

Myths Retold, In the Garden

New exhibitions open at the Museum of Art,
January 26

Friday, January 6, 2023



ROSEMARIE BECK, "PHAEDRA 1999," OIL ON LINEN, 52" X 64," 1999.
COURTESY OF THE ROSEMARY BECK FOUNDATION.

On January 26, 2023, the Museum of Art will open two new exhibitions, Myths Retold: Paintings by Rosemarie Beck and Grant Drumheller: In the Garden, both on view through April 1, 2023. The public is invited to an opening reception on Thursday, January 26, 2023, 4:00-6:00 p.m. All programs are open to the public and free of charge.

Myths Retold: Paintings by

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Rosemarie Beck

Myths Retold: Paintings by Rosemarie Beck presents a collection of paintings and embroideries spanning over 40 years of the artist's career from the mid-1970s through the early 2000s, exploring gendered relationships and universal themes of love, sacrifice and power through scenes from classical Greek mythology and English literature.

Rosemarie Beck (1923-2003) was active for nearly 50 years as a painter and teacher. She was an intellectual and passionate force, soaking up contemporary art movements in 1940s New York as a student studying with the Surrealist painter Kurt Seligmann, abstract expressionist painter Robert Motherwell and later befriending Philip Guston, her neighbor, in Woodstock, New York. Though considered by art historians to be a student of second wave Abstract Expressionism, Beck abandoned abstraction in the late 1950s focusing on narrative paintings inspired by Greek mythology and English literature for the remainder of her career. This exhibition includes seventeen paintings and two dazzling embroideries (she turned to needlework when she tired of standing at her easel) depicting pivotal moments in the lives of female characters at the heart of classical mythology.

Beck hews closely to historical texts, but contemporizes the scenes: instead of a lyre, Orpheus strums a guitar; Diana wears a chic white maillot bathing suit; dogs and cats make appearances, too. She explores female characters like Phaedra and Antigone, often revisiting the characters decades apart, reworking the compositions and reframing the scenes. Beck examines female characters in moments of crisis: Atalanta, arms and legs pumping, trying to outrun her suitor; Phaedra in bed humiliated, ruined and in despair; and a terrified Miranda pursued by Caliban. The scenes depicted are often about the agency of female characters and the societal mores that constrained their actions. In this way,

Beck questioned the roles of women and the dynamics of relationships. It should be noted that Beck also explores tragic myths featuring male characters: Orpheus, and Dedalus and Icarus, among others. These ancient stories reveal as much as they explain human experiences; serving as timeless explorations of how people interact with one another and the world around them.

Myths Retold: Paintings by Rosemarie Beck is enriched by the scholarly insights of UNH students in the course CLAS 601: Power of Myth, as well as Paul Robertson, senior lecturer in classics, humanities, and Italian studies, and R. Scott Smith, professor of classics and department chair of classics, humanities, and Italian studies. The students' exhibition labels and catalog entries help viewers understand the nuances in Beck's interpretation and the relevance of studying ancient myths and their literary sources today

This exhibition was made possible by a gift of paintings from the Rosemarie Beck Foundation (RBF), which wished to see Beck's legacy as an artist and teacher continue. The RBF recognized the educational mission of the Museum of Art, donating 12 paintings and studies to the collection, four of which are on view. Beck inspired generations of students at Queens College of New York, Vassar College, Middlebury College, the Vermont Studio Center, Parsons School of Design, and the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, where she was on the faculty until shortly before she died.

Works by Rosemarie Beck lent by the Rosemarie Beck Foundation. All exhibitions are supported by the Friends of the Museum of Art.

Grant Drumheller: In the Garden

Grant Drumheller: In the

Garden is a selection of contemporary paintings from the artist (and UNH professor emeritus of art) never before exhibited as a collection. The exhibition will feature intimate views of Drumheller's family that are both familiar and removed.



PAINTING BY GRANT DRUMHELLER.

Observation is at the center of Drumheller's work as a figurative painter; he is well-known for works of large-scale compositions of busy streets, beaches and Italian town squares and palazzos. For works *In the Garden*, we find the artist's honed observational eye turned inward to capture the vitality and ever-changing dynamic of a family. In this case, the family is his own, and the viewer is welcomed into a series of vignettes captured by the artist in vibrant color and bold brush strokes. Drumheller invites us to serene, calm evenings in living rooms bathed in golden light, to dive into jewel-toned lake waters, and to breakfast on the deck amongst the lushness of a summer garden. The viewer is welcomed like an old friend at the table — at once comfortable and known — as if taking a sip of morning coffee just out of frame.

Events and Museum Hours

Visit the [Museum of Art website](#) for information on complementary events running throughout the semester.

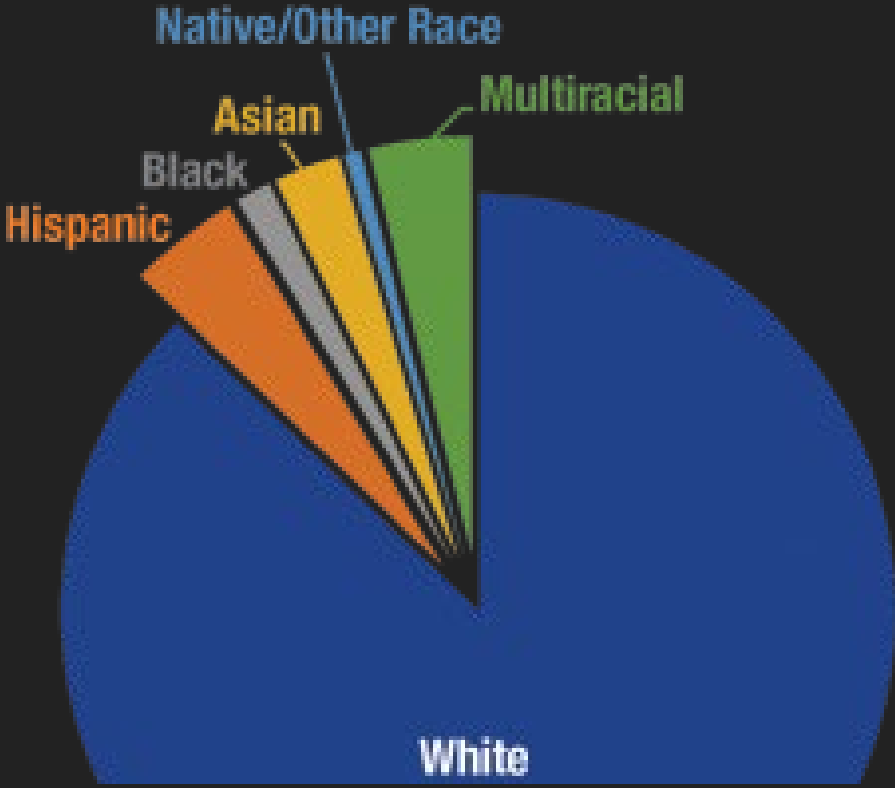
Museum hours are Monday through Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m.- 6 p.m., and Saturday 12 p.m.- 4 p.m. The museum is closed on University holidays and March 13-18 for spring break.

WRITTEN [Molly Bolick](#) | Museum of Art | molly.bolick@unh.edu

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