

# **AW** ARTWORDS

FALL 2024

**DAVID  
OWSLEY  
MUSEUM** OF  
**ART** BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Vol. 30 No. 1

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



IN THIS ISSUE: THE ART OF ELIZABETH CATLETT, PROGRAM CALENDAR, NEW STAFF MEMBER, AND MORE.



# ARTWORDS

David Owsley Museum of Art

**SERVING EAST CENTRAL INDIANA SINCE 1936**

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## **WRITERS**

Rachel Buckmaster (RB)

Robert G. La France (RGL)

Maureen Nicholson (MN)

## **DESIGN**

Aubrey Smith Creative

## **COVER ART**

Elizabeth Catlett, *American (1915 - 2012), Sharecropper, 1965, linocut, AP, 17 3/8 x 16 · in.* © Catlett Mora Family Trust/  
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of Elizabeth Catlett from the Collection of Samella Lewis, confronts these topics and more through a selection of powerful prints and sculptures (including a few additions from the museum's collection) that appeal to our common humanity.

Catlett is one of the most important African American artists of the 20th century. The works on display are drawn from the collection of the artist's pupil and friend Samella Lewis, who was a professor near my former hometown in Claremont, California; so, I'm particularly excited to share it with you. In conjunction with the show, DOMA's fall programs will feature a presentation by Catlett specialist and historian of American art Melanie Herzog, and a screening of the new one-hour documentary *Standing Strong: Elizabeth Catlett* (2023), fresh from several film festivals.

I am also proud of reaching a new milestone of ten wonderful years with Ball State. During that time, DOMA's tireless staff members have done everything in their power to highlight the collection, maintain and enhance our historic Fine Arts Building, serve the University and its many audiences, and engage with our dedicated volunteers and the wider community. Now we have extremely good news. Our namesake benefactor, David T. Owsley, has provided a financial contribution that will help the museum to better serve students and the citizens of East Central Indiana. Please read the article about his landmark gift in this issue of *ARTwords*, along with other great stories about the latest exhibits, a new employee, an amazing recent loan to the collection, and the Fall calendar of events.

I remain extremely grateful to all the people—students, faculty, staff, supporters, and visitors—who make DOMA, Ball State, and my new hometown of Muncie a cultural hub in our state.

**Robert G. La France**

## LETTER FROM **THE DIRECTOR**

Over the last ten years, the museum has built upon the strength of its inclusive, world art collection to present exciting exhibitions that celebrate diversity. In doing so, DOMA promotes and welcomes conversations about social justice, identity, and inequality. The current visiting exhibition, *The Art*



# THE ART OF ELIZABETH CATLETT

FROM THE COLLECTION OF SAMELLA LEWIS

▲ From left to right:

Elizabeth Catlett, American (1915–2012), *Maternity*, 1971, wood, 20 x 15½ x 6 in., © Catlett Mora Family Trust/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

Elizabeth Catlett, American (1915–2012), *Survivor*, 1983, woodcut, AP, 11 x 10 in., © Catlett Mora Family Trust/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

**Art can't be the exclusive domain of the elect. It has to belong to everyone. Otherwise it will continue to divide the privileged from the underprivileged, Blacks from Chicanos, and both from rural, ghetto, and middle-class whites. Artists should work to the end that love, peace, justice, and equal opportunity prevail all over the world; to the end that all people take**

**joy in full participation in the rich material, intellectual, and spiritual resources of this world's lands, peoples, and goods.**

**-Elizabeth Catlett, as quoted by Samella Lewis (1984).**

Sculptor, painter, and printmaker Elizabeth Catlett is widely considered one of the most important African American artists of the 20th century. Her work blends art and social



sept 19 - dec 20  
EXHIBITION



◀ Elizabeth Catlett, American (1915–2012),  
*There Is a Woman in Every Color*, 1975,  
linocut, screenprint and woodcut, 22 · x 30  
in., © Catlett Mora Family Trust/Licensed by  
VAGA, New York, NY.

consciousness, while confronting disturbing injustices against African Americans. Catlett is probably best known for her art from the 1960s and '70s, when she created her most politically charged, expressionistic prints and sculptures.

Born in Washington, D.C., Catlett was the granddaughter of enslaved people and daughter of trained schoolteachers. She attended Howard University, where she studied design, printmaking, and drawing. In 1940, Catlett became the first person to earn a master's degree in sculpture at the University of Iowa, where the Regionalist landscape and figure painter Grant Wood told her to paint what she knew best. In 1946, Catlett received a fellowship that allowed her to travel to Mexico City, where she further studied painting, sculpture, and lithography. There, she worked at the People's Graphic Arts Workshop (*Taller de Gráfica Popular*), a printmakers' group dedicated to promoting social change through art. After settling in Mexico and later becoming a Mexican citizen, she taught sculpture at the National

Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City until retiring in 1975. She never lost sight of what she knew best: women, Black people, and working people.

Her powerful use of the carved line in prints and the carved form in sculpture electrifies her art. Both her prints and sculptures represent human dignity born of honest work in the face of arbitrary social constraints and financial hardship. Her raw graphic images of African Americans and Mexicans—working women, city and country laborers, children working and caring for even younger children, unhoused urban children, and indigenous children, as well as Black mothers, workers, ordinary folk, and historical heroines—speak volumes about Blackness, femaleness, and *mexicanidad* (Mexican identity) to international audiences. Catlett's art invites everyone to see, feel, and begin to understand her subjects.

The works on display in this exhibition come from the collection of artist, educator, and author Samella Lewis (1923–2022), Ph.D. and

professor emerita of art history at Scripps College in Claremont, California. Lewis was Catlett's student in the 1940s and Catlett became her mentor and lifelong friend. This exhibition was organized by Landau Traveling Exhibitions of Los Angeles, CA, and is brought to Ball State University and Muncie courtesy of the Friends of the David Owsley Museum of Art. Works from DOMA's collection are added to the display to enhance the exhibition, which is further enriched by two major public programs with free admission. On Thursday, October 10, at 6pm in the Fine Arts building, DOMA presents a lecture titled *From Necessity Within My People: The Art of Elizabeth Catlett*, by Dr. Melanie Herzog, a renowned Catlett scholar and Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin. Come early for a 5pm reception and opportunity to view the exhibition. The event is part of Ball State's Arts Alive Series, presented by the College of Fine Arts, and is both free and open to everyone. Students of all majors are encouraged to attend and learn more about Catlett's powerful imagery. In the following month, on Tuesday, November 12 at 6pm in Pruis Hall, DOMA will screen the recent short film *Standing Strong: Elizabeth Catlett* (2023) featuring a fascinating narrative of the artist's life and work, which is followed by a discussion with the film's director Kevin Kelley and producer Marie Wilkes. This, too, is free and open to the public, with students encouraged to attend and learn more about Catlett's revolutionary art, life, and ideas. Please refer to the program calendar for more information about these and other museum events throughout the semester.

-RGL



# PROGRAM CALENDAR

**SEPT**

**ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM**

**Wednesday, 12 noon**

**11**

DOMA director Dr. Robert G. La France will share museum updates and an overview of the fall exhibition *The Art of Elizabeth Catlett from the Samella Lewis Collection*.

Register at [bsu.edu/doma/alliance](http://bsu.edu/doma/alliance) by September 3.

\$5 program fee; \$25 for luncheon.  
Minnetrista Museum & Gardens  
1200 North Minnetrista Parkway



Director Robert La France gives a gallery tour for the DOMA Art Alliance

**SEPT**

**MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM**

**Friday, 12 - 1pm**

**20**

Take a midday break with professor emeritus Dr. George Wolfe to experience a form of mindful meditation in the galleries.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma](http://bsu.edu/doma) for more information.

**SEPT**

**SATURDAY SPOTLIGHT TOUR**

**Saturday, 2:30 pm**

**21**

Join a free public tour of works selected by a DOMA gallery guide.

**OCT**

**MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM**

**Friday, 12 - 1pm**

**04**

Take a midday break with professor emeritus Dr. George Wolfe to experience a form of mindfulness meditation in the galleries.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma](http://bsu.edu/doma) for more information.



Enjoy Mindfulness Meditation in the Asian art gallery

**SEPT**

**EXHIBITION: THE ART OF ELIZABETH CATLETT FROM THE SAMELLA LEWIS COLLECTION**

**Thursday**

**19**

Exhibition opens to the public.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma/exhibitions](http://bsu.edu/doma/exhibitions) for information.

**SEPT**

**EDUCATOR EXHIBITION OVERVIEW**

**Thursday, 4pm**

**19**

Ball State faculty and area schoolteachers are invited to a walk-through of *The Art of Elizabeth Catlett from the Samella Lewis Collection* with DOMA director Dr. Robert La France.

Register at [bsu.edu/doma](http://bsu.edu/doma).

**OCT**

**ALLIANCE COFFEE HOUR AND PROGRAM**

**Wednesday, 10am**

**09**

Dr. Melanie Herzog, one of the leading scholars on Elizabeth Catlett, joins us to share her insights on the life and legacy of the artist and activist.

Register at [bsu.edu/doma/alliance](http://bsu.edu/doma/alliance) by October 2.  
\$5 program fee; \$15 for Alliance members.  
DOMA

**OCT**

**ARTS ALIVE SERIES: 'FROM A NECESSITY WITHIN MY PEOPLE: THE ART OF ELIZABETH CATLETT' WITH MELANIE HERZOG**

**Thursday**

**10**

**Reception and exhibition viewing: 5 pm  
Talk: 6 pm**

Dr. Melanie Herzog, a leading scholar on Elizabeth Catlett, explores Catlett's life as an artist, her lifelong dedication to the expressive potential of form in her prints and sculpture, and her enduring artistic legacy.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma](http://bsu.edu/doma) 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



Families creating together at Kids Make Art at DOMA

**OCT**

**KIDS MAKE ART AT DOMA**

**Saturday, 1:30-4:00 pm**

**19**

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 16 at [bsu.edu/doma](http://bsu.edu/doma).

**OCT**

**SATURDAY SPOTLIGHT TOUR**

**Saturday, 2:30 pm**

**26**

Join a free public tour of works selected by a DOMA gallery guide.

# FALL 2024



## program CALENDAR

NOV

### MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM

Friday, 12 - 1pm

01

Take a midday break with professor emeritus Dr. George Wolfe to experience a form of mindfulness meditation in the galleries.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma](https://bsu.edu/doma) for more information.

NOV

### ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM

Wednesday, 12 noon

06

Ball State Instructor of Art Kalleen Chilcote demonstrates the basics of creating a linoleum cut print, a preferred technique and media of artist Elizabeth Catlett.

Register at [bsu.edu/doma/alliance](https://bsu.edu/doma/alliance) by October 30.

\$5 program fee; \$25 for luncheon.

Alumni Center, 2800 W. Bethel Avenue

NOV

### STANDING STRONG: ELIZABETH CATLETT - FILM SCREENING AND Q&A

Tuesday, 5pm: reception,  
6pm: screening

12

Enjoy a screening of the Iowa-made film *Standing Strong: Elizabeth Catlett* followed by a discussion with Kevin Kelley, the director, and Marie Wilkes, the producer of this new film dedicated to the life and incredible art of Elizabeth Catlett.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma](https://bsu.edu/doma) for more information.

John J. Pruis Hall

NOV

### MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM

Friday, 12 - 1pm

15

Take a midday break with professor emeritus Dr. George Wolfe to experience a form of mindfulness meditation in the galleries.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma](https://bsu.edu/doma) for more information.

NOV

### SATURDAY SPOTLIGHT TOUR

Saturday, 2:30 pm

23

Join a free public tour of works selected by a DOMA gallery guide.

DEC

### MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM

Friday, 12 - 1pm

06

Take a midday break with professor emeritus Dr. George Wolfe to experience a form of mindfulness meditation in the galleries.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma](https://bsu.edu/doma) for more information.

DEC

### HOLIDAY COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, 6-8pm

07

DOMA joins in the annual community holiday festivities with refreshments, children's art activities, and live holiday music.

Visit [bsu.edu/doma](https://bsu.edu/doma) for more information.

DEC

### ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM

Wednesday, 12 noon

11

Explore the E.B. and Bertha C. Ball Center with Associate Director Diane Watters as she walks you through the home and history of a Muncie landmark.

Register at [bsu.edu/doma/alliance](https://bsu.edu/doma/alliance) by December 4.

\$5 program fee; \$25 for luncheon.

E.B. and Bertha C. Ball Center

400 Minnetrista Parkway



Student education assistant Halle Pressler leads a Saturday Spotlight tour

### SCHEDULED HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Oct 5 - 8, **Fall Break**

Nov 27 - Dec 2, **Thanksgiving Break**

Dec 21 - Jan 6, **Winter Break**

### JOIN THE FRIENDS OF DOMA

Join the Friends of DOMA with a minimum contribution of \$25 at [bsu.edu/doma/friends](https://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](https://bsu.edu/doma/alliance).

\$25 for lunch with pre-registration required; \$5 program fee without 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.



Ball State University Singers perform during Holiday Community Open House

# NEW EXHIBITS:

## WOMEN ARTISTS AND EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ARTS

During the summer of 2024, DOMA inaugurated a new installation on the museum's upper floor in the so-called decorative arts corridor, which connects the Ball Brothers Foundation Galleries to the John J. and Angeline Pruis Gallery and the museum's offices. As the museum exited the pandemic period, a generous gift from Sharon and Andrew Seager funded the remodeling of this heavily trafficked exhibition space by Illinois-based Proto Productions. A long hallway and square connecting room now feature two monumental display cases lined with Ultravue® Laminated Glass that is anti-reflective, abrasion resistant, and color neutral. The art objects inside the cases rest on clear glass shelves supported by slender precision-engineered brackets. Internal motion-activated and adjustable LED (Light Emitting Diode) light fixtures illuminate the objects from multiple angles.

The current exhibits in these state-of-the-art display cases are divided into two parts: the case along the hallway presents an eclectic array of nineteenth- and twentieth-century sculpture and

decorative arts exclusively by women artists, while the second case in the square space at the end of the hall focuses on European decorative arts from the Renaissance through Art Nouveau periods (about 1500–1900). Both displays encourage visitors to reconsider common assumptions about the roles of women artists, perceived barriers between the fine and decorative arts, and the significance of Islamic and Asian art for the development of European styles.

The first display spotlights several exquisite small bronzes, including a tender rendering of motherhood by Bessie Potter Vonnoh, a joyous performance from the Ballets Russes by Malvina Hoffman, and a sensitive depiction of a Jersey bull by Anna Hyatt Huntington. The bronzes are anchored by an important study for a monument to women's suffrage by Indiana sculptor Janet Scudder, along with modernist works by Eleanor de Laittre, Lily Ente, and Doris Ceasar. Another tier showcases ceramics designed and/or decorated by women at the American potteries Rookwood and Grueby, as well as the British Doulton





◀ **From top to bottom:**

Bessie Potter Vonnoh, American (1872-1955), *A Study*, about 1898, bronze, cast 1907, Elisabeth Ball Collection, gift of the George and Frances Ball Foundation 1989.032.010.

(the second one, the gold clock) Jacques Nicolas Pierre François Dubuc, attributed, French (active about 1790-1819), *Mantel Clock*, about 1815, gilded brass, iron, and enameled metal, David T. Owsley Collection L2023.003.000.

Ceramics and Dennis Chinaworks. A display nearby presents glazed vessels by women from Newcombe Pottery in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Overbeck Art Pottery in Cambridge City, Indiana. Four master drawings and pastels embellish the hallway across from the display case. Look for the recent loan of a lovely mother and child pastel by American Impressionist Mary Cassatt, a beautiful ballerina with a fan in charcoal and white chalk by Cassatt's mentor Edgar Degas, and two of the museum's signature works on paper: a pastel bouquet of flowers in explosive colors by Odilon Redon and an intimate charcoal portrait of the artist's son by Pierre-Auguste Renoir.

The second part of the corridor highlights European decorative arts, including ceramics that emphasize the connection between Europe, China, and the Islamic world. See glazed earthenware and porcelain made in Italy, France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, as well as French glass by Gallé and Daum, and the Czech Moser Glassworks. This second case is anchored by a stupendous and rare example of a nineteenth-century gilt mantle clock starring the towering figure of George Washington. Made in Paris exclusively for the American market, this clock—unlike other examples in museums across the nation—has a thirteen-step pyramid surmounted by the Eye of Providence, the patriotic symbol on the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States.

-RGL





## NEW STAFF MEMBER MICHAEL DUQUETTE

If you've been to DOMA recently and noticed a new sense of enthusiasm and fashion in the air, it is most likely due to the presence of a new staff member. Michael Duquette recently completed his first year as the museum's Security and Office Manager and continues to make an impact on DOMA in his role. Supervising the student guards, patrolling the galleries, tightening protocols, and ensuring operations run smoothly, he is a natural at motivating others with kindness and humor as well as leading by example as an attentive and considerate colleague. Student guard and visitor assistant Marcus Stach has welcomed this new and personable mentor: "I've greatly enjoyed working with Michael," Stach says. "He treats the guards with respect and understanding, and he's been a great addition to the efficiency and work environment overall."

Before joining DOMA, Michael worked many years in higher education at Columbia College in Chicago as well as in various customer service roles, all while maintaining a vibrant practice as an independent artist.

He studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, managed art galleries, served on artistic boards, and continues to freelance as a visual art instructor and consultant. These experiences have prepared him well for working both in the DOMA galleries as well as behind the scenes. "I enjoy people, art, and the wonderful things that result when bringing people and art together," Duquette says. "My favorite part of this job is the opportunity to develop relationships and create a welcoming atmosphere in a beautiful environment. It combines many of my strengths with my interests."

The important opportunity to mentor students is also well-suited for Duquette, and his mutual appreciation for them is evident. Student guard and visitor assistant Lex Roberts agrees: "Michael is an exceptional leader who we love working with. He is kind and accommodating and one of the best bosses I've ever had. He ensures that our work runs smoothly, and we know we are in good hands."

-RB



◀ David T. Owsley in 2016.



staff + education  
UPDATES

# A LANDMARK GIFT

The David Owsley Museum of Art at Ball State University received a gift of more than \$4.5M from its longtime benefactor and namesake, David T. Owsley, shortly before the celebration of his 95th birthday. The donation establishes the David T. Owsley Fund for the study, care, and promotion of the museum's remarkable collection of more than 11,000 works of art from around the globe.

David T. Owsley is the grandson of Frank C. Ball, president of the Ball Brothers Manufacturing Company, who provided the seed money for the construction of the Fine Arts Building (est. 1935) that houses the museum. Today, DOMA's collection displays art representing all seven continents spanning 5,000 years of human civilization. David T. Owsley has either donated or lent more than 3,000 works of art to the museum; these include paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts by famous European and American artists such as François Boucher, Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, Carlo Maratti, Henry Moore, Hiram Powers, and Richard Serra, in addition to hundreds of works of African, Asian, and Oceanic art.

The new endowment, paired with David T. Owsley's many gifts of art, will have a lasting effect. He has transformed the

former collection of primarily American and European art of regional importance into a modern university art museum of global scope and national prominence. David has now provided the financial means to diversify and expand the collection and further the museum's educational mission.

David T. Owsley spent a portion of his youth in Europe, studied at Burriss Laboratory School in Muncie and Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and attended Harvard University. He subsequently served in the U.S. Air Force before entering the business world. In the early 1960s, he changed direction and earned a master's degree in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. He began a curatorial career as a fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, then as an assistant curator of decorative arts at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. He spent two years as a visiting curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and a decade as curator at the Carnegie Institute (now Carnegie Museum of Art) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In later years, he worked as an independent art consultant in New York and amassed a substantial collection of art from the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands, some of which he donated to the Dallas Museum of Art in addition to Ball State University.

Before celebrating his birthday on August 20, 2024, David T. Owsley said of the gift, "It is my intention to give back to the people of Muncie and extend my family's legacy. I want the students at Ball State to have the same opportunities to see and learn from works of art in Muncie that they would have if they were in a larger city like Chicago or New York."

**-RGL**



**FALL 2024**

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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

[bsu.edu/doma](https://www.bsu.edu/doma)

765-285-5242

Follow DOMA on social media



## New to the Galleries

*This depiction of tender intimacy portrays young Margot clinging to her mother, Reine Lefebvre, assistant cook at the Château de Beaufresne, Cassatt's home by the village of Mesnil-Théribus, north of Paris.*

This sketch is related to a larger finished painting of the same subject titled *Caresse maternelle (Maternal Caress)* now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts. Cassatt enlivened her pastels with bold strokes, rich textures, and bright colors including seafoam, teal, cotton-candy pink, and burnt sienna.

Though born and trained in the United States, Cassatt lived nearly her entire life in France. She was the only American, and one of only three women, to exhibit with the Impressionists. By 1894 she had earned enough money from the sale of her work to purchase a chateau and maintain a staff. **-RGL**