

AUDREY FLACK AT WORK

JANUARY 26–MAY 8, 2026



“A new landmark is set to transform the campus landscape: a bronze tribute to Adrienne de La Fayette. The project traces its roots back to 2015, when renowned artist Audrey Flack served as a visiting professor. While observing the many statues of the Marquis de Lafayette, Flack noted that his wife—a woman of immense courage who endured the hardships of the French Revolution with grace—deserved her own place in the college’s iconography.” (Bryan Hay) Timed with the unveiling of the new bronze tribute, the exhibition highlights Flack’s connection to Lafayette and the origins of the Adrienne project.

MARCH 7

***The Making of Adrienne* | 3 p.m. in Colton Chapel, to be followed immediately by the dedication and reception in Skillman Library. The exhibition will be open 12–5 p.m. this day.**

The New Civic Art: Audrey Flack's Heroic Women

Ricardo J. Reyes, Ph.D.

Monumental Vision: The Sculpted Heroine

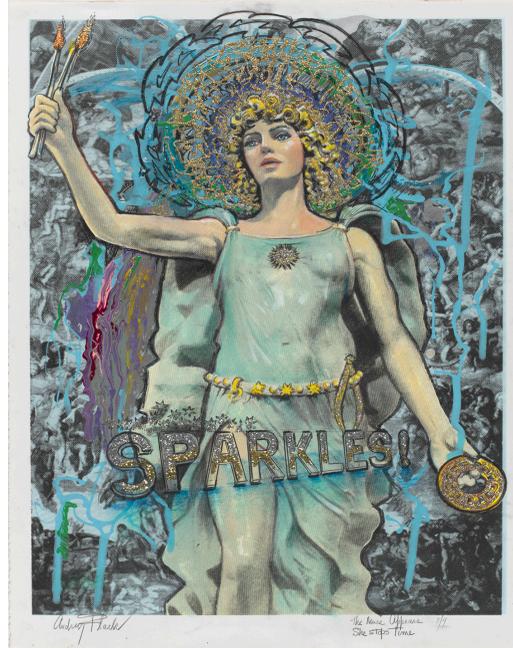
Audrey Flack's artistic life was defined by the audacious choice to break ground—first as a Photorealist painter and then as a monumental sculptor. After decades of painting dazzling, mirror-like canvases, Flack shifted mediums in the early 1980s, driven by a “creative urgency and political necessity” to create something solid, tangible, and lasting in bronze. Dissatisfied with art world elitism and a lack of positive, affirming imagery, she dedicated herself to producing what she called “The New Civic Art.”

Her belief was simple but profound: Public art must be an enriching force, serving the “needs, aspirations, and hopes” of the people. She consciously rejected the irony of postmodernism, instead studying the classical masters to develop a new figurative style that she termed “New Millennium Neo-Classicism.” This commitment led to a series of powerful, allegorical female figures—modern goddesses—designed to be inspirational beacons in the urban landscape. Works like the 20-foot gilded bronze *Civitas* in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and the ecological icon *Daphne* exemplified her mission to install “healing ideals” in public spaces, reaffirming values and creating art that nurtures the viewer.

Adrienne, Marquise de Lafayette: The Final Heroine

This pursuit of public celebration culminated in what would be one of her final major commissions: a larger-than-life-size bronze statue of **Marie Adrienne Françoise de Noailles, Marquise de La Fayette (1759–1807)**. While her husband, the Marquis de Lafayette, is a towering figure in American and French history, Adrienne's role as an unwavering hero of the Age of Revolutions—a woman who survived the French Revolution's Reign of Terror, petitioned for her husband's release, and upheld her family's legacy—often remained in the shadows.

In immortalizing Adrienne, Flack brought her lifelong dedication to feminist visibility to a final, commanding focus. The statue, completed just before the artist's death, stands as a testament



Sparkles!, 2014. Digital pigment print, mixed media. 29 1/2 x 22 inches

to Flack's belief that society needs these **symbolic goddess figures**. It is not merely a historical portrait but a realization of Flack's ideal of the heroic woman: resilient, influential, and deserving of monumental public recognition. Flack's *Adrienne* is a profound final statement by a “radical contemporary old mistress,” solidifying her own legacy as a powerful sorceress who redeemed and recreated images of women for a new millennium.

Audrey Flack at Lafayette College

Audrey Flack has had a tremendous presence at Lafayette College, having worked with faculty Curlee Raven Holton in 2013 and Robert Mattison in 2015. This relationship has been memorialized through Flack's last major work of public art, a sculpture of Adrienne de Lafayette, a commission to commemorate Lafayette College's Bicentennial.

Previously, Audrey Flack, a renowned pioneer of Photorealism and the first photorealist painter to have work purchased by the Museum of Modern Art, embarked on a landmark collaboration with Tony Rosati, chairperson of Printmaking at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), and Curlee Raven Holton, the founding director of the Experimental Printmaking Institute (EPI) at Lafayette College. This project represented the first collaborative print edition published through a partnership between the PAFA Press and EPI, serving as a “student-centered” initiative where Flack interacted with students in a *Collaborative Edition Practices* course. Students worked “hand in hand” with Flack, printing the edition under faculty supervision while also gaining experience in the business and management side of the art industry, such as media relations and research. The new piece resulting from this synergy, titled ***The Passion of Saint Theresa***, is an 18x24-inch serigraph and mixed-media assemblage, limited to an edition of 100 prints. Inspired by an original drawing by Flack, the work depicts the saint in a state of religious ecstasy, her face framed by a hood with her mouth slightly open and eyes closed, strikingly paired with a vibrant tube of red lipstick.



Audrey Flack at EPI in 2013.

In addition to the print of Saint Theresa, reproductions of Flack's other drawings and a commissioned miniature sculpture of Bernini's Angel, made for Rutgers University, showcase her consistent style and signature viewpoint, evident in the sculpture of Adrienne.

A Sanctuary for Engaging With Original Works of Art

The Kirby Art Study Center is Lafayette College's premier space for intimate encounters with art, providing students, faculty, and researchers a tranquil environment designed for quiet reflection and deep study. This carefully curated space invites visitors to slow down and engage meaningfully with original artworks, fostering an atmosphere that encourages contemplation and discovery. The Lafayette Art Collection is focused on three themes: Lafayette the person, Lafayette the college, and Easton, Pa.

Individual Study & Quiet Reflection

The Center offers an ideal setting for personal and meditative engagement with art. Away from the hustle and bustle of campus life, visitors can spend extended time with individual pieces, enhancing their visual literacy and personal responses to art in a peaceful, focused environment. The space supports sustained observation and reflection, allowing for the deep analysis that can transform understanding and appreciation.

Small Group Discussions & Research

In addition to individual study, the Center accommodates intimate seminars and research discussions, particularly those focused on material culture studies. Faculty and students can gather in small groups to examine artworks firsthand, discussing techniques, historical contexts, provenance, and cultural significance while having direct access to the objects themselves. These close-quarter discussions promote collaborative learning and enable detailed analysis that can only occur in the presence of original works. Guided visits may be arranged in advance.

State-of-the-Art Viewable Storage

The Center also features advanced viewable storage facilities that redefine traditional art storage, creating an active research and display environment. These climate-controlled, museum-standard systems ensure the proper preservation of Lafayette's growing art collections while making previously inaccessible works readily available for study and viewing. The innovative storage design allows for easy access while maintaining conservation standards, facilitating both serendipitous discovery and systematic research.

As Curator Emeritus Michiko Okaya noted, "For artwork that had previously been stored in difficult-to-access locations on campus, the Kirby Art Study Center provides a modern museum-standard environment for the care, display, and study of our growing art collections."

317 Hamilton Street | 610.330.5603

Hours | Wednesday to Friday, 12-5 p.m. or by appointment.
Additional hours during performance evenings.

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