints at the Harvard Art Museums, and Claudia Swan, exhibition catalogue contributor and associate professor of art history at Northwestern.

SUSAN DACKERMAN

What does this exhibition bring to our understanding of the relationship between art and science in early modern Europe?

Hopefully the exhibition demonstrates that art and the pursuit of knowledge of the natural world were more closely related then than they are now. Five centuries ago artists and scientific practitioners shared spheres of knowledge and had certain skills in common and thus worked together on projects that produced knowledge.

How did printmakers further the collection of empirical data and sharing of knowledge in the 16th and 17th centuries? Did artists intend their work for scientific and educational purposes?

Like the natural historians and anatomists around them, artists made observations of the earth, skies, animals, plants, and human bodies. Prints based on these observations could be disseminated widely and were therefore very influential.

Which central figures of the Northern Renaissance produced prints depicting the natural world?

The exhibition focuses on selected celebrated artists in order to demonstrate that the most effective examples of knowledge production were the result of the best artistic efforts. Consequently, the exhibition and catalogue include the work of Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein, Hendrick Goltzius, Lucas Cranach, and Jacques de Gheyn, among others.

What can the prints in this exhibition teach us about the progression of science in the 16th century?

I don't think of a "progression" of science. Rather, different ideas were put forward and tested during this time.

Rembert Dodoens and Pieter van der Borcht I, *Rosa sativa*, from *History of flowers and several kinds of plants used for fragrant garlands*, Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1568, book with hand-colored woodcuts. Library of the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University, Ka D66f 1568 c2 (1). Photo: Courtesy of the Library of the Arnold Arboretum.



How did artists' efforts to achieve realism in their work relate to their own aesthetic sensibilities?

The exhibition actually argues that verisimilitude, or a mimetic relationship to nature, was not always the most effective means of producing knowledge of the natural world. Artists, using conventions of image making and other representation strategies, manipulated images to make them more persuasive, more effective vehicles of knowledge production.

Why gather these objects that aren't normally shown together—prints, books, globes, scientific instruments—for display in one exhibition?

I hope that it demonstrates that our modern categories of knowledge were not in place in the 16th century and that there is a strong relationship between the different objects, their makers, and their functions.

CLAUDIA SWAN

What do you find interesting about the artists' depictions of the natural world as featured in *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge*?

The fact that images were so crucial to scientific efforts of the time. The depiction of the natural world in prints and drawings—and even in paintings and life casts—played such a crucial role in the pursuit of knowledge and the development of scientific disciplines: natural history, medicine, and astronomy, to name some examples.

The exhibition puts objects, prints, books, and instruments from 16th-century scientific pursuits side by side, creating a unique amalgamation. What is the effect for the viewer?

Broadly speaking, it's revolutionary to attempt to understand artistic and scientific efforts as combined in the pursuit of knowledge. Over the last two decades a lot of scholarly attention has been devoted to thinking away the distinctions between the art and science of the early modern era; *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge* is the first exhibition to explore the many connections between these two domains. It's a wonderful teaching show in that rather than presenting a series of "chapters" didactically recounting the history of the relationship between art and science, it offers viewers the opportunity to experience and map for themselves points of contact and areas of overlap.

In your exhibition catalogue essay "Illustrated Natural History," you say that "the emphasis on verisimilitude sometimes coincided awkwardly with claims for the artistry of images." How did so-called botanical Renaissance artists reach a happy medium between scientific veracity and aesthetic representation?

In general, I would say that if we learn one thing from *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge*, it might be to do away with the art-science binary as an absolute measure of things. It didn't work that way in the early modern era, and we are unable to fully appreciate the historical artifacts of that era when our questioning of them is overshadowed by the divide between art and science. Does veracity have to be opposed to beauty? Exploring how visual means are used to convey knowledge, we may find the results beautiful—even if not on purpose.

Northwestern student and Block staff member Isaac Alpert contributed to this article.

Jost Amman, *Portrait of Wenzel Jamnitzer: Goldsmith, Mathematician, Instrument Maker*, c. 1572–75, etching. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Anonymous Fund for the Acquisition of Prints Older than 150 Years, 2007.189. Photo: Department of Digital Imaging and Visual Resources, Harvard Art Museums, © 2011 President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Seymour Rosofsky, *Man/Woman/House/Bowl*, 1973, lithograph. Block Museum, Gift of the Estate of Seymour Rosofsky, 2011.1.135.



NEW ACQUISITIONS

45 WORKS BY SEYMOUR ROSOFKY

Gifts of the Estate of Seymour Rosofsky, 2011.1–45.

Seymour Rosofsky (1924–81) was part of the first generation of artists who came to be known as the Chicago Imagists, so named for their representational styles that ran counter to the prevailing trends of abstraction in the New York-centered art world.

Born on Chicago's West Side to parents who had immigrated from Russia and Poland, Rosofsky enrolled at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1942, but his studies were interrupted when he was drafted into war. After serving both state side and in combat overseas, he returned to the Art Institute where his fellow students included the artist Leon Golub and the art critic Franz Schulze. A Fulbright Fellowship in the late 1950s and a Guggenheim Foundation Grant in the early 1960s allowed Rosofsky to live and work in Rome and Paris, but he spent most of his career in Chicago, where he taught at the City Colleges.

Rosofsky's work embodies two opposing forces: a devotion to naturalistic depiction and a surreal repertoire of complex personal symbols. In dream-like tableaux he conveyed dark and troubling moods with grotesque and exaggerated characters engaged in conflict or in futile and seemingly absurd activities.

The donation spans most of the artist's career, from 1959 to 1976, and includes lithographs, etchings, and a collage. These works join three drawings and two prints by Rosofsky already in the Block's collection and complement the Museum's holdings of works by Chicago artists.

BLOCK CINEMA CLIPS

I'M ALMOST NOT CRAZY: OUTSIDER CINEMA BY HOLLYWOOD INSIDERS

This series celebrates Hollywood "insiders" from the 1960s and beyond who made daring, complex, and often deeply personal "outsider" films without regard for convention, box office potential, or whether anyone might think their makers have gone crazy. Included are films by Nicholas Ray (*We Can't Go Home Again*), Orson Welles (*F for Fake*), and Elaine May (*Mikey and Nicky*), among others.

HOT SATURDAYS: GEMS FROM PRE-CODE HOLLYWOOD

Warm up this winter with several rare and risqué Hollywood films from the early 1930s. Included are masterworks like *Scarface*—Howard Hawks's daring depiction of a demented Chicago gangster, and rarities starring Clara Bow (*Call Her Savage*), Fay Wray (*The Woman I Stole*), Miriam Hopkins (*Dancers in the Dark*), and more. All programs will be screened on Saturday afternoons at 2 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Join us on three Thursday evenings this February for free screenings of avant-garde films, a romantic classic, and an eye-opening new documentary. On February 2, we'll present a selection of



experimental film and video from the Bay Area (*Radical Light: Stories Untold*); on February 9 we'll screen the timeless classic *Casablanca*; and on February 23 we'll show a fascinating new documentary about one of the most influential people you've probably never heard of—author, activist, poet and visionary Paul Goodman (*Paul Goodman Changed My Life*).

Consult the Block Cinema winter calendar or our website for more information on this quarter's screenings. Regular admission is \$4 for Block members, Northwestern University faculty, staff, and students with WildCard, and seniors 65 and older. Quarter passes are \$20. Block Cinema is supported in part by a generous gift from James B. Pick and Rosalyn M. Laudati.



MEMBERSHIP

To join, renew, or upgrade your membership,

just visit giving.northwestern.edu/nu/block, call 847.491.7540, or fill out and send in the form on the back of this newsletter.

Educating the Eye: Sculpture

This year our Educating the Eye series explores sculpture, providing tools to understand and appreciate new directions in the medium, as well as its history and methods.

Our fall program, the Phyllis Weil Ellis lecture, focused on sculpture in and out of the Block Museum. Neil Goodman, the

creator of the *Subjects-Objects* installation that adorns the staircase at the Museum, spoke about his work in a talk entitled *Sculpture: Source, Process, Inspiration*. Accompanied by slides of work in his studio, he described the steps in his creative process, from initial concepts to finished sculptures in bronze and steel. Following the discussion, Goodman led an informal walking tour of the Block Museum's Outdoor Sculpture Garden.

Details about our winter Educating the Eye event will be announced soon.

Block Leadership Circle Committee

The Block Leadership Circle Committee plans special events for Block Museum members and Block Leadership Circle donors while raising funds to expand the Museum's collection and its programming. The committee focuses on programs, both in and outside the Museum, that build on exhibition topics and the Block's art holdings and on engaging audiences looking for a deeper connection to the Museum. The Committee is part of a larger group of donors who support the Museum at the \$1,000 level and above.

If you would like more information about joining the Block Leadership Circle Committee or upcoming events, please contact Emily Forsgren at e-forsgren@northwestern.edu or 847.491.7540.

Block Leadership Circle Committee

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Cassie Spencer
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Mary Cassatt, *Standing Nude with a Towel*, ca. 1879, soft ground etching and aquatint. Block Museum, 2009.1.

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

MFA Thesis Exhibition from the Department of Art Theory & Practice

May 4–June 17, 2012 • Alsdorf Gallery

This annual group exhibition represents the culmination of the course of study for the master of fine arts degree from Northwestern University. The works vary in style and conceptual approach, each manifesting the individual vision of the artist.

Art on Paper: Prints, Drawings, and Photographs from the Block Museum

May 11–August 26, 2012 • Main Gallery

Art on Paper is the most comprehensive exhibition yet devoted to the Block Museum's collection. Presenting compelling works by the likes of Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, Mary Cassatt, and Ed Paschke, it gives insight into the Block's role as a steward of important drawings, prints, and photographs.

