A Lasting Imprint
Rendering Rhythm and Motion in the Art of Black Mountain College

Movement and music—both time-based activities—can be difficult to express in static media such as painting, drawing, and photography, yet many visual artists feel called to explore them. Some are driven to devise new techniques or new combinations of media in order to capture or suggest movement. Similarly, some visual artists utilize elements found in music—rhythms, patterns, repetitions, and variations—to endow their compositions with new expressive potency. In few places did movement, music, visual arts, and myriad other disciplines intermingle with such profound effect as they did at Black Mountain College (BMC), an experiment in higher education in the mountains of Western North Carolina that existed from 1933 to 1957. For many artists, their introduction to interdisciplinarity at the college resulted in a continued curiosity around those ideas throughout their careers. The works in the exhibition, selected from the Asheville Art Museum’s Black Mountain College Collection, highlight approaches to rendering a lasting imprint of the ephemeral.

Artists such as Barbara Morgan and Clemens Kalischer seek to capture the motion of the human form, evoking a sense of elongated or contracted muscles, or of limbs moving through space. Others, like Lorna Blaine Halper or Sewell Sillman, approach the challenge through abstraction, foregoing representation yet communicating an atmosphere of dynamic change. Marianne Preger-Simon’s drawings of her fellow dancers at BMC from summer 1953 are not only portraits but also a dance of pencil on paper, created in the spirit of BMC professor Josef Albers’s line studies as she simultaneously worked with choreographer Merce Cunningham. Each of these artists ultimately reflects on the temporal nature of movement and music. Also represented in the selection of more than 50 prints, textiles, drawings, paintings and sculptures featured in the exhibition are influential artists such as Anni Albers, Ruth Asawa, Ilya Bolotowsky, John Cage, Buckminster Fuller, Kenneth Noland, Robert Rauschenberg, Kenneth Snelson, and Jack Tworkov. A selection of related photographs and archival objects offers intimate perspectives on the school’s unique collaborative atmosphere. Even now, decades after the school’s closing in 1957 due to financial woes, internal divisions, and decreasing enrollment, its powerful influence continues to reverberate.

A Lasting Imprint is organized by the Asheville Art Museum (AAM), Asheville, North Carolina and features key works from the museum’s Black Mountain College Collection. The AAM has been collecting works of art and materials related to Black Mountain College for over 25 years in recognition of the college’s importance to Western North Carolina and to the development of American art. In addition to collecting works produced by key BMC artists during the years the school was active, the AAM also seeks to acquire works by those artists from other periods in order to represent a broad spectrum of their development. The Museum has been fortunate to continually grow its Black Mountain College Collection through gifts from students, faculty, and their families and strategic Museum purchases. Noted scholar and author Mary Emma Harris of the Black Mountain College Project provided essential guidance to the development of the Asheville Art Museum’s Black Mountain College Collection.

Sponsored by The Guild of the Knoxville Museum of Art
Black Mountain College formed in 1933 as an alternative to the prevailing educational institutions of the time. It favored a democratic framework in which the formal lines between faculty and student were often blurred. Faculty and students dined together, worked together, and lived together. Classes were frequently held at unusual hours to make time for the work program (in which students assisted in the construction and maintenance of the campus) during the day, which often meant that some lectures continued throughout the night. As the school evolved, so did its methodologies, and over time, many individuals who had originally enrolled at Black Mountain College as students became faculty, as was the case for Hazel Larsen Archer and Joseph Fiore, both of whom are represented in this exhibition. Archer, who enrolled as a student in 1944, became the school’s first full-time faculty member in photography in 1949. On her educational philosophy, Archer wrote that “I believe, more and more, that the educational process is almost a hands-off affair; not without guidance, of course, but providing the time and the opportunity for the opening and widening of channels for growth.”
Ray Johnson (Detroit 1927 - 1995 Sag Harbor, New York)

Three Thirds, 1966
Tempera, ink, and gouache on board laid on board
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2010 gift of the Junior League of Knoxville, Inc.

A seminal Pop Art figure, Ray Johnson has been called the most significant “unknown artist” of the post-war period, a “collagist extraordinaire” who influenced Pop artists such as Andy Warhol, as well as a generation of contemporary artists. He was also a pioneer of “Mail Art” in which bits and pieces of collages, newspapers, found objects were gathered and mailed with special instructions to a vast network of fellow artists. Johnson’s experience as a Black Mountain College student encouraged his experimental instincts and served as a platform from which he dove into Manhattan and its vibrant art world.

Johnson often cut apart early collages and used the fragments in new works, a practice he dubbed “Chop Art, not Pop Art.” Three Thirds represents one of his “tesserae”, or collages made up of small blocks of the board he painted, sanded, and glued together to create endlessly inventive mosaic-like compositions that appear to be weathered by time. An award-winning documentary on Johnson, How to Draw a Bunny, was produced in 2002 and featured interviews with close friends such as Roy Lichtenstein, Christo, Chuck Close, and other prominent artists.
Robert Rauschenberg (Port Arthur, Texas 1925 - 2008 Captiva Island, Florida)

*Untitled*, 1979

Color screenprint on paper with collage; edition 13/100

Knoxville Museum of Art, 1992 gift of Beverly and Harold Duckett
Robert Rauschenberg (Port Arthur, Texas 1925 - 2008 Captiva Island, Florida)

One more and we will be more than halfway there, 1979
Color screenprint on paper; edition 12/100
Knoxville Museum of Art, 1993 gift of Mr. and Mrs. Rodman Townsend, Sr.

Robert Rauschenberg is one of the most influential artists of the second half of the 20th century, and is heralded as a visionary innovator and experimenter. Emerging from the Pop Art tradition, he spent his career examining popular culture through compositions made up of disparate images that suggest modern day information overload. His works often feature a strange array of dissimilar elements including dabs of paint, scraps of discarded objects, and magazine cut-outs-arranged in dense thought-provoking compositions. One critic has described his work as “midway in effect between Titian and color television.” During the latter part of his career, the artist was especially active as a printmaker, creating prints featuring the same conglomeration of imagery as seen in his experiments in other media.
Influential artist and educator Josef Albers first made his mark at Germany’s renowned art and design school, Bauhaus, but fled to the United States with his wife Anni in the early 1930s with the rise of the country’s Nazi movement. He joined the BMC faculty in 1933 and served as one of BMC’s leading voices for more than two decades. Albers is perhaps most celebrated for using printmaking as a vehicle for capturing his groundbreaking experiments with color and form. In his various print folios, Albers created austere compositions in which he explored the potential of subtle adjustments and juxtapositions to suggest variations in hue or the illusion of depth.
Joseph Fiore (Cleveland, Ohio 1925-2008 New York City)

**#9 Red Abstract**, 1950

Oil on Masonite

24 1/8 x 31 7/8 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Gift of the Falcon Charitable Art Foundation

Joseph Fiore came to Black Mountain College to study in 1946 and was appointed to the faculty in 1949 as Josef Albers’ replacement. He remained there as a teacher until the school’s closure in 1957. While Fiore was a prolific painter, he also sang in the school’s chorus and took musical composition from John Cage in 1948. **#9 Red Abstract** represents the height of his experimentation with abstract painting while at BMC. After his tenure at BMC, Fiore and his wife Mary moved to New York and began spending summers in Maine, which inspired him to devote increasing attention to painting landscapes from direct observation.
Former painter Barbara Morgan shifted to photography in 1935 and never looked back. She regarded her camera as a quick, efficient tool capable of capturing fleeting imagery unlike that of any other medium. Here, Morgan depicts influential BMC Anni and Josef Albers during a quiet moment during the 1944 Summer Art Institute. Josef and Anni Albers served as faculty at the college from 1933 to 1949.
Anni Albers (Berlin, Germany 1899 - 1994 Orange, Connecticut)

With Verticals from the Connections portfolio, 1983
Screenprint on paper; edition 25/120
19 1/4 x 15 inches
Publisher: Fausta Squatriti, Milan Printer: Muggiò, Milan
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

Anni Albers based her screenprint compositions such as this on woven textile patterns she developed while working as a weaving instructor at BMC. Albers believed that craft practice was a valuable tool for shaking loose mental habits that hindered creativity. She theorized that fiber would be an ideal medium because students had little previous instruction in working with it and would therefore be more likely to explore it free of any preconceived notions. Intentional or not, even Albers’ choice of screenprinting as a printmaking technique reflects her fascination with fiber.
Growing up in Tokyo, Leo Amino immigrated to the United States as a teenager. He became interested in carving after working for a Japanese wood importing firm where he had access to ebony wood samples. Although without formal art training, Amino explored a variety of sculptural methods and was eventually hired as a teacher by BMC. After decades of carving wood or stone, Amino achieved greatest recognition for his experiments with cast sculpture using synthetic resins. The angular shapes in this translucent resin sculpture recall the geometric compositions of Josef Albers, Amino’s colleague at BMC.
Jack Tworkov (Biala Podlaska, Poland 1900 - 1982 Provincetown, Massachusetts)

*KTL #1*, 1982
Color lithograph of Arches paper; edition 42/150
24 x 24 inches
Publisher: Tyler Graphics, Ltd., Mount Kisco, NY
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Brian E. Butler

Jack Tworkov was a leading abstract painter and art educator known for his refined compositions built of gridded forms and subdued color. He worked closely with Abstract Expressionist painters Franz Kline and Willem de Kooning, the latter with whom he had an adjoining studio in New York from 1948 to 1953. Invited to teach painting at BMC in the summer of 1952, Tworkov befriended Josef Albers and absorbed Albers’ theories regarding geometric abstraction. Like Albers, he shunned the signature gestural styles of his Abstract Expressionist counterparts, instead allowing mathematical systems and numerical sequences to determine each composition. As in *KTL #1*, the resulting works consist of precise geometric shapes contrasted by loose color stains and patterns of small marks. In the mid-1960s, Tworkov began exploring a variety of printmaking methods in search of techniques that would enable him to replicate the appearance of his painted passages.
Hazel Larsen Archer (Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1921 - 2001 Tuscon, Arizona)

*Portrait of Ruth Asawa,* 1947
Geltain silver print on paper
5 1/2 x 3 1/4 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Michael Urbain and Catherine Urbain

After studying at BMC, Hazel Larsen Archer was invited to become BMC’s first photography instructor in 1949. She taught the importance of visual perception over technique, and invited influential photographers including Henry Callahan, Aaron Siskind, and Arthur Siegel to teach at BMC as part of a special focus on photography in the summer of 1951.

During the nine years Archer spent at BMC, she created what represents the most comprehensive photographic document of the school and its students, community, atmosphere, and key performances. In particular, she is recognized for her important photographs of dance routines by Merce Cunningham and his students in which she conveys the performers’ graceful motion without blurring their movement. Due to a fire in the science building which housed the college’s darkroom, most of Archer’s early negatives were destroyed.
Peter Grippe (Buffalo, New York 1912 - 2002 Suffolk, New York)

Bicycle Rider, 1945
Intaglio on paper
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase with funds provided by 2014 Collectors’ Circle members Jim Wilson & Lynne Poirier-Wilson

Peter Grippe was a sculptor and printmaker who enjoyed a long career as a practicing artist and arts educator. Sculpting in terracotta early in his career, he later turned to working with cast bronze. In his prints, he specialized in abstract compositions influenced by cubism, surrealism, and other modern art movements. Grippe often found inspirations for his abstract compositions in the action unfolding around him, whether a jass performance or a passing cyclist, as seen here. Grippe used intersecting flat planes, lively patterns, and disjointed body parts to express the movement and rhythms of his subjects.
Movement

Movement was a key area of study and experimentation at Black Mountain College, whether mark making, sculpting, dancing, or other creative actions. Dance classes and theater productions featured famed choreographer Merce Cunningham, whose performances combined intense physicality and intricate movements, often blurring the lines between dancer and audience while challenging limitations of the stage. Classes in painting, drawing, textiles, and ceramics taught by Josef and Anni Albers, Karen Karnes, and Joseph Fiore were designed to convey notions of movement through gesture or repetition. The suggestion of movement is further reinforced in the titles of several works featured in this exhibition.
Marianne Preger-Simon (Brooklyn, New York 1929; lives and works in Whately, Massachusetts)

*Portrait of Merce Cunningham*, 1953
Ink on paper
11 3/8 x 10 inches
Asheville Museum of Art, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Versatile artist Marianne Preger-Simon was active at BMC as a dancer and visual artist. This drawing depicts the renowned dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham during the critical summer of 1953 at BMC in which he established his Merce Cunningham Dance Company, of which Preger-Simon was a founding member. The collaborative interactive group served as an open environment in which experimental, untested ideas were encouraged and nourished. This rendering of Cunningham along with Preger-Simon’s drawing of Peter Voulkos, also in this exhibition, stem from a series of intentionally loose and sketchy ink drawings Preger-Simon made portraying company members as if captured in mid-thought.
Clemens Kalischer (Lindau, Germany 1921 - 2018 Lenox, Massachusetts)

*Merce Cunningham Teaching at Black Mountain College,*
1948 (printed 2007)
Gelatin silver print on paper
14 x 10 7/8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase with funds provided by 2007 Collectors’ Circle member Rob Pulleyn

Clemens Kalischer fled Nazi Germany with his family in 1933, taking up residence in Paris. From 1939-1942, he was held in various French concentration camps before managing to gain passage on a ship bound for the United States. He soon took up photography in order to document the human condition. In depicting displaced people they arrived in New York Harbor he confided, “I see fear and expectation in the faces of men, women and children...because I had experienced the same. I think it was the empathy which enabled me to move amongst the people and photograph them without disturbing them.”

Kalischer stopped at BMC after completing an assignment in Cherokee, NC in 1948 and focused his lens on the ebb and flow of life on campus. This image depicts the famous dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham in his role as BMC guest faculty member. Cunningham is shown instructing student Elizabeth Schmitt Jennerjahn in the college’s dining hall, which also served as a dance studio and performance space.
Anni Albers (Berlin, Germany 1899 - 1994 Orange, Connecticut)

*Untitled* from the *Connections* portfolio, 1983
Screenprint on paper; edition 25/120
17 3/4 x 13 3/4 inches
Publisher: Fausta Squatriti, Milan printer: Muggiò, Milan
Ashevile Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

German-born Anni Albers was one of the most influential textile artists of the twentieth century. Widely admired for her pioneering wall hangings and weavings, Albers was also a prolific printmaker. First turning her attention to the medium in her mid-60s, she quickly started to use printmaking techniques to achieve results not possible in any other medium. She also credited printmaking for bringing her recognition, once remarking “...when the work is made with threads, it’s considered a craft, when it’s on paper, it’s considered art.”
Elaine de Kooning (Brooklyn, Pennsylvania 1918-1989
Southampton, New York)

*Torchlight Cave Drawings No. 1*, 1985
Aquatint on paper; edition 13/25
20 x 25 1/2 inches
Publisher: Crown Point Press, San Francisco
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Michael J. Teaford & Robert K. Benites

Elaine de Kooning was a talented painter and printmaker whose incorporation of themes from psychology and anthropology made her a prominent figure in the New York School of abstract painting in the late 1940s and 1950s. As a BMC student, she participated in art making, acted in plays, and was part of the team that helped R. Buckminster Fuller construct his first geodesic dome on campus.

Produced long after her time at BMC, this evocative aquatint is one of eight prints featured in her *Torchlight Cave Drawings*, a suite that demonstrates the artist’s unique fusion of abstraction and primitive imagery inspired by her interest in prehistoric cave paintings. As the artist once explained, “I’m an escape artist. Because I like the idea of escaping from style, but when I look at all of my work, there begins to be a unity...You don’t have to look for a style, you can’t escape a style.” De Kooning is wife of Abstract Expressionist painter Willem de Kooning.
Barbara Morgan (Buffalo, Kansas 1900 - 1992 Sleepy Hollow, New York)

*Martha Graham - Lamentation (Oblique)*, 1935 (printed later)

Gelatin silver print on paper

12 x 9 5/8 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Nat. C. Myers Fund for Photography

Barbara Morgan began her art career as a painter until 1935, when she shifted to photography. The camera enabled the artist to combine her interests in dance, the iconic power of gesture, and recording fleeting movements. In 1944, she was invited to teach as part of a summer session at BMC and lectured on “the role of Light in Photography.” She also conducted an outdoor workshop in which she stressed aesthetics over technique.

Here, she captures the angular leaping figure of famous dancer and choreographer Martha Graham. Many of Morgan’s compositions embrace abstract design concepts, an approach that set her apart from the majority of American documentary photographers of the day such as Ansel Adams, Walker Evans, and Dorothea Lange. After her husband’s death in 1967, Morgan lost interest in the human figure and shifted her attention to creating abstract photograms, photomontages, and landscape images.
Peter Voulkos (Bozeman, Montana 1924 - 2002 Bowling Green, Ohio)

*Untitled*, circa 1960

Stoneware

20 x 20 x 4 inches

Asheville Museum of Art, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the Estate of Norman Schulman

Peter Voulkos was one of the earliest and most adventurous ceramic artists to experiment with Abstract Expressionism and its potential to elevate ceramics from the utilitarian production pieces to powerfully expressive sculptures. He taught ceramics at BMC in the summer of 1953, and he met innovative figures such as Josef Albers, Robert Rauschenberg, and John Cage, who significantly influenced the direction of his work. Although the Abstract Expressionist movement is most commonly represented by the expansive oil paintings of Jackson Pollock and other members of the New York School, its influence during the 1950s soon spread to other art media, including ceramics. This bold stoneware sculpture reflects Voulkos’s groundbreaking work in which he shuns utilitarian vessel forms in favor of sculptural masses bearing the traces of bold intuitive gestures - drips, splashes, cuts, tears - in what represented a “universal” language of form.
Lorrie Goulet (Riverdale, New York 1925; lives and works in New York City)

**Quick Sketches**, 1969

Conté crayon on paper

5 1/2 x 19 1/8 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Trained in ceramics, Lorrie Goulet initially studied painting and drawing with Josef Albers and weaving with Anni Albers when Goulet arrived at BMC in 1943. She soon became best known for her direct carving of stone and wood as in *Carioles*, which appears elsewhere in this exhibition. Focused on depicting women and families from various cultures, Goulet in this dynamic drawing explores a female figure’s shifting poses from various vantage points.
Jo Sandman (Boston 1931; lives and works in Somerville, Massachusetts)

Light Memory #7, Self-Potrait (Hands III), 2004
Gelatin silver print on paper; edition 3/5
23 7/8 x 19 7/8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

In the 1990s, after gaining inspiration after seeing an x-ray of her own hand, Sandman turned her attention from painting (see her 1960 painting Love in this gallery) to producing poetic and evocative photographic images of the human body. As in works such as Light Memory #7, Self-Portrait (Hands III), she combines medical imaging technology with antique photographic processes in order to investigate the body’s unique potential to convey notions of mortality and tensions between material and spiritual worlds. Sandman, who attended BMC during the 1951 Summer Session, carried the influence of experimentation and an interest in movement and gesture born out of her time at the college into her decades-long career.
R. Buckminster Fuller (Milton, Massachusetts 1895 - 1983 Los Angeles)

Radiant Photons from the Synergetics Folio, 1977
Screenprint on paper; edition 43/44
36 x 24 inches
Publisher: R. Buckminster Fuller and Lim Chong Keat
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Leandro P. Rizzuto

Hailed as “one of the greatest minds of our times, R. Buckminster Fuller was renowned for his comprehensive perspective on the world’s problems. For more than five decades, the inventor developed pioneering solutions that reflected his commitment to innovative designs capable of doing “more with less” and accelerating the global trend toward the development of more efficient technologies. BMC faculty and students who sat in on his summer classes in 1948 and 1949 were captivated by his lessons on geodesic geometry and his vision for technology’s role in solving the world’s problems of housing, hunger, and other dilemmas.

Fuller’s Synergetics Folio, from which this print stems, represents a multi-faceted system designed to identify and understand through geometric modeling (such as his famous Geodesic Dome) the methods that nature actually uses in coordinating the universe. Fuller applied synergetics problem-solving methods to all areas of civilization and technology. The Synergetics Folio was published as a result of an exhibition of the artist’s work at the Penang Museum, Malaysia in 1978.
Jo Sandman (Boston 1931; lives and work in Somerville, Massachusetts)

Love, 1960
Oil and enamel on canvas
47 x 47 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Jo Sandman is one of New England’s most esteemed artists. She is especially recognized for her consistent spirit of innovation and experimentation in several media over a long and fruitful career. Following her time as a painting student at BMC during the 1951 Summer Session, Sandman created works such as Love that reflect her early interest in abstraction and formal and material experimentation - an interest that she expounded upon in later paintings, sculptures, and installations. One of her more recent photographic works is on view nearby.
Jacqueline Hermann Gourevitch (Paris 1933; lives and works in New York City)

*Window and Sun*, 1951
Oil on canvas
34 x 28 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Unlike many of her BMC counterparts who found inspiration in abstract synthetic forms, Jacqueline Gourevitch derived most of her compositional ideas from natural imagery such as broad skies and distant vistas. As in this early work created in the year following her attendance at BMC for the 1950 Summer Session, clear references to her subject remain visible amid hard-edged overlapping forms. A later example of her work appears nearby.
Repetition

Professor of art and design Josef Albers led his Black Mountain College students in exercises based in repetition, another key concept represented in the school’s teachings and in many of the works on display in this exhibition. Wave, a graphite drawing by Albert Lanier, is an example of an exercise Albers assigned to all of his design students. By drawing one wavy line over another until the page was filled, and then observing the resulting illusion of a rippled surface, he effected a disciplined study of human perception. Basket, a delicate sculptural work by Lanier’s wife and fellow student Ruth Asawa, transforms repetitive loops of wire into three dimensional structures. The piece is an early example of her signature looped wire technique, which she called “drawing in the air.”
Barbara Sayre Harmon (Yerington, Nevada 1927; lives and works in Taos)

*Dance (Remembering June, Merce, & Vera)*, 1949-1950
Marbling on paper on masonite
5 3/8 x 12 1/4 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Barbara Sayre Harmon is known for images of dancers inspired by her extensive performing arts background. She attended BMC in 1949-1950 and was drawn to its modernist design principles. The influence of BMC’s experimental visual arts curriculum led her to depict her subjects in a manner governed by geometric proportions and abstract patterns rather than anatomical accuracy. A talented and versatile printmaker, Harmon learned the centuries-old marbling technique seen here from BMC instructor Joseph Fiore, whose work is also included in this exhibition.
Raymond Barnhart (Ripley, West Virginia 1903 - 1996 Oregon)

Asterism, 1946-1947

Oil on canvas

14 x 15 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Genevieve Willson Barnhart

Raymond Barnhart is best known for his later totemic assemblage work made up of bones, broken toys, and weathered wood. During his time as a student at BMC in 1944, he specialized in thickly painted canvases featuring simplified imagery made up of basic color shapes that reflect the influence of his teacher Josef Albers. Common to both bodies of Barnhart’s work is his interest in using abstract arrangements to convey narrative content. Here, a network of isolated dabs of contrasting colors reinforces the title, which refers to a prominent pattern or group of stars.
Jacqueline Hermann Gourevitch (Paris 1933; lives and works in New York City)

Cloud Painting #94, 1976-1980
Oil on canvas
68 1/4 x 44 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Atmospheric forms float by in this work from Jacqueline Gourevitch’s ongoing series of cloud paintings, which she started in the 1960s. These paintings were an ideal vehicle for her continuing interest in experimenting with each composition’s picture plane. Her practice of working from “observation, memory, and invention” began while she was a student at BMC in 1950 and continues today in her paintings of the New York City skyline from the upper floors of skyscrapers.
Lorna Blaine Halper (Boston 1924 - 2012 Pawling, New York)

**Untitled print of Spiro figures**, 1989
Engraving on paper; edition 4/5
3 x 3 3/4 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Under the tuteledge of Josef Albers, Lorna Halper developed a multi-media approach while a student at BMC that combined the principles of Albers’s teachings with her own individualized use of line, color, and shape. Halper’s elaborate drawings often explore the relation between figure and ground. A recurring motif in her work is “Spiro,” whose head and face take the form of a spiral. She began depicting the enigmatic figure in sketches during her childhood and continued to incorporate it into works in a variety of media throughout her long career. A related sculpted head by Halper appears in a display case nearby.
William Albert Lanier (Metter, Georgia 1927 - 2008 San Francisco)

_E’s_, not dated
Ink and graphite on paper
17 x 22 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

After his naval service during World War II, architecture student Albert Lanier resumed his studies at BMC in 1948 under the tutelage of renowned inventor Buckminster Fuller and artist Josef Albers. Lanier was a lifelong advocate of community activism and simple efficient living, concepts that were fundamental to Fuller’s teachings. Settling in San Francisco with wife Ruth Asawa, a brilliant sculptor whom he met at BMC, Lanier opened an architecture firm known for its streamlined structures featuring large interior spaces filled with light. In addition to his architectural work, Lanier remained a humble champion of civic improvement on all fronts. He worked for the preservation of historic murals and the renovation of important public structures. Lanier also created the architectural designs for his wife’s public art projects. _E’s_ represents Lanier’s early experiments with line, pattern, and pictorial space.
Kenneth Noland (Asheville, North Carolina 1924 - 2010  
Port Clyde, Maine)

Step, 1965
Acrylic on canvas
31 3/8 x 31 1/8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Joyce Cole

Asheville native Kenneth Noland was exposed to art at an early age by his father, who was a painter. After his military service during World War II, Noland returned to Asheville to attend BMC in 1946. While at BMC he met Helen Frankenthaler, whose method of staining unprimed canvas with acrylic proved deeply influential. Noland’s work gradually became more hard-edged and geometric, featuring circular or ellipsoid rings, chevrons and targets. He moved to New York in the spring of 1962, where he developed an extensive series of chevron paintings, represented here in Step.
Olavi Toivo Sihvonen (Brooklyn, New York 1921 - 1991 New York City)

**Untitled**, 1975

Oil on canvas

28 1/8 x 36 3/8 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Lorna Blaine Halper

Olavi “Oli” Sihvonen was a post-war artist known for his large hard-edged abstract paintings that reflect the influence of his teacher at BMC, Josef Albers. After leaving BMC, Sihvonen by the late 1960s gained a measure of critical success for his canvases in which the artist uses color and line to create rhythmic repetitions reminiscent of Josef Albers.
Leo Krikorian (Fresno, California 1922 - 2005 Yreka, California)

324 BM, circa 1970
Screenprint on paper; edition 10/100
14 3/8 x 9 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

After learning about BMC from a friend, Leo Krikorian enrolled and the embarked on a two-week long drive from his Los Angeles home to the North Carolina campus in 1947. He began studying with Josef Albers, but it was Ilya Bolotowsky who had the greatest influence on him as a teacher. Krikorian recalled that he didn’t care for Albers’s teaching methods: “He doesn’t teach. He starts you off.” In contrast, Bolotowsky allowed his students to paint in any way that they wanted. “You could be a realist or an abstractionist, and you’d get criticized according to your painting, not what you think.” Krikorian soon developed a mode of geometric abstraction reflecting his interest in symmetry, optical illusion, and implied space.

In 1953, Krikorian and Knute Stiles, another BMC alumnus whose work is featured in this exhibition, opened a bar, The Place, in San Francisco’s North Beach. It soon became the center of counterculture or “Beat” life in San Francisco, and Krikorian became known as “Grandfather of the Beats.” Abstract artists were given exhibitions, experimental films were screened, impromptu music recitals were held, and poets such as William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsburg, Jack Kerouac, and Ken Kesey read their work. While operating the bar and restaurant, Krikorian continued to paint and make photographs.
Margaret Kennard Johnson (Madison, Wisconsin 1918 - 2015 Princeton, New Jersey)

Canyon Series: Beyond the Chasm III, 1994
Relief print (mesh) on paper; edition 4/10
22 x 30 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist
Margaret Kennard Johnson (Madison Wisconsin 1918 - 2015 Princeton, New Jersey)

*Canyon Series: Above and Beyond*, 1994
Relief print (mesh) on paper; edition 5/10
18 1/8 x 23 3/4 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Margaret Kennard Johnson studied with Josef Albers at BMC during the 1944 Summer Session and quickly embraced the school’s experimental approach to image making. Specializing in printmaking, her artistic interests were driven by a fundamental fascination with manipulating materials and exploring various studio techniques. Rather than imposing a preconceived idea or image onto her raw material, Johnson more often devised her approach out of a response to the material itself. In her prints, she recognized that the key to a successful work was to create a meaningful dialogue between ink and paper.
Josef Albers (Bottrop, Germany 1888-1976 New Haven, Connecticut)

*Formulation: Articulation Folio I, Folder 14*, 1972
Screenprint on paper; edition 369/1000
15 x 40 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

Throughout his long and prolific career Josef Albers remained fascinated by the nature of visual perception. In this and other compositions he presents interlocking color shapes that manipulate perspective and raise questions as to what is foreground and what is background. This series of prints also represents his interest in the optical and psychological effects of color.
Warren “Pete” Jennerjahn (Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1922 - 2020 Long Island, New York)

**White Square**, circa 1951-1955

Oil on gessoed board

23 1/8 x 18 3/4 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Musician, artist, and art instructor Pete Jennerjahn spent the summer of 1948 as a student at BMC, studying with and assisting Josef Albers. Following Albers’ departure from the college in the spring of 1949, Jennerjahn took over the print shop, which produced the school’s letterhead and catalogues. As a member of the faculty until 1951, he taught courses in color and design, and often played his recorder to accompany dance performances. Jennerjahn and his wife Elaine Schmitt Jennerjahn founded the Light Sound Movement Workshop, a multi-media endeavor that staged short theater pieces incorporating projected slides, painted backdrops, sound, and movement. In addition to his visual arts talents, Jennerjahn also played saxophone, clarinet, and flute.
Robert Chapman Turner (Port Washington, New York 1913 - 2005 Sandy Spring, Maryland)

**Pitcher**, circa 1955
Glazed stoneware
7 3/8 x 9 5/8 x 8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase with funds provided by 2007 Collectors’ Circle members David Moltke-Hansen & Patricia Poteat and Brian and Gail McCarthy

Robert Turner arrived at BMC in 1949, establishing the school’s first ceramics arts program and becoming a key catalyst for a new surge of interest in ceramic art at the school. After leaving in 1951, he went on to become one of the most influential potters and teachers of the last half of the 20th century. Turner was deeply influenced by Chinese and African ceramic traditions, and viewed the vessel as an expressive object with a long history of wide-ranging significance. This early example of his work features a striking contrast between the vessel’s refined spherical chamber and expressive gestural glaze marks.
This bronze bust depicts a character named Spiro, a mythological persona of artist Lorna Halper’s creation who represents every person, from inception through maturity. The figure appears in much of her work going back to her childhood and becomes a central character in compositions that encompass the entire human journey, from inception to eternal afterlife. Here, Halper’s title suggests a merging of her own personal with that of Spiro.
Lorrie Goulet (Riverdale, New York 1925; lives and works in New York City)

Carioles, 1976
Carved green serpentine stone
16 3/4 x 23 1/2 x 9 5/8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Trained in ceramics, Lorrie Goulet initially studied painting and drawing with Josef Albers and weaving with Anni Albers when she arrived at BMC in 1943. She soon became best known for her direct carving of stone and wood, as seen here in Carioles, a term for a single person sled. A prolific writer, Goulet’s works include poetry, and philosophical and educational essays and books. She continues to create art, publish her writings, and teach from her studio in Chelsea, New York. Goulet married artist and BMC faculty member José de Creeft, whom she met while attending the college.
**Bacia Edelman** (Boston 1925 - 2009 Madison, Wisconsin)  
**Vase**, 2000  
Glazed stoneware  
13 x 7 7/8 x 3 3/8 inches  
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Ceramic artist Bacia Edelman spent the summer of 1946 at Black Mountain College where she studied with renowned painter and color theorist Josef Albers. Her clay vessels often feature playful forms and varied surface textures. As surface was important to her, she used various firing techniques such as burnishing and sawdust firing, multi-fired matt and lichen glazes, and wood firing. Not all of her pieces were functional, and she was adamant that she was a studio artist stating, “My pots are pots, whether you drink out of them or not.”
Kenneth Snelson (Pendleton, Oregon 1927 - 2016 New York City)

**Northwood II**, 1970
Aluminum rods and cable
13 3/4 x 11 3/8 x 12 1/8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Joyce Cole

In Kenneth Snelson’s angular minimalist sculptures, shiny tubes of polished metal appear to float mid-air. The effect is achieved through the combination of tension and compression using the structural principle of “tensegrity,” a term coined by the maverick inventor Buckminster Fuller, Snelson’s BMC instructor, that fuses the words “tension” and “integrity.” Unlike traditional sculptures that rely on a central mass for structural stability, Snelson’s creations are supported by taut wires running through each metal tube. While this work is a small-scale study, or maquette, a monumental example of Snelson’s sculpture *Dragon II*, can be found in the KMA’s South Garden.

As for his lifelong fascination with tensile structure, Snelson explained that “I can see the connection between my love for making model airplanes and playing drums in a band during my teens to making sculptures with steel pipes and cables in my adult years. All three involve internally stored-up energy: tension pulling against solid resistance; the airplane’s skin shrink-stretched over the frame for strength; drumheads stretched for tuning; and steel cables pulling against the struts to make the sculpture firm. All possess what is called prestressing - materials under pressure and external tension - a natural principle that seems to hold a universal attraction for people.”
Ruth Asawa (Norwalk, California 1926-2013 San Francisco, California)

**Basket**, 1948-1949

Woven copper wire

4 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 7 3/4 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase with funds provided by 2010 Collectors’ Circle with additional funds provided by Frances Myers

At the age of 16, Ruth Asawa and her family were sent to Japanese American internment camps in California and Arkansas before their eventual release. Unable to enroll in traditional art schools because of her race, Asawa gained entrance to BMC in 1946, where she studied under Josef Albers, Ilya Bolotowsky, Buckminster Fuller, and Merce Cunningham. After a trip to Mexico in 1947, she became intrigued by the looped wire baskets used to hold eggs at the market. This simple form and the common material were the catalyst for the creation of her internationally known wire sculptures, some of which are displayed as elaborate nested forms dangling in space.
Music

Along with the visual arts, poetry, and dance, music was a key part of BMC’s curriculum. Noted musicologist Heinrich Jalowetz began teaching there in 1938, and in 1944 organized the first Summer Music Institute, which focused on “Musical Interpretation.” In typical BMC collaborative spirit, the school’s independent areas of study increasingly intersected and overlapped, often resulting in groundbreaking collaborative productions. In 1948 legendary avant garde composer John Cage made his first extended visit to the campus, and during that summer presented Erik Satie’s *The Ruse of the Medusa* in the college’s dining hall. Incorporating set design, choreography, and theater, the musical production elevated the school’s experimental climate and interdisciplinary spirit to new heights.
Anni Albers (Berlin, Germany 1899-1994 Orange, Connecticut)

*Orchestra III* from the *Connections* portfolio, 1983

Screenprint on paper; edition 25/120

Publisher: Fausta Squatriti, Milan Printer: Muggiò, Milan

26 3/4 x 18 7/8 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

Anni Albers based her screenprint compositions such as this on woven textile patterns she developed while working as a weaving instructor at BMC. Albers believed that craft practice was a valuable tool for shaking loose habits of mind that hindered creativity. She theorized that because students had little previous instruction in working with material such as fiber, they would be less conditioned to rely on their teacher for answers and more likely to trust their own experience. Intentional or not, even Albers’ choice of screenprinting as a printmaking technique reflects her fascination with fiber.
**John Cage** (Los Angeles 1912 - 1992 New York City)

**10 Stones 2**, 1989

Color spitbite aquatinit, and sugar-lift on smoked paper; edition trial proof TP paper

22 3/4 x 18 1/8 inches

Publisher: Crown Point Press, San Francisco

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College, 2004 Collectors' Circle Purchase

Although artist and composer John Cage explored creative outlets through wide-ranging media, he often resisted being labeled a painter. Late in his career, however, Cage produced a group of prints such as this aquatint that signals a new confidence in his painterly abilities. After determining by chance the color, orientation, and position of small stones on a copper plate, he used an acid-loaded brush to trace the outline of each stone in bold, sweeping gestures.
Ati Gropius Johansen (Wiesbaden, Germany 1926 - 2014 Wellfleet, Massachusetts)

**Design for Record Jacket, Salome: Richard Strauss**, not dated
Watercolor with printed text on paper
8 x 8 5/8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Ati Gropius Johansen was an educator, designer, and illustrator who was adopted at the age of nine by Bauhaus architect and founder Walter Gropius and his wife Ilse Frank. The family moved to the U.S. from Germany in 1937 to flee the Nazi regime. They first visited BMC that December to see fellow Bauhaus faculty Anni and Josef Albers and to discuss the potential development of the college’s Lake Eden campus. The family remained active participants in the college, visiting frequently until 1949 when the Albers departed. Johansen enrolled at BMC in 1943 and after some initial reluctance, soon found the environment perfectly suited to her creative sensibilities. The principles of design and composition she learned studying with Anni and Josef Albers exerted a profound influence on her work as a student, and later as a designer, teacher, and renovator of houses designed by her father.
Unknown Black Mountain College Artist
Program for *The Ruse of Medusa* by Erik Satie at Black Mountain College on August 14, 1948, 1948

Ink on paper

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Barbara Beate Dreier and Theodore Dreier Jr. on behalf of all generations of the Dreier family

In the summer of 1948, some of the 20th century’s most brilliant artists were living and studying at BMC, including John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Elaine de Kooning, Buckminster Fuller, and Arthur Penn. This group decided to collaborate on a production of the surrealist play *The Ruse of the Medusa* by French composer Erik Satie, incorporating dance, theater, music, and visual arts. The play was translated from the original French, making the BMC production the first time it was performed in English. *The Ruse of the Medusa* remains an important precursor to performance art.
Robert Rauschenberg (Port Arthur, Texas 1925 - 2008 Captiva Island, Florida)

Cunningham Relief from The Cunningham Portfolio, 1974
Embossing with hand-rubbed halftone in brown ink on paper; edition HP 1/7
30 1/4 x 22 1/2 inches

Publisher: Multiples, Inc. and Castelli Graphics, Printer: Styria Studio, Inc. and Untitled Press Inc.
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase

This technically complex and deceptive print by Robert Rauschenberg involves two techniques: hand-rubbed inking and embossing. It initially appears to depict a lone pair of silhouetted dancers from the dance company of Rauschenberg’s close friend and collaborator, Merce Cunningham. On closer inspection, rows of embossed figures of dancers become visible.
**John Cage** (Los Angeles 1912 - 1992 New York City)

**Not Wanting to Say Anything About Marcel (Plexigram I),** 1969

Screenprint on Plexiglass with walnut stand; edition 93/125

14 1/2 x 23 7/8 x 14 1/2 inches

Publisher: Eye Editions, Cincinnati, Printer: Hollander Workshop, Inc., New York

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase

John Cage is renowned for his experimentations with the nature of sound and the invention of new systems of musical notation. His innovative ideas on composition and performance have influenced numerous musicians, painters, and choreographers. *Not Wanting to Say Anything About Marcel* documents the widely publicized March 5, 1968 “Reunion” event in Toronto in which Cage and French-American conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), one of his artistic heroes, played a game of musical chess. The two creative giants used a specially constructed chessboard that triggered different electronic compositions with each move. This related print was created using the same random method that Cage used with Duchamp during their chess match. The randomly selected order of words reflects the influence of Dada, an art movement for which Duchamp was renowned, whose various modes of expression were designed to defy rational thought.
Robert Rauschenberg (Port Arthur, Texas 1925-2008
Captiva, Florida)

John from the Ruminations series, 1999
Intaglio in two colors with photogravure on Lana Gravure paper; edition 40/46
29 1/2 x 38 7/8 inches
Publisher: Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, 2015 Collectors’ Circle purchase

Milton Ernest “Robert” Rauschenberg was an American painter and graphic artist whose early works anticipated the Pop art movement of the 1950s and 1960s. He is well known for his “Combines,” a series of large artworks in which he blends everyday objects with paint and other art materials in order to blur the distinctions between painting and sculpture, and create new statements about art and its relationship to material culture.

Prints from his series Ruminations, represented here in John, take the form of dense compositions filled with imagery of important figures from his past. In a manner designed to echo the manner in which the human mind blends various fragments of memories, Rauschenberg combines disjointed imagery from vintage photographs of family and friends, many taken by the artist himself. The title John references Rauschenberg’s time as a student at BMC, where in summer 1952 he and composer John Cage formed a close friendship that would last their entire lives. The two portraits of Cage that appear in John were taken at BMC, likely by Rauschenberg.
Marianne Preger-Simon (Brooklyn, New York 1929; lives and works in Whately Massachusetts)

**Portrait of Peter Voulkos, 1953**

Graphite on paper
10 7/8 x 8 3/8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Marianne Preger-Simon’s drawings of her fellow artists at BMC from the summer of 1953 represent not only portraits, but also the fluid dance-like movements of pencil on paper. As such, they reflect the spirit and influence of BMC professor Josef Albers’s line studies and her experiences as a member of choreographer Merce Cunningham’s company. Here, she depicts prominent ceramic sculptor Peter Voulkos, represented in this exhibition by an expressively perforated stoneware sculpture.
Rhythm

Rhythm is defined as “a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.” How, then, might this concept translate from the auditory and kinesthetic—or physical—into the visual? Through exposure to other disciplines while at Black Mountain College, many artists incorporated not only what they saw, but also what they heard into what they created. Variances in rhythm were essential to the aesthetics of modern dance as taught by Merce Cunningham, modern music in the compositions of John Cage, and to modern art works constructed by Cage, Josef Albers, and Ilya Bolotowsky. In its later years, Black Mountain College also saw a flourishing of poetry and writing, where rhythm came forth in written and spoken words. The integration of various expressions of rhythm came across visually in the form of pattern, contrasting tones or colors, and sensations of vibration or movement.
Lore Kadden Lindenfeld (Elberfeld, Germany 1921 - 2010
Princeton, New Jersey)

Crossing Over, 1982
Wool and ribbons
48 x 38 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Peter Lindenfeld

After her fashion design studies were halted by the Nazis in 1937, Lore Lindenfeld and her family fled to Holland where she worked as a seamstress. A few years after moving to the United States, a friend convinced her to attend BMC. There she studied watercolor with Josef Albers and textile design with Anni Albers. After her graduation in 1948, she became a prominent member of New York’s fashion industry with her designs being featured in major publications. The simple geometric patterns and color harmonies seen in Crossing Over hark back to principles of textile design Lindenfeld learned from Anni Albers.
Elaine Schmitt Urbain (Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, 1925 - 2004 Milford, Connecticut)

Untitled, circa 1945
Watercolor on paper
11 1/8 x 14 1/2 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Michael Urbain

One of four children from her family to attend BMC, Elaine Schmitt Urbain studied at the school during 1945-1946 and embraced the teachings of Josef Albers. Her early works such as this untitled watercolor of a violin made as a study in Albers’s class feature soft, evocative imagery hovering between representation and abstraction. The artist married fellow BMC student John Urbain in 1946 and the two soon relocated to Paris. Perhaps inspired in part by her husband’s traumatic experiences in World War II, Elaine Urbain during the Vietnam War began a series of deeply personal portraits depicting leaders of the antiwar movement and captured several prominent leaders’ stories in biographical essays.
Ronald Robertson (Detroit 1927; lives and works in California)

**Transitions**, 1950
Oil on canvas
4 7/8 x 8 3/4 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Detroit native Ronald Robertson was a student of Josef Albers at BMC from 1950-51, and his early painting *Transitions* expresses the abstract geometric vocabulary that Albers championed. After leaving BMC, Robertson traveled extensively in order to pursue his interest in myths, metaphors, and symbols from various cultures. The artist eventually shifted to producing sculptural mixed media works using castoff materials assembled in unexpected combinations.
Ronald Robertson (Detroit 1927; lives and works in California)

*Triad*, 1999
Ink on paper
11 x 16 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

A passionate world traveler, former BMC student Ronald Robertson was deeply influenced by a trip to Japan, where he studied with calligraphers and print makers. The experience inspired him to write an extensive survey of Japanese wood block printing. The bold, gestural brushwork seen here in *Triad* likely reflects Robertson’s response to the vast legacy of traditional Japanese ink drawing.
Donald Alter (Bronx, New York 1930 - 2019 Goshen, New York)

Arrangement, 2010
Monoprint on paper; edition 1/1
8 1/2 x 12 1/8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Donald Alter was a versatile artist involved in textile design, graphic arts, and painting. He enrolled at BMC in 1948 and studied color theory with Josef Albers, Pete Jennerjahn, and Joseph Fiore. He continued his studies until 1951, when he was drafted into the army. After his military service, Alter resumed his art career by studying textile design at the Pratt Institute. Upon his retirement in 1990, he began devoting most of his energies to painting and printmaking, the latter represented by this colorful monoprint that appears to contain references to Albers’ signature geometric color shapes.
Josef Albers (Bottrop, Germany 1888 - 1976 New Haven, Connecticut)

*Formulation: Articulation Folio I, Folder 16*, 1972
Screenprint on paper; edition 369/1000
15 x 40 inches


Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

Influential artist and educator Josef Albers first made his mark at Germany’s renowned art and design school, Bauhaus, but fled to the United States with his wife Anni in the early 1930s with the rise of the country’s Nazi movement. He joined BMC’s faculty in 1933 and served as one of the school’s leading voices for almost two decades. Albers is perhaps most celebrated for using printmaking as a vehicle for groundbreaking experiments in color and form. In his various print folios, he worked in a serial format featuring austere compositions which demonstrated the power of subtle adjustments and juxtapositions to suggest the illusion of depth and variations in hue or value.
John Cage (Los Angeles 1912 - 1992 New York City)
Haiku, 1952
Zinc line cut on Kochi paper; edition of 300
4 3/4 x 12 7/8 inches
Publisher: Black Mountain College Music Press, Black Mountain, NC
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase with funds provided by 2006 Collectors’ Circle members Rob Pulleyn and Cherry & Paul Lentz Saenger
John Cage (Los Angeles 1912 - 1992 New York City)

**Haiku Envelope**, 1952

Print on Omi V paper; edition of 300

7 1/2 x 14 inches

Publisher: Black Mountain College Music Press, Black Mountain, NC

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase with funds provided by 2006 Collectors’ Circle members Rob Pulleyn and Cherry & Paul Lentz Saenger

John Cage was an influential artist and composer who taught at BMC for the 1948 and 1952 Summer Sessions. *Haiku* is the first and only piece published by the Black Mountain College Music Press and represents a rare artifact with few copies having been printed. The print and its companion envelope followed closely on the heels of Cage’s piano compositions *Haiku* (1950-1951) and *Seven Haiku* (1951-1952), and reflect the artist’s interdisciplinary background that included poetry, music, visual art, and Asian aesthetics. The ancient Chinese text *I Ching: The Book of Changes*, in particular, served Cage as a guide to removing the decision-making process in favor of introducing chance as a key element in the creation of his works.
Ilya Bolotowsky (St. Petersburg, Russia 1907 - 1981 New York City)

*Untitled*, circa 1970s
Screenprint on paper; edition 110/125
34 1/2 x 26 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, Museum purchase

After emigrating with his family from Russia to Turkey as a child, Bolotowsky settled in New York. There he pursued studies at the National Academy of Design, worked as a textile designer, and produced murals and paintings for the Public Works of Art Project and Works Progress Administration during the 1930s. He soon became known as one of New York’s leading abstract painters, whose work represented a search for philosophical order through the arrangement of hard-edged contours and geometric color shapes. After serving in World War II, he led BMC’s art department from 1946-1948 while Albers was on sabbatical. Bolotowsky continued to explore variations of geometric abstraction in various media until his death in 1981.
John Urbain (Brussel, Belgium 1920 - 2009 Milford, Connecticut)

**Untitled Black Mountain College Study/Abstract**, 1946
Watercolor on paper
11 3/8 x 8 1/2 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Drafted into the U.S. Army in 1941, Urbain was an infantry corporal whose skill as an illustrator led him to create army training graphics and murals. Wounded during the war, he later depicted the pathos of war in his own artwork. He studied art at BMC from 1946-47 on the G.I. Bill and was deeply influenced by Josef Albers, who opened his eyes to new approaches to design, color, and materials. The impact of Albers’s teaching is evident in this student study.

A multi-media artist, Urbain eventually came to specialize in collage and embraced the challenge of helping viewers see ordinary found objects in a new way. Rather than consciously controlling his materials, he explained that his compositions "kind of happen," and that "I often don’t realize what’s there until after it’s assembled." This early watercolor was produced in the same year Urbain married fellow BMC artist Elaine Schmitt and moved to Paris where the two continued their studies. In addition to his studio practice, Urbain served for many years as art director for the Phillip Morris Company.
After his naval service during World War II, architecture student Albert Lanier resumed his studies at BMC in 1948 under the tutelage of renowned inventor Buckminster Fuller and artist Josef Albers. Lanier was a lifelong advocate of community activism and simple efficient living, concepts that were fundamental to Fuller’s teachings. Settling in San Francisco with his wife Ruth Asawa, a brilliant sculptor whom he met at BMC, Lanier opened an architecture firm known for its streamlined structures featuring large interior spaces filled with light. In addition to his architectural work, Lanier remained a humble champion of civic improvement on all fronts. He worked for the preservation of historic murals and the renovation of important public structures. Lanier also created the architectural designs for his wife’s public art projects. A study of line, pattern, and pictorial space, *Wave*, was likely created in one of Josef Albers’s classes.
Lorna Blaine Halper (Boston 1924 - 2012 Pawling, New York)

*Untitled*, circa 1975
Oil and ink on linen
73 x 48 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

During her time at BMC from 1945-47, Lorna Halper embraced many of Josef Albers’s theories about composition and color. By the 1960s, however, she had developed an individual approach in which networks of parallel lines create an illusion of vibrating movement and shifting surfaces. Art critic Rosalind Brown viewed Halper’s style as informed by Op Art, a modern art movement concerned with perception and optics. Brown described the artist’s approach as “painterly Op” and that “her black and white lines are never the same, thick or thin, they compact into cubes that play with the background and tie in with hot colors to plasticity rather than optics.”
Olavi Toivo Sihvonen (Brooklyn, New York 1921 - 1991
New York City)

**Block Print #2, 1947**
Linocut on paper
9 7/8 x 7 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Lorna Blaine Halper

Olavi “Oli” Sihvonen was a post-war artist known for his large hard-edged abstract paintings, one of which is on view in the adjacent gallery. His style was greatly influenced by mentor Josef Albers who taught him color theory and Bauhaus aesthetics at BMC from 1946-1948, a period represented in this early linocut, *Block Print #2.*
Lore Kadden Lindenfeld (Elberfeld, Germany 1921 - 2010 Princeton, New Jersey)

_Matière Study: Wood Rubbing_, 1945-1948
Crayon on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Peter Lindenfeld

Textile artist Lore Kadden Lindenfeld, like most of her BMC counterparts, learned the value of gleaning artistic ideas from raw materials in the studio. In this study made while at BMC during 1945-1948, she uses the curving grain of a wooden panel as a compositional device for a bold abstraction that gives the effect of rippling movement. Lindenfeld graduated from BMC in 1948 with a focus on weaving and textile design.
Knute Stiles (St. Paul, Minnesota 1923 - 2009 Tuscon, Arizona)

**Untitled (dance #4),** circa 1970
Marker on paper
10 x 8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Joe & Rona Macias

Knute Stiles (St. Paul, Minnesota 1923 - 2009 Tuscon, Arizona)

**Untitled (dance #5),** circa 1970
Marker on paper
10 x 8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Joe & Rona Macias
Knute Stiles (St. Paul, Minnesota 1923 - 2009 Tuscon, Arizona)

Untitled (dance #6), circa 1970
Marker on paper
10 x 8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Joe & Rona Macias
Knute Stiles (St. Paul, Minnesota 1923 - 2009 Tuscon, Arizona)

Untitled (dance #7), circa 1970
Marker on paper
10 x 8 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Joe & Rona Macias

Painter, art critic, and poet Knute Stiles was a student at BMC from 1946-1948 after serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. These radically simplified contour drawings stem from a series in which the artist captures the movement and interaction of dancers through the subtle adjustments in color, scale, and placement. After leaving BMC, Stiles settled in San Francisco where he and fellow BMC alum Leo Krikorian ran a successful and influential gathering place for avant-garde artists involved in the city’s thriving counterculture scene.
Lorna Blaine Halper (Boston 1924 - 2012 Pawling, New York)

*Linear Dance*, 1963
Ink on paper
15 1/4 x 13 3/4
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist
Lorna Blaine Halper (Boston 1924-2012 Pawling, New York)

*The Golden Section*, 1947-1952
Oil on Masonite
13 3/8 x 21 1/2 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the artist

Lorna Halper was a student of Josef Albers at BMC and learned from her mentor lessons about color theory and proportion. In this study from Albers’s class, she presents an abstraction named for an ancient mathematical system designed to help artists and architects create compositions based on ideal geometric shapes and proportions. The Golden Section, or Golden Ratio, also appears in certain spiral forms found in nature, a fact that may help explain Halper’s character *Spiro* that appear in many of her later works, two of which are on view in the adjacent gallery. Halper attended BMC beginning with the 1945 Summer Art Institute and remained through spring 1948.
Sewell Sillman (Savannah, Georgia 1924 - 1992 Lyme, Connecticut)

**Untitled**, 1983

Watercolor on arches paper

22 1/2 x 30 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the Sewell Sillman Foundation
**Sewell Sillman** (Savannah 1924-1992 Lyme, Connecticut)

**Two Orbs (AKIN) 2**, 1969

Acrylic on paper

24 1/2 x 36 1/4 inches

Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the Sewell Sillman Foundation

After serving in World War II, Sillman briefly studied at Georgia Tech before following his friend Albert Lanier to BMC in 1948. Sillman recalled that BMC “...gave me a chance to get rid of absolutely every standard that I had grown up with... It was like a snake that loses its skin... What was left was someone who had absolutely no idea in the world what to do.... It was marvelous.” Sillman initially continued his architectural studies with design visionary Buckminster Fuller, but his introduction to Josef Albers led Sillman away from architecture to what would become a tireless exploration of geometric abstraction. Unlike Albers’ carefully calibrated and reductive studies, Sillman’s drawings and paintings often feature networks of delicate lines constructed in a manner reminiscent of textile designs woven on a loom. Others, such as *Two Orb (AKIN) 2*, suggest computer-assisted designs featuring portals that lead the viewer beyond the picture plane.
Potter Wanda Lea Austin pursued painting under Ilya Bolotowsky and writing under M.C. Richards at BMC from 1947-1948 and became known for her wheel thrown, functional red earthenware vessels and platters. She typically arrived at the brushed motifs on her vessels by studying the natural surroundings in her immediate vicinity. Austin was a founding member of the Toe River Crafts cooperative and was a longstanding member of the Southern Highlands Craft Guild.
Karen Karnes (Brooklyn, New York 1925 - 2016 Morgan, Vermont)

Jar, not dated
Glazed stoneware
12 x 10 x 10 inches
Asheville Art Museum, Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the Estate of Jane D. Alexander

Karen Karned and her former husband David Weinrib once headed BMC’s ceramics program, arriving at the school in 1952. She is known for her functional stoneware and wheel-thrown sculptural vessels that combine heft and grace. This jar, though functional, begins to edge towards the sculptural and also bears the ridges of throwing marks that communicate the rhythmic nature of producing pottery on a wheel.
Notes and College Publications from the Theodore Dreier Archive

The ephemera in this case come from the Asheville Art Museum’s Theodore Dreier Sr. Document Collection. Dreier co-founded Black Mountain College with John Andrew Rice in 1933 and remained an essential part of the College’s faculty and administration until the 1948-1949 academic year. Dreier’s documents provide a glimpse into the daily activities of the college during its eventful 24-year history, and aid in reconstructing timelines within which personal ephemera, artworks, and memoirs may be integrated.

Among the significant moments represented in the collection include a document listing the arrival of Alma Stone, the first African American student at BMC in 1944, almost 10 years to the day before the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court Ruling, and the following year the arrival of visiting faculty Roland Hayes and Carol Brice, both African American, for the school’s Summer Music Institute.
BMCBN Vol. 2 No. 6 April 1944
Art Institute, Summer 1944

Music at Black Mountain is not only a part of the curriculum but an essential element of community life. Students and teachers of every interest take part in the instrumental and vocal groups enjoying the experience and discipline that comes from functioning consciously as part of a whole. Their performances are a weekly occurrence. Music is studied as a language with its own syntax, grammar, and musical expression. In melody, harmony, counterpoint and rhythm are practiced as elements of musical architecture and in their mental interpenetration. The history of music is considered as an integral part of the culture of a period. The early music studied is sung and played before it is analyzed. A good music library facilitates the practical and theoretical work. Black Mountain believes that in a shared world of ideas, music is a world of help toward developing that community for which we all hail.