Hidden Stories, Hidden Collections, Hidden Gifts:
Stories of Extraordinary Women Benefiting the Cleveland Museum of Art

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Dates: Wednesday January 17, 24, 31 & Feb. 7, 14. Last class date to be determined
Location: Kutina Classroom first 5 classes. Last class field trip to the Cleveland Museum of Art
Time: 10:30am - 12:00
Course Fee: $70.00 (6 course session)
Description: This course will share stories of extraordinary women, remarkable collections, and highlight gestures of generosity and dedication to the creation of the Cleveland Museum of Art’s extraordinary collections, with a focus on textiles and American art. Join us as we sift through primary sources to try and uncover the stories of these women. Class will include an additional session to be held at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

- Ellen “Nellie” Garretson Wade, her mother, Ellen Howe Garretson, and her mother-in-law, Anna McGaw Wade collected all manner of textiles. Nellie’s lace collection forms the nucleus of one of the finest lace collections in North America. Another female collector from around the same time was Ida Schiff, an American living in Florence in the 1890s. There are many outstanding questions about the two women. Did they know one another? Did they visit the same dealers in Florence?

- Emory May Holden Norweb is the only woman who has ever been Board President of the CMA. A granddaughter of Liberty Holden, the founder of the Plain Dealer, she first went abroad during WWI to join the ambulance corps. In 1917 she married R. Henry Norweb who had joined the U.S. diplomatic service in 1916. Over the next 30 years, Norweb’s diplomatic career took them to Japan, the Netherlands, Chile, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. The Norweb Collection is full of hidden gems including a rare Nazca painted cloth from the Central Andes.

- Mrs. Matthias Plum was the widow of a New Jersey printer who gifted the museum with a beautiful set of 18th century Gobelins tapestries depicting scenes from Ovid in 1956. Who was Mrs.Plum? (And did she kill Colonel Mustard with a candlestick in the drawing room?) What was her connection with Cleveland, if any? Why did she decide to give these rare tapestries to the museum? Were these hers or did she buy them for the museum?

- The Cleveland Museum of Art has a number of gifts from Amelia Elizabeth White (1878–1972). She and her sister, Martha, east coast socialites, born into a world of wealth and privilege and served as nurses in Europe during World War I. Later they would settle in Santa Fe, New Mexico where they became passionate champions for the rights of the Pueblo and brought an understanding of Native American Art to collectors and museums across the country.

- Ruth Ruggles’ name has been largely forgotten by the people of Cleveland yet for 35 years, from 1918-1953, she was in charge of the Cleveland Museum of Art’s exhibits and schools and libraries. She was both in charge of the Education Collection (later the Extensions Collection, currently the Art-to-Go Collection) but she was a benefactor to the collection as well contributing watercolors and prints by Henry Keller; Native American paintings and handicrafts; textiles, and European craft items. A woman of tremendous energy she was still driving her own car at 90 and making her own clothes at 93.