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Opened in July 2014, the Clark Center provides dramatic space for exhibitions, lectures, scholarly events, dining, and family programs. The reflecting pools on the southern side are bordered by the Fernández Terrace, where visitors relax and take in the views of the surrounding Berkshire landscape. In this photo, noted architectural photographer Richard Pare captures the terrace and pools on a foggy autumn morning. Photo: © Richard Pare



Journal of the Clark, Volume 15

*Journal of the Clark Art Institute* (ISSN 1534-6323) is published annually by the Clark Art Institute, 225 South Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267, and is distributed free of charge to Friends of the Clark. To become a member, call 413 458 0425, or e-mail [membership@clarkart.edu](mailto:membership@clarkart.edu). Individual copies and back issues may be purchased from the Clark Museum Store or online at [www.clarkart.edu](http://www.clarkart.edu).

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Photography Credits: Michael Agee: pp. 32–33, 35 (*bottom*), 36–37, 54, 56, 57 (*top*), 58–59; Tucker Bair: pp. 4, 14–15, 38–53; Jean-Gilles Berizzi: p. 57 (*bottom*); Jeff Goldberg/Esto: p. 1, 34–35 (*top*); Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY: pp. 16–17. HIP/Art Resource, NY: p. 20. © Richard Pare: cover and inside cover

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## VOLUME 15

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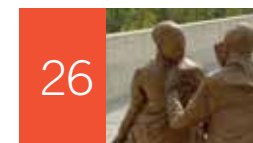
### Manton Past, Manton Future

The Clark's Manton Research Center is undergoing a major renovation, recalibrating its capacity and reinforcing its original purpose.



### *Van Gogh and Nature* at the Clark

An inside look at the development of this summer's major exhibition and the ideas behind it.



### Considering the Modern, Engaging the Contemporary

Richard Rand and David Breslin discuss the Clark's ongoing commitment to modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, commissions, and symposia.



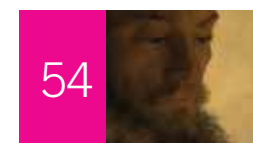
### Art History and Emergency

"Art History and Emergency," the inaugural conference in the Clark Center's West Pavilion, assessed art history's roles and responsibilities with regard to the "humanities crisis."



### The Clark Inside Out

Photographer Tucker Bair takes us behind the scenes with a photo essay documenting usually hidden areas of the Clark.



### Clark News

An exciting discovery sheds new light on a Clark painting, and a generous grant brings a bounty of books to the library's online collections.



# THE CLARK

The Clark marks its sixtieth anniversary in May 2015, and as we prepare for a year of celebrations to commemorate this milestone, we do so energized by having a sense of this moment as both a continuation and a culmination. The Institute has grown considerably—both physically and programmatically—from the seeds that Sterling and Francine Clark planted in 1955. Its growth has been carefully nurtured, remaining true to our founders' intent by continually adapting, evolving, and ensuring that the Institute is a vibrant center for exploring and expanding the public understanding of art.

In July 2014, we marked a significant step in that evolutionary process when we opened our new campus after more than a decade of planning and construction. In the months since the opening, we have welcomed visitors from around the world who have delighted in experiencing the new campus, reconnecting with our collection, and discovering our special exhibitions and scholarly programs. The combined efforts of our architectural team—Tadao Ando Architect and Associates, Selldorf Architects, Reed Hilderbrand, and Gensler—have created a distinctive setting that enriches and inspires.

Public and critical acclaim for the “new” Clark provided the best possible affirmation of the expansive potential of these new facilities. The recent selection of the Clark as the 2014

“Museum Opening of the Year” by the London-based international arts magazine *Apollo* as well as similar design accolades from the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Architect's Newspaper* are testament to the success of our undertaking and to the potential for our future.

With renovation of the Manton Research Center nearly complete, we are looking forward to this spring's opening of the facility that is the home and heart of our Research and Academic Program. This edition of the *Journal of the Clark* provides an opportunity to explore the Manton Research Center and the plans for its future and to learn about the special role our Research and Academic Program plays as a convener and catalyst for important scholarly activity in the field.

This issue also looks forward to the exciting *Van Gogh and Nature* exhibition that we will open on June 14. Presenting new scholarly consideration of one of the world's most famous artists, this show will invite visitors to look beyond popular conceptions about Van Gogh and explore the deep fascination with the natural world that was so central to his practice. The opportunity to present these magnificent works in our new galleries promises to be one of the highlights of our year.

While this has been a time of unprecedented activity and accomplishment for the Clark, we share a real sense that the best is yet to come.

Michael Conforti  
Director

A black and white architectural rendering of a large, modern building complex. The building features a central courtyard with several trees. The architecture is characterized by a grid-like structure with large, open spaces. The rendering is done in a sketchy, artistic style. The title 'Manton Past, Manton Future' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

# Manton Past, Manton Future

by Thomas J. Loughman

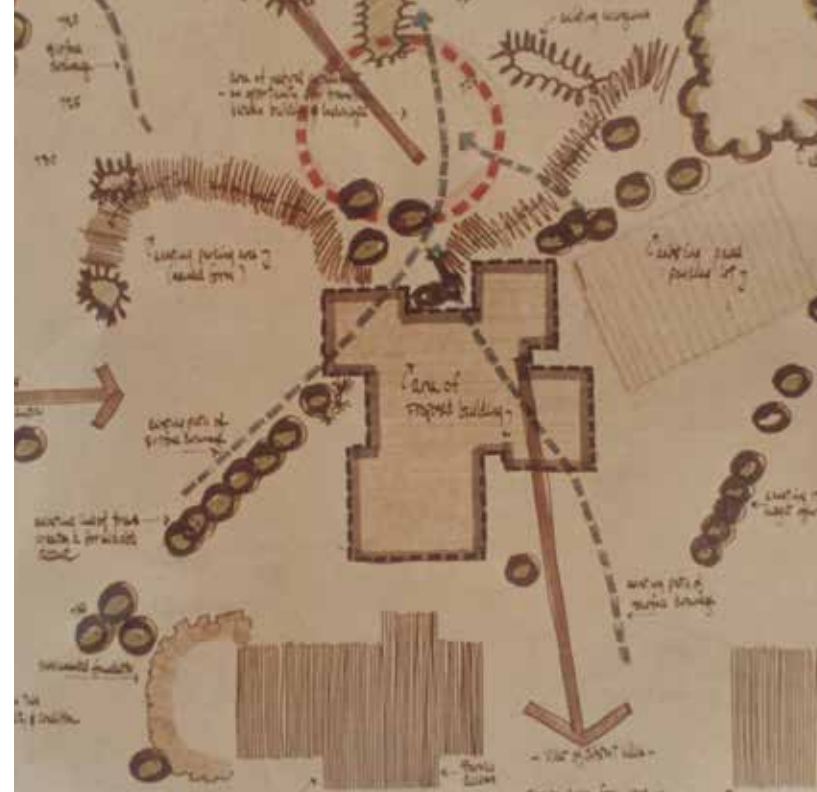
The Clark's Manton Research Center is undergoing a major renovation, recalibrating its capacity and reinforcing its original purpose.

In the late 1960s, the Clark approached The Architects Collaborative (TAC), the Cambridge, Massachusetts, architectural firm founded by Walter Gropius (1883–1969) and Norman Fletcher (1917–2007), to conceive and design a new structure for the campus. Collaborating with the Italian-born modern architect Pietro Belluschi (1899–1994), TAC produced numerous designs, drawings, plans, descriptions, and other schemata, which are now housed in the Clark’s archives, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Rotch Architectural Library, and the MIT Museum, for the Clark’s building now known as the Manton Research Center.

Originally imagined as an addition to the then ten-year-old museum, the building would eventually expand and enrich the experience of works of art at the Clark, enable the growth of a nascent library and research program, and bring a state-of-the-art concert hall to Williamstown. Renovations now afoot will reiterate an original vision for the building and prepare it for its continued programmatic life as the home for research, teaching, and public programs at the Clark.

Sited just south of the original museum structure, this building was designed to include a print study room and gallery, a large auditorium tuned for prime acoustics and envisioned for chamber music concerts,

**Previous page:** Elevation study for the Manton Research Center drawn by The Architects Collaborative (TAC), August 10, 1967.  
**Top:** Preliminary site analysis by TAC. The large arrows pointing to and from the building describe TAC’s mission to keep in mind the site’s natural beauty: they show the building’s most beautiful views.  
**Bottom:** Architectural drawing of northwest stairwell. At first, exterior granite was to continue inside along the walls and floor, but the cost was too high, so the architects opted for sand-finished plaster walls and bluestone paving. TAC partner Norman Fletcher found this solution to evoke a lighter, more delicate feeling.



Scale model of the Manton Research Center, showing the original Museum Building at upper right and the nonextant mechanical services building at upper left. Extensive landscape work was undertaken before the foundation of the Manton building was laid; parking lots had to be moved so that the building could occupy the perfect place on the Clark’s campus.

a gallery for silver, and a soaring central atrium labeled on the plans as the “sculpture court.” But the greatest expenditure of space was for a major four-level research library with offices at its periphery.

Beginning in 1966, the design process underwent several years of development, during which the architects explored different configurations. Belluschi—newly retired from his post as dean of the School of Architecture at MIT—was appointed to the project and developed the plans with Fletcher and several TAC associates, particularly John Hayes, Len Notkin, and Jack Wyman. Talcott Banks, president of the Clark board, and treasurer Eugene W. Goodwillie formed a building committee to advise the Clark’s third director, George Heard Hamilton.

In one of the earliest surviving documents associated with the project—a presentation binder dated May 14, 1966—the architects presented six schemes, labeled “A” through “F,” for possible development. These preliminary designs paired draft site plans with rudimentary models to demonstrate the overall massing of each scheme. Five of the schemes called for connecting the new structure to the original Museum Building (designed by Long Island architect Daniel Perry and completed in 1955), either on grade or via an elevated bridge. All the designs arranged the major elements—galleries, auditorium, and library—around a courtyard or multiple courtyards. While the original, rectangular building was illuminated by skylights and large, regular perimeter windows, the new idea was to

construct a multifaceted façade with a rhythmic play of windows along expanses of patterned granite walls.

A second presentation binder, prepared around the time of the building's opening in 1973, documents the evolving design process and key decisions, providing both a statement of the guiding principles of the architects and client as well as a window onto several critical moments in the design process.

The Clark leadership was steadfast in their reverence for the 1955 building and harbored a desire to maintain its integrity. One passage from the account reflects this with particular clarity:

*First of all, the Trustees requested that every effort be made to respect the importance of the existing building and the site. They felt strongly that the existing building should not be dominated by its new addition, but retain its importance architecturally and symbolically. TAC-Belluschi did agree to do this, and by placing the new building beside the original one [and] making it a darker gray—granite rather than marble—they hoped to retain the symbolic importance of the first building without subjugating the new one to it.*

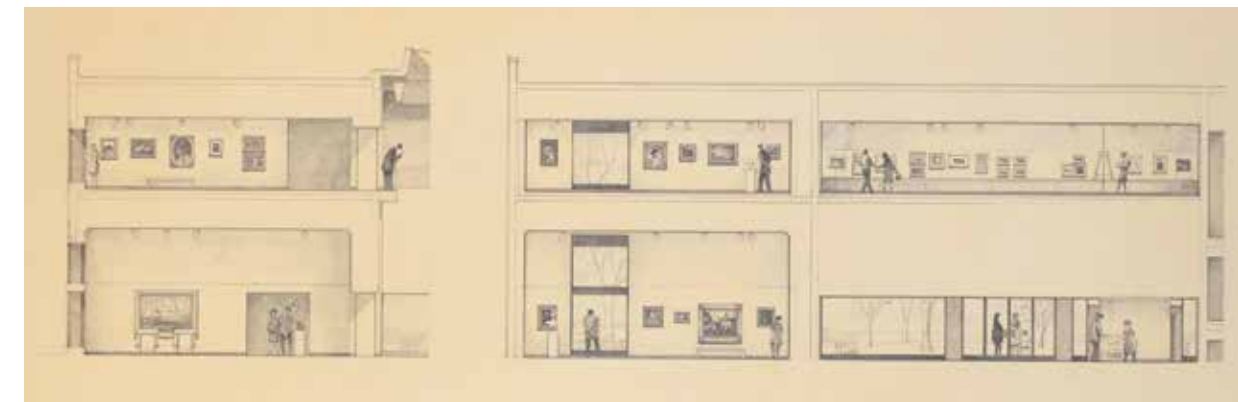
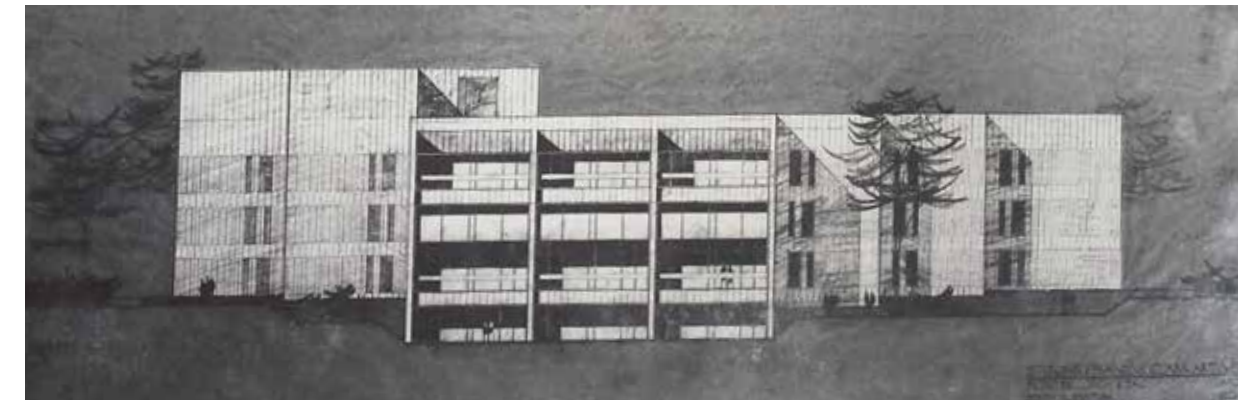
Meanwhile, the architects worked diligently to connect the interior spaces with the surrounding landscape and to harness what they revered as the “life-giving” quality of natural light. The report continues:

*To take advantage of the beauty of the site, the form of the building among the trees*



**Above:** Architectural models were built to study the effects of natural light in the building. This model shows the ceiling coffers in the model that were fully articulated and could be rotated on the ceiling grid upon which they rested. The model allowed architects to test different directions of light for the galleries. The final choice was a northern skylight orientation, which is shown in this picture. **Top right:** TAC elevation study, August 10, 1967. **Bottom right:** Gallery section-elevation.

*creates new outdoor sculpture courts and gardens, and large-scale windows and large areas of glass provide views across the land to the hills. There is a view in at least one direction from every public space except the auditorium, thus allowing the seasons and the weather to affect the mood and the light within the building. For while some other museum clients prefer a constant artificial light in their galleries, at [the] Clark the Trustees strongly agreed with the architects' preference for the accidental effects of light that come from different kinds of spaces and preferred the idea of changing natural light which can create patterns of sunlight across the floor.*

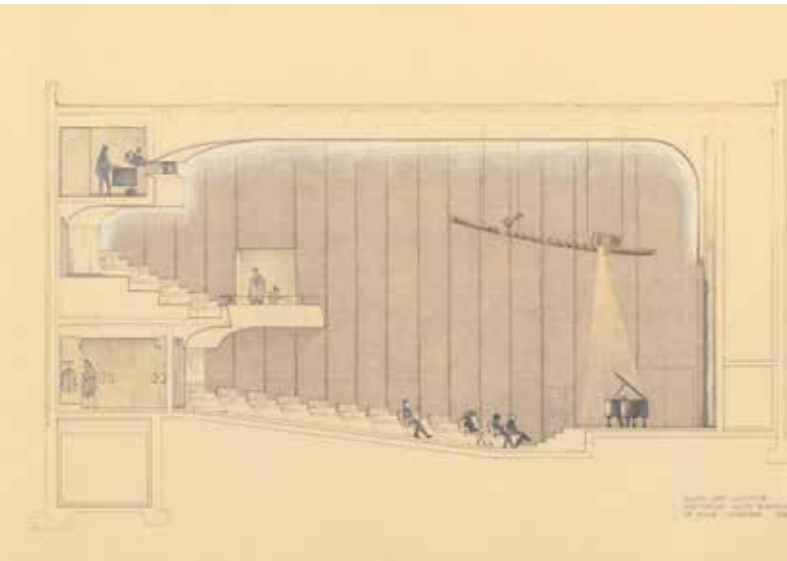


The report further invokes Walter Gropius's ideas about natural light, quoting from statements made a decade earlier in a 1957 symposium on museum architecture at Harvard University's Fogg Museum:

*A human being needs frequently changing impressions in order to keep his receptivity in a state of alertness. . . . Change and surprise are the essence of enhancing the visitor's alertness. . . . Not only will a glance through a window on the outside help to neutralize the visitor's mind, compelling him to adapt his eye to different distances, which prepares him for new impressions, but a daylight window offers also the inestimable factor of change in illumination as a result of a change in the weather.*

The overall scheme was settled upon by late 1966, and attention turned to the articulation of the building and its landscaped perimeter. Models were built to study the effects of light within the central atrium through the seasons, and the coffered ceiling was modified for optimal lighting. The patterning of the exterior stonework was also designed and redesigned through the following year, with the architects and client ultimately settling upon long vertical slabs of Dakota Red granite quarried in Minnesota, with a more slender course of masonry for the top story. Curves were used in galleries, stairwells, and even the interiors of the elevator cars in an attempt to give the building a warm and elegant feel.





It was the design of the auditorium, however, that received the greatest degree of attention. To create an optimal space for the enjoyment of chamber concerts, films, and lectures, the Clark contracted the acoustic design firm Bolt, Beranek, and Newman (BBN)—the same acoustic designers of the United Nations’ Assembly Hall, Tanglewood’s Koussevitzky Music Shed, and Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall. BBN created a system of sound reflectors and dampening curtains that enable the modulation of reverberation: less absorption for live music, a medium amount for the spoken voice, and maximum sound absorption for films and recorded music. The placement of seats, arrangement of perimeter walls, and material coverage of all surfaces would make for a high-functioning hall that remains on par with today’s world standards.

In 1973, a grand opening celebrated the new structure and commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the original Museum Building. Almost immediately, the galleries were tested with new projects that included the commission of a site-specific work by conceptual artist Robert Morris, a Helen Frankenthaler retrospective, and a series of installations showcasing the ever-growing works on paper collection. The library, designed to house seventy to one hundred thousand volumes, now comprises more than two hundred and fifty thousand books. The Clark/Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art, envisioned by Professor Hamilton, was

**Left:** Drawings of the auditorium, November 1968. The center drawing shows the “cloud” reflector for direct sound reflection and the diffusive side walls, broken into sections at four-foot intervals that slope toward the stage.

Design concept for the Manton atrium reading room in the building’s former lobby.



successfully launched and has now graduated forty-one classes. Modifications to the building over the years, particularly a major renovation in 1996–98, enhanced the library and special exhibition galleries and created a small café.

In 2006, architect Annabelle Selldorf was commissioned to renovate the Manton Research Center along with the original Museum Building. Selldorf's design for the Manton building reinforces its purpose as a center for research and academic activities. Renovations include the creation of the Manton Study Center for Works on Paper to provide greater access to the Clark's collection of prints, drawings, and photographs; a public reading room with a revitalized bookshop, information area, and coffee bar; and a gallery for the exhibition of prints, drawings, and photographs. On the second floor, in the former special exhibitions galleries, the American decorative arts collections that have been built in the decades since the building's construction—foremost the Elizabeth and Morris Burrows collection of American silver and the Albert and June Lauzon Collection of Early American Blown Glass—will find newly refreshed quarters.

As the Clark's architecture continues to evolve, the museum has transformed its profile into a dynamic, multifaceted arts institution with global reach and significance. Starting as a private collection made public, the Clark is now home to a distinguished center for research, critical discussion, and higher education in the visual arts, as well as a growing collection of extraordinary artworks, critically acclaimed special exhibitions, and a series of popular and engaging public education programs.



Above: The Manton Research Center seen from the south.

The unifying feature of the Clark's 2014 landscape design is a prominent reflecting pool that links the Manton Research Center and surrounding buildings with each other and with the natural setting. For its first four decades, that site hosted the Clark's physical plant and

main parking lot; it has been transformed into a grand plaza with views of the Museum Building, Manton Research Center, and Stone Hill and allows pedestrian access to the Manton building. In an architectural gesture quite fitting to the situation, Tadao Ando's ultimate design paid

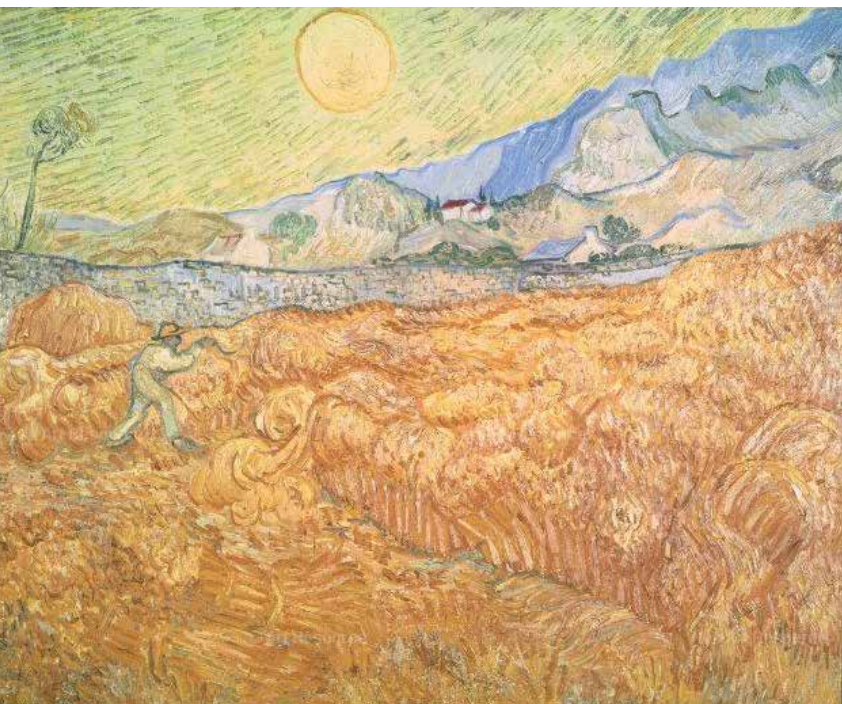
homage to the TAC-Belluschi building, cladding select walls of the Clark Center (which opened in July 2014) and its landscape elements in Dakota Red granite quarried from the same Minnesota vein selected by Fletcher, Belluschi, and the Clark leadership in the late 1960s. ■



# Van Gogh and Nature at the Clark

by Dana Pilson

An inside look at the development  
of this summer's major exhibition  
and the ideas behind it.



“Keep up your love of nature, for that is the right way to understand art better & better. Painters understand nature & love her & teach us to see.”

—*Vincent van Gogh, writing to his brother Theo, January 1874*

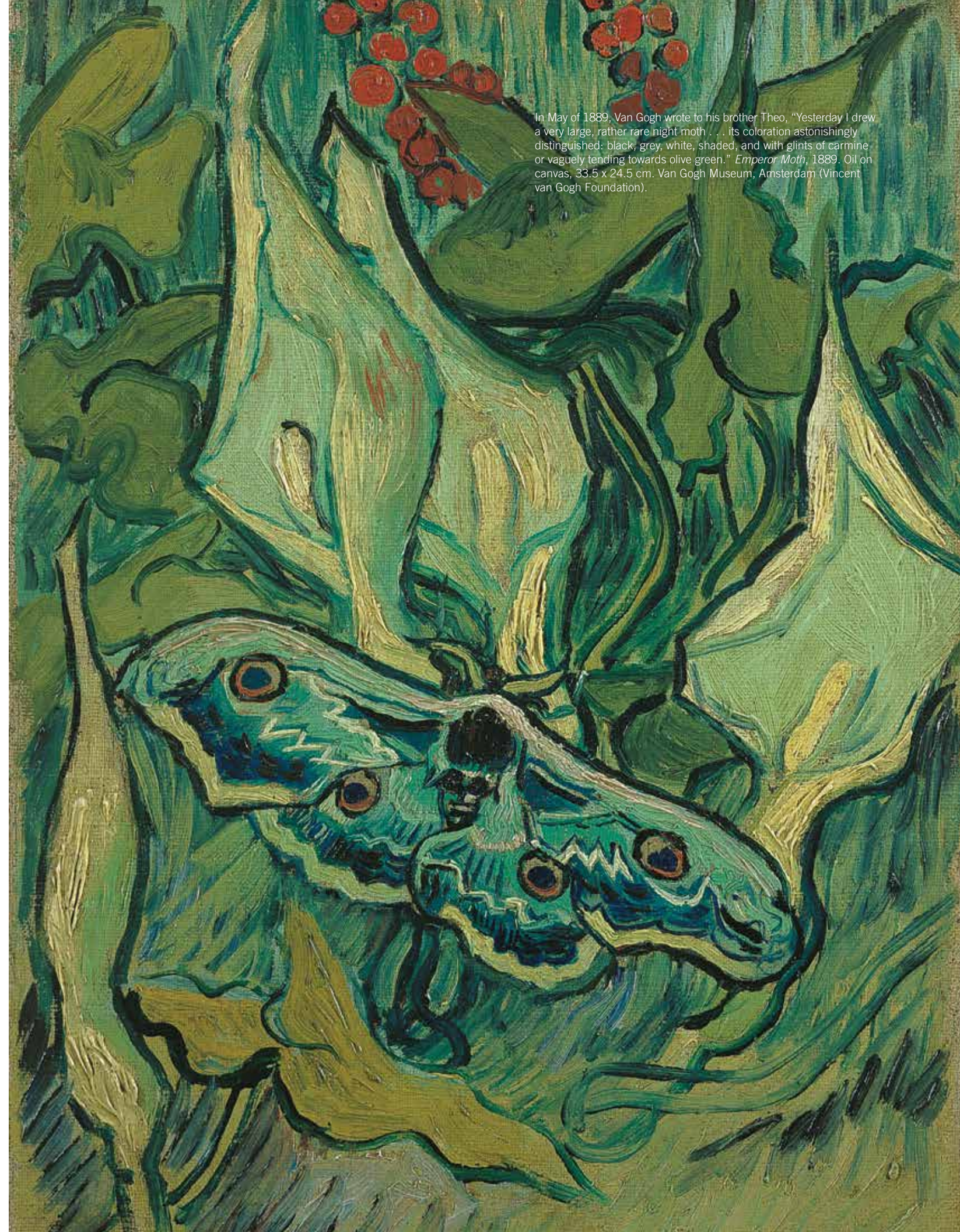
The Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), painter of starry nights, darkened cafés, haunting portraits, and harrowing self-portraits, was also inspired by brilliantly colored flowers, the vibrancy of wheat fields and olive tree orchards, placid tree-lined lanes, towering cypresses, and expansive mountain views. Van Gogh’s overriding interest in the natural world will be explored in a new exhibition at the Clark opening in June 2015.

In planning since 2010, this summer’s revelatory exhibition *Van Gogh and Nature* will bring together fifty paintings and drawings from museum collections in the United States and Europe to be shown in the special exhibition galleries of the Clark Center, completed in July 2014. Two eminent Van Gogh scholars, Chris Stolwijk (former curator at the Van Gogh Museum, currently director of the Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague) and Sjraar van Heugten (former head of collections of the Van Gogh Museum), joined the Clark’s curator-at-large Richard Kendall to develop this exhibition. Together, they have spent the past several years thinking, researching, and writing about Van Gogh’s relationship with the natural world as they worked on this exciting project.

A number of scholars and curators have published books and staged exhibitions about Vincent van Gogh. What more can be made new? To this question, Richard Kendall replies, “Many have hinted at the artist’s philosophical and artistic explorations of the natural world, but few have tackled this area head on.” Kendall, Stolwijk, and Van Heugten are renowned experts on Van Gogh,

**Previous page:** Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853–1890), *Mountain Landscapes Seen across the Walls; Green Field*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 70.5 x 88.5 cm. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

**Top left:** Van Gogh painted the view outside his room at the Saint-Rémy asylum in the spring, summer, and fall, recording changing colors, various degrees of light, and the simple activity of a wheat reaper. *The Wheatfield behind Saint Paul’s Hospital with a Reaper*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 59.5 x 72.5 cm. Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany.



In May of 1889, Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo, “Yesterday I drew a very large, rather rare night moth . . . its coloration astonishingly distinguished: black, grey, white, shaded, and with glints of carmine or vaguely tending towards olive green.” *Emperor Moth*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 33.5 x 24.5 cm. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation).

with myriad exhibitions, studies, and publications between them, including *Van Gogh's Van Goghs*, and *Van Gogh's Imaginary Museum: Exploring the Artist's Inner World*. For this new project, the scholars have studied the theme of nature in Van Gogh's writing, letters, and art, and this will be the first exhibition to bring to light the artist's interest in trees, plants, the changing landscape, and the occasional specimen from the insect world. The accompanying book will offer an in-depth study of the importance of nature in Van Gogh's art, from his youth in Holland to his mature artistic engagement with the landscape of France's Provence region.

When Richard Kendall approached Clark director Michael Conforti with the idea of an exhibition

titled *Van Gogh and Nature*, the director's eyes lit up. The Clark has long explored relationships between great art and unspoiled nature. The new Clark Center embraces nature and its many temperaments: reflecting pools shimmer in sunlight or reflect a slate-gray sky; the Lunder Center at Stone Hill beckons hikers as autumn leaves turn vibrant shades of yellow, orange, and crimson; and the woodland trails offer discoveries around every turn, whatever the season. The significance of mounting this exhibition at the Clark, rather than at an urban museum within the man-made confines of a city environment, is not lost on the curators. Museumgoers will be able to exit the galleries and take their own journey into a natural landscape filled with many of the same wonders that inspired Van Gogh: crooked trees, winding paths, mountain vistas, and a variety of plant and animal life that abound in the Clark's natural setting.

The three curators have met several times, crossing the Atlantic to refine the exhibition checklist, share their discoveries, and discuss prominent themes. Each curator brings an invaluable area of expertise to the table: Kendall is a specialist in late nineteenth-century European art; Stolwijk led the Van Gogh Museum's scientific research project that studied Van Gogh's studio practices; and Van Heugten has contributed to three volumes of the four-volume catalogue of Van Gogh's drawings in the Van Gogh Museum. Over the course of four years,



**Above:** In 1882 Van Gogh's father became a pastor in the Dutch town of Nuenen, and the family lived at the vicarage there. Van Gogh's images of the parsonage garden in the fall and winter are often gloomy and dark, with gnarled trees and huddled figures. *Parsonage Garden (Winter Garden)*, 1884. Pencil, pen, and brown ink (originally black), 39 x 53 cm. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation).

the curators have assembled a group of exemplary works that will chronologically and thematically map out the development of Van Gogh's growing interest in and knowledge of the changing natural world.

The first section of the exhibition focuses on Van Gogh's youth in rural Holland,

where he was surrounded by a flat landscape populated with trees, flowers, and birds that would feature prominently in his early art. One of Van Gogh's earliest surviving drawings from this period depicts a murky, gray swamp. Titled *Parsonage Garden (Winter Garden)*, the piece includes leafless, gnarled trees and one small, robed figure, dwarfed by nature. Van Gogh's father was a pastor who preached that "nature is God's handiwork." For a time,



**Above:** *Lane with Poplars*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 78 x 97.5 cm. Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Van Gogh aspired to join the clergy, and he often pondered the interrelationship between nature, religion, and art. In 1876 he wrote to his brother Theo, “Feeling, even a fine feeling, for the beauties of nature isn’t the same as religious feeling, although I believe that the two are closely connected. The same is true of a feeling for art.” Van Gogh would gradually come to appreciate the natural world as a setting with its own singular virtues. Chris Stolwijk’s catalogue essay delves into this early period in Van Gogh’s career, when the young artist’s first thoughts about nature began to take root in his art and mind.

The next section of the exhibition follows Van Gogh to Paris, where he encountered not only a fresh landscape, but radical new thinking about art and society’s changing relationship with nature. In Paris, Van Gogh lived in Montmartre. His apartment had a view across the city with the hills of Meudon and Saint-Cloud on the horizon and, as his brother Theo wrote, a “piece of sky above it that is almost as big as when one stands on the dunes.” The artist painted this view and also found subjects in and around Montmartre, focusing on natural features, such as the hills, trees, and fields. He also sought out the city’s parks where nature was more artificial, having

**Right:** This iconic image displays Van Gogh’s deep connection to nature and his close observation of the trees, fields, sky, and mountains. *A Wheatfield, with Cypresses*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 72.5 x 91.5 cm. National Gallery, London.





Above: *Sheaves of Wheat*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 cm. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands.

been fashioned by man and machine. The Clark's *Terrace in the Luxembourg Gardens* of 1886 perhaps reflects Van Gogh's exposure to the Impressionists in Paris. Kendall's catalogue essay on this time period further explores the influence of the Impressionists, advances made in the natural sciences, and the effect of the built, modern environment on Van Gogh and his art.

The final section focuses on Van Gogh's later period in Provence. In Arles and Saint-Rémy in the south of France, Van Gogh discovered unfamiliar terrain, flora, and fauna that further influenced his artistic ideas and subject matter. From Arles, Van Gogh wrote, "I have no doubts that I'll always love nature here, it's something like Japanese art, once you love that you don't have second thoughts about it." A trio of paintings depicting the view from Van Gogh's room in the asylum at Saint-Rémy span the spring, summer, and fall seasons, and will be presented side by side. The subtle but powerful theme of trees will also be explored: viewers will encounter hauntingly expressive pines, cypresses, and poplars. Kendall envisions "a gallery solely populated with pictures of trees, to make people stop and think." Sjraar van Heugten's catalogue essay highlights this especially rich and productive time in Van Gogh's career.

The Clark Center's large special exhibition galleries are well suited for large-scale modern and contemporary art. The intimacy of an exhibition such as *Van Gogh and Nature* poses particular challenges and opportunities. Unlike traditional exhibition rooms, the fourteen-foot-high ceilings and crisp angles will provide exciting sight lines for expansive views. For example, Kendall is excited about the gallery filled with tree paintings: visitors will be able to enjoy each work individually and then step back to take in a vista of the artist's progression through

time. The loftiness of the space will perhaps replicate the feeling of being outdoors, where the sky is one's ceiling. The galleries will accommodate not only the fifty paintings and drawings, but also copies of books and illustrated periodicals that informed Van Gogh's theories of nature, as well as other associated material.

Vincent van Gogh experienced nature through long walks, closely observing the natural world around him. Visitors to *Van Gogh and Nature* will depart the galleries and perhaps take in the Clark's verdant setting with fresh eyes, keeping Van Gogh's words close to their hearts: "It's just that one needs both nature and paintings." ■



Above: *Sower with Setting Sun*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 64 x 80.5 cm. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands.

# Considering the Modern

# Engaging the Contemporary



Richard Rand and David Breslin discuss the Clark's ongoing commitment to modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, commissions, and symposia.





**Previous page and above:** Visitors survey an exhibition titled *Helen Frankenthaler Prints: 1961–1979* in the Clark's special exhibition galleries. The retrospective was on view in April 1980.

The Clark is known around the world for its collections of paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Claude Monet, and Edgar Degas. But its commitment to showcasing cutting-edge modern and contemporary art is less well known. From its comprehensive collection of rare contemporary artists' books residing in the Institute's library, to the inscribed stone benches by artist Jenny Holzer that line the reflecting pools outside the Clark Center, the Clark's campus is home to a number of contemporary treasures. Richard Rand, senior curator, and David Breslin, curator of contemporary projects, discuss the Clark's ongoing relationship with modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, commissions, and symposia.

**Richard Rand:** The Clark's collections are primarily historical, yet I have always felt there was room for contemporary art here. It doesn't have to be a huge part of our program because we have MASS MoCA and the Williams College Museum of Art, which do a lot of programming in contemporary art. We need to find our way through a community of institutions that are really focused, and do things that are appropriate to the Clark and make sense given our mission and our collections.

**David Breslin:** We have a history of putting together rigorously thought-through, historically organized exhibitions. That's something that the Clark is known for: looking at an artist or a couple of artists or a school in a way that hasn't been looked at through the exhibition format. So I think if we use that as a foundation and say, "let's bring the same amount of rigorous thinking and clarity of

thought to new things," that's different from what our neighbors are doing. I don't think we should expect something different from our modern and contemporary exhibitions than we do from our historical exhibitions.

**RR:** A space that is potentially very difficult to show art becomes a challenge that artists respond to, and then the space itself becomes part of the work. Think of how the Guggenheim has used its rotunda. We have opportunities like that in our own spaces. At the Lunder Center at Stone Hill, the programming responds positively and dynamically to the architecture and the views out of the window.

**DB:** That's what's so exciting about the new campus: the unique setting and the relationship between this great set of built spaces, but also this fantastic landscape that is kind of raw; the opportunity to find good people, artists or whomever, to help us think about what that relationship between new art

and these places can be . . . to tell a story about the Clark that couldn't be told about another place or about another institution.

**RR:** We have built spaces that could be explored in this way: the Museum Pavilion, the heart of which could be programmed with installations on an ongoing basis, or the West Pavilion of the Clark Center.

At the Clark, the engagement with the contemporary—whether it's art, interventions, or interpretations—has a funny way of breaking down the division between the museum and the Research and Academic Program (RAP). We pride ourselves on having a dual mission where the museum program and RAP are quite separate and any overlap or collaboration is usually on an *ad hoc* basis. In terms of talking about contemporary art, though, the distinction between museum work and academic work breaks down, and there's much more fluidity.



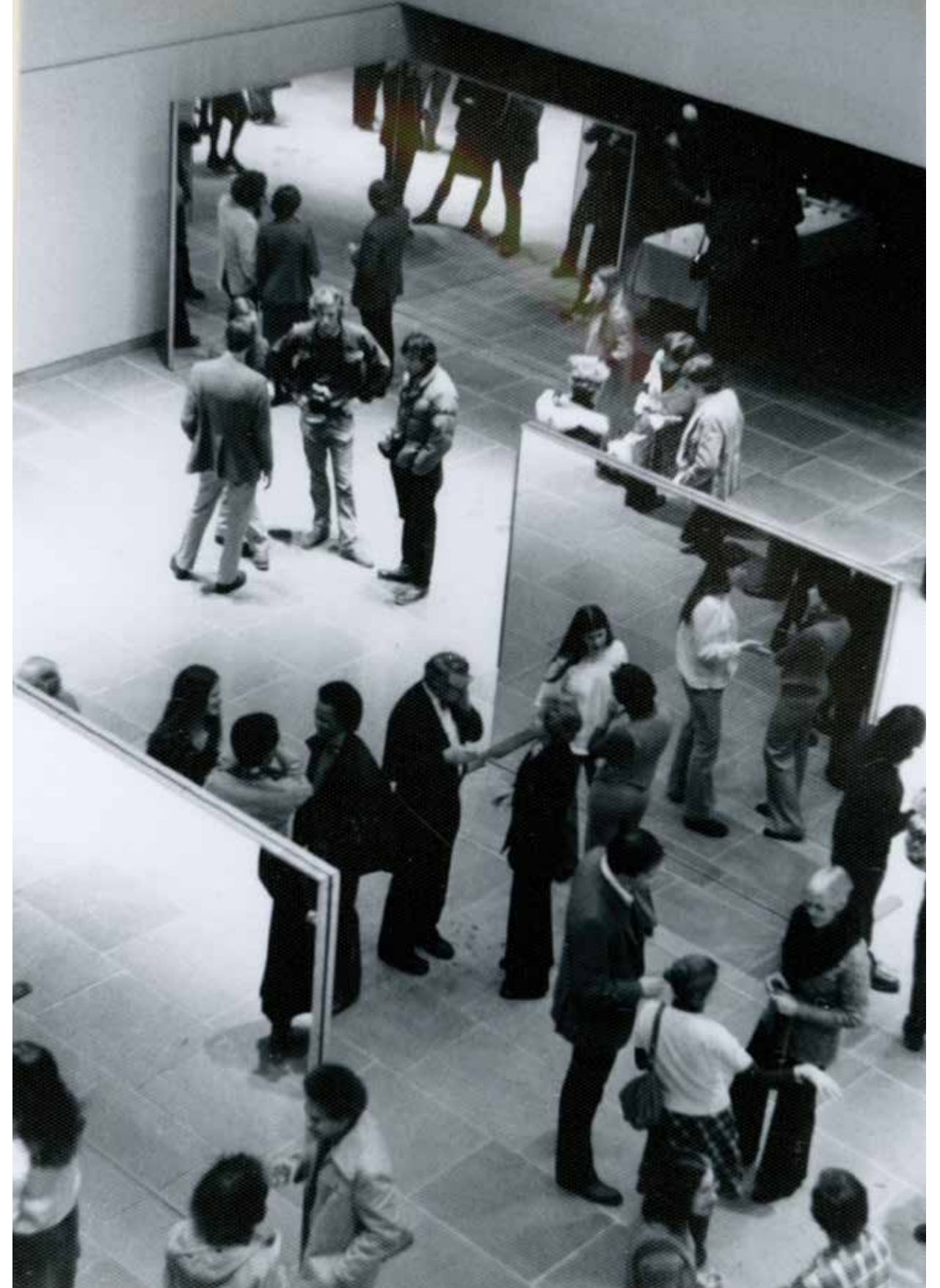
**Right:** Helen Frankenthaler (1928–2011), pictured here with a work titled *A Little Zen* (1970), was hosted in 1980 by the Williams College Artist-in-Residence Program, which aimed to organize exhibitions around the work of important contemporary artists. This show (*Helen Frankenthaler Prints: 1961–1979*) coincided with the release of a catalogue raisonné compiling the artist's prints.

**DB:** For example, the artist Julie Ault does things that we would think of as the traditional purview of the curator or the art historian. As her art practice, she writes essays and curates shows. She's frequently in residence at places, helping them think through their collections. I think a lot of artists have been using collections to think through what their art could be, never actually making the thing themselves, but doing the work usually ascribed to a curator: arranging and contextualizing. I think research has always been part of what an artist does, whether [for example] it's through drawing, which is a fundamental research tool that artists have used. I think artists now use research in an academic fashion.

There's something very exciting for artists working today to show their work at a place that looks at a broader historical range of artistic practice. To place that work within a larger historical envelope helps our audience think about familiar work in new ways. During the *El Anatsui* show (June–October 2011) at the Lunder Center at Stone Hill, so many people commented to me, "I look at the Clark's Turner [*Rockets and Blue Lights*, 1840] so differently now after seeing the Anatsui," and I think people look at the Anatsui differently having just been at the original Museum Building and seen that Turner painting. There is a capacity to find certain artists and certain practices that make odd the historical and make odd these new things, even though they're of our time. How do these belong? What stories do they tell? How don't they fit? If we can tell that story about new things, we'll be doing what we've always tried to do with the older objects in the



**Above:** From May through June 1977, the Clark featured an important exhibition curated by Sam Hunter, professor of art and archaeology at Princeton University and founder of the Rose Art Gallery at Brandeis University. The show, titled *The Dada-Surrealist Heritage*, explored the influence of early twentieth-century masters on the art of the present.



**Above:** Attendees gather at a reception for the artist Robert Morris (b. 1931) and his sculptural piece (*Mirrors*) on January 21, 1977, in the lobby of the Manton Research Center. Like Frankenthaler, Morris was invited by Williams College to take part in their Artist-in-Residence Program. This sculpture installation was followed by an exhibition five years later titled *The Drawings of Robert Morris*, also at the Clark.



**Left:** Spanish artist Juan Muñoz (1953–2001) is well known for his striking, life-size sculptures made in papier-mâché, resin, and bronze. Visitors could see *Piggyback with Knife* (2001) from outside the Lunder Center at Stone Hill, where six of the artist's sculptures were on view during summer 2010. **Top right:** The Lunder Center at Stone Hill played host to an exhibition of the work of Ghanaian contemporary artist El Anatsui. The artist fabricated *Strips of Earth's Skin* (2008) by wiring together the discarded tops of liquor bottles. **Bottom right:** Juan Muñoz created *Hanging Figure* (1997) in direct response to Degas's painting *Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando* (1879). Curator David Breslin saw a unique opportunity for the Clark to enliven the dialogue between these two artists and installed Muñoz's hanging sculpture in the place where Degas's famous *Little Dancer* (modeled 1879–81, cast 1919–21) would usually stand.

collection, which is to make them applicable to our lives today as well as extraordinary for the times in which they were made.

**RR:** When Michael Cassin, the director of the Clark's Center for Education in the Visual Arts, organized the docent summer school this past year, he did an exercise in *Make It New* [Abstract Painting from the National Gallery of Art, 1950–1975, on view August 2–October 13, 2014] in which he matched up key paintings in the exhibition with key paintings in the collection. He had docents look at Ellsworth Kelly's *Tiger* while thinking about the Clark's Piero, *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Four Angels*. Looking at this very geometric, perfectly balanced yet asymmetrical Kelly painting while thinking about how Piero organized his spaces and arranged his forms—you look at the Kelly differently and you look at the Piero decidedly differently. Another example he used that was clever was linking the Clyfford Still painting with the Fragonard fantasy portrait *The Warrior*.

**DB:** When you're thinking about how to introduce abstract work to audiences who aren't used to seeing it at the Clark, there's a way of both expecting a lot from them, because they're smart, but also giving them



a way into the work that isn't necessarily part of the Clark's historical purview. How do you balance these expectations?

**RR:** There's a long tradition of artists responding to earlier art and rethinking their own work. As an example, those Fragonard fantasy portraits were unknown until the 1850s and '60s. Collectors started buying them and there was a series of exhibitions on eighteenth-century painting in Paris. The Impressionists were going to these galleries, and Manet saw these paintings and responded to them. You can trace it historically: on one hand, the new painters of the Impressionist movement could validate their revolutionary style by making links to earlier practitioners who worked in a similar vein. They were inspired by the art of the past to do something different, but the link to tradition gave them confidence that what they were doing was a part of an artistic continuum. I don't know if Ellsworth Kelly ever thought about Piero, but he probably did, just as Georges Seurat loved Piero.

**DB:** Placing Juan Muñoz's sculpture [in the Clark galleries] where Degas's *Little Dancer* usually stood was both kind of a sensation but also a revelation because it was a pose that he took from a Degas painting of an acrobat. Here is a kind of opportunity to find artists who tell different stories about our collection and to help us think through how these things are being played through. Not necessarily our historical reception, but how artists are receiving that work. ■



**Above:** *Make It New: Abstract Painting from the National Gallery of Art, 1950–1975* gave Clark visitors a chance to engage with the work of modern artists. *Left to right:* Ellsworth Kelly, *Tiger* (1953); Frank Stella, *Delta* (1958); Jo Baer, *Horizontals Flanking (Small, Thalo-Green Line)*; 1968); Jasper Johns, *Target* (1958); and Frederick Hammersley, *One* (1961).

*2014 saw three exhibitions of twentieth-century art open at the Clark. Raw Color: The Circles of David Smith, installed among the sunny galleries and pastoral views of the Lunder Center at Stone Hill, was the first show to bring together the artist's five primary Circle sculptures in thirty years. The Clark proclaimed its commitment to exhibiting modern artists by inaugurating the new Clark Center with an exhibition of postwar works of art. Tadao Ando's spare, angular architecture proved an engaging backdrop for the challenging works in Make It New: Abstract Painting from the National Gallery, 1950–1975. Monet | Kelly, a groundbreaking exhibition that explored Ellsworth Kelly's artistic relationship to Claude Monet, was on view at the Clark Center from November 2014 through February 15, 2015.*



American artist David Smith's sculptures were installed during summer 2014 at the Lunder Center at Stone Hill, less than one hundred miles from the artist's home and studio in Bolton Landing, New York.



# Art History and Emergency

“Art History and Emergency,” the inaugural conference in the Clark Center’s West Pavilion, assessed art history’s roles and responsibilities with regard to the “humanities crisis.”



**Above:** Gerhard Wolf, director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut at the Max Planck Institut, Florence, makes a point during the joint congress of ARIAH and RIHA, while Roger Fayet, director of the Schweizerisches Institut für Kunstwissenschaft, looks on. **Previous page:** Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), *Hercules Strangling the Nemean Lion* (detail), c. 1620.

As the Clark prepares to turn sixty, its Research and Academic Program remains committed to being a leading center for education and research in the visual arts. Of the many responsibilities attached to this role, few are as significant as underscoring pressing issues for scholars working to understand what gives art its special character and incontestable value. Amidst much talk about “crisis” in the humanities, it is important to understand the potential of such a situation for those involved in the study and presentation of art.

From Thursday, November 6 through Saturday, November 8, 2014, the Clark hosted two significant events dedicated to these issues: the annual meetings of the Association of Research Institutes in Art History (ARIAH) and the International Association of Research Institutes in the History of Art (RIHA) and the Clark Conference “Art History and

Emergency.” Over three days, participants assessed the condition of the discipline and those institutions dedicated to enriching it by cultivating advanced scholarship, both in the academy and in the museum.

The meetings of ARIAH and RIHA, which represented the first joint congress of these organizations to occur in six years, were held on Thursday, November 6, in the new West Pavilion of the Clark Center. ARIAH was incorporated in 1988 to promote scholarship by institutes of advanced research in the history of art and related disciplines; to provide general information about the scholarly activities of its member institutes; and to develop cooperative projects and programs. It currently consists of twenty-four member institutions in addition to the Clark, including the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA), Washington, DC, and the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California.

The RIHA meeting gathered twenty delegates representing art history institutes from fifteen different countries. RIHA was founded in Paris in 1998 to promote education and research in art history and related disciplines by intensifying cooperation between the institutes, facilitating the flow of information among its member institutes’ activities, and encouraging research exchanges and collaborative projects.

The joint congress of ARIAH and RIHA addressed a number of key issues concerning what intellectual trends currently drive research in different countries and how institutes might promote collaboration and exchange across different parts of the world. The choice of location for the congress reflects a global recognition of the Clark, and RAP in particular, as articulators for the discipline.

The thirteenth Clark Conference, “Art History and Emergency,” held on Friday, November 7, and Saturday, November 8, 2014, addressed art history’s specific roles and responsibilities with regard to the “humanities crisis”—a much-touted condition said to be

reflected in diminishing support for people committed to areas of study beyond math, science, and technology. Despite the alarmist nature of the conference’s title, the Clark’s Research and Academic Program remains confident about the situation in which art and art history currently find themselves. In the face of widespread exhaustion about “crisis talk,” RAP insists that the questions in play are too important to bury.

Conference participants explored several open questions, including: Is this crisis but the latest of many? What role has “crisis” played in the humanities’ history? How are artists, art historians, and professionals in related disciplines responding to current pressures to prove their worth? How does one defend the practical value of thinking deeply about objects and images without losing the intellectual intensity that characterizes the best work in the discipline? Does art history as we know it have a future?

**Below:** Theaster Gates, director, Arts + Public Life, Office of the Provost, and professor, Department of Visual Arts, University of Chicago, raises his arms during his performance entitled “A Brief Conversation on Artist-Led Administration.”





**Above:** David Breslin, associate director of the Research and Academic Program and Clark curator of contemporary projects, speaks during a small group exercise at the joint congress of ARIAH and RIHA.

Following a welcome by Michael Conforti, director of the Clark, and Darby English, Starr Director of the Research and Academic Program, the conference began with Thomas Crow's keynote paper, "The Perpetual State of Emergency: Who Benefits?," in which he offered a historical perspective on crises in the humanities and specifically in art history. He argued that crisis is often created in order to extend the influence of the very parties who could mitigate the condition that "crisis" describes. Far from being frightened by the latest alarm bells, Crow is "fiercely optimistic" about the discipline of art history. Encouraged by the work of current art history graduate students, he stressed that they should not be hindered in their early careers by closed professional networks precisely because these frameworks constrain the sort of intellectual creativity that advances a discipline and expands its audience.

The keynote was followed by two papers that provided historical and international contexts for the present situation. Kajri Jain outlined the foundation and

growth of art history in universities on the Indian subcontinent in her paper, "Whose Emergency?" Molly Nesbit's paper, "The Greater Depression," recounted the efforts of professors of art history who, during the Great Depression, maintained the "long view" as a way to deepen their commitment to their students and to the field.

Caroline Arscott spoke on "Quixotic Projects: Humanities Research and UK Public Funding," detailing how funding in the United Kingdom is currently geared to measurable, short-term outcomes; Anatoli Mikhailov, in a talk titled "The Language of Art—A Saving Power?," assessed a range of instances in Western thought that bring the restorative potentials of art and aesthetics into particularly sharp focus. In her paper, "After Scully: The Twenty-First Century at Yale," Mary Miller discussed the role of images in art history's pedagogy and the need to unhesitatingly seize new technological advantages as they arise. Howard Singerman addressed "Art History and the Plight of the Publics," focusing on the different ways public and private funding structures effect disciplinary formations in art history. Manuel Borja-Villel, in a lecture titled "The Value of Art," encouraged these institutions to embrace the critical interrogation, as well as celebration, of widely shared values. In "Art-Historical Alterity in the Post-Colony," Patrick Flores, an art historian, critic, and curator from Manila, stressed the need to examine crisis at the specific sites of its irruption, rather than by means of gross generalization, which can lose sight of interchanges across the very boundaries that conflict hardens.

In the final session of the conference, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev utilized examples from her curation of dOCUMENTA (13) in "To Make Committed Exhibitions: Not κρίσις (krísis), Not κρίνω (krínō), Not to Separate, Not to Decide," in order to illustrate that curatorial ingenuity can reshape viewers' experiences of so-called crisis moments. Christov-Bakargiev's paper was followed by "Emergencia," a short black-and-white film by the group Our Literal Speed. The film explored the social and professional dynamics that shape relations among academics and administrators. Glimpsing elements of his own aspirations, practicing artist and administrator Theaster Gates used his place in the program to enact an actualization of them. Playing himself, as though he were director of the fictional Center for Art and Critical Thinking, Gates mused about "artistration."

Members of ARIAH and RIHA who stayed for the conference were a crucial part of the audience and a powerful reminder to the speakers of the conference's stakes. The extent to which the current condition of art history can or should be recognized as a "crisis" divided opinion. Participants highlighted the need for mobilizing the discipline through new techniques, strategies, and tactics rather than merely lamenting its condition. It was suggested that in order to do this, practitioners of art and art history, as well as those who sympathize with their efforts, must produce the economies they need to thrive, rather than simply waiting for them to appear. ■



**Above:** Michael Ann Holly, Robert Sterling Clark Visiting Professor in the Clark/Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art (second from left), leads a panel discussion among (left to right) Thomas Crow, Rosalie Solow Professor of Modern Art, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and Fall 2014 Michael Holly Fellow at the Clark; Molly Nesbit, professor of Art, Vassar College; and Kajri Jain, associate professor of Indian Visual Culture and Contemporary Art, University of Toronto.

**CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED:** Caroline Arscott, Courtauld Institute of Art; Manuel Borja-Villel, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía; Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Northwestern University; Thomas Crow, New York University; Patrick Flores, University of the Philippines; Kajri Jain, University of Toronto; Anatoli Mikhailov, European Humanities University; Mary Miller, Yale University; Molly Nesbit, Vassar College; and Howard Singerman, Hunter College. Following the papers, the theme of arts administration was explored in a specially commissioned film by the group Our Literal Speed (Christopher Heuer, Princeton University, and Matthew Jesse Jackson, University of Chicago) and a performance by the artist Theaster Gates, University of Chicago.

# The Clark Inside Out

Photographer Tucker Bair takes us behind the scenes with a photo essay documenting usually hidden areas of the Clark.



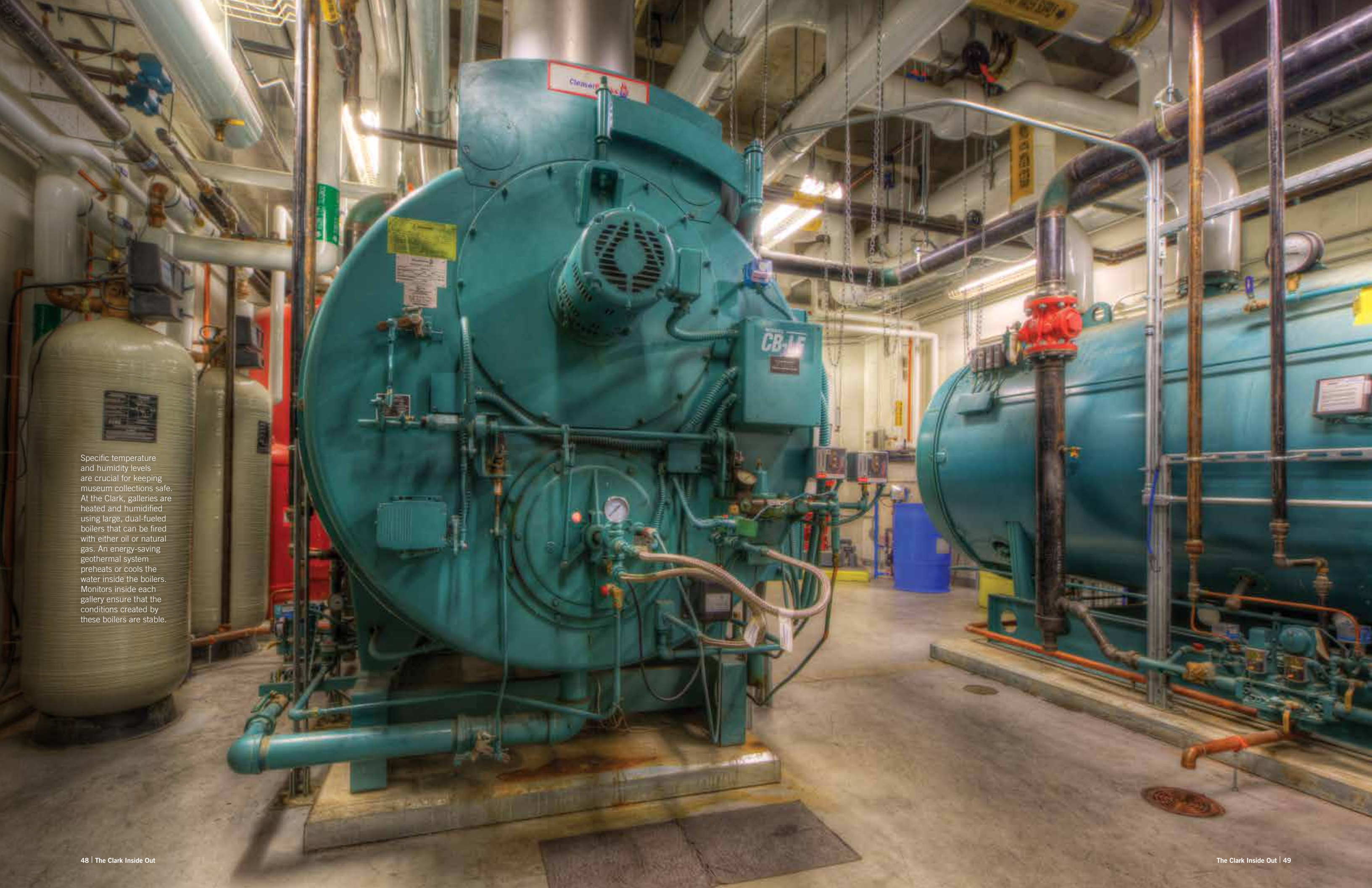




Frequent visitors to the Clark know this gallery in the Museum Building for its distinctive skylight, through which a gentle light illuminates paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Less well known, however, is the attic above the skylight itself (*previous page*). Renovated in 2014 by Selldorf Architects, this skylight is built from Kalwall laylights: state-of-the-art glass panels, custom built and glazed to perfectly moderate the amount of light that enters this room. The glazing accounts for both the chocolate color covering the back of the glass, as well as the softness of the light within the gallery itself.



Like many of the Clark's work spaces, the woodshop is located underground, leaving more space with natural lighting for shopping, dining, and, of course, experiencing the Clark's collections and special exhibitions. In the woodshop, a team of preparators fabricate exhibition furniture, including many of the pedestals, cases, and platforms used to display works of art.



Specific temperature and humidity levels are crucial for keeping museum collections safe. At the Clark, galleries are heated and humidified using large, dual-fueled boilers that can be fired with either oil or natural gas. An energy-saving geothermal system preheats or cools the water inside the boilers. Monitors inside each gallery ensure that the conditions created by these boilers are stable.



The Clark's reflecting pools (*left*) are a peaceful spot to contemplate the natural beauty of the surroundings. But sustaining this tranquility requires a lot of work. A pump room (*right*), located below the pools, collects and redistributes water. The Clark's parking lots are built with porous asphalt that allows water to drain and collect in the underground pump room, where the water is then recycled as gray water and used throughout the museum. Efforts to recycle water and reduce its carbon footprint are but a few of the many reasons that the Clark Center is a LEED Silver certified building.



Keeping all of the Clark's one hundred forty acres of lawns, meadows, and walking trails serviceable for the public requires ongoing maintenance. The Grounds Service Facility, located just north of the Clark Center, is the main base for all these operations.



# Reattributing Rembrandt

Ernst van de Wetering, the Dutch art historian and longtime head of the Netherlands-based Rembrandt Research Project, concluded this past autumn that the Clark's painting *Man Reading*, once considered a work by the "Rembrandt School" and later designated as "attributed to Rembrandt," is a work by Rembrandt van Rijn himself.

In January 1923, Robert Sterling Clark bought *Man Reading* as a Rembrandt from the New York art dealer Knoedler & Co. He paid \$180,000—the most he would ever pay for a single painting. Decades later, however, aided by better photography and other means of visual analysis, scholars in the field reconsidered the artist's oeuvre and opined it likely to have been painted by a Rembrandt student, perhaps Carel Fabritius (1622–1654), whose *Goldfinch* (1654; Mauritshuis, The Hague) attracted great attention when recently exhibited at the Frick Collection. That tentative attribution stayed consistent for more than forty years.

According to Clark senior curator Richard Rand, what contributed most to the recent change in thinking about the

painting's attribution was the dating of the signed canvas. At first believed to have been painted in 1643, closer examination of the painted numbers revealed a date of 1648, at which time Rembrandt was experimenting with different effects of light on his subjects. Although the gentleman in the painting is lit from behind, his face is actually defined by light that is reflected up from the pages of the open book. This type of lighting is consistent with the kind of work Rembrandt was doing around 1648.

"Ernst van de Wetering is a leading Rembrandt scholar, and his certainty that *Man Reading* was created by the artist himself is an important piece of the attribution puzzle," Rand says. "But as important as Van de Wetering's opinion is, it does not end the debate. We are comfortable with stating the painting is attributed to Rembrandt, but we will continue to review scholarship related to the painting."

*Man Reading* is among seventy disputed Rembrandt works that Ernst van de Wetering has declared authentic in the Rembrandt Research Project's sixth and final volume. Van de Wetering's latest attributions bring the total number of surviving paintings attributed to Rembrandt to three hundred forty, up from the fewer than three hundred considered to be the artist's work since the 1980s. ■

Attributed to Rembrandt van Rijn (Dutch, 1606–1669), *Man Reading*, c. 1648. Oil on canvas, 29 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 22 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (74.1 x 56.2 cm). Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA

# Digitization of the Julius S. Held Collection of Rare Books

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) recently announced a grant of \$118,737 to the Clark to be used to digitize close to two hundred volumes from the Julius S. Held Collection of Rare Books. Professor Held, who taught in the Clark/Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art in the 1970s and made his home in Bennington, Vermont, was one of the great authorities on Dutch and Flemish old master painters and was frequently consulted by institutions and individuals seeking to determine the authenticity of old master artworks. The scanned materials will be available through the library's digital collections interface, as well as through the Internet Archive, the Getty Research Portal, the Massachusetts Digital Commonwealth, and the Digital Public Library of America. Additionally, the Clark will enhance cataloging and metadata for the more than 107,000 images from books in the Held collection, including a significant number of rare titles and unique volumes dating from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century. Many of the books include illustrations by



**Above:** Pietro Santi Bartoli (Italian, 1635–1700), engraving after the illustration from the *Vergilius Vaticanus* (Rome, Vatican, Bib. Apostolica, Cod Vat. lat. 3225) of the Trojan Horse (detail). In Virgil, *P. Virgilli Maronis opera* (Rome: 1677), p. 37. Julius S. Held Collection of Rare Books, Clark Art Institute

such artists as Peter Paul Rubens, Albrecht Dürer, and Anthony van Dyck. Approximately eighty books include Held's annotations and commentaries regarding provenance and identification of illustrations, and these notes will be photographed as well. ■

## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Machine Age  
Modernism: Prints  
from the Daniel Cowin  
Collection  
February 28 – May 17, 2015

*Machine Age Modernism* will present forty prints from the exceptional Daniel Cowin Collection that capture the tumultuous aesthetic and political climate of the years surrounding World Wars I and II. The prints encompass a wide variety of subject matter, from armed conflict to popular sports, and show how artists during the interwar years navigated representation and abstraction to capture a rapidly changing world.



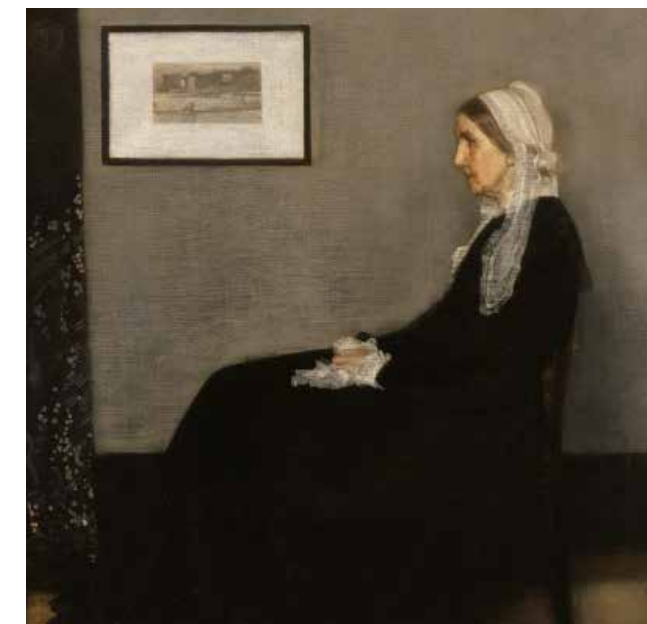
Van Gogh and Nature  
June 14 – September 13, 2015

This exhibition will be the first study of the importance of nature in Van Gogh's art, from his youthful fascination with birds, insects, plants, and trees in Holland to his mature artistic engagement with the landscape of Provence, where hillsides, rocks, and skies offered a new language for complex personal expression.



Whistler's Mother  
July 5 – September 27, 2015

This exhibition will center on James McNeill Whistler's famed *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother* (1871), colloquially known as *Whistler's Mother*. The painting will be accompanied by related Whistler prints and drawings as well as by nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock prints that inspired the artist.





## Visitor Information

The Clark Art Institute is located at 225 South Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts, one-half mile south of the intersection of Routes 2 and 7 in the center of Williamstown.

Information is available 24 hours a day at 413 458 2303 or online at [www.clarkart.edu](http://www.clarkart.edu).

## Hours

Galleries: Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Open daily in the summer season; please call or check website for details.

Open Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Patriots' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Columbus Day.

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Library:  
Please call or check website for details.

## Access

Wheelchairs and strollers are welcome. The galleries are fully accessible, and a limited number of wheelchairs is available.

**Left:** Sybil Andrews (English, 1898–1992), *Sledgehammers* (detail), 1933. Color linocut printed in red-orange, green, and dark blue on cream laid paper; sheet 30 x 34.5 cm; comp. 26.4 x 31.6 cm. Collection of Daniel Cowin



