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"Hairpin," (2001, red brass, silver, copper; 1"x7"), by Maya Whitner, Class '03, an award-winning work from the 2002 Skidmore Student Show. [More](#)



"Gone, An Historical Romance of a Civil War as it Occurred Between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart" (1994, cut paper and adhesive on wall; 156" x 600", collection of Yvonne Force, Inc.) by Kara Walker [Full story](#).

Welcome -- The Skidmore *Intercom* Faculty-Staff Newsletter is a production of the Office of College Relations. All members of the campus community are invited to submit story ideas or news items, using the contact information provided below. Department chairs and office directors are asked to please print a copy of this document to share with colleagues who do not have regular access to a computer.

We hope you enjoy this electronic newsletter and encourage you to share your impressions via email or telephone.

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Vol. 2, No. 5 - December 20, 2002**NEH Grants to Fund Faculty Book Research**

Two faculty members have received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support book-length projects during 2003-04.

Janet Galligani Casey, visiting associate professor of English, will use the fellowship to work on "Fertile Grounds: Women, Modernism, Rural America," a study of women and agrarianism in the United States from 1920 to 1940. Jordana Dym, assistant professor of history, will devote the year to "They Also Mapped: The Cartography of Western Travel Writers, 1750-1950," an analysis of the relationship between travelers and maps over 200 years.

Casey, whose ongoing research focuses on labor and ideologies of gender, will use that perspective to frame her study of the American farm during the early years of the 20th century. Her book's foundation is a selection of novels from the era written by and about agrarian women that challenge longstanding associations of Americanism with a masculinist control of the landscape. These include *Weeds* (published in 1923) by Edith Summers Kelley; *Call Home the Heart* (1932), by Olive Tilford Dargan; and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Now in November* by Josephine Johnson, published in 1934. According to Casey, these novels "resist ingrained sentimental parallels between fecundity and the female form and force a reconsideration of ideas about gender and work. The rich variety of ways in which these texts subvert social, political, and epistemological patterns reveals that the farm, rather than being a static and conservative cultural setting, offers rich opportunities for sociopolitical critique."

In addition to novels, Casey has researched the agricultural press. She has read the entire press run of *The Farmer's Wife*, a monthly magazine published from 1908 to 1939.

The only national publication dedicated to rural women, the magazine was instructional (containing recipes and stories on the domestic arts) and also provided a forum for farm women to air their views about rural issues. Stories played on the tension between country and city living through themes that reinforced the notion of country life as a healthier, better environment for families. Other stories addressed gender issues by offering ideas for women to convince their husbands to commit more of the farm's resources to women's needs, such as indoor plumbing, or appliances like stoves and washing machines. Casey calls the journal "an invaluable resource for understanding the complex ideologies – of agrarianism, of gender, of labor reform – tendered to and absorbed by farm women of the period."

The book will consider these fictional and nonfictional writings within the context of, among other things, the American Country Life Movement. According to Casey, the movement was symbolically spearheaded by the Commission on Country Life, appointed by Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. She explained, "The commission sought to improve rural standards of living and to modernize images of the rural American family in order to reinforce both an agrarian mythology and an economic fundamentalism based on the farm unit. When Congress refused to fund its recommendations, several commission members tried to implement its ideals on their own." She reports that the Country Life Movement was indirectly responsible for the Smith Lever Act of 1914, which led to the establishment of the federal Department of Agriculture's Rural Extension Service, something Casey calls "a controversial effort to 'teach' rural women improved methods of mothering and housewifery."

Casey's goal is to show that while social, political, and artistic influences of the period prescribed traditional roles for agrarian women, farm women had a complex set of responses to these expectations. "I hope to illuminate a coherent radical women's tradition that reframes basic assumptions about modernism, feminism, and Americanism," she said.

Historian Jordana Dym's research on travelers and maps is designed to appeal to scholars as well as those for whom travel means a call to AAA for their trip kit. She explains, "Until the mid-20th century, travelers were as likely to create or commission maps to accompany their travel accounts, as to consult them for way-finding. Whether the maps produced were rough sketches for private journals or measured surveys for publication, they were important enough to travelers and their publishers to appear in most types of published travel accounts."

Her book will be the first systematic study of map use and production by travelers who went from being seekers of knowledge to seekers of entertainment during an era when travel and publishing changed dramatically. All of these developments significantly influenced the maps that were produced.

Says Dym, "We think of maps as representing real physical space and use them to get to places. This is a relatively new idea. Maps weren't always literal depictions of location – they used to be more representative instead of representational. They could be decorative items, or developed as an intellectual exercise, but weren't used for way finding in their earliest days. Travelers often made maps as they went along a route, instead of using them to get to a location. And the role of the traveler in mapping changes as time goes by, from tourist, to diplomat, to businessperson."

Dym loves maps. She pulls a book off her office shelf to study the old map published on the inside cover. The illustration sparks questions about the contrasts between border detail and interior generalizations, and the quality and quantity of topographical information provided. Her theory is that travelers' cartography changed in alignment with political and cultural developments – and that the maps produced reflected this. "When travelers achieved independence from local guides, maps moved from the category of something produced by travelers, as a form of displaying knowledge, to something produced for travelers, for planning and way finding." This change illustrates "the shift from 'imperial' projects of 19th-century travelers – to 'cultural' projects of 20th century tourists," she explained.

Her research will encompass Europeans' travel to North and South America, Asia, and Africa from 1750 to 1950. Maps created at this time increased knowledge of new regions and exerted political control over them. Once adequate topographical maps were completed, travelers' cartography was directed toward new causes: commercial development, transportation, and communication. At this point (mid- to late-19th century), travel itself changed. Explained Dym, "Until the end of the 19th century, travel took large amounts of time. But after you move into the age of steam, travel becomes faster and more accessible." People traveled more independently and the goal of travel changed, with the emphasis now on entertainment. Travelers now wanted cultural knowledge, having evolved from map producers to map consumers in an effort to acquire such knowledge.

Dym, a specialist in Latin American history, became interested in this topic when she wrote an article (published in 2000) on the changing attitudes of 19th-century travelers to Central America. During the summer of 2001, she examined the cartography of travelers to Central America while participating in an NEH Summer Institute on Popular Cartography and Society. Her research has enriched her LS II course on "Travel Writers and Travel Liars in Latin America, 1492-1900." The forthcoming book "combines my current teaching and scholarship interests," she said. "I wanted to explore more the idea of maps and how they have been used."

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Faculty & Staff Newsletter

Vol. 2, No. 5 - December 20, 2002**American Studies Faculty Publish New Books**

Two members of the American studies faculty have published new books on different aspects of American history and culture.

Daniel Nathan, assistant professor of American studies, is the author of *Saying It's So - A Cultural History of the Black Sox Scandal* (2002, University of Illinois Press), and Gregory Pfitzer, professor and chair of the department, has written *Picturing the Past - Illustrated Histories and the American Imagination, 1840-1900* (2002, Smithsonian Institution Press).

Nathan's topic - the story of "Shoeless" Joe Jackson and his teammates purportedly conspiring with gamblers to throw the 1919 World Series - is less about the scandal itself and more concerned with how the story has been represented and remembered by journalists, historians, novelists, filmmakers, and baseball fans.

Addressing the relationship between cultural narratives and social reality, Nathan considers the media's coverage of the scandal - from front-page attention to scathing commentaries and cartoons - when the story broke in 1920 and in the years that followed. To shed light on the ways cultural and historical meaning are produced, Nathan reflects on a number of well-known baseball references: Bernard Malamud's novel *The Natural*, Ken Burns's TV documentary *Baseball*, the baseball field in Dyersville, Iowa, built for the film *Field of Dreams*. He also considers the country's reaction to the 1994-95 Major League Baseball strike.

The book is a volume in the *Sport and Society* series.

Greg Pfitzer takes a detailed look into the visual culture of the past by examining the often maligned illustrated history books produced in the 19th century.

Around 1840, changes in publishing techniques allowed visual images to be reproduced inexpensively for the first time. This enabled established artists, who often had no training in history, to present their own patriotic interpretations of historical events. Authors began to write their texts with these images in mind - leading to the development of a dramatic, often melodramatic, pictorial genre that had an enormous effect on the kind and the intensity of history available to Americans.

Pfitzer finds that these books were directed at not only semiliterate immigrants but also middle-class Americans seeking to reaffirm their patriotism. Many books contained sentimental - even comic - misrepresentations of history, but some authors and artists showed sparks of genius in the way they condensed the past and made it comprehensible.

By the 1890s a new breed of professional historian was expressing deep concern about the "deverbalization" of culture brought on by illustrated histories. Suspicions about the reliability of visual evidence - including photographs - called into question the relevancy of visual literacy. At the turn of the century, the heyday of the illustrated history book was over.

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Kara Walker to Exhibit Elegant, Unsettling Artworks at Tang

The Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery will present "Kara Walker: Narratives of a Negress," from Jan. 18 through June 1, 2003. An exhibition of selected and new works by the internationally acclaimed New York-based artist, "Narratives" was organized jointly by the Tang Museum and the Williams College Museum of Art. The exhibition showcases the work of an artist whose anti-racist parodies—rendered in exquisitely beautiful cut-paper silhouettes—have made her one of the most important young American artists working today, according to Tang Curator Ian Berry, one of the exhibition's four co-curators.

A highlight of the Tang exhibition will be Walker's appearance at Skidmore to deliver the Malloy Visiting Artist Lecture at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 31, in Bernhard Theater. Admission is free.

One of several contemporary African-American artists to address racial identity in a confrontational way, Walker is best known for life-sized black-paper cutout silhouettes that depict racial stereotypes, slavery, sex, and violence in the antebellum South. "Her charged and visceral imagery not only brings to light troubling episodes from the history of black and white relations in America," said Berry, "but also highlights the problems of racism, sexism, and abuse that continue into the present."

"The idea that African-American art can only be noble, appealing, and beautiful does not sit well with me," Walker has said. "I have always been drawn to art that was unsettling for me." Whether she is "on the cutting edge or over the line," *The Boston Globe* noted, Walker is "one of the hottest—and most controversial—black artists in America."

The artworks in "Narratives of a Negress" will span the artist's career, beginning with her installation titled "Gone, An Historical Romance of a Civil War as it Occurred Between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart." Described in *Artnews* as "lewd, provocative, and lovely," the 50-foot mural has not been on public view since its debut in 1994 at the Drawing Center in New York City. Another highlight of the Walker exhibition will be "Negress Notes (Brown Follies)" (1996), a series of 24 small watercolors.

Several of Walker's artworks have elaborate titles that harken back to 19th-century slave autobiographies, such as "For the Benefit of All the Races of Mankind (Mos' Specially the Master One, Boss) An Exhibition of Artifacts, Remnants, and Effluvia EXCAVATED from the Black Heart of a Negress III" (2002). The wall-sized installation uses colored-light projections that illuminate the cut-paper images as well as the gallery walls and ceiling with brilliant color—and simultaneously project the shadows of viewers onto the wall, mixing them into the turbulent scene itself.

Additional public events related to the exhibition will include the following:

- opening reception, Saturday, Feb. 1, 6:30-8 p.m.;
- noon curator's tour, Tuesday, March 11;
- panel discussion, Wednesday, March 12, at 7 p.m.;
- "Dialogue" featuring cultural critic Michele Wallace and Skidmore faculty, Thursday, April 10, at 7 p.m.;
- "Family Saturdays," 2-3:30 p.m., March 22 and April 5; and
- guided tours, Tuesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 1 p.m.

The Tang Museum is open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, and closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is free.

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Carpenter Foundation Gift to Support Contemporary Art Show at Tang

Carpenter Foundation Gift to Support Contemporary Art Show at Tang

A \$23K grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation will be used to support an upcoming Tang Museum exhibition on Asian Art.

The grant is Skidmore's first from the Carpenter Foundation, according to Stephanie Van Allen, assistant director of foundation and corporate relations. It will be used in connection with an exhibition of Chinese contemporary art titled *Brushing the Present: Contemporary Academy Painting from China*, to be mounted at the Tang next fall. Funds from the grant will support production of the exhibition's catalogue and allow for two artists and their interpreter to travel to Skidmore from China.

To be curated by Professor of Art Doretta Miller, *Brushing the Present* will include 40 pieces by 28 contemporary Chinese artists, including ink and watercolor on paper, and oil on canvas works. Selected works will illustrate how artists from North China are responding to the rapid changes in their society due to globalization and greater opportunity for artistic expression.

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, official policies toward cultural expression in China have softened, allowing for greater artistic freedom and for more tolerance of Western artistic expression. The result is a generation of academically trained artists who are skilled in traditional Chinese art and who have also explored contemporary Western ideas.

Some artists are challenged to reconcile the traditional with the new to create images that represent contemporary China, while others ignore tradition to create images that appeal to themselves or to various audiences. The exhibition will incorporate art from both perspectives for viewing by audiences of the Capital Region.

The exhibition will be used as part of the College's Expanding Horizon Partnership with the Schuylerville Central School District as well as several Tang Museum outreach programs.

The E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation supports museums and institutions involved with restoration, conservation, and education in the field of Asian art.

Schick Art Gallery to Present Student Show

The Schick Art Gallery will host its annual Juried Student Exhibition from Jan. 30 to Feb. 23, 2003.

Co-sponsored by the College's Department of Art and Art History and the student Pro-arts Organization, the show will include an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30, at the gallery. The exhibition and reception are free and open to the public.

The guest juror for this year's exhibition is renowned New York City painter William Cotton. Most recently his work was featured at the Mary Boone Gallery in New York and at Jablonka Galerie in Germany. Cotton is known for his large-scale paintings of super-realistic sweet confections.

The Schick Art Gallery is open without charge from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and from 1 to 4:30 p.m. weekends.

In the News

Skidmore faculty recently contacted by general media for expert commentary include the following:

Sandy Baum, professor of economics, was quoted in the December issue of *Washingtonian* magazine in an article titled "Where the Boys Aren't," on gender equality at elite colleges. She also was a source for a Nov. 27 Associated Press story on state prepaid tuition plans.

John Cosgrove, access services librarian, was interviewed by *The Times Union* for a Dec. 1 story on the quality of information on the world wide web titled "Don't Bet the Ranch on a Web Salary Translator."

Glenn Egelman, director, Health Services, was interviewed by *The Times Union* for a Dec. 10 story on bacterial meningitis titled "Vaccination bill lingers."

Robert Jones, associate professor of economics, was interviewed by the Glens Falls *Post-Star* for a Nov. 16 article on population changes in upstate New York cities titled "An Upstate Reinvention."

Karen Kellogg, associate director of Environmental Studies, was featured in a Nov. 25 *Saratogian* profile titled "Skidmore professor bridges gap between business and environment."

Mary Stange, associate professor of religion and women's studies, was featured Dec. 17 in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article titled "Women Hunters: Different Approach, Same Result," and an article earlier in December on women and hunting originally published in *The Baltimore Sun* and distributed nationally by Tribune Media Services.

Joanne Vella, associate professor of art, and a group of her students were featured in a Nov. 10 *Post-Star* article titled "Beauty in the Buff: Human form integral to artist development."

Segrave Named Athletic Director

Jeffrey Segrave, professor of exercise science and interim athletics director since June, has been named athletics director, according to an announcement by Charles M. Joseph, interim vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty. [View details](#)

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Faculty-Staff Activities

Dennis Conway, director of Campus Safety, and **Karen Kellogg**, associate director of environmental studies, were called "Hometown Heroes" Nov. 20 by the Saratoga Convention and Tourism Bureau for promoting Saratoga Springs by hosting conferences here. Conway was responsible for bringing the Northeast College and University Security Association annual meeting to Saratoga Springs last June, while Kellogg organized two events: the College Climate Response Conference in September 2002 and a meeting of the Environmental Studies Group in late 2001.

Roy Ginsberg, professor of government and Glaverbel chair in European Politics, Universite Catholique de Louvain, was in Brussels Dec. 3-5 to consult with the European Union presidency on the current state of U.S.-European relations and present a paper on "United States-European Union Relations during the Bush Administration." The European Commission will publish the paper. In November, he was appointed by the president of Adelphi University to the newly established International Studies Advisory Board. From September to November, he was a consultant to undergraduate international studies programs at Siena College, Morehead State University, and the College of New Jersey.

Charlotte Goodman, professor emerita of English, this fall taught a course on the Modern Short Story to more than 70 senior citizens in Delmar, N.Y., under the auspices of the Humanities Institute of Lifelong Learning.

Bob Shorb, director, Office of Student Aid and Family Finance, led a workshop on College Financial Aid Dec. 9 sponsored by the Saratoga Springs High School Guidance Department.

Susan Zappen, associate college librarian for collections, has received the Janice Graham Newkirk Research Award from the Eastern New York Chapter, Association of College and Research Libraries, to support her sabbatical research project, "Future Directions of Academic Library Services for Remote Users." On Oct. 30, she presented a paper titled "The Two faces of Journals: Cost and Usage," at the 22nd annual Charleston Conference preconference, Managing Serials in an Electronic Environment.

Publications

Roy Ginsberg, professor of government and Glaverbel chair in European Politics, is the author of a monograph, *Ten Years of European Foreign Policy: Baptism, Confirmation, Validation*, in press from the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Berlin.

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