

2022 NEWSLETTER



DEPARTMENT OF ART & ART HISTORY AT PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

FROM THE CHAIR:

It has been a delight to resume on campus, in person activities after more than a year of mostly remote operations necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The department returned to a robust academic year of courses, exhibitions, guest lecturers, and innovative student projects and research. This inaugural newsletter is meant to share some of the highlights.

Dr. Paul Crenshaw

DEPARTMENT NEWS



PHI BETA KAPPA AT PC

Dr. Joan Branham presented art history major **Kenzie Maude** with an induction into the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society in spring 2022. This marks the establishment of a Phi Beta Kappa chapter at Providence College. Dr. Branham was a key figure in stewarding the historical Honors Society onto campus.



NEW HIRE

DR. VIRGINIA THOMAS

We are pleased to announce the hire of Dr. Virginia Thomas to a joint tenure-track position in the Department of Art & Art History and the Women's and Gender Studies program. Dr. Thomas will begin in Fall 2022 and will teach two sections of Intro to Women's and Gender Studies, along with a new course, "Special Topics: Race and Gender in American Photography." Exploring aspects of race, gender, and sexuality in contemporary American photography and other forms of visual media, this course emphasizes themes of identity, kinship, belonging, class, politics, and culture.



DR. JOAN BRANHAM TO SERVE AS INTERIM DEAN OF SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dr. Joan R. Branham has been named interim dean of the School of Arts and Sciences for 2022-2023. She has been an integral member of the PC faculty – and community – since she was hired as an assistant professor of art history in 1995. A full professor since 2009, Dr. Branham has taught courses that include “Sacred Space in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,” “Introduction to Jewish Art and Architecture,” “Art History Survey,” and “The Gothic Cathedral Encoded.” She also has remained an active and sought-after scholar on subjects related to theories of sacred space in the ancient Jerusalem Temple, the art of late-antique synagogues and churches, and the relationship of gender, blood, and sacrifice.

Dr. Branham has been associate dean of the School of Arts and Sciences since 2014. In this role, she has been a leader in several key initiatives. These include serving as a co-lead on the College’s successful Phi Beta Kappa application process, chairing the Core Curriculum Administrative Team, co-chairing the Liberal Arts Task Force, and helping advance a series of faculty development and scholarship initiatives, such as the Summer Scholars and Interdisciplinary grants program.

JAMILEE LACY NAMED FELLOW AT CENTER FOR CURATORIAL LEADERSHIP

Jamilee Lacy, Director of Providence College Galleries, was awarded a fellowship at the prestigious Center for Curatorial Leadership, which trains curators to become visionary leaders of art museums. Lacy has facilitated a mentorship program through her fellowship cohort that has paired several Art and Art History students with curators working in leading national museums, including The Studio Museum, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Frick Collection, NY; and DIA Art Foundation, NY. Students have had the rare opportunity to connect with curatorial leaders and reflect on their work and career paths.



CLAY SIBLINGS TO BE HOSTED BY PC'S CERAMICS STUDIO

Visiting Assistant Professor of Ceramics Judd Schiffman will bring Clay Siblings to campus this summer for a Providence-based youth program that will run for two weeks in July. Clay Siblings is a non-profit initiative to give insight on possible college and career ventures and opportunities through clay, and to expand the prevailing view of who can become a professional artist.

ART HISTORY FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP



STRASSER NAMED PC'S OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR

Dr. Thomas F. Strasser, professor of art history, was the recipient of Providence College's Outstanding Faculty Scholar Award for 2021. His research focuses on Aegean prehistoric archaeology — roughly the Homeric period of Greece and Western Turkey, prior to approximately 776 B.C. — and makes special reference to the Cretan Stone Ages, island archaeology, and ancient seafaring.

Strasser has received nearly \$300,000 in research funds since joining the PC faculty in 2005, from organizations such as the National Geographic Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. His recent findings upended the long-held dictum that seafaring was developed only by Homo sapiens, proving instead that humanity's early ancestors were able to embark on long-distance water crossings. This discovery was ranked by *Archaeology Magazine* as one of the Top Ten finds of 2010. His more recent work has focused on Cretan petroglyphs, which he proposes to be the earliest known figural art in Greece.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Paul Crenshaw:

"Frans Hals's Portrait of an Older Judith Leyster" *Women, Aging and Art: A Cross-Cultural Anthology*, ed. Frima Fox Hofrichter and Midori Yoshimoto. Bloomsbury, 2021: 62-71.

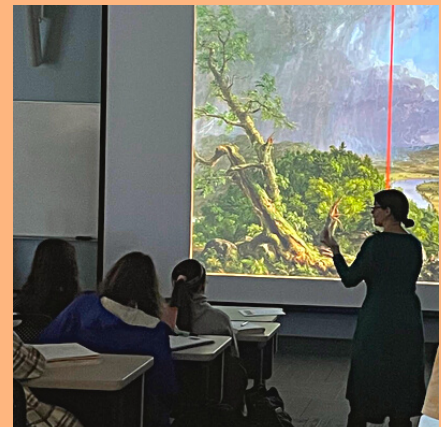
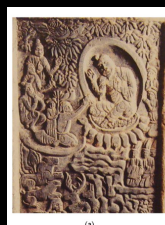
"Double-Take: Portrait of a Cleric" *Manual 15* (Spring-Summer 2021): 18-21 [with accompanying article by Pedro da Costa Felgueiras].

Dr. Bing Huang:

"Seen from Afar: The Cultural Impact of Telescopes in Eighteenth-Century China" *The International Journal of Arts Theory and History*, 16, no. 2 (2021).

"Playing in the Past: Digital Art History in the Age of VR Gaming." *The International Journal of Arts Theory and History*, 17, no 1 (2022): 1-23 [with Liam Bixby, Ryan Britt, and Nicholas Rich].

"Deciphering the Shi Jun Sarcophagus Using Sogdian Religious Beliefs, Tales, and Hymns" *Religions*, 12, no. 12 (2021): 1060.



Dr. Elizabeth Welch

joined the Art and Art History Department in 2021 as visiting assistant professor in modern and contemporary art history and will be returning for '22-'23. Dr. Welch taught in the Art History Survey, Modern Art, and Visual Communication. She is an interdisciplinary scholar of American art, culture, and identity.

RECENT EXHIBITIONS BY STUDIO ART FACULTY



HEATHER LEIGH MCPHERSON AT TAKE IT EASY IN ATLANTA

Below the Thin, an exhibition by Associate Professor of Painting **Heather Leigh McPherson**, took place during the fall semester at the Atlanta gallery Take It Easy. Existing somewhere between technician and image, McPherson's paintings are the result of a labor intensive process of building dimension through resin, paint, paper and text. Her low relief, wall-hanging works serve as wormholes into both deep strangeness and clarity. In these energetic collage-like pieces, we see realistically rendered iconography alongside stylized facial features and abstract language; a semi-autobiographical guide to exploring the in-between.

STEPHEN LACY AT ANTHONY GREANEY GALLERY



Visiting Assistant Professor **Stephen Lacy's** exhibition of new works on paper, *A Primal One, Lost to Narrative (the Dramatic Universe)* or *The Well Known Stranger*, was held this spring at Anthony Greaney Gallery in Somerville, MA.

JUDD SCHIFFMAN AT NEW YORK'S GREENWICH HOUSE



Learn more about Ceramics Visiting Assistant Professor **Judd Schiffman's** recent exhibition at Greenwich House in his artist talk [here](#). The work in the show was a selection from his larger series in which he uses clay to explore personal narrative, especially as it pertains to rites of passage and fatherhood. Each group of high relief tiles is bound by a ceramic frame, making these compositions appear to be portals or perhaps even religious tableaux. With imagery inspired by illuminated manuscripts, medieval bestiaries, his young daughter's drawings, and his own inner life, these clay "drawings" are simultaneously playful and eerie.

STUDENT RESEARCH AND CREATIVITY



ART HISTORY SENIOR THESIS SYMPOSIUM

The Art History senior majors produced theses on the topics below. Their original research was peer reviewed by an external critic, Dr. Lisa Pincus, an independent scholar of early modern visual and material culture and theory, and then presented in a symposium this May.

Leo Hainline

RISD's *Sheet of Grotesque Figures*:
Problems of Attribution and
Boschian Imagery

Kenzie Maude

Nijinsky in the Ballets Russes's
Scheherazade:
Orientalism and Decolonizing the
Visual Tradition of Dance

Keara Westover

Dorothy Draper's Interior Design Success:
Gender, Social Networks and Style

Mary Collins

Rachel Portesi's *Hair Portraits*:
Mythology, Nature, and Gender Identity

STUDIO ART SENIOR THESIS EXHIBITIONS



Studio Art majors **Callie Chan** and **Madigan Farrell** presented their thesis exhibitions this spring, titled *P.W.I* and *Forgotten Lunchbox*, respectively. Chan's ceramic installation explores her feelings as a Chinese American at a predominantly white institution. Each clay object has been squeezed in her palm, physically stamping her identity into the work. Farrell's series of abstract paintings play on perceptual overstimulation and inattention, drawing from her childhood experience managing ADHD.

Over the course of their senior year, Art majors develop a cohesive body of work. In the resulting solo exhibitions, they present projects that reveal the dynamic ways in which today's artists craft new visual experiences. The external critic for the senior theses was Susanna Kim Koetter, an interdisciplinary artist and teacher based in Providence. Koetter also served as PC's first Ceramics Guest Artist in Spring 2022.

VISUAL RESOURCE CENTER AND PROVIDENCE COLLEGE GALLERIES



NEW HIRE VISUAL RESOURCE CURATOR KATE MCNAMARA

Kate McNamara joined the department in January as the new Visual Resource Curator. She follows Harriet Pappas, who retired in 2019 after 20+ years at the College. Kate is a curator, educator and author who has worked with Providence College Galleries most recently as Curator-at-Large. Kate is also the Executive Director of My HomeCourt, a non-profit arts organization that partners with PCG to revitalize city parks with contemporary art.

In addition to teaching at Rhode Island School of Design and Sotheby's Art Institute, Kate has organized recent exhibitions, including "Staying with the Trouble" at Tufts University Galleries in Boston. Previously, Kate served as Director of Galleries and Exhibitions at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, and as Director and Curator at Boston University Galleries. She has held curatorial positions at MoMA PS1, NY, and in 2008 co-founded Cleopatra's, an alternative art space in Brooklyn, NY.

Kate received her MA at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. Her undergraduate degree is from Hampshire College in Amherst, MA.



This spring VRC and gallery student workers had the exciting opportunity to assist with the installation of the PCG exhibition, **On the Wall: Sheida Soleimani** in the Reilly Gallery. Providence-based Soleimani and PCG Director Jamilee Lacy worked closely with students, providing them firsthand experience constructing this fully immersive floor-to-ceiling exhibition. On the Wall will be on view through October, 2022.

ALUMNI NEWS



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MICHAEL ROSE '13

Art and Art History double major Zari Apodaca '23 recently sat down with Art History alum Michael Rose to discuss his career path in the Providence art world since graduating. Rose is currently Gallery Manager at the [Providence Art Club](#) and has a blossoming freelance art appraisal and art writing career. Michael earned his Bachelor of Arts in Art History from Providence College and his Certificate in Appraisal Studies at New York University. Rose was recently written up as "22 to Watch in Rhode Island in 2022" in Providence's *GoLocal*. The interview can be found [here](#).

ZIMMERLI ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTOR - DR. MAURA REILLY '90

Dr. Maura Reilly '90, a curator, writer, art consultant and non-profit leader who has organized dozens of exhibitions internationally that focus on marginalized artists, has been named the new director of the [Zimmerli Art Museum](#) at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Reilly is the founding curator of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum, where she developed and launched the first exhibition and public programming space in the United States devoted entirely to feminist art. While there, she organized several landmark exhibitions, including the permanent installation of Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* and the blockbuster *Global Feminisms* (co-curated with Linda Nochlin), among others.

MARY PELLITIER '09 AT THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY LONDON

Mary Pelletier '09 recently accepted the position of Print Sales Specialist at the [Photographers' Gallery London](#) (TPG). TPG is the UK's foremost center for the presentation and exploration of photography in all its forms and home to an international community of photographers. Pelletier is also a contributing editor at [The Classic](#), a bi-annual print magazine dedicated to expanding narratives of vintage and 'classic' photography, featuring in-depth interviews with leading dealers, gallerists, collectors, auction house specialists, and curators.

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