In 1783, Benjamin Rush founded Dickinson College to provide students with a useful education that would allow them to contribute to the common good. In the post-revolutionary era, Rush envisioned the college as the embodiment of a distinctively American curriculum, one designed to teach students how to apply liberal arts learning to the continuing task of building a just democracy. Today, Dickinson College and its museum, The Trout Gallery, remain committed to Rush’s vision and to the central role of civic engagement in a liberal arts college experience. As studies have shown, the arts play a crucial role in the work of civic engagement; they provide a platform for individuals to express agency, they build tolerance for diverse viewpoints, and they develop the capacity of communities to imagine a better future.

In support of this mission, The Trout Gallery, beginning in 2015, developed a collecting initiative to acquire works of significant artistic merit that engage deeply with issues of concern to civil society. Each year, student representatives from the museum’s advisory committee are charged with selecting works of this nature, particularly contemporary, that could serve as catalysts, connectors, and resources for civic engagement within their communities.

Exhibition Checklist

**Dickinson and Civic Engagement**

1. Thomas Sully, Benjamin Rush, c. 1819, oil on canvas, 32 x 28 in. (81.3 x 71.1 cm). Gift of Lockwood and Jacklyn Rush and purchase with funds from the Ruth Trout Endowment, the Helen E. Trout Memorial Fund, and the Friends of The Trout Gallery, 2005.8

**Nation**

2. Ken Kamo, 20 Participants at 2014 Hong Kong Protests “Umbrella Revolution,” occupied area (Atrium, Causeway Bay, Mong kok), Hong Kong, October 21–24, 2014, gelatin silver on paper, 34 x 24 in. (86.3 x 61.0 cm). Museum purchase with funds from The Friends of The Trout Gallery, 2015.2

3. John E. Buck, Condemned Crayon, 2017, woodcut with poster on paper, 23 ⅞ x 18 ⅛ in. (60.0 x 46.0 cm). Museum purchase with funds from the Friends of The Trout Gallery, 2017.19

4. John E. Buck, Moscow on the Seine, 2017, woodcut with poster on paper, 28 ⅞ x 21 ⅞ in. (73.4 x 55.7 cm). Museum purchase with funds from The Friends of The Trout Gallery, 2017.18

**Animal Rights**

5. Sue Coe, Aschdár Begins Whenevery Someone Loses at a Slaughterhouse and There! They Are Only Animals, 2009, woodcut on paper, 15⅛ x 32 in. (38.5 x 80.5 cm). Museum purchase with funds from The Trout Gallery, 2014.7

6. Sue Coe, Butcher, 2011, graphite, gouache, and watercolor on paper board, 40 x 20 in. (101.6 x 50.8 cm). Museum purchase with funds from the Friends of The Trout Gallery, 2014.9

7. Sue Coe, Large Hog Hoist, 1994, photo-etching, mezzotint, and silkscreen on paper, 40 x 30 in. (101.6 x 76.2 cm). Museum purchase with funds from the Friends of The Trout Gallery, 2016.17

**Social Justice**

8. Steve Prince, Red Spots, 2017. linocut on paper, 39⅛ x 20 ⅛ in. (99.3 x 50.9 cm). Museum purchase with funds from the Friends of The Trout Gallery, 2017.21


**Further Reading**


Acknowledgments

Exhibitions at The Trout Gallery are supported, in part, by Dickinson College, the Ruth Trout Endowment, the Helen E. Trout Memorial Fund, and the Friends of The Trout Gallery. Educational programming is presented through the Munger-Speight Education Center of The Trout Gallery.

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Photos: Andrea Balle

**THE TROUT GALLERY**

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Cover: John E. Buck, Moscow on the Seine (detail), 2017
Lalla Essaydi, she confronts the realities of meat slaughterhouse and thinks: They are only animals. Sue Coe, an ardent defender of animal rights. In a multi-exposure photograph, Kitano superimposes the faces of twenty-five different protesters so that the many become one, leading viewers to contemplate collective identity as central to the work of civil protest.

Place, nationality, and identity are central to the works of John E. Buck, which present symbolic landscapes that serve as visual maps that contextualize national debates. Buck’s Moscow on the Seine considers Russia’s construction of an Orthodox Cathedral in Paris, on the banks of the Seine River. He represents allegiances of Russian cultural and territorial hegemony through the image of a beer-selected bear holding a sickle and hammer. This symbol of Russia stands against a background that reads as a visual history of the nation, told through satirical caricatures of several iconic political and cultural figures (Vladimir Putin, Grigori Rasputin, Anna Akhmatova, and Nika Khorenchnev, among others) and well-known international architectural monuments (St. Basil’s Cathedral in Moscow, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and the Chrysler Building and the Twin Towers in New York).

A N I M A L  R I G H T S

Sue Coe is an ardent defender of animal rights. In Auschwitz Begins Wherever Someone Looks a Slaughterhouse and Thinks They’re Only Animals, she confronts the realities of meat production and consumption from the perspective of animals. In this long, woodblock print, men brutally herd cows and pigs into a walled enclosure for slaughter. Coe exaggerates the expressions on the faces of the animals, which appear more human than animal. By referencing the site of a well-known Nazi concentration camp and adding barbed wire to the top of the slaughterhouse walls, Coe likens the present-day treatment of livestock to acts of murder committed by the Nazis. The surrounding city suggests that the cruelties of the slaughterhouse, like those of Auschwitz, take place in towns everywhere. Coe draws heavily from the art historical style of the emotionally charged work of Expressionist printmakers, particularly Kathe Kollwitz (German, 1867–1945), and emulates her use of powerful, affordable, and widely circulated prints as a means to draw attention to pressing social issues and foster good.

M U N I T I O N

Issues of nationhood are central to a number of works in the exhibition. Ken Kitano’s 25 Participants at 2014 Hong Kong Protests “Umbrella,” occupied area (Admiration, Causeway Bay, Mong kok), Hong Kong, October 12–14, 2014 considers student-led protests against reforms that would give mainland China more control over Hong Kong’s electoral system. In this multi-exposure photograph, Kitano superimposes the faces of twenty-five different protesters so that the many become one, leading viewers to contemplate collective identity as central to the work of civil protest.

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T O H S I O S H I B I T A

Toshio Shibata, Neko City, Tottori Prefecture (C-2265), 2015

Hung Liu was trained in Beijing, where she labored under the rigid academism of the Chinese Social Realist style. Uninspired by the stiff, didactic art demanded of the People’s Republic of China, she secretly adopted a more expressive approach, one based on working from photographs of people, often unknown women in marginal or liminal contexts (prostitutes, for example). In 1984, Liu emigrated to the United States, where she further developed her practice. Black Madonna is from her Promised Land series, which is based on photographs of Depression-era migrants, including those taken by Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965) in this study of motherhood, Liu ranks the idealized stereotype of a mother and child in more realistic terms.

In her photographs, Moroccan-born artist Lalla Essaydi challenges the hyposexualized and stereotypically submissive depictions of Muslim women by reclaiming their bodies, spaces, and stories. Her 14C depicts a Moroccan woman whose body is masked by the pattern of her clothing and henna body art, all of which blends into the highly decorated architectural space of the harem that surrounds her. Traditionally seen as the domestic building dedicated to women in a Muslim household, the harem came to be regarded by Europeans as an eroticized space of male fantasy. Essaydi’s photograph confronts this fiction and presents the woman’s face, hands, and feet as visible signs of resistance to this tradition. On her exposed skin, viewers glimpse pieces of the poetic narratives that record the woman’s story in henna. Essaydi engages the space of the harem to challenge stereotypes and initiate dialogue about the lives of contemporary Muslim women living in Morocco.

While initially seen as scandalous in her home country, Essaydi engages the view that constant incursions of weeds suggest the uncertain ability of humans to control nature. Rather than present aesthetically composed views of the natural landscape with subtle traces of human intervention, Yoo Lee starts with environmental waste sites, which he admires to appear beautiful. In his photograph Viewing the City’s Places of Interest in Springtime, he captures what at first glance seems to be a traditional Chinese mountain landscape painting. It is only upon closer inspection that one discovers the mountains to be mounds of garbage covered in green nets. Those elements initially perceived as representations of nature’s beauty are in fact made up of trash that threatens the future of the natural world. Lu calls attention to the problem of waste in a rapidly industrializing China by upending the revered tradition of landscape painting and its status as a symbol of identity and national pride.