



ART HISTORY PROGRAM

GRADUATION MAY 2022



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Program History

Courses in Art History at George Washington University were an early and ultimately significant component of the curriculum. The discipline's distinguished past is essential and timely as Columbian College of Arts and Sciences moves forward in the twenty-first century. Founded in 1821, and predating the Art History curricula of Princeton (1832), Yale (1869), and Harvard (1874), the Art History Program has evolved and reached maturation, while vigorously sustaining its core mission of providing students an exceptional education in Art History and connoisseurship.

From its inception, a major focus has been establishing cooperative ventures with cultural institutions in Washington, DC, initially with the Smithsonian American Art

Museum (1829) and later with the Corcoran Gallery of Art (1869)/Corcoran School of Fine Art (1878), and the National Gallery of Art (1937).

Responding to contemporary thoughts and needs, the curriculum now includes courses in Islamic Arts, Asian Arts (India and Indonesia, China, Japan, Korea), History of Photography, History of Textiles, and Afro-American Art. The Art History program also has expanded its links to other disciplines in the Arts and Sciences (Anthropology, Classical Archaeology, Philosophy, History, Judaic Studies, etc.). The Art History program provides a firm foundation for further innovative advancement in response to changing educational needs.



Photo Credit: Heather Herbstritt

To the Class of 2022

Santiago Rusiñol I Prats (1861-1931), traveled from Barcelona to study in Paris in 1889 where he lived at Montmartre for nearly a decade. Returning to Spain in 1893 he became one of the exponents of Catalan *modernisme*. He was a prolific painter and novelist, and an important member of the *El Quatre Gats* in Barcelona, a place frequented by the young Pablo Picasso.

In his travels Rusiñol often visited the Balaeric Islands, especially Mallorca, which is known by its sobriquet, "La Isla de la Calma" (Island of Tranquility). His 1902-7 *Staircase of Raixa* is one of four views he

Painted of a Mallorcan garden belonging to an historical estate located seven miles north of Palma in the foothills of the Serra de Tramuntana mountains.

Flanked by two reclining lions at its base, Raixa's monumental staircase rises seven levels above a lower garden comprising orchards of citrus fruits, olive groves, verdant parterres, and water basins. A statue of Apollo, ancient god of enlightenment, stands at the center as guardian of a flourishing terrain. Rusiñol painted several landscapes of Raixa's surrounding terraced olive groves in full white

blossom. Since the 2nd century, Jews inhabited the Balearic Islands. In 1229, concurrent with the gifting of Raixa, Jews were granted land in Mallorca as well as protection by Jaime I of Aragón.

The Hebrew word for olive tree (es shemen) derives from the root word shemesh, meaning "to shine" or "to illuminate". While 2021-2022 has been a year of continued uncertainty, the graduating students have successfully ascended the final levels of an academic staircase. Just as a visitor transverses Apollo's cypress copse at Raixa

to encounter nature's secluded beauty in the upper gardens, there will be more areas to explore as you progress in your professional career. The GW Art History faculty wishes our graduating students resplendent paths ahead and interludes of "tranquility" for creating canvases of luminous colors.

Warmest wishes on behalf of the Art History Program Faculty,

Barbara von Barghahn (BvB), Chair

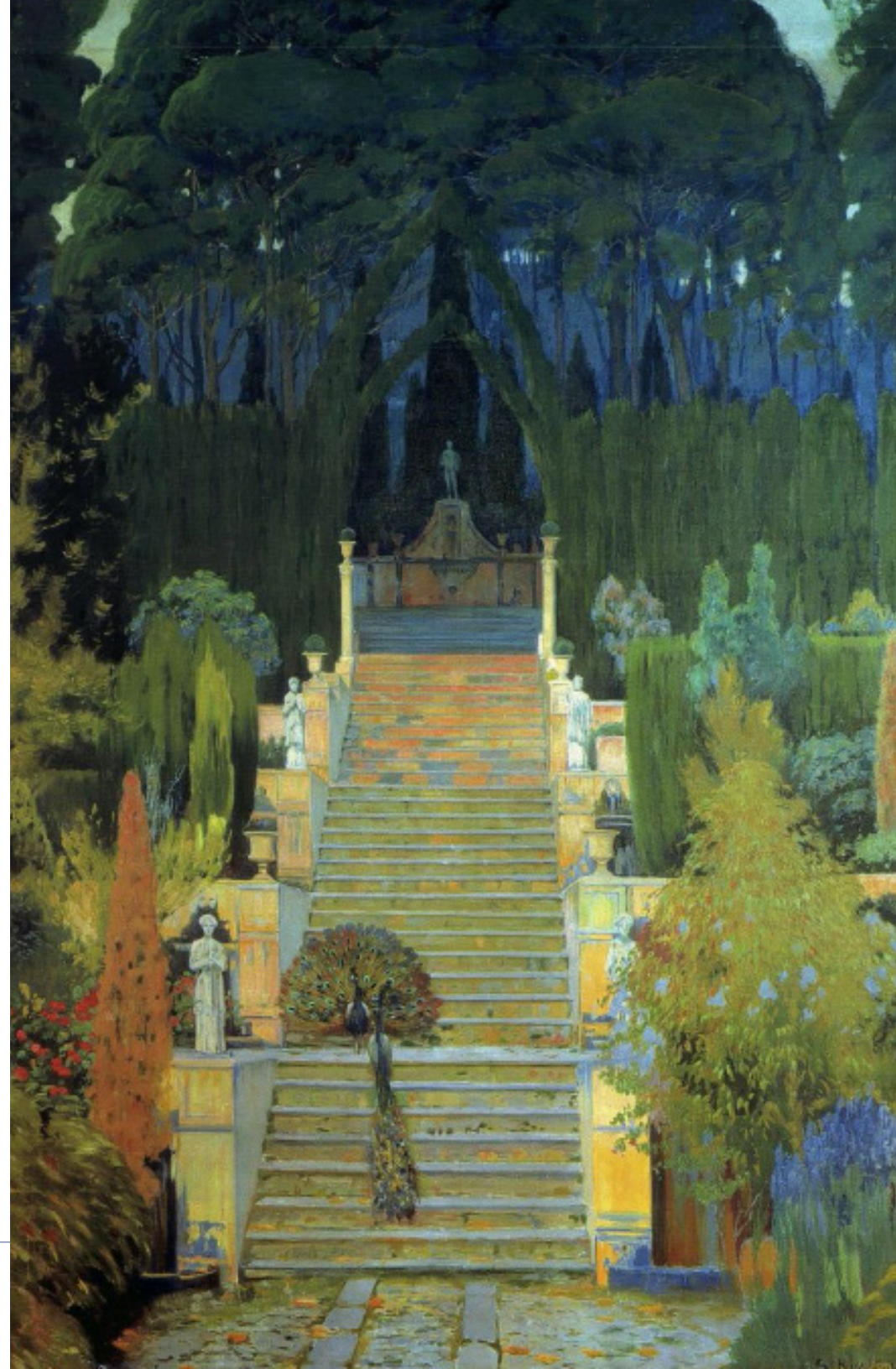


Image Credit: Santiago Rusiñol, *Staircase of Raixa*, oil on canvas, 1902-7.

Faculty & Staff

Full Time Faculty

Alexander Dumbadze, Associate Professor
Director of Undergraduate Studies

Philip Jacks, Professor

Lisa Lipinski, Assistant Professor

Cristin McKnight Sethi, Assistant Professor

Mika Natif, Associate Professor
Director of Graduate Studies

Bibiana Obler, Associate Professor

Lilien Robinson, Professor

Barbara von Barghahn, Professor
Program Head

Staff

Andy Johnson,
*Program Administrator, Corcoran Art History
Director, Gallery 102*

Paul Reuther, *Visual Resources Specialist*

Main Office Student Assistants:

*Telease Bowen, Elizabeth Johnson,
Abigail Osborne, Elaigha Vilaysane*

Part Time Faculty

Susan Arensberg, Adjunct Professor

Gillian Elliott, Adjunct Professor

Christiane Joost-Gaugier, Adjunct Professor

Jungsil Lee, Adjunct Professor

Katherine Markoski, Adjunct Professor

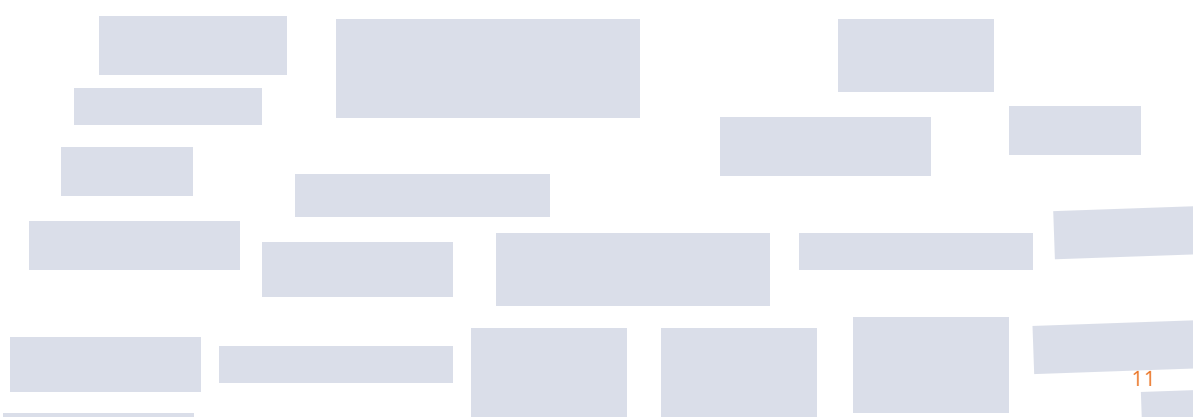
Lynn Matheny, Adjunct Professor

Paul Reuther, Adjunct Professor

Vidya Vijayasekharan, Adjunct Professor

Alan Wallach, Adjunct Professor

Elizabeth Weber, Adjunct Professor



Award Winners

Outstanding Senior in Art History

Catherine Gille

Mel Lader Outstanding First-Year MA Art History Student

Mary Bei Prince & Margot Reed Silverstein

The Melvin Lader prize fund supports an annual award to an art history master's candidate in their first year of study. Melvin Lader received his PhD from the University of Delaware and joined the faculty during the 1970's. A specialist in modern and contemporary art, and for many years the Advisor for the Art History graduate students, he was active on University, College, and Department Committees and served one term as Department Chair. Modest and unassuming he made sustained and considerable contributions through his research and publications receiving formidable professional recognition, especially for his pivotal works on Achille Gorky and Jackson Pollock. Dedicated to his students as teacher, academic advisor and mentor he was also an exceptional and beloved colleague.

Laurence Leite Outstanding Second-Year MA Art History Student

Heather Herbstritt & Gary Calcagno

The Laurence Leite Prize Fund was established in 1996 in memory of Laurence Leite. The fund supports an annual award to an art history master's candidate in their second year. Professor Leite received his PhD from Johns Hopkins University and joined the GWU faculty in the late 1950's, retiring after over 25 years of teaching. He was a specialist in Italian Baroque art, but taught an amazing variety of courses: Northern and Southern Renaissance; Medieval Art; 18th Century Art; 19th Century Art; 20th Century Art, Iconography, as well as the Survey course. He was a brilliant scholar and teacher, a generous mentor beloved by generations of students, undergraduate and graduate. His lectures were legendary in both content and delivery. His impact was such that many of his students were so inspired that they pursued careers in Art History. This award was endowed by one of his former students, who followed Professor Leite's path of research and teaching - Diane Apostolos Cappadona, a member of the Faculty at Georgetown University.

Arthur Hall Smith Prize for Outstanding Research Paper in 19th/20th Century Art

Carolyn Davis

The Arthur Hall Smith Prize was established in memory of Arthur Smith, Professor Emeritus of Painting. This fund supports an annual award presented to an Art History graduate or undergraduate student who has demonstrated exceptional research and writing skills in the area of nineteenth and twentieth-century art. A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Professor Smith received his initial training in drawing from his father who was a naval engineer. Concurrently, teachers at his school and local artists provided additional instruction. Enrolling at Illinois Wesleyan University, he excelled as a scholar and artist. In the case of the latter, his rigorous training was based on master works and techniques. Upon graduation, Professor Smith was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to continue his arts study in general and painting, specifically, at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and private studios in Paris. There he further advanced his thematic, technical and stylistic explorations in concert

with a program of intellectual study, especially of French art history, literature and language. His further study was interrupted by the outbreak of the Korean War, and, consequently, enlistment in the army. An infantry sergeant, he was stationed in Korea, making his contribution as a soldier, while taking advantage of first-hand exposure to Asian art and techniques which made an indelible impact, fully evidenced in his later drawings and paintings. Following his military service, Professor Smith settled in Seattle, Washington, where he worked with Mark Toby, who became both mentor and friend, encouraging his younger colleague's study of new philosophies and stylistic explorations, especially that of Abstraction. What defined Professor Smith's mature work was the underlying base of references: master drawing and painting, Korean and Japanese prints and painting, especially sumi black ink painting, and contemporary Abstract painting

and prints. Inevitably, his art was also built on an astounding command of intellectual thought, history, literature, music, and Art History. Throughout his career at George Washington University, he remained a serious and accomplished student of the latter. Each discipline – Fine Arts and Art History – not only informed the other but ultimately formed a perfect synthesis in his paintings and drawings. The

Arthur Hall Smith Prize represents recognition and confirmation of outstanding scholarly achievement at George Washington University of graduate and undergraduate Art History students. While it fully recognizes and honors their laudable academic accomplishment it speaks with confidence to each recipient of sustained dedication and ultimately meaningful professional contribution to the study of Art History.



Photo Credit: Denny Henry

Sons of the Revolution Award

Ella Nichols – “The Desert is of the Mind”: Perfection and Place in Agnes Martin’s Untitled #2”

Alejandra Velazquez – “Elizabeth Catlett: On Black Womanhood”

The Sons of the Revolution Award is given for an outstanding and substantial research paper on a topic in American art and history. The prize was founded by the Washington, D.C. chapter of the Sons of the Revolution to foster a critical appreciation for the role of art in American history, through the study of American art, design, or architecture from the Colonial era to the present. The Sons of the Revolution was founded in 1876 by members of the Society of the Cincinnati wishing to broaden participation in preserving the American heritage on the eve of this country’s centennial. Its mission is to promote knowledge and appreciation of the achievement of American independence and to foster fellowship among its members.



Photo Credit: Heather Herbstritt



photo credit: Harrison Jones

Undergraduate Student Features

SAMANTHA WALLEY

My favorite work of art is Yayoi Kusama's performance exhibition *Narcissus Garden*, at the 1966 Venice Biennale. Kusama sold mirror balls next to a sign that said "YOUR NARCISSISM FOR SALE," for two dollars each to attendees of the exhibition, putting consumerism in art at the forefront of her performance. In the following decades this performance adapted to floating mirror balls in ponds and fountains, which visitors take selfies in their reflection, evolving the meaning of narcissism for sale. I love this performance work as Kusama used her work and humor to point out a growing conversation about art, greed, and accessibility to art.



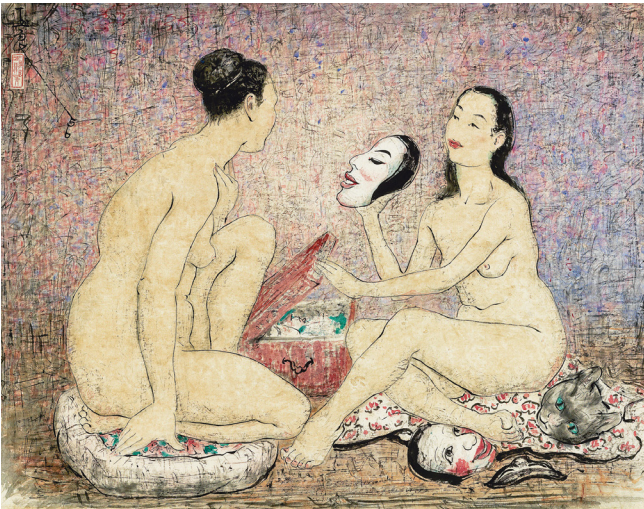
Hometown

Manhattan Beach, CA

Areas of Interest

American Post-War Art;
Abstract Expressionism; Art and Law





ARIANA HEFFNER

During my freshman year, I decided to enroll in an art history course on East Asian Modern and Contemporary art. Not only did that course lead to a deep interest in the subject, but also the decision to change my major from International Affairs to Art History. Ever since that first class, I have continually researched the field, resulting in the introduction of a wide range of artists. An all-time favorite is Yangzhou-born, Paris-based Pan Yuliang and her painting *Nudes and Masks* (1956). There is so much I could say about this beautiful work of art. The significance of the female nude in Pan Yuliang's work or the meaning behind the masks included in the scene. Pan Yuliang dedicated her art career to finding ways to merge traditional Chinese and European art conventions, and paintings like "Nudes and Masks" hold a special place in my heart.



Hometown
Hong Kong

Areas of Interest
East Asian Modern & Contemporary Art

KATHERINE SOPHIA SULLIVAN

I first saw Manet's *Olympia* (1863) in AP Art History sophomore year of high school. I had never been interested in art history before, as I thought that it was all names and dates. It wasn't until I was told the story of the connection between this painting and the famed "Venus of Urbino" that my attention was caught. I was fascinated by how a painting could cause such nationwide scandal.



Hometown
Evanston, IL

Areas of Interest
Modern & Contemporary



CATHERINE GILLE

Winter Harmony (1890/1900) by John Henry Twachtman, on display in the National Gallery of Art, evokes a calm feeling within me. It reminds me of a painting that I once studied years ago, before knowing that art history was something that I wanted to pursue; a painting whose title has long since escaped my memory. As it feels so reminiscent of the work that initially piqued my desire to study art, I can't help but appreciate and continually return to it. About the composition itself, I admire the soft, blurry blend of the winter snow with the various shades of pastels that create a lovely muted landscape. To me, the simplicity is evocative.

Hometown
Virginia Beach, VA

Areas of Interest
Contemporary Art; East & South East
Asian Art





ADRIANA MARBELLA VERGARA

Throughout my academic career, I have found myself coming back to Jacob Lawrence's *Migration Series* (1940-41). I have revisited the work multiple times to explore different themes and panels in the 60-part series. I am lucky to have grown up with access to the Museum of Modern Art where half of the series is located and to have seen it in person. I am happy to say that moving to DC for college gave me the opportunity to see the other half of the series at The Phillips Collection. Being able to view the series in its entirety gave me an even greater appreciation for the work and solidified it as an integral part of my art history coursework. This series is one of perseverance and strength and it has had a profound impact on how I have come to understand the time period during which it was created and come to appreciate Jacob Lawrence's artwork.

Hometown
Westfield, NJ

Areas of Interest
Art Conservation; Contemporary Art

ISABELLA ANN SCHUSTER

The Chigi vase, created during the Corinthian era and found in an Etruscan tomb around 1881, is a fascinating artwork I studied. It may be the earliest known example of a wine jug/olpe/sagging pitcher. While most scholars consider the vase to be the most technical masterpiece of Archaic Greek vase painting, the most informative part of the Chigi vase is its inscription, for it reveals the Judgement of Paris to be the subject. My favorite aspect of the material is the rough ashlar and quasi-polygonal masonry. The Chigi vase includes depictions of battle scenes, horsemanship, and hunts where such thematic unity reveals issues including the stages of maturation of the Corinthian male, the interpretation of every day, the exotic, the heroic, and the divine in the lives of mortals.



Hometown
Muttontown, NY

Areas of Interest
South Asian Textiles; European Art of the
Early 19th Century





MOLLY DEWOOD RISK

Mountains and Sea (1952) by Helen Frankenthaler has become one of my favorite paintings; combining landscape, nature, and emotive technicalities that create her iconic work. Each brushstroke has a story of its own, the colors flow and mesh together just like the tides represented. I first encountered this work in a Modern American Art course as we briefly touched over Frankenthaler and her mastery of understanding complex human emotions mixing with the surrounding nature and implementing them both on a canvas. I love the way the colors collide as your eyes observe the work, and how delicately intricate each aspect of brushwork, lines, and color are applied to the canvas.

Hometown
Westfield, IN

Areas of Interest
Dutch & Flemish Renaissance; Modern & Contemporary Art

**Hometown**

Boonton, New Jersey

Areas of Interest

Modern Abstract Art

OLIVIA NIUMAN

I first learned about Joan Mitchell's work *City Landscape* (1955) in Introduction to American Art, which was the first Art History class I took, and the one that made me decide to change my major to Art History. This painting was the first work I saw by Joan Mitchell, who quickly became my favorite artist. This painting marked a shift in her work to a more mature style, and it also reflects the way that both the natural environment and built urban environment were a part of her idea of "landscape." She had such an intuitive sense of color and space, something I really admire and aim to emulate in my own work. She once said "I carry my landscapes around with me," which pinpoints what I love about abstraction: the way you can capture a feeling, mood, or essence of a thing drawn from your own memory and express it through pure color.





CAROLINE GRACE MULLEN

Vermeer is an amazing artist to learn and work from; his work with light cannot be overstated. This specific piece, *A Lady Writing A Letter* (c. 1665), is one that I recreated in my Materials, Methods, and Techniques of Art History class with Professor Reuther. Painting this work using the techniques and materials that Vermeer used opened my eyes to the mastery that painting requires and peaked my interest in the conservation and restoration of art.

Hometown
Chatham, MA

Areas of Interest
16th-19th Century European Court Art;
Greek & Roman Art





Hometown
Long Beach, CA

Areas of Interest
Modern Art

TAYLOR DELAINE MILEFCHIK

The Magic Flower Game (1941) by Dorothea Tanning is the work that made me fall in love with Tanning's art and her role in modern art. This particular work is so haunting. It's intriguing and makes the viewer wonder what is going on? Who is this child? What is the game? I wrote one of my favorite essays about *The Magic Flower Game* and Tanning's contributions to modern art and surrealism which made me fall in love with her artwork and surrealism as a whole. Eventually, my personal discovery of Tanning led me to write my all-time favorite essay about women in modern art and what little representation they receive in museums.





ANN GRACE JUNEAU

I had never been a particularly huge fan of Whistler's work but after first seeing this work, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* (1862), I was immediately captivated. After looking at this closely it is so captivating in such an eerie way that you have to keep looking at all of the intricate details. The frantic hair juxtaposed with the straight laced dress makes it impossible to ignore!

Hometown
Pittsburgh, PA

Areas of Interest
Modern & Contemporary; the Art Market





PIPER MARY FORSTL

A print of this work, Roy Lichtenstein's *American Indian Theme VI* (1980), used to hang over the couch in my Grandmother's living room since before I was born. This was my first experience looking at art and questioning its meaning beyond the question of what it is actually representing. This started my interest in art and influenced me to pursue it as a degree. While I don't have any profound effect this work had on me to share, it definitely exposed me to the process of thinking that we use in this discipline.

Hometown

New Canaan, CT, USA

Areas of Interest

Contemporary Art; Decorative Arts





AMANDA MARY MSALLEM

While it is incredibly challenging to select a single favorite work of art, what comes to mind actually strays from my areas of interest. Rembrandt's *Lucretia* (1664), was the first work I completed a major research project on at GW, and sparked my love for studying art history at GW. Her tragedy rooted in heroism is contrasted by her poised elegance, all caught in a frozen moment of intensity. Lucretia's transcendent gaze captures the viewer, reeling us in. Lucretia unexpectedly captivated me, and my study of Rembrandt work helped me realize my passion for art history, research, and exploration.

Hometown

Brooklyn, New York

Areas of Interest

Ancient Greek & Roman Art & Architecture; Modern & Contemporary Art





Graduate Student Features

Photo Credit: Heather Herbstritt



Hometown
Fairfax, Virginia

Areas of Interest
Early Modern Spanish & Latin American Art; Post-Tridentine European Art and Cross-Cultural Marian Imagery from Various Time Periods, Cultures, and Religions

CAROLYN ASHLEY DAVIS

I originally encountered Henry Ossawa Tanner's *Annunciation* (1898) during my first semester as a graduate student and have a personal attachment to it. I find Mary's emotional state remarkably realistic, reflecting the loneliness and confusion of being confronted with the monumental news of bearing the Son of God. Despite the age-old rendering of the Annunciation, Tanner renders it in a refreshing and realistic way, with abstraction and simplicity. There is beauty in the humility of this image—allowing for the viewer to relate, empathize, and even aspire towards Mary's holiness. Tanner explored themes of loneliness, sorrow, and hardships in biblical scenes as an expression of his own adversities as a Black American artist painting during the late 19th century. I'm intrigued by how Tanner juxtaposes religion and spirituality with realism, adding to the ingenuity of his work. Ultimately, the *Annunciation* has shaped my subsequent research, which focuses on unique and diverse pictures of holy women.

GARY JAMES CALCAGNO

I was struck by this 18th century French dress because of the Orientalist motifs. The voluminous structure of the dress also mimics the architecture of the pagoda motif in typical French flamboyance. Since the dress is also made of silk, it is a unique example of translated culture both visually and in its material. Fashion here becomes a reflection of cultural exchange that is a recurring interest of mine.

Hometown
Benicia, CA

Areas of Interest
French Art; Transatlantic Trade;
Costume History





ARIANA ILISSA KAYE

I selected Robert Rauschenberg's *Bed* (1955), as it displays the kind of creativity that overcomes my mind when I am in my own bed. I dream about my scholarly work and the kind of inclusive scholarship I want to pursue. Rauschenberg's bed is a kind of self portrait, using his own quilt as his medium. I am interested in the way that artists use different media such as glass, fabric beads, and others. "Bed" expresses the chaos in Rauschenberg's own bed or broadly in his private life. He lived at a time where it was not acceptable to be who he was as a queer man. I chose this because of my interest in highlighting queer and feminist narratives in art and making sure narratives that historically were obscured due to discrimination will now see the light of day and of scholarship.



Hometown
Ra'anana, Israel

Areas of Interest
Contemporary Art



KENDALL TAYLOR HANNER

I often find myself mirroring Albrecht Dürer's frustrated personification of Melancholy, titled *Melencolia I* (1514). I ponder the persistent urge to answer all of life's questions and make sense of the world around me. Identifying with the winged Melancholy, a figure of pure imagination by a German Renaissance master, is thought provoking—have people truly evolved through history as much as we would like to believe? Melancholy transcends time, manifesting internally in generations of humans.



Hometown
Austin, Texas

Areas of Interest
19th-20th Century American Art; Interwar Period German Art; Medieval Art



EMMA ALDRIDGE VEON

This still of Hannah Wilke, entitled *Through the Large Glass* (1976), posing as a glamour model behind Marcel Duchamp's masterwork *Large Glass* (1915–1923) inspired an exploration into politics, linguistics, gender, labor, and aesthetics that I hope to continue for the rest of my life.



Hometown
Philadelphia, PA

Areas of Interest
Contemporary Art; Feminist Performance Art; Body Art

ALEJANDRA VELAZQUEZ



During the fall of 2020 in Professor Von Barghahn's class, I researched a genre of art called the Danse Macabre, *Dance of Death* (17th century). This genre of art grew as a response to the severe sickness and death that people experienced during the Black Plague. Researching this during our own pandemic was eye-opening, and allowed me to feel a sense of connection with people from the Middle Ages, as well as reflect on how art continues to be a daily part of how we deal with our surrounding environment.

Hometown
McAllen, TX

Areas of Interest
Medieval Art; Latinx Art; Islamic Art



Gallery 102

Gallery 102 is committed to the exhibiting of contemporary art, including work from GW & Corcoran students, D.C.-area artists, and nationally recognized artists of all mediums. The gallery provides practical curatorial experience to the student body. Students have the opportunity to exhibit work, curate shows and install exhibitions. The Student Exhibitions Committee consists of GW and Corcoran students – undergraduate and graduate, majors and non-majors, artists and art historians – who both develop innovative, original, and thought-provoking exhibitions and invite a select group of guest curators to present exhibitions each semester.

VASC (Visiting Artists & Scholars Committee)

The Visiting Artists and Scholars Committee brings respected established and emerging practitioners in the arts to present public lectures, conduct one-on-one critiques, lead small seminars or reading discussions, and share informal meals with students. All VASC lectures are free and open to the public. The lecture programs are organized by the Visiting Artists and Scholars Committee (VASC). Run by BA, MA, and MFA students, the committee brings six to eight artists and scholars to speak on campus each year.



Photo Credit: Denny Henry

GRADUATING STUDENTS NOT FEATURED

Undergraduates

Reilly Cornwall

Jessica Pica

Sarah Dunn

Graduates

Heather Herbstritt

Hope Thomson

Photo Credit: Heather Herbstritt



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the faculty, staff, and students of the Corcoran Art History Program for adapting and making this academic year successful, despite the distance.

Corcoran Art History Leadership

Barbara von Barghahn,
Program Head

Mika Natif,
Director of Graduate Studies

Alexander Dumbadze,
Director of Undergraduate Studies

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Photo Credit: Denny Henry

Notes

Notes

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