



NEWSLETTER

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GILLETT GRIFFIN, CURATOR, COLLECTOR, ARTIST

Princeton aficionados all know about the extraordinary sides of Gillett G. Griffin as a curator, a collector, a teacher, a tour guide, and a raconteur, but how much do they know about his life as an artist? Many visitors to his historic 18th-century home in Princeton have been surprised to find that the beautiful landscapes and portraits hanging on his walls are signed “G Griffin.” Born in Brooklyn in 1928 and raised in Greenwich, Connecticut, Gillett developed an early interest in the visual arts. As a student at the Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts beginning in 1942, he joined the Deerfield Arts Club, learned to paint, and began to collect early American children’s books.

His drawings have illustrated many published books, including Kelsey Flower, *Children of Deerfield* (1952), and Gary B. Nash, *...And Distinguished Guests: The Continental Congress at Princeton, 1783* (1962). Most notable perhaps was his very first book, *A Mouse’s Tale*, designed, illustrated, and printed by Gillett as part of the requirements of an MFA graphic arts major in the Yale University School of Fine Arts. At the young age of 24, Gillett won an award in the 1951 competition of the American Institute of Graphic Arts for the year’s “50 Best Designed Books.” Abelard Press picked up the book and published a trade edition the following year.

In addition to the commercial work, the Graphic Arts collection holds a little-known set of Gillett’s sketches and collages, appropriately numbered collection GC001. More than 100 pen-and-ink drawings (and still counting) have been gathered from the backs of envelopes, programs, and letters; some are even on full sheets of drawing paper! In particular, there are two pen-and-ink portraits of Gillett’s friend Albert Einstein, one of him reading and one of him on the phone. Several ink sketches are marked as preparatory

designs for linocuts, and there are many portraits of men at work, such as artists at their canvas or printers setting type. One elaborately finished drawing shows a printer pulling a print.



Photograph by John Blaziejewski

Gillett G. Griffin, untitled cut-paper collage, n.d. We have not decided whether Gillett is picturing himself shelving books in heaven or whether it was just a very dusty day in the stacks.

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The Chairman's Corner

I live in a house full of books, and I'm sure that many of you could say the same. Because of my undergraduate degree in Classics and my fascination with the transition of classical texts from the manuscript to the print era, many of the books on my shelves are in Greek and Latin, so it warmed the bibliophilic nooks and crannies of my heart to view "The Greek Book from Papyrus to Printing," on display in Firestone Library through December 7. The patrimony of ancient Greece coupled with the technological challenges in printing such a complex language with movable type make for a compelling opportunity to display some of the Library's treasures in this field. I encourage you to visit the exhibition, if you haven't already.

To go from the ancient sublime to the modern ridiculous (in the etymologically precise sense of the word), walk upstairs from the main gallery to visit "Sketching Their Characters: 150 Years of Political Cartoons." The wit and bite of political cartoons is by

no means a recent phenomenon, and this exhibition in the Milberg Gallery for the Graphic Arts demonstrates that cartoonists' pencils were every bit as sharp in the early years of the Republic as they are now. I was fortunate enough to view both exhibitions in the same afternoon, and I couldn't help but observe that they strikingly demonstrate the breadth and depth of Princeton's holdings in special collections.

Many of the items on display are the result of thoughtful and generous gifts to the Library, both in money and in kind. As we near the end of the year, please remember the Library in your financial planning and consider a gift to the Friends Anniversary Fund. The acquisitions supported by this fund create the foundation for future exhibitions, lectures, and publications, and for the contributions to scholarship for which Princeton and its libraries are so well known.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our annual Winter Dinner on December 13.

—G. Scott Clemons '90

Gillett Griffin . . .

Gillett's passion for art continues to be the driving force of his life. Those who are so fortunate as to receive one of his letters filled with satirical sketches and telling self-portraits can attest to his humor and his wit. Alfred Bush, Western Americana curator emeritus, commented, "A letter from Gillett, to an old friend or new acquaintance, is almost always embellished with an introductory drawing—beginning every message with a pertinent (more frequently impertinent) visual delight that assures not only the recipient's full attention but also a designation 'to be saved.'"

It is Gillett the art collector who will be celebrated with an exhibition in the Milberg Gallery, "Beauty and Bravado in Japanese Woodblock Prints: Highlights from the Gillett G. Griffin Collection." The exhibition opens on January 18, 2009, and a gallery tour and reception will be held on January 25. For more information, see http://blogs.princeton.edu/graphicarts/2008/08/beauty_and_bravado_in_japanese.html.

—Julie Mellby, Curator of Graphic Arts

Kitagawa Utamaro, *Women Overnight Guests* (ca. 1794–1795). Photograph by the Firestone Library Digital Studio.



FIRESTONE'S SPECIAL COLLECTIONS CONSERVATORS

Soon after arriving at Princeton in 1991 as Preservation Librarian, I set about hiring professional staff to conserve the general and special collections of Firestone Library. That year, Brian Baird joined the Library as General Collections Conservator, followed in 1992 by Ted Stanley as the Special Collections Paper Conservator. Special Collections needed a rare books conservator as well as a paper conservator, and the opportunity and funding came together in 1996, when Scott Husby was appointed to this new position. (The Library's first rare books conservator was Griselda Warr, who left prior to my arrival, and the first paper conservator was Karl Buchberg.)

Over the next decade, it became clear that a second person was needed to work on Special Collections books and bound manuscripts. With her parents, Friends of the Library member Jamie Kamph set up an endowment for this purpose, and in early 2007 Jody Beenk was appointed as Assistant Rare Books Conservator. Later that same year, after 10 years of dedicated service, Scott left the Library to pursue full-time research on a major history of bookbinding project.

Jody studied bookbinding and worked in the Rare Book Conservation Department in the library at the University of Iowa, Iowa City. Prior to Princeton, Jody spent more than seven years at Harvard University, working in the Printing and Graphic Arts Department in the Houghton Library and the Weissman Preservation Center Special Collections Conservation Laboratory. For the past six years, Jody has served on the Board of Directors for the Guild of Book Workers and as Editor and Committee Chair for the *Guild of Book Workers Newsletter*. Currently she is co-chair of the Archives Conservation Discussion Group, American Institute for Conservation Book & Paper Group. In addition to studying at the University of Iowa Center for the Book, she holds a BA in Asian Languages and Literature

and an MA in Chinese Historical Linguistics from the University of Iowa.

Robert "Mick" LeTourneaux was appointed Rare Books Conservator in early 2008, after a competitive search to replace Scott Husby. Mick is a long-time member of the Preservation Office, arriving in 1993 as Assistant General Collections Conservator and then succeeding Brian Baird as General Collections Conservator. Mick first became interested in conservation as an undergraduate. Chance student employment in the Conservation Department at the Morris Library of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, turned into a lifelong career. After graduating, Mick worked first as a bookbinder/book conservator for a private practice in Chicago, then as a conservation technician in the library at the University of California, Berkeley, and finally as a rare book conservator for a commercial firm in North Carolina. Mick has a BA in History from Southern Illinois University and an MFA in Book Arts from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

The work that Ted, Jody, and Mick perform may not always be obvious to patrons but is vital in what Professor Anthony Grafton calls the "please touch" environment of the Dulles Reading Room.

—Robert Milevski
Preservation Librarian



Photograph by AnnaLee Pauls

FRIENDS FUND PROJECTS

Every year the Friends fund special projects within the Library, choosing two or three from proposals submitted by staff from throughout the Library. Past projects include the purchase of special equipment and the sponsorship of conferences and instruction.

PERSIAN AND INDIAN MINIATURES

This project is designed to produce accurate, up-to-date descriptions and cataloging for Persian and Indian (chiefly Mughal) miniatures in the Islamic manuscript collections. The project will focus chiefly on 68 separately mounted Persian and Indian miniatures, mostly from the 16th to 18th centuries. Fifty of these are from an 18th-century illuminated album from India, composed of separate miniatures and calligraphy from many different sources (Garrett Islamic, no. 102G; see the detail below). The other 18 separately mounted miniatures are chiefly from the Garrett Collection (nos. 88G–101G), as well as some miniatures from other donors.

Our staff catalogers do not have the special expertise needed to identify, date, and localize Persian and Mughal paintings or to identify particular artists, schools, styles, and subjects of composition. The Indian album with 50 miniatures has already been digitized, but the only available descriptions, from 1939, are notoriously inaccurate. Friends funds will be used for the services of Dr. Mika Natif, who is a specialist on Persian art and book illumination. Her new descriptions of these miniatures will be incorporated into on-line catalog records and also used for the Digital Projects website (“Princeton Digital Library of Islamic Manuscripts”). Beyond her work on the 68 Persian and Mughal miniatures, it is hoped that Dr. Natif will also have time to examine some of the uncataloged Persian and Indian illuminated manuscripts in Princeton’s collections with the same goal of improving online cataloging and descrip-

tion. It is important to add that among some 9,500 Islamic manuscripts at Princeton the total number of Persian and Indian miniatures is close to 1,000. Almost half of these are in the five illuminated *Shahnamah* manuscripts (16th–17th centuries). These miniatures were all photographed, digitized, and described as part of a project headed by the late Professor Jerry Clinton, Department of Near Eastern Studies. But there are other Islamic illuminated manuscripts that were not described in terms of their miniatures. Beyond the present cataloging and digitization efforts, the descriptions can be used in a future Islamic art exhibition in Firestone Library.

—Don C. Skemer

Curator of Manuscripts

ANALYTICAL CAPABILITIES FOR NUMISMATICS

A Friends project grant has enabled the Numismatic Collection to purchase two pieces of equipment for the sophisticated analysis of coins. Both are necessary for the research project proposed by Sarah Kampbell, a doctoral student in history, to study and attribute the anonymous ducats in the Latin Orient Collection purchased this year (see related article).

First, an analytical balance is necessary to determine the fineness of the gold-silver binary alloy of these coins; until now, we had only a small balance with a capacity of 75 grams (below the weight of many coins and medals), precision only to centigrams, and

no specific gravity capabilities. Second, a binocular comparison microscope will allow the determination of punch identities among coins of different dies; before this purchase, our only magnification was with loupes and simple lenses. The new equipment gives us the analytical capacity for serious numismatic research, comparable or superior to that at similar institutions.

—Alan M. Stahl

Curator of Numismatics



A NEW COLLECTION OF MEDIEVAL GREEK COINS

The Princeton University Numismatic Collection has acquired the Latin Orient Collection of coins of medieval Greece by purchase with matching funds provided by the Program in Hellenic Studies with the support of the Stanley J. Seeger Hellenic Fund. The collection was assembled by a London-based businessman, and many of the coins can be traced back to famous collections, including that of John J. Slocum of Newport, Rhode Island.

The Latin Orient Collection comprises more than 800 coins minted in the eastern Mediterranean following the fall of Constantinople to the armies of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The Byzantine Empire was eventually reconstituted and resumed its coinage, but much of its former territory in Greece and the Aegean islands remained in the hands of descendants of the Crusaders and other Europeans, who issued coins in the traditions of their homelands. Although late Byzantine issues are well represented in many public collections, until now there has been no specialized collection of coins of the Greek lands of the later Middle Ages available for study in a public institution.

The collection is especially rich in coins minted in the eastern Mediterranean that imitate the important trade coins of Italian cities, especially those of Venice



Photographs by John Blazejewski

and Naples. Among those of note is a gold ducat of Dorino Gattilusio, Lord of Lesbos and Ainos from 1400 to 1449, which imitates the popular gold ducat of Venice. The Gattilusio were made lords of Lesbos on the island of Mytilene as well as Ainos in Thrace on the mainland by Byzantine emperors as a reward for their support in the empire's defense against the Turks. The new Princeton specimen is the only known example of the coin with an M beneath the standard, apparently an identification of the island of its minting. On its obverse, it depicts Gattilusio, identified as "Duke of Mytilene," kneeling in front of a saint; the reverse has a standing figure of Christ.

—Alan M. Stahl

Curator of Numismatics

News from Mudd Library

Four finding aids prepared at Mudd Library were jointly awarded the 2008 Frederic M. Miller Finding Aid Award of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference. The winners were: the W. Arthur Lewis Papers, processing and finding aid by Adriane Hanson; the H. Alexander Smith Papers, processing and finding aid by Casey Babcock; Council on Foreign Relations Digital Sound Records, processing, finding aid, and project management by Jennie Cole; and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs Records, processing and finding aid by Dan Brennan and Rosalba Varallo, with processing supervision by Christine Lutz. Christie, by the way, has been appointed the Assistant University Archivist for Public Services after a national search.

Also this year, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) agreed to fund the processing of the George F. Kennan Papers and the James V. Forrestal Papers. NHPRC awarded only four grants in 2008 for processing projects such as this one. Adriane Hanson began work in July, and completion is set for June 2009. Currently, only a small portion of the Kennan Papers is open; the entire archive will open on March 17, 2009, four years to the day after his death.

Finally, Dan Linke, University Archivist and Curator of Public Policy Papers, has been appointed to a grant review panel of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The NEH provides grants to humanities projects in four funding areas: preserving and providing access to cultural resources, education, research, and public programs.

CELEBRATING LEO POLITI

When Paul Politi contacted the Cotsen Children’s Library a year ago to see if Princeton would be willing to participate in the 2009 centennial for his father, Leo Politi, it didn’t take much to convince me to say yes. The time was right for a show honoring a modern American picture book artist in Cotsen. Politi is best known as the author/illustrator of *Pedro, the Angel of Olvera Street*, which won the Caldecott Medal in 1948. His stories about children who lived in downtown Los Angeles’s Mexican, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese communities were ahead of their time in their sympathetic representation of cultural diversity in the United States. Contemporary children’s book author Elisa Kleven recently praised Politi for bringing “wonder, joy, and a respect for my city . . . to my childhood. I remember pouring through the illustrations for hours, and wondering about the artist behind the beautiful pictures and gentle stories, the dramatic compositions and exquisite, singing colors.”

As a native of Los Angeles, I found curating “Leo

Politi’s Los Angeles: A Celebration of the Centenary of His Birth” to be a surprisingly poignant experience. Politi’s illustrations called up old memories of the City of Angels, which has changed almost beyond recognition since I was a girl growing up in the suburb of Manhattan Beach, 20 miles from downtown. I hadn’t thought about the family visits to Olvera Street for years, but looking at *Pedro* reminded me of piroullis, the brightly colored cone-shaped Mexican lollipops, the gleaming brass equipment in the candlemaker’s stall, and the glassblower making tiny animal figurines at dusk. The pictures of Nisei Week in Little Tokyo brought back memories of watching the swaying oban dancers in Gardena on a late August evening or of taking my daughter to see the Shogun Santa Parade at Christmas. And the bird’s-eye view of San Juan Capistrano in *The Swallows* reminded me of how much I still miss the California hills after nearly 14 years in New Jersey.

One of the most interesting things I learned while researching the show was that Politi was also an ardent historic preservationist. Although he did not work in a photographically realistic style, his illustrations were nevertheless intended as a record of the downtown neighborhoods he knew intimately, which were destined to be pulled down as the city center was redeveloped. I decided that the exhibition should show that Politi’s love of his adopted city was inseparable from his love of all the children who called it home before the freeways changed the landscape.

—Andrea Immel

Curator, Cotsen Children’s Library

Adding Up the Books

According to Executive Director Eileen Henthorne, the ReCAP storage facility on the Forrestal campus added its 7,000,000th accession on October 9. The facility opened in January 2002, and the current five modules have a capacity of 10,000,000 library items. Princeton owns and operates ReCAP with Columbia University and the New York Public Library. Princeton’s share of the space has gone from slightly under 8 percent in 2002 to nearly 20 percent today.



Photograph by John Blazejewski

FRIENDS ON THE ROAD

Ben has done it again! Once more we have had a marvelous spring outing to visit libraries in the region. This year's bus trip, on May 13, left the parking lot at 6:45 a.m. and returned around 6:30 p.m. Although a long day, the three visits were fascinating, and our small group arrived home tired but happy.

We first stopped at the Philadelphia Rare Books and Manuscripts Company, a bookseller specializing in Spanish-language material, especially Central and South American rare books and manuscripts. But they have much more. The co-owners, David Scewczyk and Cynthia David Buffington, had set aside representative samples of their wares, which they characterized as being interesting not only for their contents but also for their physical appearance and provenance. Many of the items were quite rare and therefore expensive, but they also showed us some wonderful, affordable gift books, including a lovely bound volume of poems by New Hampshire authors published in 1850.

After leaving David and Cynthia, waving to us from their front porch, our coach drove us to the University of Delaware Library in Newark, where we were greeted by Director of Libraries Susan Brynteson. She gave us a quick tour of the library, including a magnificent new multimedia center. We then visited the Special Collections Department and its two special exhibits, one on the history of Newark, Delaware, and another on the assassination of President Lincoln. The Head of Special Collections, Tim Murray, and his staff then previewed some of the materials purchased by their Friends to honor their forthcoming 50th anniversary. In addition, we were delighted to be able to visit Mark Samuels Lasner's special collection focusing on Victorian literature. Mark, one of our Council members, had developed an ingenious exhibit entitled "Tigers among the Blue Hens," which focused on items associated with people who were important contributors

to Princeton's Rare Books and Special Collections. We were all hugely entertained to see what Princeton has missed. Following a hearty lunch, we departed on our trusty coach for Winterthur.

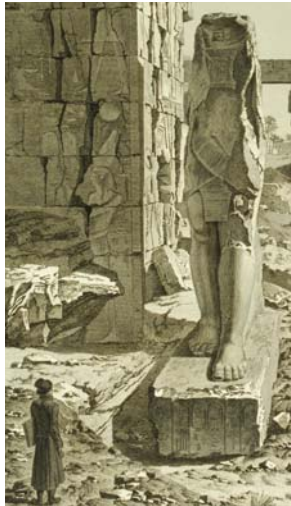
At Winterthur we were greeted by Richard McKinstry, the acting Librarian, who first accompanied us on a tram tour of the gardens, ablaze with azaleas and flowering trees, on our way to the Research Library. After a tour of a special exhibit called "Let There Be Light," showing changes from candle light to electricity, we were treated to three special selections of their treasures and invited to browse in all the items as we wished. And we did! We saw a manuscript of the land grant to William Penn, including the property now encompassed by Winterthur. We saw some fascinating manufacturers' and distributors' trade catalogs (including one demonstrating what was available in water fountains). Jacqueline Kennedy's signature in the visitor book (showing her address as the White House) was on display, as well as dozens more fascinating items collected over the years. Everyone had a favorite! We ended up at the Decorative Arts Photographic Collection, which can be consulted to help ascertain whether an item you possess is of historical value. The curators had laid out a set of photos of Stickley chairs, cabinets, and tables, and another set of photos of uniquely American silver teapots from over the years. We left with regret and only because they were trying to close for the day! —*Nancy Klath*



Photograph by Norman Klath

THE FRIENDS' CALENDAR

Exhibitions and Related Events



MAIN EXHIBITION GALLERY, FIRESTONE LIBRARY

The Greek Book from Papyrus to Printing

Closes December 7

Egypt Unveiled: The Mission of Napoleon's Savants

December 21, 2008 – May 10, 2009

Gallery tours with exhibition curators Jennifer Meyer and Stephen Ferguson, 3 p.m., January 18, March 1, and April 26, 2009

LEONARD L. MILBERG GALLERY FOR THE GRAPHIC ARTS

Sketching Their Characters:

150 Years of Political Cartoons

Closes January 4

Beauty and Bravado in Japanese Woodblock Prints: Highlights from the Gillett G. Griffin Collection

January 18 – June 7, 2009

Sunday, January 25, 4 p.m.: Gallery tour and reception



SEELEY G. MUDD MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY,
65 OLDEN STREET

John Foster Dulles: From Diploma to Diplomat

Closes January 30

Coming: 50 Years of the Princeton University Archives

*Gallery Hours (call
609-258-3184 for
holiday hours)*

*Weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to
5:00 p.m. (Wednesdays
to 8:00 p.m.); weekends,
noon to 5:00 p.m. (ex-
cept Mudd Library)*

More Events

December 13: Friends Annual Winter Dinner, with guest speaker Tavis Smiley

FRIENDS OF THE PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

NEWSLETTER

THE LIBRARY, ONE WASHINGTON ROAD, PRINCETON, NJ 08544