



# HISTORY OF ART

Rigor, prestige, and world-class faculty

Like other traditional liberal arts programs, History of Art provides students with a broad education that develops their ability to think critically, conduct research, solve scholarly problems, and write fluently. But Art History at the University of Michigan also offers something quite unique. Through classroom experiences and field trips, students gain an in-depth understanding of cultural phenomena and come to appreciate how visual artifacts can be as meaningful and significant as texts. By cultivating the ability to interpret works of art, students engage in a wide-ranging comparative study of various traditions and cultures, broadening horizons and gaining new insights into the nature of their own culture.

By studying the wide range of things that people have made and endowed with meaning, students become familiar with paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings, decorative arts and architecture, as well as with visual forms that lie outside the traditional territory of art—advertising, video, magazine and book design, ritual and ceremony, household furnishings, and popular entertainment. Consequently, they acquire skills of visual analysis that enable them to understand how images, objects, and built environments communicate. Many of our alumni go on to curator positions in museums, serve on faculties of educational institutions, or continue their studies in prestigious graduate programs. Still others leverage their knowledge and skills to pursue careers in journalism, business, and other areas.

History of Art at Michigan benefits profoundly from our alumni and friends. It is donor support that allows us to provide a full program of field experiences for our students, extend regular guest lectures by distinguished speakers, organize major departmental symposia, and offer support to graduate students and faculty for significant new research and teaching. All of these initiatives propel the department to national acclaim as a world-class center for study and research.

## STRATEGIC FUND

By innovating and boldly responding to new opportunities in teaching and research, we are able to maintain our position at the forefront of art history education. Each academic year presents challenges and exciting possibilities, many of which require the strategic use of funds. By providing financial support not otherwise available, gifts to the Strategic Fund of \$10,000 - \$50,000 annually have a significant impact on the department and its continuing success.

## DEPARTMENTAL SYMPOSIA AND GUEST LECTURES

Seminars and lectures presented by scholars from outside U-M introduce students to leading figures in the field and provide an opportunity to discuss new work and research. An annual gift of \$10,000 will fund one to two symposia or eight guest lectures. An endowment of \$200,000 will fully fund this initiative.

## UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The research opportunities and field trips to visit museums, galleries, archives, and architectural sites that the department organizes for students distinguish Michigan's History of Art program. These experiences allow students to engage in hands-on work with original art objects and archival materials. They learn how art objects were understood in their own time and place, and how they function in the modern world, both inside and outside of the museum. Gifts of \$20,000 annually or an endowed gift of \$400,000 are needed to support field and research trips on a regular basis and enhance course offerings with sponsored visits that allow students to see first-hand major examples of the works of art they are studying.

## GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH SUPPORT

Gifts for graduate student research support allow our graduate program to provide the comprehensive training that promising young scholars require to become major figures in their field. Specifically, it is imperative that the department provide financial support for attendance at art history conferences and seminars as well as for major research expenses, including trips to museums, special exhibitions, and relevant libraries and archives. In this way, we can give our students the resources to make the most of their graduate studies. An expendable gift of \$20,000 will fund three to four students per year, while an endowment of \$400,000 will fully fund the initiative.



**“I arrived at Tappan Hall in Fall 2020 focused on my book project, a study of New Deal post office murals in the Dust Bowl region. These murals raise so many questions and offer an (often distorted) window into their location. With the generous support of the Sandra Olson Fund for Art History and Civic Engagement, I [had] the opportunity to research Michigan murals alongside the sites in my book.”**

*—Michaela Rife, Assistant Professor and Postdoctoral Scholar, Michigan Society of Fellows*



## ONLINE ISLAMIC ART HISTORY PROJECT

The first faculty position in Islamic art history in the United States was founded in Ann Arbor in the 1930s, and the University of Michigan remains one of the world's main hubs of Islamic arts-centered study and scholarship. Based at U-M, *Khamseen: Islamic Art History Online* is the first free and open-access platform dedicated to Islamic art history. It is run by an international, multireligious, and intergenerational team based in Ann Arbor, Cairo, and Edinburgh. Its multimedia and hands-on talks and pedagogical materials, all produced in multiple languages, have received approximately a quarter of a million views in three years.

The Khamseen project aids the teaching and learning of Islamic art, architecture, and visual culture. The project presents academic research in an accessible and engaging manner and pioneers new models of Islamic art digital curation. It has made a visible impact on instructors who are redesigning their syllabi to incorporate our materials and is established as a crucial and peerless resource in the field that contributes to novel ways of teaching in general, bringing new voices, perspectives, and materials into our classrooms.

Funding is needed for Khamseen to continue and expand its groundbreaking work, above all to provide honoraria to its international contributors, translators, editors, coordinators, managers, and technology experts. The individuals working in these positions include undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, professors, curators, and other academics at various stages in their careers and located all around the world. Annual support of \$50,000 is needed to sustain the project and ensure this valuable resource continues to be available to people around the world.



"In the wake of the 2023 Hamline debacle, at which time an adjunct professor was fired for teaching an Islamic painting of the Prophet Muhammad, it has become even more urgent to provide accurate, free, and open-access scholarly information about Islamic arts and cultures across time and place. Khamseen does just that, and one of my talks gives viewers hands-on access to the manuscript at the heart of the Hamline controversy. Visitors to the site can browse through its folios and learn more about medieval Islamic devotional images of the Prophet, in one of Khamseen's critical pedagogical interventions in the public sphere."

—Christiane Gruber, founding director, Khamseen

## GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS

Competitive graduate student fellowships will make it possible to strengthen the program in specific areas of study, such as African and African American art, medieval and early modern art, arts of the Americas, the arts of Asia, modern and contemporary art, and Islamic art. Educating graduate students is closely connected with our undergraduate educational mission, because our graduate students work with our undergraduate students and will embark on careers of teaching after they receive their Ph.D.s. Funding of \$1M endowed for this named fellowship would enable us to offer two-and-a-half years of uninterrupted study and research support, which would enhance our students' professional development, make it easier for us to attract top applicants, and affirm the University of Michigan as a vital center for graduate study in the field of Art History. An expendable gift of \$50,000 will support one fellowship for one year.

## NAMED VISITING SCHOLAR FELLOWSHIP

Funding is needed to host a visiting distinguished scholar for one semester each year to expand and bring fresh perspectives to the program. We envision a highly prestigious fellowship awarded to a distinguished scholar across a wide range of areas of art history, who would spend a semester on campus, teach a course in the area of her/his specialization, and meet with students and faculty. Bringing renowned scholars to campus is a critical priority to maintain Michigan as a thought leader in the field.

## POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

Outstanding faculty are central to the continuing quality of the program and the ongoing leadership of the department. Postdoctoral fellows, who are appointed for two years to teach selected courses in their area of expertise, play a vital role in refreshing the program with new ideas, discussion, and debate. At the beginning of their careers and experimenting with new approaches to teaching and research, these scholars have much to offer graduates and undergraduates alike. An annual gift of \$70,000 will provide support for one postdoctoral fellow. An endowed gift of \$1.5M will provide permanent, ongoing support.

## WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your partnership connects the college's rich past to a boundless and bright future. You can change lives with gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities, and create a meaningful legacy through your bequest, trusts, gift annuities, and other planned gifts. Your generosity makes an impact on what's next, for a better tomorrow.

*for what's next ▶*

**Look to Michigan**

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