

Allen Memorial Art Museum
Oberlin College
87 North Main Street
Oberlin, Ohio 44074
(440) 775-8665
www.oberlin.edu/amam

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contact: Melissa Duffes (440) 775-8670
melissa.duffes@oberlin.edu

Religion, Ritual and Performance in the Renaissance
opens at the
Allen Memorial Art Museum

OBERLIN, OH – The Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM) at Oberlin College announces the opening of new exhibitions related to an academic-year-long series of programs on the theme of “Religion, Ritual and Performance,” comprising installations of works from antiquity to the present from a wide variety of cultures.

The impetus behind this over-arching series is the exhibition ***Religion, Ritual and Performance in the Renaissance***, which brings together more than 80 works, sacred and secular, spanning the late 13th to early 17th centuries, and from both Northern and Southern Europe. The paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts on view are from the collections of the AMAM and Yale University Art Gallery (YUAG).

The exhibition presents works used in private devotion, public worship, religious processions, and other rites and rituals, such as marriages, alongside those of a more secular nature, including portraits and chests, which nevertheless perform functions related to self-fashioning and display. Among the many exceptional artworks in the exhibition are two portable altarpieces that would have been used in private devotion: one, a painted triptych (the earliest work on view, from ca. 1280-90), is discreet and intimate, while the other, a lapis lazuli- and coral-encrusted altarpiece complete with its case (one of the latest works in the exhibition, from 1608), is a masterpiece of craftsmanship. The exhibition allows the AMAM to supplement its rich Renaissance collection with superb paintings from Yale by Taddeo and Agnolo Gaddi, Sano di Pietro, Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, Lucas van Leyden, and Jacopo Tintoretto, among many other artists, as well as with impressive sculptures from France, Germany, and Italy.



Ligozzi, *Portable Altar*, 1608, AMAM,
R.T. Miller, Jr. Fund, 1958.1



Italian, *Virgin and Child with Saints Dominic and Francis*, ca. 1280-90, YUAG, University Purchase from James Jackson Jarves, 1871.4

An exciting aspect of **Religion, Ritual and Performance in the Renaissance** is the opportunity it presents to see works by Apollonio di Giovanni, Neri di Bicci, Mariotto di Nardo, and Barthel Bruyn the Elder from both the AMAM and YUAG collections. Also reunited are six enigmatic paintings, all done in shades of brown, from a series of twelve by Maerten van Heemskerck. A large early 15th-century Florentine altarpiece is seen in its full glory, emphasizing the fragmentary nature of so many other Renaissance paintings whose original surrounding works have been lost.

The exhibition will be used extensively in teaching, research, and public programs during the 2012-13 academic year, and is part of the Yale University Art Gallery Collection-Sharing Initiative, generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Through this program, YUAG has loaned significant parts of its encyclopedic collection to six partner museums (Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Mount Holyoke College Art Museum; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College; Smith College Museum of Art; Williams College Museum of Art; and the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College). The AMAM is proud to be part of this select group, and indeed to be the only museum chosen for the program which is not in Yale's immediate New England region. The Initiative is intended to promote intra- and inter-institutional collaboration, foster object-based teaching, and strengthen the larger community of college art museums. It derives from the belief that while digital technologies have increased access to museum collections, there is no substitute for original works of art, which contain not only a particular magnetism, but also a wealth of information about history, human culture, and much more. As such, they serve as a vital part of educational experiences in a variety of disciplines.

The exhibition is on view from August 28, 2012-June 30, 2013. Numerous public programs related to the exhibition have been scheduled for the fall 2012 semester, as listed below, and it will be accompanied by a scholarly symposium to be held at the AMAM, April 25-26, 2013, which will be free and open to the public. Numerous other installations—of ancient, Asian, African, Islamic, Latin American, European, and modern and contemporary art—have been organized by Oberlin students, faculty, and museum staff to complement and expand upon this exhibition's themes, including **Religion,**

Ritual and Performance in Modern & Contemporary Art

(Aug. 28, 2012-June 30, 2013), **Performers: Dancers, Actors and Musicians** and **Printing Practice: Religious Prints from the Renaissance** (both Sept. 6-Dec. 23, 2012), and **Beyond the Surface: Text and Image in Islamic Art** (Sept. 6, 2012-June 30, 2013).



Sano di Pietro, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, ca. 1460, YUAG, University Purchase from James Jackson Jarves, 1871.60

Fall 2012 Related Events – All are Free and Open to the Public

Sept. 6, 5:00-8:00 pm—Exhibitions opening reception with curators' tours.

Sept. 11, 2:30 pm—Prof. Erik Inglis, of Oberlin's Art department, will discuss works on view in the exhibition, with light refreshments to follow.

Oct. 4, 5:30 pm—Dr. Laurence Kanter (OC '76), Chief Curator and Lionel Goldfrank III Curator of European Art, Yale University Art Gallery, will present a lecture entitled "Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, and the 'Birth' of the Renaissance."



Ghirlandaio, *Portrait of a Lady with a Rabbit*, ca. 1515, YUAG, University Purchase from James Jackson Jarves, 1871.72

Nov. 13, 2:30 pm—Prof. Wendy Hyman, of Oberlin's English department, will present a talk entitled "Poetry of Love and Seduction in the Renaissance," with light refreshments to follow.

Dec. 6, 5:30 pm—Oberlin College's Renaissance Recorder Ensemble will perform period music related to Religion, Ritual and Performance in the Renaissance. A talk with Professor of Historical Performance Kathryn Montoya, Professor of English Nicholas Jones, and AMAM Director Andria Derstine will follow.

Dec. 11, 2:30 pm—Prof. Peter Swendsen of Oberlin's Conservatory of Music will talk about the intersections of ritual, performance, and technology, with light refreshments to follow.

The Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM) houses an encyclopedic collection of more than 14,000 works selected to provide a comprehensive overview of the history of art. The AMAM works extensively with Oberlin College faculty and students to promote direct study of original works of art to foster visual literacy and a deeper understanding of the diversity of the world's cultures, and serves a broad regional audience, operating on the premise that learning about art is important for everyone. This principle is demonstrated by free admission to all, offered since its founding in 1917. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and major holidays. Free educational or group guided tours may be arranged by calling the museum's Education Office at (440) 775-8671.