



Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Imagination of Community: Artistic Practice at Black Mountain College

Katherine Markoski
Postdoctoral Fellow
Independent Scholar

Black Mountain College (1933-1956) has long been recognized as a crucible of experimental artistic production, yet the precise nature of its importance to the history of twentieth-century American art remains in many ways undecided. Building on my dissertation, my manuscript, “The Imagination of Community: Artistic Practice at Black Mountain College,” seeks to come more fully to terms with the school as a dense and vital context for artistic practice, focusing especially on the significance of a certain ideal of community to those working at the College. The book will not only elucidate how this particular notion of community mattered to artmaking at the school but also posit Black Mountain as a vital reference point for postwar collaborative and interdisciplinary work. Put differently, the manuscript will offer an account of a hotbed of American cultural experimentation and its ramifications within contemporary artistic practice.