

Celebrating diverse artists in archives: How GLAM institutions can work together to support DEI

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Recognizing the extent and importance of diverse artists in the Caresse Crosby Papers, librarians, archivists, and museum curators at Southern Illinois University Carbondale joined forces to amplify hidden stories in an exhibit that could potentially be shared with other institutions. In the 1940s, Crosby published the periodical *Portfolio*, featuring work of young modern artists who later achieved great renown. Among the more striking examples in Crosby's papers are five early works by Romare Bearden, best known for his later collage art, much of which depicts African American community life and culture.

As owners of the Black Sun Press, Caresse and her husband Harry became acquainted with many artists and illustrators. Russian emigre Polia Chentoff (1896-1933) painted portraits of Caresse and Harry. The German Decadent artist Alastair (1887-1969), a prolific illustrator, was a flamboyant figure whose letters to both Harry and Caresse are as fleeting and exquisite as his drawings. A Dutch artist couple, May den Engelsen and Frans de Geetere, lived on a barge in the Seine River not far from the Crosbys. May's watercolor of Caresse with her dog Narcisse Noir and a surrealist-inspired Valentine to Harry and Caresse are important to understanding this largely forgotten illustrator, known chiefly today for her erotica.

Following the exhibit, the Chentoff portrait of Caresse will be loaned to the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery as part of the exhibit *Brilliant Exiles: American Women in Paris, 1900-1939*. We also anticipate interest in the Bearden works as a traveling exhibit. Any decision to loan the materials must be made conscientiously: weighing the benefits of increased visibility and educational opportunity against our obligation to preserve one-of-a-kind primary sources and art for many generations of researchers to come.