



As we come to the end of a pandemic year filled with pressures, difficulties, and personal losses, I wish to extend my renewed thanks to all our department's faculty, students, and staff for having kept History of Art a thriving community of teaching and research. The good will and hard work that many poured into our virtual Tappan Hall—from hosting digital events and meetings to teaching in the Zoom room and working remotely to ensure the smooth running of the department—have been a tonic and inspiration.

Despite the challenges, History of Art achieved a number of notable successes this past year. Prof. Achim Timmerman was successfully promoted to full professor, for which we extend to him our warm congratulations. We also welcomed two new tenure-track assistant professors (Lihong Liu and Brendan McMahon), a Michigan Society Fellow (Michaela Rife), and a Collegiate Fellow (Valentina Rozas-Krause). We searched for our next Forsyth Postdoctoral Fellows and are pleased to announce that [Cecilio Cooper](#) and [David Norman](#) will join Tappan Hall in the fall. Cooper will teach courses in Transatlantic Black arts, while Norman will offer classes in Indigenous and Circumpolar art and visual culture. We also are poised to search for our next two tenure-track positions next year: namely, the [Forsyth professorial position in Western European Medieval art](#), and [modern and contemporary arts of the Americas](#). These recent recruitments and forthcoming searches will help the department continue to grow, strengthen, and enrich its faculty ranks and fields of expertise in the coming years.

Although we are sad to say farewell to a number of our community members—including Debbie Fitch, Jessica Pattison, Raymond Silverman, and Ashley Miller—we are thrilled to welcome Audra Wilson, our department's Executive Secretary. Alice Sullivan, one of our former PhD students, has proved a stellar addition to our team as Graduate Program Coordinator. In addition, our graduate students [have achieved much](#) this year, as have our undergraduate students. In support of their professionalization and to enable them to acquire a diverse set of skills, the department awarded no fewer than 18 summer museum internships and fellowships at over \$70,000 in total funding. These numbers are unprecedented in our department's history.

Such strong support for our students' and faculty's work, research, and travel has been made possible in large part thanks to Ilene Forsyth's extraordinary generosity. We owe her a deep debt of gratitude as she continues to solidify our department's position as an international leader in the scholarly discipline of art history for generations to come.

I wish one and all a restful and restorative summer. I very much look forward to our reuniting—in person, most hopefully!—this coming September.

With my warm wishes from Turkey,

Christiane Gruber

Photo caption: Cat napping on the so-called “King's Tomb,” a Lycian sarcophagus, 4th century BCE, Antiphellos (Kaş), Turkey. Photograph by Christiane Gruber.



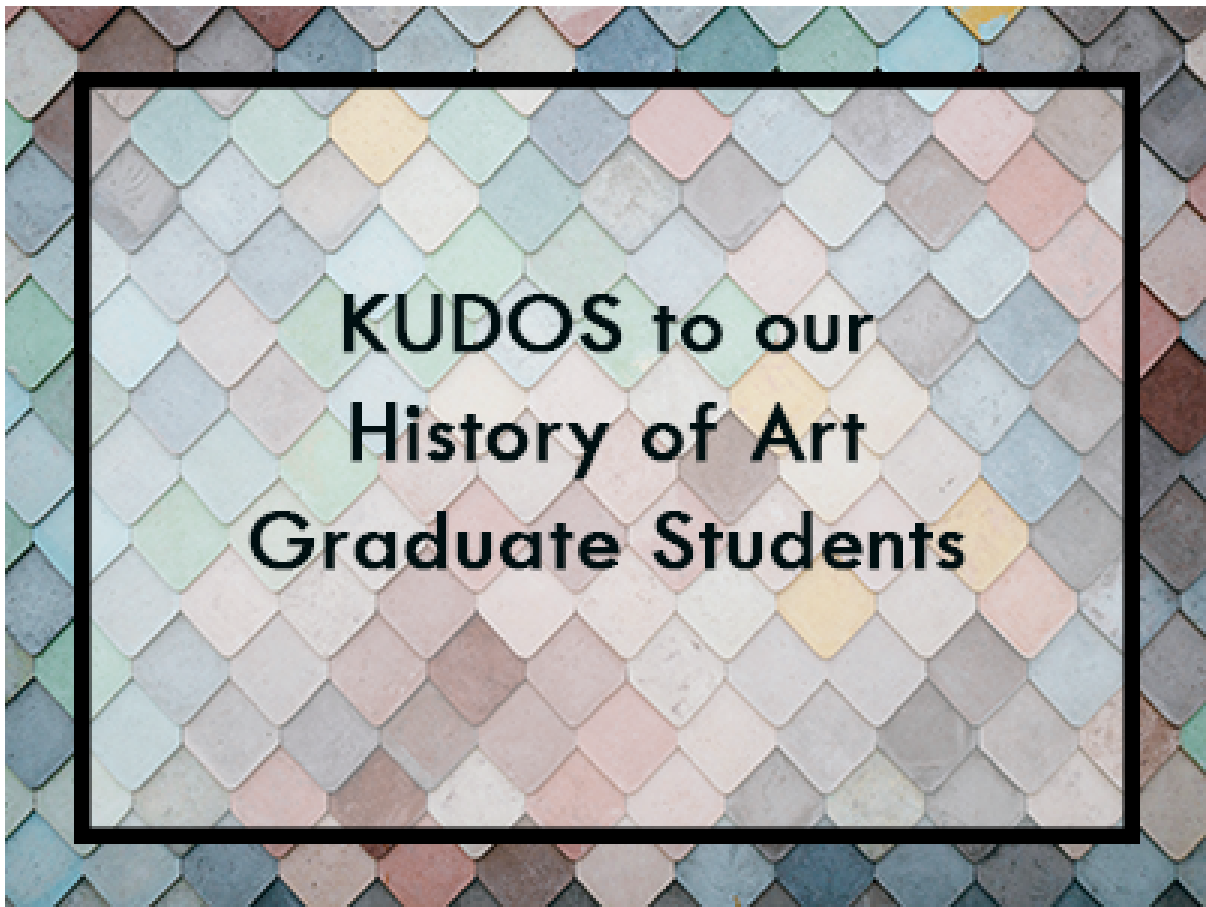
In this newsletter:

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[Graduation 2021](#)

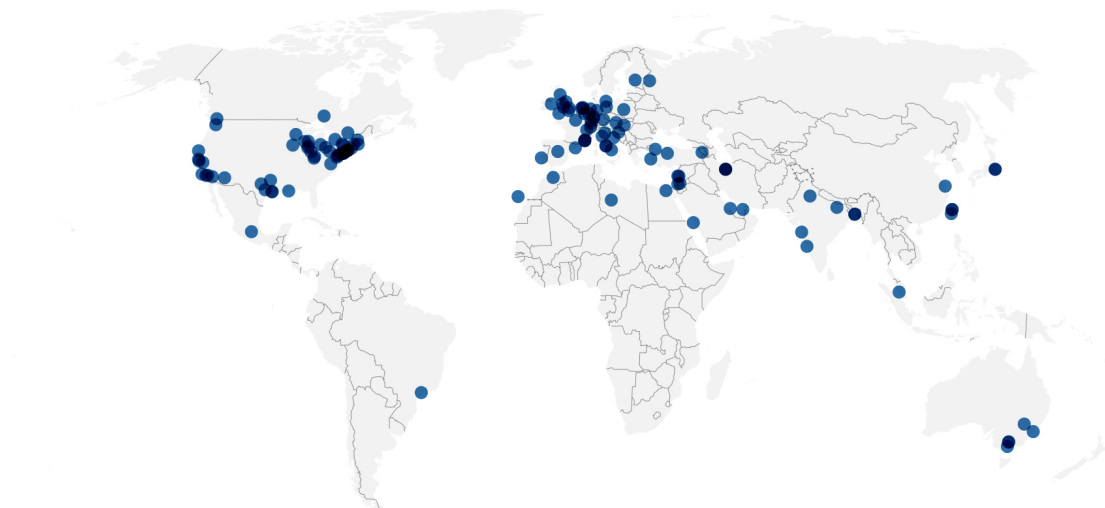
Although we couldn't be with you in person, we still wanted to mark the occasion and recognize the accomplishments of our incredibly talented students. [Click here](#) to view our virtual commencement page.



2020 - 2021 Graduate Student Accomplishments

Our graduate students continue to impress and represent the department well year after year. We take this opportunity to congratulate our students on their hard work and highlight their accomplishments as we move into a new academic year.

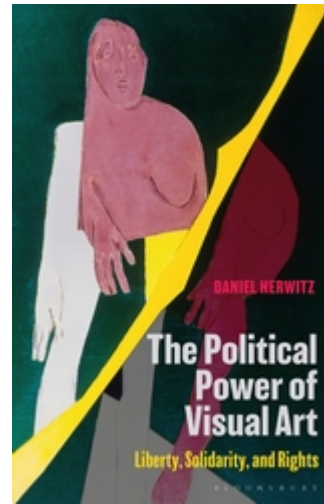
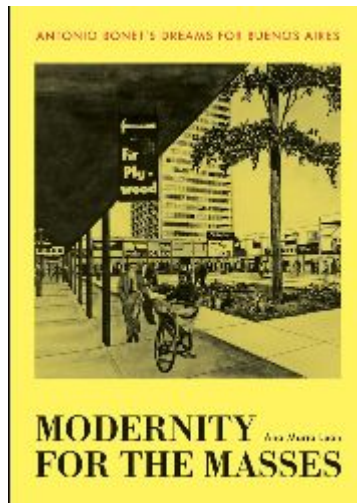
HIAA Biennial Symposium 2021



Recap: Historians of Islamic Art Biennial Symposium

- Sandra S. Williams

"This past spring the University of Michigan served as host for the seventh Historians of Islamic Art Association (HIAA) Biennial Symposium. Originally planned for October 2020, safety concerns and travel restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic led to a delay and then conversion of the in-person event to an online format. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Christiane Gruber (Professor and Chair, History of Art Department, University of Michigan, and President-Elect, Historians of Islamic Art Association) and Bihter Esener (Symposium Managing Organizer) the event was seamlessly hosted online from April 15th to 18th, 2021."



New Faculty Publications

- [Modernity for the Masses: Antonio Bonet's Dreams for Buenos Aires](#) - Ana María León
 - [The Political Power of Visual Art. Liberty, Solidarity, and Rights](#) - Daniel Herwitz
-



Environmental Art History @ the University of Michigan **-Michaela Rife**

"Environmental Art History, a winter 2021 seminar at the University of Michigan, began by asking how art can positively contribute to solving environmental problems. Following Rasheed Araeen's 2010 manifesto, we wondered what art can really "do." Must artists abandon their studios, as Araeen suggests, or is there still value in objects and contemplation? From these difficult questions, we turned to the past. What does an environmentally informed art history look like? To assemble an answer to this question, we spent the first half of the semester reading theoretical approaches: from classic texts in environmental history and recent ecocriticism in literary studies and art history, to debates over the "Anthropocene" and Indigenous critiques of "new materialisms." Dipping our toes into the theoretical waters prepared us to turn to the practice of environmental art history in the second half of the class; how have art historians crafted an environmental lens for analysis? Ultimately the students in this course, both graduate and undergraduate, produced their own forms of environmental art history."



[A Conversation with Alumna Elizabeth Otto](#)

On May 20th, 2021, Graduate Program Coordinator [Alice Sullivan](#) arranged a virtual reunion of more than 20 U-M History of Art PhD alums. From there, we were able to reconnect with people, learn about their lives after Michigan, and discuss ways to keep connected. We talked with Dr. Elizabeth Otto on her experiences with the department, her career, advice for undergraduates, and more. [Click to read.](#)

Alumni in the News

- [Faculty Retirees to Remember](#) - Congratulations to Steve J. Goldberg on his long tenure and retirement from Hamilton College



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Congratulations ***Graduates***



Dear History of Art and Museum Studies graduates...

Although we cannot celebrate with you in person, we would be remiss if we didn't highlight your accomplishments in a meaningful way. You have all worked incredibly hard, and the entire faculty and administration are proud of your achievements and how well you've represented the field of History of Art and Museum Studies. Many opportunities now lie ahead of you, and your grasp on the skills cultivated by studying History of Art is only to your benefit in our ever-changing and visually dynamic world.

Remember, wherever you go, Forever Go Blue.

2021 History of Art Commencement Address

With remarks from...

Christiane Gruber, Department Chair of History of Art

Howard Lay, Director of Undergraduate Studies of History of Art

Deirdre L.C. Hennebury, Associate Director of the Museum Studies Program

Lihong Liu, Sally Michelson Davidson Assistant Professor of Chinese Arts and Cultures

Brendan McMahon, Associate Professor of History of Art

Watch on Youtube

History of Art & Museum Studies Virtual Commencement 2021



History of Art Majors

Avery Apostle
Beck Arnett
Alissandra Aronow
Aja Brandmeier
Jocelyne Campos
Delaney Dahlstrom
Phoebe Danaher
Abigail Deemer
Lauren Deutsch
Ariel Friedlander
Samuel Kremke
Chesney Lambert
Sophia Layton
Amanda Leitman
Ariel Lowenstern
Lily McCann
Morgan McCaul
Anita Michaud
Sara Shoemaker

History of Art Minors

Gabriella Armstrong
Madeleine Azar
Christopher Baird
Harrison Bauer
Giacomo Benvegnu
Nicholas Ceccio
Albert Che
Joel Danilewitz
Madeline Dorris
Jason Du
Thomas Dye
Nicole Evans
Chloe Farhadi
Mary Finch
Patrick Girard
Ryan Goodwin
Natalie Guisinger
Eliana Harrison
Prathik Hosalli

Museum Studies Minors

Anneke Benison
Elise Borbely
Yeager Edwards
Charlotte Fater
Hailey Glushyn
Kaitlyn Hinson
Elizabeth Hungerman
Jillian Luciw
Abigail Miya
Lydia Plescher
Molly Rose Powers
Estrella Salgado
Katherine Sherry
Danielle Silverman
Austin Teholiz
Kate Zhou

Victoria Thede

Andy Huntsman

Vivian Istomin

Rachel Kass

Emma Kruse

Brianna Kucharski

Grace Lasky

Sophia Linden

Chloe Linkner

Peri Macinic

Colleen McGowan

Diana Melikyan

Michael Motoc

Alice Munro

Justin Muse

Jacob Nugent

Celia Oleshansky

Emily Phuong

Michelle Pikulinski

Julia Reguera

Helen Rhines

Ellie Rocheleau

Shannon Rumsey

Lee Shapiro

Varis Shnatepaporn

Sofia Stark

Marin Tarnowski

Samuel Tucker

Benjamin Vassar

Ethan Walker

Constance Wang

Patrick Wilton

Katelin Yoon

Fangzhou Yu

2021 Undergraduate Henry P. Tappan Award Winners

The award for **Academic Excellence in the History of Art** is determined on the basis of overall academic performance.

Aja Brandmeier

The award for **Outstanding Performance in the History of Art Honors Program** is intended for an Honors major whose senior thesis and general academic performance are deemed to be outstanding.

Phoebe Danaher

The award for **Excellence in Interdisciplinary Studies** is reserved for a History of Art major whose work has successfully sought to analyze the visual materials of diverse peoples and cultures.

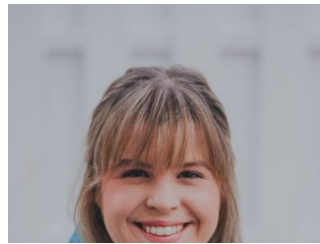
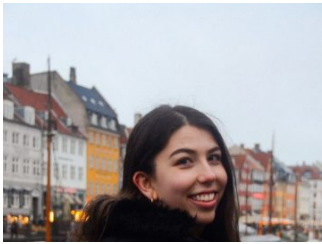
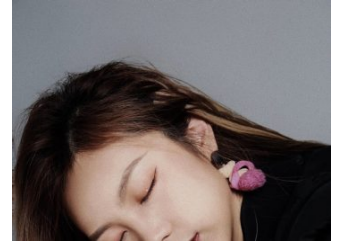
Sara Shoemaker

The award for **Outstanding Service to the History of Art** Community is to be presented to a student who has volunteered enthusiastic service to the Department, to fellow students, and to the University.

Sophia Layton

The award for **Excellence in Museum Studies** recognizes a student who has excelled in the Museum Studies minor, and who has demonstrated a sustained interest in museum-based research, curatorial practices, and museum education programs.

Estrella Salgado



[PREVIOUS](#) | [NEXT](#)

History of Art Challenge

This year, for something a little extra, we asked students to send us their recreations of a work of art, whatever that meant to them. Click through the slideshow to see all submissions. Thanks to everyone who sent something in, we love to see these!



Chesney Lambert "This is Bacchus by Caravaggio, photo from around May of last year when quarantine started to set in."



2020 - 2021 Graduate Student Accomplishments



A look at the accomplishments of our graduate students this past year; they continue to impress and represent the department well year after year!

2020-2021 Graduate Student Achievements

Our graduate students continue to impress and represent the department well year after year. We take this opportunity to congratulate our students on their hard work and highlight their accomplishments as we move into a new academic year.

Dissertation Defenses: Stephanie Triplett and Chanon Praepipatmongkol

2020-2021 Awards & Fellowships & Achievements

Vrinda Agrawal

- Publications: *Masterpieces*, Chandigarh: Government Museum and Art Gallery, March/April 2020
- Podcast: *Manifestation of Compassion*, on a thangka of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara from the Koelz Collection of Himalayan Art, Museum of Anthropological Archaeology, University of Michigan, Fall 2020
- Presentations: The Elephant in the Room: An Examination of Animals in the Arts, a virtual symposium, Tufts University

Michelle Al-Ferzly

- Charles Lang Freer Fellow, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Fall 2021
- Social Sciences Research Council-Mellon Mays Predoctoral Research Development Grant, Winter 2021

- Publications: *City in the Desert, Revisited: Oleg Grabar at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, 1964-1971*, co-authored with Christiane Gruber, Kelsey Museum Publications, 2021 (forthcoming)

Madeleine Aquilina

- Rackham Student Research Grant, 2021
- Summer Research Grant, International Institute, 2021
- Presentations: University of Arizona, Ohio State University, and Newcastle University

Ross Bernhaut

- U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) award for the study of Hindi, awarded and accepted March 2021
- American Institute of Indian Studies Junior Research Fellowship for 2021-2022, awarded March 2021
- Fulbright Award for Dissertation Research, India, 2021-2022

Andrew Cabaniss (IPCAA)

- Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship, 2021-2022

Katherine Campbell

- Dolores Zhorab Liebman Fund Fellowship, 2021-2022

Haely Chang

- Junior Fellow at International Center for Korean Studies at Seoul National University Kyujanggak Institute, September 2020 - August 2021.
- Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) Dissertation Fellowship September 2020-April 2021

Caitlin Clerkin (IPCAA)

- Publications: co-authored with Brad Taylor (emeritus in MSP), "**Online Encounters with Museum Antiquities**," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 2021.
- Presentations: virtual ASOR Annual Meeting, November 2020.
- I was a researcher/participant in the spring 2020 "Nubian Lives, Nubian Heritage: Conducting Reparative Research in Anthropology and Archaeology" project funded by a

Collaboratory Proposal Development Grant, which was subsequently awarded a full Collaboratory grant as "Narrating Nubia: The Social Lives of Heritage" for 2021-2022.

Christina Difabio (IPCAA)

- American Research Institute in Turkey Summer Fellowship for Advanced Turkish Language
- Rackham Language Training Grant to support my participation in the online summer Bogaziçi University, Istanbul Turkish Language and Culture Program.

James Denison

- Engle Graduate Fellowship, Institute for the Humanities, University of Michigan (accepted), 2021-2022
- Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship, 2021-2022 (declined)
- Presentations: Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Davidson Family Fellowship Lecture

Nadhira Hill (IPCAA)

- Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship, 2021-2022

Vishal Khandelwal

- Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship, 2020-2021
- Carter Manny Writing Award 2020, Graham Foundation

Jordan Koel

- Kress Institutional Fellowship, Warburg/Courtauld 2021-2023

Julia LaPlaca

- Presentations: 48th Midwest Art History Society Annual Conference; 56th International Congress of Medieval Studies

Elizabeth (Holley) Ledbetter

- Forsyth Dissertation Fellowship, 2021-2022
- Publications: "The Viking Afterlives of Samanid Silver" in *The Seas and the Mobility of Islamic Art*, edited by Radha Dalal, Sean Roberts, and Jochen Sokoly, Yale University Press,

2021, forthcoming; “Aestheticizing Work: The Laboring *Qiyān* in Fatimid Art,” *Different Visions* tentatively titled “Towards a Visual History of Labor in Medieval Art,” edited by Diane Wolfthal, forthcoming.

- Presentations: College Art Association Conference, Historians of Islamic Art Association *Majlis* Conference

Rheagan Martin

- Samuel H. Kress 24-month Predoctoral Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Studies in Visual Arts (CASVA), 2021-2023
- Coordinator for Digital Engagement at the International Center of Medieval Art

Robert Morrissey

- Irving Stenn, Jr. Curatorial Research Fellowship, University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2021-2022

Jun Nakamura

- Suzanne Andrée Curatorial Fellowship in Prints, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2020-2022
- CASVA Robert H. and Clarice Smith Fellowship, National Gallery of Art, 2020 (declined)
- Publications: “Seeing Outside the Box: Reexamining the Top of Samuel van Hoogstraten’s London Perspective Box,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 12:2 (Summer 2020) DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2020.12.2.3; AND Jun Nakamura, “Review of Catherine Jenkins, Nadine M. Orenstein, and Freyda Spira, eds., *The Renaissance of Etching.*” *Early Modern Low Countries* 4.1 (2020): 153-55.

Zoe Ortiz (IPCAA)

- Fulbright Grant for archival research in Italy, 2020-2021
- Rackham International Research Award

Soyoon Ryu

- Rackham International Student Fellowship
- Center for World Performance Studies Fellowship

Srishti Sankaranarayanan

- Research Associate, Museum of Art and Photography, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, July-August 2020
- Podcast: *In Defense and Devotion*, on Tibetan amulet boxes from the Koelz Collection in the Museum of Anthropological Archeology, University of Michigan, Fall 2020
- Presentations: *Tangible*, 17th Annual University of Oregon Graduate Symposium in the History of Art and Architecture

Dylan Volk

- Research Assistant with Professor Anna Watkins-Fisher in American Studies to prepare her manuscript for her upcoming book, *Safety Orange*.
- Event: co-organized “Playing Indian, Pretend Vikings, and Violence: Responding to Extremist Iconographies of the U.S. Settler State”

Gerui Wang

- Presentations: MEMS Workshop, April 2021 in April.

Sarah Wheat

- Publications: “The Turkish Style Cosey Corner: Appropriating Islamic Objects and Spaces in the American Parlor, 1885-1910” in *Expanding Dialogues of Diaspora: Manifestations of Middle Eastern Architecture in the Americas*. Chicago: Intellect Books and University of Chicago Press, (forthcoming) 2021.

Courtney Wilder

- Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow in European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art, renewal
- Presentations: Association of Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Sartorial Society Series, and the Nineteenth-Century Textiles and Dress Reframed working group

Sandra Williams

- FLAS Fellowship for Persian language study, summer 2021 and academic year 2021-2022
- Publications: “Reflections on Late Ottoman Robes from the David and Elizabeth Reisbord Collection,” in *Textiles Asia Journal* (May 2021, 13.1)

- Presentations: Middle East Studies Association Annual Conference and College Arts Association Annual Conference

Youngshin Yook

- Research Assistant, University of Michigan Museum of Art
- Research Assistant, Metropolitan Museum of Art, forthcoming exhibition *Surrealism Beyond Borders*

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Release Date: 04/20/2021

Tags: Graduate Student; History of Art

Recap: Historians of Islamic Art Biennial Symposium



Sandra Williams writes on the Historians of Islamic Art Biennial Symposium, hosted virtually by U-M April 15-18th, 2021.

by Sandra S. Williams



HIAA Biennial Symposium 2021



Heatmap of attendees' locations

format. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Christiane Gruber (Professor and Chair, History of Art Department, University of Michigan, and President-Elect, Historians of Islamic Art Association) and Bihter Esener (Symposium Managing Organizer) the event was seamlessly hosted online from April 15th to 18th, 2021.

The event kicked off with the Digital Islamic Studies Curriculum (DISC) Distinguished Lecture keynote presented by Stefan Weber, director of the Museum for Islamic Art, Pergamon Museum, Berlin. In “Pulling the Past into the Present: Curating Islamic Art in a Changing World,” Weber discussed the museum’s pending gallery reinstallation. His presentation highlighted the successes and failures the curatorial development team faced in their efforts to create an engaging and inclusive installation that would serve local and international audiences, bringing to the fore broader concerns around making the history of the Islamicate world accessible to general audiences.

The symposium was a welcome event at the University of Michigan, where the field of Islamic art gained its first academic position in the United States nearly a century ago. Titled “Regime Change,” the symposium invited presenters and attendees to reflect critically on the “regimes,” or systems that shape knowledge production within the field of Islamic art, including but not limited to modes of circulation, access to resources, and new technologies. Within this framework, the presented panels brought forth a range of topics from the relationship between

This past spring the University of Michigan served as host for the seventh Historians of Islamic Art Association (HIAA) Biennial Symposium. Originally planned for October 2020, safety concerns and travel restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic led to a delay and then conversion of the in-person event to an online

political transformation and architecture in South Asia (on which Ross Bernhaut, UM PhD candidate, presented), to issues of identity and labor in medieval and premodern crafts, to the art and architecture of fourteenth-century sub-Saharan Africa (on which Raymond Miller, UM professor emeritus, presented and Ashley Miller, UM Forsyth Postdoctoral Fellow, served as discussant).

Despite the challenges of hosting an online symposium, the new format allowed for a truly global audience of over 450 registered attendees, including from Lebanon, the UAE, Egypt, Brazil, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, China, and India, to name just a few. Furthermore, the digital realm did not prove a barrier to lively discussions during question-and-answer sessions, while the Zoom Chat feature allowed for more informal information and idea sharing. Though everyone surely misses the benefits that come from meeting in-person, especially with food and drink, the online format provided a much-needed opportunity for colleagues from across the world to meet and engage. Perhaps future iterations of the symposium will find a way to continue to maintain an online presence so that more voices will continue to be included. Ultimately, the 2021 HIAA Symposium was a chance to reflect on the opportunities that can accompany change, both those we have studied from the past and those we have unexpectedly faced in our contemporary moment.

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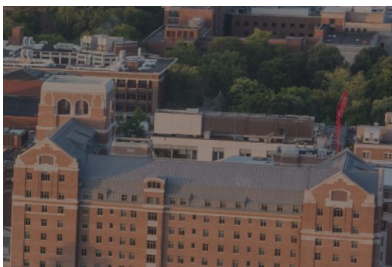
Release Date: 06/28/2021

Tags: Faculty; Graduate Student; History of Art; Conference

Environmental Art History @ the University of Michigan



Environmental Art History, a winter 2021 seminar at the University of Michigan, began by asking how art can positively contribute to solving environmental problems. Following Rasheed Araeen's 2010 manifesto, we wondered what art can really "do."



"Environmental Art History, a winter 2021 seminar at the University of Michigan, began by asking how art can positively contribute to solving environmental problems. Following Rasheed Araeen's 2010 manifesto, we wondered what art can really "do." Must artists abandon their studios, as Araeen suggests, or is there still value in objects and contemplation?

From these difficult questions, we turned to the past. What does an environmentally informed art history look like? To assemble an answer to this question, we spent the first half of the semester reading theoretical approaches: from classic texts in environmental history and recent ecocriticism in literary studies and art history, to debates over the "Anthropocene" and Indigenous critiques of "new materialisms." Dipping our toes into the theoretical waters prepared us to turn to the practice of environmental art history in the second half of the class; how have art historians crafted an environmental lens for analysis? Ultimately the students in this course, both graduate and undergraduate, produced their own forms of environmental art history. The following videos provide windows into their in-progress final projects, as well as a look at the concerns weighing on students during yet another pandemic semester.

Issues of environmental justice resonated with students throughout the course. The power and possibilities of environmentally engaged art are expressed in Celia Kent's project on contemporary art and GMOs, and in Destini Riley's mock exhibition centers on environmental artists of color. The critique of wilderness and what we deem "natural" also impacted students' final projects. Helen Rhines turns a critical eye on the appeal of sculpture parks as "natural" spaces, productively asking why many seek nature at Storm King but not the Heidelberg Project; while Patrick Girard looks to urban architecture like Habitat 67 to rethink the appeal of the North American suburbs. Meanwhile, Sophie Underwood analyzes how animated films ask us to "make kin" with nonhuman beings.

Midway through the course, we considered the fraught genre of landscape. We pondered Anishabaabe curator Wanda Nanibush's question of the exhibition *Picturing the Americas*: "are there paintings we just shouldn't show anymore?" Art historian Caroline Gillaspie also

visited the class to discuss the visibility and invisibility of environmental degradation and enslaved labor in paintings of Brazilian coffee fazendas. Yet landscape remains a popular genre for viewers and artists. Ally Eggleton discusses contemporary eco-artist Mariah Reading's rethinking of landscape as zero waste, while Sabrina Kliza reminds us (through her own artwork) that landscape painting can provide a place of refuge and escape during a period dominated by the surging Covid-19 pandemic and the January 2021 insurrection. Of course, the idea of landscape, or "nature," as a means of escape or a place of spiritual encounter has long histories, as taken up by Madison Cotner on JMW Turner.

This virtual seminar begins with two longer-form videos from the graduate students who took this course as an independent study; their work represents exciting new directions in environmental art history. Kaeun Park uses an environmental history approach to analyze *Winter, Daesungri*, a series of outdoor exhibitions in 1980s South Korea, that also offers a window onto changing views of "nature." Soyeon Ryu presents an ecocritical analysis of Korean artist Lee Seung-taek's work, with a close eye on materiality and environmental histories of the developmental state; she raises crucial questions about the tension between environmental aesthetics and ethics. Collectively, these projects represent a compelling look at the possibilities of uniting environmental studies and art history.

- Dr. Michaela Rife, April 2021

[Click here to view presentations](#)

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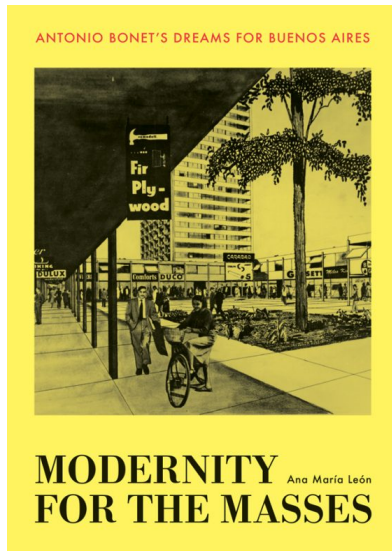
Release Date: 04/21/2021

Tags: [Graduate](#); [Students](#); [History of Art](#)

Modernity for the Masses: Antonio Bonet's Dreams for Buenos Aires



Faculty Ana María León's new publication with University of Texas Press



Now available through University of Texas Press

Summary

Throughout the early twentieth century, waves of migration brought working-class people to the outskirts of Buenos Aires. This prompted a dilemma: Where should these restive populations be situated relative to the city's spatial politics? Might housing serve as a tool to discipline their behavior?

Enter Antonio Bonet, a Catalan architect inspired by the transatlantic modernist and surrealist movements. Ana María León follows Bonet's decades-long, state-backed quest to

house Buenos Aires's diverse and fractious population. Working with totalitarian and populist regimes, Bonet developed three large-scale housing plans, each scuttled as a new government took over. Yet these incomplete plans—Bonet's dreams—teach us much about the relationship between modernism and state power.

Modernity for the Masses finds in Bonet's projects the disconnect between modern architecture's discourse of emancipation and the reality of its rationalizing control. Although he and his patrons constantly glorified the people and depicted them in housing plans, Bonet never consulted them. Instead he succumbed to official and elite fears of the people's latent political power. In careful readings of Bonet's work, León discovers the progressive erasure of surrealism's psychological sensitivity, replaced with an impulse, realized in modernist design, to contain the increasingly empowered population.

Reviews

"Modernity for the Masses offers a fascinating exploration of what happened when avant-garde modernist architecture met the social and political realities of mid-twentieth-century Latin America. Focused on the transatlantic crossings of Antonio Bonet and his projects for Buenos Aires, this book is replete with insights on the era's spatial politics. Written with

great flair, León's book shows how modernist architects yearned to transform the lives of social majorities, while demonstrating how popular movements and state power shaped their scope of action. It makes an intriguing case for why failed dreams can reveal as much as those that were realized."

- Eduardo Elena, University of Miami, author of *Dignifying Argentina: Peronism, Citizenship, and Mass Consumption*

"*Modernity for the Masses* poses two key modernist questions: how do you house 'the masses,' and how do you improve city life with built form? Ana María León explores answers through a study of Antonio Bonet's largely unbuilt housing proposals in Buenos Aires—work that would otherwise be ignored in the canon of modern history—and along the way maps out the fertile intellectual entanglements that informed Bonet's work as an architect, theorist, and urbanist. This is an important work that will appeal to anyone interested in Latin American architecture or modern architecture in general."

- Robert Alexander González, University of New Mexico, author of *Designing Pan-America: U.S. Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere*

"In *Modernity for the Masses*, Ana María León illuminates the evolution of the discourse surrounding modernist multifamily housing in Argentina's capital between the 1930s and the 1950s. In Buenos Aires, as elsewhere in and beyond Latin America, this discourse evolved as a result of interactions between architects, planners, politicians, artists, and writers. With fluid precision, Ana María León places the work of architect Antonio Bonet within an international cast of characters—Le Corbusier, Jorge Luis Borges, Grete Stern, and others—tracing their conversations within and across their fields. The result is a thoroughly researched, methodologically innovative study that contributes in important ways not only to the literature on twentieth-century architecture and urbanism in Argentina but also to scholarly understanding of the transnational and transdisciplinary nature of modernist architecture, art, and literature on both sides of the Atlantic in the decades before and after World War II."

- Jennifer Josten, University of Pittsburgh, author of *Mathias Goeritz: Modernist Art and Architecture in Cold War Mexico*

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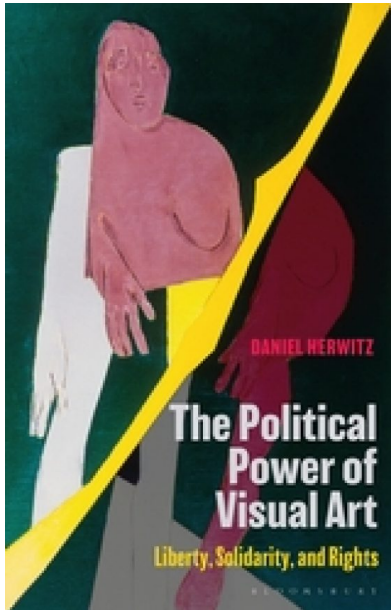
Release Date: 07/01/2021

Tags: History of Art

The Political Power of Visual Art. Liberty, Solidarity, and Rights.



Faculty Daniel Herwitz' new publication with Bloomsbury



Now available through Bloomsbury Publishing

Summary

Visual art has a ubiquitous political cast today. But which politics? Daniel Herwitz seeks clarity on the various things meant by politics, and how we can evaluate their presumptions or aspirations in contemporary art.

Drawing on the work of William Kentridge, drenched in violence, race, and power, and the artworld immolations of Banksy, Herwitz's examples range from the NEA 4 and the question of offense-as-dissent, to the community driven work of George Gittoes, the identity politics of contemporary American art and (for contrast with the power of visual media) literature written

in dialogue with truth commissions. He is interested in understanding art practices today in the light of two opposing inheritances: the avant-gardes and their politicization of the experimental art object, and 18th-century aesthetics, preaching the autonomy of the art object, which he interprets as the cultural compliment to modern liberalism. His historically-informed approach reveals how crucial this pair of legacies is to reading the tensions in voice and character of art today.

Driven by questions about the capacity of the visual medium to speak politically or acquire political agency, this book is for anyone working in aesthetics or the art world concerned with the fate of cultural politics in a world spinning out of control, yet within reach of emancipation.

Reviews

"This is a book of essays, only seemingly miscellaneous. It seeks and effectively finds a deep integration of diverse themes and movements in both art and politics, and it does so with sensibility and analytical power and an eloquence of style. How does the visual relate to dissent against the state? Can art and literature straddle both autonomy and solidarity? With what attitudes to violence is it possible to visually represent a whole empire based on the political economy of mining and a nation that comes out from under its shadow? By what gradual alchemies do philosophical traditions of taste in the eighteenth century give way to the

thrusting innovations of the avant-garde some two centuries later? With what creative pride does the art and mind of the Southern periphery refuse the offer to merely play 'catch up' with the trends and frameworks of the metropolitan North? These are some of the questions Daniel Herwitz illuminatingly traverses with his wide knowledge, his lively intelligence, and his impressive cosmopolitan reach. A work of sustaining interest and instructive insight.” – Akeel Bilgrami, Sidney Morgenbesser Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University, USA

“Uniquely and equally at home in political and formal analysis, Daniel Herwitz is at his uniform best in this book. Its breadth and subtlety of argument advances the central claim that the political achievements of art-- unlike celebrity-- increase the more it engages with the world and defers on the claim of its own importance.” – Michael P. Steinberg, Barnaby Conrad and Mary Critchfield Keeney Professor of History, Brown University, USA

“Daniel Herwitz’s new book is a testament to an author who can think in the present for the present. Its insight into contemporary art’s contribution to the political machinations and uncertainties of our times is subtly worked through a carefully selected range of artists, critics, and philosophers. It is a model for a new philosophical art criticism that must look today beyond the staid geographical landlines of enquiry.” – Lydia Goehr, Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University, USA

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Tags: Faculty; History of Art

A Conversation with Alumna Elizabeth Otto



We talked with alumna Dr. Elizabeth Otto on her experiences with the department, her career, and more.



On May 20th, 2021, Graduate Program Coordinator [Alice Sullivan](#) arranged a virtual reunion of more than 20 U-M History of Art PhD alums. From there, we were able to reconnect with people, learn about their lives after Michigan, and discuss ways to keep connected. We talked with Dr. Elizabeth Otto on her experiences with the department, her career, and more.

About: Elizabeth (Libby) Otto is Professor of modern and contemporary art history in the department of Global Gender and Sexuality Studies. Her 2019 book, *Haunted Bauhaus: Occult Spirituality, Gender Fluidity, Queer Identities, and Radical Politics* (MIT Press), received the Northeast Popular Culture

Association's best book of the year award. She is also the author of *Tempo, Tempo! The Bauhaus Photomontages of Marianne Brandt* (Bauhaus-Archiv, 2006) and the co-author of *Bauhaus Women: A Global Perspective* (Bloomsbury, 2019). Otto has co-edited five books including *Bauhaus Bodies: Gender, Sexuality, and Body Culture in Modernism's Legendary Art School* (Bloomsbury, 2019), *Passages of Exile* (edition text + kritik, 2017), and *The New Woman International: Representations in Photography and Film from the 1870s through the 1960s* (University of Michigan Press, 2011). Her essays and reviews have been published in journals including *Artforum*, *October*, and *History of Photography*, and her work has been supported by numerous grants and fellowships from institutions including the American Association of University Women, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the Getty, and the National Humanities Center.

What is your history and relationship with the Department of History of Art and U-M?

I came to the History of Art PhD program in 1996, specifically to work with Matt Biro. Even though I was his first student, he already knew how to strike that crucial mentorship balance of pushing a student and supporting her. Additionally, I took classes with quite a range of faculty from that era, Maria Gough, Pat Simons, Martin Powers, and Celeste Brusati; while I was not able to take a seminar with Betsy Sears, she became an influential mentor and friend who would later save me from abandoning my most recent book project! Parallel to the PhD degree, I did a

Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies and worked closely with faculty in History and German Studies including Kathleen Canning and Helmut Puff. Among my cohort members was Yao-Fen You.

What is your current role and how did you end up there?

I am Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where I was hired into the Art History Department in 2004; a few years ago I moved my line to our Department of Global Gender and Sexuality Studies, where I recently have served as Director of Graduate Studies. Additionally, I served as the Executive Director of my university's Humanities Institute. During the next two years, I will be on fellowship and working on my next book, *Bauhaus Under National Socialism*; first I will be at the Getty for the coming year, and then I will hold a fellowship from the Gerda Henkel Stiftung for the 2022-23 year and a short-term fellowship from the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in DC.

What are the most important skills you learned because of the study of History of Art?

This is a great question and difficult to answer because there is just so much that I learned during the course of my doctoral studies at the U of M. Probably the most important thing that I learned—and it took all of the years that I was there—was to fully take ownership of my writing, to know that it wasn't done until I knew why each word was where it was. I also learned the power of a turbo charged intellectual community! It was just such a pleasure to be immersed in a place of such engaged art history.

What advice would you give to undergraduates who want to pursue advanced degrees in the field of History of Art?

We've been through a number of years now during which art history and other humanities degrees are so often cast as a luxury or even as "useless" or "selfish." I would say: don't believe that hype! It is simply not true. Art History prepares students for the critical thinking and visual literacy that are useful in almost any career path. But just as important: the subject matter is so rich and exciting that it's just so fun to study. And an art history degree from the U of M can also prepare students to continue with an advanced degree in art history, in which case the fun never stops!

How has the last year of COVID & quarantine affected your work?

So many have suffered such losses through the pandemic; as an academic, it was ridiculously easy to transition to remote work and to live in seclusion from the world, in a bubble with my family and the neurotic COVID puppy who we adopted (and continue to love). In that sense, the impact of COVID has been extremely minor. I have been unable to go to the archives, but I've done more research online, and that has been productive. This past spring I co-taught a new course online titled "The Art and Practice of Fashion," together with a history professor at my university. While Zoom gets a little old for both students and professors, we were able to try out some new tech and take advantage of more web-based materials in this class, including a live gallery visit.

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