

An authorized lithograph of Andy Warhol's *Gold Marilyn*, left, highlights American 20th century pop art in an art collection donated to the University Library.

BY SARAH STANEK

"WAIT JUST A MOMENT," SAYS LANIER GRAHAM, CURATOR OF ART COLLECTIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND LECTURER OF ART HISTORY SINCE 1993, AS HE ADJUSTS THE LIGHTING IN THE EMERITUS READING ROOM ON THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY'S SECOND FLOOR. "I WANT YOU TO GET THE FULL EFFECT HERE."

While he speaks, the room darkens to illuminate a Renaissance painting of the Madonna and Child. The small print, with the Virgin Mary and infant Jesus cheek-to-cheek, draped in rich red cloth, is the first chronological piece in a room showcasing ways to introduce different teaching models into the library. The display is the product of a donation from the Institute for Aesthetic Development (IAD) to the University in 2010 following decades of collaboration, including several installations at the University Art Gallery.

The gift, including hundreds of original artifacts, museum-quality replicas, limited edition lithographs, artist's workbooks, and art reference books, represents global art from the Stone Age through the Bronze Age to today. With pieces from almost every continent and cultural art tradition — including African masks, Tibetan silver statuary, and pop art



PHOTO PHILIP RINGLER

A walk to Remember

The gift of a teaching collection of global art and resources inspires a vision for "A Walk Through World History" within the University Library as it evolves into a more comprehensive learning center for the 21st century.

— the teaching collection lays the foundation for “A Walk Through World History.”

At the moment, it’s a short walk — the one-room pilot exhibit is limited to a sampling of European art from the collection. But Graham and University Librarian Linda Dobb see possibilities for a pathway through study rooms and public galleries connecting prehistoric art to the rise of realism and the abstract representations of the modern era.

“We envision many different types of learning spaces within the library, not all of them traditional,” says Dobb. “Exhibits like this absolutely fit with our vision of what a modern university library and learning center can be.”

Support for a “new century learning center” is a priority in the *University of Possibilities* comprehensive fundraising campaign. In addition to modernizing library spaces to provide more technological connections and collaborative areas, Dobb says she’d welcome more interactive teaching exhibits and spaces to display art and artifacts belonging to the University, including the IAD collection. “These are ways a good library becomes a great library,” she says.

A broad teaching collection like this one is particularly valuable to the University, as pieces can be displayed in different contexts, such as by geographic origin or time period. This invites deeper inspection and interaction from students.

“Slides and books are good tools,” Graham says. “But teaching with actual art is better.”

The key, he explains, is that each gallery has an authentic centerpiece. “A collection with all reproductions doesn’t give the full aesthetic experience,” he says. In this model, each period or cultural tradition is represented by selected originals, such as Egyptian scarab carvings and terracotta artifacts, with museum-quality replicas of larger statues and hieroglyphs giving additional context.

When fully realized, “A Walk through World History” will complement survey courses in art and art history, world history, anthropology, religious studies, education, and continuing studies. In fact, it’s already begun serving its educational purpose. In designing and arranging the



An iconic image of Shiva, above, is a bronze replica of a 12th century statue from the Chola Dynasty in southern India.

PHOTO PHILIP RINGLER

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UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

nascent display, Graham worked with Daniel Charm, Lisa King, and Joan McLoughlin, graduate students in the University’s certificate program in Art Museum and Gallery Studies.

Back in the darkened reading room, Graham moves clockwise from the Madonna to the later Renaissance, represented by richly illuminated manuscripts and a fresco replica — two of the primary media during the era. Continue turning, and the crisp edges of the Baroque period blur into 19th-century impressionism. Completing the circle, he arrives at the more angular 20th-century modernist pieces.

And, pointing back to the corner of the room dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci, Graham notes that the Renaissance great was not only an artist but also a scientist and engineer — a neat connection between the University’s STEM education initiative and the arts.

It’s the type of integration that characterizes Cal State East Bay’s approach to a 21st-century education and a 21st-century library. As Graham says, “The Wisdom Traditions of the world teach that it is only when we use both logic and intuition equally on a regular basis that we can reach the fullness of our humanity.” ■