

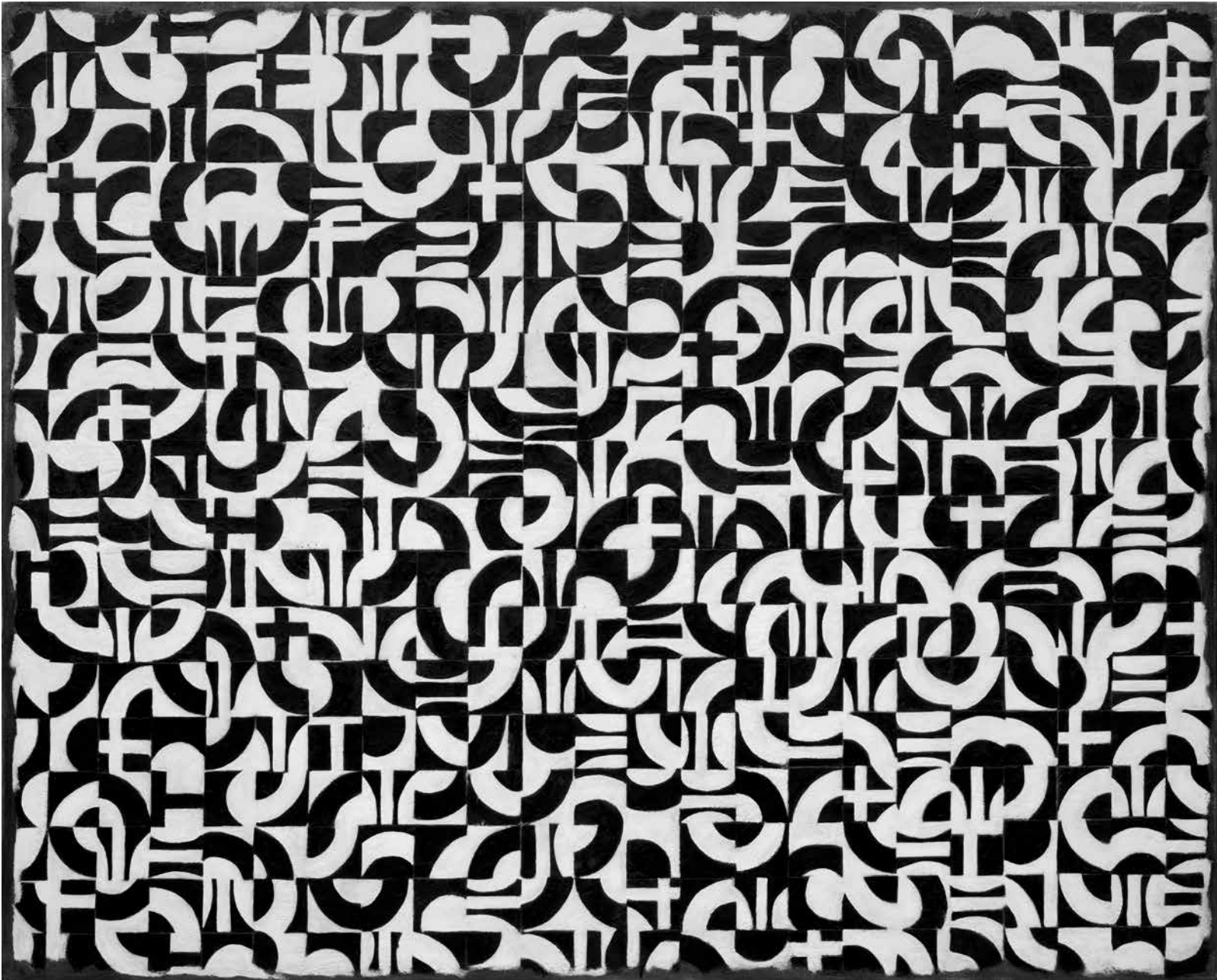
AW ARTWORDS

FALL 2023

DAVID
OWSLEY
MUSEUM OF
ART BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY

Vol. 29 No. 1

a newsletter for the Friends of
the David Owsley Museum of Art



IN THIS ISSUE: SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS, PROGRAM CALENDAR, PHOTOGRAPHY AT DOMA, AND MORE.



ARTWORDS

David Owsley Museum of Art

SERVING EAST CENTRAL INDIANA SINCE 1936

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WRITERS

Robert G. La France (RGL)
Cathy Bretz (CB)
Noelle Giuffrida (NG)
Maria VanVreede (MKV)

DESIGN

Aubrey Smith Creative

COVER ART

Debbie Ma, *American (born 1957), Social Fabric, 2019, marble dust on canvas, 72 x 90 in. (182 x 328 cm) © Debbie Ma.*

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

DOMA launches the academic year with two museum firsts and a focus on Asian art. The Special Exhibitions galleries upstairs host *Rising to the Surface: Paintings by Debbie Ma*, the New York-based artist's first one-person show of her contemporary non-objective abstractions. Ma's paintings display a sense of order, balance, and dynamism across a sculptural surface of marble dust.

In addition, the Brown Study Room downstairs features *Fibers of Being: Textiles from Asia in the David Owsley Museum of Art's Collection*, the museum's first exhibition curated by Noelle Giuffrida, DOMA's Associate Curator of Asian Art and Associate Professor in the School of Art. The show displays treasures in silk and various fabrics unearthed from storage, many of which have never been seen by the public.

Both exhibitions are on view September 28 through December 21. Mark your calendars as well for a free public presentation by Debbie Ma on October 12 as part of Ball State's Arts Alive Series, presented by the College of Fine Arts. Check the program calendar inside for this and other exciting events this fall.

We also invite you to see the reinstallation of European Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque art in the freshly painted, coral-colored West Gallery. The object labels contain new research and information about familiar gems alongside more recent acquisitions and a beautifully conserved, sixteenth-century Italian marble bust of *Christ the Redeemer*. You'll be impressed. This issue of *ARTwords* also features a brief description of one of several conservation projects that have been taking place behind the scenes at DOMA.

Whether you are bringing your family to the unforgettable Kids Make Art at DOMA (Oct. 21), partying with the 'in' crowd at DOMA After Hours (Oct. 27), practicing Mindfulness in the Museum (Oct. 6, Nov. 3, and Dec. 1), or experiencing a Docent's Choice Tour (Oct. 14, Nov. 4, and Dec. 2), there's always something new to do, see, and learn at the museum. Please join us this fall!

Robert G. La France



RISING TO THE SURFACE: PAINTINGS BY DEBBIE MA

This exhibition and related events are made possible by Ball State University's Arts Alive Series, presented by the College of Fine Arts.

Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 1:30–4:30 p.m.; closed Sundays, Mondays, and holiday breaks.

▲ From left to right:

Rush Hour, 2023, marble dust on canvas, 60 x 72 in.

Chez Henri, 2021, marble dust on canvas, 48 x 36 in.

The terms geometry, order, balance, and texture only begin to describe Debbie Ma's masterful paintings. Informed by her successful career as a graphic designer and inspired by an array of modern masters, Ma's non-objective abstractions defy simple categorization. On the one hand, her works rely on the black and white or often muted colors of a painting, while on the other she utilizes a base of marble dust that forms the shimmering three-dimensional surfaces of a granular relief sculpture. To many viewers, the perfect arrangement of shapes and complex interactions between visual elements appear exclusively modern and

contemporary. To others, Ma's materials and forms evoke intricate networks of marble tesserae from ancient Roman mosaics. This first one-person show of works by the New York-based artist introduces Debbie Ma's captivating body of work to the Midwest.

David T. Owsley, a former curator and decisive collector of action, has seen many bright stars in the art world emerge, twinkle, and wane. Yet, he singles out Debbie Ma, whose work he first sighted in 2016. He called me shortly thereafter and breathlessly described Ma's mesmerizing paintings. He was immediately attracted to *Ouarzazate* (pronounced WAR-zazat), which



sept 28 - dec 21
EXHIBITION



◀ *Ouarzazate*, 2009, marble dust on canvas, 60 x 72 in, David T. Owsley Collection, L2016.013.000

and impermanence. She loves old walls, faded frescoes, peeling paint, creased leathery faces, the iconography of early civilizations and the study of languages. These elements are filtered through her years as a graphic designer, which trained Ma's eye for modern typography and architectural forms.



◀ *Detail of Porcelain Earth*, 2023, marble dust on canvas, 60 x 84 in.

various techniques and materials.” When asked about how she starts a work, she invoked a famous quote by Jasper Johns, “It’s simple. You just take something, and then you do something to it. Then you do something else to it. And then something else. Keep

brilliantly evokes the red clay architecture and labyrinthine streets of the Moroccan city. The painting is included in the exhibition and is now a promised gift to the David Owsley Museum of Art.

Ma, who studied psychology, anthropology, art education, and communication design, used her college degree to launch her career. She began in publishing and then worked for 25 years in packaging design, which was lucrative but also, as Ma states, “provided me with a creative platform to learn and experiment with two-dimensional and three-dimensional designs employing

doing this and pretty soon you’ve got something.” She adds, “If every artist were to honestly describe what happens in the sanctuary and privacy of their studio, they would be saying the same.”

Art historians, and the artist herself, point to several sources of inspiration for Debbie Ma’s work, specifically modern and contemporary artists Anselm Kiefer (born 1945), Robert Ryman (1930–2019), Antoni Tàpies (1923–2012), Mark Bradford (born 1961), Eva Hesse (1936–1970), and many others. Aside from these artists, Ma’s influences more generally and thematically derive from the beauty of imperfection

The exhibition is enhanced by a beautifully illustrated catalogue with an essay examining the artist’s methods, motivations, and style by art critic and curator Barbara A. MacAdam, who writes regularly for the *Brooklyn Rail* and is a former editor of *ARTnews*, *Art & Auction*, and *New York Magazine*. The catalogue also includes a conversation between the artist, MacAdam, and curator Mary Dinaburg, who is the former director of Jack Shainman Gallery and principal of DinaburgArts LLC. The catalogue will be available for purchase.

Finally, you will have the opportunity to see and meet the artist in person at 6pm on Thursday, October 12, 2023, when she discusses her work in the Frank C. and Elizabeth B. Ball Recital Hall in the Fine Arts Building at the David Owsley Museum of Art. The event is free and open to the public and made possible by Ball State University’s Arts Alive Series, presented by the College of Fine Arts. Students from all majors are encouraged to attend.

-RGL

PROGRAM CALENDAR

SEPT

ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM

Wednesday, 12 noon

13

Dr. Robert G. La France, DOMA's director, will share museum updates and an overview of the fall exhibitions *Rising to the Surface* and *Fibers of Being*. DOMA's new collection manager and registrar Maria VanVreede will also introduce herself, share past museum experiences, and discuss her approach to DOMA's collection.

Register at bsu.edu/doma/alliance by September 6.

This is a joint meeting with the Muncie Art Students' League.

Alumni Center



Class visit

SEPT

EXHIBITION: RISING TO THE SURFACE: PAINTINGS BY DEBBIE MA

28

EXHIBITION: FIBERS OF BEING: TEXTILES FROM ASIA IN THE DAVID OWSLEY MUSEUM OF ART'S COLLECTION

Thursday

Exhibitions open to the public.

Visit bsu.edu/doma/exhibitions for information.



Exhibitions

OCT

EDUCATOR EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Monday 4 pm

02

Ball State faculty and area schoolteachers are invited to a walk-through

of *Rising to the Surface: Paintings by Debbie Ma* and *Fibers of Being: Textiles from Asia in the David Owsley Museum of Art's Collection* with DOMA Director Dr. Robert La France and Associate Curator of Asian Art Noelle Giuffrida.

Register at bsu.edu/doma.



Docent training

OCT

ARTS ALIVE SERIES: DEBBIE MA

Thursday, 6 - 7 pm

12

Join abstract artist Debbie Ma as she delves into her work, inspirations, and art as a vehicle for mindfulness and introspection.

Visit bsu.edu/doma/exhibitions for more information.

This free public presentation is made possible by Ball State's Arts Alive Series, presented by the College of Fine Arts. Students are encouraged to attend.

Recital Hall, Fine Arts Building

OCT

DOCENT'S CHOICE TOUR

Saturday, 2:30 pm

14

Join a free public tour of works selected by a DOMA docent.

Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.



Kids Make Art at DOMA

OCT

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM

Friday, 12 - 1 pm

06

Take a midday break with Professor Emeritus George Wolfe to

experience a form of mindfulness meditation in the galleries.

Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

OCT

KIDS MAKE ART AT DOMA

Saturday, 1:30 - 4:30 pm

21

A fun-filled opportunity for families and kids to experience the artworks at DOMA through art making activities, with student teachers from the Ball State Art Education program.

Free with registration. Children must be accompanied by an adult guardian.

Register by October 18 at bsu.edu/doma.

OCT

ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM

Wednesday, 12 pm

11

Abstract artist Debbie Ma will share insights on her creative practice and works featured in her solo exhibition *Rising to the Surface*.

Register at bsu.edu/doma/alliance by October 4. E.B. and Bertha C. Ball Center, 400 W Minnetrista Blvd

FALL 2023



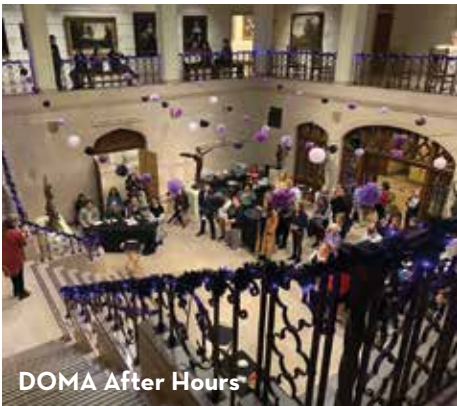
program CALENDAR

OCT

DOMA AFTER HOURS Friday, 5 - 8pm

27

This evening Halloween-themed event invites students, faculty, and community members to “let the ghouls roll” with music, cash bar, art-making activities, games, and a live storytelling competition. Costumes encouraged!
Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.



DOMA After Hours

NOV

ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM Wednesday, 12 noon

01

Student curatorial assistants will introduce the fall exhibition *Fibers of Being: Textiles from Asia in the David Owsley Museum of Art's Collection* which explores the layered meanings of textiles translocated from Asia to the United States as they cross geographical, cultural, and temporal boundaries.
Register at bsu.edu/doma/alliance by October 25. Alumni Center

SCHEDULED HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

October 7 - 10, **Fall Break**

November 22 - 27, **Thanksgiving Break**

December 22 - January 8, **Winter Break**

NOV

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM Friday, 12 - 1pm

03

Take a midday break with staff from the Ball State Counseling Center for meditative experiences in the galleries.
Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

NOV

DOCENT'S CHOICE TOUR Saturday, 2:30 pm

04

Join a free public tour of works selected by a DOMA docent.
Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

NOV

WORKSHOP: THE JAPANESE ART OF MENDING WITH SASHIKO Wednesday, 6 - 8pm

08

Explore the Japanese art of hand embroidery known as *sashiko* in this hands-on workshop. Learn about the history of the technique and be guided through stitching your own piece.
Workshop open to 20 participants. Registration required by November 1 at bsu.edu/doma.

DEC

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM Friday, 12 - 1pm

01

Take a midday break with Professor Emeritus George Wolfe to experience a form of mindfulness meditation in the galleries.
Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

DEC

DOCENT'S CHOICE TOUR Saturday, 2:30 pm

02

Join a free public tour of works selected by a DOMA docent.
Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

DEC

HOLIDAY COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE Saturday, 6 - 8pm

02

DOMA joins in the annual community holiday festivities with refreshments, children's art activities, and live holiday music.
Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

DEC

ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM Wednesday, 12 noon

13

Barbara Schafer, of Gordy Fine Art & Framing, will discuss the what, where, and why of art & antique appraisals.
Register at bsu.edu/doma/alliance by December 6. Alumni Center

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF DOMA

Join the Friends of DOMA with a minimum contribution of \$25 at bsu.edu/doma/friends or call **765-285-5242** for more information.

JOIN THE DOMA ALLIANCE

Minimum annual contribution of \$50. Larger donations are encouraged to support exhibitions, acquisitions, and conservation at the museum. All Alliance members automatically become a Friend of DOMA. If you wish to join or attend an Alliance meeting, call **765-285-5242** or register online at bsu.edu/doma/alliance.

\$20 for lunch with pre-registration required; \$5 program fee without lunch; first-time guests free unless registering for lunch.

Programs, correct at press time are subject to change without notice. Call ahead to confirm, **765-285-5242**.

All programs are at DOMA and free unless otherwise noted.



◀ **TOP:** *Han Woman's Coat*, 1850–1900, China, Qing dynasty (1644–1911), blue satin ground embroidered with satin, seed, and couching stitches with multi-colored silk floss, Gift of Daniel Jarrett Hathaway, 1937.500.095.

BOTTOM: *Fragment of a Buddhist Priest's Robe (detail)*, 1680–1790, Japan, Edo Period (1615–1868), pieced silk and gilt paper brocade, Gift of Anna M. Keirn in memory of Reverend G.I. Keirn, 1931.500.103.



sept 28 - dec 21
FOCUS
EXHIBITION

FIBERS OF BEING

TEXTILES FROM ASIA IN THE DAVID OWSLEY MUSEUM OF ART'S COLLECTION

This exhibition and related events are made possible by the Sursa Art Exhibitions and Visiting Performers Program and the Friends of the David Owsley Museum of Art.

Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 1:30–4:30 p.m.; closed Sundays, Mondays, and holiday breaks.

Fibers of Being explores the layered meanings of textiles translocated from Asia to the United States as they cross geographical, cultural, and temporal boundaries. Clothing and accessories convey the personal identities, fashion sense, and social status of their original wearers and transmit the tastes of people who selected them from shops in cities around the world. Because textiles are portable and adaptable, American tourists and missionaries purchased them as souvenirs to serve as tangible objects around which to center stories of travel with friends back home.

Works in the exhibition include a silk embroidered woman's coat, collar, paired apron, and rank badge from China; remnants of Buddhist priests' robes and a woman's formal outer robe known as an *uchikake* from Japan; a cotton batik headwrap from Java; painted textiles created in Bali that feature characters from the Hindu epic *Ramayana*; a silk and gauze Chinese dragon robe; and a Hmong embroidered story cloth.

Many textiles in the show are new discoveries from storage while others have remained unseen since their initial acquisition by the museum in 1930s–1980s. New research reidentifies and contextualizes these objects while highlighting the roles of women as makers and wearers. Many works include evidence of use through physical traces, such as fraying, loose threads, and incomplete repairs. By introducing visitors to these previously invisible works, this show aims to encourage support for their conservation and preservation.

Several student curatorial interns contributed to this show including Cydney Davidson ('23), Gabriela Henderson ('23), Natalia Latham ('23), Kennedy Moore ('26), and Lea Stouder ('23). We also partnered with staff and students from Ball State's Digital Corps to produce supplementary audio-video content that is available through in-gallery QR codes and a computer kiosk.

-NG



PHOTOGRAPHY AT DOMA

Savannah Calhoun, a photographer and Indianapolis native, joined DOMA's staff in January 2023 after teaching photography at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Before that, she earned a bachelor's degree in photography from IUPUI's Herron School of Art and Design and a Master of Fine Arts, also in photography, from the University of Missouri. Outside of work, she enjoys digital collage, still life, and installation photography.

Savannah divides her work week between DOMA and the School of Art, where she is a Photography

Technician and also teaches classes. She appreciates the chance to work in two distinctly different environments.



With a wide range of art objects in DOMA's collection, each presents a new challenge. Before snapping the shutter, an item must be carefully positioned and uniquely lit. In terms of future projects, Savannah expects to stay busy photographing new acquisitions and documenting DOMA's special exhibitions each year in addition to organizing images in the museum's EmbARK database.

-CB

INSIGHT: CONSERVATION

Long-time museum supporters Charles and Kathy Harper donated a substantial portion of the estate of African American artist Joseph Delaney (1904–1991) to the museum in 2019 and 2021. The collection, which consists of over 450 works on paper, features dynamically posed models, scenes from city life, and anatomical drawings. Delaney’s sketches show a deep understanding of the use of line and shadow.

Mainly dating from the 1930s, the drawings were done on a variety of paper types, using charcoal, pen, or marker. Over time, the paper has become brittle, and tiny spots of mold have formed on several sheets.

In late June, conservator Harriet Stratis and her colleague Mary Broadway of Stratis Fine Art Conservation, Chicago, spent two and half days at DOMA surveying the entire Delaney collection.

Their work entailed confirming initial inventories of the collection, grading each sketch on its condition, and improving storage conditions for the works. The final report, completed a few weeks after their visit, provides details on the materials of each work, an approximate date, and notes on its condition and conservation treatment priority, as well as instructions for long-term storage.

The museum is currently reviewing the report and deciding how to move forward in making the recommended improvements, as well as which of the high-priority conservation treatments can be started first.

Harriet and Mary’s visit and the future conservation work to preserve the collection are paid for by funds provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

-MKV



▲ *Anatomical Sketch with Female Portrait and Two Bowls*, about 1930, pen and ink, graphite, grease pencil on paper, Gift of Charles and Kathy Harper, 2019.029.058. The paper has discolored with torn edges.



▲ Mary Broadway examines Delaney’s sketches, which are sorted by size and separated by sheets of glassine.



▲ *Sketch of Three Nude Female Figures*, about 1930, Joseph Delaney, charcoal on paper. Gift of Charles and Kathy Harper, 2019.029.029. The page is heavily damaged with tears and losses.

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Museum Hours

Tuesday - Friday: 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Saturday: 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Closed Sundays and Mondays

FREE ADMISSION

2021 W. Riverside Avenue
Muncie, IN 47306

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◀ **Hans Hofmann, designer, American, born Germany (1880-1966) and L. Vincent Foscatto, mosaicist, American (about 1887-1968),** Maquette for Mural at the New York School of Printing, 1957, glass tile set in concrete, David T. Owsley Collection L2022.005.000.

New to the Galleries

MAQUETTE FOR MURAL AT THE NEW YORK SCHOOL OF PRINTING

This small sketch or maquette is one of three known models for a giant mural on the south wall of the New York School of Printing at 439 W 49th Street in New York City. The mural is one of only a few important architectural commissions designed by Hofmann.

The artist collaborated with a mosaicist to recreate the textural and chromatic qualities of loosely brushed oil paint throughout the mural. This small work translates the main characteristics of Hofmann's style into glass mosaic tiles called tesserae. These stylistic traits include his "push-pull" method, by which pictorial elements appear to emerge, recede, and jostle in oppositional tension across the pictorial surface.

-RGL