



People Watching THEN AND NOW



September 24, 2017 – January 14, 2018

Educators' Resources



About Fitchburg Art Museum

Founded in 1929, the Fitchburg Art Museum is a privately-supported art museum located in north central Massachusetts.

Art and artifacts on view (partial list):

- Discover Ancient Egypt
- GLOBAL AFRICA: Creativity, Continuity, and Change
- Evoking Eleanor (about Fitchburg native, painter Eleanor Norcross)
- Nineteenth-twenty-first-century photography from the permanent collection (usually);
- Temporary exhibitions of contemporary art

Museum Hours

Wednesdays-Fridays, 12 – 4 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Closed Mondays and Tuesdays,

Admission

Free to all Museum members and children ages 12 and under.

\$9.00 Adult non-members, \$5.00 Seniors, youth ages 13-17, and full-time students ages 18-21



The Museum is wheelchair accessible.

Directions

Directions to the Museum are on our website.

Address and Phone Number

185 Elm St, Fitchburg, MA 01420

978-345-4207

Visit our website for more information:
www.fitchburgartmuseum.org



To Schedule a Tour

All groups, whether requesting a guided tour or planning to visit as self-guided, need to contact the Director of Docents to schedule their visit.

Guided tours need to be scheduled at least three weeks in advance.

Please contact the Director of Docents for information on fees, available tour times, and additional art projects available or youth groups.

Museum Contacts

Main Number: 978-345-4207

Director of Docents: Ann Descoteaux, ext. 302
adescoteaux@fitchburgartmuseum.org

Director of Education: Laura Howick, ext. 305

Please note: The Museum is closed to staff on Mondays.



Preparing for Your Visit

Teacher or Leader Preparation

- If you wish to preview any of our exhibitions before your class visits, please call the Museum's Director of Docents (ext. 302) or Director of Education (ext. 305) for a free pass to use for that purpose;
- Call the Museum before your visit if anyone in your group needs a wheel chair, and one can be reserved for you;
- Prepare pre- and post-visit activities to strengthen what students learn at the Museum

Preparing the Students

- Shortly before the visit, discuss what students already know about the exhibition topic, if anything, and tell them about some of the exciting things they will be seeing;
- Share any goals you have for the visit, if appropriate;
- Try to give the students some choice and control over the visit by asking their input on the visit's agenda. Ask students what they want to see, learn about, or experience on the visit, and in what order they want to do things. Include time for bathroom and snack breaks, going to the gift shop, and time for students to explore on their own.
- **If visiting as a self-guided tour of *Discover Ancient Egypt*, *GLOBAL AFRICA*, or the *contemporary art exhibition in the upstairs galleries*, decide when students will be allowed to do the interactive activities – while they're in each section of the exhibition, or after the entire tour? – and make sure all students understand this before the tour. Guided tours usually allow 10 minutes for this purpose at the end of the tour.**
- **Review museum etiquette:**
 - Please do not run in the museum (the student or the artwork could be hurt);
 - Please do not touch the artworks (oils and salts in our skin damage art);
 - Listen respectfully to others' responses to the art (because you may hear something that surprises you, a new way of looking at the artwork.)

continued



Preparing for Your Visit, continued

Tell students they may want to bring:

- A camera or camera-equipped cell phone;
- Paper and pencil to record their favorite objects or experiences

PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY:
Photography without a flash is allowed in
the Museum.

The Day of the Visit

- Review the agenda for the day (explaining **when** they'll be taking the tour, playing the interactive games and taking pictures, eating a snack, etc.) Research has shown this step allows students to focus on learning once they are at the museum.
- Please remind them, again, of museum etiquette and the Museum's photography policy
- Students will be asked to leave backpacks and coats in the lobby



People Watching: Then and Now

September 24, 2017 – January 14, 2018

Exhibition Components

- Traditional painted portraits from FAM's permanent collection, including those by John Singleton Copley, John Singer Sargent, Eleanor Norcross, and Joseph Wright of Derby;
- Portrait sculptures from ancient Greece and Rome, and early twentieth-century Africa;
- Contemporary portrait paintings and sculptures
 - Styles range from realistic to abstract to surrealistic;
 - Media: Paintings (some based on photographs), silicone (sculpture), urethane resin, altered found objects, cyanotype and tintype photography, mixed media;
 - Artists: Philip Brou, Susan White Brown, Caleb Cole, Nayda Cuevas, Leslie Graff, Lavaughn Jenkins, Lucy Kim, Steve Locke, Ross Normandin, David Prifti, Kate Russo, Ann Strassman, and Tabitha Vevers;

Themes

- What constitutes a portrait? Does a portrait always have to show a face? How are portraits sometimes different in different cultures?
- What does a portrait tell us about the person shown? What are visual clues to a person's identity? What might the setting and objects in the portrait tell us about the person through symbolism? What can't a portrait tell us about the person?
- How are some contemporary artists expanding our ideas of portraiture?

Learning Lounge Components

Didactic Labels:

- A Brief Timeline of Western Portraiture
- Why Doesn't the Portrait Always Look Like the Sitter?; Looking at Portraits; The Many Faces of Portraits – All included in this packet

Artists' Process Profiles (also in this packet)

- Philip Brou (includes his actual paint palette)
- Ross Normandin (includes a 2-part mold and molded head)
- Kate Russo (includes images of the paintings by other artists on which she bases her work)
- Caleb Cole (includes 3 glass negatives and two wooden holders for glass negatives and photo-sensitized paper)
- Lucy Kim (includes images of her casting process)

- Leslie Graff (includes clothing, a book of influential images, and contact sheet of preparatory photographs)

Interactive Components

- Who Do You Think They Are? -- writing activity
- Say “Cheese” -- Take a portrait photograph station
- Who’s Who? -- Match a written description with a portrait
- Put Personalities on Paper -- drawing activity (portrait or self-portrait)

People Watching: Then and Now



During Your Visit: Suggestions for Writing Activities

(In accordance with MA State English Language Arts Writing Standards)

Artworks and exhibitions are natural catalysts for writing of all forms:

Opinion Writing – Supporting a point of view with reasons and information

- Is this exhibition worthy of being in an art museum, why or why not?
- Would you recommend visiting this exhibition to a friend, why or why not?
- Compare two artworks and persuade the reader why one tells you more about the subject than the other.

Informational/explanatory Writing – Examining a topic and conveying ideas and information clearly

- Explain what portraiture is, the types of materials used to make portraits in this exhibition, and what clues artists include to tell us about the person in the portrait.
- Compare a traditional portrait (on the green walls) with a contemporary portrait in terms of facial expressions, body language, mood, clothing, and setting.
- Imagine you are talking to someone who cannot see this exhibition, and describe one portrait in great detail.

Narrative Writing

- Write quick notes about part of your visit to the Fitchburg Art Museum in the order that events occur, including conversations, new ideas you learn, and things you see. Develop your notes into a narrative description back in the classroom.
- Find two portraits next to each other, and write an imaginary dialogue between them based on what you see in the portraits.
- Pick a portrait and write an imaginary story about what the person in the portrait did before and after he or she had his or her portrait painted or sculpted.

Stories, Poems, and Scripts using Similes and Metaphors

- Look at several traditional and contemporary portraits that show very different ways of depicting a person, and generate a list of similes and metaphors for each. Use these lists to write a poem about one artwork or the exhibition as a whole.

- Think of the exhibition like a zoo. What kind of animal would each of these portraits be? Pick one portrait, decide what kind of animal it would be, and then write a paragraph or poem that describes the portrait in terms of that animal's characteristics using similes and metaphors.

People Watching: Then and Now



Vocabulary

Abstract – Non-representational.

Contemporary – Belonging to, occurring in, or living in the present

Cyanotype – A print that uses light-sensitive iron salts brushed onto paper. A photographic negative, a drawing on clear acetate, or semi-flat objects are placed on the paper and exposed to sunlight. Where the light was blocked from the paper the image is white, and the rest of the paper turns blue. Sold commercially as “Nature Paper” in toy stores.

Impasto – The texture made by thick layers of paint

Likeness – A reproduction of how someone or something looks

Portrait – A picture of a person, usually a specific person

Portraiture – The art of creating portraits

Silicone – A compound that can be used to make plastics, rubber, and lubricants; it can be liquid or solid

Sitter – The subject of a portrait

Tintype - An early form of photography (1850s) that produced black-and-white images without a lot of gray tones.

General Discussion Questions for Talking About, and Looking At, Portraits from the Getty Museum

Talking about portraits

- Has anyone ever had his or her portrait made by an artist? What did the artist use to make your portrait?
- If you have had your portrait drawn or painted, how long did you have to sit for your portrait to be made? If you have never had your portrait drawn or painted, how long do you think it would take?
- Has anyone ever had his or her photograph taken? Would you consider that a portrait? How long does that take?
- Are you always satisfied with the results of your portrait? Explain.
- What things would a person consider when choosing an artist to create his or her portrait?
- What do you think about when you know that you are going to have your portrait made?
- How would you dress?
- What might you bring with you?
- What will the setting be for your portrait?
- Will you be sitting or standing?
- Will you be alone, or will someone be in it with you?

Looking at portraits

- What can we discover about a person just by looking at his or her portrait?
- What do you think the person in this portrait wanted to communicate about himself or herself?
- How does the relationship between artist and sitter change the outcome of the portrait?
- What kind of life do you think this person leads? Does he or she work? If so, as what? Are there any props that give clues about the sitter's profession or lifestyle?

- Is this a person you would like to meet? Why, or why not?
- If the person in this portrait could speak to you, what do you think he or she would say?



People Watching: Then and Now

Since ancient times, artists have created images of specific people. And the complex social, political, and cultural moments in which each subject and artist lived are embedded in these portraits. While not comprehensive in its chronological or geographical scope, **People Watching** places a selection of painting and sculpture from FAM's permanent collection, and paintings on long term loan from the Fitchburg Historical Society, in direct dialogue with those by thirteen contemporary New England artists: Philip Brou, Susan White Brown, Caleb Cole, Nayda Cuevas, Leslie Graff, Lavaughan Jenkins, Lucy Kim, Steve Locke, Ross Normandin, David Prifti, Kate Russo, Ann Strassman, and Tabitha Vevers.

Portraiture is adaptable. In fact, the very sensibilities of looking and imagining what constitutes a likeness have changed over time. Through these portraits, the audience is offered an introduction to the changing styles, traditions, and functions of the portrait. Many artists today use the conventions of the past as reference and source material to respond to the present. The representation of ideals of beauty and social values through portraiture has become intertwined with explorations of style. These perspectives are sharpened as we consider contemporary works against historical ones.

People Watching explores three central intersecting themes: portable portraiture, degrees of likeness, and looking itself as an integral part of how artists represent themselves and others. As contemporary viewers, we are predisposed to "people watch" to different ends. As creators of selfies or snapshots of others, and as consumers of social media, we people watch; we scan individuals' appearances for visual cues, and depending on one's predilection for narrative, craft stories. The title of the exhibition is thus an observation and an invitation to "people watch" within FAM's galleries. We welcome you to ponder the changing considerations of what it means to "watch," to look, and to observe the representations of people then and now.

People Watching will be on view from September 24, 2017 – January 14, 2018, and is organized by Curator Lisa Crossman and Koch Curatorial Fellow Lauren Szumita. This exhibition is in part made possible by the Simonds Lecture Fund. Special thanks to Harvard Art for the conservation of the historical frames, and to Simon Gregory for the fabrication of sculpture mounts.

Looking at Portraits

Una Mirada a los Retratos

Clues to identity include:
Algunas claves para identificar incluyen:

Traditional portraits
Retratos tradicional

Contemporary portraits
Retratos Contemporáneo



Setting
El entorno

Symbolic objects
Objetos
Simbólicos



Clothing

Ropa

continued



Body language

Lenguaje
Corporal



Facial expression

Expresión Facial



References to
historical people,
events, or time
periods

Referencias a
personajes
históricos,
lugares, eventos
o períodos de
tiempo



The Many Faces of Portraiture Las Muchas Caras del Retrato

Portraits fall into many categories:
Los retratos caen en muchas categorías:



Portable (miniatures) portraits for personal
enjoyment or larger-than-life size for public
display

Desde retratos portátiles (miniaturas) para el
disfrute personal, hasta obras de proporciones
astronómicas para mostrar en público



Depicting an individual or a group (families or
organizations)

Representando a un individuo o a un grupo
(familias u organizaciones)



Formal or candid
Formal o cándido



Showing a person of high social status or a favorite or beloved person or family member
Mostrando a personas de alto nivel social o un ser querido o un familiar



Self-portrait or portrait by another
Autorretrato o retrato creado por otra persona



Convey identity only through the person's appearance, or through appearance and symbols and/or setting

Mostrando la identidad únicamente a través el aspecto de la persona o el aspecto y símbolos y/o el entorno



Why Doesn't the Portrait Always Look Like the Sitter?

The definition and degree of likeness can vary due to:

- the artist's skill
- the artist's imaginative interpretation of the subject
- the need to please the sitter or client by making her or him appear more ideal than she or he looks in real life
- cultural ideas of what is considered the most notable or essential characteristic of a person to capture in the portrait
- cultural conventions for representing those characteristics



¿Por Qué los Retratos No Siempre Se Parecen al Retrato?

La definición y el grado de parecido pueden variar debido a:

- la habilidad del artista, el estilo o los materiales
- la interpretación imaginativa que tiene el artista respecto al sujeto
- la necesidad de complacer al retratado o al cliente, haciéndole lucir mejor de lo que ella o él luce en la vida real
- ideas culturales de las características de las personas que son consideradas más notables o esenciales para ser capturadas en un retrato
- convenciones culturales para representar dichas características



Some of the portraits from FAM's permanent collection in the exhibition

For a 22-page illustrated checklist of all of the artworks in the exhibition,
see the document, "People Watching, Artworks"

<p>Roman Empire, possibly Greece Portrait Head of a Young Woman, 117-138 CE marble 10 ¼ inches Museum Purchase (supported in part by the Clementi Family Fund) 2001.10</p>	
<p>Joseph Wright of Derby (English, 1734-1797) Sarah Clayton, 1769 oil on canvas 50" x 40" 59" x 49" framed Gift of Louise I. Doyle 1953.1</p>	
<p>Edouard Vuillard (French, 1868-1940) The Artist's Mother Pouring Water into a Carafe, 1900-1904 oil on millboard 15 ½" x 17" 23 ¾" x 22 ¾" framed Gift of Mrs. Paul Mellon in memory of her grandfather, Arthur H. Lowe 1983.71</p>	 <p>A painting by Edouard Vuillard titled 'The Artist's Mother Pouring Water into a Carafe, 1900-1904'. It depicts an elderly woman in a long, patterned dress standing in a room, pouring water from a pitcher into a carafe. The room has a yellow wall, a doorway, and a small framed picture. The floor is covered with a patterned rug. The style is characteristic of the Nabi movement, with a focus on domestic interiors and a soft, textured brushwork.</p>
<p>Jon Imber (American, 1950-2014) Portrait of Jennifer, 1983 oil on canvas 68" x 52" Gift of Meredyth and John Moses 2017.18</p>	



People Watching

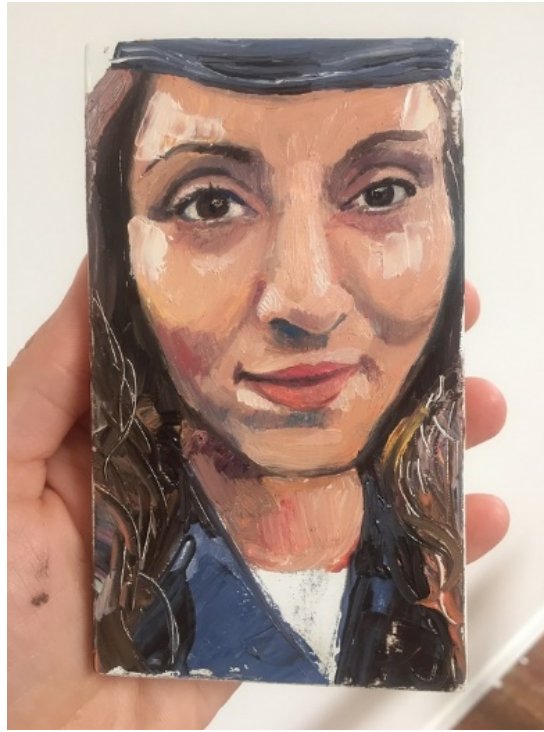
THEN AND NOW

Some of the contemporary
artists in the exhibition

People Watching: Then and Now



Artist: Nayda Cuevas



#Latina Reclaiming the Latina Hashtag,
2016, oil on gessoed plywood

#Latina: Reclamando la Latina Hashtag,
2016, óleo sobre madera contrachapada

Nayda Cuevas finds photographs of Latina women on #Latina Reclaiming the Latina Hashtag and recreates them as paintings. She then posts images of her paintings back on Tumblr, and displays the paintings in galleries to encourage dialog about Latina identity.

Some women in the photographs have emailed Cuevas their responses to their portraits.



Nayda Cuevas encuentra fotografías de mujeres Latinas con la etiqueta #Latina Reclaiming the Latina Hashtag y las recrea como pinturas. Luego, publica imágenes de sus pinturas en Tumblr, y muestra las pinturas en galerías para fomentar el diálogo sobre la identidad Latina.

Algunas mujeres de esas fotografías le han escrito sus respuestas a Cuevas acerca de sus retratos.

People Watching: Then and Now



Artist: Ross Normandin



Short Holiday, 2016
silicone rubber, foam, plexiglass

Vacación Corta, 2016
goma de silicón, espuma, plexiglás

Ross Normandin made a mold of his head, and uses it to make multiple copies out of silicone rubber.



Ross Normandin hizo un molde de su cabeza y lo usa para hacer múltiples copias de silicona.

Artist: Lucy Kim



Fitness Trainer (Stephen Marino) #1,
2017, oil paint, urethane resin, epoxy, fiberglass,
aluminum frame, and acrylic paint

Entrenador Físico (Stephen Marino) #1,
2017, óleo, resina de uretano, epoxi, fibra de
vidrio, marco de aluminio, y pintura acrílico

Lucy Kim begins her artworks by making a mold from a real person. She makes a cast from the mold using urethane resin. This cast is flattened and distorted, and later painted. Sometimes she makes a mold of the distorted figure so she can produce multiple copies of it.



Lucy Kim comienza sus obras haciendo un molde de una verdadera persona. Ella hace un molde del molde usando la resina de uretano. Esta molde es aplanado y deformado, y más tarde pintado. A veces ella hace un molde de la figura deformada para que puede producir copias múltiples de ella.

Artist: Philip Brou



Lost, 2016
oil on panel

Perdida, 2016
óleo sobre panel

Philip Brou paints actors, called “extras,” who appear as minor, unnamed characters in movies. He takes many photographs of the person before deciding which photograph to use as the basis for a painting.

Before he begins painting, he puts together a collection of colors on the computer that he’ll use in his painting. He then mixes the paints to match those colors.



Philip Brou pinta actores, llamados “extras,” que aparecen como personajes menores y sin nombre en películas. Él toma muchas fotografías de la persona antes de decidir cuál usará como base para una pintura.

Antes de comenzar a pintar, él reúne una colección de colores en el computador que luego usará en su pintura. Luego mezcla las pinturas para emparejarlas con esos colores.

Artist: Leslie Graff



Want a Slice?,
from **Domestics**, 2010
acrylic on canvas

¿Quieres Un Pedazo?,
de **Domésticos**, 2010
acrílico sobre lienzo

Leslie Graff collects vintage clothing and props to recreate images of women from the 1950s and 60s. Inspired by old books, and using herself as the model, she takes multiple photographs before choosing one for her series.



Leslie Graff colecciona ropa y accesorios antiguos para recrear imágenes de mujeres de los años 50 y 60. Inspirada en libros viejos, y siendo ella misma la modelo, toma múltiples fotografías antes de elegir una para su serie.

Artist: Kate Russo



Paintings by Men, 2015
oil on panel

Pinturas por Hombres, 2015
óleo sobre panel

In her two series, *Paintings by Men* and *Paintings by Women*, Kate Russo analyzes portraits by male and female artists based on their color choices, and reinterprets them as blocks of color.



En sus dos series, *Paintings by Men* y *Paintings by Women*, Kate Russo analiza retratos hechos por hombres y mujeres en base a sus elecciones de color, y los reinterpreta como bloques de color.

Caleb Cole



Blue Boys, 2014

cyanotype on vintage magazine page

Chicos Azules, 2014

cianotipos sobre paginas de revista de
época, sobre cartulina de enmarcar

Caleb Cole creates his images using an early form of photography called cyanotype, named for the blue (cyan) color of the images it creates. Vintage glass negatives of men are placed on top of paper that has been coated with a light-sensitive chemical and exposed to light.



Caleb Cole crea sus imágenes usando una forma primitiva de fotografía llamada cianotipia, su nombre tiene que ver con el color azul (cian) de las imágenes que crea. Se colocan negativos antiguos de vidrio de figuras masculinas en la parte superior del papel que ha sido recubierto con un producto químico sensible a la luz y luego se exponen a la luz.
