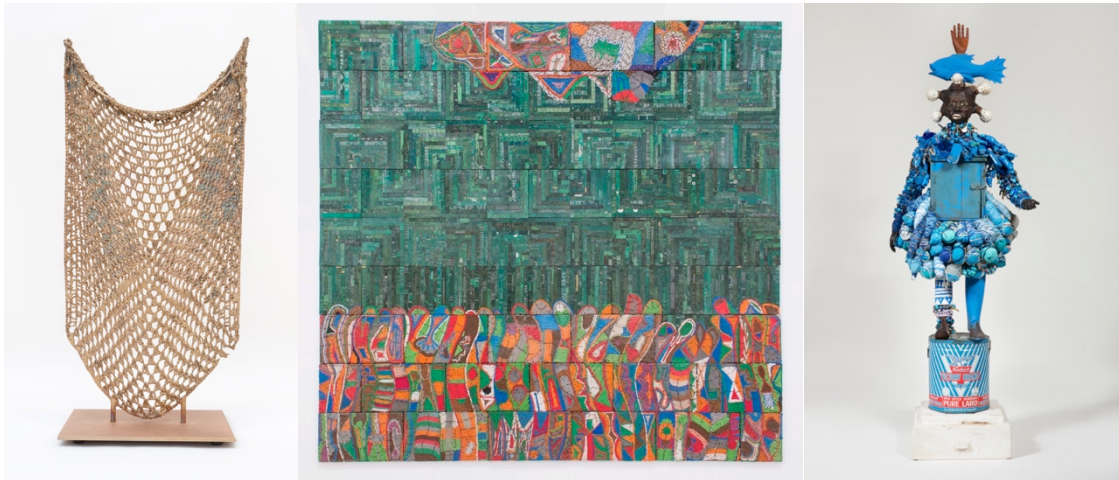


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## WELLIN MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS EXHIBITION OF 140 WORKS FROM ITS COLLECTION, MARKING THE MUSEUM'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

### Exhibition Combines New Acquisitions of Contemporary Art and Historic Works from the Museum's Collection

*Innovative Approaches, Honored Traditions:  
The Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum at Five Years,  
Highlights from the Permanent Collection*  
September 9 through December 10, 2017



Left: Michelle Grabner. *Untitled*, 2016. ©Michelle Grabner.  
Center: Elias Sime. *Tightrope, Familiar Yet Complex 2*, from the series "Tightrope," 2016. ©Elias Sime.  
Right: Vanessa German. *i will never smile again*, 2016. ©Vanessa German and Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York.

**Clinton, NY**—In celebration of its fifth anniversary, the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College presents an exhibition of 140 works of art featuring selections from its permanent collection. *Innovative Approaches, Honored Traditions* brings together new acquisitions of contemporary art and works donated over the last 200 years by alumni and friends of the College. Curated by Katherine D. Alcauskas, the Wellin's Collection and Exhibitions Specialist, the exhibition will be on view from September 9 through December 10, 2017.

New acquisitions include three contemporary artworks created in 2016: **Elias Sime's** *Tightrope, Familiar Yet Complex 2*, a bright patchwork of salvaged electronic components that explores the role of technology in today's society; **Michelle Grabner's** untitled bronze sculpture cast from a hand-crocheted blanket; and **Vanessa German's** *i will never smile again*, a mixed-media

sculpture comprised of doll parts, cowrie shells, African beads, and household objects. Reflecting the museum's five-year history, a number of works that will be on view were acquired by the Wellin through its exhibition program, such as a photograph by **Rhona Bitner**, a painting by **Yun-Fei Ji**, a fiber-based portrait by **Karen Hampton**, a suite of images by **Sharon Lockhart**, an assemblage by **Renée Stout**, and a work on paper by **Frohawk Two Feathers**.

Historic works in the exhibition include ancient Greek vases, glass vessels from the Roman Empire, Mesoamerican ceramics, and Native American objects of material culture. The diversity of the exhibition—with mediums ranging from prints and drawings to photographs, sculptures, and paintings—reflects that of the collection itself, which contains art and artifacts from around the world dating from 1300 BCE to the present.

Curator Katherine D. Alcauskas explains, “The title of this exhibition, *Innovative Approaches, Honored Traditions*, reflects a multivalent perspective. The show speaks to the Wellin's mission to develop new exhibitions, support original scholarship, and craft a permanent collection on the cutting edge of the field, while also looking back at Hamilton's long history of art collecting and rotating exhibitions as well as its educational mission.”

Tracy Adler, Johnson-Pote Director of the Wellin adds, “Since the Wellin first opened in 2012, we have continued to grow the collection, acquiring 450 works of art through select gifts and purchases, with a specific focus on emerging and mid-career artists, as well as artists who have been historically underrepresented. We are thrilled to now have the opportunity to present these new acquisitions alongside the pivotal works within the collection, and to create a narrative that will spark new dialogues across disciplines, inspire experimentation, and foster creative inquiry.”

*Innovative Approaches* encourages visitors to draw upon their own knowledge and experiences to interpret the works. The show is arranged into six distinct themes, or “lenses,” that reflect Hamilton's educational goals. These are:

- **Investigation | Recognition**, presenting works that employ patterns, symbols, and schematics to explore how art can help develop our analytic skills
- **Appreciation | Evaluation**, focusing on the role of art in promoting our understanding of aesthetic discernment
- **Tradition | Inspiration**, featuring works that are either indicative of cultural traditions or demonstrate the fluid transfer of ideas between cultures
- **Transmission | Articulation**, demonstrating how art can shed light on the way we communicate and express ourselves
- **Participation | Condition**, encompassing works that address social and political concerns including pollution, slavery, poverty, commerce, and war
- **Imagination | Invention**, examining the power of art to foster creativity, intellectual curiosity, and innovative problem-solving

Each section of *Innovative Approaches* presents works from various time periods and cultures, offering a progressive understanding of the history of art and creative output that is in line with the Wellin's mission. A fragment of an Assyrian relief from the ancient city of Nimrud (located in present-day Iraq)—one of the first objects donated to Hamilton College early in its history—will be exhibited within the same section as works by **Lorna Simpson**, **Carrie Mae Weems**, and **Martin Wong**, and iconic 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs by **Julia Margaret Cameron** and **Eadweard Muybridge** are juxtaposed with pieces by key Post-war contemporary artists such as **Josef Albers**, **Henry Moore**, and **Ed Ruscha**.

Throughout Hamilton's history, students and alumni have played a critical role in preserving and contributing to the college's art collection. While works from the collection have been exhibited from time to time at Hamilton College, the Wellin Museum provides it with a singular home. A rotating selection of artwork is displayed in large glass vitrines, facilitating access to works from the collection. Through its global collection, original exhibitions, and varied programs, the Wellin Museum of Art stands as a synthesis of venerable practices and new ideas that inspires curiosity and interconnectivity among a range of audiences and academic disciplines.

Related Programming:

**Saturday, September 9**

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

*Artists in Conversation: Vanessa German*

Artist Vanessa German will be in conversation with exhibition curator Katherine D. Alcauskas followed by a spoken word performance.

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

*Opening Reception*

**Friday, October 20**

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

*Wellin Collects: A Discussion with William E. Williams*

William E. Williams, Class of 1973, Audrey A. and John L. Dusseau Professor in the Humanities at Haverford College, will discuss the significance of a teaching collection to a liberal arts education.

**Thursday, November 9**

4:15 – 5:00 p.m.

*Curator's Tour*

Katherine D. Alcauskas will lead a tour of *Innovative Approaches*, *Honored Traditions*

### **Exhibition Catalogue**

This exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated publication featuring an essay by Katherine D. Alcauskas, the Wellin Museum's Collections and Exhibitions Specialist and curator of the exhibition, detailing the history of the collecting and exhibiting of art on Hamilton College's campus, from the establishment of the original "Cabinet" in 1850 to the technologically sophisticated galleries, teaching spaces, and open storage of the Wellin Museum today. It also includes a foreword by Hamilton College President David Wippman and a preface by the Wellin's Johnson-Pote Director Tracy L. Adler.

### **About the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art**

Designed by Machado Silvetti, the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College opened in October 2012. Through its exhibitions, public programs, and educational outreach, the Museum promotes interdisciplinary approaches and the cross-fertilization of concepts and ideas vital to a liberal arts education. The Museum works with emerging and established artists and collaborates with Hamilton students and faculty to develop programming exploring a wide range of disciplines. The Museum features a 27-foot-high visible archive, 6,200-square-feet of exhibition space, and other amenities that foster common exchange and learning.

**[www.hamilton.edu/wellin](http://www.hamilton.edu/wellin)**

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