

For Immediate Release

RECENT ACQUISITIONS AT MIA INCLUDE CONTEMPORARY PAINTINGS BY LAMAR PETERSON AND DAWN WILLIAMS BOYD, A JAMES BARNOR SELF-PORTRAIT, AN 18TH-CENTURY INDIAN TEMPLE HANGING, AND SEVERAL 19TH-CENTURY WORKS

Minneapolis, MN—May 24, 2023—The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) announces the highlights of its spring 2023 acquisitions, a diverse group of works that includes: Lamar Peterson's 2020 painting *The Late Spring Arrival*; Dawn Williams Boyd's 2007 painting *The Middle Passage*, from the artist's series "The Sins of the Fathers"; *Self-Portrait with a store assistant at the West Africa Drug Company*, by photographer James Barnor; Alfred Thompson Bricher's 1870 painting *Mississippi at Dubuque, Iowa*; the painting *Allegory of Summer* (1862) by Joseph Gabriel Tourny; Edward Armitage's 1855 work *The Bottom of the Ravine at Inkerman*; and a late-18th century *pichhvai* (temple hanging) for the Hindu Festival of the Cows.

"As institutions such as ours continue to think about diversifying our collections, I am always excited by the recommendations of our curators because they continually expand on how we think about diversity itself," said Katie Luber, the Nivin and Duncan MacMillan Director and President of Mia. "Works by Lamar Peterson and Dawn Williams Boyd present contemporary interpretations of the Black experience in America, while James Barnor's photographs are cross-cultural, reflecting his Ghanaian heritage and British training. But more 'traditional' works such as those by Bricher, Tourny, and Armitage demonstrate that we still have more to learn about how artists saw and presented the world, especially in a work as resonant with today's conflict in Ukraine as Armitage's *The Bottom of the Ravine at Inkerman*, which captures the awful aftermath of war."

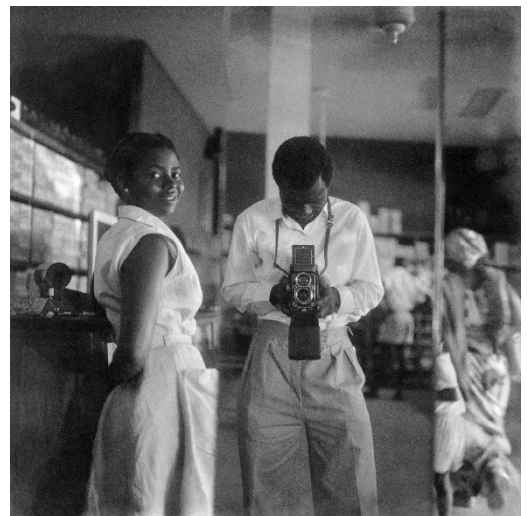
In total, 100 objects were approved for accession. Additional detail on these highlights follows below.

Lamar Peterson, *The Late Spring Arrival*, 2022

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky

Created in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, Peterson's work explores the pleasurable hobby of gardening—one not always associated with or accessible to Black men. Here, the artist depicts a man lying in repose in his garden, caught in a moment of solitude and joy after a long winter. Adding to the scene are a swirling group of bees that appear almost like stickers on the surface of the painting. Yet while the protagonist of the work appears happy, confidently taking pride in his lush gardens, the artist's rich palette and especially the angular framing that situates the figure between the plantings creates a tension between the visible happiness and the implied challenges of



James Barnor (Ghanian, born 1929), *Self-portrait with a store assistant at the West African Drug Company*, 1952 (printed 2023), gelatin silver print. The Walter McCarthy and Clara Ueland Endowment for Photographs and gift of funds from an anonymous donor, 2023.4

the outside world. Born in 1974 in St. Petersburg, Florida, Lamar Peterson received his MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2001. Throughout his career Peterson has painted a wide range of subjects, from cartoon landscapes populated by African American suburbanites to surreal portraits of Michael Jackson. His refined figuration and pared-down compositions deliberately highlight raw emotions and convey elements of strength, violence, and vulnerability—and, through the transformation or disfiguration of young African American men and women, he visualizes the effects of the systemic racism that frequently targets Black bodies.

Dawn Williams Boyd, *The Middle Passage*, "The Sins of the Fathers" series, 2007

Cotton fabrics and floss, silk ribbon, kente cloth; applied by machine; embroidered and quilted by hand
Gift of funds from Mary and Bob Mersky

Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Dawn Williams Boyd (b. 1952) is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work reflects her interests in American history as it affects and is affected by African American citizens, women's identity and sexuality, and national politics. Her work *The Middle Passage* is from her series "The Sins of the Father," which features the artist's self-described "cloth paintings" made of quilted fabric and acrylic paintings on canvas and plywood. These works address the complex history of racial violence against Black Americans, beginning with the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade and continuing to the present day murders of innocent Black men, women, and children. In this work, *The Middle Passage*, Boyd presents two naked, enslaved human beings held captive in the cargo hold of a ship, who are shackled at their ankles. One of the men looks directly at the viewer, while the second shields his face and peers toward the specter of death standing at his side in the form of a human skeleton—a harbinger of their future.

James Barnor, *Self-Portrait with a store assistant at the West Africa Drug Company*, 1952 (printed 2023)

Gelatin silver print
The Walter McCarthy and Clara Ueland Endowment for Photographs and gift of funds from an anonymous donor

Trained as both a portrait photographer and photojournalist, James Barnor's 1952 photograph brings both traditions together for a triple portrait: it depicts the artist, a store attendant, and also a small sliver of life in Accra, Ghana, prior to its independence from Britain in 1957. By pointing his camera at a mirror, Barnor places himself and his work in the bustle of the store, while also capturing the smiling young woman leaning against the counter. This work is an excellent example of Barnor's artistry, as well as his history as a photographer. Born in Ghana in 1929, Barnor was one of the first photojournalists to collaborate with *The Daily Graphic*, a newspaper published in Ghana by London's Daily Mirror Group. In 1959, he moved to London to expand his study of photography—a time that coincided with the City's resurgence as a center of global style and energy, encapsulated by its nickname "Swinging London." Many of his works from this period document the African diaspora in Britain, and these images—with Black models, and London as the backdrop—were often selected for the cover of *Drum*, then the leading magazine in Africa. While in London, he began to explore color photography, and in the late 1960s, he returned to Ghana to set up the country's first color photography laboratory. He stayed for more than two decades, before returning to the U.K.

Alfred Thompson Bricher, *Mississippi at Dubuque*, Iowa, 1870

Oil on canvas
The Siri and Bob Marshall Endowment for American Paintings

Alfred Thompson Bricher (1837 – 1908) was a prolific American painter who traveled widely and had a successful commercial career during his lifetime. Initially a New Englander, with a studio in Boston, he moved to New York City in 1868, where he was elected to membership in the American Water Color Society in 1873 and as an Associate at the National Academy of Design in 1879. In 1866, Bricher is known to have made a trip West along the Upper Mississippi, following which he produced a number of landscape works; the firm. L. Prang and Company eventually purchased many of these works, publishing over 20 of them as chromolithographs. It is not known precisely whether this painting, *Mississippi at Dubuque, Iowa*, was conceived during that trip, but it is both an excellent example of Bricher's artistry and an unusual composition based on the artist's first-hand experience of seeing the Mississippi River. This scene, depicted from the vantage point of being on the river, shows people sailing, rowing and waiting to board more modern vessels. In particular, the crisp, clear, and calm realist

effects in the painting demonstrate the experience of “luminism,” a specific quality of light that shows after a passing storm or when people are actively engaged on the water. Here, the water is like a mirror and the whites of sails and painted ships appear to shine against the moody atmosphere lingering as a storm passes.

Joseph Gabriel Tourny, *Allegory of Summer*, 1862

Watercolor, pastel, and pencil on paper

The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund

The French artist Joseph Gabriel Tourny (1817 – 1880) worked across media—drawing, painting, printmaking—but distinguished himself in the medium of watercolor. He was interested in the history of art and invested considerable time in learning it, from studying Rembrandt’s prints, to copying old masters such as Raphael, and spending time in Rome exploring ancient, medieval, and Renaissance works. This deep interest is reflected in his *Allegory of Summer*, portrayed as a pensive young woman in a classically inspired wheat-and-flower crown that the artist has invented anew. The figure’s necklace and earrings also mimic ancient Roman prototypes but are similarly refreshed. Tourny has composed his allegorical portrait—a woman who resembles the sitter in at least four of his other works—on a glittering mosaic, where each golden tile varies in shape and tone. Together the hundreds of meticulously painted and drawn tesserae have a trompe l’oeil effect, giving depth to the figure.



Joseph Gabriel Tourny (French, 1817-1880), *Allegory of Summer*, 1862, watercolor, pastel, and pencil on paper. The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund, 2023.24

Edward Armitage, *The Bottom of the Ravine at Inkerman*, 1855

Black and colored chalks on canvas

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund

The Bottom of the Ravine at Inkerman captures the aftermath of the Battle of Inkerman, which killed some 15,000 Allied and Russian soldiers in November 1854, during the Crimean War. Edward Armitage (British; 1817 – 1896) visited the site four months later, as the winter thaw exposed the thousands of decaying corpses. His drawing depicts the brutal human catastrophe of a battle that was heralded as a victory at home: three fallen soldiers lay prostrate or face down in the dirt in a barren thicket, and their bare feet and stripped bodies emphasize their suffering. Remnants of the battle are scattered around—a blue badge, a Russian cap, a bolt of a rifle—but Armitage omitted details that might identify each soldier’s nationality, emphasizing instead the overall human cost of war. Drawn primarily in black chalk on an unprepared brown canvas, he restricted his use of color: to remnants of the men’s clothing, to their frozen flesh, and to the blooming yellow and white crocuses marking the arrival of spring. Armitage traveled to the battlefields of the Crimean War in order to create works celebrating recent Anglo-French victories against Russian forces, and made this piece in London in 1855, based on his study drawings. Works such as this—powerful in reflecting the brutality of war—helped to shift public opinion against the conflict. Armitage’s work exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1856, a few months after a truce was declared.

Pichhvai (temple hanging) for the Festival of the Cows, Late 18th century

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on cloth

Gift of the Ramesh and Urmil Kapoor Collection

With their large scale and delightful detail, *pichhvais* (temple hanging) are especially helpful in demonstrating the vibrancy of Indian temple arts. This pichhvai on indigo dyed cotton would have hung in a shrine dedicated to Sri Nathji (an incarnation of Krishna), serving as an evocative backdrop during worship. Noted for the profuse use of gold and silver, such ‘golden’ pichhvais belong to a rare group of textiles commissioned between the late 18th and early 19th centuries for members of the merchant classes who had moved from Northern India to the Deccan plateau. The distinctive traditions of these merchants fused with local aesthetic traditions resulting in objects that captures the spirit of joy and grace associated with the worship of their deity. Commissioned on the occasion of the Festival of the Cows (Gopashtami),

and celebrating Krishna's role as divine cowherd, the central field is sprinkled with flowers and frolicking cows as dutiful cowherds look on tenderly.

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About the Minneapolis Institute of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest art collections in the country—from all corners of the globe, and from ancient to contemporary—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

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