
Research Out Loud: Met Fellows Present

May 16–26, 2022



**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 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 events on May 16 through 25 are live and take place on Zoom. Free, though advance registration is required. To register, visit metmuseum.org/researchoutloud.

COME TO THE MET FOR IN-PERSON EVENTS WITH FELLOWS ON MAY 26

The fellows expand on their May 16–25 presentations through in-person talks, musical performances, and other exciting activations of The Met galleries. Free with Museum admission; no registration required. The full schedule can be found at the end of this brochure and at metmuseum.org/researchoutloud.

**Monday, May 16 Against Place:
Modernism in Collaboration (1915–1955)**
10 am–12 pm

The Working Life of the Suprematist Textile

Jason Mientkiewicz, Leonard A. Lauder Fellow in Modern Art,
Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art

After the exhibition of Kazimir Malevich's *Suprematist Composition: Black Square* in 1915, a group of young artists gathered around the painter to establish the Supremus group. Though these figures are best known today for deploying Malevich's geometrically abstract idiom (Suprematism) in oil paintings, many were equally involved in the creation of Suprematist textile designs executed by rural female artisan collectives (*artely*) in small villages in present-day Ukraine. These collaborations were initiated by historically underrecognized women such as the artists Natalia Davydova, Aleksandra Ekster, Nina Genke-Meller, and Evgeniia Priby'lskaia, partly with the aim of alleviating rural poverty, and their activities continued into the first years of Soviet rule. During this time, artists increasingly attempted to explicitly theorize practices of artistic production, collaborative and otherwise, that deprivileged individual creative authority. This presentation examines these activities in relation to the collective philosophy Malevich claimed as Suprematism's foundation and addresses their role in the on-the-ground reconfigurations of artistic labor and its organization and administration that occurred in the early years of the Soviet state. In so doing, it hopes to refine an understanding of the stakes and understandings of collaboration, collaborative labor, and artistic collectivity in the years surrounding the Russian Revolution.

Migrant Constructivism

Adrienn Kácsor, Leonard A. Lauder Fellow in Modern Art,
Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art

This presentation revisits the early period of Russian Constructivism from a “migrant point of view,” through the lens of Hungarian migrant artists who encountered the experimental works of the Russian Constructivists in Moscow in the early 1920s. The inevitably out-of-place perspectives of the Hungarian migrants disrupt several of the familiar narratives of Russian Constructivism. Most important, the Hungarian migrants’ viewpoints entangle Constructivism with a Soviet state organization that is most often associated in scholarship with aesthetic traditionalism and political obedience: the *Proletkul’t*, a state institution of proletarian culture. By piecing together the dispersed and discrepant migrant Constructivists’ objects, including both the Hungarians’ aesthetic works and their theoretical texts, this paper uncovers an alternative mode of revolutionary art that Hungarian migrant artists produced in the 1920s by mixing the abstract forms of Constructivism with the committed ideology of the *Proletkul’t* and its dream of a new collective culture.

Re-placing Modernism: The Reimann School in the United States

Alexandra Chiriac, Leonard A. Lauder Fellow in Modern Art,
Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art

In 1930, the New York publication *Art Digest* observed that the designation “executed by the Reimann School Workshops,” referring to a German design institution and lesser-known competitor of the celebrated Bauhaus, had “come to be synonymous with a personal interpretation of the modern spirit.” Unashamedly focused on commercial aspects of design, the Reimann prepared its students to obtain jobs in commerce and industry and employed teachers who worked professionally in their chosen fields. Its pioneering pedagogical program was well established even before the First World War, and the school actively supported women in teaching and studying the commercial arts. Furthermore, through its international student body and its professional collaborations, the Reimann helped to popularize concepts of modern design across the world. Traces of the Reimann’s presence in the United States can be found at The Met, in holdings such as copies of the school’s monthly publication *Farbe und Form* as well as metal objects produced in collaboration with the Chase Brass & Copper Company of Connecticut. In this paper, the Reimann’s reception in the United States provides an entry point for reassessing the school’s contribution to the promotion and professionalization of modern design in the twentieth century.

From Communication to Commodity: The Derrière Garde of Alexey Brodovitch in American Exile

Hyewon Yoon, Leonard A. Lauder Fellow in Modern Art,
Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art

This presentation explores the work of Alexey Brodovitch, an émigré from Russia best known for his role as art director of *Harper’s Bazaar* between 1934 and 1958. Working in the crucible of American commercial arts from the interwar period through the 1950s and known as “the visual father of the generation,” Brodovitch’s graphical work captivated artists, critics, designers, and photographers by virtue of its optical dynamism, creative intertwining of typography and abstract elements, and, above all, its “shock effects.” This study offers a new approach to the work of the leading impresario of commercial arts in mid-century America by considering how his *graphisme* derived from a pastiche of technical and formal resources culled from a variety of avant-garde movements. Brodovitch co-opted and “disarmed” the visual elements of the radical avant-garde in service of vendable style and rhetoric in fashion photography, graphic design, and the marketing of various commodities. Exploring how Brodovitch arbitrarily selected, copied, partially conserved, displayed, and publicized the aesthetic practices of European modern art, this study offers a history of the postwar American culture industry’s reception of the radical avant-garde.

Monday, May 16 Fashioning Black Subjectivities 2–4 pm

Portraits of People Never Met

Alisa Prince, Chester Dale Fellow, Department of Photographs

This presentation unpacks the concept of anonymity as it pertains to vernacular photographs of Black people. Anonymity, it is argued, enables viewers of such images to fabricate visual narratives about the sitters. The discourse on Black vernacular portraiture centers self-fashioning, self-presentation, and inscribing legacies within familial and communal histories, yet, in the realm of found vernacular photography, most sitters and photographers are unknown. By assessing the intersection of imagination and identification, this talk extends the discussion to address how the function(s) of vernacular photographs is/are altered when a sitter is unknown. This talk focuses on studio portraits made during the 1940s and 1950s and examines how the content of a photograph interacts with the concept of anonymity to illuminate how the photographic object might problematize and/or reproduce the namelessness or decontextualization of its sitter.

The People v. Peter Sewally, or the Misadventures of Mary Jones

Jonathan Square, The Gerald and Mary Ellen Ritter Memorial Fellow, The Costume Institute

This talk presents a chapter in progress from the book manuscript *Negro Cloth: How Slavery Birthed the American Fashion Industry*, which reconstructs the life of Mary Jones, a Black trans sex worker in early nineteenth-century New York. In particular, it uses an analysis of a drawing and descriptions of Jones in newspapers to explore and analyze her sartorial self-representation. Although frustratingly little is known about the lives of trans people in the nineteenth century, this presentation utilizes garments from the period to recreate how Jones may have wanted to present herself to the world. Ancillary sources that inform the present analysis include Sewally's fashioned body as an archive, the court case *The People v. Peter Sewally*, and numerous newspaper accounts. Here, fashion provides an analytic beyond the oppressive apparatus of the queerphobic criminal justice system of early-nineteenth-century New York City.

Fashioning Black Subjectivities

Travails of the Traveling Hats: From the Congo to The Met

Wendy Grossman, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Director's Office

The Congo headdresses in The Met collection provide the centerpiece of this presentation, which traces the course of their travels from utilitarian and prestige objects in the Congo to their resting place as reified art in the vitrines of the Museum. My research reveals how this headwear entered the world of modernist discourse and western fashion via French colonial structures and Surrealist activities, highlighting the role of Man Ray's photographic portfolio *Mode au Congo* in this process. The reproduction of several of these photographs of women modeling the headdresses in a 1937 spread in *Harper's Bazaar* is key to this investigation. The full-page image of the Guadeloupean model and dancer Adrienne Fidelin from the featured series literally and figuratively sets her apart from the three similarly crowned White models on the opposing page. Sporting a Congolese headdress, bedecked with a tiger's tooth necklace and ivory bangle, and seductively posed, Fidelin was reduced to a fanciful projection of difference, assimilating her identity into a homogenizing notion of Blackness under the construct of an imaginary Africanity. As such, she was inscribed as the first Black model to appear on the pages of a major American fashion magazine.

Discussant: Denise Murrell, Associate Curator, Director's Office

Tuesday, May 17 Embodied Practices: Making and Experiencing Art in Ancient Egypt and the Andes 10 am–12 pm

A New Approach to Predynastic Egyptian Tableaux: Understanding How Compositions Were Painted on Decorated Ware Vessels

Sophie Kroft, Marica and Jan Vilcek Curatorial Fellow (Institute of Fine Arts–NYU),
Department of Egyptian Art

The Decorated Ware vessels of the Naqada II period (ca. 3700–3300 B.C.) are distinguished by their material of manufacture; the shapes of the jars, which offer a convex surface for the decoration; the application of dark red paint; and the distinctive iconography of the scenes. Previous scholarship discussing these vessels has focused heavily on deciphering the iconography, an important element in understanding Predynastic Egyptian culture, but has not adequately addressed the materiality of the paint and vessel surface or the role they play in the reading of the compositions. Through close inspection of the vessel surface and the paint strokes, this study proposes the way the compositions were designed and realized on the vessels. Compositions featuring human figures in particular open up the investigation of figure-ground relationships and the element of time in reading the scenes. Using experimental archaeology, this presentation presents examples of the painting process in which the three-dimensionality of the vessel surface is incorporated into the analysis of the compositions themselves.

Digital Davies: The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna

Amy Butner, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellowship,
Department of Egyptian Art

Between 1905 and 1908, the Egyptologist Norman de Garis Davies published *The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna*, a six-volume publication containing detailed line drawings, descriptions, and interpretations of the architecture and decoration of the nonroyal tombs in the ancient Egyptian city called Amarna. The decorative program of these tombs has been mined by scholars for visual and textual evidence for various scholarly questions, most notably the nature of religious and political changes during the Egyptian New Kingdom. Despite their age, Davies's books remain the best surviving evidence of these spaces. However, though Davies's work is indispensable to Egyptological study, reliance on two-dimensional line drawings has stripped the decoration of its architectural context, leading to problematic interpretations.

In this talk, I introduce my virtual reality project, currently titled Digital Davies, which addresses methodological issues by creating 3D models of the nonroyal tombs of Amarna as described by Davies. These models reintegrate figurative and textual decoration with architectural space to create a research tool that centers the

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experience of the living visitor within the tomb. Digital Davies allows researchers and the public alike to access these tombs, not as flat drawings but as navigable virtual spaces and makes an invaluable resource more accessible to everyone.

Ancient Andean Artists: Who Were They?

Hugo C. Ikehara Tsukayama, Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Research/Collections
Specialist, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

This presentation focuses on the creators of artworks from the ancient Andes. Due to a lack of written source materials, the accurate authorship of most of these works in museums will remain unknown. I argue that while specific authorship may remain unknown, understanding how these objects were used and/or considered by their own community can provide valuable insight into their creators and their roles within ancient Andean societies. The context of use for these objects can be partially recovered by the finding of similar objects in archaeological sites and from descriptions in the historical record. Vessels sculpted or painted as heads, dressed jars, figures of humans and animals, and multispecies bodies are presented as examples in talking about authors as artists as well as creators of enlivened entities and impossible bodies.

A World in Your Hands: Monumentality and Three-Dimensionality on a Wari Container

Louise Deglin, Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow,
The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

A fierce supernatural creature stares menacingly at us with its fangs exposed, its head framed by two hissing felines ready to attack. This scene—carved more than a thousand years ago on a seemingly modest wooden container small enough to fit in one's hands (1978.412.142)—has the power to unsettle us at a single glance. If most of the preserved works made by artists in the Wari Empire (present-day Peru, 600–1000 A.D.) consist of two-dimensional depictions painted on ceramic or woven on textiles, objects that survive in other media have much to teach us in terms of Wari artistic practices. How does the introduction of three-dimensionality, taken to its full potential on this wooden container, change our perception of Wari art? Through a detailed visual analysis, this presentation advocates for a multimedia approach to Andean art, showcasing the importance of broadening the art-historical canon to include objects long ignored in scholarship.

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

Tuesday, May 17 **Word, Image, Material:** New Frontiers in East Asian Art 2–4 pm

When a Chinese Monk Crosses the Sea: Painting and Calligraphy in the East Asian Mediterranean

Xiaohan Du, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Asian Art

This talk explores how art evolves as it migrates with people, and how people in turn, through artistic practice, navigate and adapt to new socio-political realities. Specifically, it focuses on the calligraphic practice of Yishan Yining (1247–1317), a Chinese émigré Chan monk who was sent to Japan as imperial envoy in 1299 and thrived there as a consummate calligrapher and an influential advocate of Sinological learning. An evocative ink painting of the subject *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangtze River on a Reed* (1982.1.2) in The Met collection bears Yishan's inscription. Tracing the evolution of this iconography that straddled China and Japan, this presentation demonstrates the significance of the medium of ink monochrome that constituted a major milestone in the development of visual language in East Asian art. In addition, it discusses the practice in premodern East Asian art of inscribing poems on paintings, of which Yishan was an early proponent, and the communicative power of the form of calligraphy that transcends the merely semantic.

Marvelous Verses without Sounds: Xiao Yuncong (1596–1669) and an Alternative Representation of Landscape in Seventeenth-Century China

Joy Xiao Chen, Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow,
Department of Asian Art

This talk presents a preliminary study of a twelve-leaf album in The Met collection titled *Marvelous Verses without Sounds* (L.2020.10.12a, b), executed in ink by the Chinese literati artist Xiao Yuncong (1596–1672), who became a local recluse in eastern Anhui after the Ming regime was overturned by the Manchu in the 1640s. A superlative combination of painting, poetry, and calligraphy, this album manifests Xiao Yuncong's distinctive *yimin* (literally, "left-over") aesthetic sentiments as a Ming-dynasty loyalist in the early Qing period. This presentation explores Xiao Yuncong's innovative landscape styles, aesthetics, and artistic concepts, such as humor, in contrast to the more desolate landscapes of his contemporaries. Thus, it sheds light on the artist's process of self-reconciliation and transcendence during and after the dynastic trauma. Through this alternative reading of Xiao Yuncong's landscape art, I hope to show that despite agreeable social and cultural permeabilities of the time, and across local areas in a shared region, there lies an overlooked heterogeneity in the visual representations of landscape of seventeenth-century *yimin* artists in China.

Word, Image, Material: New Frontiers in East Asian Art

Taking a Shine: Agate Carvings for the Yongzheng Emperor

Julie Bellemare, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Asian Art

Within the current surge of scholarship on Qing material culture, agate carvings have been largely overlooked, despite increased appreciation of them during the eighteenth century and their high degree of craftsmanship and visual appeal. In particular, agate wares produced during the reign of the Yongzheng emperor (1723–1735) exploit the full breadth of chromatic effects and degrees of translucency offered by these silicate stones. Using local gazetteers, palace memorials, and the archives of the imperial workshops, this talk considers specific commissions of agate objects by the Yongzheng emperor. It identifies possible mining sites where agate was extracted, addresses how artisans reckoned with its unique material qualities, and explores some of the factors that underpinned the imperial appreciation of agate in Qing China. Because the geological environment in which agates are formed affects their pigmentation, the range of agate colors recorded in the workshop archives reflects a variety of geographic origins. Consequently, this presentation argues that looking closely at agate objects not only tells the story of an expanding Qing empire but also illuminates the artistic and political encounters between material, artisan, and patron.

Discussant: Joseph Scheier-Dolberg, Oscar Tang and Agnes Hsu-Tang Associate
Curator of Chinese Paintings, Department of Asian Art

Wednesday, May 18 **Of Absence and Presence: Tracing the Material and Immaterial in Ancient Art** 10 am–12 pm

Commonalities in Clay: Winged Figures in Italian Red-Figure Vase Painting

Keely Heuer, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow,
Department of Greek and Roman Art

Because of their durability, abundance, affordability, varied decoration, and use in diverse ethnic communities, Italian red-figure vases are an ideal medium to gain insight into pre-Roman Italy between the mid-fifth and the late fourth century B.C., a period of conflict, political change, and economic prosperity that largely remains opaque in extant literary and epigraphical sources. Similar decorative motifs appear in Etruscan, Alto-Adriatic, and South Italian vase painting, and the dissemination of this iconography can reveal cross-cultural trade and exchange of ideas along with heretofore unrecognized societal commonalities. As a case study of such parallels, this talk addresses the proclivity for winged figures across Italian red-figure wares, discussing the potential identities of these figures, the types of scenes in which they appear on vases, and their occurrence in other contemporary media produced in Etruria, Picenum, Magna Graecia, and Sicily. This exploration reveals that such figures' appeal likely rested in their role as liminal creatures, transcending the realms of the living and the dead, and their ability to express hopes for a hereafter, even one where familial bonds endured eternally.

Illuminating Iconography of Gladiatorial Training: The *Palus* on Roman Terracotta Oil Lamps

Marlee Miller, Marica and Jan Vilcek Fellow in Art History,
Department of Greek and Roman Art

While gladiatorial fights were grounded in bodily violence, they were not two men pitted against one another until death decided the outcome. Rather, the Roman enthusiasm for strategy and desire for entertainment compelled organizers to produce competitive, dynamic, and exciting shows. To ensure that the gladiators became properly equipped fighters, worthy opponents, and unflinching losers, training was essential.

Before the final training stage with another competitor, gladiators would drill against the *palus*, a wooden pole about six Roman feet tall. Not extant in the archaeological record because of wood's natural composition and mentioned sporadically by ancient writers such as Juvenal and Vegetius, visual depictions fill this lacuna. This talk analyzes a group of terracotta lamps from Cyprus that show a gladiator training with a *palus*. The Met has the most legible and well preserved of these oil lamps, amassed through the Cesnola collection of the Department of Greek

Of Absence and Presence: Tracing the Material and Immaterial in Ancient Art

and Roman Art. The portable and popular oil lamp was a common medium for gladiatorial scenes; however, gladiatorial training was an activity restricted to the gladiatorial training school, not practiced in the amphitheater arena. Choosing this specific scene suggests interest in the full scope of gladiatorial shows beyond the training school.

Planned Paradise: Composite Landscapes in Sargon II's Royal Palace at Khorsabad

Bianca Hand, Henry S. Blackwood Fellow,
Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art

This paper explores the subversive role of nonfigural alterity—or the depiction of exotic plants, animals, and architecture—through an analysis of Room 7 in the royal palace of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) at Khorsabad. A small room (50 square meters) located in the residential area of the palace, Room 7 contains a relief program that is organized into two registers, with the upper register depicting a banquet scene and the lower a garden scene in which the king and his men hunt. Singular in its size and spatial orientation, the room boasts possibly the first extant depiction of a Neo-Assyrian garden. Palatial gardens, coined “universal gardens” by some scholars, became increasingly complex during the reign of Sargon II, as increasing emphasis was placed on importing exotic flora and fauna from different parts of the empire to create these composite landscapes. This paper explores how the inclusion of foreign plants, animals, and architecture informs our understanding of Assyria's relationship with the other and how the inclusion of foreign elements within this space potentially speaks to a larger designation for Room 7 as the empire's conceptual and ideological “center.”

Transcendent Silver: New Approaches to the Study of Silver Vessels from Iranian Late Antiquity

Arvin Maghsoudlou, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow,
Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art

Focusing on a group of late Sasanian silver vessels, this paper draws attention to a series of unprecedented visual motifs and questions the existing interpretations of Sasanian artifacts through the fixed framework of imperial Persian or Zoroastrian identity. Consequently, it suggests that the vessels reflect a wide range of cultural and religious practices characteristic of the Iranian world during late antiquity. Moreover, it argues that above any possible celestial or imperial “content” implied in their motifs, the vessels as artifacts-of-prestige belonged to a culture of feasting and delight shared widely among the elites of late antique Eurasia. Resisting time and historical events, these objects retained their exceptional ability to move between centers of power and wealth and, as relics of a mythologized past, inspired the aesthetic and material sensibilities of later periods.

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

Wednesday, May 18 **Form, Material,** **Audience: New Approaches to Medieval** **Art and Architecture 2–4 pm**

Embedded Relics and Grafted Parts: The Apse Mosaic of San Clemente in Rome

Alexis Wang, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow,
Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

The apse mosaic of San Clemente in Rome (ca. 1120) has often been described as a monumental “reliquary.” Indeed, the inscription that runs along the springing of the apse signals the presence of relics of the True Cross and of two saints beneath the mosaic image of Christ’s body. Yet the so-called reliquary function of the apse has yet to be examined in light of its architectural, spatial, and medial identity. The unusual “embedded” structure of the inscription, wherein the relic list interrupts an exegetical couplet, also has received little attention.

Using the nested form of the apse inscription as a starting point, this presentation argues that the apse mosaic at San Clemente communicates the theological relationship of part to whole across multiple registers: textual, spatial, medial, and material. Drawing upon scriptural and exegetical writings that discuss concepts of participation and grafting, it shows how relic, image, and medium mutually reinforce one another to figure the Universal Church as a grafted entity, made of disparate parts united in Christ.

Parish, Church, and Chapel: Competitive Architectural Production in Late Medieval England

Zachary Stewart, J. Clawson Mills Scholar,
Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

Parishes often required two kinds of religious foundations to accomplish the care of souls in late medieval England: churches and chapels-of-ease. The former served as sites for worship, baptism, and burial in older centers. The latter served as sites for basic liturgical celebration in newer peripheries. This sun-and-satellite arrangement sought to mitigate the inflexibility of ecclesiastical networks and the volatility of municipal growth. But it often resulted in recurrent conflicts over rights, privileges, and prestige.

This presentation investigates the architectural repercussions of this dynamic in two regions: East Anglia and the West Country. It focuses, in particular, on church-building projects carried out in the towns of King’s Lynn (Norfolk), Dartmouth (Devon), and St. Ives (Cornwall). Comparison of the parish churches and the chapels-of-ease erected in these locations suggests that their commissioning bodies employed a variety of formal devices to engage in intraparochial architectural competitions that resonated with larger disputes over territory, ecclesial authority, and municipal identity. Such an exploration reveals that lay-oriented building projects served as important means of articulating, consolidating, and contesting the boundaries of local community in the late medieval world.

Form, Material, Audience: New Approaches to Medieval Art and Architecture

Embriachi Boxes at a Mediterranean Crossroads

Scott Miller, Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Research/Collections Specialist,
Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

In the late fourteenth century, bone-carving workshops owned by the Florentine merchant Baldassare degli Ubriachi and his North Italian competitors developed a form of sumptuous personal box composed of figural carvings and marquetry friezes assembled over a wooden core. Opulent furnishings adorned with this type of decoration, today known as “Embriachi carving,” became fashionable among wealthy merchants, aristocrats, and royalty across Europe, a phenomenon that modern historians have attributed to their readily accessible narrative imagery drawn from popular romances and the enterprising marketing of Baldassare degli Ubriachi himself. In this talk, it is argued that the renown of Embriachi carving stems from the successful appropriation of assembly practices and geometrical decorative marquetry native to the south Mediterranean. In drawing upon these technical and decorative traditions, these workshops created a product that was both readily apprehended by contemporary audiences and evocative of a shared pan-Mediterranean luxury material culture. Through this analysis of nonfigural aspects of Embriachi boxes, this talk calls attention to the centrality of abstract pattern to the aesthetic habits of late-medieval Europeans and to the world of cross-cultural desire, exchange, and emulation that these motifs could evoke.

“Pop the Trunk!” The Making and Meaning of Medieval Ivory Containers

Nicole Danielle Pulichene, Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Research/Collections Specialist, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

Beginning in May 2022, Gallery 304 at The Met Fifth Avenue will host a temporary installation in two large vitrines leading to the European Sculpture and Decorative Arts galleries and the Antonio Ratti Textile Center. Titled “*Pop the Trunk!*” *The Making and Meaning of Medieval Ivory Containers*, this installation offers new perspectives on the technical construction, social life, and ritual function of boxes and vessels made from elephant ivory and related materials. Juxtaposing containers with provenance ranging from early Christian Egypt to late medieval France, the installation also offers unexpected views of the interiors, bottoms, and sides of several works from the Department of Medieval Art and the Cloisters. Starting with a brief introduction to the installation, this presentation focuses on ivories that were made to hold sacred materials, especially consecrated hosts, relics, holy water, and holy oil. Through a close examination of the materiality, making, and iconography of these ritually significant containers, this presentation ultimately draws attention to an important challenge for medievalists in the Museum, namely the absence of the sacred contents that once enlivened these precious objects and gave them meaning.

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

Thursday, May 19 Crafting Luxury: Mediation, Translation, and Aesthetic Exchange in Architecture and Decorative Arts 10 am–12 pm

Paper Candelabra and the Vélez Blanco Patio

Angel Jiang, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints

The patio of Vélez Blanco at The Metropolitan Museum of Art features a type of architectural ornamentation that was characteristic of both Spanish plateresque and northern Italian architecture at the turn of the sixteenth century. *A horror vacui* of fantastical grotesques and naturalistic foliage in marble, the patio's elaborate capitals, windows, and portals were likely carved by sculptors trained in Lombardy, Venice, and Genoa. While the northern Italian origin of Vélez Blanco's ornamentation is widely acknowledged, the spectrum of sources and means of production involved in translating grotesques and candelabra from Italy to Spain has not been fully explored. Building on the methodological premise that prints were highly mobile objects capable of catalyzing invention, this talk demonstrates how modes of graphic assemblage informed the patio's ornamentation, culminating in an approach that traversed paper and stone.

Reproductions and Performances of *Ki Mao Sao and Worshippers*

Marlise Brown, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow,

Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts

Sometime between 1708 and 1716, Jean Antoine Watteau decorated a cabinet, or small room, inside Château de la Muette with inventive chinoiserie paintings. Although the cabinet was remodeled a few decades later, Jean de Jullienne commissioned François Boucher, Michel Aubert, and Edme Jeurat to produce etchings and engravings after Watteau's paintings. Watteau's published chinoiserie designs were widely disseminated. In particular, Watteau's composition *Laotian Goddess Ki Mao Sao and Worshippers* has been replicated, reimagined, and translated into various media. This presentation discusses three-dimensional iterations of the goddess-and-worshipper chinoiserie composition, focusing on stucco ceiling portraits in Bayreuth, Germany, and a porcelain figure group produced by London's Bow Porcelain Factory. It discusses the interactive and performative qualities of *Ki Mao Sao* compositions and how audiences would have engaged with the Bayreuth stucco portraits and the Bow figure group. In the Bow Porcelain Factory *Ki Mao Sao and Worshippers*, artists modeled the central figure's hands to hold objects, such as a parasol or fan, similar to Watteau's original designs. This detail reveals how some chinoiserie porcelain figures could function as modular and alterable luxury objects.

Crafting Luxury: Mediation, Translation, and Aesthetic Exchange in Architecture and Decorative Arts

Manufacturing Indian Applied Arts: Lockwood de Forest, Muggunbhai Hutheesing, and the Ahmedabad Wood Carving Company

Katie Loney, Douglass Foundation Fellow in American Art, The American Wing

In 1881, New York-based artist, designer, and dealer Lockwood de Forest began commissioning replicas of the tracery windows of the Sidi Saiyyed Mosque in Ahmedabad, India. He ordered these works from the Ahmedabad Wood Carving Company (AWCC), a company de Forest established that same year with Gujarati merchant Muggunbhai Hutheesing to export luxury woodcarving and metalwork to the United States. The carpenters in Hutheesing's and de Forest's employ translated the intricate stone patterns of the sixteenth-century mosque's jalis into the dense and oil-rich material of teakwood. In the U.S., de Forest's elite clientele understood these luxury goods as distinctly "Oriental" objects produced for use in "artistic" interiors.

Examining the AWCC's business operations and the craft traditions and practices of its more than one hundred craftsmen, this talk explores the tension between the AWCC's handmade mode of production, de Forest's emphasis on handicraft as a means of "saving" Indian art, and the industrial and capitalist aspects of the company's operations. This approach shows how the creation and circulation of the AWCC's handmade furnishings and ornamental works depended upon the material supply chains, craft labor, and transit systems of the British Empire, while also serving U.S. imperialism as the United States became a global commercial power.

Domesticating the Alhambra: Washington Irving, Sears Roebuck, and the American Ideal of Luxury

Olivia Clemens, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Islamic Art

Centering around the case study of a 1920s Sears Roebuck kit-house model called "The Alhambra," this paper traces the American vogue for all things "Moorish," from Washington Irving's bestselling nineteenth-century travel accounts into early twentieth-century popular culture. From the Gilded Age to the Jazz Age, theaters and towns named after the Alhambra proliferated, while Moorish Revival buildings graced landscapes across the United States in the form of synagogues, Shriners halls, world's fair pavilions, and private homes. Drawing upon contemporary advertising illustrations and popular-press archives, this talk explores how the Moorish aesthetic was marketed to and received by American audiences and suggests that this phenomenon is crucial to understanding the history of collecting "Moorish"—and more broadly "Islamic"—art in the United States during the same period. Furthermore, this presentation situates this Moorish craze within the broader trend of medievalism, revealing how Moorish art and architecture came to represent an American ideal of medieval luxury and escapism that reverberates into the present day.

Discussant: Femke Speelberg, Associate Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints

Thursday, May 19 Contemporary Dialogues in the Arts from Africa

2–4 pm

The Politics of My Skin

Desiree Dibasen Nanuses, Chester Dale Fellow, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

Why do I have to speak in a particular manner, wear a certain type of mask, and behave in a manner that is deemed appropriate in this sphere, and the moment I address my immediate communities and engage with the environment, I am made fun of for my accent, the way I look and/or behave? When I fit in with one section of my society, the other regards it as unacceptable.

As intervention, contextualizing the presentation through an auto-ethnographic, conceptual, and visual aid, I discuss a painting by the artist Azael Langa, who has mastered the technique of smoke painting. Theory about smoke painting and understanding of the process as a metaphor for Africa's ancestral and spiritual media are encapsulated in my presentation.

Langa's work is seen as a socially sensitive yet politically transformative communiqué. Through his art, which views the notion of "homes" as places from which we emerge yet which we carry with us everywhere we go, he evokes pertinent issues of corruption and exploitation through the investigation of the dualism that exists between identity and community. He uses burned plastics to signify the toxicity of an economy that operates thanks to the "silent sacrifices" of others and candle smoke "as a gesture of illuminating and purifying their situation."

Hearing Jinns: Gendering The Met's Historical Collection of Musical Instruments from Mandé West Africa

Althea Wair SullyCole, Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow, Department of Musical Instruments

Inquiries into the origins of musical instruments from the Mandé region of West Africa (present-day Mali, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and the Gambia) inevitably lead to jinns, or spirits. In one iteration of the origin story of the kora, for example, Jali Mady Wuleng is said to have run into a cave chasing after his betrothed, a jinn, and come out with a kora. As a result, the kora, like other Mandé instruments, both houses and channels a jinn that is gendered female. This paper explores questions that arise in the context of historical museum collections when viewed with a sensitive awareness of the female spirits that inhabit musical instruments from the Mandé region of West Africa. Drawing from a few examples from the nineteenth century in the Crosby Brown collection at The Met, I demonstrate how acute analysis of the morphological elements of Mandé instruments not only reveals their roles as tools through which musicians

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wield *nyama*, or dangerous forces, but also how they contain within them certain spiritual, gendered agencies in their own right. In this way, this paper offers a unique approach to the study of musical instruments, interweaving archival, organological, museological, and ethnographic research to understand more deeply, and from the perspective of gender, the collection's intangible cultural heritage over time.

Questions of Style and Function in a Luba Royal Drinking Vessel

Elaine Ericksen Sullivan, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

Artworks by Luba artists are some of the most celebrated examples of artistic ingenuity in the African art-historical canon. Prime examples of Luba arts can be found in the collection of The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, such as the *lupona* royal seat attributed to the Buli Master or a headrest attributed to the Master of the Cascade Coiffure. This presentation considers an oft-overlooked work in the collection, a drinking vessel in the shape of a head (1978.412.630). By comparing it with other similar vessels in European collections, this talk brings to light current challenges in stylistic designations of African arts. Further, an investigation into the vessel's possible use provides an important example of how little is known about the creation and function of many objects in The Met collection, and how educated guesses drive the creation of knowledge. Finally, the vessel is considered within the context of the reinstallation of the African galleries in The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing and its future display therein.

History, Reparation, and Melancholia in the Art of Benin

Fernanda Villarroel Lamoza, Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

In the city-state of Benin, about 250 miles east of the Nigerian border with the Benin Republic, since the fifteenth century artists' guilds have played the vital role of creating a visual grammar to simultaneously legitimize and evaluate the rule of their sovereign, the Oba. This talk foregrounds the disavowed and silenced epistemological frameworks engraved in these artworks, paying particular attention to the ancestral altars each Oba would commission for his predecessor (often his father) as a narrative thread informing contemporary approaches to melancholia. As reparative strategy, melancholia is, as J. E. Muñoz explains, a refusal to let go of the dead or of the battles we must wage in their names. Through this lens, this presentation sheds light on how these artworks offer a concrete and material connection to the artists and historical figures they were meant to outlive. Instead of a linear succession of past events, the art of Benin offers myriad perspectives on, or readings of, history, which are meant to shift and realign across time according to their potential to permeate the present meaningfully.

Discussant: Akili Tommasino, Associate Curator, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art

Friday, May 20 Conservation and Material Science: Recent Innovations and Technological Investigations

10 am–12 pm

Revisiting Methods in the Structural Conservation of Panel Paintings

Kristin Holder, Research Scholar in Paintings Conservation (Getty Panel Paintings Initiative), Department of Paintings Conservation

A gold-ground panel painting, *Saint Ursula and Saint Michael*, one of three paintings in The Met collection that once formed part of a polyptych by the fifteenth-century Sieneese artist Priamo della Quercia (41.100.37), has been the subject of study and treatment this year. The painting comes with a complex lineage of previous structural treatments focused on stabilizing the wooden support. The current treatment aims to do the same, in addition to understanding why problems such as splitting persist in this painting. There are several viewpoints—such as environmental conditions, extensive channeling from previous insect infestations, and removal of original material—from which to analyze the current condition. These perspectives, along with a discussion with a previous Met Fellow in Paintings Conservation, who treated the painting in 1993, will demonstrate the evolution of methods used to treat panel paintings.

Like all areas of the conservation of cultural heritage, the methods and techniques used to restore paintings on wood are constantly evolving and being refined to produce better outcomes. This presentation includes a discussion of the efficacy of previous treatments and the integration of the current treatment with those of the past.

Conservation and Material Science: Recent Innovations and Technological Investigations

Examining the Risks Inherent in Releaving: The Conservation of Two Stained-Glass Windows

Alexandra Wysopal, Sherman Fairchild Foundation Conservation Fellow, Department of Objects Conservation

Originally installed in the Cistercian Cloister in Rathausen, Switzerland, *The Flagellation, Christ at the Column* panel (53.200.2) is an example of fine late-sixteenth-century grisaille and enamel work. Likewise, the *Angel with Flowers* window produced by Tiffany Studios for the Dunlap Mausoleum within Woodlawn Cemetery exemplifies the innovative American style of stained glass that was produced during the turn of the twentieth century. While different in their designs, these windows are significant examples of stained glass and the numerous techniques used by the artists to achieve brilliant results. Due to past actions, both objects displayed different condition concerns, ranging from previous restoration to physical damage that limited the legibility of their original design. This presentation provides an overview of the conservation of *The Flagellation, Christ at the Column* and the *Angel with Flowers* panels and the factors that were considered in developing each treatment plan.

Dragon Revival: The Conservation of Nineteenth-Century Venetian Glass

Margot Murray, Sherman Fairchild Foundation Conservation Fellow, Department of Objects Conservation

The Metropolitan Museum of Art houses a collection of nearly three hundred glass objects donated by James Jackson Jarves in 1881. The collection includes Venetian glass collected by Jarves in the late nineteenth century. Two objects featuring elaborate dragons were recently treated in the Department of Objects Conservation at The Met. The oversized covered goblet with coiled dragons at its stem and finial, made from gilded reticello glass (81.8.185a, b), and the blue cased glass ewer with a dragon handle (81.8.215) were thought by Jarves to have been made in the eighteenth century. Alongside their conservation treatment, further investigation into the manufacture and history of the two objects found that these pieces were most likely made by Salviati factories in Murano in the second half of the nineteenth century, when Venetian glassmaking experienced a period of revival. The practical conservation treatment of these badly damaged objects allowed for use of techniques new to me and for the further development of innovative techniques, which were required to repair and replace losses from these incredibly intricate glass objects. The successful treatments will allow for the objects to be displayed in the future.

Islamic Metalworks from Iran: A Review of Technological Aspects of Copper-Based Metallurgy from the Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries

Omid Oudbashi, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Conservation Fellow,
Department of Scientific Research

As the Iranian Plateau entered the Islamic era fourteen centuries ago, metalworking technology encountered significant changes in artistic style, function, and skill. These changes were strongly influenced by Islamic ideologies, though some Sasanian traditions remained visible in early Islamic metalwork—particularly in those objects manufactured following the arrival of Islam. In this way, Islamic metalworkers attempted to transform any limitations to their advantage by using different types of metals, especially impure copper and copper-based alloys, such as tin, bronze, brass, ternary, and quaternary alloys, to obtain different shades of metallic surface—from silver to golden to red. Furthermore, Islamic metalworkers used different types of metals to decorate the surfaces of objects by rendering various patterns and motifs. In fact, metalworking during this period can be divided to two main categories: quotidian objects, which were made from different copper-based alloys that lacked decoration, and those that featured alternative manufacturing techniques and high-level decorations made from various copper-based materials. This presentation reviews some of the technological aspects of Islamic metalworking in Iran by discussing these different features during the early centuries of the Islamic period.

Discussant: Karen Stamm, Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation

Friday, May 20 Interrogating and Reframing Photographic Records in The Met Collection 2–4 pm

Kinetic History: A Preservation Survey of One Thousand Photo Albums and Photographically Illustrated Books

Catherine E. Stephens, Annette de la Renta Fellow,
Department of Photograph Conservation

Ever since photography was invented in 1839, we have been fascinated by the camera's ability to capture and preserve a moment in time. The rapid proliferation and democratization of photography resulted in an ever-greater demand for specialized albums in which collectors could organize and display their photographs. Most photo albums are unique narrative objects that can intimately tell the story of a family, an artistic movement, or an entire city. Unlike static artworks, photograph albums must perform complex kinetic functions to divulge their narratives, yet, ironically, most albums are very fragile today. Large collections of albums pose difficult questions to the conservators who care for them: how do we repair kinetic objects that are too weak to support their own weight? How do we ensure these artworks' survival, without restricting public access? This presentation will discuss an ongoing preservation survey of more than one thousand photo albums and photographically illustrated books in The Met's Department of Photographs. This survey is being conducted by the Department of Photograph Conservation, and it will assist the conservators in determining how to improve this collection's overall state of preservation while continuing to provide access to these important materials

A Prison Museum Prototype: The 1889 Paris Penitentiary Exhibition, Police Photography, and Anthropometric Surveillance

Michael Reyes Salas, Chester Dale Fellow, Department of Photographs

The transformation of prisons, jails, and other carceral sites into museums throughout the twentieth century is a commemorative trend that can be traced back to the 1889 Paris Exposition's Exhibition *spéciale pénitencier*, an early example of penal exhibition for international spectators. This public carceral display, which was assembled by penal laborers, included a section that showcased emerging methods of identification based on anthropometric measurements that were being increasingly applied to persons in police custody. In this presentation, the circulation of anthropometric visuality in the world's fair circuit serves as a point of departure into the Museum's collection of photography by Alphonse Bertillon, a French police photographer who developed the modern mugshot portrait. By repurposing

photographic practices that originated in colonial ethnographic contexts during a period of targeted criminalization, Bertillon enhanced the French state's efforts to capture the biometric data of domestic and foreign political prisoners in Paris. This analysis of The Met's Bertillon photographs, along with the works in the 1889 Expo, calls into question the early penitentiary exhibition's aim of publicly improving the rehabilitative image of prisons. In closing, it argues that this exhibition is a prison museum prototype that reinforces the punitive drive that continues to fuel today's prison-industrial complex.

[Transcending the Gaze: New Media and Patronage as Spaces of Innovation for Late Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Māori Art and Visual Culture](#)

[Elizabeth Cory-Pearce, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow,](#)
[The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing](#)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art holds a substantial collection of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographic postcards of Māori, including images depicting Te Arawa Māori groups active in heritage industries of the Rotorua region of central Aotearoa (North Island New Zealand). Colonial-period imagery of Māori has been rightly criticized for its often voyeuristic and racialized objectification of its subject, yet imagery from Rotorua, even in just this one museum collection, when combined with research among families of the people depicted suggests something different. This paper argues that Te Arawa Māori adoption of novel portrait media, along with experimentation with new avenues for patronage and new markets for their work, transcends any singular notion of a dominant gaze. Not only were particular Te Arawa leaders and personalities confident as subjects and sitters for colonial artists and photographers, they could also be patrons, and the resulting portrayals were fashioned intersubjectively—both in the moment of their creation, through fluid relationships between sitters, artists, and photographers, and dynamically over time, in ongoing personal and ceremonial interactions between localized displays of imagery and their circumscribed onlookers. In sum, this presentation highlights how, well in advance of any scholarly post- or decolonial work, Te Arawa Māori have always been at home with their colonial period imagery, which continues to play important and diverse roles in Te Arawa lives.

[Dance and Music at The Met ca. 1970: Peripheral Activities or Major Works of Art?](#)

[Megan Metcalf, The Diana A. and Harry A. Stern Fellow, Live Arts](#)

In 1970, in conjunction with The Met's Centennial celebration and first major exhibition of contemporary art, a series of performances highlighted the dialogue between visual art and forms such as film, music, and dance. This presentation focuses on the contributions of choreographer Twyla Tharp and composer La Monte Young, which demonstrated the latest trends in dance, music, and the visual arts at the time. Almost entirely lost to history, these genre-defying, interdisciplinary works were in dialogue with other museum-based performances taking place in New York City between 1968 and 1971. The museum framework was critical for aesthetic developments in multiple fields, yet the live performances were generally considered too peripheral to the museums' central mission of collecting objects to generate extensive photographic or filmed documentation. More than far-out entertainment, events such as Tharp's and Young's supplied liveliness and relevance to museums at a moment when they were rethinking their missions and audience, an effort with renewed importance today. Performance helped establish new priorities for the contemporary art institution, but without a fuller record, the origins and outcomes of this development in museums remain only fragmentary, raising historiographic questions extending across the entirety of The Met collection and activities.

Monday, May 23 Negotiating Identity through Difference: Representing Race, Faith, Ethnicity, and Space 10 am–12 pm

The Boundaries of Similitude: Binding Style and Politics in Hohenstaufen Italy

Jacqueline Lombard, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow,
Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

This talk examines an enigmatic capital (55.66) from southern Italy that features four diverse heads, currently on display in Gallery 304. Representing physical diversity was not unusual in the thirteenth century, but the stylistic naturalism of each face stands out in comparison to similar earlier images. In response to the striking individuality of the faces, scholars have turned primarily to the capital's social and political context in Hohenstaufen Italy to position it within either the demographics of the region it was produced in or the political ambitions of the Holy Roman Emperor in power at that time. Considering the capital not as a mere reflection of its context but rather as a carefully crafted image catering to a particular audience, this talk argues that this object must be contextualized within the artistic, philosophical, and legal shifts that took shape in thirteenth-century Europe that imbued human physical features with newfound political and racial meaning. In lieu of a clear understanding about the fragmented capital's origins and intended audience, this talk surveys the discourses that could have informed this object's reception and examines how naturalism could act as a political tool in this particular context.

Lorenzo Lotto and the (Im)Permissibility of Divine Images

Andrea Kibler Maxwell, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Robert Lehman Collection

During the first half of the sixteenth century, political dangers and religious upheaval plagued the Italian peninsula. Artists working for the Catholic Church in Northern Italy faced especially tumultuous circumstances as the Italian Wars ravaged their hometowns and Reformation theologies were disseminated across the Alps, prompting response from the Inquisition. Christian art commissions during this time subsequently transitioned from primarily focusing on Jews as the alleged enemies of Christ to theological innovations that positioned German mercenaries and Reformation heretics as new Catholic adversaries. Not all North Italian artists took this approach, however. Through church altarpieces, fresco cycles, devotional paintings, and portraits, Lorenzo Lotto developed a theological art style that emphasized orthodox beliefs and the permissibility of divine images without visual condemnation of contemporary Jews or reformers. Lotto's long history in the company of heretics, despite his continued profession as a painter of

Negotiating Identity through Difference: Representing Race, Faith, Ethnicity, and Space

Catholic Christian art, makes Lotto an enigmatic example to study. This paper situates two of Lotto's artworks within their socio-political and religious context to reveal how his paintings protected (or at least avoided condemning) contemporary enemies of the Catholic Church by focusing on Christocentric devotion and personal faith.

The "Turk" in the City: Dress and the Representation of Cosmopolitanism in Early Nineteenth-Century Paris

Marina Kliger, Eugene V. Thaw Fellow for Collections Cataloguing,
Department of European Paintings

With the expansion and subsequent fall of the Napoleonic Empire, early nineteenth-century Paris attracted an array of foreign ambassadors, administrators, soldiers, travelers, and permanent migrants, including a growing population of former Ottoman subjects. This paper considers the role of dress, particularly Middle Eastern dress, in the representation of Paris as a cosmopolitan urban space by looking closely at two seemingly dissimilar genre paintings: Jean-Baptiste Isabey's *Le grand escalier du musée* (1817; Musée du Louvre, Paris), in which a lavishly dressed "Turk" encounters two fashionable French couples at the entryway to the Paris Salon, and Auguste-Xavier Leprince's *A Man from the Middle East in the Artist's Studio* (ca. 1820–26 [2003.42.39]), which portrays a single humble figure seated in the midst of a quotidian assortment of artistic paraphernalia. Although contemporary print culture frequently relied on sartorial difference to signify distinct national identities, either to vaunt the city's modernity or to satirize its residents' cultural differences, these two works, I argue, use dress to visually confound notions of cultural otherness, complicating the period's contradictory discourses of nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

Discussant: Denise Allen, Curator, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts

Monday, May 23 To Be Determined: Objects, Archives, and Memory 2–4 pm

Sample Narratives: Exploring Nineteenth-Century European and American Textile Sample Books in The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Courtney Wilder, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow,
Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts

The goal of this presentation is, first and foremost, to share with both specialists and a general audience an overview of nineteenth-century textile sample books that have long been part of The Met collection but that remain little known and thus little studied. Often rather mysterious compilations of textile fragments assembled by manufacturers, sample books tend to have a strongly dual nature, falling somewhere between archival documents and objects of almost overwhelming visual interest. This presentation offers examples of how to approach and tell stories with sample books by engaging both their informational and aesthetic qualities, while also putting selected sample books into conversation with objects in other parts of The Met collection, such as quilts, costumes, decorative arts, modern design, paintings, drawings, prints, and rare books.

Unraveling Hidden Stories: Enslavement, Art, and the Healing Journey
Caryl McFarlane, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Director's Office

Considering racism as a cultural trauma, my fellowship project explores the traumatic impact of racism and the journey towards healing for several African American women. Specifically, I focus on the female protagonists in Toni Morrison's historic trilogy (*Beloved*, *Jazz*, and *Paradise*), juxtaposing the latter with three chronologically correspondent objects in The Met collection created by African-American women artists. These objects include a mid-nineteenth-century Star of Bethlehem pattern quilt by Ellen Morton Littlejohn and Margaret Morton Bibb (62.144); a 1933 linocut, *Woman in Profile (Young Woman of African Descent)*, by Georgette Seabrooke Powell (1999.529.137); and a 1962 self-portrait by Howardena Pindell (1997.458.4). This presentation focuses in particular on the first of these interdisciplinary intersections by investigating Morrison's Sethe, the protagonist of *Beloved*, and Margaret and Ellen, the two enslaved women who created the Star of Bethlehem pattern quilt. Received as a donation to The Met in 1962, the quilt has never been exhibited nor the lives of its creators deeply explored. However, the information gleaned through researching the historical context of enslavement and the cultural and familial environment for Margaret and Ellen reveals and underscores the remarkable achievement the quilt demonstrates. This presentation posits that the narrative journey of healing that Morrison presents through Sethe's self-emancipation in *Beloved* is visually depicted, in some ways, through the quilt itself.

To Be Determined: Objects, Archives, and Memory

The Shadow Play: Plantation Mansions and Racial Proximity
Delphine Sims, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Department of Photographs

Over the last decade, venerated scholar Hortense Spillers has presented several versions of a lecture entitled in part "Shades of Intimacy." This talk builds on Spillers's archival revelations and theories on enslavement, freedom, power, and sex to explore the racial proximity captured in Walker Evans's and Carrie Mae Weems's respective photographs of Louisiana plantation mansions. It leverages Black feminist geographies and Spillers's outlining of interracial intimacy, both forced and consensual (though certainly under the weight of enormous power difference), in order to access the interwoven lives of Black and White subjects held in the memory of plantation homes and consequentially in the photography of those structures. Through readings of Weems's motions and poses, this presentation speculates about Black women's lives in the fraught geography of plantation home interiors and immediate exteriors. In establishing the architectural intersections between Weems and Evans—the design elements and monumentality that attracted both artists—this presentation argues that Weems's self-portraits force new understandings of Black presence in Evans's figureless photographs.

After Kelly: Critical Research and Artistic Practice
Sequoia Barnes, Gerald and Mary Ellen Ritter Memorial Fellow, The Costume Institute

This presentation explores critical research as part of the artistic process and therefore explores how "academic" research can produce an art object by examining the stages of art making. Following personal research on the design aesthetics and techniques of the late fashion designer Patrick Kelly, this presentation looks at an art object made by the artist/researcher that is inspired by Kelly's Black baby doll, or "pickaninny," pins and his attempt to reappropriate the racist trope through his designs. This talk historicizes the pickaninny figure and evaluates how the racist trope overlaps with the history of the Black baby doll, along with an exploration of how Kelly utilized the Black baby doll/pickaninny figure using reclaiming tactics typically seen in Black radical art practice. Last, the talk provides a breakdown of how the presented art object, inspired by Kelly, was conceptualized and then created by the artist/researcher.

Discussant: Ian Alteveer, Aaron I. Fleischman Curator, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art

Tuesday, May 24 Understanding Objects and Their Pasts to Preserve Them for the Future 10 am–12 pm

Technical Study and Conservation Processes of an Old Kingdom Wooden Statue

Ahmed Tarek, Andrew W. Mellon Conservation Fellow,
Department of Objects Conservation

This research presents the results of a technical study to understand better the materials, manufacture, and condition of the Old Kingdom wooden statue of the Official Merti (26.2.4a–c) in the Museum’s collection. In preparation for the statue’s inclusion in a new exhibition, nondestructive analytical techniques were used to document construction methods, identify the pigments, and provide a deeper understanding of previous interventions and the current condition of the statue. Multiband imaging (MBI) offered helpful information about the spatial distribution of surviving original pigments and materials used in the previous restoration, while x-ray fluorescence (XRF) helped characterize the chemical composition of pigment and preparation layers. In addition, reflectance transformation imaging (RTI) was used to document marks relating to the wood’s carving and the surface preparation of the hair, and x-ray radiography helped to clarify the extent of the previous restorations.

A Scientific Investigation of Emulsion-Cured Leather

Aleksandra Popowich, Annette de la Renta Fellow,
Department of Scientific Research

The ancient technique of emulsion (organ) “tanning”/curing was used by many cultures globally, from the Tungus people in Asia to the Zulus in Africa to Native Americans. In every habited continent, emulsion curing demonstrates a cross-cultural desire for a common durable, flexible, water-resistant material. This technique is efficient and economical, exploiting natural emulsifying agents (oils/lipids), generally from brain, to preserve animal skin against putrefaction. Despite the abundance of emulsion-cured leather worldwide, throughout history, and in museum collections, there is no scientific method to accurately identify or characterize this complex material, which has been the primary focus of my fellowship. This work could help characterize the state of preservation, predict degradation mechanisms, and guide conservation treatments for these often-misidentified objects. This talk presents a novel analytical workflow combining ultrasensitive protein and lipid analysis methodologies to allow for minimally invasive sampling of cultural heritage objects and characterization of both classes of biomolecules from a single sample. This method will be used to analyze objects from The Met’s extensive collection, which has a remarkably expansive variety of

Understanding Objects and Their Pasts to Preserve Them for the Future

suspected emulsion-cured leathers, ranging from archaeological Syrian scale-armor to twentieth-century Native American objects, and will serve as a chronological and geographical archive of the technology.

Piso Sanalenggam: A Study of Batak Blades and Their Tradition of Blade Protection

Janine Meier, Annette de la Renta Fellow, Department of Objects Conservation

The main subject of this research is a *piso sanalenggam* (1988.143.23), a North Sumatran blade, that has been in The Met collection since 1988 and will soon go on display. Investigations will focus on Batak weapon traditions, fabrication techniques, materials, and blade protection traditions. Few written sources are known, so the objects must serve as the primary source of information. This research builds on a preliminary investigation of protective coatings for *keris* blades, which compared contemporary formulations with traditional historical formulations. The natural traditional coatings were found to successfully protect the blade and outperformed the contemporary coating formulations. Furthermore, this study showed that traditional coatings not only were used to protect *keris* blades but also were involved in ritual practices, and therefore should be considered an integral part of the object. An in-depth study of the *piso sanalenggam* is required to better understand and preserve the information contained within the object and other objects of this type in The Met collection.

Treating the Ill Effects of an Early Wax-Resin Infusion: Franz Kline’s *Nijinsky*, 1950

Sara Kornhauser, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow,
Department of Paintings Conservation

Research and treatment of the 1950 painting *Nijinsky* (2006.32.28) by Franz Kline (1910–1962) was undertaken to address ongoing condition issues and is explored in this presentation. Before *Nijinsky* entered The Met collection, it was owned by Muriel Kallis Newman in Chicago. There it was treated by a private conservator in 1960 to address its cracking and cleaving paint film, which was largely the result of the painting being executed on top of another composition. The treatment, which included infusing the painting with wax-resin adhesive, was unsuccessful and caused long-term condition problems. This project focuses on reversing the previous treatment by reducing the wax-resin and addressing the unstable paint. A technical study of *Nijinsky* was also carried out in collaboration with the Department of Scientific Research and informed treatment decisions.

Discussant: Christina Hagelskamp, Associate Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation

Tuesday, May 24 Methodologies for Mounting, Monitoring, and Mitigating: Different Perspectives on Textile and Fashion Conservation Practice 2–4 pm

Figuring It Out: Moving Towards a Three-Dimensional Costume Mounting

Viviane Wei-An Chen, Andrew W. Mellon Conservation Fellow,
Department of Textile Conservation

The display of non-Western costume has often emphasized intricate textile design and decoration, rather than the cultural or fashion-centric perspective of the costume in its entirety. Similarly, exhibition display is frequently limited to two dimensions, disguising the volume of the garment, and ignoring how it originally would have adorned the human figure. Oftentimes, undergarments are not included in museum displays, despite their functions of support and shaping. Three-dimensional mounting enhances the form and offers a dramatic contrast to flat displays. In addition, mannequin displays help to connect costumes with the cultures in which they originated. In general, methods for the three-dimensional mounting of non-Western garments have not been adequately published, and case studies of individual garments often substitute for more in-depth studies that might address larger collections and overarching approaches.

The aim is to create a recommendation for three-dimensional costume mounting guidelines based on three cultures from The Met's vast collection—Japanese kimonos, Native American dresses, and Turkish dresses—and will include a review of the literature, excerpts from interviews, and case studies as well as a collection survey.

Reversible Color Restoration and Site-Specific Stain Mitigation: A Multifaceted Approach to the Conservation of a Man's Twentieth-Century Wrapper Cloth from the Bondoukou Region of Côte d'Ivoire

Kristal Hale, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing—Conservation

A Côte d'Ivoire man's wrapper in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2007.388) is the impetus for this research. Created from strip-woven bands that were sewn together into a large-scale format, this historic textile has surface deposits, stains, soil, and blanched sites, which distract from its dynamic design and are not representative of the original intent of either the artist-weaver or the wearer.

Since environmental contaminants and stains can potentially accelerate the degradation of an object, these areas were tested for pH and conductivity. Additional analysis with x-ray fluorescence (XRF) and infrared spectroscopy

Methodologies for Mounting, Monitoring, and Mitigating: Different Perspectives on Textile and Fashion Conservation Practice

(FT-IR/ATR-FTIR) aid in determining the composition of the stains and creating a tailored conservation treatment with rigid hydrogels.

To mitigate the visual distraction of the blanched areas, reversible recoloring with abaca- and mulberry-paper overlays was explored via tests on a surrogate handwoven cotton cloth with a structure similar to the Côte d'Ivoire man's wrapper.

Based on the results of these tests, a conservation strategy is being implemented for the Côte d'Ivoire man's wrapper to mitigate stains and reversibly restore color to the blanched areas. The viability and implementation of these treatments will provide strategies for the treatment of related textiles in The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing.

The Plastics Age: Long-Term Storage Practices in The Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute

Kaelyn Garcia, Polaire Weissman Fund Fellow, The Costume Institute—Conservation

The Costume Institute has a significant number of objects constructed out of problematic synthetics, such as foams, laminates, coatings, paints, fibers, resins, and molded plastics. After decades in the collection, these materials have begun to deteriorate and are forcing Museum professionals to rethink storage, documentation, and display practices. During the past three years, The Costume Institute, in collaboration with the Department of Scientific Research, has conducted multiple plastics surveys to identify problematic materials in order to develop storage and monitoring protocols.

This presentation shares the ongoing research of three different analysis and preventive conservation projects that have been a focus for the past year. The first is a plastic component survey, in which The Costume Institute's conservation department identified problematic materials in the collection using fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy and pyrolysis-gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (Py-GC/MS). The second is an analysis of surface efflorescence on buttons on select garments designed by American couturier Mainbocher. The third is a project to implement the long-term anoxic PVC-P and polyurethane storage protocols we have developed over the past three years.

Discussant: Kisook Suh, Conservator, Department of Textile Conservation

Wednesday, May 25 **Transmissions of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Technologies, Ethics, and Taste**

10 am–12 pm

Tech know ologies: Understanding Asian Lutes through Instrument Construction Technologies

Hilary Brady Morris, J. Clawson Mills Scholar, Department of Musical Instruments

Silk Road narratives predominantly feature the migration of silk and paper making, medicine, and military practices from Asia to Europe. Integrated by varying degrees into the Euro-American consciousness, these technologies maintain traces of their origins and, by extension, contribute to ongoing transnational exchanges of knowledge and technology today. But what of other technologies transmitted along the Silk Road, which perhaps failed to take hold in Europe, or after arriving, developed beyond original associations?

Such is the case with monoxyle lute construction (i.e., stringed instruments carved primarily from a single piece of wood). This technology predates additive construction methods (gluing pieces of wood together, e.g., violins or guitars) and remains practiced and relevant in many musical cultures. However, monoxyle lutes have been largely absent from Euro-American musical practices since the Renaissance; their construction technology also appears to have faded from many Euro-American luthiers' awareness.

Analyzing several monoxyle lutes in The Met collection, this talk illustrates how morphological similarities among them indicate a transmission of specialized technologies and knowledge that traveled these trade routes. In doing so, I hope to offer a more refined narrative of the migration, transmission, and adoption of wood-working techniques in lute-making along the Silk Road.

Wonder across Shirazi and Golconda Manuscripts in the Sixteenth Century

Seher Agarwala, Theodore Rousseau Fellow, Department of Islamic Art

In Persianate courts, ethics were not an abstract universal judgement but a practice of repeated self-engagement where the ethical subject was produced in the performance of ideal behavior, which in part was drawn from canonical didactic works. Manuscripts of poetry and prose circulated between Iran and South Asian courts, transmitting and creating a shared sense of ethics from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century. Many such manuscripts are filled with painstakingly detailed paintings. Furthermore, manuscripts of any given work usually shared standard compositions and similar pictorial cycles and word-image combinations. But what do

Transmissions of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Technologies, Ethics, and Taste

paintings have to do with formation of ethical comportment? To demonstrate how illustrated manuscripts engaged and shaped their audiences, this presentation closely examines the manuscripts' internal mechanisms to reveal the precise techniques through which audiences were encouraged to reflect on themes of brotherhood, ambition, and justice: issues central to these books and to courtly life. The talk will focus on "wonder," which was one pedagogical strategy used to produce experience and induce contemplation. This study tracks patterns of depicting, constructing, and producing wonder in illustrated *Kalila wa Dimna*, *Anvar-i Suhayli*, and related manuscripts produced and collected in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Shiraz (Iran) and Golconda (Deccan India).

Threads of Power: Kashmiri Shawls and Their Imitations in Nineteenth-Century Iran

Nader Sayadi, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Department of Islamic Art

When "cashmere fever" began to spread quickly in western Europe in the late 1790s, Kashmiri shawls were already typical articles of elite attire in Iran. Both Iranian and western European markets shared a taste for similar types of imported Kashmiri shawls until the 1830s, when they went in two different directions. This paper explores the socio-political dimensions of modes of production and consumption in Iran as an understudied market for Kashmiri shawls during this change. It argues that the Iranian elite became increasingly interested in a specific type of Kashmiri shawl, unpopular in European markets, and that the style generated local imitations in Kerman and Yazd in southern Iran. Iranians used the shawls primarily to make robes of honor (*khil'a*) worn by individuals in the administration. As the result, the signature paisley (*buti*) pattern became a symbol of political status in the second half of the nineteenth century. This study emphasizes the agency of shawl producers in Kashmir as they influenced and were influenced by the particularities of the demand in their target markets of Iran and Europe, as well as the agency of the Iranian elite in developing a new taste for attire in conversation with Kashmiri design.

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

Wednesday, May 25 **Broadening Perspectives on Levantine Heritage: Preservation, Adaptation, and Interpretation** 2–4 pm

The Vitality of Ancient Levantine Patterns

Majdolene Dajani, Chester Dale Fellow, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art

Decorative motifs from the ancient Levant that appeared as early as the Bronze Age were reused throughout the following millennia and even continue to emerge in contemporary artistic practices such as Palestinian *tatreez*, a cherished tradition of embroidery. Passed down from mother to daughter, several embroidery patterns echo decorative elements of historic buildings and portable objects from the region. Palestinian communities still practicing *tatreez* have made present what has been conventionally relegated to the past, creating a vital archive for future generations. This study explores the longevity of motifs by reuniting material separated by the imposition of linear chronologies and the divisions that the field of art history has established. Considering the role of memory and the significance of the dynamic readaptation of ancient motifs within living traditions, this project also seeks to understand how images not only survive but are actively retained over broad spans of time.

Levantine Antiquity, Modernity, and Contemporary West Asia in Works by Rayyane Tabet and Michael Rakowitz

Lara Fresko Madra, Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art

In this paper, I analyze two works in The Met collection: Rayyane Tabet's *Orthostates* (2019.288.1–.32) and Michael Rakowitz's *The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist* (2016.80–.88). The contemporary lens offered by these works articulates temporality through the entangled eras of ancient civilization, empires, colonialism, nationalisms, and interventionism. Drawing from the burgeoning fields of heritage studies and decolonization, this paper asks how recognizing this diversity of imaginaries and their various composites can offer alternative modes of engaging the past, particularly as a challenge to modern official historiography.

In doing so, this talk proposes the conceptual framework of heterochronic imagination as an artistic practice, an art historical methodology, and a curatorial strategy that pushes back against the temporal linearity and racialization imposed by modern historiography. With a multitemporal emphasis, the presentation instead foregrounds the shifting significance of objects, images, and stories through a proliferation of narratives regarding the past. This paper argues that such

Broadening Perspectives on Levantine Heritage: Preservation, Adaptation, and Interpretation

multitemporality holds the potential for redressing not only historical violence but also the violence perpetrated by official historiography in the present.

Adapting Preventive Conservation Best Practices in the Context of a Multiple-Risk Zone

Rachel Tabet, Andrew W. Mellon Conservation Fellow, Department of Photograph Conservation

Photographs are surprisingly delicate objects. Preservation enclosures are necessary to protect them from deterioration factors such as physical damage, incorrect temperature, and relative humidity, light, and atmospheric pollutants. International standards for the proper storage of photographic materials recommend using paper and plastic materials that pass the Photographic Activity Test (PAT). This test assures that storage materials will not interact chemically with photographs and cause further damage over time. However, PAT-passed materials are difficult to obtain in countries where cultural heritage preservation is still a developing field.

Such is the case in Lebanon, a country suffering an unprecedented economic collapse, where institutions with photographic collections must purchase expensive preservation materials from abroad. This presentation will tackle my on-going research into locally sourced, alternative solutions as I focus on the chemical stability of locally produced materials from Lebanon's shipping and food packaging industries. My working theory is that these manufactured materials can be combined in unconventional ways to provide acceptable preservation housings for Lebanon's vulnerable photographic collections. By drawing on resources from Lebanon's manufacturers, The Met's Department of Photograph Conservation, and the Department of Scientific Research, I hope to expand the preservation resources available to cultural heritage institutions in multiple-risk zones.

Discussant: Michelle Al-Ferzly, Research Assistant, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

Events at The Met Thursday, May 26

Join fellows at the Museum as they expand on their presentations through in-person talks, musical performances, and other exciting activations of The Met galleries.

All events are 30 minutes in duration. Free with Museum admission; no registration required.

10:30 AM

Meet in Gallery 304 (Medieval Europe)

Gallery Tour of “Pop the Trunk!” The Making and Meaning of Medieval Ivory Containers

Nicole Danielle Pulichene, Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Research/Collections Specialist, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

Join this tour that focuses on a new installation celebrating the beauty and variety of medieval vessels and boxes crafted from elephant ivory. Examine the construction and use of these unique objects and learn about the environmental and social impact of the medieval ivory trade.

11:15 AM

Meet in Gallery 459 (The Greater Ottoman World)

Althea SullyCole Trio

Althea Wair SullyCole, Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow, Department of Musical Instruments

Enjoy the Althea SullyCole Trio's performance of a mix of traditional, contemporary, and original pieces for kora. The trio features Althea SullyCole on kora, Ras Moshe on saxophone and flute, and Alec Saelens on guitar.

12 PM

Meet in Gallery 908 (Leonard A. Lauder Gallery/Avant-garde)

Avant-garde Marxism

Adrienn Kácsor, Leonard A. Lauder Fellow in Modern Art, Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art

Learn about the life and work of Ivan Mátsa, a Hungarian migrant art historian who introduced Soviet audiences to avant-garde art in the mid-1920s, and explore an experimental Marxist take on key trends of the twentieth century—from Cubism to the Bauhaus.

1 PM

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

Work and Play at the Schule Reimann: A German Design School in the 1930s

Alexandra Chiriac, Leonard A. Lauder Fellow in Modern Art, Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art

Delve into German design periodicals from the Museum's Thomas J. Watson Library.

1:45 PM

Art Study Room, Uris Center for Education

Digital Davies: 3D Models of the Rock Tombs of El-Amarna

Amy Butner, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellowship, Department of Egyptian Art

Experience the text, decoration, and architecture of the nonroyal tombs of Amarna through newly developed 3D models based on the work of British Egyptologist and illustrator Norman de Garis Davies.

2:30 PM

Art Study Room, Uris Center for Education

The Travails of the Traveling Hats: From the Congo to The Met

Wendy Grossman, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Director's Office

View a short film featuring The Met's unique collection of inventive headwear from the Congo and the journey through the worlds of Surrealism and high fashion that brought them to the Museum. Then learn more about the material in the film, the larger historical context, and the revolution in the world of high fashion these elaborate works spawned.

metmuseum.org/metspeaks

To learn more about The Met's Fellowship Program visit [metmuseum.org/fellowships](https://www.metmuseum.org/fellowships).

For further information about Research Out Loud: Met Fellows Present, contact Academic.Programs@metmuseum.org.

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Cover: Glass horn, 19th century. France.
Glass; $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{5}{8} \times 11\frac{7}{8}$ in. (18.4 × 11.7 × 30.2 cm).
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical
Instruments, 1889 (89.4.1116)

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