ART & WORKS
A New Treasure Chest in the Nation's Capital: A Conversation with Director Dr. John Wetenhall on the GW University Museum

A CLOSER LOOK
Meet Caranine Smith: Gallery 102’s Mentor, Advocate, and Director

RECOLLECTIONS
Remembering Arthur Hall Smith. A friend and colleague honors the artist and teacher

COVER STORY
Reassembling the Art in History. Dean Kessmann superimposes art and history.
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It's been a remarkable year in Fine Arts and Art History—with noteworthy successes by students, alumni, and faculty, not to mention the beginnings of a new partnership with the Corcoran School of Arts and Design. For me, just starting my first year as chair, these few months have been an opportunity to get to know the extended community that is FAAH in a whole new way.

This year we are releasing our new publication Perspectives, which lets us share more in depth stories about the exciting work of undergraduate and graduate students, alumni, faculty, and the special programs, such as the GW artist-in-residence program, in which FAAH has had the good fortune to participate this past year. You'll find stories that share the research and creative process. Artist-in-Residence, Beverly Ress, shares a description of her time working in the Mammalian Brain Lab at GW and with a collection of dermestid beetles to create a new series of drawings. Undergraduate major, Melissa Sturman (BA ’16), describes her process of learning in studio courses. You'll find news that keep you in touch with the FAAH community. The newly arrived Phillips Collection–GW Postdoctoral Fellow, Anne Monahan, introduces her research for her book manuscript, Radical/Chic: Race, Politics, and the Legacy of Social Realism in the 1960s. The news of the recent passing of Arthur Hall Smith will have saddened many: Professor Lilien Robinson remembers Smith’s life, work, and time teaching in FAAH.

FAAH also has a new website format this year. Its biggest benefit is the ease with which it allows us to keep you up to date with the news and activities of current students and alumni like those in this newsletter as the events are happening. Events such as Larry Cook’s (MA ’13) solo show at Hamiltonian Gallery; Bryan Hilley’s (MA ’15) internship at The Phillips Collection; or Professor Phil Jack’s presentation for Sarah Lawrence University at Palazzo Spinelli in Florence. Spin by and find out about the latest student show in Gallery 102, upcoming lectures and exhibitions in the area, or submit your recent news and events by email.

One of the most exciting things about being chair is getting to witness the many accomplishments of faculty. Our departmental community has grown this past year. We are excited to have welcomed a new faculty member this past year. Mika Natí is a historian of Medieval Islamic art focusing on the intercultural exchanges and global connections that Muslim societies forged with the European sphere in the pre-Modern era. Mika received her Ph.D. from New York University in 2006 and joins the department from the Harvard Art Museums where she served as the Assistant Curator of Islamic and Later Indian Art.

This has been a banner year for books, edited volumes, and new translations by members of the Art History faculty. All of the art historians in the department have significant publications out this year, including two firsts. Bibiana Obler’s first book, Intimate Collaborations: Kandinsky and Münster, Art and Táber is now out as is Mika Natí’s first co-edited volume, Eros and Sexuality in Islamic Art. Barbara von Barghahn’s long-term project, Jan van Eyck and Portugal’s “Illuminating Generation” is also out this year. Lilien Robinson and Phil Jacks both have new publications this year, while David Bjelajac and Alexander Dumbadze join the list with chapters in edited volumes.

On the studio side of the department, two of our newest faculty have been awarded leave to pursue exciting opportunities. While we can’t wait to have them back, we are pleased to share that Julia Brown is in Houston, TX with a CORE fellowship at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Glassell School of Art; James Sham is away this year to work on a project funded by a collaboration with MIT and Skolktech (Moscow). Closer to home, Dean Kessmann’s most recent solo show is covered in this newsletter—along with reflections by part-time faculty member, James Huckenpahler, organizer of the show and member of Furthermore, a research and development lab for visual culture and for sustainable art communities.

As you likely all have heard by now, major changes are afoot in and around the department as we begin the process of merging with the Corcoran. The new entity that is the Corcoran School of Arts and Design at GW is just starting to come into existence. We are excited about the growing role the production and study of arts will be having at GW moving into the future.

Siobhan Rigg
Chair & Associate Professor of New Media
From Our Post-Doc’s Desk

By Anne Monahan

As the GWU-Phillips Collection Postdoctoral Fellow, I am researching and writing two projects that relate, directly or indirectly, to the nexus of art, race, and politics that informed much American art in the 1930s and 1940s: a book manuscript entitled Radical/Chic: Race, Politics, and the Legacy of Social Realism in the 1960s and a catalogue essay on the self-taught painter Horace Pippin (1888–1946). In the spring, I will connect those interests via a graduate seminar on race and representation in art since the Harlem Renaissance.

I spent my first two months focused on Pippin, who has proved surprising in many respects. I quickly became fascinated with The Barracks (1945) in The Phillips Collection, which I have been able to study closely and often thanks to my residency. Conversations with Artists, the magazine’s live events division. Her previous experience includes a position in visitor services at the Nasher Museum of Art in Durham, N.C., and internships at New Museum of Contemporary Art and at Art in General in New York. She earned a B.A. in Art History and French Studies from Duke University. She enjoys working closely with the faculty and staff at GW’s FAAH department and getting to know the GW students each semester. In her free time, she loves reading, visiting other museums, exploring DC, and volunteering at Union Kitchen and local food markets.
Anne Monahan (Ph.D., University of Delaware) is the Phillips Collection–George Washington University Postdoctoral Fellow for 2014-2015. Her research focuses on contemporary art with particular attention to the dynamics of racial formation and the construction of modernism. She is completing her book Radical/Chic: Race, Politics, and the Legacy of Social Realism in Art of the 1960s, which traces how racial politics influenced a politics of style over the course of that decade through close attention to the exhibitions of Romare Bearden (1963), Faith Ringgold (1967), and Philip Guston (1970). She is also developing a catalogue essay on memoir and memory in Horace Pippin’s work that takes a fresh look at The Barracks in The Phillips Collection. This spring, she will unite these pre- and post-war research topics in a graduate seminar entitled Race and Representation in Art Since the Harlem Renaissance.


“I aim to invite students to think about the nature and expression of racial subjectivity, the mechanisms of critical reception in the art world, and the construction of (art) history over the last century.”

history paintings and family history, turning up new information about both that changes his story in substantial ways. In the fall, I presented aspects of that research in a lunchtime lecture to the Smithsonian American Art Museum fellows and a roundtable discussion on Pippin’s regiment at New York University. In the spring, I will give a talk at The Phillips Collection, and my essay “Witness: History, Memory, and Authenticity in the Art of Horace Pippin” will appear in the catalogue for Horace Pippin: As I See It at the Brandywine River Museum of Art. Because this research has proved so fruitful, I have begun developing ideas for a future book that uses close attention to Pippin’s production and reception as a way to examine the dynamics of racial formation vis-à-vis the “outsider art” phenomenon.

In September, I returned my attention to my current book project, which traces how racial politics shaped a politics of style through case studies of three watershed exhibitions: Romare Bearden’s Projections of 1964, Faith Ringgold’s American People of 1967, and Philip Guston’s Hoods of 1970. Each challenged modernism on formal and conceptual grounds as they revived figuration to engage such issues as Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Vietnam War that were then considered problematic for fine art. These efforts were received unevenly, and my project posits that careful analysis of the ways in which they were accepted, marginalized, and contextualized can illuminate the mechanisms by which the expression of political, especially racial, subjectivity has been policed. Now, almost fifty years on, it is finally possible to see those dynamics clearly enough to imagine the parameters of an expanded history of art of the 1960s that can account more fully for the social structures at work in its production and reception. I am hopeful my work can offer a model for that kind of accounting. In September, I presented a paper on Ringgold’s painting Die (1967) at The Phillips Collection that Nka: The Journal of Contemporary African Art will publish in the spring.

Next semester, I will teach a graduate seminar that considers the various modes of racially conscious representation—abstraction, figuration, conceptual, and performative—that artists have mobilized since the 1920s and the ways those efforts have been received and politicized. I aim to invite students to think about the nature and expression of racial subjectivity, the mechanisms of critical reception in the art world, and the construction of (art) history over the last century.

I will also co-chair with Rachel Middleman a session at the College Art Association Conference on the role of artists’ estates in shaping art history, a significantly under-theorized aspect of our field, that will include Alexis Boylan, Michael Corris, Jacqueline Francis, Caroline Jones, Nancy Troy, and Brett van Hoesen.”
NEWS from VASC

By Bryan Hilley & John Hobson, co-presidents

The Visiting Artists and Scholars Committee (VASC) is the department’s student-led organization responsible for bringing notable scholars, artists, and other professionals in the field to speak at GW, lead studio visits, or conduct seminars with graduate students. These events take place throughout the school year and give students an opportunity to meet, learn from, and interact with professionals in the visual arts. After the lectures, VASC hosts receptions during which students have the opportunity to continue conversations with the lecturers.

In September 2013, VASC was delighted to have Rebecca Stone, Professor and Curator of Art of the Americas at the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University, deliver a talk entitled “Reciprocity, Revelation, and Rule-Breaking: Indigenous Language and Ancient Andean Art.” Stone’s talk was based on her own work in the fiber arts, shamanism, museology, and Andean and Costa Rican art. The second lecture was given by artist Gregory Thielker and anthropologist Noah Coburn who spoke about their recent collaborative project in response to modern life in Afghanistan. After several years of site research the two combined their disciplines to create a positive portrait of Afghani life. The 2013 year closed with Michael Fried, Professor and J. R. Herbert Boone Chair in the Humanities at Johns Hopkins University, who presented “Orientation in Painting: Caspar David Friedrich.” Fried approached Friedrich’s work in the light of Immanuel Kant’s 1786 essay on “orientation in thinking” and shared his results with attendees from both the art and philosophy departments.

The new year opened with a visit from New York-based artist Derrick Adams, a multi-disciplinary artist who works in performance, video, and collage. Adams presented key points in his shifting career and conducted studio critiques the following day with MFA students. Marden Nichols, Assistant Curator of Ancient Art at the Walters Museum, presented “Vitrivius on Painting: A Scholar’s Lecture on Vitrivius’ De architectura and Roman Wall Painting.” Nichols spoke at length about Roman wall paintings and discussed the difficulties in using Vitrivius as an aid to understanding wall painting styles and their reception in ancient Rome. VASC’s Spring 2014 series closed with artist Vesna Pavlović, who discussed her recent works that combine photography and sculpture to create installations focused on cultural histories. Pavlović also remarked on her installation “Illuminated Archive,” which was on view at The Phillips Collection at the time.

For the 2014-2015 academic year, VASC is continuing its mission of selecting speakers to discuss various aspects concerning careers within the arts. This year’s line-up will consist of an even broader range of individuals who work in a variety of professions. VASC’s first lecturer was Asen Kirin, Associate Professor of Art at the University of Georgia. For his lecture “The Guiding Gaze of the Enlightened Empress: The Architecture of Lookout Spaces” Kirin used examples from poetry, art, and architecture to highlight eighteenth-century Russia awareness of how different modalities of “gazing” could be constructed. October followed with the lecture “How to Solve a Curatorial Mystery” presented by Farar Elliott, Chief Curator for the U.S. House of Representatives Office of Art and Archives. Elliott has also served as Field reviewer at the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Our final 2014 lecture “Data Mining and the Visual Arts: Nancy Graves’s Concept of Representation” was presented by Christina R. Hunter. The lecture focused on Graves’s conceptual investigation of systems of visual representation applied to contemporary art practices. Hunter is Director of the Nancy Graves Foundation, part-time lecturer of Modern and Contemporary Art/Art Practice at Columbia University, and lecturer/researcher with the Museum of Modern Art. She also works as a professional artist, creating collages and installations under the name Christina Stahr.

As VASC celebrates its past and looks toward the future, there are many opportunities for students to get involved. To subscribe to VASC’s newsletter, join the VASC board, or to get involved, please contact vasc@gwu.edu.
Graduate Symposia

Beth Rizley Evans
“Barnett Newman’s Stations of the Cross (1958-1966) and the Figuration of the Zip”

Barnett Newman believed art could make sense of life in the wake of tragedies like WWII and the Holocaust. Sublime abstraction was the revised goal of his practice, and the ideal he held up for art-making more broadly. He took this spiritual aspect very seriously as he reassessed his work and eliminated any visual traces of the physical world, which he considered obsolete props. His abstract zip was a religious symbol that conveyed life’s tragic truth and simplicity. It derived its power from the inner forces of the artist made visible on the canvas. The forces changed as his zip evolved. A series of two canvases became four, at which point he conceived his greatest undertaking: fourteen zip paintings to represent the Stations of the Cross. Unlike the traditional Stations, which focus on Christ’s physical and emotional anguish, the zip Stations triangulate the bodily experiences of Christ, Newman, and the viewer, to create a study of suffering that surpasses religion to address pain at a level that is simultaneously universal and deeply personal.

Newman’s Stations of the Cross: Lema Sabachthani relied on the metaphysical outcry to convey meaning. The series represents a call into the void, “Why did you forsake me?” and the tragedy of life. The cry of pain and alienation, the unanswered plea for comfort, is a uniquely human moment in Christ’s story. Newman believed this glimpse into Christ’s humanity elevated the event beyond the empathy of just the believers. The artist made the emotional outcry his own through the physicality with which he created the series. The project was Newman’s personal exploration based on his understanding of and connection to the Biblical account.

The many-layered references to the artist within the work open a subjective reading to an often static theme. Newman encouraged the viewer to participate in the experience. As the viewer processes in a sacramental fashion through the series and engages with each of the fourteen works, she is assaulted by the expanse of alienation, the unanswered plea for comfort, is a unique-ly human moment in Christ’s story. Newman believed this glimpse into Christ’s humanity elevated the event beyond the empathy of just the believers. The artist made the emotional outcry his own through the physicality with which he created the series. The project was Newman’s personal exploration based on his understanding of and connection to the Biblical account.

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Anna Walcutt
"Thomas Cole and White Mountain Tourism"
At the behest of his patron Daniel Wadsworth, the son of Hartford’s wealthiest merchant and financier, the American landscape painter, Thomas Cole (1801-1848), toured the White Mountains in 1827. In 1828 and 1839, Cole again traveled to the White Mountains. I argue that White Mountain tourism influenced Cole’s understanding of the region, and the paintings that resulted encouraged White Mountain tourism. Few had seen the region; some knew the White Mountains from maps and travelers’ accounts. In his paintings, which sketching trips informed, the artist depicted sights associated with stories and myths that captivated his contemporaries.

Tourists were city-dwelling Americans who toured the White Mountains to see striking views, the region’s geological features, and to look at such sites as the Willey House. On 28 August 1826 the Samuel Willey Jr. family perished in an avalanche. Soon the still-standing house became one of United States’ earliest major tourist attractions. In his 1839 painting Crawford Notch, Cole shows an established tourist site with Thomas Crawford’s inn on the road to the Willey House. Bare patches on Mount Washington and an approaching storm allude to the Willey disaster.

While touring such sights as Lake Winnipesaukee, Mount Chocorua, and Mount Washington, tourists came to see the Willey House. Their familiarity with the beautiful and the sublime aesthetic categories informed tourists’ appreciation of White Mountain scenery. Influential as well was the Associationist Philosophy that tourists set forth in his Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790). For romantics like Cole, nature was a place of moral exemplar, offering advice on parenting and good government, however, it is the mother and housewife that secured the morality of the home.

Shannon Weiss
"Mother Knows Best: An Interpretation of Pieter de Hooch’s The Bedroom"

Compared to the angelic putti of the Italian Baroque, most children in seventeenth-century Dutch art are holy terrors, dirty, smelly, and misbehaved. Painters depict mothers wiping bottoms, toddlers wetting themselves, and children receiving spankings. It was the responsibility of the mother and father to instruct and educate children, thus making the parents, especially the mother, ultimately responsible for the young generation’s moral behavior.

Mothers are responsible for instilling virtuous principles in their children. According to popular seventeenth-century Dutch emblem literature, the mother, not the father, was the most important societal figure. Countless references to the family and home as the moral foundation of the Dutch Republic demonstrate the importance placed on spiritual education received while still under a mother’s care. ‘‘The home was the sentinel of good government, however, it is the mother and housewife who secured the morality of the home.” J.H. Huizinga commented, ‘‘[Dutch] art was so intensely national that it became the most profound expression of [Dutch] character.” If this is so, seventeenth-century Dutch landscapes, portraits, and genre scenes, can be understood to evoke patriotic sentiments.

Interiors with women and children, a subcategory of genre scenes, were extremely popular in the second half of the 1600s. Many of these paintings focus upon a married woman’s paramount obligation as nurturer and moral exemplar, offering advice on parenting and marriage. This presentation will consider one such seventeenth-century domestic scene, The Bedroom, 1658, by Pieter de Hooch, in a nationalistic light.

Social responsibilities of the married woman centered on domestic virtue. The home was said to be the foundation of the Dutch Republic. The health of the family unit, therefore, mirrored the state of the fledgling nation. Juxtaposing the mother as moral protector, and the home as the Republic’s foundation, the mother and housewife in De Hooch’s The Bedroom will be seen as patriotic.

The Bedroom
Mother Knows Best: An Interpretation of Pieter de Hooch’s The Bedroom
Thomas Cole and White Mountain Tourism
Anna Walcutt
The Bedroom
Miriam Grotte-Jacobs
"The Last Paintings: Precision and Accident in Morris Louis’ Stripes”
Morris Louis’ (1912–1962) mature period is composed of three series: the veils, unfurleds, and stripes. Louis made these works using a stain technique by pouring Magna acrylic paint, thinned with turpentine, directly onto unsized and unstretched cotton duck canvas. Criticism and scholarship about Louis’ mature work by Clement Greenberg, Michael Fried, Diane Upright, and John Elderfield interpret Louis in relation to Abstract Expressionism and track the influence of Jackson Pollock and Helen Frankenthaler on Louis’ artistic development.

The stripe series was the last group of paintings Louis completed before his death in 1962. This work is often read as the culmination of previous work, the furthest move away from the visceral spontaneity of Abstract Expressionism. Under this reading, the stripes present a rigid, neat, and orderly picture of abstraction, in contrast to Louis’ earlier, more expressive veils and unfurleds. The heavy ribbons of poured color in the stripes, consistent in width and saturation throughout the vertical length of an entire canvas, assert an unmistakable intentionality and demonstrate the power of Louis’ will over his materials.

Louis’ stripe paintings embody an undeniable intentionality and precision; they do not, however, represent a wholesale rejection of improvisation or expressionistic gesture. In fact, Louis’ stripe paintings—such as J33 from 1962, in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington—are compositions that reveal Louis’ investment in both precision and imprecision, in control and the relinquishment of control. Despite their rigid, controlled appearance, these paintings reflect Louis’ openness to the possibility of chance and contingency. My paper explores this fundamental tension in

2014 For 2014, the presenters were: Miriam Grotte-Jacobs (MA ’15), Kate Murphy (MA ’15), Eden Orelove (MA ’15), and Kristine Walsh (MA ’15). Below are abstracts of each presentation.

Miriam Grotte-Jacobs
“The Last Paintings: Precision and Accident in Morris Louis’ Stripes”
Helen Frankenthaler on Louis’ artistic development. The stripe series was the last group of paintings Louis completed before his death in 1962. This work is often read as the culmination of previous work, the furthest move away from the visceral spontaneity of Abstract Expressionism. Under this reading, the stripes present a rigid, neat, and orderly picture of abstraction, in contrast to Louis’ earlier, more expressive veils and unfurleds. The heavy ribbons of poured color in the stripes, consistent in width and saturation throughout the vertical length of an entire canvas, assert an unmistakable intentionality and demonstrate the power of Louis’ will over his materials. Louis’ stripe paintings embody an undeniable intentionality and precision; they do not, however, represent a wholesale rejection of improvisation or expressionistic gesture. In fact, Louis’ stripe paintings—such as J33 from 1962, in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington—are compositions that reveal Louis’ investment in both precision and imprecision, in control and the relinquishment of control. Despite their rigid, controlled appearance, these paintings reflect Louis’ openness to the possibility of chance and contingency. My paper explores this fundamental tension in
Louis’ work through a close examination of Louis’ process in 133 and related paintings, and also examines how this dualism was interpreted in the critical discourse of the 1960s. I argue that ultimately, both interpretations of Louis—as a precise, intentional painter and as a painter interested in the possibility of the accidental—are valid. These poles coexist in his work, especially in the stripe paintings, creating a tension between reductive minimal form and controlled expression of color and a technique that allowed spontaneous, unplanned marks to materialize.

Kate Murphy
“Seeing and Being Seen: Implications of the Mirror in Titian’s Venus with a Mirror”
Titian’s Venus with a Mirror of 1555 most compellingly presents the complicated and innovative utilization of the mirror in Venetian Renaissance painting. In relation to the figures presented and the painting’s viewer, the mirror suggests a complex implication of Venus as spectacle. Through the mirror, the artist is presenting an intricate relationship between Venus and the mirror, and Venus and the viewer. This relationship between viewer and subject, and who is seeing and being seen in the painting, is not only imperative for Titian’s career of painting, but for those directly influenced by him as well. Titian’s addition of the mirror in this depiction complicates the relationship between vanity and modesty as it relates to the figure of Venus. Vanity and modesty are oftentimes thought of as mutually exclusive, which limits the possible interpretations. This paper argues that Titian’s Venus can be read simultaneously as vain and modest, which diverts from previous and expected interpretations.

Many artists used Titian’s groundwork in their representation of the mirror, but further complicated the relationship between subject and viewer in their own works. The theme of Venus with a mirror was by no means isolated in Italy. The Spanish artist Diego Velázquez utilized the prior Italian influences of the female nude to compose his Venus with a highly innovative visual concept. While there are many examples of Titian’s influence on representations of the mirror, Velázquez is arguably the most important, due to his strong influence from Titian and Italian art, and the clear progression of his experimentation with the mirror with Rokeby Venus, and ending with Las Meninas, representing the most complicated relationship between viewer and subject in arguably any other painting. This paper delves into the various readings of Titian’s Venus with a Mirror, addressing the implications of the mirror in relation to the juxtaposition of vanity and modesty, and the viewer/subject relationship, and by extension, its influence on later painting.

Eden Orelove
“Completing the Picture: Billie Holiday, the Scurlock Studio and 1940’s Washington, D.C.”
This paper explores the Scurlock Studio’s depiction of Billie Holiday, providing a close examination of the photographs from her performances at Club Bali. In contrast to the prevailing depictions of Holiday as a tragic, criminal, and demoralized figure, the Scurlocks’ photographs provide a multidimensional, holistic understanding of Holiday at a time when the media was widely promoting a sensationalized narrative of her life. Their photographs of her performances present her in an overwhelmingly positive light, while their offstage pictures of Holiday reveal an everyday, “normal” figure. An exploration of the Scurlocks’ photographs of Holiday at Club Bali provides insight into their unprecedented photographic legacy, the dynamism of Washington’s U Street black community, and the complexity of Holiday’s performing and personal life in 1948-49.

Kristine Walsh
“The Nikosthenic Amphora: the Nineteenth-Century Viewpoint on Greek Vases”
Spencer Joshua Alwyne Compton, the Second Marquis of Northampton, presented to the Society of Antiquaries on March 25, 1847 on his research and interpretation of a Nicosthenic amphora from his collection. The Marquis presented an example of the nineteenth century British scholar in addition to a noble collector. Placed alongside contemporary scholarship on Greek vases, the Marquis adhered to research practices and interpretation while examining his own collection. Through analysis of his published article, the nineteenth century viewpoint on vase-painting as a source to understand Greek culture becomes apparent. Despite shortcomings in his art historical interpretation, the Marquis was an exceptional figure through his collecting practices and scholarly research.
Arthur Hall Smith was a member of the Fine Arts and Art History faculty for 13 years (1974-1997). An artist of significant and admirable reputation at the time of his appointment, he was a formidable and beloved contributor to a Department in the process of programmatic and physical expansion. Devoted and engaged in every aspect of our shared pedagogical mission, Arthur epitomized dedication to his students, colleagues, and the discipline.
The Early Years

A native of Norfolk, Arthur was the son of a naval architect from whom he received not only initial but rigorous training in drawing. That he was a youth of prodigious talent was evident when, as a high school student, he received the prestigious National Scholastic Achievement Award in the Arts. A few years later (1946) he was the youngest person elected to Art Corner, a professional artists' group. The breadth of Arthur's interests as an adult was a matter of amazement, but intellectual exploration had been a major component of his maturation as evidenced in his academic performance at Illinois Wesleyan University and selection as a Fulbright scholar, one of the first students in the Fine Arts to receive this coveted honor. It provided an opportunity for study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. It was a pivotal experience affecting Arthur's artistic and personal direction.

As in the case of many of his generation, Arthur was drafted into the army, serving his two years in Korea as an infantry sergeant. As a man of intellectual curiosity, the tour of duty exposed him to another culture and its arts. Arthur's art attests to what became a life-long study of East Asian art, especially Japanese sumi painting techniques. Although he never confirmed it, it is quite possible that when he moved to Seattle, Washington in 1955 the decision to work with Mark Toby may have been influenced, at least in part, by a commonality of interest in non-western art.

Five years later, in 1960, Arthur returned to the East Coast, settling in Washington, D.C. and working first as an illustrator for the Smithsonian Institution and subsequently at The Phillips Collection, which under Duncan Phillips' direction was undergoing its first major physical expansion. Maintaining close contact with the Phillips family, Arthur joined the administrative staff as lecturer, curatorial assistant, exhibition designer, and, as necessary, translator for the French dignitaries visiting the Collection. He brought his multi-faceted talents to an institution in transition. In the process he came to know some of the major figures in contemporary art, including Mark Rathko and Marc Chagall. Concurrently, throughout his years at the Phillips he maintained an active record of exhibitions—group and one-person shows, including a ten-year retrospective at the Corcoran Gallery, while also building a substantial and continuously expanding list of collectors of his work.

The GWU Years

Although well known to many of us either professionally or personally, Arthur's official interaction with the artists and art historians in our Department began in the Fall of 1974. At the time, our classes, taught by seventeen full-time and 12-15 adjunct faculty, were housed in four buildings, converted to accommodate art history and studio courses. The 1970's were years of challenge—rapidly rising enrollments, heavy teaching loads, limited budgets, and generally inadequate facilities that placed enormous and unexpected demands on the faculty. Arthur quickly and easily became not only a part but an integral member...
of our community and a colleague who worked without regard to self-gain or promotion. He was inevitably inventive in his solutions to perplexing problems. He could be depended upon to work on any project, help organize programs and activities, professional and social. Arthur combined complete reliability, perfection of execution, generosity of time, and genuine delight in contributing to the greater whole. However, what further made Arthur such a special colleague and friend was an intuitive understanding, sensitivity to others and an incredible quick wit. At any gathering, even the most serious and decorous, he could be counted upon to bring us to laughter with stories, reminiscences, or a simple “bon mot” that somehow put into perspective whatever seemingly daunting situation we faced.

While a demanding time, the end of the decade marked the beginning of a transformation. Through the extraordinary generosity of Robert and Clarice Smith the Department had the opportunity to grow its programs, build its library collection, and finally work in a fully equipped modern facility, the Smith Hall of Art. Arthur, like his colleagues, was fully engaged in the process, poring over the painting studios layout and determining equipment needs. At the same time he was quietly addressing the completion of his own formal studies, while meeting all of his other responsibilities, including University and College committee service. He was awarded the MFA degree in 1979. The quill, sumi, and india ink drawings of his remarkable thesis series focused on the imaginary ruination of Washington, D.C. buildings, which, according to Arthur, “has been an obsession with me [and] I suspect the motive lies some

where between playful pretense and preventive archaeology.” Related themes and sumi techniques, which he shared with his students in courses that became legendary, continued to fascinate and engage him throughout the later years.

After twenty-three years of teaching, Arthur retired to Paris, where he had for years spent his summers. Appropriately, he settled in the Sixth Arrondissement, which had for centuries attracted artists and writers including Voltaire, Racine, Delacroix, Monet and Renoir. His studio apartment became a requisite stop for colleagues, old and new friends, and generations of former students. The latter inevitably speak of Arthur’s brilliance as a teacher. They view their experience simply as extraordinary. The impact he made was not only because of his remarkable breadth of theoretical and technical knowledge but the ability to convey and inspire. Arthur’s gift as a teacher was born of a passion, profound understanding, almost encyclopedic knowledge and love of the arts. He was a teacher, par excellence, demanding but tireless in guiding every student to reach to the highest level of his or her ability. Fully focused on the individual student, he would move from easel to easel, explaining, gently urging or regaling with an anecdote or an exquisitely timed quip. As a colleague I marveled at his ability to convey, engage and inspire. Perhaps he was sharing the “eternal truths” and the “special insights” that are attributed to the creative.

The tributes to Arthur as artist, teacher, and friend have been a constant and are ongoing, as evidenced in the spontaneous and outpouring of respect, admiration and affection of his friends at the Luther Brady Gallery’s Arthur Hall Smith: In Memoriam exhibition in March 2014. He left a remarkable legacy as an extraordinary artist, teacher, colleague, and beloved friend.

1. Faculty Hang-Ups, Exhibition Catalog, Dimock Gallery, George Washington University, 1980.
2. Featured in the exhibition, Quarry with Flowering Tree, 1972, sumi ink on paper, was presented to the GW Permanent Collection by Richard Brock. It is currently on display in the Department of Fine Arts and Art History in the foyer of the Department’s seminar room.
When I began the Fellowship at GWU, in the fall of 2013, I had just spent the summer drawing at the Museum of Health and Medicine. During the two summers prior to that, I had been given access to draw in the collection rooms of the Bird Division in the Smithsonian Natural History Museum. I was becoming very interested in the idea of collections, and wanted to pursue them as repositories of subject matter. So, the first thing I did was to make contact with many of the scientists who ran collections at GW. I was delighted to connect with Chet Sherwood, who gave me complete access to objects in the Mammalian Brain Lab. And during my meeting with biology professor Amy Zanne, I had the good fortune to meet Darcy Young, who knows a lot about molds and fungi. So, I had some interesting new subject matter: brains and stained brain slice slides. And I had some new ways to think about making marks on the paper—the possibility of using mold and fungus to create abstract images on top of my representational drawing was intriguing.

My original proposal for the Fellowship was to use dermestid beetles to create images of deep space onto the surfaces of my representational drawings. I had worked with that kind of cut imagery, using a laser-engraver, in earlier work. My thought was that I would create a laser-engraved template of a star pattern, and then use the template to integrate dermestid beetle food, into the surface of the paper. When I placed the paper in a container with the beetles, the idea was that they would eat into the paper where the food was embedded, creating an eaten ‘cut-out’ of the star imagery. So, early on, I made contact with John Ososky at the Smithsonian’s Osteo-Prep Lab. Dermesid beetles are used to clean the bones of museum specimens, and John knows a lot about them.

"I had some new ways to think about making marks on the paper—the possibility of using mold and fungus to create abstract images on top of my representational drawing was intriguing."

By mid-fall, I had paper samples being tested in the dermestid beetle crates at the Smithsonian, was drawing in the mammalian brain lab, and was getting fungus-growing lessons in the biology department. I also spent time in my studio at GW, playing with new ideas for cutting forms into drawings I had made over the summer, and then folding those forms into three-dimensional shapes.

During the winter, I developed my own dermestid beetle colony in my GW studio. I had learned that the beetles don’t actually eat the paper; rather, they chew into it during their ‘worm’ stage, then push themselves through the openings as a way of removing their exoskeletons, to become adult beetles. It began to dawn on me that the image control I had hoped for was not going to be possible. But, I was still curious about the imagery that might be created by the holes the beetles made, and I kept working with them. 

Dermestid beetles can be quite destructive. (More than one museum professional I know literally gasped when I told her I was working with dermestids.) For that reason, I decided that it would be wise to send any paper that had been in the colony through an autoclave – used for sterilizing biology equipment – to make sure that there was no beetle infestation of the drawings. When I removed the first sheet of paper from the beetle box, I noticed a kind of water stain on it. I assumed it had come from the water we used to spritz the beetles. But, when that paper came out of the autoclave – having been subjected to high heat – those “watermarks” had turned a delicate grey-blue and ochre. They looked like a watercolor painting of clouds. I still don’t know what those marks are (though I have a guess). Eventually, I did put a couple of actual drawings in with the beetles, before I returned the dermestids to the Smithsonian. One drawing came out of the bug box with many holes chewed into the surface, in a very linear arrangement – looking almost like an old-school computer punch card. The other had fewer holes, though still in a structured linear configuration, and (after the autoclave) a delicate grey-blue wash, outlined with a warm ochre border.

I made several drawings in the brain lab – of both brain slides (as in Gorilla Gorgeous) and specimens in jars. I also developed a system to grow mold on my drawings in specific areas, and in specific shapes. All of these elements pushed my work into some new territory. Working with GW scientists was a thrilling experience for me. I very much appreciate GW’s invitation, and the resulting openness to cross-fertilization that I encountered. Thanks to Dean Kessmann in the Department of Fine Arts & Art History, and Cheryl Stimpson in the Mammalian Brain Lab, for their warm and helpful support as well.
Hello to all the students, faculty, parents, and visitors of the GWU Department of Fine Arts and Art History! I am currently a junior earning a double-major in English and Theatre and a certificate in French. In my completed years at GW so far, I've acted in seven student theatre productions, adapted and directed *The Little Prince* as a one-act, and most recently directed Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

In the coming Spring 2015 season, I will be serving as Artistic Director of the 14th Grade Players. I have also been fortunate enough to be part of Epsilon Sigma Alpha, GW’s only community service sorority, for which I served as Community Service Chair last year and am serving as Co-Vice President currently. Last year, our chapter provided over 3,000 hours of service to the DC community, both on and off GW’s campus, and I am honored to be counted among these dedicated women. Additionally, I am a contributing writer for *Her Campus GWU* and the Editorial Assistant for Glossy Finds, an online beauty conglomerate.

I have also spent most of this Fall semester working on *Vanishing Point*, Jeri Kroll’s verse novel adapted for the stage by Leslie Jacobson, in which I had the honor of premiering the lead role in our world premiere. Even though I’m often in the Department of Theatre and Dance, I always look forward to coming to work! The faculty and staff are always a pleasure to serve, and the students are enormously talented and focused. You can find me at the side desk color-coding syllabi or in the back conference room wrestling with the vinyl machine—and if you’re lucky, there might be some baked goods on the front desk… if I didn’t eat them all already.

**Angelina Hoidra**

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I work in the Visual Resources Center assisting the Visual Resources Specialist with a major scanning project of artists’ works and architecture. I enjoy working in the Center because I get to learn about different artists as well as be re-introduced to artworks that I learned about during undergrad.

I recently obtained a Graduate Certificate in Exhibit Design, which is a part of the Museum Studies Department. I enrolled in the program because I wanted to gain a better understanding of the exhibit design process and improve my design skills. I recommend anyone who is interested in museum work to take at least one exhibit design course. I had a lot of fun in the program. I have a huge interest in all types of art exhibitions, but at the moment, I’m mainly interested in fashion/costume exhibitions. I am enamored with Japanese fashion and would love to study it seriously in the future. Earlier this year, I was actually able to visit Japan for the first time. It’s hard for me to explain my experience but I will say it was very unique. I spent over a week in Tokyo and Nikko. I’m hoping to spend more time in Japan and am taking a serious approach to learning Japanese.

Besides art and museums, I am also interested in film and public health. I like to think that if I weren’t currently pursuing a career in the arts, I would begin a career in epidemiology or biostatistics. Diseases are very fascinating to me, but art research is even more fascinating.

**Tiffany Greene**
Dean Kessmann’s recent exhibition, *A Layered History of Art: From Semitransparent to Opaque*, is a continuation of a number of past projects in which he has altered various kinds of commercially produced paper and printed texts. Over the years, his work has moved from deconstructing a religious text, to manipulating contemporary art magazines, to examining blank sheets of white and colored paper, and now, to tearing apart and re-composing one of the most widely used art history survey textbooks written in the last fifty years, *Janson’s History of Art*. 
Kessmann’s interests have ranged from the necessity of taking personal responsibility for the interpretation of a holy text to issues that revolve around the circulation of information about the contemporary art world and its relationship to the market place. In each of these projects the source material was transformed—systematically copied, reproduced, and re-presented to the viewers—yet to some extent, these transformations merely held a mirror to the thing itself, as many photographers do.

A Layered History of Art: From Semitransparent to Opaque takes a seminal art history survey textbook as its subject and source material. In this project, Janson’s History of Art has become a singular work of art in which every page has been relocated and positioned on the same picture plane; it too retells the history of art, albeit in a way that requires viewers to interpret its meaning via the visual language of art instead of a linear, text-based narrative. To create this piece, the textbook was literally deconstructed by removing every single page from the binding, individually scanning the pages on a high-resolution scanner that passes light through them, and then re-combining the files into a single, massive digital document. The written and visual narrative has been simultaneously obscured and enhanced by filtering light through the pages, which superimposes both sides of every single page of Janson’s History of Art, while at the same time, the information contained between the covers has been overlapped and layered in ways not possible with the book in its original format, except perhaps, within the mind’s eye.

Artists continually position their work within broader historical contexts in order to bring to the fore its relationship upon that which has come before, even as it bridges the gap between the past and future. Kessmann’s practice as an artist often reflects upon the ways in which information about art is disseminated to the public. This project enabled him to widen the span of his research to include the entire history of art, at least as it is presented in this singular textbook. The final piece is composed entirely of images and texts from this popular art history textbook and may be viewed as homage to or a critical reflection of an artistic lineage. Thus, this project moves beyond the historical artworks reproduced within the textbook as well as those omitted, all the while remaining in dialogue with them on their own terms, that is, through a multi-layered and non-verbal means of visual communication. A Layered History of Art: From Semitransparent to Opaque has enabled Kessmann to venture into familiar territory to create his most ambitious project to date.

The final 40 foot long piece is an exact, one-to-one replication of every single page of Janson’s History of Art, while at the same time, the information contained between the covers has been overlapped and layered in ways not possible with the book in its original format, except perhaps, within the mind’s eye. Artists continually position their work within broader historical contexts in order to bring to the fore its relationship upon that which has come before, even as it bridges the gap between the past and future. Kessmann’s practice as an artist often reflects upon the ways in which information about art is disseminated to the public. This project enabled him to widen the span of his research to include the entire history of art, at least as it is presented in this singular textbook. The final piece is composed entirely of images and texts from this popular art history textbook and may be viewed as homage to or a critical reflection of an artistic lineage. Thus, this project moves beyond the historical artworks reproduced within the textbook as well as those omitted, all the while remaining in dialogue with them on their own terms, that is, through a multi-layered and non-verbal means of visual communication. A Layered History of Art: From Semitransparent to Opaque has enabled Kessmann to venture into familiar territory to create his most ambitious project to date.

At the time, I didn’t know whether or not I’d enjoy teaching, but I thought that I would be good at it. Shortly thereafter, I applied to a number of universities and decided to enter into the MFA program at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. I attended SIUC from 1993 to 1996. In 2002, after earning my MFA and teaching part-time for six years in the St. Louis, MO area at multiple universities and colleges, The George Washington University offered me my first full-time position, which I enthusiastically accepted. Over the past twelve years, I’ve had the pleasure of teaching undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Fine Arts and Art History at GW. Curiously enough, a number of projects that I’ve completed since coming to Washington, D.C. have taken art magazines and an art history textbook as the source material and subject matter. One of the wonderful things about being an artist in an academic setting is being surrounded by other faculty members and students who share a passion for art. Since the beginning of my teaching career, my goal has been to integrate my practice as an artist with my vocation as a teacher. While some art professors would gladly stop teaching altogether in order to work full-time as artists, personally, I don’t think I’d want to sacrifice one for the other. However, the continual challenge for most professors is to form, and then continually nurture a mutually beneficial relationship between teaching and research, such that each one propels the other forward in new and exciting directions. After serving as Chair for three years (AY 2010-2013), and then continuing on an additional year as Deputy Chair (AY 2013-2014), both of which came with a significant reduction in my teaching responsibilities, I’ll be teaching a full course load this coming year. While I’m proud of my accomplishments in these administrative positions, and recognize the importance of taking on this type of service to the university, I have to say that I’m extremely excited about getting back to what I care most about in my position as a professor at GW, having more time to interact with students in the hope of moving their work and mine to the next level.
D.I.Y. History
By James Huckenpahler

Recently, I was chatting with a friend about the Western canon, in particular about Dante and Joyce. In both cases, as soon as you start reading their work, you realize that you have to go back and read about fifty other things. They embraced and enfolded everything that came before—plus a little something extra, some new way of integrating all that knowledge that directly addressed the needs of the moment. That “enfolding-plus” is a common denominator in the art that I personally appreciate.

So when Kessmann and I started having informal conversations about ideas we were pursuing, this description of A Layered History of Art: From Semitransparent to Opaque struck a chord. Creating an image from the complete Janson’s textbook was about as explicit a gesture as one could make towards wrangling the canon. The complete Janson’s textbook was about as explicit a presentation it all in one gesture as one could make towards wrangling the canon. The outcome of the experiment was better than we could have hoped for.

To fit the work in the space, our colleagues Richard Voss-eller and Dan McCauley built an arc that we then floated off the wall, no mean feat. This allowed us to show the full length comfortably, and also added a subtle and nostalgic reference to cycloramas of old. The book, transformed into a panorama, rather than incremental pages within episodic chapters, unpacks the volume’s monumental scope into an object of equally monumental scale. At roughly five feet by forty feet, it allowed a grand tour of the substance and matter of the Western visual universe. (And the question in the back of one’s mind might be, “Where is its dark matter? The artists of color, women, outsiders and outliers?”) While the individual pages were arranged in a roughly linear fashion, it is a particular view that allows the eye to wander freely, tracing paths back and forth between the “pages.”

Kessmann scanned each page as one would a positive transparency. The light from the scanner, having passed through each sheet, captured both the right-reading front of the sheet, and the reversed back of the sheet, revealing both sides without concern for whether what is seen is readable by the viewer. And, the density of information increases as the scanned pages overlap each other in Kessmann’s loose arrangement. One finds oneself much like Alice trying to make sense of “Jabberwocky,” requiring a mirror.

While Kessmann, in his own description of the piece, has referred to the light tables used by art historians for sorting slide transparencies in preparation for lectures, one might also make the association with the photo editor’s light table, where images are chosen based on their fit for a particular commercial or ideological purpose. In a sense, it is the arena of the male gaze… “Is this image sexy enough to sell lots of my product?” “Which image will support my ideology in a compelling way?” In either case, whether Art Historian or Art Director, Kessmann draws attention to the perils of looking at images chosen by other people, where an artist’s work might be pressed into the service of ideas without concern for the work’s original impulses, motives, or intentions. And as well, he creates an opportunity for the viewer to more actively participate in the natural selection of images, and press them into service of their own ends.

James Huckenpahler

James Huckenpahler makes pictures on his laptop; his current work-in-progress, “Allegories” is an illustrated history of the federal city. His work is represented in Washington, D.C. by Hemphill Fine Arts. He is a member of Furthermore, a research and development lab for visual culture and for sustainable art communities. He is a fellow of Provisions Research Library, and currently serves on the advisory board of Transformer, non-profit, artist-centered organization that connects and promotes emerging artists locally, nationally and internationally. He is a Lecturer of New Media at George Washington University.

Mika Natif

After talking to Dean Kessmann about his artwork, I felt compelled to invite him to speak to my Survey of Art and Architecture class, which spans the prehistoric period to 1300 CE. Since we focus on early periods of artistic creativity, we do not have the opportunity to know what inspired the artists to create their work. My goal was to expose my students to the perspective of the artist and exemplify how ancient ideas and aesthetic concepts are still pertinent to our own lives today, inspiring contemporary artists. Dean’s work is a reflection on art history canons, something that preoccupies any survey class. Moreover, I think that Dean’s visit to the classroom further strengthens the ongoing collaboration between fine arts and art history.
Recently published books by Art History faculty

David Bjelajac
My new book chapters, one on Samuel F. B. Morse’s *Gallery of the Louvre* (1831-33) and the other on Adolph Weinman’s Sculpture Frieze for the United States Supreme Court (1931-1935), were written upon invitation. Though very different, each of these American artworks expresses imperial, politically conservative values despite their sociable themes and/or fraternal ideals. Thus, I show how the evangelical Protestant Morse created his large-scale Louvre painting, in part, to champion American exceptionalism and territorial expansionism while simultaneously critiquing liberal Unitarian disbelief in the Holy Trinity. Later, during the Great Depression, the German-Catholic immigrant Adolph Weinman’s sympathetic inclusion of the Prophet Muhammad within a quasi-Masonic, multicultural frieze of historical “Lawgivers” implicitly opposed the materialist atheism of Bolshevism, communism, while explicitly expressing imperial faith in America’s Manifest Destiny and world leadership.

Alexander Dumbadze
On July 9, 1975, artist Bas Jan Ader set sail from Chatham, Massachusetts, for Falmouth, England, on the second leg of a three-part piece titled *In Search of the Miraculous*. His damaged boat was found south of the western tip of Ireland nearly a year later. He was never seen again.

Since his untimely death, Ader has become a legend in the art world as a figure literally willing to die for his art. Considering the artist’s legacy and oeuvre beyond the mysterious circumstances of his peculiar end, Alexander Dumbadze resituates Ader’s art and life within the early 1970s Los Angeles conceptual art scene. Blending biography, theoretical reflection, and archival research to draw a detailed picture of the world in which Ader’s work was rooted, *Bas Jan Ader* is a thoughtful reflection on the necessity of the creative act and its inescapable relation to death.

Phil Jacks
Phil Jacks spoke to an audience of professors, architects, restorers and Italian Renaissance scholars in the Palazzo Spinelli in Florence on May 27. He was invited by Sarah Lawrence University, which occupies the ground floor of the historic palace. Its courtyard boasts one of the finest examples of *sgraffito* decoration from the 15th century. The occasion was the presentation of the new Italian edition of his book, *Gli Spinelli di Firenze: Mercadanti e Mecenati nel Rinascimento* (Edizioni Edifir, Florence: 2014). In attendance were his translator, Dr. Costanza Cocchi, and Maria Teresa Bartoli, professor in the Facoltà di Architettura at the University of Florence and the daughter of Leando Bartoli, who restored the palace following the flood of 1966.

Prof. Jacks collaborated with the economic historian, William Caferro, Professor of History at Vanderbilt University. Their book is the result of several years research into the archives of the Spinelli conserved at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University in New Haven, CT. The book was originally published by Penn State in 2001. This Italian translation includes new material on the patronage of domestic art, including...
the nature and function of erotic and sexual images that have featured prominently in broader art-historical discussions in recent decades.

This book has been a long journey. Francesca Leone and I are deeply pleased to see this important undertaking coming to fruition. Our collaboration started at Princeton University, where I was teaching a seminar on the Body in Islamic Art, and Francesca was writing on representations of demons in the Shihabnama (Book of Kings). The erotic and sexual component in the various materials that we were working on was simultaneously wonderful and shocking. Wonderful—because the paintings were compelling and poetic, tantalizing in their subdued representation, or very explicit in their sexual content. Shocking—because we could not find any academic work that discussed these issues in Islamic art. So we decided to venture in a new direction for our field by organizing a panel dealing with sexuality and Eroticism in Islamic Art at the College Art Association (Los Angeles, 2009) sponsored by the Historians of Islamic Art Association. The core of this volume was born from that panel.

Mika Natif
Eros and Sexuality in Islamic Art
Presents a series of articles dedicated to the topic of eroticism and sexuality in the visual production of the pre-modern and early-modern Muslim world. This volume sheds light on the diverse socio-cultural milieu of erotic images, on the range of motivations that determined their production, and on the responses generated by their circulation. The articles review what has been accepted as a truism in existing literature—that erotic motifs in the Islamic visual arts should be read metaphorically—offering, as an alternative, rigorous contextual and cultural analyses. As the first systematic study on these themes in the field of Islamic art history, this volume fills a considerable gap and contributes to the lively debates on

Bibiana Obler
This compelling examination of the work and lives of Expressionist artists Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter and Dadaists Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber illuminates the roles of gender and the applied arts in abstraction’s early days. Both couples, like Expressionism and Dada more generally, strove to transcend the fragmented individualism promoted by capitalism. Through abstraction and by unsettling the boundaries between the decorative and fine arts, they negotiated tensions between the philosophical and commercial aspects of their production.

Barbara von Barghahn
Several recent studies of Jan van Eyck’s art have concerned his realistic imagery, his religious ideology, his technical facility, working methods, congruence of style with his contemporaries and followers, interpretation of new documents relating to his life, his patrons and their environment. My book analyzes Jan van Eyck as a diplomat-painter, particularly with regard to his interaction with the Avis court of Portugal from 1428 until his death in 1441. Published in two volumes in 2013-2014 by Pindar Press in London-Oxford (745 text pages: 1405 bk/wh illustrations). Jan van Eyck and Portugal’s “Illustrious Generation” received the support of Portugal’s prestigious Instituto de Camões.

In 1428, Jan van Eyck traveled to Lisbon as one of a retinue of Burgundian ambassadors sent to negotiate a prestigious marriage between Duke Philip the Good and Isabel of Portugal, daughter of King Joao I and Philippa of Lancaster. Before returning to Bruges in October of 1429, Van Eyck was introduced to the six Portuguese princes of the Avis royal house: Duarte, Pedro, Henrique, (the Navigator), João, Fernando, and their half-brother, Afonso, then Count of Barcelos. In 1415, Duarte, Pedro, and Henrique had won the spurs of their knighthood in an unprecedented Portuguese expedition to North Africa, which concluded with their conquest of the strategically located Moroccan port of Ceuta. This martial engagement I believe was acknowledged by Van Eyck in portraits he provided in both his 1429 Fountain of Life and the 1432 Ghent Altarpiece panel of the Holy Knights. The scions of the Avis house were called the “illustrious generation” not only for their exploits in battle, but also because they were educated authors of considerable reputation.

Lilien Robinson
On The Very Edge: Modernism and Modernity in the Arts and Architecture of Interwar Serbia (1918-1941), which I co-edited and also to which I contributed a chapter, examines Serbian arts and architecture during a period of challenges and transformation not only with respect to creativity but culture and society in Serbia between the world wars. Fifteen scholars in Serbia and the United States examine this complex period in which Serbia, poised between the new and old, traditional and modern, sought its identity. They address bold experiments in the visual arts, architecture, and literature that in fact place Serbian creativity “on the very edge” of modernism.

I have been working on this project for four years. In addition to my own research, which began years earlier, I have been responsible for the editing of the chapters, most of which had been translated into English. In my view this volume is an important contribution as it is the first English language examination of examples of Serbian modernism and modernity on a wide range of creative fronts. It is also important to note that there is truly a paucity of publications outside of Serbia not only post-Medieval Serbian art and architecture, but Serbian art in general. I am hopeful that our book will help to fill that void, expand cognizance, and encourage new studies of the art and culture of Serbia.
On June 1, Dr. John Wetenhall took up his post as the joint director of the new George Washington University Museum and the Textile Museum. The new museum, which spans the historic Woodhull House and a new 46,000 square foot building, is expected to open in early 2015 at the corner of G and 21st Streets NW. The building includes exhibition space for the University’s art collection, as well as the Textile Museum and the Albert H. Small Washingtoniana Collection. The Textile Museum’s holdings include 19,000 textiles and carpets—dating from 3000 BCE to the present—from the Near East, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. The Washingtoniana Collection, generously donated to GW in February 2011, includes rare maps, prints, drawings, letters, documents, and other ephemera about the history and development of the nation’s capital.

Wetenhall is an experienced and well-respected leader in the museum field. He served as the president of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh from 2011–2012, and has previously served as the interim director of the Miami Art Museum; executive director of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art for nearly 10 years; director of the Cheekwood Museum of Art; and curator of painting and sculpture at the Birmingham Museum of Art. Additionally, Wetenhall has served as treasurer and vice-chair of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and chairs nominations for the U.S. National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-US). After graduating as an English major at Dartmouth College, he earned his MA at Williams College and Ph.D. at Stanford University in the History of Art; he also has an MBA from Vanderbilt University.
What is the mission of the GW Museum?
The museum is basically two distinct entities coming together. It unites a small specialty museum with a large research university. The two audiences are different, but they are also complementary. The Textile Museum has a more traditional museum-going audience, as well as many out-of-town followers both domestically and abroad. The university, on the other hand, brings a younger, more urban, and office-based audience—including students, young professionals, and the rich community of faculty and staff from GW, as well as the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. There’s great opportunity to engage a complementary mix of multiple audiences. The challenge, however, is how do you engage them all? We’re hoping to carry the traditions of the Textile Museum to the new museum—its audience, its history, its legacy programs—and create new, parallel programming and exhibits to establish the identity of the new museum for a new, broader audience.

How will the Department of Fine Arts & Art History work with the new museum? What opportunities might there be for students?
The faculty has been very welcoming and interested in this project. We would like to work together to enhance the career opportunities available to graduates of the program and help emerging art historians build hands-on expertise. We don’t have a large staff, so we want to work with GW students and faculty in pursuing the work of the museum. Right now, actually, we have a large team of interns currently packing our collection. That’s hands-on experience that you couldn’t possibly get in a classroom. We have also been working closely with museum studies faculty to encourage them to use the museum as the case study for coursework. There have already been a number of courses in which the museum has acted as a client of the students—including courses on fundraising, social media, and exhibition design. In the exhibition design class, students actually designed two Washingtoniana exhibitions that will inaugurate the new museum and a subsequent Chinese photography show. That was their class project. In this way, we’re trying to help students build a portfolio of real experience that they can use as a springboard for their careers.

Since you mentioned the Washingtoniana Collection, can you tell us what is so important and unique about it, for both a local and national audience?
The Washingtoniana Collection creates an identity for the museum: the classic idea of “think local, be global.” It’s the history of the nation’s capital—in maps and documents—in the heart of a museum that is built upon an international collection of global textiles. Both collections are really about identity—the aspiration for civic identity and ideals, and the identities that people build around their personal lives and communities.

What can you tell us about the new collections and research conservation center that was recently built on GW’s Virginia Science and Technology Campus to support the museum’s collection?
The facility is a first-rate collection, storage, and care facility. It is meant to provide safe, climate-controlled storage for the textile collection, which includes nearly 20,000 objects, as well as objects from the university’s collection and the Washingtoniana Collection. It houses a major conservation lab, a large photography studio (with a high walkway that you can stand on to take photographs from a bird’s eye perspective), and wood-working exhibition preparation areas. The facility can provide great behind-the-scenes access and possibly be a place for even more learning opportunities. When I was in graduate school, I spent a year apprenticing in the conservation lab, and I learned an enormous amount on-site that I couldn’t possibly have learned in the classroom. We hope we can open this space so that students can really participate in the complete life of the museum.

As an expert in the museum field, what do you think are some of the biggest challenges that museums face today?
There are tremendous financial pressures on museums. Many museums have not recovered since the recession of 2008. There has been a decline in government funding, which used to provide the basis of most museum operations. Philanthropy has also become much more cause-based and less institutionally-based, which means that museums have to change in order to earn funding.
I think that there has also been a major generational shift in how people learn. Young adults today were raised on a digital screen, not a library, and their expectation for information is very fast and visual. Museum professionals have often been trained in words, in slow time—dissertations, books, articles—while their audience is expecting real-time, fast information. There’s also a real challenge of growth. Museums have been growing and expanding into new buildings, but it’s not clear that growth is the way to prosper in the long run, especially as your funding base is eroding. Museums must also prove their worth in the public eye.

What do you view as the role of museums in today’s world? Why do we need them?

Museums enrich the quality of people’s lives. They’re places where people can come to better understand cultures from around the world and appreciate the rich diversity of the planet on which we live. They’re the community’s wealth—public and open to be shared. They’re treasure chests.

The GW Museum seems to be a new kind of museum that represents a current trend in the field towards partnerships and collaboration. Do you agree?

Museums have always been great collaborators. What we are seeing now, though, are mergers. The challenge is to ask how complementary missions can be enhanced. In a way, this can facilitate growth and contraction at the same time.

Is there anything else that you want the GW community to know about the museum?

The art history program has been especially generous and active in seeking out ways to maximize the potential of the museum for students and faculty. I’ve met one-on-one with a number of art history faculty members to discuss how we might work with the department and students, as well as the broader art community. We hope that there’s a large role to play and a rich collaboration between the Department of Fine Arts & Art History and the museum. Of course, I’m a little biased—I’m an art historian.

Miriam Grotte-Jacobs (MA ’15)

Miriam is a second-year MA candidate in art history, focusing on modern and contemporary art. Miriam received the Department of Fine Arts & Art History’s 2014 Laurence Leite Memorial Prize, and was named a “2014 Cosmos Scholar” by the Cosmos Club Foundation in Washington, D.C., which included a grant in support of archival research completed for her qualifying paper. In September, Miriam represented the department with her paper, “The Last Paintings: Precision and Accident in Morris Louis’ Stripes,” at GWU’s annual art history graduate student symposium. She is currently a graduate student fellow at the University of California, Riverside’s annual art history graduate student conference, and she has published her work in Predicament, an interdisciplinary humanities journal published by Georgetown University’s English Graduate Student Association. This fall, Miriam curated and presented an exhibition, “Chasing Down the Pour,” in GWU’s Gallery 102. Since 2011, Miriam has worked as a publicist in the press office at the National Gallery of Art. From 2007–2011, she worked at contemporary art gallery D’Amelio Terras in New York, NY. Prior to that, she was a curatorial intern at the International Center of Photography, in New York, NY. She graduated from Reed College with a BA in philosophy.

The Value of Unpaid Internships

By Bryan Hilley

I did not originally plan to pursue a career related to art museums. The majority of my undergraduate time was spent toiling away in the studio until I successfully completed my BFA. Upon graduating, with dim prospects at becoming the next “big thing,” I evaluated my current position in life and decided to investigate other career paths associated with the arts. It occurred to me that I wanted to learn how art is cared for after leaving the artist’s hands. With zero experience, I decided that the best way to gain this knowledge quickly and easily was through unpaid internships. Immediately after graduation, I accepted a position with the Design and Preparation department at the Georgia Museum of Art. Over the course of five months I assisted the preparatory team with installing the permanent collection into newly renovated gallery spaces and with mounting travelling exhibitions. Although the beginning involved menial work of patching holes and repainting gallery walls, after time I was entrusted with tasks involving direct contact with the art. While working closely with the department I amassed valuable skills including how to professionally hang artwork, archival matting and framing techniques, and other methods of art handling.

Throughout the entire time I never got past the realization that these institutions eagerly greet students with opportunities to learn the trade.

Upon moving to D.C. for graduate school, I was amazed by the sheer number of museums accepting applicants for learning opportunities. After completing my first semester and becoming somewhat familiar with the city, I began interning at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Situated under the education department, my position followed the new trend of “interpretive guiding,” where interns roam the galleries offering patrons assistance in understanding works of art. We began by familiarizing ourselves with the art featured in the exhibits while also learning the basics of how to teach the information we had gathered. While it was unusual attempting to strike up conversations about the meaning of art with visitors, most seemed willing to engage in conversation. In addition to guiding, each intern was required to give weekend tours highlighting notable works from the current show.

The idea of leading individuals through the carefully constructed exhibition seemed daunting, but after many practice runs the day came where I lead my first group. What instantly became recognizable was the few people who accompanied my tour were genuinely interested in furthering their understanding about the works on view. Following the guidelines taught at the beginning of my internship, I encouraged tour participants to come up with their own ideas regarding the art without fear or prejudice of being “wrong.” After some coaxing, they began to formulate their own personal opinions and engaged in discussions over the many interpretations that emerged. While helping visitors slow down and contemplate what they were looking at, I also discovered new ways to interpret the art.

This past summer I completed my latest role with the curatorial department of The Phillips Collection. Upon moving to D.C. for graduate school, I was amazed by the sheer number of museums accepting applicants for learning opportunities. After completing my first semester and becoming somewhat familiar with the city, I began interning at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Situated under the education department, my position followed the new trend of “interpretive guiding,” where interns roam the galleries offering patrons assistance in understanding works of art. We began by familiarizing ourselves with the art featured in the exhibits while also learning the basics of how to teach the information we had gathered. While it was unusual attempting to strike up conversations about the meaning of art with visitors, most seemed willing to engage in conversation. In addition to guiding, each intern was required to give weekend tours highlighting notable works from the current show.

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This past summer I completed my latest role as a curatorial intern with The Phillips Collection. Under the guidance and supervision of Vesela Stretenović, Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, I was able to experience first-hand the work that goes into setting up public exhibitions. Whereas my previous internships dealt with completed exhibitions, this time I was included in the development and planning stages of an exhibition. Even though the themes for the upcoming shows had already been decided, my opinions regarding their setup were still valued and considered. While the majority of my time was spent researching objects that potentially will be included in forthcoming shows, the exposure allowed me to see the constant changes that happen as an exhibition develops. Additionally, I assisted with the acquisition of new works, which revealed to me the process it takes for objects to be acquired into the museum’s collection.

My summer spent with the curatorial department gave me a new perspective on the amount of work that goes into an exhibit before any art makes it on the walls. Without the assistance of these unpaid internships I would not have been able to gain such varied and vast knowledge in such a short amount of time. The experiential information I learned from my internships has built upon the knowledge I have learned in school. I have also gained real-world experience that will lend itself to my future career. Learning how a museum’s education department uses material from a show to inform visitors may aid in understanding what should be included in future exhibits. The time and labor spent helping preparators install a show can offer new insight into how images and objects can be physically arranged to create a rich dialogue.

My advice to students wanting to find work in a museum would be to expand their horizons. Those who enjoy researching objects might also benefit from learning how to install the works for public display. Students who revel in working behind the scenes can learn how to interact with visitors and donors through development or marketing internships. Museums do not just run on art. They thrive by maintaining a relationship between their employees and the services they provide to their patrons.
Every semester, at least one of my classes in the Department of Fine Arts & Art History results in a lasting relationship with a professor. I am a junior majoring in Fine Arts, and as such have been able to forge several meaningful academic relationships within the department. By sharing one particularly resonant experience, I hope that others are reminded of their own relationships or are encouraged to begin one. This exemplary professor, who I prefer to keep anonymous, is an example of what I believe much of the department to be—enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and invested.

In the fall of my sophomore year, I was immediately struck by this professor’s enthusiasm for form and how we as artists could become the form-maker. She showed slide after slide of images, and after almost every one she would pause, just to appreciate the object. I was fascinated and began sending her relevant images so that we could continue the conversation outside the classroom. She responded to me with several research suggestions, which led me to discover how others artists responded to some of the challenging issues I encountered. I decided to take another class with her because I knew that I had much more to learn. She, like many fine art professors, is a practicing artist and has firsthand knowledge of her craft. Although I identified weaknesses in my own practice, I was able to take my artwork to the next level thanks to her expertise and guidance. She not only cared about me as a student but also as an individual.

Spending time with her both inside and outside the classroom helped me to grow as an artist. She took the time to encourage me to discover my interests and tastes and become involved in the larger artist community. She allowed me to learn from her professional experiences, and I was able to immerse myself in my art knowing that she was at my side. Though this relationship has been particularly poignant, other connections with the fine arts professors have lasted past the semester’s end. Remember, professors are willing to become part of our lives. I want to encourage students to take the first step, move out of your comfort zone and reach out to them. I am so thrilled that I did!
A CLOSER LOOK

Meet Caranine Smith:
Gallery 102’s Mentor, Advocate, and Director
By Eden Orelove

On an unseasonably cool day in early June, I sat down with Caranine Smith to discuss her accomplishments and goals as the new Director of Gallery 102, the department’s student-run art gallery. I was excited to speak with Caranine and learn about her work; as a member of the Gallery 102 student organization, I have had the pleasure to collaborate with Caranine over the past few months. Additionally, under Caranine’s guidance, I curated a show this fall. Caranine has been a mentor, teaching me how to conceptualize, organize, and promote my exhibition. I look forward to continuing to work with – and learn from – Caranine during the next year. Caranine’s dynamic leadership and achievements thus far have significantly enhanced the organization and activities of Gallery 102. As we look to the future, her continuing endeavors will undoubtedly further the gallery’s success.

When did you start managing Gallery 102 and why was the position developed?
I started working at Gallery 102 in January 2014. While I was an Art History MA student at GW several years ago, I curated several shows and was president of the student gallery committee. After I graduated I kept in touch with the department, and when it was decided that the gallery needed guidance, I was offered a part-time position as Director of the Gallery.

I stepped in to provide continuity. I helped standardize the processes of the gallery, such as setting up curator and committee meetings, making a checklist of the exhibition procedures, and helping with the promotions process.

What are some of the highlights over the past year?
At the first gallery committee meeting, there were only three students participating and I wanted there to be more involvement from the GW community. From the get go, I wanted to emphasize teamwork, with every member contributing to the organization through their respective responsibilities. I worked on recruiting students to participate in the gallery’s board, and by the end of the semester we had approximately fifteen committed students. The students became increasingly passionate about and excited for the gallery’s future activities and exhibitions.

Additional highlights included the student events held in the gallery. For example, our Donuts and Drawing event brought students together in a competition to design a logo for Gallery 102. They realized that working for the gallery could be fun as they shared a Saturday creatively designing and mingling, while eating donuts. The 2014 Awards Show was an absolute success. This year we had a record number of entries—we received 123 artworks and juror Karyn Miller, Director of Exhibitions at Arlington Arts Center, selected 43 for inclusion in the show. It made me realize that there are many students who can and want to contribute to the gallery. One of my goals is to make artists realize that the gallery isn’t just a place to walk through, but a place for participation and collaboration.

Spring 2014 at Gallery 102 featured several first-time undergraduate curators who gained valuable experience and produced excellent exhibitions. Emily Hawthorne, BA ’16 and Presidential Scholar in the Arts, curated Under Oath: The Art of the Presidency. The show featured work connected to American presidents of years past, with pieces ranging from humorous and clever to those offering critical commentary. Jahdai Kilkenny, BFA ’14, assembled art exploring hip-hop culture in her exhibition, Stupid Dope Moves. Art history student Veronica Sesana, BA ’14, curated In Conversation with Frank Gehry. The well-known architect based many

Eden Orelove (MA ’15)
Eden is a second-year Art History MA student at GW. Her areas of academic interest include the history of American photography and photographic archives. Hailing from Juneau, Alaska, she regularly photographed the natural world and credits her upbringing with developing her interest in landscape photography. An archivist by profession, she has worked at the Carnegie Mellon University Arts and Special Collections Library, the Smithsonian Institution Archives, and the National Gallery of Art; she also interned at the Smithsonian Archives of American Art and the Yale Center for British Art. Eden is the recent recipient of the GW Archives Diversity Research Fellowship and the GW Lader Prize for Outstanding Work by a First-year Student.
From top: Samantha Sethi, Sandy, 2014; Jenna Helfman, Sweater Game, 2014; Josh Zeis, Liminal Rite, 2014; Otabek Ishmukhamedov, Entropy, 2014; Robin Schaefer, Father and Son, Annual Award Show opening reception; Rosemary Feit Covey, Xena, 2013; Donuts and Drawing event; Molly Dunn, Canvas in Motion, 2014.

Prof. David Bjelajac admiring Travis Beauchene's MFA thesis installation Square Footage, 2014.
A CLOSER LOOK

building designs on art pieces, and Sesana asked artists to reverse the dialogue, and create art based on his architecture.

Three thought-provoking MFA thesis shows highlighted the latter part of the semester. *Liminal Rite [for the indigenous modern identity]* featured the work of Josh Zeis (MFA ‘14). Zeis’s ambitious exhibition was informed by a heightened sense of his surroundings, which he noticed after being deployed as a trauma technician in a combat unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom. His work explores how constructing and navigating virtual worlds affects the ways we interact with the physical landscape. This was followed by *Square Footage*, Travis Beauchene’s (MFA ’14) smart juxtaposition of domestic spaces in a public setting. Beauchene’s installation included a monumental two-story hard-built parquet floor propped upright and assembled inside the gallery space. Closing out the thesis shows was Robin Schaefer’s (MFA ’14) insightful exhibition *Puncture*, about the growing nostalgia over early forms of video technologies, such as 8mm and 16mm video.

**Who can join? What are the responsibilities?**

The gallery committee is open to any GW student. This year we were able to obtain student organization status, which will greatly help in engaging students from other disciplines. Students with different backgrounds and interests will certainly bring new ideas to the table.

Gallery 102 offers students the chance to develop a wide variety of skills needed to create an exhibition, including de-installation and installation. In addition, there is an artistic aspect; curators not only learn how to present art in a meaningful way, but also how to create dialogues between artworks through layout choices. For students, writing a curatorial label, designing the catalogue for a show, or being the author of a exhibition review are great ways to challenge themselves in a safe environment. Also, learning how to produce a call for art, developing connections with artists, and conceptualizing the show are important skills. Curating a show is a great creative and intellectual exercise.

Lastly, sitting on the Gallery 102 Committee offers an opportunity to provide leadership by contributing to the gallery’s management. Some of the student positions include president, photographer, and coordinators for installation, events, and public relations.

**What are your goals as Director of Gallery 102?**

One of my goals is to further increase awareness of and participation in exhibitions. Nowadays, students have a lot of options for activities but I want Gallery 102 to become “the place” where students share their art. It is vital to allow participants to develop friendships and a sense of community in the college setting. This is so important—college is just as much about social growth as intellectual development.

I loved curating when I was a student and now I can enjoy helping shape show ideas with the committee and mentoring artists and historians. I feel privileged! But, of course, while I provide support and continuity for the gallery, the final word always comes from the experts—our students.

**Under Caranine’s leadership, Gallery 102’s continuing progress is assured. I, for one, can’t wait to see how her efforts and vision contribute to the gallery in the future.**

For further information contact:
thegallery102@gwu.edu
Caranine Smith: cbsmith@gwu.edu

Gallery 102 is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
My work with bed sheets grew out of my thinking about my mother’s effort to maintain aesthetic order in her home. She wants her linen closet to be beautifully organized, even if the rest of the house is in chaos. With my mother’s habits in mind, I construct installations from sheets and pillowcases that I purchase from second-hand stores. I fold and pile these sheets on simple shelves or chairs, as well as on and around the significant or quirky architectural features of an exhibition space: stacking them on windowsills, swaddling them around columns, and draping them from the rafters and across the floor. Because I have removed the sheets from their domestic context, my installations are formal and material investigations that can engage a viewer’s senses of sight and touch. The interactions among color combinations, printed patterns, and folding systems are akin to a painting made in space; the evidence of my hand in creased, rolled, and knotted forms invites the viewer to look closely and become involved in teasing out the steps of my creation process. This embedded process narrative ties my work to Abstract Expressionist or Minimalist art. However, my constructions differ from these because they are not stable or fixed like a canvas on the wall or metal plates on the floor. With one wave of a hand or kick of a foot, a work of mine returns to being just another pile of laundry. I entice my viewer to look closely at color and pattern, inviting touch through my use of familiar, soft materials but refuse this physical engagement because of the mutability of my work.

I also hope to engage my viewers’ storytelling capacity, so that my installations can be a stimulus for their human impulse to create stories from small scraps of information. Because my raw materials have been used by other people, they carry with them a history of the bodies and habits of their previous owners. In this way, the sheets function much like the scraps in a patchwork quilt. But since the previous owners are strangers, there is no great-aunt or grandmother to tell us the story associated with the scrap. We have to decide for ourselves what kind of person slept every night in a jungle bedroom with lion faces and zebra herds; who purchased the slinky nylon satin and what they expected from it; who chose flowers; who chose stripes. We can re-imagine and piece together all these lost narratives into our own satisfying version of fact or fiction.

The physical nature of my materials, combined with their connection to the domestic realm, allows me to address many different topics at once. In my work, I can talk about painting and storytelling, reality and reverie, color and memory, all at the same time. Whether piled in the awkward corners of a room or layered on a shelf, the sheets are reminders of a variety of human activities: sleeping, dreaming, housekeeping, lovemaking, birthing, dying, etc. They offer us a glimpse into the linen closets of other people and other times, and perhaps allow us to recall our own past experiences in the comforting confines of bed.

Mariah Johnson at Cezanne’s studio in Aix-en-Provence, France, Spring 2013

Mariah Johnson is a Professorial Lecturer of Painting and Drawing.

Mariah Johnson at Ceranne’s studio in Aix-en-Provence, France, Spring 2013

Finding the perfect balance between shape, color, surface, and structure is always a challenge, an emotional struggle. The mere existence of this powerful energy makes it so appealing to me to work with clay. My work has a strong connection with nature and its organic structures. My inspiration comes from the small artifacts I collect on walks or trips with my family. These fragile imprints of nature provide me with rich visual vocabulary, endless shapes and colors. I work in the solitude in my studio and this peaceful loneliness gives me the perfect stage to working with clay.

Sometimes in the silence there is a moment of harmony when clay and I understand each other perfectly, both of us know exactly what the other one wants to do. These are the moments I long for and draw me back in the studio to open up a new bag of clay and start again.

I was born and raised in Hungary. I studied mathematics and art in college then I went to the Moholy Nagy University of Arts and Design in Budapest to study ceramics. Shortly after graduating and moving to the United States, I set up my ceramic studio in Maryland and I have been teaching ceramics at George Washington University for the last several years. This gives me a great counterbalance for those lonely times in my studio.

As an artist I draw on my background in mathematics, a universal language. I settled on three shapes—circle, square, and knot—as my basic vocabulary in clay. This truly simple element allows me to share my thoughts without words, without accent.

Each piece begins as a thick, flat clay slab, which is stretched out on a concrete floor or wooden board to create surface tension. Sometimes I’ll punch holes to add texture or to make the walls of the finished piece look inviting instead of impenetrable. While the clay is still wet I add colored slips, creating a malleable body whose surface is already finished (rather than decorated later, when the clay is hardened, though sometimes I do that, too). This approach gives me tremendous freedom to make my shapes. The color is cohesively bonded to the clay body from the beginning, and it’s behaving naturally all the way to the end, as one material. The holes and other markings move and stretch as I cut, bend, twist, coil, and build the clay into my three-dimensional forms: pods, cocoons, squares, or circles.

Judit Varga is a Professorial Lecturer of Ceramics.

Opposite page: Judit Varga. Seed. 2012. Handbuilt stoneware with slips and engobes, 17 x 8 x 8 in. 
Christiane Joost-Gaugier

By Kristine Walsh

Christian Joost-Gaugier, originally from France, has had an extremely successful academic career. After completion of her Doctorate at Harvard, she began her teaching career at Tufts University. Early in Professor Joost-Gaugier’s career she faced gender discrimination. Later, however, she became the First Witness in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission landmark case on sex discrimination in universities. Joost-Gaugier continued to hold faculty positions at the New Mexico State University, the University of New Mexico, and Wayne State University. As a result of her lifetime achievements, Joost-Gaugier was inducted as an honorary member of Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard University.

Professor Joost-Gaugier is currently working on two exciting books. The first one is on the origins and early history of wine in ancient history, which will concentrate on Syrian and Sumerian wine connections. The second book will be on the architecture of Puglia, Italy. One of the main subjects will be about an entirely Muslim town in early modern Italy, which thrived as a home for the Muslim population in Italy at the time when Europeans were at war with the Islamic Ottomans. Professor Joost-Gaugier has recently spent time in Puglia and plans to spend the spring of 2015 doing further research in Italy.

Kristine Walsh (MA ‘15)

Kristine is a second-year MA candidate in art history. Originally from Cleveland, Kristine completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Modern European Studies from George Washington University. In addition to her graduate studies, Kristine holds a Fellowship with the Center for Student Engagement. Previously, she held internship positions at the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Albert H. Small Washingtoniana Collection, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Kristine’s primary research interests are the patronage and collecting practices of early modern England. In the future, Kristine aspires to be a curator at a museum.
David Bjelajac (Art History)

David Bjelajac, Professor of Art History and American Studies, has two anthology book chapters appearing this fall, including: “Honey from the Louvre: Gleaning God's Word from the Old Masters,” in Samuel F. B. Morse’s Gallery of the Louvre and the Art of Invention, ed. Peter John Brownlee (Chicago and New Haven: Terra Foundation for American Art; distributed by Yale University Press, 2014), and “Masonic Fraternity and Muhammad Among the Lawgivers in Adolph Weinmann’s Sculpture Frieze for the United States Supreme Court (1931-1935),” in The Image of the Prophet between Ideal and Ideology, eds. Christiane J. Gruber and Arvinoam Shalem (Berlin: De Gruyter Publishing, 2014). Both chapters originated as conference papers: a 2012 Morse symposium at the National Gallery of Art; and a 2009 conference on “Crossing Boundaries, Creating Images: In Search of the Prophet Muhammad in Literary and Visual Traditions” co-sponsored by the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz and Max-Planck-Institut.

Julia Brown (Fine Arts)

During her fellowship leave from GW, Prof. Brown has been engaged in numerous research fellowship and residency projects. She was awarded a Museum of Fine Arts Houston Core Fellowship for 2013-2014 and re-awarded a second fellowship for 2014-2015. She is simultaneously competing a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. She spent the summer of 2013 engaged in research in Lombardy, Italy supported by a GWU grant. During the summer of 2013 she had a two-person exhibition of video works Julia Brown|Helen Dowling at Via Farini, Milan. Other group exhibitions and screenings this year have included: Moving, Not Moving at McKinney Avenue Contemporary; Dallas; The Neighbors at American University Museum at the Katzen Center, Washington, D.C.; The Core Exhibition 2014 at the Museums of Fine Arts Houston; The Last Brucennial, Bruce High Quality Foundation, New York; Subterfuge, The Gallery Apart, Rome; Body Rock at the Film Archive, Auckland. Prof. Brown recently began serving on the Artist Board of the Houston arts non-profit DiverseWorks.

Alexander Dumbadze (Art History)

Prof. Dumbadze’s monograph Dumbadze spent much of the 2013-2014 academic working on his new book presently titled Jack Goldstein: All Day Night Sky, Dumbadze’s first book, Bas Jan Ader: Death Is Elsewhere (University of Chicago Press, 2013) received more than ten reviews, including in The New York Times, Art in America, Art Review, and ARTnews. ARTINFO/Modern Art Notes selected Bas Jan Ader as one of the best art books of 2013. Prof. Dumbadze published two essays: one in the French journal, Initiates, and the other in the edited volume Beyond the Anti-Aesthetic (Penn State University Press, 2013). A long-form exhibition review appeared in ArtInfo Reviews. He chaired the panel “Identity Politics: Then and Now” at the 2014 College Art Association Annual Conference in Chicago, and took part in the symposium “Whose Terms? New Perspectives on Social Practice” at the New Museum in New York. In addition to participating in the panel “Deemed to be Free” at Triple Canopy in Brooklyn, NY, he gave a lecture at Cabinet Magazine’s event space about his current work on Jack Goldstein.

Phil Jacks (Art History)

During his time as chair, Prof. Phil Jacks moved forward several important agenda items, notably peer evaluations for Associate Professors for their promotion in rank and an exploratory committee for the prospective joint program between Art History and Museum Studies. Prof. Jacks designed and oversaw construction of A-106, the former slide library, for a state-of-the-art Seminar Room and Faculty Office Suite. Professor Jacks worked with the development office to secure an endowment of $100,000, which established a Fine Arts Fund whose annual payout will be used for the main-tenance and renovation of Gallery 102. At the university level, Prof. Jacks was appointed to the Steering Committee of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. Early into the discussions of the merger with the Corcoran, he worked on the accreditation process and met with their faculty at numerous events. In his own scholarly activity, Prof. Jacks saw the publication of an amplified edition in Italian translation of his 2001 monograph, co-authored with William Calfero of Viterbi University: Gli Spinelli di Firenze: Mercadanti e Mecenati nel Rinascimento, Edizioni Editif, Florence; most of the digital photography for the book was shot on location by Prof. Jacks. He presented a lively lecture and book signing in the courtyard of the Palazzo Spinelli in May to an audience of faculty from the School of Architecture at the University of Florence and professors from the Sarah Lawrence University, whose Florence Program is housed on the ground floor of the palace. Prof. Jacks also contributed a solicited chapter “Ferro-concrete and the search for style in the American Renaissance: the case of Franklin Webster Smith” to the volume Revival: Utopia, Identity, Memory, edited by A. Lepine, M. Lodder and R. McKeever, Courtauld Institute Symposia Series (to be published in Courtauld Books Online). He also continued work on a new monograph, now half complete, which traces the urban development of Baltimore harbor during the 19th and early 20th centuries, entitled: ‘To Make it a Grand Entrepot’: The Story of Locust Point, Baltimore. He intends to submit a proposal this year to Johns Hopkins University Press for publication.

Bibiana Obler (Art History)

2014 was a big year for Prof. Bibiana Obler: her book, Intimate Collaborations: Kandinsky and Moi, Arp and the Berlin University Press, and she was promoted to the rank of associate professor. In addition, she organized a symposium on “War and Race” for the Potomac Center for the Study of Modernity (Fall 2013), co-chaired a panel at the College Art Association on “Objects, Objectives, Objections: The Goals and Limits of the New Materialisms in Art History,” and presented papers on Lynda Benglis at the University of Illinois, Chicago, and on Al Loving as part of the Textile Museum’s lecture series. During the academic year 2014-15, Prof. Obler has a Faculty Fellowship to work on her second book, The Anti-Craft Tradition.
Turker Ozdogan (Fine Arts)
Prof. Turker Ozdogan traveled extensively this year and expanded his reputation as a leading figure in ceramics. He was invited to three international exhibitions. As a distinguished native son, Turker delivered the keynote address at the International Ceramic Symposium at Kocaeli University in Golçuk, Turkey, Kocaeli University. He spoke on “Technical Variations in My Ceramic Sculpture” and presented a workshop. Turker also traveled to Zibo, China, a well-known center for ceramic production, as one of 21 artists invited from around the world to exhibit his work, as well as to interact with Macsabial International Symposium and Workshop. He also had the opportunity to work with local artists in residence and students from Osaka, Korea in an international symposium. Prof. Ozdogan was invited to a small number of guests to receive an Honorary Degree from Qiu University of Technology in Ceramics. Two of his works were installed in the permanent collections of the Qiu Ceramic Glass Art Museum in Jinan, China, and the Taishan Ceramic Museum in Zibo, China – both located in Shandong Province. A catalogue accompanied the Taishan exhibition. For the works selected for the Macsabial International Symposium and Workshop in Zibo, Prof. Ozdogan used an innovative process of a wood-firing kiln, making high-fire stoneware technology pieces. He also experimented with an original method of employing ceramic inserts in sculptural pieces. These “in-sert attachments” are free form pieces that interact with the main body of his ceramic sculpture. They can be moved, repositioned, and configured in various forms on a single sculpture.

Siobhan Rigg (Fine Arts)
Prof. Siobhan Rigg has several projects in various stages of preparation, but most of 2014 has been spent working on Too Big to Fail, a multi-part research and creative project. The project engages historical and contemporary practices of using objects – especially large-scale objects – for purposes of political representation, whether during the process of production, real-time reception, or in the afterlife created by media, metaphor, or storytelling. Portions of the project have been included in the group shows, Inter/Activism, at the Arlington Arts Center and Art as Research, at the George Mason University Gallery. Her animation work is also included in the exhibition, Some Uses of Photography, curated by Phyllis Rosenzweig, at the Katzen Art Center at American University. She was a recipient of GW Artist’s Incubator Fellowship, through which she had the opportunity to teach a course connected to Too Big to Fail, and she received an Individual Artist Fellowship from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

James Sham (Fine Arts)
Prof. James Sham was invited to a panel at Loft 594, in Brooklyn on Interpretations of Success in Artist Initiated Projects. In September he took part in the MIT-Skoltech Innovations Ecosystems Ideas Lab, a week-long conference hosted in Moscow, where 25 specialists from diverse fields were invited to an international workshop. At the end of the conference, participants were invited to present proposals for projects to the conference’s organizers. Two of the projects were awarded grants to be enacted at the Skoltech campus with an annual operating budget of $500,000 over three to five years. Prof. Sham and his two colleagues, Adam Bock (University of Edinburgh) and Barbara von Barghahn (University of Texas, Austin), were one of three teams to be awarded these grants. Prof. Sham also presented his research to the Graduate School of Information Systems, University of Electro-Communications in Tokyo, where he spoke on the interface of Artifical Intelligence and creative design. Their project, “Rapid Design Pivot,” is to build a facility on the Skoltech campus that will function as a cross-disciplinary hybrid space—a laboratory, gallery, artist residency and prototype development space all at once. The plan is to interface inventors and artists, who will be partnered to produce prototypes and art exhibitions using newly generated technology from the institution. Prof. Sham, as the lead member on this team, will produce several exhibitions, with a publication at the end of the grant period highlighting the three facets of Entrepreneurship, Technological Innovation and Contemporary Art. Over the next two years, James will be pursuing the Skoltech project as Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Texas, Austin. Prof. Sham contributed to two group shows: December’s Letters, Orgy Park, in Brooklyn; and Eurekal at Loft 594, also in Brooklyn.

Barbara von Barghahn (Art History)
This year marked the culmination of a decade-long project for Prof. von Barghahn. The first of two volumes of her book, Hapsburg Archduchesses Mary of Hungary and Isabella Clara Eugenia: Their Gardens at Niche, Brussels and Mariemont, was published. She also had the distinct honor of Guest Speaker of the Explorers Club at the Embassy of Portugal in Washington. She spoke on “Portuguese Nautical Achievements during the Renaissance,” to an audience of over 150 attendees, including Ambassador Nuno Brito. Following her presentation, Prof. von Barghahn joined a formal dinner at the embassy and the officials from the Kennedy Center, the National Gallery of Art and the Portuguese Secretary of State of Culture, Jorge Barreto Xavier.

Frank Wright (Fine Arts)
Prof. Frank Wright is completing work on an edition with original illustrations of The Civil War Diary of Franklin P. Brockway. This autograph diary recounts the final stages of the campaign between January and July 1865 as witnessed by a 19-year-old lieutenant with the First Pennsylvania Light Artillery on the front lines in Petersburg, Virginia. This edition will include some of Prof. Wright’s paintings of important Civil War sites, including City Point, Virginia. Several of Prof. Wright’s earlier works has been reproduced in recent publications. His “The Grand Review” appeared on the cover of On My Way to Becoming a Man (NYQ Books). His engraving “fcars Falling” appeared on the cover of Classical Studies (Oxford University Press) and Greta Hawes, Rationalizing Myth in Antiquity (Oxford University Press). In November, on the occasion of “A Celebration of the Life of the Honorable Thomas S. Foley” in Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol, Prof. Wright’s portrait of the Speaker of the House, commissioned in 1998, was exhibited next to the speaker’s podium. It served as the backdrop for the tributes of several distinguished guests, including Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Print and broadcast images of the event were widely circulated in national and international newspapers with the portrait prominently displayed.
José Ruiz (faculty). Force Field. 2014. Archival pigment print, 23 x 28 in.
Travis Beauchene (MFA) calls Fargo his home. Fargo is not a city where people get killed in wood-chipper machines (regularly), or a platform where Billy Bob Thornton shoots his current television series (valiantly). It is a city where Beauchene lives today after his two-year residence in Washington, D.C. While in Washington, Beauchene received his Master’s Degree in Fine Arts at The George Washington University. His artwork consists primarily of sculpture, performance, and curatorial projects. Beauchene approaches these disciplines through the process of infiltration, intervention, and site conditioning. His time enrolled at GWU was accompanied by his role of Director at Gallery 102, an internship at Connersmith Contemporary, a Teacher’s Assistantship of Photography, and volunteering at Miriam’s Kitchen Homeless Shelter. Travis Beauchene was honored with the Morris-Lewis Endowment Fellowship as he entered GWU, and was awarded First Place in GWU’s Annual Awards Show during his last semester before graduating. Recently, Beauchene was invited to display his work in the Academy exhibition at Connersmith Contemporary, and has been accepted into (e)merge Art Fair 2014. Although Beauchene currently lives 1,341.68 miles away from Washington, D.C., he is excited to continue the many conversations that blossomed during his time as a graduate student at The George Washington University.

Amy Thompson (BA) graduated summa cum laude with honors with a double major in Art History and Dance in December of 2013. She was awarded the Outstanding Senior in Art History Award and was also a Presidential Scholar in the Arts in dance. During her time at GW she held internships at the Washington Ballet and worked in the curatorial department of the Corcoran Gallery of Art assisting with the final installation of their celebrated American collection. During the summers she worked for the Exhibition Road Show, an arts festival during the 2012 Olympic Games, and in the curatorial office of the Royal Academy of Arts. Upon graduating, she returned to London where for four very intense but exciting months she worked as the Evening Sale intern for the Post-War and Contemporary Art department at Christie’s auction house. In this role she was the sole researcher for seventy-five lots, seven of which achieved world records at auction. She now works permanently at Bonhams auction house in London as a Trainee Specialist in Contemporary Art, where she helps transport, appraise, catalogue, and write about a diverse range of artworks. While Contemporary Art is a time-period she never expected to work in it is proving to be both challenging and fascinating.

GW Art Alum Creates Innovative Interior Design Company

ZOOM Interiors is the completely virtual interior design service that Madeline, Beatrice & Elizabeth created while still in college at GWU because they felt that the interior design world was not accessible or affordable to everyone.

Most people relate interior design to flabbergasting prices and drawn-out timelines. Their service seeks to change that stigma and reinvent how interior design works through their virtual design process. Virtual design means that they work completely online, which gives them the opportunity to work with anyone, anywhere across the country while keeping prices low and providing an efficient process.

Part of ZOOM Interiors’s service includes custom paintings, which Madeline creates for clients and their spaces. She gets to combine the best of both worlds—Art & Design—into what she does everyday. Through this experience, Madeline has developed a love for abstract painting that she didn’t necessarily have during her time at GW. She is constantly evolving as an artist, changing her medium and subject matter based on the influences of her daily life.

Madeleine is thrilled to be running ZOOM interiors with two incredible business partners, who she met in her very first architectural drafting class at GW. Each of them brings something different to the table, which makes their company unique and forward thinking. They are learning while growing together, which keeps the business fresh and fun.

www.zoominteriors.com
getzoomed@zoominteriors.com
A Life of Wonders

If you told Bethany four years ago that she would be spending most of her time in a remote village in the interior of the Fiji Islands, she would have been really excited, but also would never have believed you. After graduating in 2011, Bethany took what was supposed to just be a summer job with Rustic Pathways, an international teen travel and community service organization. Bethany was hired as a catalog photographer and social media coordinator for the company’s Fiji-based programs. This assignment allowed her the ability to travel extensively within the country, to see aspects of Fiji that most people are unaware of, and to connect with a broad range of international students who are looking for ways to engage in a positive and meaningful way with the world around them.

After returning home to Los Angeles and working stints as a studio manager for a small jewelry company and as a high school soccer coach, Bethany felt the islands pulling her back and took the opportunity to travel back to Fiji for another summer. She has been working there ever since. Her years of involvement have now moved her out of the photographer role and into more hands-on assignments. In addition to being involved in building schools and implementing clean sanitation systems, she has also helped to coordinate various arts-based efforts including mural development and arts education in primary schools.

This was never a path Bethany could have envisioned for herself, so her best advice is to take random opportunities, and don’t be afraid to stick with them. There will always be a voice telling you to get serious, to “grow up,” but there are so many different ways to define being a success. Find a path that connects you to the truest and happiest version of yourself and everything else will follow. In Fiji they say, “E rewa ga mo mate.” Literally, it means “You can only die,” but it refers to the importance of giving yourself completely to everything that you choose to undertake in your life. Be passionate and committed. Work as hard as you possibly can at every little thing that presents itself to you. The worst that can happen is that you die—that’s not so bad right?—and then there’s just another adventure waiting on the other side.

2013

Dena Rapoport (MA) currently works at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in the Division of Education as part of Family and Teen Programs. This past year she taught workshops for 7th, 8th, and 9th grade teens on Johannes Vermeer and the camera obscura. She also taught an all day studio for 10th, 11th, and 12th graders on Paul Cezanne. Both of these programs were conducted both in the gallery looking at original works of art and in the studio for a hands on art project. This summer she taught in the Stories in Art program for 4-7 year olds and their families; this summer’s focus was on the Italian collection at the National Gallery of Art. This coming school year Dena will continue to teach family and high school audiences.

2012

Chelsea Souza (BA) has recently started at the National Gallery of Art as a Staff Assistant in the Office of Protocol and Special Events. Prior to this role, she interned at the NGA in Media Production and Gallery Archives. Chelsea graduated from GWU in 2012 with a Bachelor’s degree in Art History and Political Science and from the University of Oxford in 2013 with a Master’s degree in the History of Art and Visual Culture.

Elizabeth Searcy (MA) has finished her coursework and comprehensive exams for UCLA’s PhD program in the Department of Art History. This summer she will be working on the prospectus for her dissertation on the early photography of Carrie Mae Weems, hoping to be ARD this fall. While she has thoroughly enjoyed her time on the West Coast, she has fled back east—but this time up North to the Green Mountains of Vermont, where she currently writes this from a small town with a fantastic coffee shop.
Melanie Samper, BA '10

When Melanie reflects back on her undergraduate career, the most cherished memory she recalls is the moment she decided to pursue art history as a dual degree at GWU. She spent a few weeks in the summer after her freshman year in a short-term study abroad program in Paris exploring the contemporary and modern visual arts. After visiting the Musée d’Orsay, the gardens of Giverny, the Louvre, and other iconic institutions in the heart of Paris, Melanie came back to GWU energized and confident that pursuing a degree in the arts is where she would make the most out of her experience at GWU. Upon returning to D.C., she registered for as many art history courses allotted during her remaining years, and she even pursued a semester long program in Barcelona in the fall of her junior year taking courses in art history at the University of Barcelona. The immersion in the arts didn’t stop in the classroom. Through the support of professors and graduate teaching assistants, she landed internships with three well-respected institutions in D.C.—The Kreeger Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art, and The Phillips Collection. She took two graduate seminars at The Phillips taught by UVa professors as part of a consortium that utilized the Phillips’ collection and offered hands-on experience with objects in the conservation laboratory. One special event included the reunion of GW, UVa, and Phillips Collection professionals, where Jenny was able to introduce herself as a product of all three institutions.

Beyond the classroom and office, Melanie’s continues to foster her love for modern and galleries in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Melanie’s time and involvement in the creative artistic community within NYC and DC has fueled an ambitious internal energy that has invigorated her to pursue a career in the arts that will hopefully take her ideas and passions to a global market.

A Tale of Two Cities

When Jenny Parsons, a Philadelphia native, moved to Washington, D.C. in 2006 to begin her master’s degree in art history at George Washington University, she never imagined the extent to which her scholarship, and her life, would become a veritable tale of two cities. Crediting her career trajectory to her superb mentors, the journey began with the connections she forged during her time at GW. Jenny was attracted to GW’s art history program not only for the renown of its professors, but also for the opportunity to intern at a local museum as part of a museum studies concentration. During her internship at The Phillips Collection, she worked with Senior Curator Elizabeth Hutton Turner, who, a few years later, became her dissertation advisor at the University of Virginia, where Turner assumed a professorship in 2007 and Jenny matriculated in 2010.

In 2008, the Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Anne d’Harnoncourt, invited Jenny to become a visiting scholar to research the connections between the Calder family of sculptors and Philadelphia. Jenny’s dissertation topic, “John Sloan: Between Philadelphia and New York, 1892-1907” grew out her research on that project. The relationships between the Calders, Sloan, and artists traveling between Philadelphia and New York stimulated her questions about the significance of geographic origin, mobility, regional consciousness, and the contingency of artist-networks in shaping artistic identity.

As a doctoral candidate at UVa, Jenny reconnected with GW thanks to a partnership between GW, UVa, and The Phillips Collection. She took two graduate seminars at The Phillips taught by UVa professors as part of a consortium that utilized the Phillips’ collection and offered hands-on experience with objects in the conservation laboratory. One special event included the reunion of GW, UVa, and Phillips Collection professionals, where Jenny was able to introduce herself as a product of all three institutions.

The to and from continues: Jenny spent 2013-14 as the Barra Fellow in American Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She is currently in residence at the Smithsonian American Art Museum as 2014-15 Sara Roby Pre-doctoral Fellow in Twentieth-Century Realism.
Jay majored in art history and was awarded the senior prize for that subject upon graduation. He has made excellent use of his academic training, working in prominent commercial contemporary art galleries in New York City, such as Pace and Joan Washburn, and he also had his own gallery of emerging artists for several years. Stil based in New York, Jay is now a private art dealer and fine art appraiser; news of his professional activities can be found at www.jaygrimm.com. Professors such as Jeffrey Anderson, Lilien Robinson, and the late Melvin Lader cultivated a life-long love of art in Jay, as well as in many of their other students. The rigorous classes of GW's art history department, which always required visits to the museums of Washington, D.C., for first-hand inspection of the works being taught, allowed Grimm to develop the visual tools necessary for a successful career as an art dealer. He is grateful for the opportunity to have studied under such talented, committed people and for the first-rate education he received.

Ann Schaefer (Ann Dynes Terbush), BA '69
Ann graduated in 1969 with a BA in Art History with a heavy concentration in Fine Arts studio classes. She has joyfully resumed the art career she set aside to manage environmental programs for NOAA. Now through her art, she shows how precious our environment is to her. She now works primarily in plein air painting, and she always took watercolors on trips for her “day job” and for pleasure. She now works primarily in oil and has won awards in plein air events and juried shows. Her work can be viewed at Gallery 322 in Frederick, MD. www.gallery-322.com

Kristen A. Shepherd, BA '93 & MA '98

Kristen moved to Los Angeles in 2013 to join the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. As an executive in External Affairs at one of the largest museums in the United States, Kristen is responsible for LACMA’s membership program as well as the museum’s Marketing and Guest Services departments. She still sees the value of looking carefully and enjoys the broad range of art on view at LACMA—from classical to contemporary, works from all over the world. Kristen says, “Every day at work is an opportunity to learn something new. I am never jaded about this collection. It is spectacular.”

Art History and Business Sense
As an undergraduate Art History major at The George Washington University, and later as a graduate student, Kristen Shepherd’s focus was on Pre-Raphaelite art and the possibility of an academic career. Two decades later, she still relies on the skills she learned as an art historian, and she remains committed to introducing students of all ages to great works of art. Kristen says, “I’ve been fortunate to be inspired by great teachers, at university and in my career. Dr. Lilien Robinson in particular made a lasting impression on me. I learned from her that art history is truly multidisciplinary. Knowledge of history, music, literature, economics, the sciences, material culture—all of it provides important context to what is really the study of human expression. Art history brings it all together. And I think art history students come out of university with the broadest foundation for everything that comes next for them. Art historians are trained to question and to look carefully. We look for context as well as details. Those skills are useful in any field.”

After conducting her thesis research in London, Kristen moved to New York, where she accepted a “day job” as the administrator in the IT department of a major law firm while she wrote her thesis. She states, “It opened up an entirely new set of business skills I did not even know I had. At the time I had no idea how valuable this experience would be for my future; I just needed a job.”

The business experience served her well. After attaining her Master’s degree, Kristen decided to combine her love of art with her business skills, accepting a corporate position at Sotheby’s auction house in New York. In her ten-year career at Sotheby’s, Kristen excelled in positions in finance and strategy, and managed special projects for the auction house worldwide.

She moved on to the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York where she was tapped to run the museum’s growing membership department. “I wanted to work in a great American museum. When the Whitney called, I jumped at the chance.” Kristen’s first foray into the nonprofit world resulted in the creation of the Whitney’s innovative Curate Your Own Membership program.

Kristen moved to Los Angeles in 2013 to join the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. As an executive in External Affairs at one of the largest museums in the United States, Kristen is responsible for LACMA’s membership program as well as the museum’s Marketing and Guest Services departments. She still sees the value of looking carefully and enjoys the broad range of art on view at LACMA—from classical to contemporary, works from all over the world. Kristen says, “Every day at work is an opportunity to learn something new. I am never jaded about this collection. It is spectacular.”
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