2019-2020 upended any notion of a “normal” academic year, though such a thing has never existed nor should it. And make no mistake, the murder of George Floyd, Breana Taylor, and others—the unimaginable numbers of Black and Brown deaths—and the loss, suffering, and health injustices of COVID-19, utterly exceed the format and purpose of a newsletter. But the point to emphatically make is that we must be upended by what has happened this year, and not, indeed, this year alone. We must engage with the struggle against alienation and the wreckage of lives, communities, and collective opportunity.

We believe Black Lives Matter. We reject the racism, violence, and injustice that Black, indigenous, LGBTQI, disabled, and other communities have for so long fought against.

We take up this struggle in our academic department—not simply “out there.” Learning, knowledge, and intellectual freedom, the bedrock of the university, mean nothing without collective recognition, justice, and liberation in our work and learning spaces, in the acknowledging care of our voices and actions, and in our rejection of technocratic reforms and of merely symbolic gestures against hard-structured and defended inequalities. We have deep individual commitments and long-standing practices, but as a department we are responsible to the common good of our community, to the use of power with not over others in the work of equity and inclusion. A politics, then, of our collective future.

2020 was tumultuous even before SARS-CoV-2. We stood in solidarity with the UC graduate student wildcat strike for a cost-of-living increase. Although the pandemic chilled organizing, the harms of academic hierarchy, unfair labor compensation, and unlivable stipends remain and have deepened. Then the pandemic shuttered the campus, sending us into dispersed and unequal spaces and into arduous forms of confined being, uncertain and anxious. Our department faced nothing unique, of course, but the collapse of “business as usual” at UC Berkeley further laid bare the university’s complicity in inequality and its violent past, beginning with its occupation of xučyun (Huichin), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo Ohlone. The pandemic’s economic destabilization of the campus is horrifying in what it portends even as it further exposes the financial and moral failures of decades-long privatization.

As art historians committed to equality and inclusion, we see these crises saturated with images and bodies, and demanding response. The visual evidence of police murder and brutality, historical images of settler colonialism, slavery, lynching, misogyny, and other categories of oppression, all to be interrogated still and anew. Public statues celebrating white supremacy pulled down by communities and allies in age-old practices of revolutionary iconoclasm. Counter-monuments that visualize, embody, and speak other histories. And diverse artworks that disorient history, vision, and embodiment, as Nicole Fleetwood writes, “aestheticize difference as belonging.” We believe in the power of aesthetic experiences and forms to register and shape history, and it remains an honor, pleasure, and our commitment to work as educators, to call History of Art our academic home. Classes may still be online as we await vaccination, and even though we remain exiled from our accustomed spaces in Doe and elsewhere on campus, we report to work with a mandate to join with our brilliant students to examine art from myriad places and times, adopting (and adapting) critical, engaged, and historically grounded perspectives to do so. This is the heart of what we do and value as an academic community.

2020-21 brings focused work on equity, inclusion, and climate, a department-wide effort to interrogate complicity in perpetuating racism, sexism, and ableism. This work is immediate and long-term, individual and collective. More than merely a review of curriculum, admissions, hiring, student support, and other matters, it is a struggle against silencing, inequality, and harm. We must listen and acknowledge, empower, act, and change. It is not enough to be “resilient” through these crises, and we refuse a “return to normal.” We commit to this effort even as the pandemic threatens our public mission like never before.

Join us in this effort: we are linked with you in a global community of alumni and friends. Keep your eye on our department website as we make more visible our diverse, collaborative, and engaged activities. Some of our projects and achievements are featured here. We welcome your responses and news.

Greg Levine, Professor and Chair
Anneka Lenssen, Associate Professor and Vice Chair
Ivy Mills Appointed Continuing Lecturer in Visual and Literary Cultures of Africa and the African Diaspora

Since she joined the department in 2014, Ivy has taught a wide range of courses on the arts and visual cultures of Africa and the African diaspora, and has served as the department’s Reading and Composition Program Coordinator. Trained in African Diaspora Studies at UC Berkeley, she conducted Fulbright-funded research on Senegalese cultural production and taught university courses during a four-year residency in Dakar. She has ongoing research projects on queer animality and social death in Senegalese art, folktales, and cinema; comedic whiteface performance; gendered piety in Wolof melodrama and contemporary Senegalese art; and visual activism in Nigeria. She co-curated (with Sugata Ray) the library exhibition Love across the Global South: Popular Cinema Cultures of India and Senegal, and has moderated conversations with artists and curators for the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco and the Berkeley Art Museum.

Lauren Kroiz Appointed Hearst Museum Faculty Director

Professor Lauren Kroiz has been selected to serve as the Faculty Director of the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology for a five-year term. Kroiz will succeed Dr. Benjamin Porter, who stepped down on December 31, 2019, and will join Executive Director Dr. Caroline Jean Fernald in the leadership of the museum. Since joining Berkeley’s faculty in 2013, Kroiz has taught a range of topics in the history of American art, photography, material culture, and modernism, including courses on avant-gardism, race and representation, technologies of imaging, and meanings of medium, and museum studies. She is a Faculty Curator of photography, paintings, and works of art on paper at the Hearst Museum, as well as affiliate faculty in the American Studies Program and the Center for Race and Gender. Kroiz is also active at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) where she chairs the Academic Advisory Committee. In 2019, together with Associate Professor Leigh Raiford and the students from their graduate seminar, Kroiz co-organized the exhibition About Things Loved: Blackness and Belonging at BAMPFA featuring objects from its permanent collection and loans from the Hearst Museum.

Kroiz plans to engage both graduate and undergraduate students from a broad range of disciplines in classroom and hands-on work at the Museum. And her scholarly and curatorial work evince a deep understanding of the impact of colonialism on practices of collecting, archiving, and displaying; this knowledge and critical acumen will serve her well in the Museum’s work on repatriation and relations with Native American governments and communities.

An Update from the V-Lab

It has been a busy, wonderful year at the Visualization Lab for Digital Art History (V-Lab). In the Spring, we addressed the impact of COVID-19 on our discipline with an online conference, Art History in Quarantine, a program co-organized with researchers from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, UCLA, and the University of The Andes. Over three hundred participants from five continents participated. We also continued to conduct workshops in image processing, machine learning, and 3D modeling, and adapted our training offerings to a Zoom format.

In September, Justin Underhill taught a course on image forensics at the University of Málaga as part of their joint initiative in digital art history with UC Berkeley. The V-Lab has also begun to work with undergraduate researchers who are collaborating with faculty: students are using photogrammetry with Professor Angelova; 3D modeling with Professor Lenssen; and scanning and cataloguing with Professor Grigsby.

ART HISTORY IN QUARANTINE: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS, DIGITAL FUTURES

Poster for Art History in Quarantine Conference, held online, April 10, 2020

Screenshot from Justin Underhill’s course session in the University of Málaga/UC-Berkeley Digital Art History Summer School
Matt Culler completed his dissertation “Creating Creation: Francisco de Holanda between Theory and Practice,” which addresses a sixteenth-century Portuguese artist who was trained as a manuscript illuminator and is best known for his contributions to Italian art theory. Matt has made a major contribution by investigating Hollanda’s world-making in relationship to the colonial project of Portuguese global empire. Recently, Matt held visiting professor positions at Georgia State University and Kenyon College. (By Professor Todd Olson)

In Karine Douplitzky’s dissertation “Du Naturel or Philippe de Champaigne Against Nature,” an extraordinary study of the French painter (1602-1674), she considers the multiple aspects of portraiture by an artist full of seeming contradictions: a servant of the French monarchy who was affiliated with the Jansenists, a reclusive religious community that was condemned by the papacy. Her final chapter is a subtle study of the artist’s use of a death mask in the production of portraits for the Jansenists and a meditation on Blaise Paschal. (By Professor Todd Olson)

Jez Flores-García completed her dissertation, “Camp as a Weapon: Chicano Identity and Asco’s Aesthetics of Resistance,” in Spring 2020. This rigorously researched and incisive thesis argues that the Los Angeles-based group Asco used feminist and queer tactics to critique structures of power and stereotypes about Chicanx representation in the 1970s and 1980s. She is currently teaching in the curatorial studies program at the California College of the Arts. (By Professor Julia Bryan-Wilson)

Elizabeth McFadden’s dissertation “Fur Dress, Art, and Class Identity in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England and Holland” combined the study of paintings, material culture, and social and economic history to trace the movement of fur as clothing across continents, classes, and genders over two centuries. In a unique study, Elizabeth analyzes how from the robes of Henry VIII to the burguer’s beaver hat, fur spoke of position and status with a complexity that few other materials could rival. She is now serving as a lecturer at Hood College. (By Professor Elizabeth Honig)

Aleksandr (Sasha) Rossman is finishing his fascinating dissertation, “On the Table: Episodes in the Political Life of an Early Modern Object.” His study takes on three tables in three countries: Bess of Hardwick’s “Eglantine table” at Hardwick Hall, the round table at which representatives of the nations of Europe gathered to ratify the Treaty of Münster, as depicted by Gerard ter Borch, and a table from Versailles whose stone inlay showed a map of France. Sasha shows how these tables, but also tables in general, functioned to represent and to organize rituals of power. (By Professor Elizabeth Honig)

Despite the absence of in-person celebrations that usually mark our annual commencement, we are thrilled that thirty-two students received their Bachelor of Arts Degree. Jamie Danis was Valedictorian and the Departmental Citation was awarded to Tina Kremzner-Hsing. Shreya Kareti was awarded the Cahill Prize for her Honors Thesis on the transcultural histories of painting in eighteenth-century Awadh and Chelsea Glickman was awarded the Stewart Prize for her Honors Thesis on defying geographic borders and “Egyptianness” in the Surrealist works of Amy Nimr, Ida Kar, and Lee Miller.

The five recipients of the Doctoral Degree were Matthew Culler, Karine Douplitzky, Jessica Flores Garcia, Elizabeth McFadden, and Sasha Rossman. The primary advisors have provided brief accounts of their work.

The History of Art Department’s Commencement ceremony took place on a virtual platform this year and can be viewed here: Undergraduate Commencement, Graduate Commencement.
Students examine paintings and vessels that represent the transcultural gardens in the Indian Ocean. The Five Tables of the Indian Ocean was exhibited at BAMPFA on December 5, 2019.

The students in Professor Sugata Ray’s Fall 2019 undergraduate lecture course, History of Art 30, curated December’s Five Tables exhibition at BAMPFA. Mining the museum’s collection, the students selected artworks and objects—some of which have never before been displayed—to convey a thoughtful narrative of the transcultural nature of the Indian Ocean. The exhibition focused on three topics: the garden, mobility, and water. Garden typologies were products of Indian Ocean exchange, and artistic depictions of gardens provide insight into trade as well as the dynamics between women, men, and nature. Physical movement across the Indian Ocean region made the reciprocal exchange and multifaceted adaptation of objects and ideas possible. As the medium connecting the vast Indian Ocean trading network, water played an instrumental role in this circulation. It functioned both as a vital resource and as a powerful force exerting an indelible impact on the environment, people, and animals dependent on it. The student-designed catalog was published with the generous support of the Museum Social Justice Initiative. The exhibition was an experiment in involving large undergraduate classes in hands-on museum curating, keeping the UC Berkeley’s Strategic Plan Signature Initiative Environmental Change, Sustainability, and Justice in mind.
History of Art alumnus Rue Mapp reflects on life at Berkeley and Beyond

My time in the Berkeley’s History of Art department reinforced the power of visual representation as a window into what a society values, and the potential of images to reshape narratives. I took specific inspiration from Sojourner Truth’s cartes de visites that leveraged the intersection of photography and the postal system to raise the visibility of her leadership and galvanize support for the anti-slavery movement of her time. As someone who always loved and felt empowered by the outdoors, I quickly came to the realization that I did not see enough images of people like me - Black people in the outdoors as strong, beautiful, and free. So just before graduating from Cal, I started the blog I whimsically called Outdoor Afro, using the nascent medium of social media in 2009, to show and tell a new narrative that would go on to attract and engage more people who loved the outdoors, but not seen in the glossy magazines of the day. For many of our early subscribers, Outdoor Afro became the first time Black people felt included in the narrative of not only who could participate in outdoor activities, but also who can be experts and leaders in nature. Today Outdoor Afro has grown into a nationally recognized organization, present in 30 states with an outdoor participation network of 45,000 people.

Alumni reunite at Peabody Essex Museum

In September 2019, three former Mellon Curatorial Graduate Interns reunited with their curatorial mentor for a private luncheon with the Asian Export Art Visiting Committee to celebrate the opening of the Asian Export Art gallery in the new wing of the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA. Under the guidance of Karina H. Corrigan (H.A. Crosby Forbes Curator of Asian Export Art), William H. Ma (Fall 2013), Susan Eberhard (Spring 2017), and Patricia J. Yu (Fall 2018) each worked on successive stages of the exhibition project from its inception to its completion. Their shared research interests in Sino-Western cross-cultural encounters and exchanges brought them to the Peabody Essex Museum, which has the foremost collection of objects made in Asia for the lucrative China Trade of the 18th and 19th centuries. While at PEM, each graduate student also pursued their own research projects in the museum collections and archives: William peered into an elaborately carved ivory desk and mirror; Susan examined the hallmarks on export silver; and Patricia studied auction records in the department files.
Diliana Angelova
Associate Professor Early Christian and Byzantine Art

Diliana Angelova is grateful to have been able to do the following: teach wonderful students, work over the summer with Undergraduate Research Apprentices, cooperate with Justin Underhill from the V-Lab on various projects, host Professor Sarah Bassett from Indiana University and celebrate in person with colleagues and students, present her research at an in-person conference in fall 2019, deliver a virtual talk for the Hearst Museum on late antique textiles, hike in the Teton Mountains with her family, chair the department in the turbulent month of June, participate in a faculty search at the department in Near Eastern Studies, get a new puppy, see a halo phenomenon at the Albany bulb, and grow a lush tomato garden.

Giotto Conference

The interdisciplinary international conference “Transformation & Modernity around 1300” addressed themes from Henrike Lange’s book Giotto’s Arena Chapel and the Triumph of Humility (forthcoming with Cambridge University Press). The speakers explored five key topics: “The Sources of Antiquity as Other” - Prof. Ulrich Pfisterer (Director, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich & LMU), Prof. Andrew Stewart, Prof. Todd Olson; “Crystallization: Matter and Illusion” - Prof. Whitney Davis, Prof. Christopher Hallcott, Prof. Kris Ravetto-Biagioli (UCLA Film Studies); “Mystic Intelligence: Vision, Words, Cognition” - Prof. Brenda Schildgén (UCD Comparative Literature), Prof. Thomas Dandelet (UCB History), Prof. Jonathan Sheehan (UCB History); “Giotto Historiographies” - Prof. Roberta Morasini (Wake Forest University Italian), Prof. Anne Derbes (Hood College History of Art), Prof. Randolph Starn (UCB History), kindly supported by Prof. Alessandro Nova (Director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut - Max Planck Institute, Florence & Goethe-Universität Frankfurt); and “Modernity & Modernities” - Prof. Alexander Nagel (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University), Prof. Mario Biagioli (Stanford CASBS / UCLA Law & Communication), Prof. Michael Subialka (UCD Comparative Literature). The meeting was held as a memoriam to Martin Warnke (1937-2019) and finished with a graduate round table featuring Daisy Ament, Alice Fischetti, and Sean Wyer.

Poster for “Transformation & Modernity around 1300” by Laetitia Coustar, Berkeley Class of 2020.

Diliana Angelova with her family (including a new puppy!) at Point Richmond.

Viewing the halo phenomenon at the Albany Bulb.
Julia Bryan-Wilson spent the last year as so many of us did, consumed with fears about the pandemic and energized by the hopes generated around the Black Lives Matter uprisings. Her major international group show Histories of Dance, scheduled to open in June 2020 at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo in Brazil, was cancelled due to covid but the catalogue she co-wrote and the scholarly anthology she co-edited were both published. In addition, her co-edited special issue of Third Text on amateurism appeared, and she published texts on figures such as Maria Auxiliadora, Lotty Rosenfeld, Wendy Red Star, and Shinique Smith. The Arts Research Center, which she directs, hosted events with an emphasis on Black and Indigenous artists and poets, including Tourmaline, Julie Mehretu, Joy Harjo, and Cannupa Hanksa Luger.

Whitney finished the third volume of his trilogy on visual culture, Space, Time, and Depiction, and also completed a book of his critical and historiographical essays, including chapters on Hegel, Pater, Wölfflin, Boas, Cassirer, Gombrich, Danto, Goodman, Gell, Baxandall, and Summers as well as chapters on visual culture studies and world art studies. Forthcoming publications include essays on psychoanalysis and the study of American art, Danto’s concept of artistic transfiguration and the birth of art, and new analytic approaches to dating the prehistory of depiction. He gave invited lectures at NYU, Columbia, Penn, the Courtauld, and elsewhere, and talks at CAA and ASA. He contributed to an exhibition of the portrait sculpture of Bertel Thorvaldsen in Copenhagen, but, due to travel restrictions, was unable to attend the opening in March.

Despite 2020, Aglaya Glebova’s first year on the Berkeley faculty was a wonderfully eventful one. In November, she had a very productive workshop on her book on Aleksandr Rodchenko’s photography (forthcoming from Yale University Press). Participants included Christina Kaiser (Northwestern), Spyros Papapetros (Princeton), Andrei Pop (Chicago), Kristin Romberg (UIUC), and Berkeley’s own Atreyee Gupta. Many members of History of Art and Slavic attended and offered valuable feedback. This year, the book also received a Graham Foundation publication grant. In the Spring and Fall, Aglaya taught courses on European modernism, modern art, architecture and design, and appropriation—the latter two entirely on Zoom. She continues to be deeply impressed by the energy and resilience of Berkeley students. Shortly before the newsletter went to press, Aglaya received the exciting news of her promotion with tenure.

Cover of Histórias Da Dança: Antologia (Histories of Dance; Anthology), eds. Julia Bryan-Wilson and Olivia Ardui (Museu de Arte de São Paulo, 2020)
Somehow just prior to the eruption of Covid-19, I enjoyed what now seems a dream: in-person conversations with faraway scholars and their students. I spoke about “Blackness and Blindness” at the University of Georgia, Athens, an institution contending with its location on slave burial sites; and I gave a talk, “Sojourner Truth by Committee,” at the “Black Images, Black Histories” conference at Duke University. My lecture concerned my contribution to the creation of the first statue honoring non-fictional women – suffragists - in New York City’s Central Park. In August 2020, the finished statue was unveiled and the sculptor Meredith Bergmann credited my graduate advisees (Delphine Sims, Vanessa Jackson, Ryan Serpa, and Grace Kuipers) and myself for improving her representation of Sojourner Truth. Such an odd and timely antecedent to the explosion of debates about commemoration, inclusivity, erasure, and Black Lives Matter.

I remember my tearfulness abruptly saying goodbye to my beloved students in my freshman seminar, upper-division lecture course, and graduate seminar in March 2020. In April, I participated in a Cal Conversation, Literature and the Arts in Times of Crisis, partly to acknowledge our collective grief. These were the very early days of the Covid crisis and learning to teach online. Now remote instruction is more familiar, endlessly challenging, and all the more urgent. While frustrating in myriad ways, teaching the young whose dreams have so abruptly been cut short (for now, at least) is a lifeline both for them and for myself. My current COLOR! undergraduate seminar is a gift. At once isolated and globally dispersed, students seem to me all the more appreciative of their education. I have never read such intense and consistently excellent short papers as their playful attempts to describe color in a Bonnard painting. Art enables an exceptionally intense confrontation with our values, our histories, and our politics, and it also provides joy and solace during desperate times.

Atreyee Gupta
Assistant Professor of Global Modern Art and Modern and Contemporary South and Southeast Asian Art

Atreyee began 2019-2020 with a Townsend Assistant Professor Fellowship and ended the academic year with a Hellman fellowship for 2020-2021. She co-curated two exhibitions, both (re)shaped by virtual life: All that is Solid Melts into Air, which she co-curated with Larry Rinder and a group of HoA graduate and undergraduate students, opened at BAMPFA merely days before quarantine and subsequently took on a digital life. The second – Crisis and Creativity, a 72hr live-streamed artist residency with New Delhi-based Mithu Sen and Chicago-based Brendan Fernandes – was an experiment in critical curating that took virtuality and stasis as matter, material, and concept. (Link to residency program here). She continues to co-direct the UC Berkeley South Asia Art Initiative with three colleagues in Art Practice and Art History and helped to secure funding to inaugurate an annual PhD award for the best dissertation on any aspect of South Asian art or architecture. Her publications expanded upon her interest in the conceptualization of the global as it took shape in the past few years, especially in relation to the Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War. She is delighted to welcome Tausif Noor, her student in the Department of History of Art, who joined in Fall 2020.
Chris Hallett
Professor of Roman Art

2019-20 was the second year of Chris’ 4-year Traveling Seminar, ‘The Many Lives of Ancient Monuments’, supported by the Getty Foundation. In September the seminar’s twenty Turkish, Greek, and Bulgarian participants spent 10 days touring SE Turkey, visiting a series of ancient sites (including Antioch on the Cranes, Zeugma, Gobeklitepe, and Mount Nemrut) and some remarkable new archaeological museums (in Adana, Antakya, Gaziantep, and Sanliurfa).

In the Fall Chris gave lectures at Stanford and at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; he was a speaker at the Humanities West conference in San Francisco, Etruscan Italy: Life and Afterlife, organized by Lisa Pieraccini; and he published an essay on Roman mummy portraits in Funerary Portraiture in Greater Roman Syria, edited by Rubina Paja and Michael Blömer. 2019 also saw the appearance of Chris’ edited volume, Flesheaters: An international symposium on Roman sarcophagi, in the prestigious Sarkophag-Studien series of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI).

Imogen Hart
Assistant Adjunct Professor of Modern British Art and Material Culture

Looking back on the 2019–20 academic year, Imogen wistfully recalls the research and conference trips she took while travel was still possible. Highlights included a trip to London to study textiles by Althea McNish in the Victoria and Albert Museum’s Clothworkers’ Study Centre in December, and her first ever visits to Seattle and Chicago to present at MLA and CAA respectively in early 2020. Two new seminars—“The Arts and Crafts movement” and “Victorian Orientalisms”—took Imogen and her students to local sites including the Greene & Greene Thorsen House (pictured) and the exhibition James Tissot: Fashion and Faith at the Legion of Honor. In 2019–20 Imogen was a Townsend Fellow. She published in Winterthur Portfolio and the volume Teaching William Morris and spent much of summer 2020 proofreading her forthcoming book Sculpture and the Decorative in Britain and Europe, Seventeenth Century to Contemporary, co-edited with Claire Jones.
Jun Hu
Mr. and Mrs. Pai Ruchu Presidential Professor in the Arts and Humanities, Assistant Professor, Chinese Art and Architecture

In his first year at the department, Jun Hu had no sooner found his bearings on the fourth floor of Doe than the campus went into full lockdown. Prior to that, he traveled and presented his research in Seattle, New York, and San Francisco. In the spring semester, Hu taught two undergraduate courses “Sacred Arts in China” and “Space, Time, and Chinese Architecture.” Both allowed him to continue to work on his book manuscript The Perturbed Circle: Chinese Architecture and Its Periphery.

Henrike Christiane Lange
Assistant Professor of Italian Renaissance Art and Architecture

Henrike Lange taught a new medieval & early modern “Psychologies of Art” seminar, a course on spiritual seeing and reading, a new Botticelli seminar, and was part of the final Global Urban Humanities Fellowship cohort. Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 were also dedicated to the preparation of her Giotto conference (“Transformation & Modernity around 1300”) with local, regional, national, and international guests, and to the final edits of her Giotto book manuscript for Cambridge University Press. Lange hosted the concluding session of the Medieval Academy of America conference in lockdown live from Berkeley and has been teaching remotely ever since. Henrike won the Prytanean Faculty Award 2020 “for her record as a distinguished teacher, her demonstrated scholarly achievement, and her success as a role model for students at the University of California, Berkeley” (Prytanean Alumnae, Inc.) and is extremely grateful to the Prytanean Alumnae for their support of her work.
Anneka Lenssen
Associate Professor of Global Modern Art

The highlight of Anneka Lenssen’s 2019–20 academic year was receiving tenure! The happy news is a lone bright spot in an otherwise deeply challenging year, marked by a global pandemic that not only sent the Spring semester into online instruction but also made it all the more difficult—and all the more necessary—to mobilize against police violence in this country. Anneka’s book, Beautiful Agitation: Modern Painting and Politics in Syria (UC Press), has hit the shelves as of September 2020, aided in the final stretch by a Millard Meiss Publication Grant. Her co-edited anthology, Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents, continues to receive accolades, most recently in a special folio of responses in the Review of Middle East Studies. Because archival research and travel are curtailed, Anneka remains grateful for a February 2020 CAA panel organized by Sonal Khullar on the “Languages of Art History,” which generated a new project on Surrealist word/image relationships in Aleppo, Syria, during the not entirely postcolonial 1940s.

Greg Levine
Professor of Buddhist Visual Cultures and Eco Art History

2019–20? Ancient history. Hard to recall it, without falling into pre-COVID-19 nostalgia. Well, the graduate student wildcat strike for fair work and pay was news and still matters. So too UC-AFT’s negotiations on behalf of lecturers. Then the lock-down “pivot” to “resilient instruction.” The early days of administrative pandemic-magical thinking. A crash landing, more like it, followed by worse for many. How to teach, learn, write, support—in our remoteness. And summer? Black Lives Matter. Hat tips to our graduate students for pushing us to have hard conversations about our academic community and campus—leadership, complicated, imperfect as it always is. And an inspiring experiment with students from my spring lecture, Eco Art Asia: a book of their writing to edit and hopefully publish or at least zine—You Must Not Look Away: Letters to the Next Generation from Students of Eco Art History. Looking ahead, despite the following uncertainty.

Screenshot from Anneka Lenssen’s “Discussion on Primary Sources” at the American University of Beirut (showing a spread from her book, Beautiful Agitation: Modern Painting and Politics in Syria)

Greg Levine participating in UC system-wide action supporting the graduate student strike for a cost of living adjustment
Margaretta Markle Lovell
Professor of American Art and Architecture

Prof. Lovell developed a new graduate course, The Arts of Migration, and taught again the American Cultures seminar on American Folk, Indigenous, and Vernacular Arts developed some years ago to satisfy the University requirement termed by its founder, “intellectual affirmative action,” as well as the lecture course, Arts of the United States. She had the pleasure of serving on the dissertation committee for Elizabeth McFadden and on committees for several Senior Honors Theses brought to successful completion over the course of tumultuous Spring 2020. She served as peer reviewer for essays submitted to four journals, as Book Review Editor for Panorama, journal of the Association of Historians of American Art, as Academic Editor for Arts, as well as fellowship application reviewer for several post-docs and professional organizations. Most interesting, she served as External Reviewer to UCLA’s flourishing department of History of Art and Architecture. On campus she served on the Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction and its Subcommittee on the Humanities, as well as acting as Faculty Grad Advisor, Equity Advisor, Admissions, and Program Review Self-Study committees for the Folklore Graduate Program. Public service included Board membership for the American Antiquarian Association and the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, also chairing its Preservation Action Committee. Publications include a new essay on the work of Wayne Thiebaud for an exhibition celebrating his 100th birthday in November.

Todd Olson
Professor of Early Modern Art

Todd has been a member of the advisory board for the Graphic Arts Loan Collection (Morrison Library), assisting with acquisitions and participating in a series of online events during Fall 2021, honoring the 60+ year old campus program. Todd’s contribution, “Lasting Impressions: An Art Historian’s Perspective on Printmaking and the Graphic Arts Loan Collection,” involved the participation of undergraduate History of Art/Art Practice student Albie Cartagenes, who was also an undergraduate research apprentice and who, along with Helen Pinto, was a recipient of a URAP summer grant. Todd has been co-directing a seminar with Ivonne del Valle (Spanish and Portuguese) and Lynne Kimura (BAMPFA) as part of the Cal Conversations exhibition program. Several guest speakers, artist Sandy Rodriguez, LACMA curator Ilona Katzew and Prof. Yve Chavez (UCSC), joined the class via Zoom. Curated by Berkeley students, the exhibition highlights works in the museum’s permanent collection related to Latin America (Spring, 2021).
Lisa Pieraccini
Associate Adjunct Professor of First Millennium BCE Italy, Reception, Collecting

Lisa spent the fall of 2019 organizing a full day workshop sponsored by the History of Art Department and the Del Chiaro Center for Ancient Italian Studies. The workshop, Etruscan Identities: Image and Imagination, explored various aspects of Etruscan identity from the Etruscan and Roman periods all the way to the present. Scholars from the J. Paul Getty Museum, The University of Copenhagen as well as the department’s own Chris Hallett and UC Berkeley undergraduate, Rileigh Clarke gave papers. Lisa’s paper, “Images and Perception of Etruscan Identity” traced the story of the shifting political, academic and cultural trends which have directly impacted Etruscan identity up to the present. In January of 2020 Lisa was an invited speaker at two different panels at the Archaeological Institute of America’s annual meeting in Washington DC - “Fieldwork and Parenting: Challenges and New Directions,” sponsored by the Women in Archaeology (WIA) interest group as well as the panel on “Provenance Research in Museum Collections: Display and Publication” where Lisa and Rebecca Levitan (UCB graduate student), spoke of their work on the Etruscan collection at the Hearst Museum. Lisa was also the co-organizer in DC of a colloquium entitled: “Consumption, Ritual and Society: Recent Finds and Interpretive Approaches to Food and Drink in Etruria,” where she gave a paper on, “Visual Meals and Symbolic Consumption in Etruscan Tomb Painting.”

Sugata Ray
Associate Professor of South and Southeast Asian art

Sugata Ray spent much of 2020 at his dining table with a battered MacBook. As a 2020 Getty Scholar—of course virtually—Sugata worked on his book Indian Ocean Art Histories in the Age of Anthropocene Extinction and published essays on themes ranging from early modern animal studies and farming as resistance in Palestine to the political ecologies of air. His 2019 book Climate Change and the Art of Devotion received a number of accolades, including the American Academy of Religion’s annual Religion and the Arts Book Award. On campus, the South Asia Art Initiative, which Ray co-directs with colleagues in History of Art and Art Practice, launched a talk series and a virtual artists’ residency around the question of creativity in the time of a global pandemic. He looks forward to teaching a L&S Collaborative Research Seminar on art and ecology with Asma Kazmi (Art Practice) and Sharad Chari (Geography) and giving keynotes and book talks in China, India, the US, and Germany in 2021 (hopefully not via zoom!).
T.J. Clark

T.J. Clark’s last real-life stint before real life was suspended was a week of seminars and lectures at the University of Glasgow in early March. The highlight of the previous year had been a visit with Anne Wagner to Warsaw, to aid a brave band of young art historians mounting an exhibition on “Art against Fascism.” It was Polish Independence Day, and the Right was in the streets. In December Clark spoke at the Poetry Foundation in Chicago, as well as lecturing on Matisse at the University of Chicago. In lockdown he finished writing a book called ‘Climbing Path: Poems and Pictures,’ and worked on a book about Cezanne. An essay ‘What Hegel Would Have Said About Monet’ came out in the online journal nonsite in 2019, and an interview with Daniel Marcus and Daniel Spaulding in Selva.

Andy Stewart

Andy Stewart started his first year of retirement in Athens, working with Rebecca Levitan and Erin Lawrence in the Agora. After submitting two final articles to Hesperia on the hitherto unsuspected and unpublished sculptures of the Temple of Ares, and speaking at conferences in Athens and Paros, he returned to Berkeley in July to draw his pension, sail his boat Obsession on San Francisco Bay, and teach his curatorial seminar, “Hands On At The Hearst,” in fall. The coronavirus, however, spiked all his plans for spring and summer. Lectures in Eugene and Washington D.C., and another campaign in the Agora, were all canceled; instead, he caught up with other commitments and sailed occasionally when crew were available. Teaching Greek mythology to his twin granddaughters, Sophia and Giselle, and reading Greek with students and friends (all via Zoom), provided welcome diversions. As the Greeks say, sto mellon (“to the future!”)

Anne Wagner

Inevitably, this year’s activities have been curtailed by Covid-19. I can note the following: in late November 2019, I chaired a session in a symposium focused on an exhibition of the sculpture of David Smith occasioned by a retrospective at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and also contributed an essay to the catalogue. In mid November I gave a presentation on ‘Picasso, Kollwitz, and Maternity’ at a seminar at the University of Warsaw. In January 2020 I published a review of an exhibition of Kaethe Kollwitz’s graphics, and in July, one of a magnificent catalogue of Eve Hesse’s drawings, both for the London Review of Books. In March 2020, I gave a paper at a symposium organized by Jacqueline Rose at Birkbeck College, London, followed by a research seminar, ‘Sculpture’s Material Worlds,’ at the University of Glasgow. In mid-March, quarantine began.

Svetlana Alpers


Thadeus Dowad

A generous Paul Mellon Fellowship from the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) in 2018 sent me to Istanbul and Paris for two incredible years of dissertation research. From October 2020, I’ll be back in the US as a CASVA resident fellow, putting the finishing touches on my dissertation on Ottoman and European art and architecture ca. 1800. Next fall, I’m excited to be joining the faculty of Art History at Northwestern University, where I’ll be an assistant professor of global eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art.

Claire Ittner

Claire Ittner was supposed to have a calm and relaxing 2020 after passing her exams in November 2019! She survived her first presentation at CAA in February, and was able to conduct a few weeks of dissertation research at the Special Collections Research Center at the University of Chicago before everything shut down. She is currently the Chester Dale Fellow in the Modern and Contemporary department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where she is beginning research on her dissertation project, focused on the Rosenwald Fellowship program. She is excited to serve on the lecture series committee for the upcoming academic year. In her ample free time, she tutors New York City public school students in English and History, and is currently on her second course on bird identification with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
Rebecca Levitan

In 2019-2020 Rebecca was the Edward Capps Fellow at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. When the strict lockdown began in Greece in March, she elected to stay in Athens with only a few other students. Because of travel and safety restrictions, most major American archaeological projects in Greece were canceled and libraries closed. However, this unprecedented situation created an unusual opportunity when the lockdown was eventually lifted in Summer 2020 to work with local teams and pursue new endeavors in an almost-entirely empty field. In June Rebecca began a research project about the ancient colossal abandoned sculpture of Naxos with a colleague from the ASCSA, and in July she learned to survey with the Norwegian/Greek/American Small Cycladic Islands Project. All within the new parameters of social distancing! Some notes from Naxos may be read here: Blog

Beginning in January 2021, she reoriented towards Italy as a Samuel H. Kress Foundation/Emeline Hill Richardson pre-doctoral Rome Prize Fellow.

Yessica Porras

In January of 2020, Yessica Porras began her SSRC International Dissertation Research Fellowship in Colombia. During this trip she was able to photograph mural paintings for her dissertation project and create her first 3D rendering of the Convent of Santa Clara la Real in Tunja. Yessica first stayed in Bogotá where she worked at the Archivo General de la Nacion (AGN), the National Library, and the Luis Ángel Arango Library. She then traveled to Tunja, Colombia, where with the help of Doña Alba Arévalo Páez she was granted unlimited access to the Archivo Historico Regional de Boyacá, where she found documents dated from 1540 to the nineteenth century. Here, Yessica was able to collect over a hundred manuscripts such as testaments, foundations of churches and convents, royal edicts, lawsuits, letters, and others. Although her trip was interrupted by the pandemic in March, she was able to create strong relationships with fellow scholars and locals.

Shivani Sud

Mont Allen (PhD 2014)
Mont’s book with Cambridge University Press — “The Death of Myth on Roman Sarcophagi: Allegory and Visual Narrative in Late Antiquity” — went into production during the summer of 2020. He also won a highly competitive $100,000 “Humanities Connections Grant* from the NEH, awarded for his novel interdisciplinary project designed to lure STEM students into concurrent study of the humanities and the ancient world.

Letha Ch’ien (PhD 2014)
Though many of her planned activities were cancelled — enough conference papers for an edited volume — Letha Ch’ien kept busy. She became a fellow at the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, published “Polytopos: Multi-ethnic Practice in Venetian Imagery” in Cultures and Practices of Coexistence in the Multi-ethnic Cities of the Mediterranean World. She gave writing for the SF Chronicle a whirl, which means perhaps somebody actually read what she wrote. Involvement with the San José Museum of Art has been lots of fun, faculty governance less so.

Will Coleman is Director of Collections & Exhibitions at The Olana Partnership, working alongside NY State Parks to research, preserve, and interpret the 250-acre estate and global collections of Frederic Edwin Church in Hudson, NY. He’s also glad to show Berkeley folks (and their classes) around a very special place, whether in person or virtually. He has co-curated the exhibition ‘Cross Pollination: Headie, Cole, Church, and Our Contemporary Moment’ that will be on view at Olana and the Thomas Cole Site from 6/12-10/31/2021 and also travels to the Cummer Museum, Reynolda House, and Crystal Bridges. The catalogue is now available.

Rebekah Compton (PhD 2009)
In the spring of 2020, Rebekah Compton was promoted to the position of associate professor of Art and Architectural History at the College of Charleston. During the academic year, she received several grants, including the RSA–Samuel H. Kress Publication Subvention for Art Historians, for the illustration program of her book, Venus and the Arts of Love in Renaissance Florence, which will be published by Cambridge University Press in spring of 2021. Rebekah was also named a Rush H Kress Fellow for the 2020-2021 academic year at the Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies. Her upcoming projects include an exhibition of Arts and Crafts Pottery and historic Wabanaki baskets. Diana and her family are still enjoying life in Portland, Maine very much.

Sarah Louise Cowan (PhD 2019)
Sarah Louise Cowan is an assistant professor of art history at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. She researches modern and contemporary art of the Americas with a focus on the African diaspora. Her current book project, the first scholarly monograph on artist Howardena Pindell, develops the idea of Black feminist modernisms. This project received a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend in 2020.

Todd Cronan (PhD 2005)
Recently I’ve published essays on Le Corbusier and Matisse (nonsite), on Van Gogh (for the exhibition Through Vincent’s Eyes) as well as political essays like “Take It Down!” for Common Dreams, a piece for Jacobin on Oliver Cromwell Cox and “The Bauhaus Against Socialism” (in French and Dutch) for Lava. I’ve just completed a book on Rodchenko, Brecht and Eisenstein and I am in the final stages of a book on California Modern. I am also editing and introducing a deluxe edition of Minor White’s photographic daybooks, his Memorable Fancies, for Yale UP.

Diana Greenwold (PhD 2016)
Diana Greenwold opened the traveling exhibition, Mythmakers: The Art of Winslow Homer and Frederic Remington, this fall with an accompanying catalogue. She was thrilled to host her advisor, Margaretta Lovell, for a fascinating lecture about both artists over the summer. Her upcoming projects include an exhibition of Arts and Crafts Pottery and historic Wabanaki baskets. Diana and her family are still enjoying life in Portland, Maine very much.

Sharon Hecker (PhD 1999)
Aaron M. Hyman (PhD 2017)

Aaron M. Hyman is assistant professor in the Department of the History of Art at Johns Hopkins University. His first book, Rubens in Repeat: The Logic of the Copy in Colonial Latin America, is forthcoming (July, 2021) with the Getty Research Institute.

Chalk drawing by Joseph Leo Koerner, UCB PhD 1988, recipient of CAA’s 2020 Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award for Writing on Art, and son of artist Henry Koerner, on a blackboard in 308B Doe Memorial Library. The drawing developed in iterations, over the period 1989 to 2018. Photo by Julie Wolf.

Joseph Leo Koerner (PhD 1988)

The College Art Association has announced that UCB HA alum Joseph Leo Koerner has won the 2020 Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award for Writing on Art.

Sonal Khullar (PhD 2009)

Sonal Khullar has been appointed W. Norman Brown Associate Professor of South Asian Studies in the History of Art Department at the University of Pennsylvania effective July 1, 2020. She is completing a book manuscript, The Art of Dislocation: Conflict and Collaboration in Contemporary Art from South Asia, under advance contract with the University of California Press. She is editing a volume, From Kitabkhana [Library] to Karkhana [Workshop]: The Arts of the Book in South Asia, under advance contract with the University of Washington Press. She has organized a session, “Art Historian as Ethnographer,” for the CAA conference in 2021.

Amy Lyford (PhD 2007)

Amy Lyford was awarded an NEH Summer Stipend in Spring 2019 for her research on the photographer Dora Maar. Due to Covid restrictions, she has postponed the research until Summer 2021 (fingers crossed). She is also currently completing her book “Exquisite Dreams: The Art and Life of Dorothea Tanning,” under contract with Reaktion Press.

Kate Lusheck (PhD 2000)


Jeanne Nuechterlein (PhD 2000)


Amy Lyford (PhD 2007)

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Jeanne Nuechterlein (PhD 2000)


C. Oliver O’Donnell (PhD 2016)

Oliver O’Donnell’s first book, Meyer Schapiro’s Critical Debates, which was developed out of his Berkeley PhD dissertation, appeared with Penn State Press in October 2019 and was awarded the Willibald Sauerländer Award from the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich. Over the past year he also placed an article in The Art Bulletin and began teaching at the Courtauld, where he leads his own MA special option. Ollie maintains his research appointment at the Warburg and continues to develop and present research related to his new book, now titled “Specters of Empiricism.”
**Bibiana Obler (PhD 2006)**

Bibiana Obler (Ph.D. 2006) co-curated, with Phyllis Rosenzweig, Fast Fashion / Slow Art, which was on view fall 2019 at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design (which is now part of George Washington University where Bibi teaches) and then the Bowdoin College Museum of Art in spring 2020 (which may still be available in an online version). The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue featuring essays by several of the artists as well as scholars Kirsty Robertson, Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, and Pietra Rivoli.

**Orna Tsultem (PhD 2009)**

Orna started a new position at Indiana University’s Herron School of Art and Design in Indianapolis, where she is Edgar and Dorothy Fehnel Chair in International Studies and Assistant Professor. She was a guest editor of a Special issue of Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review journal that was titled “Buddhist Art of Mongolia: Cross-Cultural Connections, Discoveries, and Interpretations.” Orna was also invited to curate the first Mongolian contemporary art exhibition at Sapar Contemporary gallery in NYC. Orna’s research article about a Mongolian woman artist Mugi was published at Third Text. Her monograph on Mongolian Buddhist art, titled A Monastery on the Move: Art and Politics in Later Buddhist Mongolia, is forthcoming in December, 2020 from Hawaii University Press.

**Barbara Wisch (PhD 1985)**

A Companion to Early Modern Rome, 1492–1692, edited by Pamela M. Jones, Barbara Wuch, and Simon Ditchfield, Brill’s Companions to European History 17 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), has been chosen as the joint recipient of the 2020 Roland H. Bainton Prize for Reference Works by the Sixteenth Century Society & Conference, an international scholarly organization. Among the thirty multidisciplinary essays are “Building Brotherhood: Confraternal Party, Patronage, and Place” by Wisch and “Printers and Publishers in Early Modern Rome” by Evelyn Lincoln (PhD 1994).

**Elaine Yau (PhD 2015)**

Elaine concluded her appointment as the Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. During her term, she co-curated “Rosie Lee Tompkins: A Retrospective” with Director and Chief Curator, Larry Rinder, organized the Art Wall installation featuring the art of Edie Fake, and assisted with the show, “Looking: The Art of Frederick Hammersley.”

Editors: Justin Underhill, Heather Feilly
Designer: Julie Wolf
Founding Editor: Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby
Cover: BAMPPA Member Celebration, courtesy of Stephen Leevisohn
Photography.
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