

RESEARCH OUT LOUD

MET FELLOWS
PRESENT
MAY 9–24, 2024

THE
MET

Join the leading minds and rising voices of their fields as they explore new avenues of research in art history, visual culture, education, and cultural heritage preservation. The Met's fellows present cross-cultural and transhistorical connections throughout The Met collection that go beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, bridging the visual arts and other areas of the humanities, social sciences, performing arts, and fine arts.

The in-person presentations on May 9 through 24 also take place live on Zoom. Presentation sessions are free, though advance registration is required to attend on Zoom. Registration to attend in person is recommended, though not required. Walk-ins are welcome if space allows. *Note: Space is limited; first come, first served.* To register, visit metmuseum.org/researchoutloud.

Join the Fellows for Gallery Activations at The Met

On May 10, 17, 18, and 24, the fellows expand on their presentations through talks, installations, tours, and other exciting activations of The Met galleries. Free with Museum admission; advance registration is strongly encouraged, though not required. Drop-ins are welcome if space allows. *Note: Space is limited; first come, first served.* The full schedule can be found at the end of this brochure and at metmuseum.org/researchoutloud.

Please note: Research Out Loud abstracts and events are subject to change.

RESEARCH OUT LOUD: MET FELLOWS PRESENT

May 9–24, 2024 | Bonnie J. Sacerdote Lecture Hall

Thursday, May 9

10 am: Generative Remnants: Critical Interventions in Historiography and Interpretation

1 pm: Lives and Afterlives of the Object: Conservation and Interpretation for an Audience

Friday, May 10

10 am: Power and Place in Global Contemporary Art, 1970–89

1 pm: Gifts, Drinks, and Dancing: Society and Materiality in and Beyond The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing Collection

Thursday, May 16

10 am: Modern Experiments: Multicentered, Multisensory

1 pm: Different Perspectives on Conservation Practices

Friday, May 17

10 am: Built Environments and Local Histories

1 pm: Use and Reuse in the Construct of Artistic Representation

Thursday, May 23

10 am: New Approaches to Identity and Materials in Works on Paper

1 pm: The Transient and the Tangible in Asia and Europe

Friday, May 24

10 am: Artifice and Premodern Landscapes

1 pm: Enduring Connections: Chemical Bonds and Artistic Networks on the Printed Page

Thursday, May 9

Generative Remnants: Critical Interventions in Historiography and Interpretation

10 am–12 pm

Black Venus

Cresse Jackson-Alger, Chester Dale Fellow, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts

This interdisciplinary study analyzes the bronze statuette popularly known as the Black Venus asking: How does a portrait differ from a type? What is the significance of a racialized Venus in the early period of the Atlantic slave trade? How might this bronze help to reconceptualize depictions of Black bodies within the larger history of Western art?

Coping with Death: The Impacts of the Peloponnesian War on Women in Athens (431–404 BCE)

Victoria Greene, The Bothmer Fellow, Department of Greek and Roman Art

How does the death toll of war affect the lives of women? In the late fifth century BCE, the Greek world became embroiled in a series of interlinked and multilevel conflicts. This period of conflict, now known as the Peloponnesian War, saw mass death, enslavement, and social instability across the Greek world. This study explores the consequences of mass death on women through a case study of the polis Athens. Centering the concept of vulnerability, it examines the social consequences of war on the living. Thinking critically about how these conditions impacted the ways populations were gendered, I assert that the extent to which the social position of Athenian women, both free and enslaved, relied upon their ties to a male head of household left them particularly vulnerable in situations of social disruption. I discuss the impacts of wartime death on the lives of women in Athens by focusing on mourning, widowhood, motherhood, legal status, population decline, and social reproduction. The relationship between women and death will be illuminated through an examination of funerary objects, particularly Attic white ground lekythoi, in dialogue with analyses of textual sources.

Recoloring The Met's Assyrian Sculpture Court

Talah Anderson, The Slifka Foundation Interdisciplinary Fellow, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art

The Met's Assyrian Sculpture Court, which presents monumental wall reliefs and gateway sculptures excavated from the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883–859 BCE) at Nimrud (ancient Kalhu) in northern Iraq, is currently closed, along with the rest of the galleries for Ancient Near Eastern Art, to undergo renovation. This comes as part of The Met's current capital project to rethink how the cultural heritage of ancient Southwest Asia is contextualized and displayed in the Museum. A major consideration in the reimagining of the Assyrian Sculpture Court, which is essentially a speculative recreation of the architectural and decorative arrangement of one area of Ashurnasirpal II's palace, is the role that might be played by color in this endeavor. However, while it is known that the reliefs were once painted and intended to be viewed in color, few pigment traces remain. Encountering the challenge of reconstructing an authentic color palette in the face of this absence, this research project poses—and seeks to answer—a central question: How can The Met effectively restore vibrancy to the now dormant Assyrian Sculpture Court, activating this space for a new generation of visitors?

White Femininity and Black Exclusion in the Banjo's Material History

Maya Brown-Boateng, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Department of Musical Instruments

Although the banjo is often associated with white performers in the United States and Europe, current ethnomusicological research has shown that the instrument was originally created by enslaved Africans in the Americas and has been circulating within Black music circuits around the world since the seventeenth century. Over the past few decades, the Black history of the banjo has received major attention in music scholarship and among the banjo community. Scholars, historians, musicians, and collectors alike have explored the banjo's sonic and physical changes over time and its role in the history of racial relations within the United States. This paper contributes to this scholarship by applying object-oriented and organological methods to investigate why the banjo is no longer associated with Black musical identity. To accomplish this, I analyze banjos from the turn of the twentieth century that were manufactured to perform the parlor style. Associated with high social status, the parlor banjo was advertised significantly to wealthy Euro-American women. This promotion of white femininity through banjo consumption rapidly overshadowed the instruments' previous associations with Blackness and the blackface parody. By examining trade catalogues, advertisements, method books, patents, and the instrument itself, I aim to create a material history that highlights the absence of Blackness in the creation and marketing of the parlor banjo. Additionally, this talk chronicles the events leading to the instrument's depreciation among the African American population. By relying upon Black newspapers and writings that

reflect New Negro discourses, I seek to illuminate the agency Black individuals have demonstrated to actively reject the instrument.

A More Lasting Sorrow: Mourning, Silver, and Stability in Dutch Colonial New York
Joseph Zordan, The Douglass Foundation Fellow in American Art,
The American Wing

At Maria van Rensselaer's funeral in 1689, her loved ones received one last gift from the family matriarch: a silver spoon with her name carefully engraved in scrolling letters across its handle. Referred to as "funeral spoons," these memorial objects were given out in multiples at funerals to any combination of family members, pallbearers, priests, and attending doctors within primarily Dutch cultural contexts, both in the Netherlands and their colonial outposts. Rarely if ever used, these spoons often did not survive more than two generations of removal from the one commemorated, the silver they were made of often being of more value than the memory of a long-dead ancestor. But the legacy which Maria left her kin greatly outsized this simple memorial. Often credited as having secured the nearly one-million-acre manor of Rensselaerswyck in the area of present-day Albany for her family despite others' best efforts, Maria left a complex legacy for her descendants. And in this sense so too is the spoon. Using this work as a point of departure, this paper will examine how early settlers and their descendants negotiated their place within the colonies in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Suffused with concerns of tradition, sustenance, and death, the spoon presents a series of complex questions of great concern to both American art history and settler colonial studies alike: At whose expense could this mourning occur? And what

Discussant: Sarah Graff, Curator, Department of Near Eastern Art

Thursday, May 9

Lives and Afterlives of the Object: Conservation and Interpretation for an Audience

1–3 pm

Protecting Heritage: Integrating Science and Conservation at The Met Cloisters
Jana Butman, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Conservation Fellow, Department of
Scientific Research

The Met Cloisters combines medieval art, original architecture, and cultivated gardens that its visitors can wander in and out of uninhibited. Gallery doors are propped open to invite visitors to navigate the built structure freely, which exposes the collection to the outdoor climate. This poses a unique preventive conservation challenge, as stable temperatures, humidity levels, and low particulate counts are ideal for long-term object care.

During the summer wildfires of 2023, New York City experienced record-breaking air pollution levels, peaking at over 460 on the Air Quality Index (AQI) with exceptionally high particulate matter counts (PM). Curators and conservators at The Cloisters expressed a need for scientific data about the level of pollution experienced by the galleries compared to outdoors to determine whether they need to close the building off during such an event.

As part of the Met's Scientific Research Department, this talk is centered on air quality studies conducted at The Cloisters to determine how well its current systems work as preventive conservation measures. Specifically, this talk explores how new particulate matter sensors and monitoring protocols can be used in the event of an extreme weather event affecting The Cloisters. Ultimately, this project highlights the benefits of collaboration between curators, conservators, and scientists on questions of collections care. Researching and monitoring these environmental variables allows conservators and curators to mitigate the effects of outdoor pollutants.

Insights Into Audiences Perspectives: Early Stage Interpretive Planning for The Met's Medieval Sculpture Hall Reinstallation

Clara Maria Apostolatos, Kress Interpretive Fellow, Department of Education

Visitor evaluation engages audiences directly and centers their perspectives in exhibition and interpretive planning. This presentation delves into the significance of early-stage adoption of such an approach in the context of the upcoming reinstallation of The Metropolitan Museum's Medieval Galleries. Grounded in a three-part study encompassing timing and tracking, gallery intercepts, and focus groups, this research underscores how front-end visitor evaluation fosters an iterative and collaborative approach to interpretive planning, tailored to the diverse needs of audiences. This evaluation allowed the team to study and contextualize visitor behavior in the galleries as they are currently installed, understand motivations for visiting, and grasp key beliefs and perceptions about the medieval period and its art. Such early-stage research not only informs interpretive planning but also lays the foundation for a museum practice that prioritizes the audience from the very inception of exhibitions.

Discovering the “Unfinished”: Historical and Technical Study of a Late Eighteenth-Century Fabric Embroidered à la disposition from The Costume Institute Collection

Margherita Barone, The Gerald and Mary Ellen Ritter Memorial Fellow, The Costume Institute

Within the framework of the upcoming Costume Institute exhibition *Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion*, opening in May 2024, an opportunity arose to study a yellow satin fabric, embroidered à la disposition, that was selected for the show.

Part of the exhibition revolves around garments deemed “not displayable,” whether for their condition or other issues. This is the case with this object, an “unfinished” dress that is an example of an embroidery practice used largely in the eighteenth century called à la disposition.

The first part of the study involved considering the style of dress that the fabric could have been intended for, which entailed a comparison of the embroidery and its placement on the fabric with other extant dresses from the same period. The necessity to determine this aspect led to an in-depth study of fashionable styles from the second half of the eighteenth century, of which published patterns were selected and digitally overlaid on the fabric images to observe if they would have fit. The research and comparative analysis with similar embroidered dresses led to the hypothesis that the fabric was embroidered to create a robe à la piémontaise.

Once this latter aspect was defined, a pattern of the same style taken from another dress in the Costume Institute collection was selected to create a full-scale reproduction in muslin to learn more about historical dressmaking techniques.

Malqata Jar Labels

Sherif Mohamed Abdel Moniem, Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Research/Collections Specialist Fellow, Department of Egyptian Art

The Metropolitan Museum Expedition to Malqata (1910–20) recovered some fourteen hundred hieratic jar labels (dockets) from the palace complex of Amenhotep III. Written in black ink, the inscriptions identify the commodity inside the jar. The collection was acquired in 1917 by the Museum in the division of finds. The date of most of this material is certain. Some of this material dates to the first Sed-festival of Amenhotep III, years 29–30 of the reign of Amenhotep III. Those from the other areas can be dated to the period of occupation of the palace, approximately the last ten years of the reign.

The surviving pottery is important because it was also connected to a specific event—the jubilation—which is described in the docket: date of manufacturing, type of production, degree of fermentation (excellent, medium, or poor, place of manufacturing, name of the domains, name of the person who supervised the work in the domains, name of the donor, name of the king). The docket contains different types of offering/commodities including wine, beer, fat, meat, ale, fowl, Ben oil, milk, honey, incense, and fruits.

The ongoing project includes researching, cataloging, updating object information, and writing labels for New Kingdom pottery excavated at Malqata. The project also will focus on different aspects of the vessels such as the digital reconstruction of the complete form of the vessels and the significance of the fabric and its relationship to the contents of the jars. In our study we are trying to answer these questions: What kind of information was included in the docket (labels)? What was the relationship between the commodities and the jars (form and fabric)? What is the significance of the spatial distribution of the jars?

Discussant: Niv Allon, Associate Curator, Department of Egyptian Art

Friday, May 10

Power and Place in Global Contemporary Art, 1970–89

10 am–12 pm

From Below, New York City: Migrant Artists on the Lower East Side

Elise Armani, The Diana A. and Harry A. Stern Fellow, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art

For three centuries, the Lower East Side (LES) of Manhattan was the populous heart of immigrant New York, housing successive generations of arrivals in crowded tenement buildings, from Kleindeutschland of the 1840s to the mid-twentieth century Great Migration of diasporic Puerto Ricans. In the 1970s, retrenchment, divestment, and abandonment brought this hum of activity to a quiet, with two-thirds of the population departing the neighborhood—leaving a terrain of obsolescence in their wake. This manufacturing and correspondent representation of vacancy proved critical to the eventual redevelopment of the LES, with urban renewal efforts instrumentalizing perceptions of an empty, available landscape. Likewise, storied histories of the neighborhood's migrant communities, countercultural activities, and artist enclaves have taken on symbolic afterlives as marketable traits of the LES today.

Tracing the evolving urban visual imaginary of the LES through the twentieth century, I consider how representations of the locality were employed within the logics of neighborhood development and circulated beyond their original contexts of creation. Drawing upon works within and beyond The Met collection, this presentation examines how shifts in demographics, industry, and land use are reflected in neighborhood scenes by New York based–migrant artists, including Saul Kovner (1904–1981), Philip Reisman (1904–1992), Toyo Tsuchiya (1948–2017), and Kazuko Miyamoto (b. 1942). Through the locally bound perspective of street scenes, this presentation makes evident the entanglements of global migration, urban development, and modernity as experienced by successive residents within a single locality.

Lalarukh's Global Political and Artistic Practice: Military Dictatorship at the End of the Cold War, 1982–87

Kristen Plys, J. Clawson Mills Scholar, Director's Office

This paper examines the political and artistic practice of Pakistani artist Lala Rukh, situating her work in the global geopolitics of the Cold War in the 1980s. While military dictatorships proliferated across the Global South in the 1980s and had unique articulations across different geographies, they also were part of the global political-economic consequences of the Cold War and its neo-imperialist logic. If the causes of military dictatorship were global, in that its emergence and power is structured by the forms global neo-imperialism took during the Cold War, then how can military dictatorships be opposed by citizens even if they are articulated locally? For individuals, there is a mismatch in working to undermine a global structure when one is located within one particular geographic articulation of that global structure. I explore why the political economy of military dictatorship wrested on a deepening of the exploitation and oppression of women, comparing other histories of dictatorship in Fascist Italy and Chile under Pinochet to show how and why the political economy of dictatorship is gendered. Finally, I examine how five political posters (2019.403.1, 2019.403.2, 2019.403.3, 2019.403.4, 2019.403.7) Lalarukh created during Pakistan's military dictatorship both were influenced by and sought to intervene in the trajectory of Pakistan's 1977–88 military dictatorship from a gendered standpoint. This subject matter is timely as resurgent authoritarianism has restricted women's rights around the globe. Rukh's political posters offer lessons from the past that can help us better understand the relationship between gender and authoritarian rule.

Reenvisioning the Kwoma Ceiling at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Sylvia Cockburn, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

Learn how The Met's iconic Kwoma ceiling is being redisplayed and reconnected with the descendants of its artists through the current renovation of The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing. The Kwoma ceiling is one of the largest contemporary art commissions The Met has undertaken. Composed of more than 260 pangal (sago palm petioles), it was commissioned over two installments in 1970 and 1973, and first exhibited in the newly opened Michael C. Rockefeller Wing at The Met in 1982. The ceiling is the work of twenty-four named artists from the Kalaba and Wanyi clans of Mariwai Village in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. It reimagines here in New York the private and sacred space of a Sepik men's ceremonial house. In 2025, a new display of the ceiling will be unveiled in the Museum's renovated Oceania galleries. The reenvisioning of the ceiling is the result of consultation with contemporary artists in Mariwai village and will honor the clan affiliations, seniority, and specialist knowledge of the original painters involved. New interpretation will further highlight the biographies and clan designs of those artists.

Discussant: Brinda Kumar, Associate Curator, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art

Friday, May 10

Gifts, Drinks, and Dancing: Society and Materiality in and Beyond The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing Collection

1–3 pm

Treatment of Two Ancient Andean Textiles in the Michael C. Rockefeller Collection

Karri Vaughn, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Conservation Fellow,
The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

This presentation will focus on the examination, conservation treatment, and mounting of two ancient Andean garments on display in the exhibition *Weaving Abstraction in Ancient and Modern Art*. One is a Wari tunic, dated seventh to ninth century, and the second is a Central Coast shirt dated 1460–1540.

The Wari tunic is composed of two woven to shape panels seamed at the center and sides. In a previous treatment the tunic was lined with a heavy wool repp fabric, which caused distortion to the piece, among a range of other condition issues. The tunic is strong and stable, and a full lining prevented access to the interior for study. The lining was removed and replaced with small underlays in areas of damage.

The Central Coast shirt has a more complicated construction. Four tapestry woven panels make up the body and sleeves. Separately woven stepped fret bands and fringes were then sewn to the bottom. The fibers of the shirt were degraded and friable yet the piece is strong enough to support its weight for vertical display. There were numerous open seams, creasing, and previous repairs that were causing distortion along the bottom seam. The shirt was humidified to reduce the creasing. Previous repairs were removed and replaced with an overcast stitch to eliminate distortion.

Lastly, mounts were constructed for the shirt and tunic. Based on the dimensions of the pieces, the mounts were custom carved to completely support the forms without being seen at the opening in neck slits.

Animal Skins and Laundry Bluing: Technical Study of a Cross River Mask

Katherine McFarlin, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Conservation Fellow, Department of Objects Conservation

The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing opened to the public in 1982 to display works of art from sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. After almost forty years on view, the galleries were closed in 2021 and the Museum began a massive renovation project to overhaul the conceptual and physical display of the artworks from these distinct regions. Since then, a dedicated team of staff, interns, and Fellows has been documenting, treating, and mounting hundreds of objects in preparation for reopening; however, the multiyear renovation has also provided a rare opportunity to study select pieces in greater depth than previously possible.

One unique and relatively understudied tradition represented in the collection comes from the Cross River region of Nigeria and Cameroon, where the masquerade masks of local societies are covered with carefully stretched animal skins. Four of these skin-covered masks will be going back on display in the galleries next year, and together they demonstrate the variety of artistic styles and social contexts that the technique is used for. One particularly striking “Janus”-style mask is notable for both the fineness of its decoration and the vibrant blue pigment applied to the attached horns, but little was known about the materiality of the piece itself. Using a range of analytical and imaging techniques, the materials and manufacturing methods of the mask were explored and identified in order to provide insights on artisanal practice and community use, which in turn informed the long-term care and conservation of the work.

Libations for Gods and Kings: Lambayeque Beakers, Ritual Drinking, and Divine Transformation on the North Coast of Peru

Ji Mary Seo, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

A certain typology of metal beaker, fashioned in the shape of an anthropomorphized head or upper body, appears frequently in high-status tombs of the Lambayeque (also known as the Sicán), a culture that once flourished on the northern Pacific coast of what is now Peru (ca. 750–1370). These drinking vessels, made of high-karat gold and silver alloys, can be further divided into two distinct “styles”: so-called “upright” beakers with figures that look right-side up when the vessel sits on its base, and “inverted” beakers depicting human-like heads that look upside-down when the vessel itself is upright. The following paper argues that upright and inverted beakers not only belong to a larger nexus of ritual drinking traditions, but also exhibit concurrently complementary and opposed designs that represent interconnected yet distinct stages in the transformation of the human body, from earthly bound to apotheosed. Such allusions to deific transfiguration, this paper contends, were attempts to negotiate a central concern at the heart of Lambayeque funerary

practices, namely the need to mediate cosmic relations with ancestors through feasting and toasting in order to secure life-sustaining resources. That is to say, uprightness and inversion were more than just visual or formal qualities for the Lambayeque; these artistic choices likely served as potent signifiers of ritual action that remained vital to maintaining life on the unforgiving coastal deserts of Peru.

Participatory Collecting: Unwritten Histories of Social and Cultural Networks in Samoa and Beyond (1887 and 1894)

Sophia Merkin, J. Clawson Mills Scholar, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

My paper applies Sean Mallon's conceptualization of participatory collecting to a suite of barkcloth (tapa) paintings I call the Vailima Co-Collection (1990.333.1–10), assembled by Robert Louis Stevenson, his family, and their peers while the Stevensons traveled and lived in Western Polynesia between 1887 and 1894. Tapa changed hands for important, personal, national, and intentional reasons; we can unpack these, and identify them more clearly. An essential purpose of my paper is the attempt to understand Indigenous practices and beliefs in late nineteenth-century Polynesia through lenses other than written accounts by visitors. As demonstrated in the Vailima Co-Collection, Pacific Islanders regularly gave barkcloth as gifts, for myriad reasons, including to cement relationships with friends as well as with figures considered to be particularly important. This paper unpacks both the production and historiography of barkcloth, and in so doing argues that tapa exchanges are uniquely capable of revealing unwritten histories of social and cultural networks in Samoa and Polynesia more broadly in the 1890s, due to the function, value, and centrality of the medium to Polynesian peoples.

Discussant: Jenny Peruski, Senior Research Associate, Arts of Africa, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

Thursday, May 16

Modern Experiments: Multicentered, Multisensory

10 am–12 pm

Xul Solar's *Carpetas de Recortes*: Reading with a "Big Pair of Scissors in Hand"

Sabrina Carletti, Leonard A. Lauder Post-Doctoral Fellow in Modern Art, The Leonard A. Lauder Research Center

The crossing of art making and learning in the work of the Argentine artist Xul Solar (1887–1963) has long attracted his friend the writer Jorge Luis Borges. In 1965, Borges referred to Xul as “a citizen of the cosmos” who “studied all [and] renewed all.” Xul achieved this by incorporating what he learned from his readings into paintings, experiments with print culture, invented languages, board games, and other creative endeavors. This paper highlights the role of literacy in Xul's set of thirty-eight scrapbooks he assembled between 1933 and 1955, a project with encyclopedic and mnemonic intent. These scrapbooks, spanning a diverse range of content, from current events to entertainment and culture, function as repositories for newspaper clippings gathered from both national and international publications. Xul's experiment, I contend, must be examined amid the significant social, pedagogical, and technological transformations in Argentina during the first half of the twentieth century. Drawing from the very etymology of the Spanish verb to read, *leer*, which comes from the Latin and means *escoger*, or to choose in English, I introduce and move beyond contemporary experiments with print culture in this talk. I demonstrate that Xul collected and reconfigured these clippings because he believed that, in so doing, he could implement a form of learning that relied on reading and on the act of selecting, abstracting, and reorganizing—operations he understood to be integral to critical thought and the cultivation of memory. Xul undertook this project at a moment when literacy, emblematic of Argentina's modernity, was perceived to be in crisis due to the emergence of other technologies, such as the radio.

The Cryptographic Imagination in Postwar Painting

Kamila Kociałkowska, Leonard A. Lauder Post-Doctoral Fellow in Modern Art,
The Leonard A. Lauder Research Center

Cy Twombly, the abstract painter famed for his expressive, calligraphic painting style, was not only trained as an artist. He was also trained as in the Cold War art of cryptography. After World War II, Twombly studied at a military academy in codebreaking and ciphering systems. This part of his biography is usually read as incidental to his subsequent artistic practice, but this talk will explore how his professional training intervened in his work.

Using Twombly and his contemporary Jasper Johns as case studies for the broader theme of art and information aesthetics, I explore how the runic ciphers of military intelligence became iconographically appropriated by artists in the 1960s. My talk will discuss how this overlapping of the intelligence and artistic communities shaped the production and reception of art in the first phase of the Cold War. In this context, the artist and the intelligence operative both deploy visual communication as a crucial tactic of resuming authority to produce a new kind of encounter with the art object: one that seems to assume an artefact can reveal disguised truths upon close scrutiny by disciplinary professionals.

Viewing Socialist Realism in Turkey, 1934–35

Özge Karagöz, Leonard A. Lauder Pre-Doctoral Fellow in Modern Art,
The Leonard A. Lauder Research Center

Between December 1934 and January 1935, the *Exhibition of Soviet Artists* introduced audiences in Ankara and Istanbul to Socialist Realism just as Soviet artists and critics were formulating the aesthetics of this nascent art form, which had been declared the official art of the Soviet Union in August 1934. The idea to organize this state-sponsored exhibition emerged during a period of alliance between republican Turkey and Soviet Russia, both new entities born of popular revolutions that erupted after World War I. The Bolshevik and Kemalist leaders who seized power in these revolutions forged this alliance in the early 1920s while facing mutual military threats from imperialist Britain and France and by overcoming their ideological differences between bourgeois nationalism and socialism. The exhibition arrived in Turkey amid heated public debates about the form and subject matter that modern artists should embrace so that their art could match the country's ongoing transformation from a multiethnic Islamic empire into a secular nation-state. This presentation will focus on the exhibition reviews penned by public intellectuals and artists, demonstrating that they paid particular attention to formally innovative depictions of ordinary Soviet citizens, mainly in the work of a younger generation of painters. In this select body of work, the Turkish reviewers found helpful lessons in reconciling formal ambitions with

socioeconomic professional needs, broad public address with artistic autonomy, and interest in local aesthetic traditions with modernist painterly trends.

Phonographies of Race: The Politics of Picturing Jazz

Rodrigo Salido Moulinié, Leonard A. Lauder Pre-Doctoral Fellow in Modern Art,
The Leonard A. Lauder Research Center

Depicting racial difference in visual art and literature became a central point of debate in 1920s New York. How should others be portrayed, especially those groups who are being discriminated against, persecuted, and oppressed? Should art work as propaganda, showing only the best a people can become, only the educated, modern, and hard-working individuals? Or should art portray their vices, failures, troubles, and broken dreams? What are the stakes in choosing one or the other?

For African Americans, this was not only a matter of aesthetics, but the core of a broader political project seeking Black liberation from lynching, discrimination, and segregation: if a people can be seen beyond the stereotypes and caricatures that entrap them, they can also be seen as having moral virtues, diverse social roles, dignity—entirely human. They can look like citizens. And images of jazz were one of the main battlefields to tackle these questions. What happens when we try to listen to these images? This talk will revisit some visual depictions of jazz by Black, Mexican, and white American artists—as well as their critical reception—to unpack the politics of picturing the sonic color line through music.

Discussant: Neil Cox, Head, The Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art

Thursday, May 16

Different Perspectives on Conservation Practices

1–3 pm

The Conservation and Technical Study of *Two Tritons at the Feast of Achelōūs*: An Investigation into Attribution and Collaboration

Derek Lintala, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Conservation Fellow, Department of Paintings Conservation

The painting *Two Tritons at the Feast of Achelōūs* was purchased by The Met in 1906, and since entering the collection has never been cleaned or restored. Initially thought to be the work of Peter Paul Rubens, the painting generated debate over its attribution during the following century, with various suggestions put forward, including a young Anthony van Dyck. Because of the elusive subject and purpose, the unusual composition, as well as the uncertain authorship, art historian and curator Walter Liedtke described the painting in his 1984 catalog *Flemish Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* as “... one of the most problematic in The Metropolitan Museum’s Flemish collection.” Currently, the painting is assigned to Cornelis de Vos and Frans Snyders, who were brothers-in-law and regular collaborators of Rubens. This attribution primarily derives from the painting *Fish Market* in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, a documented collaboration by de Vos and Snyders that depicts the same model as one of the tritons.

This research project will employ updated technical imaging and scientific analysis to investigate the attribution as well as to determine what role, if any, artist collaboration may have played in the work’s manufacture. Through the process of cleaning and restoring the picture, the artist’s (or artists’) work will be brought closer to the original and intended appearance, and perhaps provide additional insight as to the authorship.

Exploring Greens in Persian and Indian Paintings: Techniques, Materials, and Conservation Strategies

Cornelia Busslehner, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Conservation Fellow, Department of Paper Conservation

This talk will delve into the complex and complicated world of greens in Persian and Indian paintings. Employing a multifaceted approach, I will be showcasing recipes and processing methods of green pigments, characterizing them scientifically, and deriving conservation protocols.

Firstly, historical recipes for greens used in Persian paintings were investigated, focusing on admixtures and processing methods of paint and its application. Examining objects from The Met collection assisted in differentiating manufacturing methods and exploring factors of aging properties.

The characterization of the paint was carried out through various scientific analysis methods, providing guidance into the compositional nature of the pigments and assisting in the interpretation between various artistic choices and regional ambiguities.

Lastly, this talk will focus on conservation methods for objects damaged by copper corrosion, specifically corrosion inhibitors. In a test series, the effects of the corrosion inhibitor Benzotriazole were tested on self-manufactured paint swatches. To resemble historic paint layers, they were artificially aged, treated with Benzotriazole, and scientifically analyzed.

A Study on the Materiality of Southeast Asian Collections at The Met: Addressing the Needs of Local Collections

Leslie Zacharie, Sherman Fairchild Foundation Conservation Fellow, Department of Paper Conservation

Two distinct projects are interrelated components of the Fellow—both centered on the conservation of Southeast Asian works of art on paper.

The first project focuses on the technical study of a selection of works from The Met. Objects produced in Thailand and Burma will be examined, and a case study will focus on the analysis of a nineteenth-century Burmese manuscript. A methodology for paint layer consolidation will be identified.

The second project concerns the needs and challenges faced by conservators in this region, where museums are heavily dependent on Western suppliers to find collection care materials at high costs. Consequently, they sometimes resort to local suppliers unable to identify the composition and potential negative effects of these materials in contact with artworks.

A survey will help understand the difficulties encountered by our peers and learn about the resources they employ to address their needs. With an emphasis on paper-based art collections, low-tech, low-cost, and user-friendly tests will be identified according to parameters such as regional accessibility, cost, health, and safety, and the tests will be evaluated for their reliability. The results will be included in a guide to help museum professionals find safe materials that are locally and sustainably sourced. These guidelines should be easily sharable and could be translated into local languages. The guidelines will also include information regarding media consolidation methods extracted from the Burmese manuscript case study.

Piña Textiles: Technical Study of a Nineteenth-Century Group of Philippines Textiles Made of “Red Spanish Pineapple” Fiber

Alejandra Flores, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Conservation Fellow,
Department of Textile Conservation

Piña textile is the weave made of the “Red Spanish pineapple” fiber in the Philippines. In the nineteenth century, Philippines piña textiles became a symbol of national identity that reflected the significance of women’s weaving skills within the multicultural, historical context of this time. This talk presents the technical analysis and identification of the “Red Spanish pineapple” fiber of a group of piña textiles from the European Sculpture and Decorative Arts collection. This group includes elements such as blouses, sleeves, and kerchiefs from the Philippines’ national costume, called *Baro’ t saya*. The research aim is to characterize the morphological aspect of “Red Spanish pineapple” fiber implied in the piña textiles weaving. As a result, a unique visual and descriptive database of this under-investigated fiber will be established and eventually available to scholars worldwide. By conducting this analysis combined with an investigation of the weaving and embroidery techniques applied to the piña textiles, the research will contribute to their study from a technical perspective, while emphasizing their weaving technology as a combination of interaction between the Spanish and native wear of the Philippines’ traditions.

Finally, the talk will introduce a selection of piña textiles from the group mentioned above for upcoming conservation treatment and plan for display in The Met Museum galleries.

Discussant: Giulia Chiostrini, Conservator, Department of Textile Conservation

Friday, May 17

Built Environments and Local Histories

10 am–12 pm

Limestone Landscapes: The Art of Phanigiri, 1st–4th Centuries CE

Kalyani Ramachandran, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Asian Art

The earliest scholarship on the art of premodern South Asia focuses on the Buddhist complexes of Gandhara and Mathura in northwestern and northern India respectively. The issues at hand fundamentally revolve around the transition from the aniconic to the anthropomorphic Buddha image with particular emphasis on the debate of its origins in the ancient Greek world. However, the canon has largely ignored a school of early Buddhist sculpture that developed contemporaneously in the Deccan region of southern India. These are some of the earliest stone monuments in the region and precede the construction of its Hindu temples and Islamic structures by several centuries. The scholarship on Buddhist art in this region has been hitherto limited by the “Deccan gap” or the relative absence of authoritative textual sources. This paper overcomes the methodological problem by focusing instead on art historical sources. It studies the ancient Buddhist monastery at Phanigiri, a recently excavated site which constitutes a key discovery in the long history of the Deccan. The complex presents a unique combination of aniconic and anthropomorphic Buddha forms as well as distinctive modes of sculptural representation. Furthermore, a poem inscribed in Sanskrit (as opposed to conventional Buddhist Prakrit) positions the site as a microcosm for the interaction of a range of cultural and political groups. Through interdisciplinary art historical, archaeological, and epigraphical methods, the paper understands Phanigiri in the context of a vast network of over a hundred monastic complexes in the region. These sites would have been ecologically connected and culturally enriched by their locations along interlacing rivers flowing into the eastern Indian Ocean, proximate to Southeast Asia. This paper thus presents a vibrant history of the earliest sculptural landscape of the Deccan at large.

Late Fatimid Architecture and the Spoils of Trade

Mikael Muehlbauer, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Department of Islamic Art

My paper presents the aesthetic impacts of the so-called Red Sea Policy in Fatimid Egypt, wherein trade Egyptian priorities, in the wake of the Crusades and the Seljuk invasions, moved south towards the Indian Ocean, rather than the Mediterranean. As I will argue here, this shift in trade priorities inspired aesthetic changes in the monumental decorations of elite buildings, both in the capital, Cairo, and the provinces. Relief decorations, monumental murals, and perhaps even epigraphic styles appear to have been modeled after Indian Ocean cloth patterns. Indeed, this ornamental mode of representation was founded in the economic and devotional primacy of textiles in the western Indian Ocean world.

My talk is focused on two instances where Late Fatimid architectural decoration was inspired by Indian Ocean cloth designs. The first is the final Fatimid mosque built in Cairo, the Mosque of Salih Tala'i. Here we find monumental epigraphy lining the arches of its prayer hall, but with an interlace frame that appears to be rooted in the epigraphy of Yemeni-Ikat—Indian-style dyed cloths produced in South Arabia—deployed alongside local floriated Kufic. The second example is in the mural program of the contemporary monastery church of Abu Fana in Upper Egypt, which utilizes in its sanctuary an entirely ornamental decorative program drawn from Indian cloths, presumably reflecting their function as ritual veils in the church. In this way, the two buildings present two discrete visions of this economic shift. Whereas the mosque of Salih Tala'i was originally built as a new pilgrimage center to replace those lost to crusaders in the Levant, the monastery church of Abu Fana was rebuilt out of a trade surplus that came from this southern shift in overseas policies. In both cases, through the transfer of textile patterns, the monuments were both founded in and clothed in the spoils of world trade.

(Re)Generating “Moroccanness” in the Aftershock of the 1960 Agadir Earthquake

Riad Kherdeen, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art

Though the 1960 Agadir earthquake may have only directly impacted that city, the effects of the earthquake reverberated all over Morocco and beyond. Seizing the opportunity presented by the earthquake to expand its powers and extend its reach into everyday life, the Moroccan state entered into an accelerated stage of nation-building. One of the overlooked aspects of this national development involved aesthetic production, particularly by a group of Moroccan modernist artists associated with the Casablanca School of Fine Arts. The three primary figures of this school—Farid Belkahlia, Mohammed Melehi, and Mohamed Chebâa—had all been studying and working abroad in Europe when the earthquake struck, but in the

following years, they all migrated back to Morocco to purportedly take part in Morocco's nation-building efforts and create a newly decolonized art world within Morocco. They also collaborated on several occasions with the architects Faraoui and de Mazières, who had worked extensively in Agadir, to design hotels across Morocco that were commissioned by the Moroccan government to promote tourism and open the country up to international capital and speculation.

This paper connects the developments and achievements of the Casablanca School artists to the trauma of the Agadir earthquake and the paternalistic Moroccan state-planning that followed; rereading these collaborations, or “integrations” as Belkahlia, Melehi, Chebâa, and Faraoui and de Mazières called them, of the artists and architects through this lens finally moves us beyond the triumphalist neo-Bauhaus mode that is all too commonly used to explain these projects and instead render visible the haunted aspects of this production. This paper features objects in The Met's holdings from the Maghreb, in particular Amazigh textiles, jewelry, and furnishings akin to the objects studied and collected by the Casablanca School artists that they used to forge modernist vernaculars rooted in local histories and aesthetics; they embraced the abstract, geometric, graphic, and artisanal qualities of these objects in their own projects and in their collaborations with architects. In so doing, they worked to (re)generate radical forms of modernist aesthetics by rejecting European models of modernism in favor of new paradigms rooted both locally in a multiplicity of regional histories and globally in the Third Worldism movement.

Discussant: Navina Haidar, Nasser Shabah al-Sabah Curator in Charge, Department of Islamic Art

Friday, May 17

Use and Reuse in the Construct of Artistic Representation

1–3 pm

Franz von Stuck and German Orientalism

Samantha Small, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of European Paintings

This presentation examines the impact of Germany's culture of "New Imperialism" on the paintings of Bavarian Symbolist artist Franz von Stuck (1863–1928), most notably in four versions of *Salome* (1906), which render the eponymous figure in the ecstatic throes of her dance. Produced during a period of rapid colonial expansion and concomitant fascination with the perceived "exoticism" of the Eastern Mediterranean, Stuck's imagery underscores the politically and socially engaged nature of what has been read as Germany's hermetic version of "Orientalism." Stuck drew from the prevailing imperialist culture, particularly vis-à-vis the dual phenomena of "Salomania" and "Egyptomania," taking inspiration from the theater, archaeological artifacts on display in cultural institutions, and popular spectacles including advertisements, panoramas, and fairs.

Creating Christendom in Castile: Reflections of Iberian Multiculturalism in the Retablo de Isabel

Jessica Weiss, J. Clawson Mills Scholar, Department of European Paintings

My presentation will explore the ways in which the paintings of the Retablo de Isabel, a multipaneled project produced by Juan de Flandes and Michel Sittow, propagandized a vision of Castile as occupying an explicitly Christian geography. This framing contrasted with the long history of Iberia which included both Islamic kingdoms and a large Jewish population. The late fifteenth century was a time of cultural transition through the War of Granada and the expulsion of the Sephardim, political moves promoted with a messianic fervor. The artists of the Retablo de Isabel participated in this messaging by centering the royal family within biblical narrative, utilizing iconographies suggestive of evangelization, and conflating the local environment with the eastern Mediterranean. Collectively, these paintings suggest a specifically Spanish "holy land" under the auspices of divinely sanctioned rulers. The paintings also coincided with textual propaganda related to crusading efforts and promotional of the realm as a homogenous, Christian kingdom. By interpreting the paintings of the Retablo de Isabel within the complex network of theological and political contexts, my paper will argue that these works reflected the aspirations of the crown and their desire for an explicitly Christian Castile.

Beyond Temporal Boundaries: Depicting the Prophet Muhammad through Visual Parallels in the Sixteenth Century Islamic Manuscripts

Özlem Yıldız, The Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow, Department of Islamic Art

A detached manuscript painting from sixteenth-century Iran at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, formerly identified as Jesus reviving Lazarus, was more recently reidentified as Muhammad healing a sick boy. While this reidentification has its problems, the reasons behind the confusion this image caused scholars are worthy of attention. This presentation focuses on the visual parallels, such as the use of the same colors, shapes, and compositions, between the images of Muhammad and other prophets in the sixteenth-century Ottoman and Safavid manuscripts. I argue that these visual parallels strengthen the image of Muhammad as the "seal of the prophets," ascribing to him superiority as well as finality. In some cases, the pictorial similarities invite the viewers to go back and forth among the images within the same manuscript. Thus, the images of Muhammad evoke the wider Quranic timeline of the prophets starting with Adam and punctuated by major narratives of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Jesus, through visual and tactile experience. Painting and viewing practices in sixteenth-century Ottoman and Safavid manuscripts, such as *Qisas al-Anbiya* ("Tales of the Prophets"), *Siyer-i Nebi* ("Life of the Prophet [Muhammad]"), and *Falnama* ("Book of Omens"), convey the message that Muhammad's existence crossed temporal boundaries, marking the past, present, and future.

Mair von Landshut (fl. 1485–1504): Author of a Style

Luming Guan, Diamonstein-Spielvogel Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints

Mair von Landshut, a painter-engraver active in Lower Bavaria in the late fifteenth century, is best known for having introduced the technique of printing on colored paper, which foreshadowed the invention of the chiaroscuro woodcut. In my presentation, I examine how the artist contrives a singular personal style: by incorporating intriguing motifs from various sources, the artist skillfully transformed and assimilated them. This process not only demonstrated his skill in synthesizing but also stood as a testament to his resourcefulness. Many previous scholars have dismissed Mair's style as merely fantastical and provincial, referring to the distinctive architectural forms and other idiosyncratic elements in his works. I will reconsider the significance and intention behind these unusual motifs, which reveal not so much the artist's fantasy but suggest his involvement in the larger intellectual project of humanist antiquarianism in the southern German region at the time.

Discussant: Shirin Fozi, Paul and Jill Ruddock Associate Curator, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

Thursday, May 23

New Approaches to Identity and Materials in Works on Paper

10 am–12 pm

“Indescribably Beautiful”: The Matter of Color in Early Modern Insect Imagery

Olivia Dill, Diamonstein-Spielvogel Interdisciplinary Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints

Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, European artists began depicting insects as central subject matter. Many aspects of insects challenged artists. Insects' microscopic size, complex morphologies, and often difficult procurement from around the world allowed artists to test their powers of observation and skills of representation, as well as to perform their access to global systems of trade, and labor from around the world. This presentation will focus on the challenges posed by insects' color, especially their iridescent colors, asking whether and when artists sought to precisely re-create insect color in artworks and how iridescence challenged the application of painterly materials and skills. Using an interdisciplinary approach that applies methods and resources from the Departments of Scientific Research, Paper Conservation, and Drawings and Prints, the presentation will present a close look into several seventeenth century works on paper, focusing on a drawing by German-born artist-naturalist Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), to better understand the materials and techniques that reproduced insect color in the early modern world.

Possessions: Claudine Bouzonnet Stella's Prints After Nicolas Poussin

Yasemin Altun, The Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints

Around 1750, when praising the prints of Claudine Bouzonnet Stella (1636–1697) after Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), the renowned connoisseur Pierre-Jean Mariette claimed that “Poussin, however great, majestic, and correct he may be, perhaps appears even more so in the prints of Claudia Stella than in his own paintings.” By elevating a female printmaker above the founding father of French painting, Mariette

effectively upended the established hierarchies of gender and medium in art history. What justified such a bold assertion?

Playing on the polysemy of “possession”—here referring both to material property and to the topos of creativity as a process of divine inspiration—this paper investigates how Bouzonnet Stella acquired an intimacy with Poussin’s work. To qualify how a woman could best capture his masculine, intellectual manner of painting, nineteenth-century art historians resorted to an ancient metaphor of creativity: the master’s spirit entered her body, stirring her to produce virtuosic prints. My paper complicates this sexist simplification of Bouzonnet Stella’s skills as a printmaker. I show how, by carefully studying Poussin’s drawings and paintings owned by her family, and by collaborating with her brother and uncle (who were members of Poussin’s inner circle), she cultivated a deep familiarity with his aesthetic. I propose that these concrete experiences of belonging informed Bouzonnet Stella’s own use of novel, mixed methods of engraving and etching to enhance the color of Poussin’s paintings through her black-and-white prints. Through close visual and historiographic analysis of never-exhibited prints in The Met collection, this paper offers not only renewed evidence of women’s contributions to seventeenth-century French printmaking, but also a fresh look at Poussin’s art.

Trees As a Central Building Material in the Early Modern Period (1450–1650)

Yeo-Jin Katerina-Bong, Diamonstein-Spielvogel Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints

In *De architectura* (30–20 BCE), Vitruvius categorized various tree species according to their qualities and function in building construction. Following Vitruvius, subsequent early modern architects made conscious efforts to study, illustrate, categorize, and characterize trees in their treatises as if dendrologists, when the study of the natural world increasingly became systematized. The early modern architectural histories have overlooked the relative importance of trees in building practices because of their impermanence, combustibility, crudity, and/or preferences for marble. By analyzing these architectural treatises, this paper will assert that architects obtained information about trees’ materiality which enabled them to construct more durable, sturdier, and solid buildings, forming an integral part of building practices.

Archeology and Ethnography in Jean Charlot’s Illustrations for *The Book of Christopher Columbus* (1930)

Juan Gabriel Ramírez Bolívar, Marica and Jan Vilcek Curatorial Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints

In 1930, the French-Mexican artist Jean Charlot made illustrations for *The Book of Christopher Columbus: A Lyrical Drama in Two Parts*, written in English by the French philosopher Paul Claudel and published through Yale University Press. The theater play focuses on the judgment for posterity of Columbus’s life and actions, presenting a heroic narrative of his first voyage to the Americas and focusing solely on the struggles in his conquest campaign. The artist made around eighty-eight illustrations combining glorifying depictions of Columbus, stylized Maya imagery, and allegories of the colonized territory. These themes came from Charlot’s experience living in Mexico and his participation as a copyist in archeological expeditions to Chichén Itza, financed by the Carnegie Institute in the 1920s. Furthermore, these illustrations go against the political message in the mural the *Massacre of Tenochtitlan* (1922–23), which Charlot painted in Mexico. This presentation analyzes the prints featured in this editorial project through the lens of Charlot’s practice during the 1920s and 30s. Questions to consider are: How does this publication relate to the more significant artistic production of Jean Charlot? What is the influence of Paul Claudel in the artist’s visual work? Furthermore, what are the differences in the discourse of Charlot in public spaces inside and outside of Mexico? By examining the print proofs of the publication, I will elucidate the differences in the ambiguous messaging of the artist to the readership of the book in contrast to the intended public of the mural in Mexico City.

Discussant: Joanna Seidenstein, Assistant Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints

Thursday, May 18

The Transient and the Tangible in Asia and Europe

1–3 pm

Capturing the Unreachable: An Gyeon's Use of Local Models in *Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Spring*

Gina Choi, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Asian Art

In 1447, the Korean painter An Gyeon (fl. 1440s) faced the task of depicting his patron's dream—a journey to the Peach Blossom Spring, a remote and utopian land described in a fifth-century Chinese tale by the renowned poet Tao Yuanming. The finished product, *Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Spring*, is the only existent painting by An Gyeon and serves as a testament to the painter's flourishing career. In this paper, I examine how An Gyeon approached his task of portraying an imaginary landscape that briefly appeared in a dream, with a profound understanding of the Korean conception of the Peach Blossom Spring and the knowledge of diverse painting styles and genres from the past and present. In an attempt to move away from a linear model of stylistic transmission, I trace some of the visual features in the painting to local sources, mainly paintings in the themes of "Gathering of Government Officials," "Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers," and "Water-Moon Avalokiteshvara," of which I draw examples from The Metropolitan Museum of Art collection. In so doing, this study situates the painting within the visual corpus of fifteenth-century Korea and reveals it as An Gyeon's assertion as a master painter of his time.

Defining Manchu Identity: Visual and Material Expressions of Martiality

Yeorae Yoon, Marica and Jan Vilcek Curatorial Fellow, Department of Asian Art

Manchu bannermen were an ethnic minority group with unique social privileges during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). As a military and administrative organization, the Eight Banners played a key role in conquering the Ming and establishing the Qing dynasty. Bannermen belonged to the ruling class of the new empire and were sociopolitically distinguished from non-bannermen, mostly Han Chinese (the ethnic majority). As the conquest elite, they were demanded by Qing emperors to embody military skills and martial spirits, which were defining characteristics of Manchu identity. This study examines how bannermen-related paintings and arms and armor exhibit and celebrate the military prowess and preparedness of the conquerors. First, I analyze how Manchu bannermen's embodied knowledge of martial activities, such as archery and horse-riding, was visualized and communicated through painting. For instance, *Horsemanship Competition for the Shunzhi Emperor* in The Met collection, painted by a bannerman, accurately articulates numerous movements, postures, and gestures of bannerman riders on a horse. Second, I explore intricately decorated ceremonial helmets and saddles of high-ranking bannermen, demonstrating that the glorification and beautification of military equipment were explicit and effective ways of displaying and emphasizing martial values. Bannermen also adorned their bodies with archer's rings and embellished knives, visually signaling their martial identity. Analyzing the geographical and cultural origins of materials and decoration techniques of these weapons and equipment will reveal the complex sociopolitical dynamics underlying the promotion of martial virtues.

A Different Approach to the Landscape: Jean-Joseph-Xavier Bidault in Central and Southern Italy (1785–90)

Orfeo Cellura, Eugene V. Thaw Fellow for Collections Cataloguing, Department of European Paintings

After receiving his artistic education between Lyon and Paris, in 1785 French painter Jean-Joseph-Xavier Bidault (1758–1846) left Paris to travel to Italy, reaching Rome in November. He spent the following five years traveling and painting outdoors around the Pontifical city and throughout the South, including the Campania region. His outdoor pictorial style differed from that of his contemporaneous colleagues active in Central and Southern Italy. Indeed, rather than focus on atmospheric and transient effects of a landscape and paint quickly, he preferred to concentrate on details and catch the Italian sunlight through a refined and attentive painting. After his return to the French capital, in 1790, he often included elements from his Italian outdoors paintings to create the idealized and academic artworks he exhibited in the Salon every year until 1844.

Bidault's Italian paintings reveal a studied, highly precise way to paint outdoors that

differed from the techniques favored by French artists active at that time in Rome. The paintings he made between Central and Southern Italy would later be admired by the French painter Camille Corot, who described Bidault as a “master” whose paintings influenced his own work. Through the analysis of several of works produced by Bidault, among which there are some studies held at The Metropolitan Museum, I will seek to clarify his unique approach to the practice of painting outdoors in late eighteenth-century Rome.

Metal Stone Studies (*Jinshixue*) and the Origin of East Asian Painting: The Cross-Cultural Context of *Yu Rang* by Hirafuku Hyakusui

Tamaki Maeda, The Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow, Department of Asian Art

Depicting a famous assassin from China’s distant past, *Yu Rang* (J: Yo Jō, 1917) by Hirafuku Hyakusui (1877–1933) won first prize at the Bunten, Japan’s most prestigious competitive exhibition of the time. Its subject was taken from *Records of the Grand Historian* (Shiji, ca. 100 BCE); style inspired by Gu Kaizhi (ca. 344–408); and composition derived from the Wu Liang Shrine (ca. 147–51). Hyakusui’s work, as this paper shows, exemplifies a new trend in Japanese art in tune with *jinshixue* (literally “metal stone studies”)—an antiquarian pursuit widespread among the learned elite of late Qing (1644–1911) and Republican China (1912–1949). What’s more, *Yu Rang* provides insights into “East Asian art”—a concept formed by Japanese intellectuals concerned with cultural connections, not only within East Asia, but also throughout Eurasia. *Yu Rang*, with its allusion to Chinese antiquities, represents a modern mindset exploring transcultural linkage, as opposed to national containment, of Japanese culture. I contend China was integral to such a modernism in Japanese art.

Discussant: Asher Miller, Associate Curator, Department of European Paintings

Friday, May 24

Artifice and Premodern Landscapes

10 am–12 pm

Labor and Legends in Early Netherlandish Landscapes

Virginia Girard, Theodore Rousseau Fellow, Department of European Paintings

This presentation will suggest new possibilities for the interpretation of sixteenth-century Flemish landscape painting that are attentive to the material, vernacular associations viewers brought to their visual experiences. The dense forests of the Ardennes, in Belgium’s Wallonia province, were once believed to be populated with mythical beings such as giants, fairies, and demons. Elven creatures called *nutons* populated the mines and iron refineries for which the Ardennes was famous in the sixteenth century. Strange rock formations, ancient ruins, and unusual natural features were attributed to the activities of these legendary figures. They were celebrated in local pageants and processions, some of which continue to be performed today.

In this talk, I describe the most important legends of the Ardennes and consider their bearing on mining landscapes by Herri met de Bles and Lucas van Valckenborch. My analysis is informed by my examinations of paintings in European collections undertaken this past year, and supplemented with primary source material concerning the cultural and environmental history of the Ardennes.

Embracing the Surface of the Pool: The Falcon’s Bath Tapestries and Representational Theory in Late Medieval Franco-Flemish Courts

Isabella Weiss, The Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

The Metropolitan Museum possesses three early fifteenth-century tapestries (46.58.1, 2011.93, 43.70.2) that depict a noble couple with a falcon seated in a field of flowers. In all three, one of the figures disturbs the surface of a small fountain with a

stick, transforming the pool's reflective facade into a cloud of ripples. Previous approaches to the iconography of these tapestries have taken a realist approach, interpreting them as representations of an actual practice described in late medieval hunting manuals. In this paper, I propose that the interest in representing this particular stage in the process of training a falcon is not arbitrary. Rather, I argue that these artworks participate in an active visual and written discourse within fifteenth-century Franco-Flemish courts on reflective surfaces and the nature of the images they produce. By contextualizing these tapestries within the broader visual and cultural context of the Franco-Flemish courts for which they—or objects like them—were produced, I explore the engagement of these rare surviving examples of monumental secular representation with contemporary intellectual discourse. With this research, I strive to contribute to our understanding of the unique cultural conceptions of visual representation that were developed in the arts and literature of late medieval courts, and to distinguish these ideas from the classical notion of “mimesis” that is often projected erroneously onto artworks with naturalistic elements produced in late medieval contexts.

Evoking the Middle Ages: Modern Medieval Gardens in the United States

Sarah Daiker, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

As with the collection of medieval European architectural elements enclosed within the Bishop's Garden of Washington National Cathedral, the garden's visitors are likewise situated within a deliberately designed environment that evokes medieval European gardens. Fragrant herbs and flowers, a neat expanse of turf, boxwood hedges, and paving stones form the Bishop's Garden and frame the stone arches, relief sculptures, and column capitals worn from age and centuries of display outdoors in France, England, and the United States. These fragments were imported from Europe and brought to the cathedral grounds along with flora and garden design gathered from monastic records, herbals, and tapestries to fabricate a “medieval” environment in Washington, D.C. in the early twentieth century, much like at The Met Cloisters in Upper Manhattan. This presentation illustrates how the Bishop's Garden and the gardens of The Met Cloisters evoke medieval European gardens while being separated from the historical context of the Middle Ages in Europe temporally and geographically. Bringing together archival research and onsite study of the gardens' design, plantings, and experiential impressions, this talk examines the motivations of the gardens' original designers in creating these spaces as integral parts of the grounds of a cathedral and a museum, respectively, that continue to shape visitors' experiences of these sites and perceptions of medieval Europe in the present.

The Grammar of Art and Science in the Lapidary of Alfonso X of Castile *Rosario Cornejo, Hanns Swarzenski and Brigitte Horney Swarzenski Fellow, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters*

Though art and science intertwine in unexpected ways in the medieval world, the iconography and style rather than the contents of scientific manuscripts are typically focused on by art historians. However, the scientific manuscripts commissioned by Islamic, Jewish, and Christian patrons of the medieval Mediterranean challenge facile distinctions because they often intersperse references to optics and representation in their contents.

This presentation centers on a sumptuous example of medieval mineralogy, the Lapidary of King Alfonso X of Castile (1221–1284). This manuscript is a Castilian translation of Arabic sources assembled by Alfonso's Jewish physician, Yehuda ben Moshe, exploring the astrological, medicinal, and magical properties of stones and minerals. Alfonso's Lapidary is renowned for its naturalistic depiction and scientifically accurate positioning of the constellations in the sky. This presentation challenges this understanding by focusing on the interplay, rather than the distinctions, between art and science. It suggests that art and representation serve as active modes of engagement in the world, while scientific interpretation operates in an allegorical manner.

Discussant: C. Griffith Mann, David- Weill Curator in Charge, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

Friday, May 24

Enduring Connections: Chemical Bonds and Artistic Networks on the Printed Page

1–3 pm

From the Russian Empire to Ancient Greece: George Hoyningen-Huene's *Hellas* (1943) and New York's Émigré Networks during World War II

Sasha Whittaker, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Photographs

George Hoyningen-Huene, who established his career at Paris *Vogue* in the 1920s before moving to *Harper's Bazaar* in 1935, is best known as one of the leading fashion photographers of the interwar period. He is less widely recognized for his extensive archaeological photography, which culminated in a series of lavishly illustrated photobooks such as *Hellas*, published in 1943. *Hellas* paired Hoyningen-Huene's photographs of ancient Greek art and architecture—including images of objects in The Metropolitan Museum of Art collection—alongside excerpts from ancient and modern literature. Born in St. Petersburg in 1900, Hoyningen-Huene fled Russia just before the October Revolution and joined a wave of émigrés who settled first in France and later in the United States. This talk examines how *Hellas* emerged from networks of Central and Eastern European émigrés in 1940s New York, focusing on Hoyningen-Huene's closest collaborators: graphic designer Alexey Brodovitch, writer and editor Alexander Koiransky, and publisher J. J. Augustin. Printed during the Axis occupation of Greece, *Hellas* raised funds for the Greek War Relief Association and the Friends of Greece, a charity to which Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia contributed. This talk asks why contemporary Greece became the focus for these émigrés' wartime activism and investigates how *Hellas* challenged the Nazis' appropriation of ancient Greek heritage. Ultimately, this project reveals how exiled artists and writers, far from being marginal figures in New York's cultural scene, supported the Allied war effort from afar.

Albums of Endurance: A Study of the Mechanical Properties of Conservation Adhesives

Catherine E. Stephens, Research Scholar in Photograph Conservation, Department of Photograph Conservation

As soon as photography was invented in the late 1830s, enthusiasts began organizing their photographs inside books. As photographic technology evolved, bookbinders competed to invent new or improved album structures that could attractively display the latest photographic formats. Unfortunately, the same industrial innovations that led to the birth of photography also led to the mass-production of unrefined wood pulp papers and other inexpensive, chemically unstable bookbinding materials. For this reason, photograph albums can be very fragile today, especially in areas that must bend and flex, such as the spine and joints. Because of their experimental structures, and their often fragile materials, photograph albums are some of the most difficult and least-satisfying books to repair. Traditional bookbinders preferred to use unrefined animal glues or starch pastes; today, when repairing these historical books, conservators often use wheat starch paste or cellulose ethers, synthetic adhesives derived from cellulose, the primary ingredient in paper. Some book conservators choose to mix wheat starch paste with a purified animal glue or a cellulose ether, for added flexibility, but others believe that this practice is ineffective. In an attempt to resolve these disagreements, I have designed an experiment to evaluate the effects that various adhesives may have on the flexibility and fold-endurance of historical papers. In particular, this experiment studies the effects of mixing two distinct adhesives, such as wheat starch paste and methyl cellulose. This presentation will provide a brief overview of bookbinding and photographic history, and will discuss the preliminary results of my adhesive study.

Development of Direct Insertion Probe Mass Spectrometry (DIP-MS) for the Analysis of Organic Colorants

Rachel Lackner, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Conservation Fellow, Department of Scientific Research

Chemical analysis of dyes and pigments can be critical to understand how, when, and where an artwork was made. However, it is often necessary to weigh the desired level of molecular detail with the sample size required for analysis. For example, liquid chromatography mass spectrometry (LC-MS) enables highly accurate mass measurements of complex mixtures but requires sampling (~1 mg), limiting its use mostly to textiles. However, organic colorants are frequently encountered in prints, paintings, and drawings, from which sampling is more limited. There is therefore a need for techniques that provide detailed molecular information for minimally invasive analysis of organic colorants. This work presents preliminary research into

the development of direct insertion probe mass spectrometry (DIP-MS) as a complementary method for organic colorant analysis. DIP-MS requires little or no sample preparation and can be performed on solid or liquid samples, allowing its use with dyes and pigments with solubility or polarity issues. We present an optimized DIP-MS methodology for the analysis of natural and synthetic pigments and demonstrate its potential as a complementary method to techniques such as LC-MS and surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy (SERS). We present case studies for the use of DIP-MS to identify markers for mixtures of natural dyes such as dayflower blue and safflower in an aged Japanese print and for detecting synthetic dyes that are challenging to detect with widely used LC-MS techniques that use electrospray ionization (ESI). Finally, we demonstrate the use of DIP-MS for analysis of objects in The Met collection.

Discussant: Mia Fineman, Curator, Department of Photographs

Gallery Activations

Friday, May 10

Recoloring the Palace

3:15 pm, 4 pm, 4:45 pm

Art Study Room, Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education

Talah Anderson, The Slifka Foundation Interdisciplinary Fellow, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art

How can we reconstruct the color of the walls of an ancient palace? Though the currently closed Assyrian Sculpture Court of The Met appears almost colorless, experts know that its reliefs, which lined the walls of the Northwest Palace of King Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria at Nimrud (northern Iraq) in the ninth century BCE, were painted. Experience a black-and-white reconstruction of the Assyrian Sculpture Court, and learn about the various approaches and historical sources used to investigate the original color palette of the reliefs. Examine the evidence with Met fellow Talah Anderson and imagine how you would restore vibrancy to the space.

Behind the Classical Facade I: Seeing Women and Enslaved People in the Greek Galleries

5–5:45 pm

Meet in Gallery 534, The Vélez Blanco Patio

Victoria Greene, The Bothmer Fellow, Department of Greek and Roman Art

Where can we see women and enslaved people in the material record of the Classical Greek world? Join an interactive conversation and explore the Greek galleries through a new lens, focusing on the social histories of ancient artworks, and examining the axes of power and oppression entangled with their visual language and production. This is part one of a two-part gallery conversation.

Behind the Classical Facade II: Fictions of Blackness in Imperial France

6–6:45 pm

Meet in Gallery 534, The Vélez Blanco Patio

Careese Jackson-Alger, Chester Dale Fellow, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts

Explore Charles-Henri-Joseph Cordier's *Woman from the French Colonies* and consider the significance of a “Black Venus” at a specific point in history. Building on “Behind the Classical Facade I,” this talk recontextualizes depictions of Black bodies within the larger canon of Western art, considering them beyond their value as artifacts of racism and enslavement.

Friday, May 17**Performance through the Camera's Lens: Selections from the Department of Photographs**

4–4:45 pm

Gallery 850, Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Gallery

Sasha Whittaker, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Photographs

How can one capture a performance—an ephemeral event that unfolds over time—through a still image? Explore how the challenges of picturing performance have pushed the technological limits of photography since the announcement of its invention in 1839. Through close looking, with attention to photographic processes, learn how photographers devised innovative solutions to the age-old problem of visualizing the fleeting forms of dance, music, theater, and performance art.

Magic and Miracle in Islamic Art

5–5:45 pm

Gallery 450, Patti Cadby Birch Gallery

Rosario Cornejo, Hanns Swarzenski and Brigitte Horney Swarzenski Fellow,

Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

Özlem Yıldız, The Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow,

Department of Islamic Art

Can you discern the subtle distinctions between magic, miracles, and divine interventions? Art and objects produced in the premodern Islamic world offer a rich record of societies enforcing or negotiating the boundaries of the sacred and the profane. Journey through centuries and explore how magic and miracles are portrayed in paintings, instruments, and books from the Islamic Art collection, comparing the depiction of similar practices in both organized religion and popular culture.

Saturday, May 18**Herbs and Flowers, Fragrance and Memory: In the Gardens of The Met Cloisters**

2–3 pm

The Judy Black Garden in the Cuxa Cloister, The Cloisters

Sarah Daiker, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Medieval Art and

The Cloisters

What might it feel like to be in a medieval European garden? Explore the gardens of The Met Cloisters—designed as an integral feature of the Museum—and join in conversation about how experiencing these modern medieval gardens shapes our understandings of the Middle Ages and The Met collection of medieval art.

Friday, May 24**Portable Meadows: An Immersive Visual Essay on Millefleurs Tapestries and Meadow Ecosystems**

3:15 pm, 4 pm, 4:45 pm

Art Study Room, Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education

Isabella Weiss, The Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters, in collaboration with Jake Vallante

What would it have looked and felt like to stand in a room covered in “portable meadows?” Experience an immersive visual essay that explores the relationship between fifteenth- and sixteenth-century tapestries depicting the vegetation of biodiverse grassland ecosystems and the actual meadow ecosystems they depict.

Guess the Dress: Fashionable Styles in the Late 18th Century

5–5:45 pm

Meet in Gallery 634, Evelyn Borchard Metzger Gallery

Margherita Barone, The Gerald and Mary Ellen Ritter Memorial Fellow,

The Costume Institute

Have you ever wondered how fashionable women would dress in the 18th century? Learn about the differences between fashionable styles of with the help of a reproduction of a robe à *la piemontaise* from The Costume Institute's collection, created by Met fellow Margherita Barone. Then, join a game that will challenge you to find depictions of these dresses depicted in the newly reopened galleries dedicated to European Paintings.

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