

Sweet Briar Explores 2,000 Years of Humanity Through Eras Exhibition

Sweet Briar students and faculty curate "Eras," a 2,000-year journey through portraiture from the College's expansive art collection.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- There are many ways to view history and examine human evolution. This year, in the [Pannell Gallery](#), Sweet Briar is utilizing its extensive art collection to do just that.

Organized by the galleries and museum team of staff and students,

Eras: People Watching 400 BCE to 2022 CE opened on Oct. 9, featuring 65 pieces from the College's art collection. The exhibit hones in on the way people have been portrayed across time, the clues about the eras in which they lived, and the artists who have shaped our view of history. From medieval martyred saints to women rebelling against restrictive dress codes, the exhibit spans over 2,000 years. It features significant artists alongside household names, including Rembrandt van Rijn, William Blake, Mary Cassatt, and Carrie Mae Weems. Through art, viewers can observe how people, especially women, are constrained, celebrated, and liberated across different eras.

The exhibition also highlights the breadth and [depth of the College's art collection](#), which will be featured in an upcoming art catalogue produced in recognition of Sweet Briar's 125th anniversary. Sweet Briar is just one of the 10% of post-secondary institutions offering object-based learning with access to an art collection, a celebration of the teaching potential of this visual encyclopedia. Some 26 courses actively utilize the collection, ranging from art history to creative writing to archaeology and leadership. The resulting student work can be found in the gallery alongside the collected works, including photogrammetry 3-D printouts that open the timeline in 400 BCE, award-winning creative writing, and classical drawing studies that conclude the timeframe in 2022.



New exhibition explores more than 2,000 years of history through art.

During the opening, the exhibited art was paired with a series of brief lectures that covered 2,000 years in just 10 minutes. Ten subject matter experts spoke about a piece or collection of exhibited work for a minute each (or a few minutes in some cases), weaving the selection together while offering insights into the pieces or the artists themselves. The lectures included:

400 BCE: Dr. Erin Pitt on Classical and Pre-Columbian collection works (presented by Dr. Hamilton)

1490 CE: Dr. Tracy Hamilton on "Circe and Ulysses" in the Nuremberg Chronicle

1493 CE: Dr. Lynn Laufenburg on martyred saints in the Nuremberg Chronicle

1825 CE: Professor Laura Pharis on William Blake

1934 CE: Dr. Joe Sacksteder on Walt Disney Studio's Grumpy

1941 CE: Heath Ballowe on Thomas Hart Benton

1941 CE: Dr. Becky Bivens on Fernand Léger

1992 CE: Professor Claire Stankus on Sally Mann

1995 CE: Dr. Kathleen Placidi on Carrie Mae Weems

2022 CE: Dr. Clare van Loenen on Mahsa R Fard



Gallery Assistant Shadia Suleman '26 and Adrianna Jernigan '27 admire the Eras exhibition.



Students enjoy friendship bracelet making and refreshments during the opening event.

The opening event also featured themed refreshments, such as gingerbread people representing humanity throughout the ages, as well as Mediterranean and medieval-inspired fare.

Additionally, there was a scavenger hunt and friendship bracelet making. The Eras will be on display until March 21, 2026, in the Pannell Gallery, which is open Thursday through Saturday from 12-5 p.m. while classes are in session.

At Sweet Briar College, we believe in learning that is both immersive and [interdisciplinary](#). Through exhibitions like Eras, students gain hands-on curatorial experience, engage with world-renowned artists, and make meaningful connections across time and disciplines. It's part of how Sweet Briar empowers women to lead with creativity, curiosity, and confidence. Discover how you can be part of this bold learning environment at sbc.edu/admissions or contact admissions@sb.edu.

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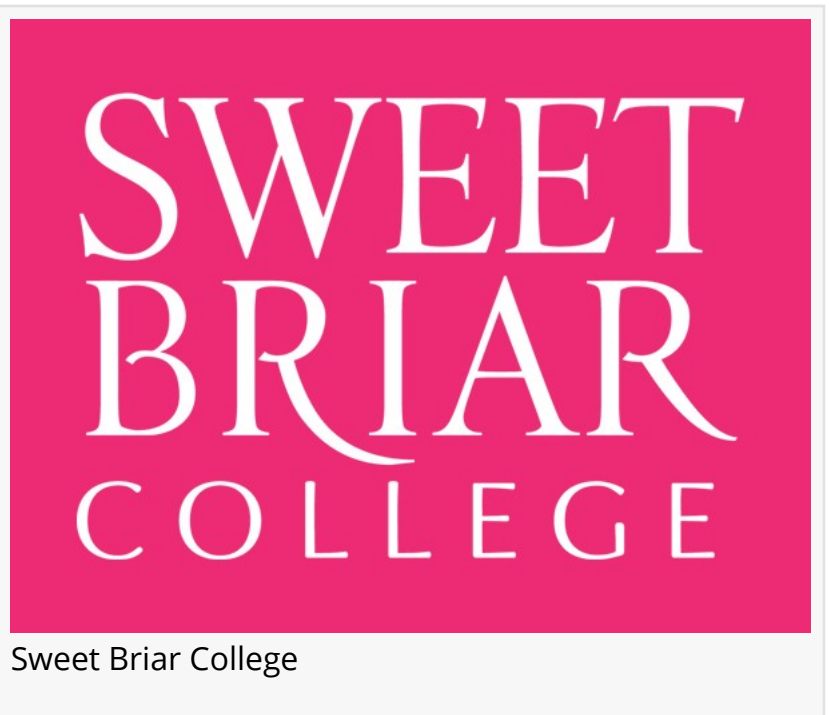
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