# The Story of the College's Amazing Art Collection—

## CHAPTER 2

*By Cassandra Frey '09, economics major*

*Man Ray, Nude in Profile*
*Lithograph, 24 x 20 inches framed*

*Hans Erni, Two Dancers*
*Color lithograph, 26 x 32 inches framed*

*Donation from Steven Sheinhouse and Frances Glasser*
*Photos by Peter Karis*

*Marc Chagall, Woman Riding a Circus Animal*
*Pochoir print, 36 x 30 inches framed*

Much has happened in the art world at St. Mary's College since the article "The Story of the Collection" appeared in the Summer 2006 *Mulberry Tree* alumni magazine. The article described the history of the College's Art Collection, which now holds more than 2,000 original works of art representing the likes of Renoir, Warhol, Picasso, Dali, and countless other celebrated artists. Since then, the amazing story of a small college with such quality art has continued with the collaborative endeavors of donors, gallery directors, faculty, staff, students, and artists.

The recent history of the Collection cannot be discussed without mentioning the 2004 acquisition of the Mako Collection. This assortment of over 700 artworks was given to the College by art collector Gene Mako to help further the academic goals of students, and has helped to expand the Collection by strengthening areas that were minimally represented. Mako's massive gift also gives professors and students more opportunities to use artworks in classes and St. Mary's Projects. About 100 pieces have arrived so far with plans for the rest to be shipped later.

In 2008, attention to the Collection continued with the hiring of Mary Braun as gallery director and collections manager. She came to St. Mary's from Minnesota where she served as the director of the American Museum of Asmat Art. Braun's arrival continued the expansion of cooperative efforts among the various groups working together to improve the management, use, facilities, access, and conservation efforts for the Collection.

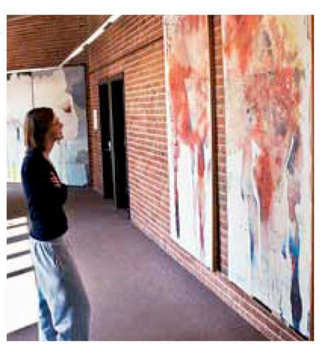

*Photo by Andrew Keiper*

The creation of two new committees, the Collections and the Program Advisory committees, also has been pivotal in furthering stewardship of the Collection. The Collections Committee offers a range of art, museum, collections management, legal, and development advice. Members are in the process of formulating a Collection management policy and a mission statement while also providing recommendations on the holdings in the Collection. The Program Advisory Committee, on the other hand, represents multiple departments and the students of St. Mary's College. This committee discusses exhibition development with an interest in expanding programming appeal and access across the disciplines and various College communities.

All parties are exploring new ways to incorporate the Gallery and Collection into the classroom. The recent creation of the museum studies minor allows students to utilize knowledge from different fields in the exploration of museum practices and standards. This cross-disciplinary minor also has increased faculty and student interest in the Collection. For example, visiting Professor George Ciscle's class, "Connecting Art to Our Community," allowed students to look at prospective ways in which Boyden Gallery could reach out to communities on and off campus. Students enrolled in "Critical Approaches: Analysis of Art" continue to use the Collection to conduct different types of art historical research. Professor Joan Poor brought her "Cultural Economics" class to visit the Gallery in order to better understand the relationships between the marketplace and art collections.

*Photo by Andrew Keiper*

*Mary Braun, gallery director, and author Cassandra Frey '09*

Improvements are being made to the Gallery web site and art storage facilities with the hope of improved access and care of the Collection. The web site will become a more informative resource for students, staff, and members of the community, and will include the Collection's catalog to promote additional research. Storage facilities are being reorganized, environmental controls heightened, and layers of padding added to each storage unit to further the protection of artworks.

Braun has sought out additional financial resources to help ensure progress in the conservation of the Collection and further the goals of the Gallery. This year, the Collection and Gallery received two grants from the Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) and Museum Assessment Program (MAP). According to their web sites, the CAP funds a professional conservation assessment of the Collection, including its environmental conditions and attendant preservation practices. The MAP, on the other hand, provides a professional consultant to advise the Gallery on how it compares to national standards, gives suggestions for improvement, and helps to set priorities, allocate financial resources, and build a stronger system of support.

From its first accessioned artwork in 1971 to the establishment of a Collections Committee in 2008, the St. Mary's College Art Collection has come a long way. Thanks to the dedicated efforts and cooperation among both past and present gallery directors, faculty members, staff, volunteers, donors, artists, the administration, and students, "the Collection is emerging as a significant asset... whose presence enriches both the College and local communities," Braun says. The future remains promising as the Collection and efforts to provide stewardship continue to expand.

*Frey, an economics major, is minoring in art history and museum studies. She spent an internship this past semester in Boyden Gallery and first became interested in the Collection during a Curatorial Studies course with Assistant Professor Cristin Cash. This fall, Frey plans to stay at the College to enter the Master of Arts in Teaching program.*