Throughout its history, Black Mountain College encouraged and nurtured process and experimentation, initiating an artistic and educational legacy that continues into the 21st century. In the coming months at Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center (BMCM+AC), you will see many signs of process and experimentation, as well as new forms of creativity and educational outreach, evolving from our 80/20 anniversaries in 2013-14, when we celebrated the founding academic year at BMC (1933-34), the first year of programs at BMCM+AC (1993-94) and reconsidered the history and lasting impact of BMC.

This September, following that year of celebration and reflection, we announced that BMCM+AC had received a grant of $646,685 from the Windgate Charitable Foundation, the largest grant in this organization’s history. This generous grant will enable us to implement a three-year strategic program that will include enhanced exhibitions; education, research and public outreach programs; a new focus on the permanent collections; museum internship and apprentice programs; and, most visibly, the expansion and renovation of our museum facilities and support spaces.

This will begin with Phase One, now under way, focusing upon the conversion of 56 Broadway, our pioneering home in downtown Asheville (opened in 1993), into a new BMC research and orientation center, library, and exhibition gallery, designed to display more of the museum’s permanent collection and archival holdings. We will open this space with a new Susan Weil exhibition on January 30, 2015.

Phase Two of the project, scheduled to open in June of 2015, reflects an alliance with the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design (CCCD), now located at 67 Broadway. We will build out new BMCM+AC spaces there for changing exhibitions, enhanced programs and educational initiatives, including our new internship and museum training programs, as well as a new museum storage and support facility.

Reflecting BMC’s spirit of process, experimentation, and creative collaboration, the museum is working with Asheville artist, designer, and arts advocate, Randy Shull, who is now designing and building these spaces in collaboration with us. Randy’s designs reflect his research into the Bauhaus-influenced sensibilities evident at BMC and the school’s use of available and vernacular materials, as well as his own contemporary design aesthetic, reflected in projects such as Pink Dog Creative, located in Asheville’s River Arts District. He is also serving once again as a mentor and teacher, working with BMCM+AC’s first design apprentice, Carley Brandau, a recent UNC Asheville graduate and an emerging Asheville artist.

So, please join us as these and a new series of exhibitions, programs, special events, collaborative projects, and related initiatives unfold at BMCM+AC in 2015. As always, we appreciate your ongoing support and interest, making it possible for us to look forward as we work to maintain the legacies of BMC and BMCM+AC.
Dan Rice at Black Mountain College: Painter Among The Poets

by Brian E. Butler
Thomas Howerton Distinguished Professor of Humanities, Department of Philosophy, UNC Asheville; Director IDE+A Institute; BMCM+AC Board Member, Former BMCM+AC Board Chair

It was an honor to curate the exhibition on Dan Rice, piecing together the story of his time at Black Mountain College. We are deeply grateful to Dan’s daughter Hilary Rice and his partner Virginia Foster for their steadfast and enthusiastic support for this project. Rice’s paintings surely deserve more attention than they have been given up to now. Further, it has become clear to me his place in BMC history has been greatly underrated.

Consider first: Rice’s place as the painter among the poets of Black Mountain College. Rice had an intimate friendship with Charles Olson. Olson clearly respected Rice’s work, describing him as the “greatest painter alive.” Rice and Robert Creeley were also very close at BMC — so close at times as to be virtually inseparable. Rice’s work clearly resonated with many other poets of the time as well. Rice’s artwork was featured in a 1952 collaborative work with Victor Kalos, The Double-Backed Beast, one of the earliest books (the fourth) of Jonathan Williams’ influential Jargon Press. In 1955 Williams, Rice and Creeley collaborated on All That is Lovely in Men. He also provided artworks for Paul Blackburn’s The Dissolving Fabric, Ross Feld’s Plum Poems, Savonarola’s Time by Max Finstein, Joel Oppenheimer’s The Love Bit, The Pitch by Joe Early and Gilbert Sorrentino’s Corrosive Sublimate. Rice also, and maybe most significantly, did the elegantly minimal cover for The Black Mountain Review Number 6.

In addition to being a painter among the BMC poets, Rice also interacted with a who’s who of painters at the College. He studied with Albers, Fiore, Motherwell, Shahn, Stamos, Tworkov and Vicente. He overlapped there and in New York with fellow students Rauschenberg and Twombly. His friendship with de Kooning would last for life. But for Rice, the most important friendship developed at Black Mountain College was with Franz Kline. He would become Rice’s closest friend. As Creeley describes it, Rice was the acknowledged heir to de Kooning, Kline, and his friend from New York days, Rothko.

Finally there is the Dan Rice who represents Black Mountain College as an educational institution. Was he a student? A faculty member? Those are distorting categories for an institution that allowed learning to go on without preconceived limits. Perhaps we should use Charles Olson’s image of Black Mountain College as a city and say that in the polis of Black Mountain College Dan Rice was properly one of the most important, active and esteemed citizens. As a painter among the poets at Black Mountain College he was known and honored as a peer worthy of respect and admiration. As a painter among the painters in New York City he was thought equal to the best. It is time that Rice’s influential position is acknowledged and his paintings take their place as proper representatives of the best of what the painters at Black Mountain College and the New York School offered. Indeed, as Michael Rumaker puts it, Rice is indeed “a poet in paint.” This exhibition is, I hope, a beginning to the process of giving Dan Rice his rightful place in BMC and New York School painting history. I am thrilled to be part of it.
by Virginia S. Foster

“It is the grind against oneself that makes an artist, not talent and all that. It’s the internal vision of what is possible to be achieved and the unwillingness to settle for less. To get it right just once... knowing you never will.” — Dan Rice

For me, that quality defined Dan throughout the 25 years I knew him: he was unwilling to settle for less. He manifested a quiet but fierce discipline that was part of who he was before he arrived at Black Mountain College and that was affirmed and strengthened during his years there.

Dan held himself to the highest possible standard in everything he said and did. Small talk, pop culture, just fiddling around instead of pouring oneself into one’s work — none of that was for him. But show him something that revealed a seriousness of purpose — be it a painting, a poem, a piece of music, even a score-tying base hit — and he gave it his full-on attention.

BMC helped shape and sharpen Dan’s outlook on life and art, and it was the touchstone to which he continually returned. He would delight in telling his students stories about living in the intense, sometimes tumultuous, Black Mountain community, where people of every stripe — poets, painters, sculptors, scientists, architects, dancers — both pursued their own disciplines and collaborated with each other to create astonishing new forms.

After the art world dramatically changed in the 1960s and Dan left New York City, he stayed in touch with a large circle of BMC friends, including Jonathan Williams, Bob Creeley, Basil King, Cynthia Homire, John Cage, and many others. He saw them when he could, and in 1980 he moved back to a loft on the Lower East Side, just below that of fellow “Black Mountaineer” Oli Sihvonen.

But the magic of the early days was gone; the art in the Soho galleries puzzled (and saddened) him; and he returned to Connecticut in 1985.

In truth, Dan felt a bit stranded after the sixties. Nothing ever came close to matching the intellectual foment and generative power of his time at BMC or the years just after in New York and at the Cedar Tavern. He sorely missed that era — those people, those places, those passionate discussions. Yet they continued to inform every aspect of his life and every stroke of his brush as he struggled to get it right, just once.

— Virginia S. Foster was Dan Rice’s longtime partner
North Carolina Poet Laureate Joseph Bathanti was the keynote speaker at the University of North Carolina at Asheville’s Arts Fest on April 11, 2014. His talk was titled “My Black Mountain College” and explored his discovery of the college and its continued influence on his work as a poet and as an educator.

Bathanti, who was born in Pittsburgh, first came to North Carolina as a Vista volunteer in the 1970s. He was doing prison outreach work, and was surprised and delighted years later to get a phone call from another writer interested in that work: that writer was BMC alumnus Fielding Dawson who had begun his work in maximum security prisons in 1984. The two worked together until Dawson’s death in 2002.

Bathanti is writing the introduction for, and is actively involved in, the creation of the first extensive and inclusive anthology of Black Mountain writers and poets to be published by Jargon Press and the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center in 2015.

The Anthology of Black Mountain College Poetry, a volume consisting of selections from many teachers, students, and others associated with the College will be published in 2015. The Anthology will reach the widest possible audience and make the works and the Black Mountain College experience accessible to those schooled in poetics and those encountering poetry for the first time. Although we tend to think of Black Mountain College poetry as synonymous with the 10 poets Donald Allen classified as the “Black Mountain School” of poetry, The Anthology of Black Mountain College Poetry will enlarge this scope and include many voices not previously considered.

In other poetry news, Backpacking in the Hereafter, a chapbook of twenty-two poems by M.C. Richards, has just been completed. Edited by M.C.’s literary executor Julia Connor, and with a letterpress cover designed and printed by Laurie Corral of Asheville BookWorks, this chapbook is available from the museum. We’ve also just published a set of photo postcards featuring twelve of Jonathan Williams’ iconic images of Black Mountain College people including Buckminster Fuller, Robert Creeley, Francine du Plessix Gray, Charles Olson, M.C. Richards, Joel Oppenheimer, Katherine Litz and others. They’re available for $12 including postage.

Volume 6 (Summer 2014) of The Journal of Black Mountain College Studies was recently published. Find all six volumes of the Journal on the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center website.
The ICA/Boston Organizes
Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957

by Helen Molesworth
Exhibition Curator

The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston will present Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957, an exhibition on Black Mountain College, on view October 7, 2015–January 24, 2016 in Boston. BMC occupies a rare place in the memory and history of American art and education. Although only in existence from 1933 to 1957 and located in rural North Carolina, BMC became a seminal meeting place for many artists, musicians, and poets who would become among the principal practitioners of the postwar period. Figures such as Anni and Josef Albers, Ruth Asawa, Robert Motherwell, Elaine and Willem de Kooning, Buckminster Fuller, Gwendolyn and Jacob Lawrence, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, Charles Olson, Ben Shahn and many more taught and studied at BMC. The teachers and students hailed from around the United States and the world. They gathered in North Carolina’s Blue Ridge Mountains; some stayed for years, others mere weeks. They placed the arts at the center of their intellectual lives; they experimented with new ways of teaching and learning; they encouraged discussion and free inquiry; they felt that form in art had meaning; they were committed to the rigor of the studio and the laboratory; they practiced living and working together as a community; they shared the ideas and values of different cultures; they had faith in learning through experience and doing; they trusted in the new while remaining committed to ideas from the past; and they valued the idiosyncratic nature of the individual. But most of all, they believed in art, in its capacity to expand one’s internal horizons, and in art as a way of living and being in the world.

Leap Before You Look features work by over fifty artists, an acoustic soundscape, archival documents such as class notebooks and exams, documentary photographs of life at the college, and also includes a piano and dance floor for performances within the galleries. Organized around such ideas as the role of art in the philosophy of progressive education, the tension between the individual and community, cosmopolitanism, and tactility, the exhibition offers BMC as an important historical precedent for thinking about the relationships between art, democracy, globalism, and innovative pedagogy. Leap Before You Look explores how BMC created the conditions for some of the twentieth century’s most fertile ideas and individual artists to emerge and helped shape the contours of cultural life in America and abroad.
Cynthia Homire: Vision Quest

by Brenda Coates
BMCM+AC Board Member

Cynthia Homire: Vision Quest (January 24 – May 17, 2014), an elegant exhibition curated by Connie Bostic, guided us through the life of Cynthia Homire, a student at Black Mountain College from 1950 until 1954. Her family pushed her to attend Bryn Mawr, but Homire longed to attend the more experimental Black Mountain College. While there, she plunged into the energetic, challenging artistic environment of the college and was further stimulated by the discussions led by Charles Olson and Robert Creeley. These encounters were diverse and rich in their exploration and interpretation of art forms from all angles.

A selection of poems and figure drawings filled the museum’s walls during the exhibition. The drawings, mostly completed in the 1980s while Homire was living near Santa Fe, were quickly sketched and drawn from live models. She and her former husband Jorge Fick (the last student to officially graduate from Black Mountain College), shared these Saturday morning sessions with local friends who were also interested in life drawing. In an interview, Homire remarked that she “learned this drawing technique from Josef Albers” (even though she didn’t study with him directly), because his continued influence among teachers and students at Black Mountain College held strong for years after he had left.

At BMC, Homire found a dual love affair in pottery and poetry and states that her greatest influences were poets Olson and Creeley, and the versatile poet, potter and painter, M.C. Richards. Homire has continued to explore and refine both pottery and poetry throughout her life, and it has been a successful marriage. Initial encouragement for her writing came through Charles Olson who, when she submitted a piece for his class told her, “If you write a hundred of these, I’ll get you published.”

Homire’s Black Mountain experience traveled with her to her present home in Taos where several other alumni also live, and where former Black Mountain students still visit. When seeing the full range of her combined talents in the Vision Quest exhibition, she mischievously laughed and asked Program Director Alice Sebrell, “Who is this person?” One of the poems, “Self Portrait”, featured in the exhibition’s accompanying publication, ends with the question, “Did I write this?” To some extent, Homire’s work plays with essential questions of identity — a play that parallels her career-long experimentation with various disciplines and media. Cynthia Homire: Vision Quest revealed her consistent, joyous, and spirited practice across decades.

A 48-page book of Homire’s poems and drawings was produced in conjunction with the exhibition and is available for purchase through the museum.

You can view a video of Cynthia Homire’s walkthrough and discussion of Cynthia Homire: Vision Quest at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUdxl9FdikM.

“We Were BMC Kids” was a presentation in May, 2014 with John Corkran, son of David and Marion Corkran, and Megan Rice, daughter of Jack and Barbara Rice and niece of Dan Rice. Photo: Ken Fich.
Recent Gifts to the Collection

ABOVE FROM TOP:


David Novak, as a very convincing R. Buckminster Fuller, served as the M.C. for the (Re)HAPPENING. Photo: Michael Oppenheim.

LEFT:
BIOSPHERE, performed on the lawn with Lake Eden and the mountains in the background. Photo: Michael Oppenheim.

BELOW FROM LEFT:

Julie Becton Gillum performing in Koori with Sara Baird, Jenni Cockrell, and Rachel Thomas-Levy; Kimathi Moore (composition); Christopher Perryman (set design); and Amanda-Ray Danko (production design). Photo: Michael Oppenheim.
Hundreds of artists, musicians, performers, supporters, and community members gathered on the campus of the former Black Mountain College on Saturday, April 5 for an exceptionally creative evening, but I can assure you that no two had the same experience. The 5th annual {Re}HAPPENING marked the largest event yet; with 140 artists contributing to 47 projects and performances, programmed and overlapping throughout the campus. With more happening than can be seen or heard by anyone, this chance-your-own-adventure is part of what makes everyone’s {Re}HAPPENING experience unique and intimate.

An event of this scale is months in the making, with some of the area’s finest experimental artists revved up by the opportunity to create fresh new works for the historic buildings, grounds, and lake. For artists and volunteers, the event lasts all weekend—the campus is abuzz with rehearsals, installations, and a meeting of the minds. Some of the works are carefully prepared, some formed by artists from across the country meeting one another and seeing the site for the first time, making decisions and improvisations on the spot. Each year, there are nods to the campus’ rich legacy; most notably this year was Buckminster Fuller, played by David Novak, interacting with guests in the historic dining hall.

In the spirit of Black Mountain College, the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of the event enables some impressive works of art. A sampling from this year’s event includes a complex emotionally and politically charged spoken-word performance/sculptural installation on the Lake Eden dock by a group formed via ‘chance operations’; a complete build-out of the Round House into an interactive post piano sound room and archive; a diverse series of dance and performances that held audiences captivated in the gym; the boathouse turned vaudeville performance space with the singing, dancing, and recitation of a different text every 5 minutes; and the completely immersive and unique installations transforming the cabins, theater, and Quiet House. The caliber of works and diversity of projects, combined with the outstanding show of support from local restaurants, businesses, and community leaves a lasting impression.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all of the artists, volunteers, cash and in-kind sponsors, and our local and national community for making this annual event a success. For a full list of contributors, and to view images and video from this year’s {Re}HAPPENING, please visit blackmountaincollege.org and rehappening.com.
Jacqueline Gourevitch, New York-based painter and Black Mountain College alumna, joined us for the opening of our 2014 summer show and delivered an Artist’s Talk on May 29, 2014 about her work. Nine paintings from Gourevitch’s series Site Reconstruction — painted from direct observation of the World Trade Center reconstruction site — were featured in the exhibition. Gourevitch attended BMC in the summer of 1950 while still in high school in New York, and studied with Hazel Larsen Archer, Clement Greenberg, and Theodoros Stamos, among others. Below is an excerpted interview with museum staff member, Erin Dickey, as part of our oral history initiative to record the voices and stories of those directly associated with Black Mountain College.

ED: Can you talk about Hazel Larsen Archer?

JG: …I’m going to the [Western Regional] Archive this afternoon and I think there I’ll be able to see what I was, in fact, registered for. If I was registered for anything it would be [Theodoros] Stamos and Hazel. I did really want to learn photography…It was maybe consciously the biggest learning experience of that summer. She was a wonderful teacher, a very inspirational and unique human being… She sat on the floor — not in a wheelchair — in the corner of the room and we would sit on the floor and put our work against the wall. This was much more of a formal class. Stamos would walk around, he’d come to your study the way that I might walk around and come to your easel, or go to advanced students wherever they were working. You went to her class on a particular day, at a particular time. She was assisted by Andy Oates, who was also a very fine teacher. He’s the one who would work with you in the darkroom. I had never been in a darkroom. I had to learn the whole thing from scratch.

The emphasis was very much on close looking and fine printing. I mean learning how to do a very sharp, clear and clean print, which I’m grateful for. Not grainy. It was, in that sense, traditional printing with a wide range of values. I remember that my prints were often considered too dark. I seem to like that. But some of it was just ignorance. I didn’t know how to get those in-between tones. I spent a lot of time on value scales, trying to get more information out of certain dark areas. As I say this in front of these paintings [gestures to the Site Reconstruction series, primarily night paintings] that was also one of my key experiences of painting at night. You think it’s dark and you look down there… it’s the experience we all have when we go out in the dark…at first we can’t see much and then we find our way and do not bump into things. Our eyes adjust and we see more and more. There is that same experience in photography, in the darkroom, when you re-discover what you were looking for. There is more than one way of printing the same negative… this was all about working with negatives, all new…taking a dark area, manipulating the exposures and finding information there in the dark was enormously useful. She was a good teacher. She was probably the one faculty member from whom I feel I really learned, I hope, some of what she hoped to teach, in a short time.

ED: I wonder too if we could talk about the social life of the College. In your Artist’s Talk you mentioned seeing a Buster Keaton film for the first time. Could you tell us about that experience?
JG: The way I remember it, on weekends there was time off in the evenings, communal time, and it was scheduled in advance so that you knew what was coming up...there were movies, there were concerts and there was dancing. The dancing was fabulous. We would dance to Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring. Many times. It was one of my favorite things.

Buster Keaton was completely new to me. I mean, a great many things were new to me — not just photography in the darkroom and art criticism as Clement Greenberg was at that point really working it out. That was early for him too! He lived a long life and had a very long and major influence, positive and controversial. He hatched a whole new generation of art critics, either followers or adversaries. It was for a while impossible, or rare, to discuss what was going on in the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s without references to Greenberg.

One of the people there that summer was a mathematician, Glenn Lewis, who was also a pianist, working his way through Bartok. He played beautifully. I spent many evenings in the Round House reading, or drawing, or just plain listening to him practice with tremendous discipline, listening to his own playing as he was doing it, and obviously thinking ‘I can do it better’ and repeating it, and repeating it again and doing all that under no obligation other than getting it right for himself. That’s a terrific experience! And, the music was new to me. Sometimes, years later, I’d put a record on the turntable in my studio that would just repeat and repeat. It might repeat for a week or two. There are a group of my paintings that are Scarlatti paintings. They are really quite abstract. That is music that involves repetition and variations on a theme, which is also close to the Bartok…or to the way I hear Bartok.

ED: You said in your Artist’s Talk that memory and observation are important to your paintings, and you seem to focus on the fugitive nature of a given subject, so I was wondering: Did your teachers, or the work you did early in your career or at Black Mountain College have an effect on your usage of these themes or your dedication to these themes?

JG: No, not in any way other than all the ways I’ve spoken about. Our themes, subjects and memories depend on how much attention we pay to the stuff out there, as well as to the stuff that’s going on in our heads, how we process it and how conscious we are of our own awareness of things. All of that is formative. It’s what you work with. It determines what you look at and for, how you think about it and what you then do. I am who I am and have been interested in a range of things. Black Mountain was important in all the ways I’ve said, but it was a long time ago. I was very young.

…I would say one thing maybe about that, which is: I think being in Greenberg’s course, as well as being at Black Mountain that summer, confronted me at a very early age with issues about painting and how painting is thought about that I responded to very intuitively. I thought, ‘Gee, this is fascinating, it is very serious and I love doing it. I think I’m pretty good at it and I think I’m going to spend my life doing it.’ But, there was something about the way Greenberg left out the parts [of painting] that I most cared about that made me, maybe, hold onto those more than I might have otherwise. And, that’s very important! In other words, you often define yourself in terms of something that you distance yourself from…It saved me a lot of time…I’ve seen contemporaries really struggle with the whole issue of abstraction and representation. At some level that was not an issue for me. I just use both. That does not make it easy as a career because people do want to pigeonhole you. So I live with that. It helped me clarify things early on.
The past year has been one of growing momentum, remarkable exhibitions and events, and welcome appearances by several BMC alumni. Our exhibition *Black Mountain College: Shaping Craft + Design* closed in early 2014, and we opened *Cynthia Homire: Vision Quest* in late January. We published a lovely book of her poems and drawings to accompany the exhibition and were thrilled to have Cynthia present for the opening. Programming included several poetry readings, performances, films and presentations including one called “We Were BMC Kids” with Megan Rice and John Corkran.

Our summer exhibition was actually two separate shows: *Interlude* which provided a look at some of the new arrivals and rarely seen works in our collection, and *Site Reconstruction: Jacqueline Gourevitch*, a small, powerful show of recent paintings by this BMC alumna depicting the World Trade Center site as rebuilding has taken place. Programming included an excellent Artist’s Talk by Gourevitch, poetry readings, a solo cello performance and a scholarly presentation.

In September we opened a thrilling exhibition of paintings, *Dan Rice at Black Mountain College: Painter Among The Poets*, and published a 72-page catalogue containing reproductions of all work in the show plus some other rare gems. The catalogue also includes a strong essay by curator Brian E. Butler, exploring Rice’s time at BMC and associations with poets and writers in his circle including Robert Creeley, Charles Olson, Joe Early, and others. Our exhibition focuses on Rice’s early work, but a full reconsideration of Dan Rice’s painting is long overdue. It was especially rewarding to have many close and intimate friends of Dan Rice present for the opening and for an engaging panel discussion on the following day.

Our sixth annual ReVIEWING Black Mountain College conference was held the last weekend of September and was themed around the writers of BMC. It was fabulous! Co-sponsored by UNC-Asheville, and with the support of many generous sponsors, the conference was an invigorating mix of presentations and performances capped off by a tour of the Lake Eden campus led by historian Mary Emma Harris and scholar David Silver. Internationally acclaimed writer and curator Vincent Katz, our keynote speaker, and featured speakers Mary Emma Harris and William Craig Rice (grandson of BMC founder John Andrew Rice) all gave excellent and inspiring talks. We’re thrilled that the conference is now truly international in scope and seems to be growing and getting better every year. We were also very pleased to have Ted Dreier, Jr. and his wife Kit attend the conference this year. Ted grew up on the BMC campus, arriving with his parents Ted and Bobbie in 1933, and departing with them in 1949. Ted spoke eloquently and enthusiastically about his memories of the College, and recorded an oral history for our collection.

Our biggest news this year was the receipt of a major grant from the Windgate Charitable Foundation to expand into a second exhibition space diagonally across the street from our current location. More details about this exciting opportunity can be found in Board Chair Rick Gruber’s article on the front page.

We look forward to our next exhibition, *Poemumbles: 30 years of Susan Weil’s poem/images* opening January 30, 2015. The poemumbles explore the limitless potential and fluidity of Weil’s thoughts in visual and verbal form and are part of her daily practice as an artist. The opening of this show will coincide with the opening of our redesigned space at 56 Broadway. It will contain our library and study center with ample exhibition space. I do hope you’ll plan to join us as we celebrate this next phase of growth. Interest in Black Mountain College is definitely alive and well in the 21st century.
IDE+A
Institute for the Study of Democracy, Education and the Arts
Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center

The Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center’s Institute for the study of Democracy, Education and the Arts aims at investigating and continuing the college’s legacy in experiential education, democratic practice and artistic innovation both separately and in combination. The Institute’s activities focus on educational activities and include internships, visiting fellowships, publications, and public programming.

IDE+A is directed by Dr. Brian E. Butler, Thomas Howerton Distinguished Professor of Humanities and Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina Asheville. Immediate past Chair of the Board of the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, Butler is a scholar in politics, legal philosophy and aesthetics. He has degrees in art (BFA, Otis College of Art and Design and MFA, Claremont Graduate University), philosophy (MA and PhD, Claremont), and law (JD with honors, University of Chicago).

In 1933, John Andrew Rice founded Black Mountain College and the result was a famous experiment in democratic liberal arts education centered on the arts. At Black Mountain College, a combination of Rice’s Socratic methodology, the ideas of John Dewey on democracy and the Bauhaus-inspired curriculum of Josef Albers brought legendary results.

Rice started the College with the idea that rigorous Socratic questioning in a classroom setting was an effective way to practice the critical thought skills necessary for effective citizenship. But, as opposed to the great books style of education propounded by experts such as Robert Maynard Hutchins at the University of Chicago, Rice thought that immersion in the traditional literary canon was too one-sided to encompass a full education. Rice’s friend and mentor John Dewey emphasized experiential learning. This idea, though often associated with permissive visions of education attached to satisfaction of student desires, was actually based upon the belief that experiential education centered upon learning skills in the arts brought about great self-discipline and the practice of careful observation — skills essential to effective citizenship. That is, in developing the skills it takes to craft a properly finished artwork, the student learns to understand and respect both the power of human ingenuity and the limits of human ability. Josef Albers, the first art professor at the school, utilized the curriculum he both learned and taught as a Bauhaus master to design the arts curriculum at Black Mountain College.

The liberal arts education Black Mountain College offered was centered upon the formation of effective democratic citizens and based upon a rigorous experiential training in critical thought and the arts. IDE+A will bring added focus to the museum’s permanent collection through the utilization of these materials to understand contemporary and future issues in artistic production and appreciation, liberal arts education and democratic citizenship.
BMCM+AC Supporters

$10,000 +
The Windgate Charitable Foundation, John Cran + Matt Chambers, Michael + Sydney Green, Jim Oliver, Hilary D. Rice

$5,000 +
The North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Elizabeth W. Holden, Paige Rense Noland

$1,000 +

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Community Supporters
2015 Exhibitions + Programming

GRAND OPENING
The Center for Black Mountain College Studies
January 30, 2015 at 56 Broadway

OPENING RECEPTION + EXHIBITION
Poemumbles: 30 years of Susan Weil’s poem/images
January 30 – March 23, 2015
Curated by Rachael Inch and Brian E. Butler
Opening reception: Friday, Jan. 30, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
with a gallery talk by Weil’s studio assistant and
exhibition co-curator Rachael Inch
This project receives support from: North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, through the Asheville Area Arts Council; The UNC Asheville Howerton Distinguished Professor in the Humanities.

PRESENTATION
Weaving Ear and Eye: Susan Weil’s Poemumbles
Saturday, January 31, 2015 — 2:00 p.m.
Sara Kirschenbaum + Rachael Inch

PLAY/PERFORMANCE
R. Buckminster Fuller: The History (+ Mystery) of the Universe
Saturday, February 21, 2015 — 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, February 22, 2015 — 3:00 p.m.
A one-man play by D.W. Jacobs, featuring David Novak

PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION + BOOKSIGNING
Heather South, Archivist at the Western Regional Archives
Thursday, March 5, 2015 — 7:30 p.m.
South will also sign copies of the new photographic
publication of Black Mountain College.

WORKSHOP
Word and Image
Sunday, March 15, 2015 — 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Taught by book artist and calligrapher Annie Cicale

EVENT
6th Annual (Re)HAPPENING
Saturday, April 4, 2015 — 3:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Held at the former BMC campus, now Camp Rockmont

GRAND OPENING
BMCM+AC Second Exhibition Space
June 5, 2015 at 67 Broadway

EXHIBITION
SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY: Ray Johnson, Dick Higgins
+ the making of THE PAPER SNAKE
June 5 – August 22, 2015
Curated by Michael von Uchtrup

EXHIBITION
CONVERGENCE / DIVERGENCE: Exploring Black Mountain College + Chicago’s New Bauhaus/Institute of Design
Curated by Michael Reid

In Memoriam

We apologize in advance for any omissions. Please let us know if any BMC alumni have recently died.

2002
Jerrold Levy

2012
Addison Bray
Vollmer Hetherington
Raymond Trayer

2013
Angelica Bodky
Ray Spillenger
Alma Stone Williams

2014
Ati Gropius Johansen
Galway Kinnell

Black Mountain College
MUSEUM + ARTS CENTER

NEW  RENEWAL  GIFT  DONATION

$15  STUDENT
$35  INDIVIDUAL
$60  FAMILY
$125  AFFILIATE
$500  DONOR
$1000  PATRON

All BMCM+AC Members receive a 10% discount on books and items, including artwork for sale at BMC exhibitions. We appreciate your generous financial support. Please join or renew today!

Mail to: Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center
P.O. Box 18912, Asheville, NC 28814

Join online: www.blackmountaincollege.org/support/join

Name  I wish to remain anonymous in publications.

Address

City / State / Zip Code

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Email  I prefer to receive the newsletter electronically.

Date

Make checks to BMCM+AC. Memberships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Amount Enclosed
Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center preserves and continues the unique legacy of educational and artistic innovation of Black Mountain College for public study and enjoyment. We achieve our mission through collection, conservation and educational activities including exhibitions, publications and public programs.

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**Save the Dates**

**JANUARY 30, 2015**
Grand Opening of The Center for Black Mountain College Studies at 56 Broadway in conjunction with the Opening Reception of Poemumbles: 30 years of Susan Weil’s poem/images

**APRIL 4, 2015**
6th Annual {Re}Happening

**JUNE 5, 2015**
Grand Opening of BMCM+AC Second Exhibition Space at 67 Broadway

**SEPTEMBER 25 – 27, 2015**
ReVIEWING Black Mountain College Conference

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Susan Weil, April 23, 2000, collage, 11 x 8.5 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.