JOURNEYS BEYOND: Faces and Forms of Pilgrimage

A SPACE for DIALOGUE

HOOD MUSEUM OF ART, DARTMOUTH
In the summer of 2021, when a friend invited me to hike the Camino de Santiago with her, I ventured into the world more freely than I had since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Known as the Camino, the trail traces various medieval pilgrimage routes, all terminating in the city of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain, where the cathedral is said to hold the remains of Saint James. Today, both secular and religious people traverse the route. Inspired by that experience, *Journeys Beyond: Faces and Forms of Pilgrimage* explores the act of purposeful wandering.

At its most basic, pilgrimage entails going to a place that bears significance for the traveler. This act’s transformative properties are central to its significance. Anthropologist Arnold van Gennep’s tripartite model for studying rites of passage is useful in analyzing the cycle of pilgrimage. He proposes that there are three parts to a rite: a separation, a liminality, and a reintegration. This sequence mirrors a pilgrim’s journey, from departure, to travel and transformation, to return. Pilgrims, in their intentional wanderings, leave the realm of the familiar explicitly to engage in transformative experience, seeking a culmination of some type, whether visiting a shrine, settling in a new place, or gaining personal clarity.

*Journeys Beyond* follows cycles of movement from the outset to the return, the spiritual to the secular, and the psychological to the bodily. Central to the exhibition are the intangible consequences and opportunities pilgrimage offers, such as healing within the self. Atmospheric works such as John Taylor Arm’s *Cathedral at Orense* and Lou Stoumen’s *Journey to Land’s End, Santa Monica* suggest the interior emotional work intrinsic to pilgrimage, while Rick Bartow’s series *The Ceremony That Never Was* brings in the realm of the spiritual.

Romare Bearden’s *Carolina Memory (Tidings)* shows us the work of memory and then connects it with migration, a theme echoed by Zarina’s *Cities I Called Home* prints. Janis Lewin’s images of the Cuban raft exodus of 1994 mark a historic migration, documenting one of the most pivotal moments of any pilgrimage: setting out. While the link between pilgrimage and migration is apparent in all these works, the differences between them highlight the subtlety and complexity of each instance. Bearden and Lewin both depict specific cultural movements, but while Lewin utilizes an outsider’s documentary lens, Bearden inhabits a generational perspective on his own family’s move. Zarina’s perspective is even more personal, centering not on an experience undertaken by many families but rather on her individual journey, starting with her displacement from her home in Aligarh as a result of the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. In terms of pilgrimage, Bearden and Lewin show us that the historical can be personal, and Zarina communicates that the personal can be historical.

The collection of reliquaries in *Journeys Beyond* invites the viewer to think about the destination and ultimate goals of pilgrimage. The Mbulu Ngulu and Saint Sebastian reliquaries held genuine spiritual power in their respective cultures by channeling the power of sacred
figures into the daily lives of believers. Geoffrey Hendricks's satirical *Flux Reliquary*, in contrast, encourages us to think critically about the role of objects not only in sacred contexts but also in our daily lives.

In the months following my walk on the Camino, I traveled back to the Dartmouth campus for the first time in nearly two years. Paul Sample's painting, titled *The Return*, captures the end of the journey and explores what homecoming means. Depicting a soldier finally coming home from war, this work helps to express some of the qualities and complicated feelings that come with such a moment—its nostalgic, melancholic mood allows us to consider what it feels like to return to a familiar place under radically different circumstances.

Returning reveals the changes we have undergone, reminding us of who we were and who we have become. In the strange times in which we find ourselves, moments of reflection on transformation are more important than ever. The works in this exhibition offer insight on what it means to both seek and experience change and prompt reflection on the ways in which each life carries traces of pilgrimage in its many forms.

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**NOTES**

**CHECKLIST**


**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


**THE EXHIBITION**

The exhibition *Journeys Beyond: Faces and Forms of Pilgrimage*, part of the museum’s student-curated A Space for Dialogue series, is on view at the Hood Museum of Art, August 27–October 22, 2022.

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