

Artist / Activist: Speaking Truth to Power



Kruizenga Art Museum
September 3-December 14, 2024

Introduction

The phrase “speaking truth to power” originated in the Civil Rights and Peace movements of the mid-20th century. It refers to the act of non-violently challenging political, economic, social and cultural leaders, and holding them accountable for actions, words and ideas that result in injustice, inequality and harm to others. Speaking truth to power requires courage and a willingness to risk one’s reputation, livelihood and sometimes even one’s life to express beliefs that go against entrenched interests and status-quo public opinions.

Although the phrase is relatively recent, the idea of speaking truth to power is ancient, and can be found in cultures around the world stretching back thousands of years. The term “speak” suggests that this form of protest is primarily verbal, but challenges to established power structures can also be expressed through literature, visual art, music and social behavior. This exhibition highlights the work of selected 20th and 21st-century visual artists who used their talents to fight for civil rights, social justice, and environmental protections, and against political oppression, economic inequality, and war.

Some of the artists represented in the exhibition paid a steep price for their activism. Käthe Kollwitz was declared a “degenerate artist” by the Nazi regime in the 1930s and lost her job and the copyrights to many of her artworks. In the 1960s, Ernest Cole had to flee the apartheid government in his native South Africa and lived the remainder of his life in exile, impoverished and often homeless. Wang Guangyi in the 1990s lived under the constant threat of imprisonment and possible execution for his artworks that criticized the political and social policies of the Communist Chinese government.

Even in situations where the consequences are not so severe, making art that challenges power structures and causes discomfort is an act of bravery. Not all art needs to make political statements or advocate for change, and there is equally great value in art that engages people’s minds, lifts their spirits, and adds beauty to the world. But as long as we live in challenging times, we need art that speaks truth to power to raise people’s consciences and promote the common good.

Artist / Activist was organized by the Kruizenga Art Museum and all of the artworks in the exhibition belong to the museum’s permanent collection. The museum is grateful to all the donors whose gifts helped make the exhibition possible: David Jensen, Roberta VanGilder ’53 Kaye, Ronald ’62 and Gerri Vander Molen, David Kamansky and Gerald Wheaton, and Scott Tannen.



Untitled (Flag)

Barbara Kruger (American, born 1945)

2020

Screenprint on cotton

Hope College Collection, 2024.16

Barbara Kruger's art typically combines text and images to comment critically on a wide range of social and cultural issues. Her work is both sharp and funny, and she can be ruthless about exposing what she sees as hypocritical moralizing and abuses of power. Kruger created this print in 2020 for a project called Artists Band Together, in which fifteen artists created designs that were printed on cotton bandanas and sold on ebay. All of the revenue from the sales was donated to voter registration initiatives aimed at young voters, first-time voters, and voters from historically disenfranchised communities of color. As project organizer and co-curator Nora Halpern explained at the time: "This project is rooted in the history of bandanas as symbols of unity. From the abolitionist movement to Rosie the Riveter, bandanas have been wearable markers of alliance and action. By bringing together long-time artist changemakers, our goal is to celebrate and elevate the myriad voices that make up American voters."



Whetting the Scythe

Käthe Kollwitz (German, 1867-1945)

1905

Etching

Hope College Collection, 2016.25.5



The Plowers

Käthe Kollwitz (German, 1867-1945)

1906

Etching and aquatint

Hope College Collection, gift of David Jensen, 2004.6.2

Throughout her career, Käthe Kollwitz used her art to comment on issues of social oppression and economic inequality in German society. These two images belong to a series of seven prints called *The Peasants' War* that Kollwitz created between 1903 and 1908. The prints were inspired by a historical rebellion that occurred in parts of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 1524-25, when hundreds of thousands of poor farmers rose up to protest the harsh conditions imposed on them by the aristocracy. The rebellion was brutally suppressed, but memories of it persisted and were revived in the 19th and early 20th centuries by Friedrich Engels and other leftwing activists who saw it as an important example of popular resistance against exploitation and injustice. *The Plowers* is the first image in *The Peasants' War* series. It depicts two impoverished farmers being used like draft animals to drag a plow through the soil. *Whetting the Scythe* is the third image in the series. It depicts an old woman sharpening a scythe blade so that it can be used as a weapon in the upcoming revolt.



Two Shovels

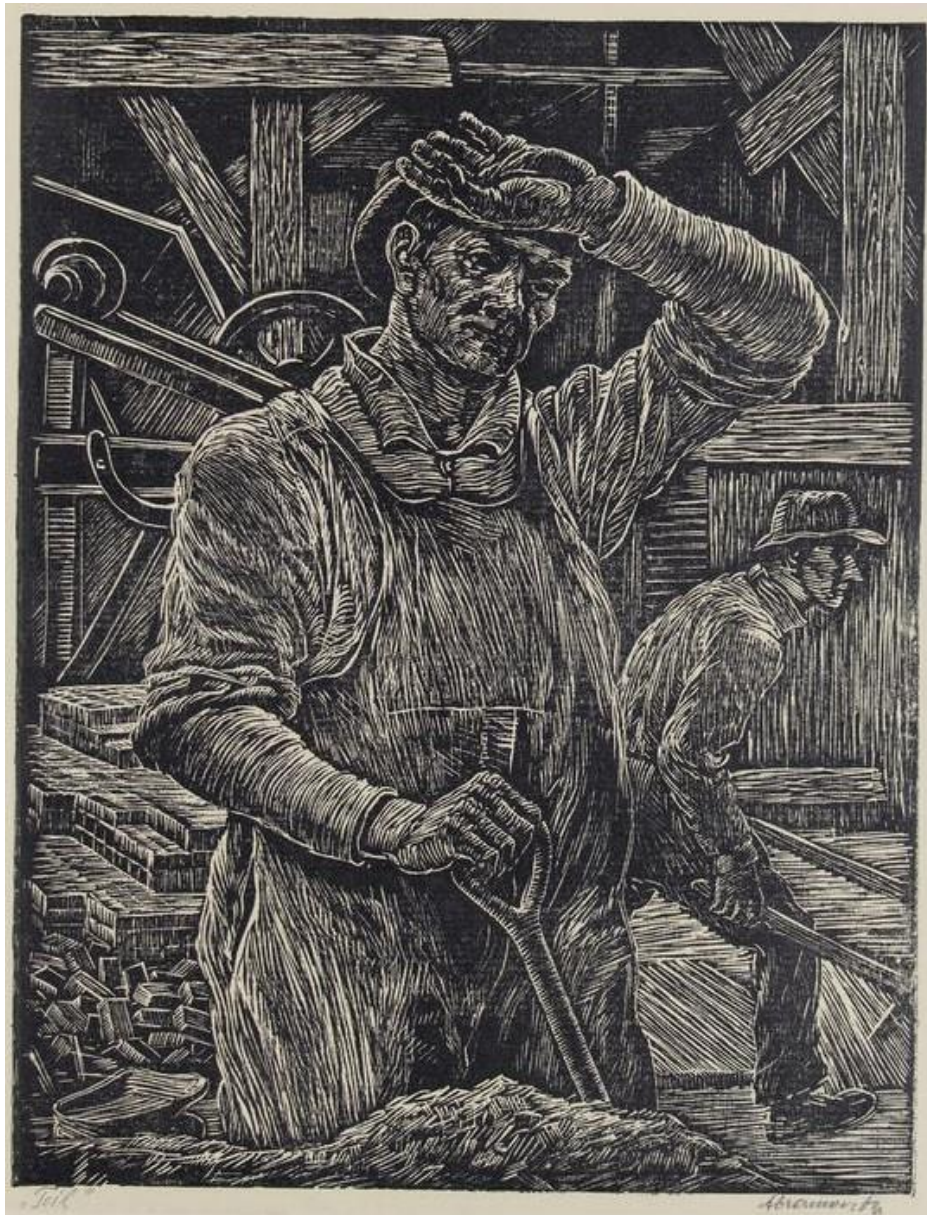
Gerrit Beneker (American, 1882-1934)

1912

Oil on canvas

Hope College Collection, 1987.1.3

Rapid industrialization and mechanization in America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries offered the promise of greater productivity and profitability, but also generated considerable anxiety and uncertainty among those whose jobs and lives were transformed by the changes. This painting by Grand Rapids artist Gerrit Beneker depicts a man with a hand shovel facing off against a much larger steam-powered excavator at a mining or construction site. By composing the image with the man's back to the viewer, Beneker invites us to step into the picture and imagine the man's thoughts. Is he pleased that the steam shovel will make his work easier, or is he afraid that the machine will make his job obsolete? The ambiguity of the scene makes this one of Beneker's most complex and interesting paintings.



Toil

Albert Abramovitz (American, born Latvia 1879-1963)

1932

Wood engraving

Hope College Collection, 2017.64

Latvian-born Albert Abramovitz studied painting and printmaking in Russia and France before moving to the United States in 1916. During the 1930s, Abramovitz lived in Brooklyn, New York where he created many scenes of everyday urban life, often focusing on the plight of the poor and oppressed. This image depicts a laborer on a construction site stopping to wipe his brow as another worker pushes a wheelbarrow in the background. Abramovitz created the print in 1932 at the height of the Great Depression when jobs were scarce and manual laborers in particular were often forced to work long hours for low wages.



Shipbreaking #10, Chittagong, Bangladesh

Edward Burtynsky (Canadian, born 1955)

2001

C-print

Hope College Collection, 2015.43.2

The son of a factory worker, Edward Burtynsky has spent much of his life as an artist exploring the impact of human industry on the natural environment. This haunting image belongs to a series of photographs Burtynsky took in Bangladesh, where he documented the often-dangerous work of disassembling de-commissioned container ships. Using rudimentary tools and little safety gear, the people of Bangladeshi coastal towns like Chittagong break down huge ocean-going vessels into their constituent materials that are then recycled, burned, or discarded in nearby landfills. While recycling used materials is generally positive, many older ships contain large quantities of asbestos, lead paint, and other toxic substances that may persist and cause harm to the environment for decades or even centuries after the ships are dismantled.



The Last Thanks

Wendy Red Star (American, b. 1981)

2006

Digital print

Hope College Collection, 2021.17

This photograph by Apsáalooke Crow artist Wendy Red Star uses dark satiric humor to criticize persistent stereotypes of Native Americans and White mythology surrounding America's first Thanksgiving in 1621. The central figure in the photograph is a self-portrait of the artist wearing a traditional Crow ceremonial costume. She is posed artificially at a long table with a group of skeletons wearing dollar-store feather headdresses. The skeletons remind us that while Thanksgiving is meant to celebrate the early English colonists' survival after a difficult first year in a new land, for Native Americans the arrival and survival of European settlers in North America resulted in millions of Native deaths from disease and White violence over the decades and centuries that followed. In the background of the photograph, a cartoonish inflatable turkey looms behind the table while the tabletop is spread with an array of processed foods, cartons of cigarettes, and piles of money. These visual elements remind us that the legacy of the first Thanksgiving's abundance has not been passed down equally to everyone, and that many Native Americans continue to suffer disproportionately from poverty and ill-health as a result of having their lands stolen and their cultures suppressed by numerous governments, corporations, and individuals over the past 400 years. Along with its references to the first Thanksgiving, the title and composition of the photograph also allude to Leonardo Da Vinci's famous painting of the Last Supper. By injecting this reference to an icon of European Christian art, Red Star reminds us that European colonization of the Americas was largely driven by religion and that many Christian churches and organizations played a shameful role in efforts to suppress Native American culture and force the assimilation of Native American people into mainstream White society during the 19th and 20th centuries.



Eka Numu, Red Comanche

Nocona Burgess (American, b. 1969)

2014

Oil on canvas

Hope College Collection, 2021.10

An enrolled member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma, Nocona Burgess makes art that counters negative stereotypes of Native Americans and seeks to capture the beauty, dignity, and complexity of indigenous American peoples and cultures. Descended from a prominent family of chiefs and artists, Burgess is interested in finding contemporary ways to portray the enduring strength and vitality of Native American culture. He often bases his paintings on historical photographs, which he recreates using bold colors and forceful brushwork to give the subjects greater power and presence. This painting is based on a 19th-century portrait of a Comanche chief or medicine man. The term “Eka” used in the painting’s title is the Comanche word for “red” while the word “Numu” is the Comanche name for themselves. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Comanche ranked among the most powerful indigenous tribes in the Southern Plains region of North America and they still exist there as a proud nation today.



The Hanging

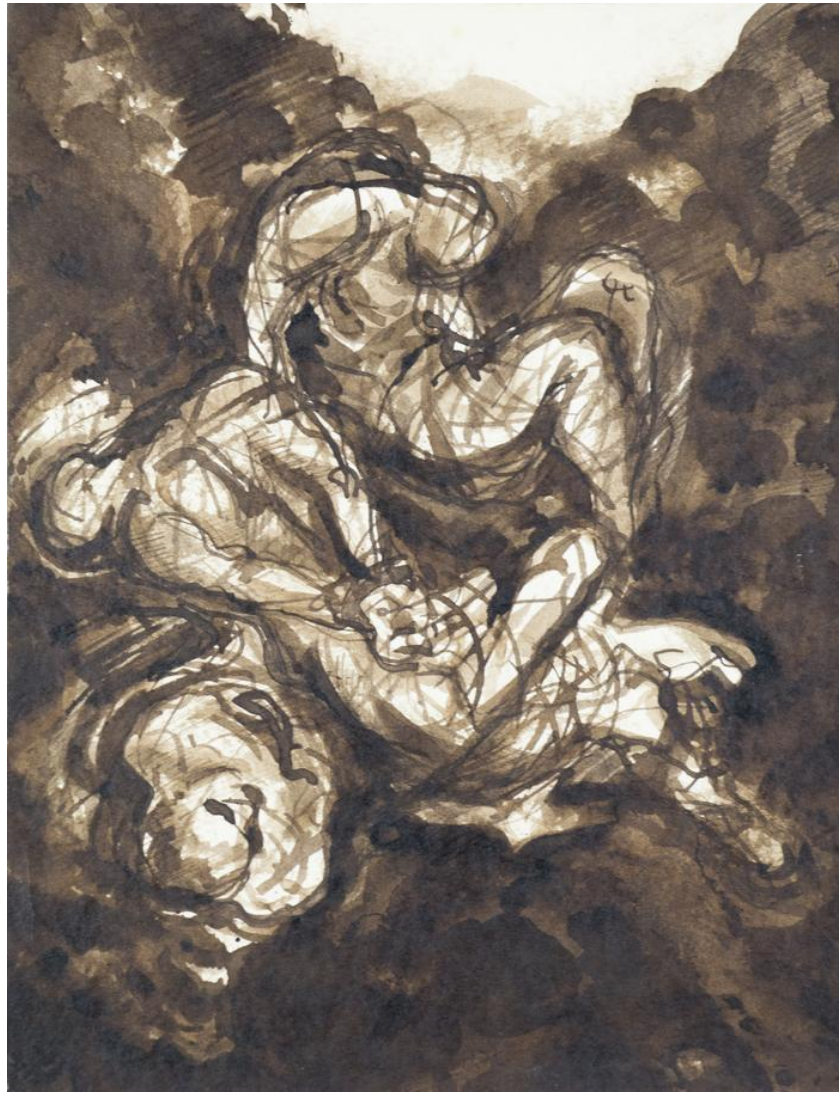
Hans Weingaertner (American, born Germany 1896-1970)

1932

Oil on canvas

Hope College Collection, 2015.54.1

Art has played an important role in the African American Civil Rights Movement since the 1920s. This disturbing painting from 1932 was created to awaken viewers to the horrors of lynching. Lynching refers to the unsanctioned killing of a person or persons by a non-official group of people, usually for some real or perceived crime. For more than a century after the Civil War, white supremacists used lynching as a terror tactic to suppress African American civil rights efforts, and historians have estimated that at least 4,000 Black Americans were murdered by lynching between 1865 and 1965. This image depicts a lynching from the perspective of the person being hanged. Looking down past a pair of bound feet at the faces of the lynch mob, we are forced to imagine the terror of the victim, and to wonder at the level of hatred and moral indifference to human life that could inspire such a grotesque act of violence. The painting was created by Hans Weingaertner, a German-born artist who emigrated to the United States in 1922. Before he left Germany, Weingaertner had been associated with the New Objectivity Movement, a loose association of politically progressive artists who believed that art should reflect social reality, even if that reality was ugly and uncomfortable.



Missippi

Milton Derr (American, born 1932)

1965

Ink and wash on paper

Hope College Collection, 2018.20.2

Along with desegregation and criminal justice reform, the restoration of voting rights to African Americans was a central goal of the Civil Rights movement during the 1950s and 60s. This dark, emotive drawing portrays the bodies of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, three Civil Rights workers who were murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi while campaigning to register African American voters during the so-called Freedom Summer of 1964. The bodies of the three activists were buried in an earthen dam and remained hidden for two months before their remains were finally discovered. Public outrage over the murders fueled support for passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. When Mississippi state officials refused to prosecute the killers, they were tried in federal court for Civil Rights violations and seven defendants were found guilty. However, because the federal Civil Rights charges carried lighter sentences than state murder charges, none of the convicted killers served more than six years for their crime. The title of the drawing is deliberately misspelled to approximate the vernacular pronunciation of Mississippi in that state.



Commemorating Every Black Man Who Lives to See Twenty-One

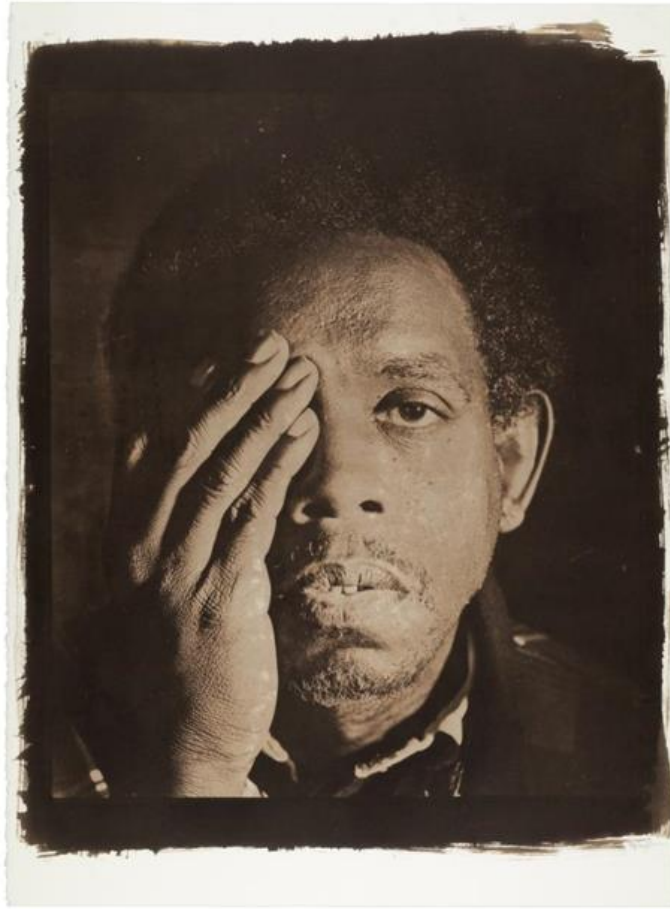
Carrie Mae Weems (American, born 1953)

1992

Glazed and gilt Lenox bone china

Hope College Collection, 2017.67.2

Carrie Mae Weems is an African American, multi-media artist whose work often deals with race, gender and social justice issues. This plate comes from a series Weems created in 1992 to commemorate aspects of Black life that are often ignored or marginalized by the white majority culture. The gut-wrenching inscription on the plate was originally a lament for the large numbers of young Black men who were killed by drugs, gangs and police violence in the 1980s and early 90s, but it has taken on new relevance today in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. There is intentional irony in the fact that Weems created this artwork using Lenox china since Lenox is one of America's oldest and most prestigious ceramic manufacturers, best known for providing dinner services to the White House and other elite clients.



George

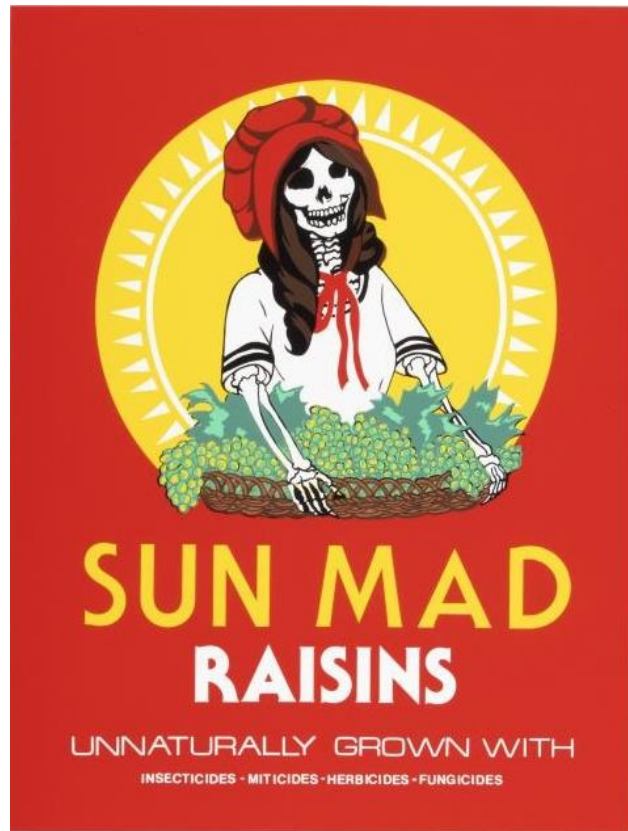
Rashid Johnson (American, born 1977)

1999

Van Dyke brown print

Hope College Collection, 2015.9

In the late 1990s, artist Glenn Ligon and curator Thelma Golden coined the term “post-black art” to describe the work of younger African American artists that was rooted in, but not exclusively defined by, their Black identities. Post-black art was intersectional art that often addressed a wide range of issues beyond race, including class, gender, and sexual identity. The maker of this print, Rashid Johnson, was included in the first-ever exhibition of post-black art held at Harlem’s Studio Museum in 2001. The print is based on a photograph Johnson took while he was an undergraduate student at Columbia College in Chicago. The photograph belongs to a larger series of portraits of homeless people that Johnson created to explore social and economic inequality in contemporary America. The subject’s enigmatic hand gesture—covering half his face—and his weary, thousand-yard stare encourage us to imagine his life story. Assuming George was about fifty years old when this photograph was taken in the late 1990s, he would have grown up during the height of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 60s and may have served in the Vietnam War. He witnessed the decline of the urban manufacturing economy in the 1970s that severely reduced employment opportunities for many Black Americans, and lived through the so-called “war on drugs” in the 1980s and 90s that disproportionately sent Black men to prison. Although we cannot be certain about all the details of George’s life, his worn face and traumatized expression strongly suggest that he suffered from the systemic racism that continues to negatively impact the lives of many Black Americans today.



Sun Mad

Ester Hernandez (American, born 1944)

1981/82

Screen print

Hope College Collection, purchased with funds donated by Ronald '62 and Gerri Vander Molen, 2021.5

The terms Chicano, Chicana, and Chicax refer specifically to people of Mexican ancestry who were born in or live in the United States. The terms first came into popular usage during the 1960s and 70s as part of a broader campaign to promote the civil rights of Mexican Americans, many of whose families have lived in the US for generations. From the beginning, the Chicax civil rights movement was influenced by, and closely intertwined with, the African American and Native American civil rights movements. Over time it has continued to evolve and now intersects with many other civil rights movements as well, including the movements for women's rights and LGBTQ+ rights.

Ester Hernandez is a leading figure in the Chicax art movement. Born in California into a farm worker family of Mexican/Yaqui Indian heritage, she studied anthropology at the University of California Berkeley before becoming a professional artist in the 1970s. Hernandez quickly earned a reputation for her mural paintings, posters, and other artworks that celebrate Mexican American identity and culture. This print parodying the imagery of the famous Sun Maid raisin brand is one of several artworks created by Hernandez to draw attention to the use of dangerous chemicals and the exploitation of migrant farm workers in America's agricultural industry. A large proportion of America's fresh fruit and produce is harvested by migrant workers from Mexico and Central America, who typically work long hours, under difficult conditions, for low pay. Despite the vital role they play in our nation's economy and food chain, these workers are highly vulnerable to unfair treatment and abuse, especially if they are undocumented immigrants.



Electric Hero: Cesar Chavez

Linda Vallejo (American, born 1951)

2009

Acrylic on canvas

Hope College Collection, 2022.35

Cesar Chavez (1927-1993) was a Mexican American labor leader and civil rights activist. Born in Arizona, Chavez lived most of his life in California where for decades he led efforts to unionize agricultural workers while fighting to win them better pay and safer working conditions. He was, and still is, widely regarded as a hero by many Mexican Americans and has been memorialized by numerous artworks as well as by hundreds of roads, parks, buildings, and other structures that have been named in his honor around the United States. Artist Linda Vallejo painted this portrait of Chavez in 2009 as part of a larger series depicting her political and cultural heroes, including Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Frida Kahlo. The painting's pixelated style and neon colors were inspired by Vallejo's interests in digital imagery and the aesthetics of traditional Mexican folk art.



American Guardian

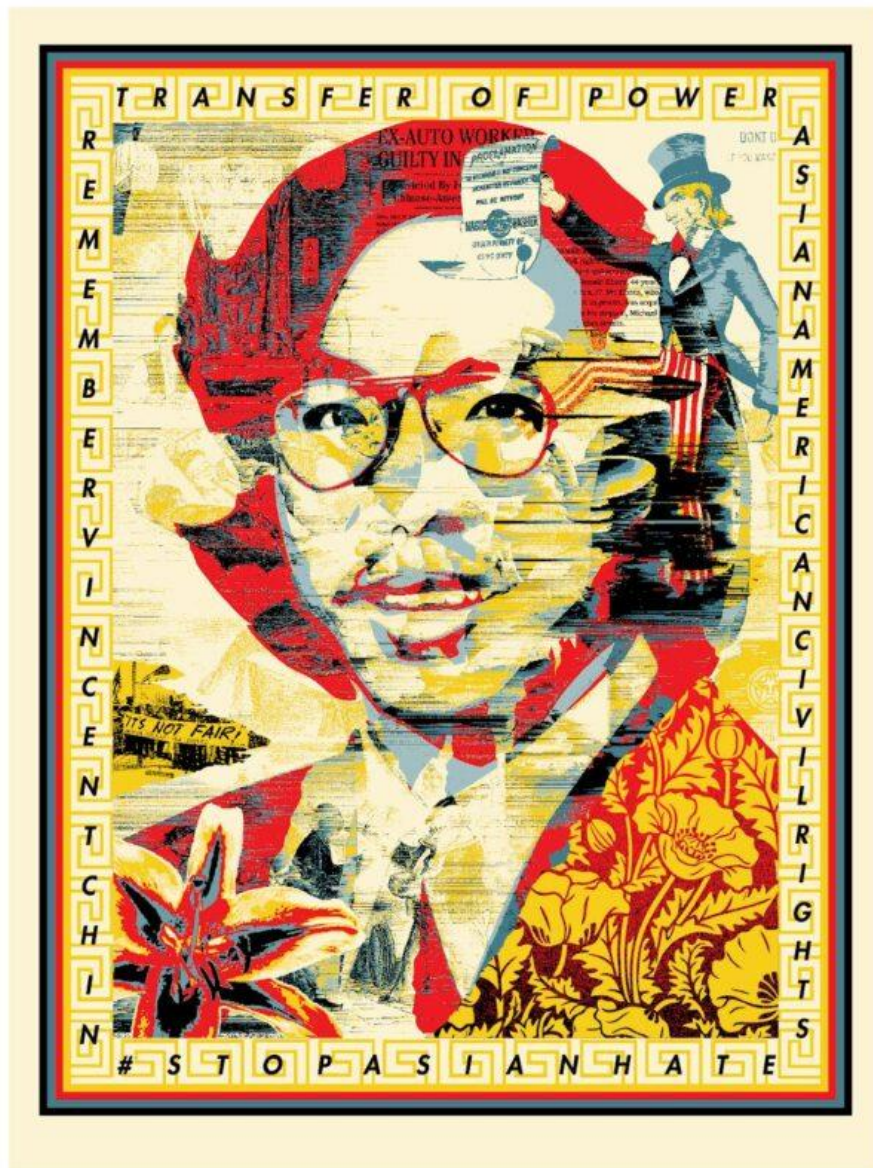
Roger Shimomura (American, born 1939)

2007

Lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2017.17

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the American government rounded up approximately 120,000 Japanese-Americans living in the western United States and incarcerated them in military prison camps. Many of the imprisoned Japanese-Americans lost their houses, automobiles, and other property, and a significant number suffered physical injury, psychological trauma, and even death as a result of their forced confinement. Roger Shimomura is a third-generation Japanese American whose family was incarcerated in two different camps from 1942 to 1944. Although he was only a child at the time, Shimomura's own memories and the stories he heard from relatives have provided powerful inspiration for many works of art that address the fundamental injustice of the Japanese-American incarceration program and the persistence of racial stereotyping and anti-Asian bias in the United States.



In Honor of Vincent Jen Chin

Gordon Cheung (British, born 1975) and Shepard Fairey (American, born 1970)
2021

Screenprint

Hope College Collection, 2024.28

Vincent Chin was a Chinese-American man from suburban Detroit who was killed in 1982 by two White autoworkers who reportedly shouted anti-Asian racial slurs during the attack. Chin's death occurred at a time when American auto makers were struggling to compete with their foreign—especially Japanese—rivals. Mistakenly assuming that Chin was Japanese, the killers confronted him at a nightclub and blamed him for the loss of American jobs. When they encountered Chin again outside the club, they chased him down and beat him to death with a baseball bat. The killers accepted a plea bargain charge of manslaughter and were each sentenced to three years of probation and a \$3,000 fine. This print was created by artists Gordon Cheung and Shepard Fairey in 2021 to protest a surge in anti-Asian hate crimes that occurred in the United States and other countries around the world following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020.



Through the Flower 2

Judy Chicago (American, born 1939)

1972

Color pencil on paper

Hope College Collection, 2014.2

Judy Chicago is a pioneering American artist and writer who played a fundamental role in establishing the fields of feminist art and art history. This drawing is a study for an iconic Chicago image that exists in multiple versions in paintings, drawings and prints. As Chicago has explained, the image represents the evolution of her consciousness from a version of femininity constructed by a male-dominated society to a more liberated, independent conception of what it means to be a woman. The image positions the viewer as if she is inside a flower looking out at the sky beyond. The tube-like petals that lead to the center of the image represent the stereotypical identification of women with flowers. At the same time, the petals also remind us that flowers are sexual organs and offer the promise of a birth-like passage to another state of being.

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST:

Working without the pressure of success

Not having to be in shows with men

Having an escape from the art world in your 4 free-lance jobs

Knowing your career might pick up after you're eighty

Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make it will be labeled feminine

Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position

Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others

Having the opportunity to choose between career and motherhood

Not having to choke on those big cigars or paint in Italian suits

Having more time to work when your mate dumps you for someone younger

Being included in revised versions of art history

Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius

Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist

Guerrilla Girls (American Artists' Collective, founded 1985)

1988

Offset lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2017.16

Guerrilla Girls is a feminist artist and activist collective founded in New York in 1985. The group is dedicated to exposing gender and racial discrimination in the art world and in society more broadly. The members of Guerrilla Girls keep their identities a secret by wearing gorilla masks at public events so that the audience remains focused on the group's message rather than any individual artist's personality. Billboards, posters, leaflets and other ephemeral media have been an important part of the Guerrilla Girls' artistic production from the very beginning. Art critic Susan Tallman once wrote about their early poster campaigns: "The posters were rude; they named names and they printed statistics (and almost always cited the sources of those statistics at the bottom, making them difficult to dismiss). They embarrassed people. In other words, they worked." *The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist* is a good example of an early Guerrilla Girls poster that uses ironic humor to make a serious point about the unequal treatment of female artists in the art world.



Madame Cezanne

Grace Hartigan (American, 1922-2008)

1992

Oil on canvas

Hope College Collection, 2015.47

Grace Hartigan's paintings often employ art historical references to comment on current social and cultural issues. This canvas alludes to a group of portraits painted by Paul Cezanne in the late 19th century depicting his wife, Hortense Fiquet. Although Fiquet sat as a model for Cezanne at least twenty-nine times and was an important part of his personal and professional life, she has received scant attention from Cezanne scholars. By disintegrating the image of Madame Cezanne into splatters of paint, Hartigan encourages viewers to think about the many women whose roles in art and other areas of culture have been ignored over the centuries.



By leaving her husband, Mary empowered her four daughters to never tolerate abuse. St. Paul, Minnesota, 1985.

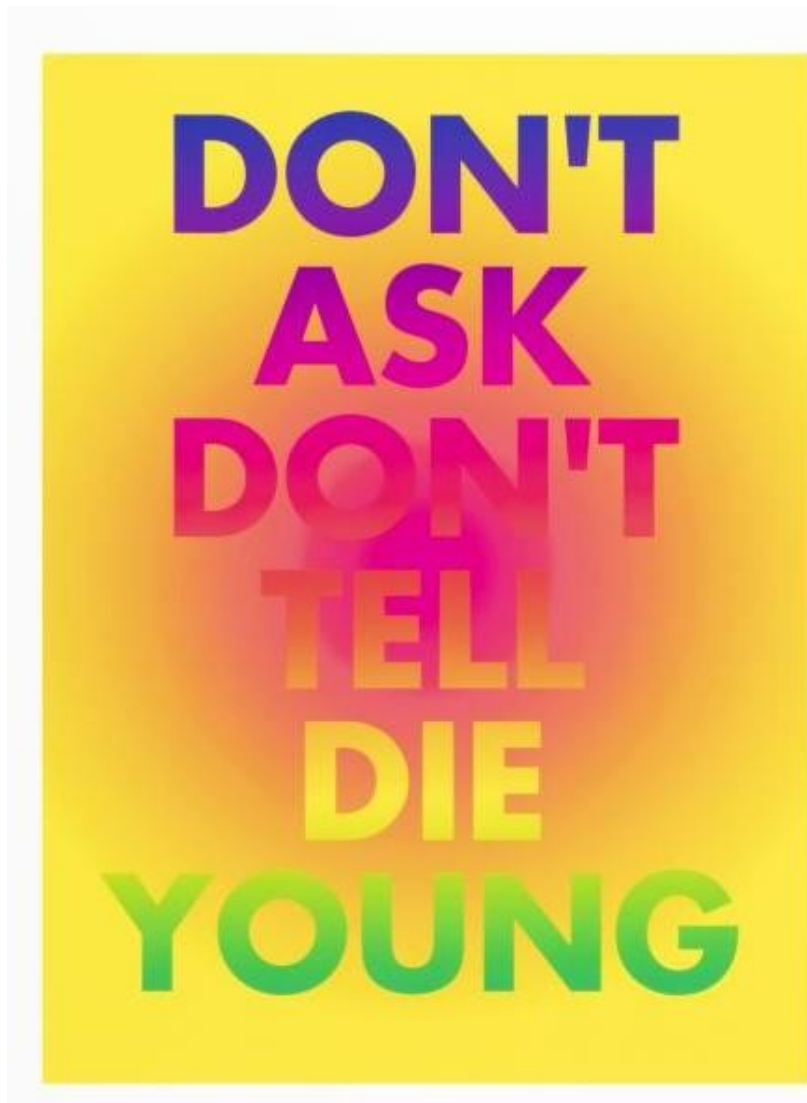
Donna Ferrato (American, born 1949)

1985

Gelatin silver print

Hope College Collection, gift of Scott Tannen, 2019.91.6

Documentary photographer Donna Ferrato has earned an international reputation for her decades-long effort to highlight the problem of domestic violence. This photograph was taken as part of a project Ferrato began in the 1980s to document the lives of women who survived and escaped abusive relationships. The narrative title identifies the survivor and briefly encapsulates her story. The photograph was published in Ferrato's 1991 book *Living with the Enemy*.



Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Die Young

David McDiarmid (Australian, 1952-1995)

1994/2012

Inkjet print

Hope College Collection, purchased with funds donated by David Kamansky and Gerald Wheaton, 2022.20

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was the official policy governing service by LGBTQ people in the US military from 1993 to 2011. It allowed LGBTQ people to serve in the military as long as they were not open about their sexual identities; but if a person was open about their identity, the policy allowed them to be discharged from military service or barred from enlisting in the first place. This print by Australian artist and gay rights activist David McDiarmid uses the "don't ask, don't tell" phrase ironically to criticize the culture of secrecy and shame that discouraged some LGBTQ people—gay men, especially—from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status to potential sexual partners during the 1980s and 90s. The failure of people to ask or tell about their HIV/AIDS status allowed the disease to spread and caused many more deaths than might have been the case if the epidemic had been properly managed as a public health emergency. Tragically, McDiarmid himself was a victim of that culture of secrecy and he died of HIV/AIDS-related complications in 1995 shortly before his 43rd birthday.



LGBT(Q?)

Trey Speegle (American, born 1960)

2019

Archival pigments on paper

Hope College Collection, 2022.6

Author, artist and gay rights activist Trey Speegle created this image in 2019 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, when the gay community in New York City fought back against intimidation and oppression after the police raided a Greenwich Village gay bar called the Stonewall Inn. The Stonewall Uprising is widely regarded as a key milestone in the ongoing struggle for LGBTQ+ rights in this country. Like many of Speegle's artworks, the image was inspired by vintage paint-by-number kits and also recalls the illustrations found in some mid-20th century children's books. Although originally intended as a celebration of LGBTQ progress, the print's imagery has assumed new meanings in light of recent conservative efforts to limit the ability of public schools and libraries to teach children about LGBTQ+ issues.



Relationship #35 (Pygmalion)

Zackary Drucker (American, born 1983) and Rhys Ernst (American, born 1982)

2013

Digital C-print

Hope College Collection, 2021.32

Between 2008 and 2013, artists Zackary Drucker and Rhys Ernst took a series of photographs to document their evolving relationship as a transgender couple who were still in the process of transitioning in opposite directions. The photos capture both the physical transformation of their bodies as well as their changing states of mind, and are important as one of the first visual accounts of trans-trans love. This image is a portrait of Drucker as seen reflected in a make-up mirror. The word *Pygmalion* in the title refers to an ancient Greek myth about an artist who creates a sculpture of a beautiful woman and brings her to life. *Pygmalion* is also the title of a 1913 play by George Bernard Shaw about a young woman who is transformed from a humble flower seller into a respectable lady. These stories about the creation and transformation of female characters must have resonated strongly with Drucker as she neared the end of her own transitioning process.



Take Refuge in Your Heart, Poor Vagabond

Georges Rouault (French, 1871-1958)

Designed 1922: printed 1948

Aquatint and drypoint

Hope College Collection, 1967.2.5

Georges Rouault was a devout Roman Catholic whose work was directly inspired by his religious sentiments. This print comes from Rouault's great *Miserere* series, which was designed between 1914 and 1927 in response to the horrors of World War One. The series—which contains 58 prints—explores the importance of maintaining faith in the face of suffering, and hope in the face of tragedy. This particular image depicts an adult reaching out to a child with a gesture of comfort. From the title and the pack on the man's back, we can deduce that both figures are wartime refugees. That implied narrative in turn allows us to imagine their emotional states and to empathize with their plight. In addition to its emotional content, the image is an excellent example of Rouault's distinctive style, which combines elements of Fauvism and Expressionism yet is uniquely his own.



Substance of a Town

Raphael Gleitsmann (American, 1910-1995)

1949

Oil on panel

Hope College Collection, 2015.65

Ohio artist Raphael Gleitsmann served as a combat engineer in Europe during World War Two. Deeply troubled by the death and destruction he witnessed in the war, he used painting as a form of therapy to help himself recover emotionally from his post-traumatic stress. For nine years after the war, Gleitsmann produced canvases featuring desolate battlefields and ruined towns. His grimly powerful images won him national attention, including a first-place finish in the prestigious Carnegie Institute Invitational of 1948. After working through his inner turmoil, Gleitsmann lost interest in painting and spent much of his remaining life working as a carpenter.



Explosion

Roy Lichtenstein (American, 1923-1997)

1967

Lithograph

Gift of the Holland City Council for the Arts, 1970.2.8

Roy Lichtenstein was a leading figure in the American Pop Art movement. He is best known for using the style and imagery of popular comic books to comment on serious social and political issues. Lichtenstein created this print for a multi-artist portfolio published by the Hollander Workshop in New York. The dramatic image of a mid-air explosion is one of many Lichtenstein created during the Vietnam War-era to criticize the celebration of war and violence in American society.



Family (from the Hiroshima series)

Jacob Lawrence (American, 1917-2000)

1983

Screenprint

Hope College Collection, 2020.32.3

In 1982, artist Jacob Lawrence was commissioned to create a set of images for a special edition of John Hersey's 1946 book *Hiroshima*, which told the story of the atomic bomb that was dropped by the United States military on the city of Hiroshima, Japan in 1945. The book recounted the devastating effects the bombing had on the lives of six survivors, and it continued to be read throughout the Cold War period as a poignant warning about the dangers of nuclear war. Altogether there are eight images in Lawrence's *Hiroshima* series. This image depicts a family seated around a dining table at the moment of the bomb blast. The force of the blast is collapsing the table and chairs and melting the skin and flesh of the figures, revealing the white bones of their skeletons. Lawrence meant for his images—like the text—to shock and horrify audiences and to serve as a protest against the inhumanity of war. As he explained in a colophon to the book: "...I read and reread *Hiroshima* several times and, in doing so, I began to see great devastation in the twisted and mutilated bodies of humans, birds, fishes and all of the other animals and living things that inherit our earth. The flora and the fauna and the land that were at one time alive, were now seared, mangled, deformed and devoid of life. And I thought, what have we accomplished over these many centuries? We have produced great geniuses in music, the sciences, the arts, dance, literature, architecture and oratory among many other disciplines. And we have in the meantime developed the means to destroy, in the most horrible manner, that life that is our God-given right."



Traditional Transformations

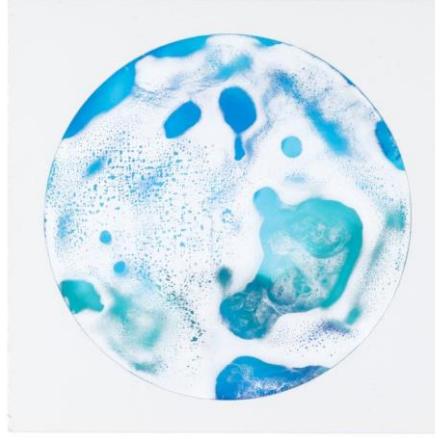
Kelly Church (American, born 1967)

2019

Black ash, sweetgrass, copper, Rit dye, velvet, glass, emerald ash borer

Hope College Collection, 2021.18a-c

For centuries the Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, and other indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region used black ash wood to make baskets, fish traps, snowshoes, lacrosse sticks and various other woven and bentwood objects. Although all of these objects can now be made from other materials, black ash weaving remains an important tradition that helps many Native American individuals and communities maintain a sense of connection to their cultural heritage. That heritage is threatened, however, by an invasive insect, the Emerald Ash Borer, which was inadvertently brought to the Great Lakes region from Asia in the 1990s and is now killing large numbers of black ash trees throughout the area. Michigan artist Kelly Church draws attention to this danger by making black ash baskets in which some portions of the basket are woven with materials other than wood to signify the disappearance of the black ash trees. For this basket, Church dyed the ash wood green and used copper as the replacement material to mimic the natural coloring of the Emerald Ash Borer. The inside of the basket is lined with velvet and contains a specimen of the invasive beetle preserved in a glass vial. Church is a fifth-generation black ash basket maker of mixed Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Odawa and European heritage and is an enrolled member of the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Potawatomi Indians in Allegan County, Michigan.



40x40: Day 2, Day 9 and Day 20

John Sabraw (British, born 1968)

2021

Paint on aluminum

Hope College Collection, 2022.7.1-3

Ohio University art professor John Sabraw extracts metallic oxides from water polluted by mining and manufacturing operations, and uses those metallic oxides to make the pigments that appear in his evocative abstract paintings. Sabraw sees his art as a fusion of art and science, as he once explained in an interview: "I collaborate with many scientists and artists in widely differing fields, and I have come to the conclusion that scientists and artists share two critical aspects: curiosity and failure. We are endlessly curious, try new things, and fail often. But that failure does not dampen our curiosity. So the artist, like the scientist, has a crucial role to perform in our society: see things differently, act on this vision, report the failures and successes."



Cit  Soleil 15

Antonio Bolfo (American, born 1981)

2013

Archival inkjet print

Hope College Collection, 2022.49

Some scientists believe that Earth has entered a new geologic age called the Anthropocene in which the planet's land, water, and atmosphere are being fundamentally altered by human activity. Landfills containing the accumulated waste of our consumption-oriented societies are one type of landscape feature associated with the new Anthropocene age. This photograph by artist Antonio Bolfo depicts the massive Truitier Landfill in Cit  Soleil, an extremely poor, densely populated settlement near Port-au-Prince in Haiti. Dumptrucks arrive around the clock bringing more than 800 tons of garbage to the landfill every day. With few other economic opportunities open to them, the residents of Cit  Soleil scrounge through the refuse looking for things they can re-use or sell. Some of the garbage at Truitier is burned in the open, creating noxious clouds of smoke that waft into nearby neighborhoods. During the rainy season, runoff from the landfill contaminates local streams and groundwater reservoirs and creates an ideal breeding ground for malarial mosquitoes.



Earth on Fire

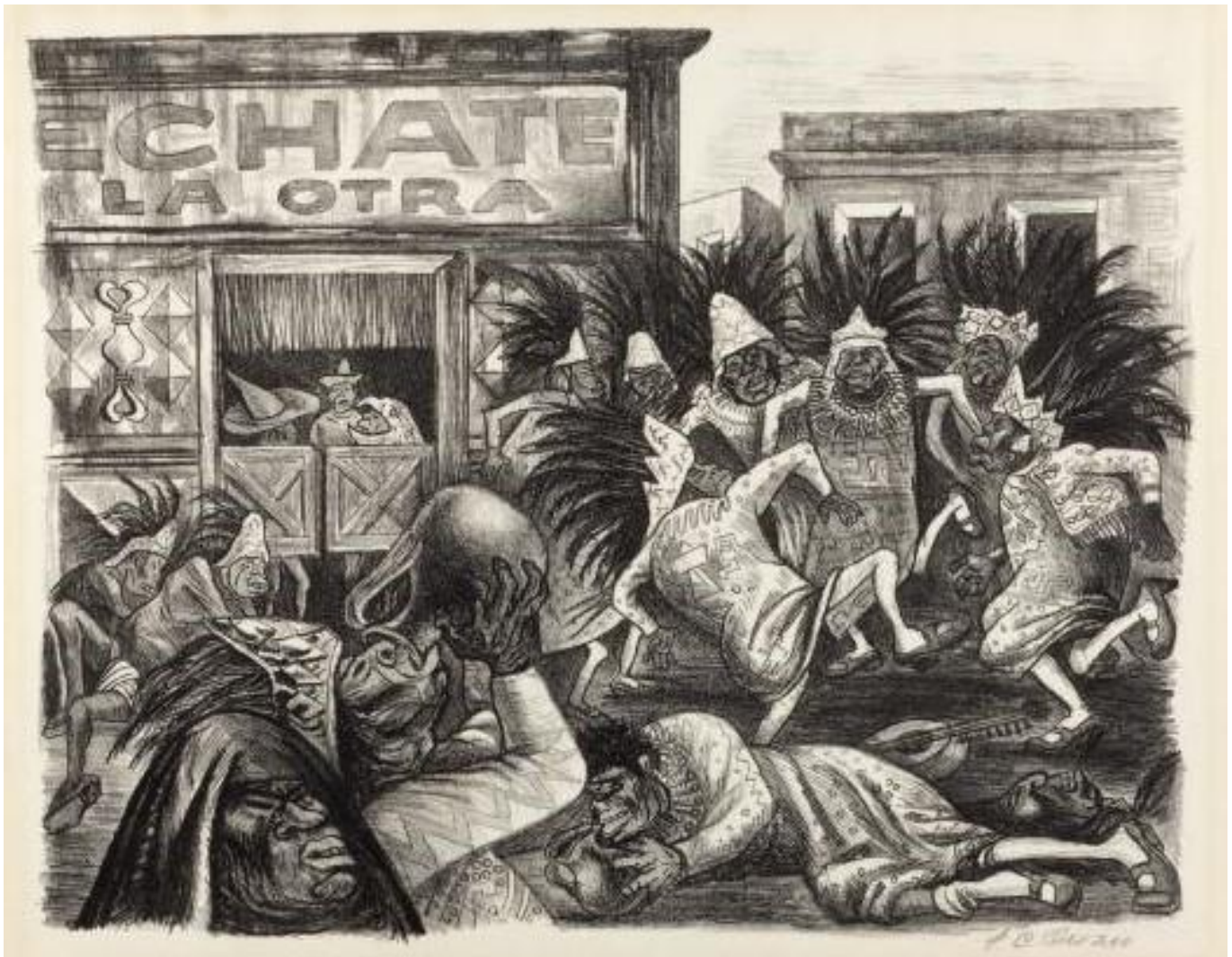
Cleon Peterson (American, born 1973)

2020

Screen print

Hope College Collection, 2020.83

This print by Los Angeles-based artist Cleon Peterson effectively conveys the sense of impending doom that many people feel when confronted with news stories about climate change and other environmental problems. The image of a kneeling figure holding a burning globe on his shoulders derives from a story in Greek mythology about Atlas, a Titan who took part in a war against the Olympian gods. After the Titans were defeated, the Olympians punished Atlas by forcing him to support the sky upon his shoulders. Artists in the ancient world and later in Renaissance Europe often depicted this story by showing Atlas as a kneeling figure holding a celestial sphere on his shoulders. Inevitably, some artists mistook the celestial sphere for a terrestrial globe, resulting in the image we see here.



Pulqueria

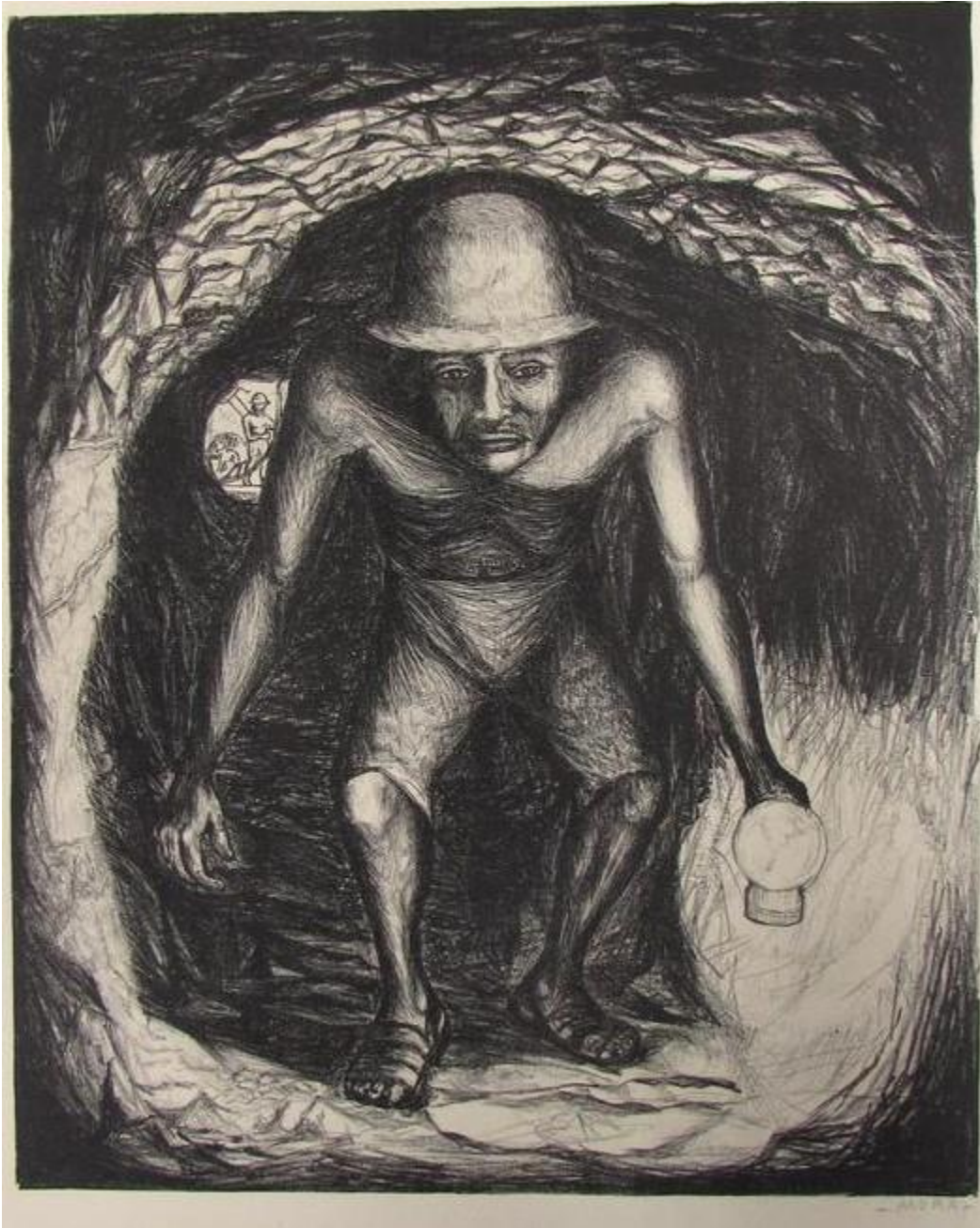
José Clemente Orozco (Mexican, 1883-1949)

1928

Lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2023.62.2

A pulqueria is a shop that sells pulque, a traditional Mexican alcoholic drink made from the fermented juice of the maguey cactus. For centuries, pulque was consumed mainly by Mexico's indigenous peoples and working classes, and it became a cultural symbol of those groups in the years after the 1920 Mexican Revolution. This print depicts a group of men wearing a mix of indigenous and Western-style clothes drinking and dancing outside a pulqueria named *Echate La Otra*, which translates as "Have Another One." The figures' exaggerated features and gestures indicate that they are intended to be seen as caricatures of drunken, dissolute behavior, but the implied criticism is not directed at the men themselves. Rather, the print is more likely meant to criticize the political policies, social prejudices, and economic inequalities that historically forced many people from disadvantaged groups into lives of poverty and vice.



Silver Mine Worker

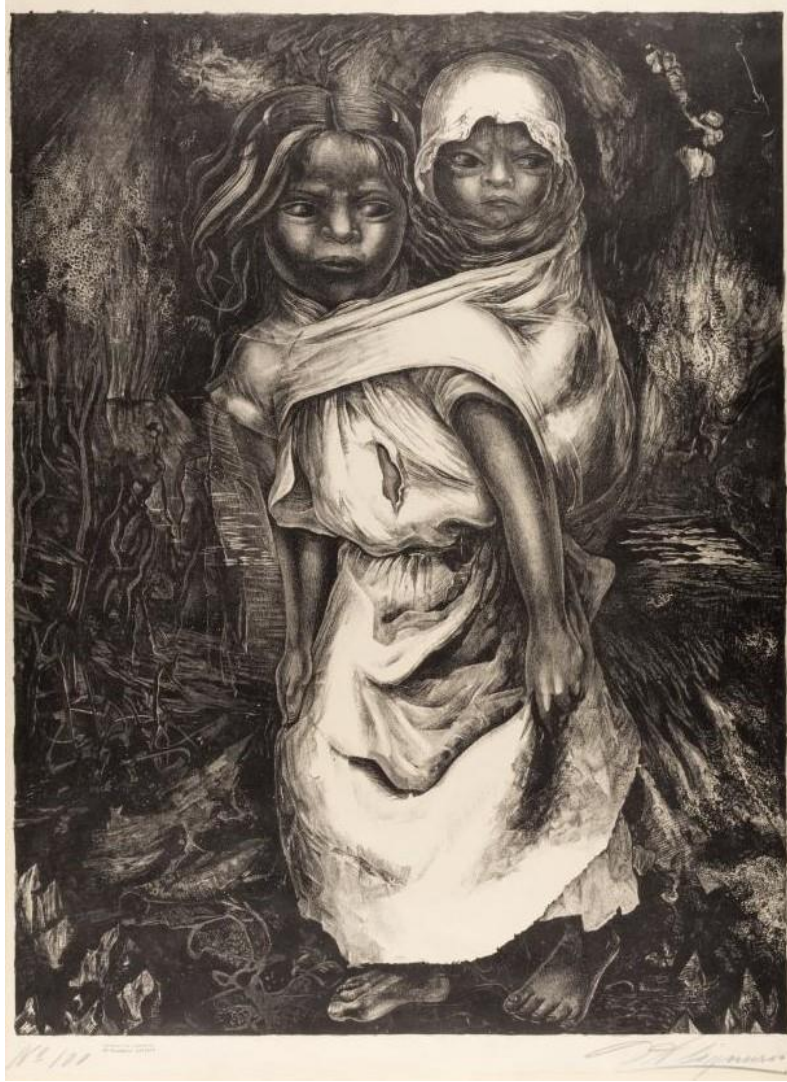
Francisco Mora (Mexican, 1922-2002)

1946

Lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2016.1.1.2

Mexico is home to some of the richest silver deposits in the world. After the Spanish conquest of Mexico in the 16th century, huge quantities of Mexican silver were shipped overseas to fuel the economies of Europe and Asia. Historically, most Mexican silver was mined by hand. Miners often worked in low tunnels with poor ventilation and drainage and accidental deaths were common. The exploitation of Mexican mines and miners continued well into the 20th century, as we see in this Francisco Mora print depicting a silver miner working in the state of Hidalgo north of Mexico City.



Two Children (Dos Niños)

David Alfaro Siqueiros (Mexican, 1894-1974)

1956

Lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2023.62.1

This print by Mexican Muralist artist David Alfaro Siqueiros is also known by an alternate title: Child Mother (Madre Niña). It depicts a young girl carrying a toddler in a sling on her back. The girl's torn clothes, bare feet, disheveled hair, and weary facial expression suggest desperate poverty and a loss of childhood innocence. The print is based on a painting Siqueiros made in 1936, which in turn was based on a 1915 photograph taken by artist Hugo Brehme. Siqueiros created the painting and print to draw attention to the plight of Mexico's indigenous peoples, especially the women and children who suffer most from poverty and lack of access to education and jobs. This impression of the print comes from an edition that was printed by Elizabeth Catlett, an African American artist who moved to Mexico in the 1940s after being unable to find gallery representation or a teaching position in the United States despite having an MFA degree from the University of Iowa, which was one of the leading art schools in America at that time.



Pepsi (from the Great Criticism Series)

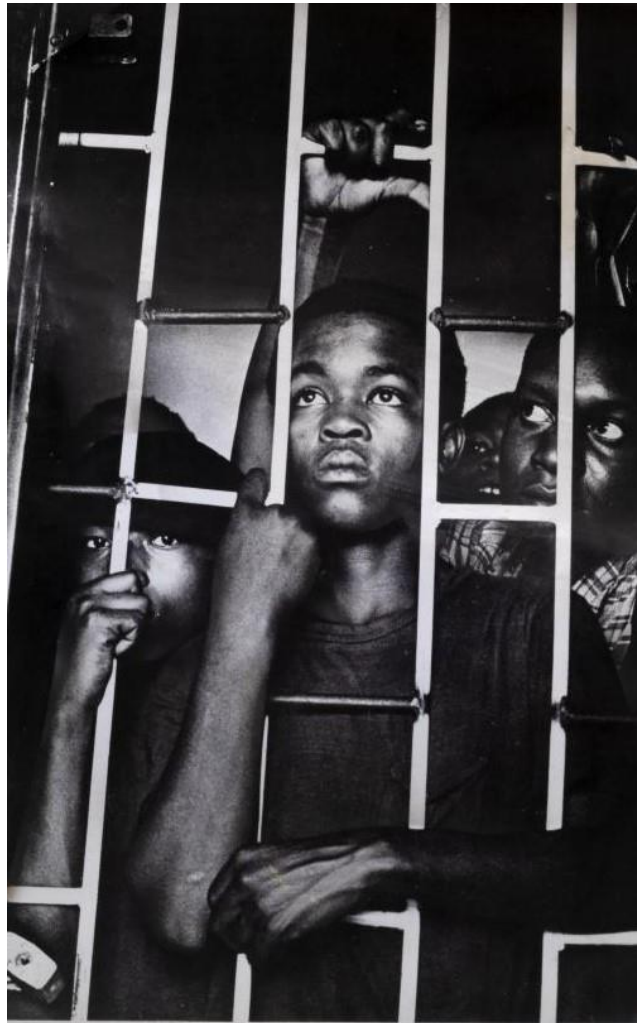
Wang Guangyi (Chinese, born 1957)

2006

Lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2015.16

Wang Guangyi is a leader of China's Political Pop movement. Political Pop emerged in the 1990s in response to the contradictions between China's ostensibly communist political system and its increasingly capitalistic economic system. Wang's *Great Criticism* series juxtaposes imagery from political propaganda art that was ubiquitous in China during the 1950s and 60s with brand names and slogans from Western-style commercial advertising that began appearing in China during the 1980s and 1990s. The images are overlaid with strings of numbers that recall both government-issued personal identification numbers and consumer product barcodes. In keeping with the original spirit of Pop Art, Wang has produced thousands of paintings and prints in his *Great Criticism* series, proving that even avant-garde protest art can become a valuable commodity in contemporary China.



These Boys Were Caught Trespassing in a White Area

Ernest Cole (South African, 1940-1990)

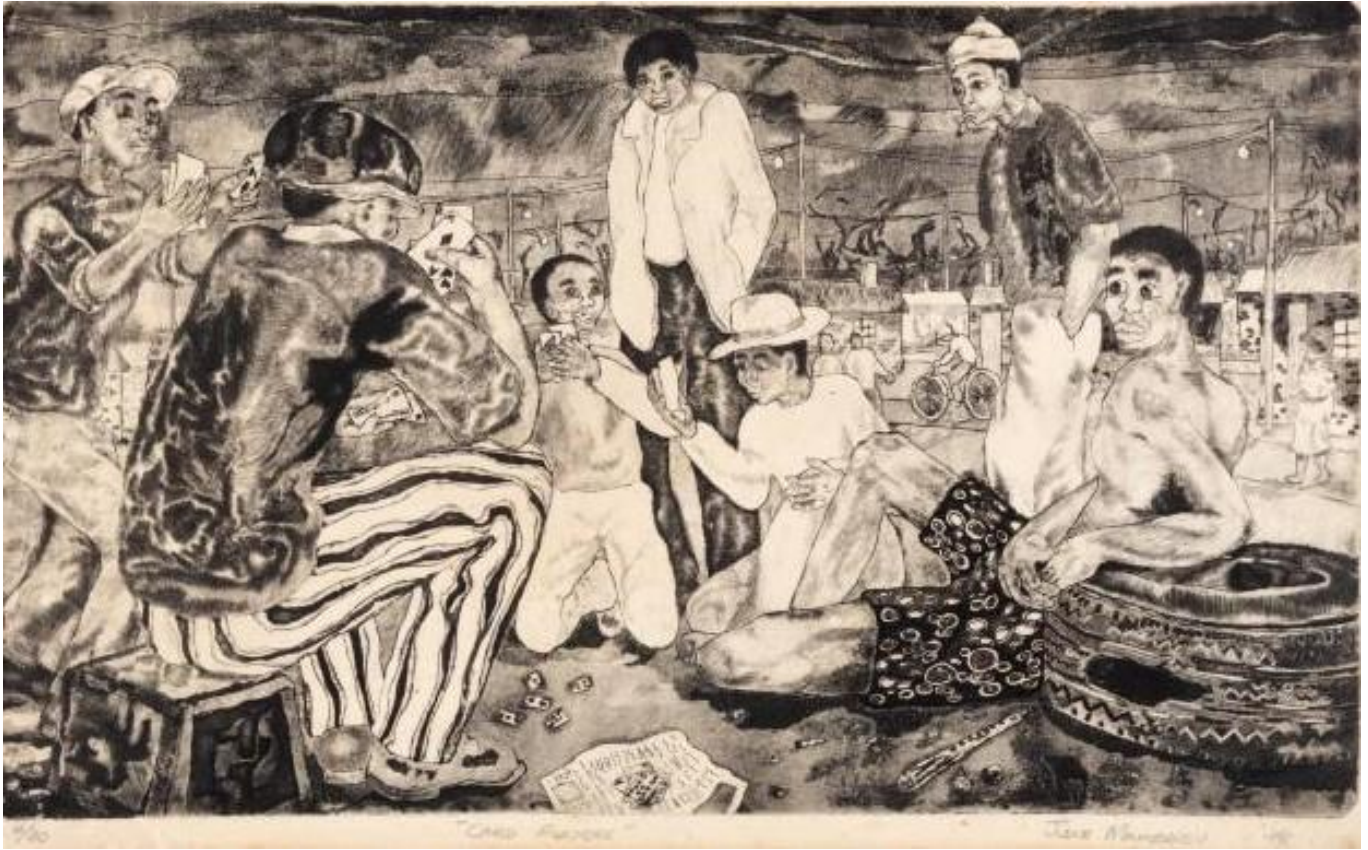
1967

Gelatin silver print

Hope College Collection, 2024.14

Apartheid was a government-mandated system of racial segregation that existed in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The apartheid system was aimed at preserving the power of South Africa's minority White population by imposing restrictions on housing, education, employment, health care, political activities, and social interactions for the country's non-White citizens. Apartheid was strongly opposed by most of South Africa's Black, Asian, and mixed-race populations, along with a smaller percentage of the White population. Resistance to apartheid was manifested in periodic labor strikes, consumer boycotts, and protest rallies that were often harshly suppressed by the South African government.

Art played an important role in anti-apartheid resistance. This photograph of young boys who were jailed for straying into a Whites-only area was taken by Ernest Cole, a Black South African photographer who used his camera to expose the harsh injustices of the apartheid regime in the early 1960s. Under increasing threat from the South African government, Cole fled his homeland in 1966 and published his images in a book titled *House of Bondage* in 1967. In explaining the book's title, Cole wrote: "Three-hundred years of white supremacy in South Africa have placed us in bondage, stripped us of our dignity, robbed us of our self-esteem and surrounded us with hate." This photograph is one of the images from *House of Bondage*. This impression was printed in 1967 to accompany a French press release about the book's publication.



Card Players

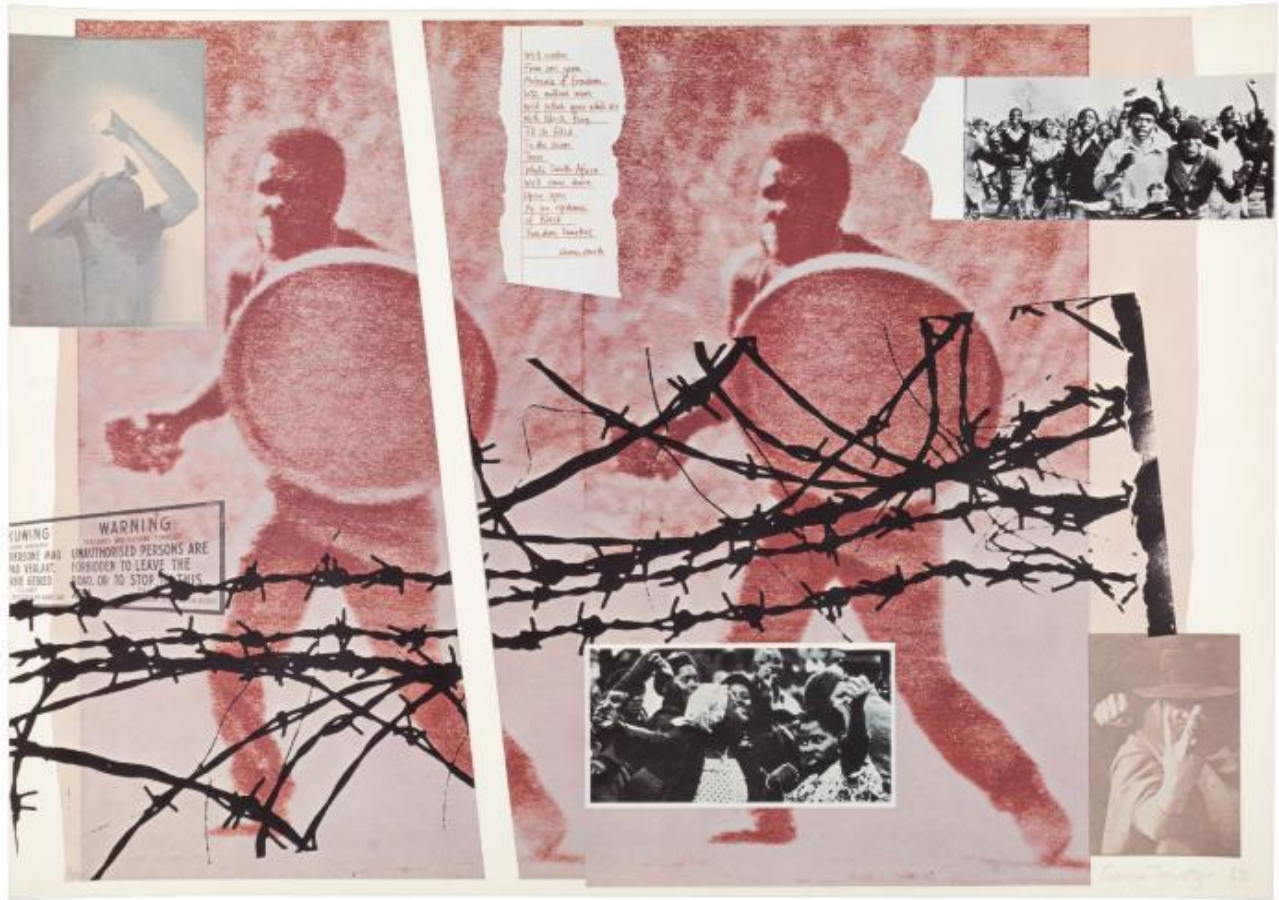
Judas Mahlangu (South African, born 1951)

1976

Etching

Hope College Collection, 2023.56

The Rorke's Drift Art and Craft Centre in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa was established in 1962 by the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church to give black South African artists an outlet for their creativity and a place to develop marketable artistic skills. It also fostered a sense of pride in Black South African culture and became a nexus for subtle resistance against the White apartheid regime. Artist Judas Mahlangu studied at Rorke's Drift from 1972 to 1975 and quickly earned acclaim for his sharply observed images of life in the Black townships that surrounded many South African cities. This 1976 Mahlangu print depicts a group of young men—some dressed in stylish clothes, others only in t-shirts and shorts—playing cards on a township street. Apartheid restrictions on travel and employment meant that many Black South Africans had difficulty finding work outside a narrow range of menial jobs. With no employment and few places to go, township residents created their own cultures and built strong communities, despite their deprivations.



Freedom Hunters

Gavin Jantjes (South African, born 1948)

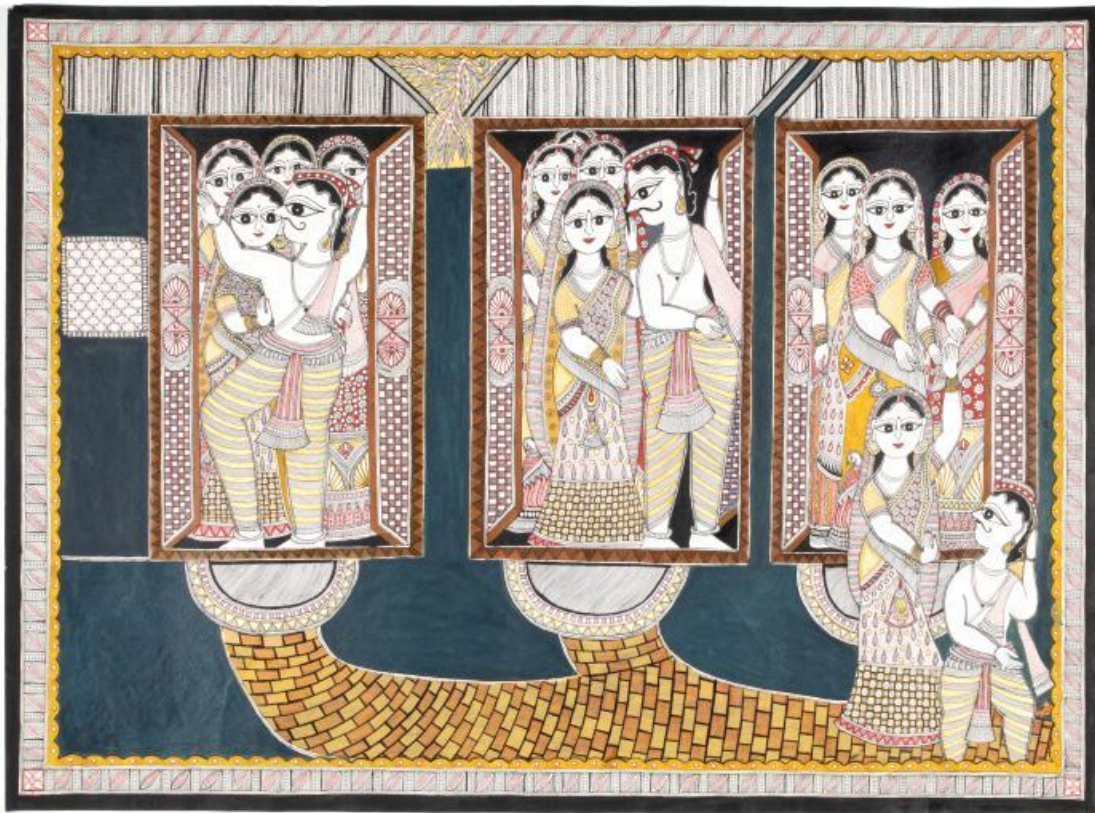
1977/1983

Offset lithograph

Hope College Collection, 2023.58

Gavin Jantjes graduated from the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town in 1969, an achievement attained by few other non-White artists during the apartheid era. Jantjes was an outspoken opponent of the apartheid system and his political opinions made it dangerous for him to remain in South Africa, so in 1970 he left to pursue his career as an artist in Europe. Although he lived in exile, Jantjes continued to make art that celebrated his African heritage and criticized the apartheid regime. For him, art had to serve a larger moral purpose, as he once explained in 1976: "One cannot speak of form and color [in art] when one's environment speaks of poverty, hunger, and death."

Jantjes created this image in 1977 to commemorate a massive uprising by Black students that had erupted in Soweto Township near Johannesburg a year earlier. More than 20,000 students took to the streets of Soweto to protest a government mandate to make Afrikaans, the Dutch-derived language spoken by White South Africans, the official language of instruction in Black schools. Government soldiers and police quashed the uprising with lethal force, killing several hundred students in the process. Jantjes celebrates the bravery of the student rebels in this print, which features an image of a student facing off against the government forces armed with only a rock and a shield made from a trash can lid. This impression comes from a second edition of the print issued by Jantjes in 1983.



The Storm of Feminism

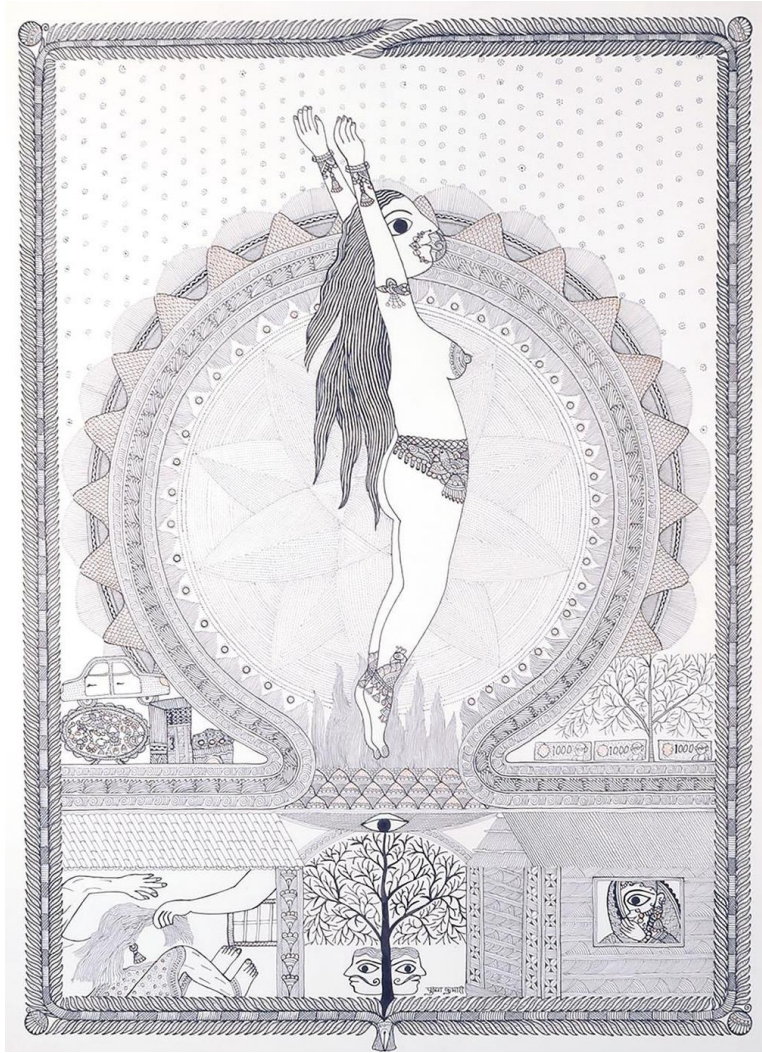
Rani Jha (Indian, born 1963)

2016

Paint on paper

Hope College Collection, purchased with funds bequeathed by Roberta VanGilder '53 Kaye, 2020.28.8

In many regions of India, upper-caste girls and women have traditionally led highly cloistered lives, first in the homes of their parents and later in the homes of their husbands and in-laws. But as their access to education and job opportunities have increased, women are increasingly moving beyond their restrictive domestic environments and are now participating more fully in many aspects of Indian society and culture. This painting symbolically portrays a young woman's journey toward greater independence. At the left, her passage through the door into the wider world is blocked by a male figure. In the center, she gently pushes the male figure to the side. On the right, she leaves the confines of her house with the male figure at her side. Rani Jha is an artist and educator who promotes Mithila painting through her work with the Mithila Art Institute.



Dowry—Escape to Freedom

Pushpa Kumari (Indian, born 1969)

2022

Ink on paper

Hope College Collection, 2024.29

Arranged marriages are still common in many parts of India. Such marriages often involve the payment of a dowry—which may consist of money, jewelry, animals, vehicles, property or other items of value—from the bride's family to the groom's family to provide financial resources for the couple as they start a new life together. While dowry payments can be beneficial in some cases, in other cases they are sources of strife, especially if the groom's family feels the amount of the dowry is insufficient or if a woman wants to leave an unhappy marriage and the groom's family cannot afford to repay the dowry. Dowry disputes can lead to women being verbally, mentally, and physically abused by their husbands or in-laws, and in extreme cases women have been killed over dowry issues. The darker aspects of dowry payments are alluded to in the lower register of this drawing by feminist artist Pushpa Kumari, while the upper register imagines a woman breaking free of dowry traditions and being able to marry and live on her own terms.