

News from Tappan Hall

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NEWS FROM TAPPAN HALL

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Letter from the Chair

My greetings to the greater Tappan community – to those who have at one time or another entered Tappan Hall with intent to pursue art historical study (and remember that this Romanesque-revival building, constructed in 1894, carries a good deal of history with it as the oldest structure in use for classroom instruction in the university). I succeeded Matt Biro as chair on July 1, and first I would like to thank him, on behalf of the community, for his six years of administrative labor. During his time he kept the department on an admirably even keel. Among the achievements of his period in office I might list: instituting, with UMMA director Joe Rosa, the Mellon Curatorial fellowship Program – which after three years has become permanent; shifting the Museum Studies minor into History of Art; working with Associate Dean Derek Collins to establish the Mellon “Egalitarian Metropolis” project; and inaugurating a book subvention program with the university to help our faculty publish art historical books (always costly). Thank you, Matt!

For those who do not know me, I am a medievalist and historiographer (of late writing a good deal of collective biography related to the history of art historical study). In these first months of my three-year chairship, with the help of a truly outstanding staff and my colleagues Megan Holmes (Associate Chair), Joan Kee (Director of Graduate Studies), and Howard Lay (Director of Undergraduate Studies), I’ve been trying to undertake some initiatives to further our undergraduate educational mission. One involves revving up our website and working to open up new lines of communication with and among students and alumni. You’ll be hearing from us now several times a semester in a sleeker, more frequently appearing Newsletter – for which we are developing some features that I think you’ll find interesting. I’d ask you to be in touch, now or at any point, if you have ideas for us.

Many exciting things are happening in the department in this bicentennial year, as our events page makes clear. Our faculty is active in research, not a one who is not in the middle of preparing at least one major book. We will next year be welcoming a new tenure-track member of faculty: Jessica Lamont, an art historian and archaeologist who completed her doctorate in Classics at Johns Hopkins University (“Amphiaraos into Attica: The Rise of Athenian Healing Cults”) and who has spent time at the American School in Athens and the Walters Art Museum;

in the department: she comes to us via Chicago (PhD: “The Art of Play: Games in Early Modern Italy”), the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, and CASVA. Martina Becker, a postdoctoral fellow who trained in Hamburg, Barcelona, Ankara, and Berlin, will be in residence for three terms, to work with Christiane Gruber, to continue her research on the formation of art and architectural theory in Ottoman Turkey, c. 1900, and to do some teaching in Islamic Art for us. David Low was selected by UM’s Armenian Studies Program to be in residence for a year as a Manoogian Fellow; he will teach a course on Photography and the Near East in the Winter term and continue to develop for publication research he undertook when preparing his dissertation at the Courtauld Institute in London (“Framing the Armenian Genocide: Photography and the Representation of the Ottoman Empire, 1878-1923”).

Our graduate students are a point of pride. We have brought in another outstanding cohort this year, six in number, with diverse interests: Emily Cornish (Oceania), Isabelle Gillet (19th-century French), Jordan Koel (Medieval), Holley Ledbetter (Islamic), Rheagan Martin (Early Modern Italian), and Olivia Mendelson (Modern China). Our students have a truly remarkable record of getting internal and external grants and, against the odds, securing postdocs and positions in museums, universities, and colleges after defending their dissertations. Every second year those in residence organize a departmental conference. If you are in town, be sure to attend this year’s: “All That Glitters: Magnificence in Art, Architecture, and Visual Culture” (Saturday, November 12, 9:00-5:00, Helmut Stern Auditorium)!

Elizabeth Sears

George H. Forsyth Jr. Collegiate Professor of History of Art



Introducing our 2016 Graduate Student Cohort

academic career as a photojournalism major but after taking her first art history course she was hooked and decided to switch majors. Her research interests broadly concern Oceanic visual culture with a focus on tattoos, and bodily inscription. She is also interested in new media art and has developed a recent fascination with print culture. Cornish received her MA in art history from University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Her thesis was titled “Gender Politics, Presence, and Erasure: Tattoo in In Pursuit of Venus [Infected] and Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique.” Her hobbies include hiking, camping, exploring museums and dancing at concerts.

Isabelle Gillet

In 2011, Isabelle Gillet received her MA in the history of art from the Graduate Program at Williams College after a double degree in law and art history at the Sorbonne in Paris. She recently completed an MFA in art writing and criticism at the School of Visual Arts in New York while interning at the Frick Collection and working on their curatorial files. Her research interests center on nineteenth-century French painting, especially so-called academic portraits. To balance her academics, she has consumed a frighteningly high number of lowbrow tv shows—which she now considers as the token of her successful understanding of the vernaculars of American pop culture.

Jordan Koel

Jordan Koel received a BA in art history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2005. After taking several years off, he attended the University of Oregon and earned an MA in art history in 2014. His master’s thesis was a study of Carolingian sacred art that dealt with concepts of materiality, presence, and the control of the holy. Components of this project developed into an interest in the maker of holy objects, leading to his work on medieval metalworkers and sculptors. Prior to arriving at Michigan, he lived in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he split his time between the county museum, the university, and the local literacy center. When he’s not working on art history, Koel is playing music and brewing beer.

Holley Ledbetter

Holley Ledbetter is originally from Elon, North Carolina, but has also lived in Austin and Kalamazoo. She graduated from Sweet Briar College, a small liberal arts women’s college in Virginia, with degrees in Classical languages and Medieval/Renaissance studies. She then earned an MA in art history at the University of Texas and an MA in English at Western Michigan University. Her cross-disciplinary training informs her work in Islamic art and architecture, where she investigates ways cultural exchange affects the production and dissemination of art, with particular regard to image destruction, artistic appropriation, and reuse. Beyond her work in Art History, Ledbetter enjoys traveling to new places, eating rose-infused Turkish delight, and meeting interesting people.

Rheagan Eric Martin

Rheagan Martin comes to the University from Los Angeles. Prior to coming to Michigan, he was a curatorial assistant in the manuscripts department at the J. Paul Getty Museum. In addition to overseeing digitization of the collection, he curated two exhibitions within the manuscripts galleries. Martin’s broader research interests include 15th- and 16th-century Italian goldsmiths as

the perfectly baked chocolate chip cookie or riding his motorcycle.

Olivia Mendelson

Olivia Mendelson is originally from Hyattsville, Maryland. She attended Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, where she majored in Art History and minored in Chinese. Her senior thesis was titled “Between East and West: He Chengyao in Dialogue with Lu Xun and Joseph Beuys.” She has also spent time studying at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and most recently at National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan. During the summer of 2015, Mendelson conducted interdisciplinary research in China and Taiwan on the production and consumption of tea. Her diverse experiences also include internships at The Phillips Collection and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, as well as working at the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia. Mendelson enjoys knitting gifts for friends, cooking, and doing yoga.



Helicon is the U-M History of Art undergraduate student organization dedicated to supporting the local visual arts community. The group runs a blog, curates student exhibitions, and edits Hel[icon], an arts publication that appears at the end of each school year. Their many activities include community service, museum visits, an arts-oriented spring break trip, and socials.

Where are you from?

I am lucky to call Petoskey, Michigan my hometown. It is a beautiful resort town on Lake Michigan about four hours northwest of Ann Arbor. The small community there is very arts oriented and creative; the landscape of Petoskey has always been so saturated with writers, artists and musicians that it gave me a deep appreciation for the arts since a very young age.

What is one of your earliest memories of appreciating art?

When I was in fourth grade, my art teacher gave us an assignment to imitate a style of a particular artist. I chose Cezanne. It was a much more challenging exercise than I expected and I really gained a new respect for the creative process. Mine turned out okay. Actually, my dad still has the painting hanging in his office.

Why did you decide to major in art history?

For me, art has always been intertwined with life. It made sense to me to study their interactions across time periods and cultures. Since highschool I've been very sure that I wanted to study the history of art as a way to combine my interest in history with my passion for art!

What has been your favorite history of art class, and why?

Last year I took a class with Tom Willette called "The Art and Poetry of Michelangelo." That class combined essentially all of my favorite things: Renaissance art, Italian culture and language, and poetry. It was also really interesting to look so much more closely at one artist in particular after a couple years of classes covering much broader topics.

What is your favorite piece of public art on campus, and why?

Honestly I'm a sucker for The Cube. I love how a contemporary work has become such a symbol of our institution. I also love how it is interactive and engages so many students and visitors on campus!

What are your plans after graduation?

Next fall I am planning to attend graduate school abroad for a masters program in arts management. Living abroad has always been a goal of mine, and I really believe that my degree gives me the perfect skill set to make that dream a reality. Ultimately, I hope to have a curating position in a museum/gallery or work in collections.

How do you think what you have learned from your history of art classes will serve you in the future, personally and/or professionally?

All of my art history classes have taught me how to be a much more efficient and effective communicator, both on paper and verbally. Being confident and able to interact with and explain

What do you think about the concern that an art history degree isn't marketable?

I can understand the concern, but only on the surface. In this day and age, so much of the information we receive and process is visual; I think the ability to recognize, read and interpret visual information is a priceless skill, and that is exactly what art history teaches.

What advice would you give to someone thinking about majoring in art history?

I would urge them to try it out! Our department here offers such a range of types of classes that could cover nearly anything that you're interested in. I know that for me, the most significant deciding factor about my degree was the program and the department as a whole. If you value a close-knit, supportive academic community, the history of art department could certainly be the place for you!



Welcome Visiting Faculty

Martina Becker, Visiting Assistant Professor

Martina Becker teaches Islamic and global modern art. Her research centers on nineteenth and twentieth-century art, architecture and urbanism in the Ottoman Empire and its eastern successor states. She is particularly interested in the practicalities of theory and value formation in art education, art historiography, and cultural policies. She also engages in the development of methodologies for a global art history.

Becker is currently working on two projects. The first is a book on engagement art, which investigates a practice-oriented (rather than object-oriented) concept of art developed in the late Ottoman Empire. For this project she has received a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellowship (2016-2019). For the second project, she is preparing a book manuscript titled *Art Formation in the Early Turkish Republic*. Recently, she also co-edited a volume under the title *Aesthetic Practices and Spatial Configurations: Historical and Transregional Perspectives* (Berlin, December 2016). She received her PhD from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. Before moving to Ann Arbor, she was a lecturer at the Humboldt University of Berlin, a postdoctoral fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin, and a visiting scholar at Columbia University in the city of New York.

David Low, Manoogian Post-doctoral Fellow

David Low is a Manoogian Post-doctoral Fellow specializing in photographic history. His

social and political processes. He received his PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London in 2015. His dissertation, titled *Framing the Armenian Genocide: Photography and the Revisualization of the Ottoman Empire, 1878-1923*, was supported by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. As a Manoogian Post-doctoral Fellow, he will work on a project examining nineteenth-century exploration of the Near East and the use of photography in the construction of a Western vision of Armenia.

Austin McCoy, Michigan Mellon Fellow

Austin McCoy is a historian whose research explores the relationship between transformations in political economy and the evolution of city- and state-based social movements. His dissertation, "No Radical Hangover: Progressive Responses to Economic Crises in the Midwest, 1967-1988," analyzes activists' responses to plant closings and urban fiscal crises in the Midwest during the 1970s and 1980s. Austin recently published a historiographical essay on twentieth century labor history in the journal *Social History*. He has presented papers at various national conferences including the Organization for American Historians, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, and the North American Labor History Conference. Austin also writes about issues of race, gender, and culture for Nursing Clio, a blog that connects the practice of history to contemporary issues of gender and medicine.

Michael Stauch, Michigan Mellon Fellow

Michael Stauch received his PhD in U.S. History at Duke University. His dissertation, titled "Wildcat of the Streets: Race, Class, and the Punitive Turn in 1970s Detroit," focuses on a series of street disturbances carried out by African American youth in Detroit and the political responses this unrest elicited. Michael is the co-author of an article on radical German exile communities in London that appeared in the peer-reviewed journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*, as well as a forthcoming entry on the Urban League in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism*, and reviews appearing in *Labour / Le Travail* and *Comparativ*. He has presented papers at conferences for the Labor and Working-Class History Association, appeared as a panelist at the North American Labor History Conference, and given numerous presentations in the community.

Kelli Wood, Assistant Professor and Postdoctoral Scholar, Michigan Society of Fellows

Kelli Wood's research focuses on the relationship between art and games in the sixteenth century. She is currently preparing a book manuscript based on her dissertation, titled "The Art of Play: Games in Early Modern Italy," and is researching a second book project on the interpenetration of the exceptional, festal, and playful with the quotidian in the development of genre painting. This research has generously been supported by several fellowships and institutions, including as a Fulbright Fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut and as a Samuel H. Kress Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. In addition to her work on early modern art, Wood's interests include game studies and its history in visual and material culture, including video games. In Winter 2017 she will offer an undergraduate seminar, *Video Games: Cultures in Play*.

Alumni Feature: What did I do with my History of Art degree?

From arts & ideas to farming & sustainability: how one alumna applied her liberal arts education to a career in sustainable living.



Emily Canosa ('06)

Assistant Director of
**Sustainable Living
Experience**, U-M

Lecturer in Liberal Arts,
**College for Creative
Studies**

Board Member, **The
Agrarian Adventure**

B.A. History of Art
Double Major: Arts and
Ideas in the Humanities
(Residential College)

M.A. Japanese Studies

“Get very quiet inside. Listen to your reactions; follow them; compare one thing to another; it’s through comparison that we learn.” – Jerry Saltz, Art Critic

For many people, the path from college major to dream job is not a straightforward, linear one. Along the way, there can be twists and turns, starts and stops, and even a jump or a pivot. By threading together an array of acquired experience, and keeping an open mind alumna Emily Canosa created her own path as she proceeded from a double major in History of Art (LSA) and Arts and Ideas in the Humanities (RC) to a career in farming and sustainability. In the course of an interview with her, it emerged that Emily has come to feel that the major and the career need not necessarily align, but that a liberal arts education makes many things possible. In her case it was her UM training as part of a multi-faceted journey of self-discovery, which involved experiential education, informal, learning and co-curricular opportunities, that led ultimately to a deeply satisfying career.

How did Emily move from a liberal arts B.A. to her current role as Assistant Director of the Sustainable Living Experience at UM? One of the earliest steps came when she enrolled in a basic introductory survey, Renaissance to Modern Art, taught that year by Rebecca Zurier. Here Emily was surprised to learn that the study of history of art fostered the investigation into

revelations about social change over periods of time and across cultures. She enrolled in more art history courses, not only because the content and subject matter were interesting, but also because the coursework was intellectually challenging. She remembers with pleasure learning about the impact artists and writers had on society in Howard Lay's seminar Baudelaire's Paris. It was inspiring to follow the ways in which works of art could shift the terms of social dialogue and effect political change.

After graduation, Emily decided on the path of adventure. She traveled to Japan where she taught English as a second language. It was during this period that she began to discover and cultivate her passion for sustainability while working on a permaculture farm. She fell in love with farming and when she returned to Ann Arbor, she continued this work, although in a different capacity, by participating in community garden projects and doing youth programming at **Avalon Housing**. Simultaneously she kept up her work with the visual arts and secured a position at UMMA as a graduate researcher for the Asian Arts curatorial team. Shortly thereafter, she enrolled in the M.A. program in Japanese Studies at UM. It was then that the "twist and turn" came, but from Emily's point of view, the switch from liberal arts study to farming was not as great as it might appear. Work on sustainability and issues around agrarian history and the supply of food enabled Emily to engage directly with topical concerns, involving her in social movements around ecology and community and allowing her to maintain her deep interest in effecting change. While working on her M.A., she returned to Japan to study the sustainable food movement in the Kanto region. Upon her return, she managed to keep up her dual interests. After completing her graduate program, she moved to Detroit to teach Asian art history at the College for Creative Studies (CCS) and there found a working urban farm on her block. Her time as a farmer-owner at Singing Tree Garden – where she worked alongside a small group of her neighbors and RC graduates – ultimately led Emily back to her present career in Ann Arbor.

In 2014, Emily accepted a newly created position at UM as manager of the **Sustainable Food Program**, where she acted as the organizational lead working with 13 student organizations, to monitor the activity of several campus gardens and the Campus Farm, thereby ensuring that knowledge would not be lost in the shuffle as students graduated. She served in this capacity for three years before being selected as the Assistant Director of the Sustainable Living Experience on campus which "strives to function as a microcosm of diverse students whose actions have generative and innovative impacts on the development of a more just and sustainable world." In addition to this role, Emily continues to teach at CCS, is co-founder of **The Hive**, a sustainable living cooperative, and a board member of The Agrarian Adventure, a local non-profit that works with K-12 students to connect food, environment, community and personal health.

At a time when the liberal arts are under siege and people frequently question the relevance of degrees in precisely such subjects as History of Art or "Arts and Ideas," Emily defends her training. She points out that even though she only teaches art history part-time, she utilizes the core skills she developed as an undergraduate on a daily basis in her sustainability work. History of Art provided the context in which she was able to strengthen her abilities in critical thinking, analysis, and communication: the rigorous coursework and classroom discussions honed her

of the big picture. As any organizational leader or project manager can attest, these are crucial skills for success. On the surface, the steps along Emily's path may seem to be somewhat tenuously linked, but she herself is acutely aware of the common denominator: the skills and ideas acquired through her liberal art studies and her history of art coursework.

-Jennifer Lewis



Save the Date

**All That Glitters: Magnificence in Art, Architecture, and Visual Culture
2016 History of Art Graduate Student Symposium**

U-M Museum of Art, Helmut Stern Auditorium

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