



Dear Tappanites,

We are thrilled to release our Fall 2021 Newsletter, which is packed with news of recent arrivals, events and talks, and accomplishments in History of Art. Despite the ongoing COVID pandemic, we indeed are growing and thriving—and celebrate creativity within constraint!

Besides our new cohort of PhD students, whose presence enlivened our in-person Fall Reception, we extend a warm welcome to the five new lecturers and postdoctoral fellows who joined us this fall: [Sanne Ravensbergen](#), [Cecilio Cooper](#), [David Norman](#), [Sabiha Göloğlu](#), and [Susanne Reichert](#). Collectively, their work encompasses museums, decolonialism, and repatriation; visual cultures of blackness and notions of the chthonic; modern and contemporary art in Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland); Islamic and Ottoman art, architecture, and visual culture; and Carolingian and Mongol cities and empire building. This dazzling spectrum of scholarly sub-fields is expanding the department's areas of expertise and teaching, enriching our undergraduate course array in trendsetting ways.

Our faculty members also accomplished much over the past year. Among the notable successes, Ana María León published her first book [Modernity for the Masses](#), on architect Antonio Bonet's housing projects in Buenos Aires, while Daniel Herwitz published an exploration of [The Political Power of Visual Art](#). Many other colleagues published scholarly essays, op-eds, collected volumes, and exhibition catalogues, launched online resources, presented papers, organized conferences, and secured prestigious fellowships and grants.

Our turn to the virtual during this pandemic period has yielded some surprisingly positive results, including our ability to record Zoom lectures and place them on our department's website, increasing accessibility for one and all. Please stay tuned for more information about our Winter 2022 flash-talks and lectures, including the MLK Day presentation on carceral arts by Prof. [Nicole Fleetwood](#), one of this year's recipients of the McArthur Fellowship. We also have been able to virtually "welcome" students, colleagues, and visitors through a new (and fully captioned) [welcome video](#), for which we extend our warm thanks to Matthew Quirk.

Last but not least, we would like to take a moment to thank those remarkable individuals who have supported the department through their transformational gifts. We extend our renewed thanks to Prof. Ilene Forsyth who, this past year, donated [\\$6.25 million](#) to the department to establish a Distinguished Professorship and the Forsyth Visiting Graduate Student Fellowship, a fund that will allow us to recruit about three graduate students, based anywhere in the world, each year to join Tappan Hall. This endeavor will further

strengthen and diversify History of Art's graduate community. Moreover, we wish to thank Sandra Olson for having established the Sandra Hersee Olson History of Art Fund, dedicated to art history and public engagement. This fund is currently supporting Michaela Rife's project on [Michigan post office murals](#), and promises to enable many of us Tappanites to go "out in the world" and make Art History matter: to scrupulously study the historical past *and* boldly meet the challenges of today.

With my best wishes for a restful and restorative winter holiday,

Christiane Gruber

Chair, History of Art



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Professor Emerita Ilene Forsyth (photo by Sally J. Bjork)

New Forsyth fellowship expands global collaboration for U-M History of Art - Kristen Loszewski

"One of Forsyth's great joys as an art historian is the exchange of ideas in discovery and analysis. "Fresh thinking has always seemed to me to be stimulated by study of the work of colleagues from other, related disciplines and direct interactions with them," Forsyth noted in the 2005 work *Women Medievalists at the Academy* (ed. Jane Chance)."



Museum Studies Minor Program Highlights - Deirdre Hennebury

The Museum Studies Minor has launched several new initiatives for the academic year of 2021-22. Associate Director Deirdre Hennebury writes on these program highlights as well as give welcome to Dr. Sanne Ravensbergen, who taught the fall seminar of 'Colonialism, Museum Collections, and Repatriation'



[Michigan Post Office Murals Project](#)
- Michaela Rife

"I arrived at Tappan Hall in Fall 2020 focused on my book project, a study of New Deal post office murals in the Dust Bowl region. However, one of the attractions of the murals and sculptures produced under the Section of Fine Arts (1934-1943) is that they are so widespread— there are over one thousand sites, from nearby Chelsea, Michigan, to Charlotte Amalie in the Virgin Islands. These murals raise so many questions and offer an (often distorted) window into their location. With the generous support of the Sandra Olson Fund for Art History and Civic Engagement, I have the opportunity to research Michigan murals alongside the sites in my book. The goal for the tentatively titled "Michigan Post Office Murals Project" is a public-facing website chronicling ten New Deal murals in lower Michigan: Alma, Blissfield, Bronson, Chelsea, Eaton Rapids, Fenton, Grand Ledge, Howell, Paw Paw, and Plymouth..."



Left Image: Mongke Khan stela (National Museum of Mongolia)



Right Image: Cizhou vessel, Yuan dynasty, 1271-1368 CE. (Photo: Peter Bittner)

Humanities Collaboratory: Centering the Northern Realms **- Bryan Miller**

September 1, 2021 – December 31, 2023

Centering the Northern Realms: Integrating Histories and Archaeologies of the Mongol Empire (1200 to 1500 CE) investigates the importance of the northern reaches of the Empire through interdisciplinary research. Overlapping patterns in source materials, whether textual or archaeological, are used to build a narrative of past behaviors in the understudied Khövsgöl region and to challenge existing descriptions of the northern people of the forest as minor participants in the Mongol Empire. The aim of the project is to highlight how power was concentrated in northern communities by analyzing their influence on networks of exchange, control of resources, and engagement with multiple religions. We demonstrate the centrality of the north through scholarly publications, seminars, a comic book, and an exhibition.

Team members include **PI Alicia Ventresca Miller** (Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology / Assistant Curator, Museum of Anthropological Archaeology); **Miranda Brown** (Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and Professor of Chinese Studies, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures); **Pär Cassel** (Associate Professor, Department of History); **Bryan K. Miller** (Lecturer, History of Art); and **Sangseraima Ujeed** (Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures).

For the Northern Realms Collaboratory, Bryan manages a team of graduate and undergraduate students who work to translate Mongolian and Russian reports of sites and integrate them into a research database. He also leads a research project to investigate the nature and manifestations of Central Places in Mongol society, with special attention to the activities, functions, and features of local nodes that may be gleaned from written records and archaeological remains.

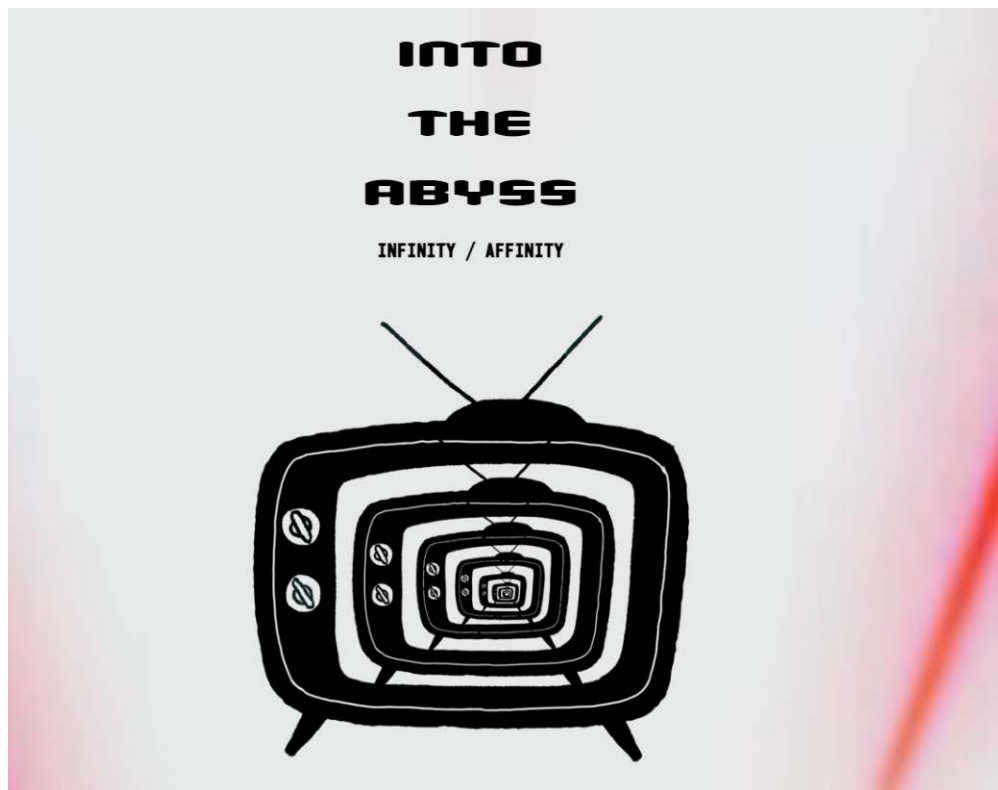


Asia Society Lobby

Student Internships & Fellowships, Summer 2021

Every year, History of Art and Museums Studies students take on new and challenging opportunities at museums and institutions throughout the country - and sometimes beyond. These internships are often life-changing experiences, and we aim to support these students by offering [scholarships](#) for this very purpose.

While some students were able to take part on-site, a good number of internships are still remote due to the COVID pandemic. Although this has made institutions rethink how internships might be deployed remotely while maintaining a high standard of engagement and enrichment, we are pleased that our students were still able to take part in whatever ways they could.



[Into the Abyss](#)
[Infinity / Affinity](#)

Helicon Student Exhibition, Fall 2021

Helicon Haus is excited to announce our 2020-2021 annual exhibition, Into the Abyss. Postponed due to Covid-19, Into the Abyss is Helicon's second entirely virtual exhibition, and our first foray into collaborative art-making with the Michigan Electronic Music Collective. Celebrating our long relationship with MEMCO, Into the Abyss is a set of seven collaborative visual-aural works, each crafted by a team of artists and musicians and digitally curated by Helicon members.



[Three History of Art Graduates Win Fulbright-Hays Award](#)

The US Department of Education Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) Fellowships provide opportunities for PhD candidates to engage in full-time dissertation research abroad in less commonly taught modern foreign languages and non-Western-European area studies.

In 2021, USDE awarded a total of eight [DDRA Fellowships to University of Michigan applicants](#) for a total amount of \$258,366. Of those, three were awarded to History of Art students. Congratulations to Ross Bernhaut, Michelle Al-Ferzly, and Holley Ledbetter! [Click to read about their plans for their fellowships.](#)

Henry P. Tappan Graduate Awards

- Every year, History of Art recognizes graduate students whose research, teaching, and contribution to the department goes above and beyond. This year, the Tappan Award for Excellence in Teaching goes to [James Denison](#); James was noted for going above and beyond to bring DEI & Antiracism into his pedagogy.
 - The Tappan Award for Outstanding Achievement in Graduate Studies goes to [Holley Ledbetter](#) and [Dylan Volk](#). Holley and Dylan were both noted for the high level of originality in their respective research projects.
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News from Tappan Hall

- We welcome two new staff members to Tappan Hall, **Audra Wilson** and **Alexis St. John**. Audra joins us from the English department as our new Executive Secretary and Alexis joins us from the Ross School of Business as our new Graduate Program Coordinator.
- We wish **Jessica Pattison** well as she starts a new role at the University of Northern Alabama and **Debbie Fitch** as she starts a new journey in retirement.

Alumni in the News

- [An Artful Relic: the Shroud of Turin in Baroque Italy](#) - new publication from Andrew Casper (BA '01)
- [The Glass House in New Canaan presenting own architect Philip Johnson](#) - webinar from Jeffrey Lieber (PhD '07)
- Art Historian and Digital Humanities Researcher Silvia Tita (PhD '13) has been selected as the [first appointee of the Carol Ann Bennett-Vallès Professorship in Art History](#) at Michigan State University.

Faculty in the News

- [At Hunter Biden's Art Show, Line, Color and Questions](#) - Joan Kee quoted in the New York Times.
- [Propaganda: The Art of Telling Lies](#)—documentary film containing interviews with Christiane Gruber

Students in the News

- [Oh, honey... A Queer Reading of UMMA's Collection](#) - Sean Kramer

- [City in the Desert, Revisited: Oleg Grabar at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, 1964-71](#)
- Christiane Gruber and Michelle Al-Ferzly, foreword by Renata Holod and contributions by Bihter Esener, Nicola Barham, and Ani Kalousdian
 - [Queen Lili'uokalani's accession photograph](#) - Emily Cornish, SmartHistory.org
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