30th Annual Art History Graduate Student Symposium

Schedule of Events

Friday, October 5, 2012
3:30–7:30 p.m.
William Johnston Building, Room 2004

3:30 p.m.
Welcome
Adam Jolles, Chair, Department of Art History, FSU

Acknowledgements
Lynn Jones, Symposiarch, FSU

3:45–5:45 p.m.
Session I: Creating Identity: Propaganda and Self-Promotion

Introductions
Karen Crissman, Treasurer, Art History Association, FSU

Kristin Hébert, Louisiana State University
Kira Maye, Rutgers University
Samuel Ewing, Florida State University
Ashley Lazevnick, Princeton University

5:45 p.m.
Reception
Art and Design Library, WJB 2020

❊

6:00 p.m.
Keynote Address, William Johnston Building, Room 2004

Maria Gough
Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. Professor of Modern Art,
Harvard University

"The Para-Architectural Imagination of Gustav Klutsis"

❊

Saturday, October 6, 2012
8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
William Johnston Building, Room 2004

8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast, Art and Design Library, WJB 2020
8:30 a.m. Speakers meet with Allys Palladino-Craig, WJB 2038

9:00–11:00 a.m.
Session II: Considering the Context: Intention and Reception

Introductions
Lauren Higbee, MA Student, FSU

Elizabeth Molacek, University of Virginia
Abigail Upshaw, Florida State University
Elizabeth Browne, University of Florida
Leslie Todd, University of Florida

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Lunch On Your Own

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Session III: Presentation and Interpretation

Introductions
Sarah Simmons, PhD Student, FSU

Kristen McArthur, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Emily Thames, University of North Texas
Laura Hunt, Emory University
Chelsea Rinehart, Virginia Commonwealth University

Closing Remarks
Lynn Jones, Symposiarch, FSU

Maria Gough
Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. Professor of Modern Art
Harvard University

Maria Gough received her Ph.D. from Harvard University and joined Harvard's faculty in 2009 as the Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. Professor of Modern Art. Her primary area of research and teaching is European Modernism (1890-1950) with a particular emphasis on the Russian and Soviet avant-gardes.

Dr. Gough is a past recipient of a Paul Mellon Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Studies at the National Gallery of Art, a J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship and a Clark Fellowship. During the 2011-2012 academic year she was a Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.

Dr. Gough's book on the Constructivist debates of the 1920s, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution*, was published by the University of California Press in 2005. Among her most recent publications are "Kentridge's Nose" (*October* 134 [Fall 2010]), a reflection on William Kentridge's production of Dmitri Shostakovich's opera *The Nose* at the Metropolitan Opera House in 2010, "Corps Concept," a short text on the Soviet collective (*Artforum* [February 2011]), and an essay entitled "El Lissitzky's Architectures of Everyday Life" (in *Avant-Garde in Everyday Life* [Chicago, 2011]). Currently she is working on two book manuscripts, one on El Lissitzky and Gustav Klutsis in the 1920s-1930s, the other on the photographic practices of foreign travelers in the Soviet Union during the Stalinist 1930s. In collaboration with Jodi Hauptman she is preparing an exhibition of drawings and print media by Klutsis.

Kristin Hébert
Louisiana State University

Looking the Part: Transcending Gender in the Portraits of Agrippina the Younger

The propagandist art of the Roman Empire typically used images of the women of the imperial family as a type of political icon. These women were often displayed in reliefs or portrait groups as symbols of morality, fecundity, femininity, and the continuation of the dynasty. While scholars have discussed this issue in great detail, they have often overlooked the fact that the portrait images of these very same women often contradict the feminine virtues that they are meant to convey. For instance, the portraits of Agrippina the Younger are divided into typologies based on, among other things, the incorporation of physiognomic features of contemporary emperors (Caligula, Claudius, and Nero) that lend an element of androgyny to her depictions. This physiognomic assimilation was not simply the unconscious input of sculptors accustomed to carving the emperor's features, as it occurs in some of the highest quality versions of the female imperial portrait types. Rather, it is conceivable that Agrippina, and women like her, integrated these masculine features into their portraits to reinforce their various positions in relation to the emperor, while demonstrating the unity and cohesiveness of the imperial dynasty as a whole. Furthermore, this gender transcendence was employed to advance the political aspirations of these women through the formation of alliances with popular imperial factions. By analyzing the portraits of Agrippina the Younger, this paper aims to explore the dichotomy that this transcendence of gender presents in order to expand our current understanding of gender roles and women's functions within the dynastic ideology.

Kira Maye
Rutgers University

Performing for the Court: Sofonisba Anguissola's Self-Portraits at the Easel as Court Gifts

This paper examines the self-portraits at the easel by Sofonisba Anguissola (1535-1625) in the context of the gift-giving culture of the period. Documenting the artist's self-promotion through the exchange of letters and works of art in the 1550s, I demonstrate Sofonisba's ties to prominent Mannerists like Francesco Salviati and Giulio Clovio, and I argue that through this exchange she became acquainted with the court style of Mannerism and earned a reputation for *invenzione* (invention). In addition, I identify a lost drawing or painting by Salviati, recorded in an engraving by Diana Mantuana from 1576, as the likely source for the fictive easel paintings in Sofonisba's self-images. I then examine the potential prototypes for her self-portraits – Catharina van Hemessen's *Self-Portrait at the Easel* (1548; Kunstmuseum, Basel, Switzerland), images of Saint Luke painting the Madonna and Child, and representations of female painters from antiquity – and assert that the artist combined her precedents to create images that advertised her artistic skill and *invenzione* to prospective patrons. Finally, employing Stephen Greenblatt's theory of self-fashioning to elucidate Baldesar Castiglione's description of the ideal court lady in *Il cortegiano*, I offer an interpretation of Sofonisba's self-portraits as self-conscious performances of her chosen identity as a court painter, capable of working in the court style of Mannerism. Thus, this paper argues that Sofonisba's self-portraits at the easel functioned as court gifts, attracting court patronage by displaying her talents and identifying her as the ideal court artist ready to perform for the pleasure and amusement of the court.

Samuel Dylan Ewing
Florida State University

Sojourner Truth's Fugitive Images and the Disruptive Power of Circulation Anxiety

In 1843, almost twenty years after escaping her life as a slave in West Park, New York, Isabella Van Wagenen rechristened herself Sojourner Truth. This act marks the beginning of Truth's self-conscious fashioning of her identity after years of being defined by her servitude to others. While Truth's historical archive contains many textual ambiguities, her carte-de-visite portraits present scholars with a decisive, rhetorical statement. Beginning in 1864, Truth sat for about seven different card portraits that she then sold for a profit, each bearing same inscription, "I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance." Despite the declarative force of this statement, scholars have debated how to "read" Truth's card portraits due to the myriad contexts in which they circulated. My research examines the modes of circulation and the discursive formulations within which these photographs operated to provide a unifying analysis. After first problematizing the conventional readings of Truth's card portraits, my research will then focus on their circulation in three discursive realms: the realm of economics, of celebrity, and of symbolic identity. Truth's images exemplify what I call "fugitive images" - images without a prescribed contextual home, and thus requiring such an overarching analysis. By viewing Truth's card portraits within the context of abolitionist rhetoric and beyond, I argue that Truth's photographs derive their rhetorical power primarily through their circulation and uncomfortable proximity to related discourses.

Ashley Lazevnick
Princeton University

The Soul in the Machine: The Case of Charles Sheeler and his *Classic Landscape*

Charles Sheeler's Precisionist painting of the Ford River Rogue factory is the focus of this study. One of four pictures that the artist completed after his 1927 commission to photograph the Detroit plant, *Classic Landscape* (1931) reflects the philosophical challenges of interwar machine aestheticism. Sheeler praised the factory as beautiful world without people in it. As a result, his own art making was "peopleless" in two regards: both because he did not represent people and because he was striving to become less people-like himself. He believed, along with fellow Precisionists, that an artist could faithfully transcribe reality by becoming something of a machine-man. This paper uses the trope of Sheeler's depopulated world as a way of exploring the stakes of artistic agency and the nature of human identity in the face of the machine in the early twentieth century. It explores the Dada precedents for Sheeler's art as well as the later writings of the American philosopher Stanley Cavell in order to reveal a crucial paradox. To become the machine they admired, artists had to first enliven that non-living, mechanical object. Sheeler's 1923 *Self Portrait* uncovers the ironic animism at the heart of the modernist machine-man. His self-encryption in this portrait is then read back into his Ford factory pictures. In the end, *Classic Landscape* displays a world of artistic personality, of patient animism, that remains both enigmatic and prescient for our own eyes.

Elizabeth Molacek
University of Virginia

Multiple Personalities: Identifying Narcissus in the Mosaics of Antioch

Since its excavations in the 1930s, the Roman city of Antioch has been known primarily for its stunning, polychrome mosaic pavements. Because of the city's diverse history throughout the Hellenistic, Roman and Late Antique periods, the mosaics reflect relationships with a variety of cultural groups, evolve tremendously over Antioch's vast life span, and depict a wide-range of subjects and motifs. This paper examines the representation of a specific subject—Narcissus—in the mosaic pavements of Antioch in order to more clearly understand various representations of the subject over time and within the context of the diverse city. Among the hundreds of mosaic pavements unearthed at Antioch, five deal with the mythological figure of Narcissus. The youth is identified in each scene by an inscription and/or his attributes of a spear, sword, petasus and buskins. By conducting both an iconographic and a thematic analysis of the five Narcissus pavements two general motifs are distinguished: pavements that deal primarily with the mythological narrative of a languishing youth and pavements that focus on Narcissus as a hunter, removed from his larger story. The emergence of two distinct motifs among the Narcissus pavements at Antioch suggests that these subjects may have held special significance for the patrons and the contemporary culture of the city. This paper suggests ways in which each of these motifs may have related specifically to Antioch and by doing so offers a nuanced understanding for each of the pavements.

Abigail Upshaw
Florida State University

Love and Politics: Michelangelo's *Cleopatra*
for Tommaso de' Cavalieri

Among the drawings Michelangelo created for his closest
friends, *Cleopatra* (c. 1533) stands out as the sole example of
a bust-length historical figure. Pointedly eliminating all
extraneous details in his composition, Michelangelo forces his
viewer to confront the deep emotion embedded in his figure's
face. Undoubtedly the artist meant for this drawing to be
studied by its recipient, his lifelong friend Tommaso de'
Cavalieri. Throughout the extant literature, scholars divorce
the subject matter of the drawing from its role as a memento
of Michelangelo and Tommaso's friendship. However, to
fully understand the drawing we must integrate these discreet
lines of inquiry. In this paper, I utilize the visual and textual
tradition of Cleopatra to examine the professional and
personal relationship between Michelangelo and Tommaso. I
first examine the political implications of *Cleopatra*. I
investigate the Cavalieri family to uncover conspiracy and
deep republican sentiments. With this in mind, I reevaluate
Michelangelo's designs for the Campidoglio and Tommaso's
role in their execution. Weaving together Tommaso and
Cleopatra's histories, I argue that Michelangelo's *Cleopatra*
signifies the two men's desire for a republican Rome. I
conclude by incorporating Cleopatra's tragic love affair with
Marc Antony into my reading. Using Michelangelo's
surviving letters and poems, I create a compelling link
between Michelangelo and Tommaso's private relationship
and the ancient lovers. This approach sheds new light on the
debated subject of Michelangelo's sexuality. My paper
ultimately proves that the *Cleopatra* holds a double meaning –
one that unfolds only upon conflating public and private,
politics and passion.

Elizabeth Saari Browne
University of Florida

Amateur Painting: Honoré Daumier's 'Homage to Fragonard' and the Rococo

Best known for his lithographs, Honoré Daumier's (1808-1879) small oil paintings remained virtually unknown to the public until the end of his life when an exhibition of his work was mounted at Durand-Ruel, marking a moment of "discovery" of a new genre of work by Daumier. In light of this, art critics and writers began to reconceive Daumier's position as an artist in relation to other painters. Reviewers of the show focused on the sketch-like aesthetics of brushwork and draughtsmanship and, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, consistently compared Daumier's paintings to the work of various rococo artists. Due to their private nature and lack of *fini*, Daumier's paintings have been frequently considered unfinished studies. Yet, examining the significance of Daumier's brushwork, or *faire,* for which they were originally praised, reveals formal and historical ties to particular histories of art, ideologies, and audiences. This paper will argue that for Daumier, the free paint handling associated with the sketch was actually part of an eighteenth-century tradition that appealed to an audience of *amateurs*, whose appreciation and judgments were inspired by works in which contemplation, imagination, and intimacy were of more value than explicit social content or narrative. More specifically, this paper will consider Daumier in relation to rococo artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), not just in terms of their noted thematic and stylistic similarities, but as a model for understanding the implication of Daumier's *faire* in relation to the aesthetic and social contexts in which he worked.

Leslie E. Todd
University of Florida

Transcending the Cloistered Convent: An Examination of the Role of Secular Mural Paintings in El Carmen de la Asunción in Cuenca, Ecuador

The architecture of the colonial cloistered convent had one main objective: to separate the secular and ecclesiastic realms. Eighty late eighteenth-century pastoral scenes in the mural paintings of El Carmen de la Asunción, however, circumvented the fortress-like structure of the convent. I argue that the paintings manipulated the internal space of the refectory to conform to the lifestyle the nuns created, which was constantly engaged in an interaction with the outside, secular world. This paper moves beyond what past scholars have done in identifying and contextualizing the iconography of the mural paintings within late eighteenth-century Cuenca, and examines how this context may have affected the refectory space and nuns, themselves, within the overall architectural program of the convent. The pastoral scenes of El Carmen's mural paintings brought the changing secular world within the safe, understandable, and controllable jurisdiction of the nuns in the refectory of the convent. With the presence of these mural paintings and their visual and iconographic connections to the secular, the nuns reaffirmed and strengthened their relationship with the rapidly changing Bourbon world while simultaneously upholding their monastic vows to be physically cloistered within the convent. The mural works transcended the architecture of El Carmen by fusing the secular and ecclesiastic domains of the nuns, crossing and blurring the strict architectural boundaries that separate the outside and inside.

Kristen McArthur
University of Alabama at Birmingham

José de Ribera's *Battle between Two Women*

José de Ribera's *Battle between Two Women* (1636) is traditionally identified as depicting a battle between two Neapolitan women, Isabella de Carazzi and Diambra de Pettinella, who, legend holds, fought over a man in 1552. As a monumental representation of two early modern women engaged in a duel, the image is unique within Ribera's oeuvre and nearly so within Spanish baroque art generally. Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Nicola Spinosa suggested that the iconography responded to an interest in chivalric culture among Ribera's wealthy clientele in Spanish Naples, where the artist worked during the majority of his career. The painting has also been identified in passing with Ribera's depictions of oddities, such as the portraits *Clubfooted Boy* (1642) and *Magdalena Ventura* (1631). This paper identifies Ribera's *Battle between Two Women* as an image derived from the popular plays and comic theatre produced in Naples and early modern Europe, especially during Carnival season. To support this thesis, I first identify Ribera's painting with the popular theme of the *femme forte* in seventeenth-century art and depictions of strong female figures. I also place the image in the context of representations of *il mondo alla riversa,* or the topsy-turvy world, popular in both Naples and Spain during the period. Finally, consideration of Ribera's composition is aligned with contemporary comic theatrical sets. Recognizing this origin of the image within theatrical productions offers a previously unrecognized avenue for exploring Ribera's imagery. Not only does this exploration bring a fresh breath to studies of Ribera's body of work, it also generates discourse about monumental representations of popular theatre and other ephemeral arts of Neapolitan and early modern European culture.

Emily Kathleen Thames
University of North Texas

Les boutons de l'habit de gala de Toussaint L'Ouverture: Adornments of Abolitionism

In the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York City there are eighteen late eighteenth-century buttons believed to once have been in the possession of Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803), the leader and hero of the Haitian Revolution. Featuring miniature gouache paintings of West Indian scenes based on the work of Agostino Brunias (1730-1796), the buttons are made of tin, ivory, glass, and brass, measuring three-eighths of an inch in height and one and seven-sixteenths of an inch in diameter. These apparently unique objects, though diminutive in size, reflect a monumental moment in history during which reform and revolution dominated the European political sphere. Unfortunately, the negligible extant research pertaining to the buttons is currently restricted by the L'Ouverture legend with which they are frequently associated. As no concrete evidence exists to prove a connection between the buttons and the revolutionary figure, the primary objective of this research project is to explore and analyze these buttons as objects independent from this supposition. I contend that these objects contribute to an anti-slavery discourse without the certainty of a famously anti-slavery patron. In addition, I maintain that the buttons revolutionize representations from British prints originally intended for a pro-slavery perspective through appropriation and translation of the imagery onto material culture objects used in an arguably abolitionist, French context. To support my argument, I will consider the function and form of the buttons, simultaneously considering their material use as objects of adornment and the potential interpretations and implications of the imagery they possess.

Laura Hunt
Emory University

From Performer to Petrushka: a Decade of Alexandra Exter's Work in Theater and Film

Culled from the final chapter of my Master's thesis, *From Performer to Petrushka: A Decade of Alexandra Exter's Work in Theater and Film,* this paper explores Russian artist Alexandra Exter's creation of approximately 40 marionettes for an unrealized film production. A pioneer in Russian visual and performing arts, Exter is best known for her set and costume designs for Iakov Protazanov's *Aelita: Queen of Mars,* which helped solidify her place in history as one of Russia's so-called Amazons of the avant-garde. Exter's marionettes represent a solution to her many years of research into the movement and dynamic arrangement of costumed performers on the stage, while at the same time embodying futurist principles of sculpture and relative motion. I approach her marionettes as innovative and elegant performing objects within which are reconciled conflicting notions of stasis and dynamism, sculpture and performer, human and object. The concept of a total work of art, long sought after by theatrical innovators and artists, is realized in the figures of Exter's dynamic creations, even as they hang motionless. In this paper, I briefly trace the progression of Exter's set and costume designs, culminating with the performing object as a solution for rhythmic and scenic unity on the stage.

Chelsea Rinehart
Virginia Commonwealth University

Revealing An Ethnography of Institutional Culture in the Photography of Candida Höfer

In her serial images of the vacant interior spaces of public cultural institutions, photographer Candida Höfer combines an after-hours emptiness with complicated vantage points and extended exposure times in order to create views of museums and libraries which are distinct from the experiences of the public these cultural institutions serve as well as from the experiences of the staff who, in turn, serve these facilities. In imitation of the new perspectives Höfer's images inspire and the methods they employ to their end, I seek in this presentation to recontextualize the visual experience and reevaluate the scholarly significance of Höfer's work. In doing so, I will critique two common oversights in current scholarship that have thus far prevented a fuller understanding of Höfer's significance both art historically and museologically. First, I will argue against the frequent isolation in both scholarship and exhibitions of Höfer's institutional images from her earlier studies of Germany's Turkish immigrants. Second, I will address the reductive tendency of numerous exhibitions and studies that organize her institutional photographs into geographic series and strict formal typographies. As an addition to these trends in existing literature and an alternative to their methods, I will argue for an inclusive approach to organizing and understanding Höfer's art that unites the photographer's entire *oeuvre* by recognizing her continuous concern with the presentation and representation of culture. On the basis of this new analysis, I will suggest an interpretation of Höfer's institutional images not as mere typology but as an ethnography of institutional culture.

Günther Stamm Prize

The departmental faculty evaluates the student papers on the basis of originality and presentation, and recognizes one participant with the Günther Stamm Prize, in memory of a former professor of art history at Florida State University.

Athanor

Papers presented at our symposium are considered for inclusion in *Athanor*, a publication for art history graduate students sponsored by the Department of Art History and the Press of the FSU Museum of Fine Arts. Edited by Allys Palladino-Craig, with the assistance of faculty, *Athanor* is indexed by the Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA).

College of Visual Arts, Theatre & Dance
Visiting Artists and Scholars Lecture Series

Our keynote speaker has been funded by a gift from the Vincent and Mary Agnes Thursby Visiting Artists and Scholars Lecture Series.

Thank You

Many thanks to all those graduate students, faculty, and staff of the Department of Art History whose assistance was essential for the success of the Symposium. Our special thanks to the student speakers, who shared the fruits of their research with us, and to our keynote speaker, Maria Gough, for generously contributing her own current work to our collective efforts. Material and spiritual support was provided by Lynn Hogan, Interim Dean of the College of Visual Arts, Theatre and Dance, and Allys Palladino-Craig, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts and editor of *Athanor*, where the proceedings of the Symposium are published. Jean Hudson, Media Center Curator, Kathy Braun, Program Coordinator, and Sheri Patton, Office Manager, kept track of everything and kept everything on track. Our potluck hosts, Bobbie and Segundo Fernandez, provided a welcoming atmosphere where we could continue our conversations about art and its history. The officers and members of the department's graduate Art History Association kept us on schedule, and replenished our energies.

Lynn Jones
Symposiarch

Notes