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*Dust & Discoveries*

## Exeter's Lamont Gallery dusts off a cabinet of curiosities



Taking inspiration from museums of yesteryear and their collective "cabinet of curiosities," Phillips Exeter Academy present "Dust & Discovery: Works from the Lamont Gallery Collection" through Wednesday, July 31.

The showing includes nearly 100 works, including some by John James Audubon, Alexander Calder, Amanda de Leon and Kiyoshi Saito. The exhibition spans the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D. 220) to the 1980s, with paintings on canvas, silkscreens, wood carvings, poster, glass and skulls.

Featured selections will be mounted on a designated wall on a rotating basis. A reception is set for Wednesday, July 10, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Lamont Gallery, located in the Frederick R. Mayer Art Center on Tan Lane. There is no admission fee.



FORM & FUNCTION: This unusual chair is on view at the Lamont Gallery.



BEHIND THE CANVAS: While some works are unsigned, this painting is attributed to Amanda de Leon.

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"The works are being shown as is, as they were found in storage — stains, tears and all — to raise such questions as: 'What defines a collection? How are collections built, maintained and shared with audiences? What is the function of a collection within an educational institution? How are objects preserved to pass along to the next generation?'" curators said.

Though not officially a collecting gallery, the Lamont Gallery's holdings include art and other objects that were donated or purchased, some gifts from alumni and friends of PEA, others items left behind by departing faculty or students. While the gallery has

information on some of these pieces, others remain mysteries, with important details like an artist's name or type of material missing. Visitors will be invited to offer their own insights into the works displayed, and share their thoughts about what and why they collect.

Items from other individual collections, including those of PEA Art Instructors Carla Collins and Becky Barsi, as well as PEA alumnus Chris Woerner, class of 1963, will be included, adding to the discussion of whether the value of a collection rest in its financial worth or sentimental meaning to an owner.

Independent paintings conservator Elizabeth Leto Fulton will work on site for several days during the exhibition, analyzing the works and offering her expertise on the condition and restoration needs.

On Thursday, July 18, from noon to 1:30 p.m., the gallery also will host a lunchtime discussion with Fulton on the field of art conservation, the common problems in painting conservation, and Fulton's assessment of selected items in the Lamont Gallery's collection. To register by July 12, send email to [galleries@exeter.edu](mailto:galleries@exeter.edu).

"Collections take great care to manage and conserve, and there are ethical issues associated with taking objects into a collection initially, as well as with deciding when and why to remove objects from a collection," said Lauren O'Neal, director of the Lamont Gallery.

"'Dust & Discovery' will kick off a longer-term project: to assess the gallery's collection, to put the holdings into a digital database and to make decisions about future additions to the collection so that the work can be used as a tool for students, faculty and researchers."