

## About the Cover

Marie Nau Hunter

Deputy Director, Museum of Art and Archaeology,  
University of Missouri

**Cover image:** Claude Raguet Hirst (American, 1855–1942), *Still Life with Bowl (Lionel and Clarissa—A Comic Opera)*, 1922, oil on canvas, Gilbreath-McLorn Museum Fund and Gift of Museum Associates (91.280)

We are so pleased to again provide an image for the cover of this publication, this issue being the third such iteration. Collaboration with disciplines outside of the arts is a hallmark for museum professionals. Most importantly (for us), it gets more eyes on art in the Museum of Art and Archaeology's (MA&A) permanent collection and hopefully results in interest in our exhibitions and related programming.

Claude Raguet Hirst's *Still Life with Bowl (Lionel and Clarissa—A Comic Opera)* is currently on view in the museum, greeting visitors as they enter our Gallery of European and American Art. The label accompanying it, written by our very talented Curator of European and American Art, Rima Girnius, PhD, reads as follows:

Claude (born Claudine) Hirst was one of the few women artists of her era to paint still lifes in a deceptively realistic style known as *trompe l'oeil* (French for “deceives the eye”). Her skill in capturing details of texture and fleeting light with meticulous precision is evident in this assortment of decorative vessels and old, leather-bound volumes. Featured in the immediate foreground is a book open to the title page of Isaac Bickerstaff's *Lionel and Clarissa*. The book is a comedy of manners that features independent women who rebel against their fathers' choices of husbands. Included on the title page is the name of feminist critic, Elizabeth Inchbald, perhaps suggesting Hirst's support of women's rights.

Dr. Girnius has taken a thoughtful approach in her organization of the Gallery of European and American Art. Visitors can tour the space and appreciate the chronology of the art within, but Girnius has provided additional layers of information to give a global perspective. This is in keeping with current museum practices; that it is important to offer more than just art at which to look (though “art for art's sake” is definitely still a thing). Museums need to provide context. Dr. Girnius's introductory panel in the Gallery of European and American Art does exactly that:

European and American Art from a Global Perspective

The Gallery of European and American Art offers a selective overview of the principal values, practices, and beliefs underpinning Western art from the 13th through the 19th centuries. The presentation pays particular attention to the cross-cultural exchanges and encounters that fueled the stylistic and technical development of European visual arts.

Europe's participation in global trade—first stimulated by the military campaigns waged by Christians against Muslims (1050–1300 CE)—witnessed a dramatic expansion in the early modern period (ca. 1450–1700 CE). Maritime and land routes between Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas not only transported raw materials and luxury goods but also served as conduits for the movement of people and exchange of ideas. Because of increased commercial networks, artists adopted new motifs, experimented with techniques, and gained access to prized pigments. There was, however, a human cost attached to Europe's increased engagement with the wider globe. In their pursuit of new markets and sources of wealth, European kingdoms and states gained control over territories and their inhabitants in distant lands through military conquest. They implemented a system of forced labor to extract the natural resources of colonized lands at low cost, exploiting first the indigenous populations and then enslaved Africans.

The expanded label included with Hirst's *Still Life with Bowl* provides the additional global perspective for the subject matter depicted:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exhibited in the museum's Gallery of European and American Art just under Hirst's painting is a small stone sculpture, part of our collection of Asian objects. Its identifying label, also written by Dr. Girnius, reads:

Seal Stone Surmounted by a Lion, China, ca. 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century, stone, gift of J. Lionberger Davis (67.5)

This stone sculpture is a Chinese seal used to stamp and validate important personal documents, contracts, and works of art. Mounted on its square base is a crouching lion, a creature traditionally used as a symbol of good luck and protector of truth. A Fu dog, as it is known, is among the items on display in Claude Hirst's *Still Life with Bowl*.

This approach also provides an important opportunity to bring works out of storage that would not otherwise be on display (Dr. Girnius does so in one other example in

### Collecting East Asian Art in America

A yellow-glazed ceramic bowl, possibly from Jingdezhen in southern China, occupies a central position in Hirst's composition. Its presence, as well as the addition of the Fu dog, reflects America's fascination with East Asian art during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This taste for "exotic" luxury goods was fueled by the success of large international exhibitions held in American cities from 1876 onwards. Designed to bring together the technological and artistic achievements of nations around the globe, the so-called World's Fairs exposed a large segment of America's population to Chinese culture. Dealers and collectors took advantage of the political and economic instability in China during this time, buying or looting art and antiquities with relative ease.

If you are reading this from a screen in central Missouri, you have little excuse for not visiting Hirst's painting in person, as works of art are best viewed. It is a lovely work of art. If you live and work further away, I hope you'll plan a trip to Columbia. The city and the University of Missouri's (MU) campus both have so much to offer, including the museum.

Please ask for me at the museum's visitors' services desk if you stop in during regular work hours. It would be my pleasure to give you a tour of our galleries and to admire together Hirst's painting and her skill as an artist. If you are really lucky on the day you come by, you might encounter Dr. Girnius walking the galleries, checking on the art, and considering next projects for the museum's spaces that host temporary exhibitions and displays.

In case I cannot meet you during your visit, I'll share with you here a basic timeline of the museum which is, unfortunately, a hidden gem of MU's flagship campus.

The museum's history is a storied one, starting in the late nineteenth century when a teaching collection was established by professors Walter Miller and John Pickard for students matriculating in MU's department of classical archaeology and history of art. Miller and Pickard acquired photographs, plaster cast reproductions of well-known Greek and Roman sculptures, and original works of art. A letter written by Professor Pickard on January 1, 1895, to MU President Richard Jesse (for whom Jesse Hall is named), asked for \$10,000 to purchase objects and furniture. That same year, MU's catalog included a mention of a museum in Academic Hall. More than 100

---

the European and American Art Gallery, with an ancient Mesoamerican). In this case, it is doubly important since we do not have a dedicated gallery for Asian art as previous museum locations did. And while it is just one small work, it allows us to discuss an important cross-cultural trend that might not otherwise be a topic in this exhibition space.

works acquired in those early years remain in the MA&A's collection today.

Professors Miller and Pickard both retired from MU during the Great Depression. In 1935, the university disbanded its department of classical archaeology and history of art, though the study collections were maintained.

The arrival to campus of professors Saul S. Weinberg in 1948 and Homer L. Thomas in 1950 revived the study of art history and archaeology at MU. And with the support of MU President Elmer Ellis, the study collections became an official project of the university, complete with a modest budget for the purchase of seventeen objects.

Professor Weinberg served as the museum's first director. His wife Gladys, an accomplished archaeologist in her own right and an internationally recognized expert in ancient glass, was the museum's first curator of ancient art and eventually became assistant director. Gladys founded the museum's peer-reviewed journal, *MUSE*, still published today.

A formative gift of Old Master works was received from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation in 1961, essentially launching a museum of art and archaeology and its designated gallery space in Ellis Library. In 1976, the MA&A moved into its first permanent location on campus, in Pickard Hall, immediately north of the Chancellor's Residence, allowing the MA&A to significantly expand public programming.

An abrupt move of the museum in 2013 occurred when radiation was discovered in Pickard Hall (the building had once housed the university's chemistry department including a contemporary of Dr. Marie Curie). That move landed the collection in an off-campus location for nearly ten years. While exhibitions continued to change and new educational programs were offered, MU student and faculty attendance plummeted. The time needed for transportation to and from the museum's location on Columbia's business loop made it prohibitive for most university classes to meet in our galleries and storage areas.

As with so many other industries, MA&A operations grinded to a halt with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. After an initial shut-down, the museum re-opened for a brief period before closure for its eventual move back to campus in 2022 to the lower level of Ellis Library. Once all 16,000 objects were carefully packed and transported across town (again), the museum remained closed for nearly four years as renovation of our current space was undertaken. Along the way, several important staff changes occurred, including the hiring of a new director, curator of European and American Art, deputy director, registrar, and educator.

Less than a year ago, on May 3, 2024, the museum finally reopened in the heart of MU's flagship campus. We offer five gallery spaces, two of which are permanently installed: the Saul S. and the Gladys D. Weinberg Gallery of Antiquities, named in honor of the museum's founders,

and the Gallery of European and American Art. The latter includes Claude Raguet Hirst's *Still Life with Bowl*, featured as this issue's cover image.

Many other paintings, drawings, and prints are displayed in our galleries, of course, as well as sculpture, textiles, and mixed media objects. Our permanent collection spans six continents and 6,000 years, with ancient works to contemporary art. This spring semester, three new exhibitions will open in addition to the ongoing permanently installed displays, two of them organized by Dr. Girnius, the other by Curator of Antiquities, Benton

Kidd, PhD.

The Museum of Art and Archaeology is located in the lower east side of Ellis Library, with entrances off Hitt Street, Lowry Mall, and from within Ellis. Regular hours during the week are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and noon to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Admission to the museum is always free.

For more information about the MA&A, including a calendar of events and a searchable database of the museum's permanent collection, visit [maa.missouri.edu](http://maa.missouri.edu).