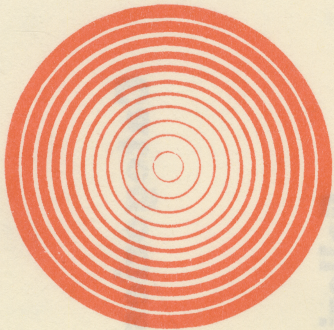


Unpacking the Vault: Hidden Narratives in the Bennington Art Collection



Feb. 27-April 15, 2018
A two-phase exhibition co-curated by students

Over seven weeks in fall 2017, students delved into the campus art-storage space known as “the vault.” They researched objects familiar and unknown, seeking narrative strains connecting artworks to the college and to each other. The resulting exhibition is the first of college art holdings curated by a Bennington class. It reveals and honors the eclectic nature of a collection that, known for mid-century abstraction, also contains surprises from within and beyond that art-historical moment. More broadly, “Unpacking the Vault” identifies core themes and agents in the making, distribution, and acquisition of art.

Organized in thematic clusters, objects play a “six degrees of separation” game of individuals, institutions and modes of collecting. This strategy resists hierarchy and celebrates the miscellaneous, finding common ground for a range of styles, time periods, and artists. “Unpacking the Vault” also engages Bennington history by transforming Usdan Gallery into a hybrid gallery/classroom, symbolically fulfilling design plans from the 1960s envisioning a dedicated space, under the gallery and adjacent to the vault, for studying the art collection.

Because of the range of works owned by the college, the exhibition will evolve. “Phase one” opens with arrangements determined by the fall class. In spring 2018, a new class takes over to create “phase two,” transforming the show with additional artworks and themes. An informal “catalog” of documents gives background on artists and donors, highlighting when possible how artworks entered the Bennington holdings. Like the show itself, this volume will grow as students continue to investigate the vault contents. A closing event marks the collaboration between the two classes, whose research joins a growing database of information about college-owned artworks.

The “Unpacking the Vault” class is taught by Usdan Gallery Director and Curator Anne Thompson, with vault manager Erin McKenny.

UNPACKING THE VAULT: OUTSIDE THE GALLERY



-  Suzanne Lemberg
Usdan Gallery
-  Inside the metal shop:
David Smith's anvil
-  Behind the Barn:
Isabella Lee squirrel
sculptures
-  Admissions:
Anthony Caro
sculpture
-  Dean Carriage Barn:
Paintings by Cora
Cohen and Andrew
Spence
-  Parking

Categories and Artists

Gallerist Betty Parsons

Chryssa
Ralph Humphries
Agnes Martin
Tony Smith
Barbara Valenta

The Art Students League

Tadashi Asoma
Larry Poons
Robert O. Skemp
David Smith

The Network

Ben Benn
Douglas Brown
David Burluk
Stanley Hayter
Stefan Hirsch
Hans Hofmann
Wolf Kahn
Karl Knaths
Isabella Lee
Lucy Lee
Marisol
Emily Mason
Hans Moller
Anne Poor
Diego Rivera

Donors and Collectors

Anthony Caro
Steve Giankos
Mel Hunter
Richard Lindner
Ken Noland
Anne Truitt
Gloria Vanderbilt

In the Library

Jim Dine
Kiene Kochi
Objects of incomplete provenance

At the Doors

At the door inside VAPA: Holland Taylor
At the door leading to the outside: Mary Callery

Works inside the gallery as part of "Unpacking the Vault" have connections to works elsewhere around campus. We encourage you to go exploring!

The map on the back of this brochure gives directions to works by:

Anthony Caro
Cora Cohen
Isabella Lee
David Smith
Andrew Spence

About the labels: All publications and signage for "Unpacking the Vault" are printed on a Risograph (RP3505UI), a digital duplicator first released in Japan in 1986 designed to help public schools and other civic agencies print materials cheaply and quickly. In this context, the Riso conceptually suits the pedagogical nature of the exhibition. It also allows for easy updates of information as the "Vault" show changes with ongoing research.