

AW ARTWORDS **SPRING 2025**

**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: EXHIBITIONS, PROGRAM CALENDAR, PROFILES, UPDATES, AND MORE.



ARTWORDS

David Owsley Museum of Art

SERVING EAST CENTRAL INDIANA SINCE 1936

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COVER ART

Philippe Halsman, *Dalí Atomicus* from the *Halsman/Dalí* portfolio, 1948, gelatin silver print, printed 1981, Gift of Marjorie Neikrug, 1989.008.001b © Philippe Halsman Estate 2025.

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MUSEUM STAFF

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Cathy Bretz, *Education Coordinator*
Savannah Calhoun, *Photographer*
Michael Duquette, *Security and Office Manager*
Maureen Nicholson, *Curator of Education*
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Maria VanVreede, *Registrar and Collection Manager*

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Rachel Buckmaster (RB)
Robert G. La France (RGL)
Maureen Nicholson (MN)

DESIGN

Aubrey Smith Creative



◀ Photographer and Guest Curator Ronn Brown and Director Robert La France from the documentary *Ronn Brown: People and Places*, directed by graduate student Colton Hendrix (faculty supervisor Prof. Robert Brookey) © 2024 Ball State University Department of Media and the David Owsley Museum of Art.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

By popular demand, the museum has extended its formidable Fall exhibition, *The Art of Elizabeth Catlett from the Collection of Samella Lewis*, until the end of Black History Month on February 28, 2025. Visitors are deeply moved by the prominent African American artist's sculptures and prints; so much so that Catlett's themes of racial and social justice inspired DOMA's student interns to create a pop-up exhibition of activist art last November. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to familiarize yourself with Catlett's work here in Muncie before the retrospective *Elizabeth Catlett: A Black Revolutionary Artist* opens at the Art Institute of Chicago in late August 2025.

This Spring, DOMA's focus shifts to the art of photography. Now, almost two hundred years since its invention, most people have the power to capture and carry thousands of photographic images on smartphones in their pockets. DOMA invited local photographer Ronn Brown to curate a selection of photographic prints from the collection that draws upon the long history of the medium. The resulting show, *People and Places 1873-2000*, features a variety of techniques from early albumen prints to recent digital images, and raises questions about the nature of portraiture and celebrity. An article in this newsletter explains more about the exhibition's motivations and goals. How grateful and fortunate we are to have dedicated

artists and professionals like Ronn Brown residing in downtown Muncie.

The museum is also proud to offer several exciting programs this Spring. We will kick off the semester with a special DOMA After Hours Anti-Valentine's Day Edition on Thursday, February 13, with music, cash bar, and cheeky activities for the young, amorous, and young-at-heart. A week later, join us for the opening night party for *People and Places 1873-2000* (February 20, free and open to the public). Later in the semester, everyone will have an opportunity to be photographed by Ronn Brown during two Hollywood portrait sessions on March 14 and 15. A younger audience will enjoy creating at Kids Make Art at DOMA (April 5), when families and kids will work with students from the Ball State Art Education program. On April 24, DOMA will host a major Music in the Museum event titled *Vientos y Colores (Winds and Colors)* in honor of a campus visit by contemporary artist Justin Favela and National Hispanic Heritage Month. Also, you can count on DOMA's popular programs, like Mindfulness in the Museum on many Fridays, and Spotlight Tours on several Saturdays. Finally, Art in Bloom returns for its tenth anniversary on the weekend of May 16-18 with more flowers, music, and fun than ever. You won't want to miss it or any of the other events listed on the calendar!

Robert G. La France



PEOPLE AND PLACES 1873-2000:

A SELECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS FROM DOMA'S COLLECTION

Guest Curator: **Ronn Brown** February 20 - May 23, 2025

Museum hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 1:30-4:30 p.m.; closed Sundays, Mondays, during Spring Break (March 1-8), and Commencement (May 3).

▲ From left to right:

Lotte Jacobi, American, born Germany (1896-1990), *Head of a Dancer, Berlin, 1929*, gelatin silver print, Museum purchase, 1991.017.003 © Lotte Jacobi Collection, University of New Hampshire.

Julia Margaret Cameron, British, born India, 1815-1879, *Enid, 1874*, albumen print, Museum purchase 0000.261.000, image in the public domain.

Born in Portland, Indiana, Ronn Brown traces his fascination with photography to his childhood, when he first acquired a 110 pocket camera. He later attended Ball State University and worked at the legendary Jack's Camera Shop. As a young photographer, Brown's attraction to the television and film industry led to a four-day trip to Los Angeles. That short stay launched a highly successful career in Hollywood that lasted for more than twenty years. In February 2020 (just before the pandemic), Brown returned to his roots in Indiana, leaving California with a sense of accomplishment and ready for a new chapter in life.

For the spring of 2025, Brown brings his great energy and decades of experience as a celebrity portrait photographer to bear as a guest curator at the David Owsley Museum of Art. Given full access to the museum's holdings, Brown reviewed hundreds of photographs before choosing more than two dozen prints that appealed directly to his interests. The selection of works both large and small, old and new, reflect Brown's keen eye for glamor, artful posing, and innovative lighting effects that made his reputation as a highly sought-after professional photographer. Fascinated by the human face, Brown picked images

spanning the entire history of photography that represent a range of human expressions and places of great beauty, power, and drama that continue to captivate audiences today.





feb 20 - may 23
EXHIBITION



◀ Lawrence J. Graham, *American (1929-2022), Down Walnut Street: Dreamer, about 1975, photodrawing, Gift of Dr. Bruce and Kathy Graham 2022.010.008.*

Whether albumen or gelatin silver prints, Polaroids, C-prints, inkjets, or digitally manipulated imagery, Brown chose works that showcase the photographer's skill. In his personal practice, he prioritizes the photographer's unlimited ability to control the image and medium. Ronn Brown declares, "there are no rules in photography." Consequently, many of the photographers represented in the show are rule breakers and style setters, like Margaret Bourke-White, Imogen Cunningham, Lotte Jacobi, Philippe Halsman, and John Coplans. The mix also includes some anonymous photographs that blur the perceived boundaries between fine art, commercial, and even amateur photography. Brown's selections not only reflect his personal style and preferred techniques but also represent some of the most impactful photographers and images of the last two centuries.

For many, Brown's choices will raise questions about the medium and its effect on viewers. A few of these questions include: How do light, tone, and texture elicit a visual response in photography?

collaborate in the making of the image? The museum encourages students, visitors, and photographers to begin with these queries and formulate new ones while at the exhibition. Answers will vary, indicating photography's capacity to both reveal and conceal its meanings. Viewers may realize that the photograph, far from being a literal or mirror image of the world, is a highly deceptive and skillfully manipulated form of representation.

The exhibition also features related programs to increase community engagement. Two stand out as unmissable. First, the museum invites all students, faculty, and the public to an opening party to meet photographer Ronn Brown on Thursday, February 20, 2025. Second, DOMA invites visitors to attend one of two Hollywood Portrait sessions held by Brown on March 14 and 15, 2025. On these two days, Brown will demonstrate how to take bold, imaginative photographs with live subjects in highly inventive poses and dress. Students and members of the public will have the opportunity to learn

How do these and other formal elements evoke atmosphere and provoke emotional reactions? How does scale affect a photographic image? Why do viewers react differently to a tiny, intimate portrait as opposed to a face as large as a billboard? How do photographers infuse portraits with personalities? How does a photographer transform an anonymous sitter into a celebrity? How do the

technical skills in operating the camera and lights, as well as have their portraits taken by one of the most fashionable television and film industry photographers of the last few decades. Admission to these events is free. Please refer to the Calendar section of *ARTwords* for details.

People and Places 1873-2000 presents visitors with several special opportunities. Because prolonged exposure to light harms photographic prints, the museum's photographs are often stored safely in the dark and only displayed temporarily. So, for a limited time, this exhibition provides DOMA's audiences with access to treasures usually confined to storage and helps the museum to fulfill its mission to educate Ball State students and the public. Also, by inviting Brown to curate an exhibition, the museum gives visitors a chance to get to know a professional photographer with experience in the film industry. Finally, the show includes a short documentary about Brown's life and art directed, filmed, and edited (including the soundtrack) by students. The video is the fruit of a long-standing collaboration between the museum and the Ball State Department of Media and can be viewed by visiting the exhibition page on our website.

The people of East Central Indiana are fortunate to add another celebrity to the Muncie community, photographer Ronn Brown. DOMA and Brown hope that *People and Places 1873-2000* offers a new generation of student photographers, videographers, and artists in a variety of media—as well as the public—a catalyst for creativity.

-RGL

PROGRAM CALENDAR

FEB

ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM Wednesday, 12 pm

05

Gabriel Tait, associate professor in the School of Journalism and Strategic Communication, shares how the immersive learning program "Sight Beyond My Sight" provides insight about issues important to a community through photography.

Register at bsu.edu/doma/alliance by January 29. \$25 for Alliance members and guests. Alumni Center, 2800 W. Bethel Avenue

FEB

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM Friday, 12 - 1 pm

07

Take a midday break with Professor Emeritus Dr. George Wolfe to experience meditation in the galleries.

Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

FEB

KIDS MAKE ART: SPECIAL WORKSHOP Wednesday, 10 - 11:30 am

12

Children will explore the collection by learning about a focus artwork and its artist and then make their own creative art project in response.

For children in grades 4 through 8. Free with registration. Visit bsu.edu/doma to register by February 7.

FEB

DOMA AFTER HOURS Thursday, 5 - 8 pm

13

This evening event invites community members to embrace their inner cynic with an "Anti-Valentine's Day" celebration including music, a cash bar, art-making activities, photo booth, and a live storytelling competition.

Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

FEB

EDUCATOR EXHIBITION OVERVIEW Thursday, 4 pm

20

Ball State faculty and area schoolteachers are invited to a walk-through of *People and Places 1873-2000: A Selection of Photographs from DOMA's Collection* with guest curator Ronn Brown and DOMA director Dr. Robert La France.

FEB

PEOPLE AND PLACES 1873-2000: A SELECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS FROM DOMA'S COLLECTION Thursday

20

Opening Reception: 5 - 7 pm

Exhibition opens to the public. Enjoy live music, a gallery talk, and refreshments.

Visit bsu.edu/doma for information.

FEB

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM Friday, 12 - 1 pm

21

Take a midday break with Professor Emeritus Dr. George Wolfe to experience meditation in the galleries.

Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

FEB

SATURDAY SPOTLIGHT TOUR Saturday, 2:30 pm

22

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

FEB

KIDS MAKE ART: SPECIAL WORKSHOP Wednesday, 10 - 11:30 am

26

Children will explore the collection by learning about a focus artwork and its artist and then make their own creative art project in response.

For children in grades 4 through 8. Free with registration. Visit bsu.edu/doma to register by February 21.

FEB

PUBLIC DROP-IN TOUR: THE ART OF ELIZABETH CATLETT Friday, 4 - 5 pm

28

Education assistant Mya Whitis will lead an interactive tour of *The Art of Elizabeth Catlett* on the final day of the exhibition.

EXTENDED EXHIBITION CLOSES:

THE ART OF ELIZABETH CATLETT FROM THE COLLECTION OF SAMELLA LEWIS

Friday

MAR

ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM Wednesday, 12 pm

05

Explore *People and Places* at DOMA with guest curator Ronn Brown.

Register at bsu.edu/doma/alliance by February 26. \$25 for Alliance members and guests. DOMA

MAR

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM Friday, 12 - 1 pm

14

Take a midday break with Professor Emeritus Dr. George Wolfe to experience meditation in the galleries.

Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

MAR

HOLLYWOOD PORTRAITS: PHOTOSHOOT WITH RONN BROWN Friday, 2 - 4 pm Saturday, 2 - 4 pm

14 - 15

Step into the spotlight as photographer Ronn Brown captures your portrait in the style of film and television stars.

Participants will receive a digital copy of their photo.

SPRING 2025



program CALENDAR

MAR

KIDS MAKE ART: SPECIAL WORKSHOP Wednesday, 10 - 11:30 am

19

Children will explore the collection by learning about a focus artwork and its artist and then make their own creative art project in response.

For children in grades 4 through 8. Free with registration. Visit bsu.edu/doma to register by March 14.

MAR

SATURDAY SPOTLIGHT TOUR Saturday, 2:30 pm

22

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

MAR

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM Friday, 12 - 1 pm

28

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

APR

KIDS MAKE ART AT DOMA Saturday, 1:30 - 4 pm

05

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.
Children must be accompanied by an adult.

APR

ALLIANCE LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM Wednesday, 12 pm

09

Dr. Natalie Phillips presents research from her latest book project on artist Jean-Michel Basquiat and how he used his art to combat racism.
Register at bsu.edu/doma/alliance by April 2. \$25 for Alliance members and guests. Alumni Center, 2800 W. Bethel Avenue

APR

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM Friday, 12 - 1 pm

11

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

APR

WRITING IN THE GALLERIES: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PROSE Saturday, 2 - 4 pm

12

Ball State creative writers will guide visitors through a generative writing workshop inspired by DOMA's special exhibition *People and Places*.
Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information.

APR

PUBLIC DROP-IN TOUR: PEOPLE AND PLACES

18

Friday, 4 - 5 pm
Join a DOMA gallery guide for a tour of the special exhibition.

APR

SATURDAY SPOTLIGHT TOUR Saturday, 2:30 pm

19

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

APR

MUSIC IN THE MUSEUM: VIENTOS Y COLORES (WINDS AND COLORS) Thursday, 5:30 - 7 pm

24

Faculty and students from the School of Music, Honors College, the Delaware County community, and the Writing Workshop at DOMA collaborate to perform works of Latin American music to celebrate the Arts Alive presentation of Justin Favela and National Hispanic Heritage Month.

APR

MINDFULNESS IN THE MUSEUM Friday, 12 - 1 pm

25

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

MAY

ART IN BLOOM Friday, 5 - 7 pm Preview Party

16 -
18

Saturday, 1 - 5 pm
Open House
Sunday, 1 - 5 pm
Open House

Enjoy a celebration of springtime with floral interpretations of works of art – plus refreshments, art-making activities, music, demonstrations, and more.
Visit bsu.edu/doma for more information about this free community event.

EXHIBITION CLOSURES:

PEOPLE AND PLACES
Friday, May 23

SCHEDULED MUSEUM CLOSINGS

March 1-10, **Spring Break**

May 3, **Commencement**

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF DOMA

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

JOIN THE DOMA ALLIANCE

Suggested 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.

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:** Education Coordinator Cathy Bretz with students from South View Elementary School in the Sculpture Court.

BOTTOM: Gallery Guide and student assistant Halle Pressler with students from Longfellow Elementary School and a print by contemporary artist Swoon (born 1977).

SMART 2025

DOMA is gearing up for another exciting year of School Museum Art Readiness Tours (SMART) with Muncie Community Schools 5th grade learners.

The SMART program is more than just a field trip. Initially funded by grants from the Ball Brothers Foundation, benefactors Bea and Lynn Sousa will support the program for the next 5 years. Their generosity helps to eliminate financial barriers for Muncie's elementary schools to access free cultural resources in the community. SMART provides interdisciplinary standards-based curriculum to make meaningful learning connections. During their time in DOMA's galleries, students practice object-based learning, a pedagogical approach that uses objects to facilitate deep learning. Looking at an object for the first time helps students build reasoning skills, provide evidence, and make concepts accessible to all types of learners.

This year, Muncie Community Schools 5th-grade students are introduced to various roles within the museum. The Indiana State Visual Arts Standards for 5th grade addressed by the SMART program include:

- VA:Pr4.1.5(a): Define the roles and responsibilities of a curator, explaining the skills and knowledge needed in preserving, maintaining, and presenting objects, artifacts, and artwork.

- VA:Pr6.1.5(a): Cite evidence about how an exhibition in a museum or other venue presents ideas and provides information about a specific concept or topic.

Before their trip to DOMA, students learn about museum professions through filmed staff interviews. The videos highlight important duties of individual positions and what skills and knowledge are required for the job. They also learn how curators use themes and categories while developing exhibitions.

While at the museum, students engage in game-based learning while they help the curator solve a mystery by finding specific objects and information found in labels. Gallery Guides assist them with the process of finding works of art and encourage deeper thinking. Students' time in the galleries focuses on the power of observation, discovery, collaboration, and problem solving. With thanks to the Sousas and valuable input from MCS art educators, we look forward to providing art enrichment opportunities for years to come.

-MN

A LASTING GIFT

Bea and Lynn Sousa have shared a love of learning since meeting on a school bus in the Central Valley of California in 1960. Many years later, after launching careers as professional educators, the two would land in Muncie, where Lynn joined the Ball State Department of Chemistry and Bea commuted to Noblesville, where she taught 6th grade until retiring in 2000.

During Lynn's tenure in the Cooper Science building, he frequently wandered over to DOMA seeking peace and quiet in the galleries. In early 2013, during the museum's most recent expansion, Bea became a volunteer docent. The opportunity allowed her to deepen her knowledge of art history while exercising her teaching skills with museum visitors of all ages. Over time the couple, who believe "art enriches a community," began attending museum programs and lectures, joined DOMA's Art Alliance, and became steadfast Art in Bloom sponsors.

As a docent Bea became involved in the SMART program, a partnership with Muncie Community Schools through which all 5th-grade students visit campus for a themed tour connected to classroom curriculum. The field trip is centered around the needs of students and teachers and includes bus transportation, lunch, and visits to other venues on campus. Recognizing the



value of exposing Muncie youth to the university environment and DOMA's extensive collection, the Sousas decided to provide support to fund the program for several years.

When asked what they want others to know about the museum, Lynn noted that, regardless of your interests, you will find something that speaks to you – there is something for everyone. Bea added "The world opens when you come to DOMA." We agree and are most grateful to the Sousas for their generosity.

-CB



Are you curious to hear behind-the-scenes updates about DOMA? Interested in connecting with others who value art in our community? The David Owsley Museum of Art Alliance might be for you! This group was formed nearly 50 years ago to provide an opportunity for members of the public to engage with the museum's staff, collection, exhibitions, and programs. Fronted by elected officers and supported by DOMA staff members Maureen Nicholson and Cathy Bretz, the group meets regularly throughout the year to enjoy lunchtime conversations, hear from selected speakers, presenters, scholars, and artists, and discuss issues affecting the museum world and DOMA.

ART ALLIANCE

Members also occasionally volunteer at museum events and programs and help to spread the word about DOMA within their own networks. The Alliance also assists in increasing the museum's revenues for the acquisition of works of art, conservation, and other projects. At the September 2024 meeting, the group presented Director Robert La France with a check for the museum in honor of his 10th anniversary at DOMA!

With a suggested annual contribution of \$50 or more, Alliance members are first in the loop for meetings (typically four in the fall and three in the spring) and participate in lively discussions with museum staff, guests, and each other. Meeting fees are currently \$25 for each program and are essential for establishing cost estimates, covering catering expenses, and providing speaker support. For more information – or to join the Alliance or attend a program as a guest – visit bsu.edu/doma/alliance or contact Cathy Bretz. We'd love to have you!

-RB



staff + education
UPDATES

DOMA AFTER HOURS



Join us on February 13 for DOMA After Hours: Anti-Valentine's Day Edition at DOMA! This playful and rebellious event turns Valentine's Day on its head with a celebration of self-love and creative expression. Enjoy an evening filled with music, refreshments, and art-making activities that encourage you to explore themes of freedom, exploration, and self-discovery.

Get inspired by the museum's exhibits as you craft your own artwork, or join the live storytelling competition, where participants share their most memorable (or disastrous) love stories. Whether you're here to enjoy the beats, make new friends, or create something uniquely yours, this event promises a night of fun, laughter, and connection.

Escape the traditional romantic clichés and embrace a night of artistic rebellion at DOMA After Hours. Whether you're single, or not, or somewhere in between, there's no better place to



celebrate Anti-Valentine's Day! By attending, you're helping us to make DOMA a thriving, central gathering place for our community around art, history, ideas, and culture.

-MN

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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

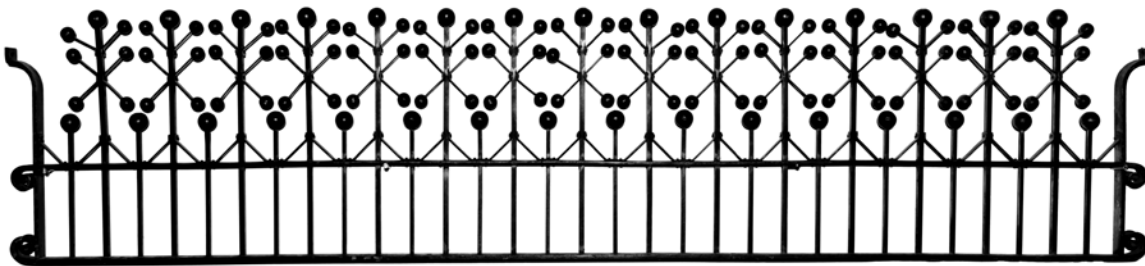
2021 W. Riverside Avenue

Muncie, IN 47306

bsu.edu/doma

765-285-5242

Follow DOMA on social media



◀ Elevator Transom from the Chicago Stock Exchange Building, 1893

Designers: Louis Sullivan, American (1856-1924) and Dankmar Adler, American, born Denmark (1844-1900)

Manufacturer: Winslow Brothers Company, Chicago, IL (1887-1921)

iron, cast and forged

Purchase: Andrew Seager Art Fund 2024.002.000

New to the Galleries

Elevator banks in the Chicago Stock Exchange Building (demolished in 1972) protected passengers with wrought iron cages. The decorative transom above the doors supplied ventilation and enhanced visual appeal.

Adler & Sullivan formed a partnership from 1883 to 1924; Sullivan defined the architectural design, while Adler focused on engineering. Sullivan, called the father of skyscrapers, blended organic and geometric forms in the Art Nouveau style.

Germinating seeds and pods inspired this metal ornamentation and reflects the economic significance of midwestern agriculture.

-Elizabeth Hahn '24 and RGL