



A Time to Reflect & Celebrate

Mark Your Calendars!

*Learning Through Looking -
Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of
Art History & Visual Studies at the
University of Victoria*

Where: The Legacy Maltwood
Gallery (at the Mearns Centre
in the McPherson Library)

When: February 6 to
April 13, 2017

Art History and Visual Studies
Graduate Association
email: ahvsgra@uvic.ca

It is with great pleasure that I welcome new and returning graduate students to our exciting, 50th Anniversary year! Events include the Orion Lecture in the Fine Arts given by our Orion distinguished guest, Robert Wittman, celebrated former FBI Special Agent charged with investigating art crimes, our faculty exhibition "Learning Through Looking. Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Art History & Visual Studies," the anniversary events at the annual graduate symposium Visual Impetus, and the 50th Anniversary edition of the AHVS graduate journal *ARTiculate*.

Our anniversary provides a wonderful opportunity to reflect not only on our past, but also on our future, and how history, community, and learning are inextricably linked across time. The Department of "History in Art" was founded by Alan Gowans in the spirit of creating a new, world-

minded art history. This was a revolutionary concept in 1966. It has since become the vanguard of the discipline. Now, with a new name - "Art History and Visual Studies" - which honours our past while forging new relationships with present and future students - our community continues to foster world-minded art history. You - our highly-valued graduate students - are central to this mission. Drawn from local, national, and international spheres, our graduate community embodies the interregional and intercultural dialogue that is central not only to the identity of the department but to the continuing power of the discipline itself. Let's celebrate!



*Dr. Erin Campbell, Chair
Art History & Visual Studies*

Fifty Years of Art History Celebrated with a Significant New Endowment

The Department of Art History & Visual Studies (AHVS) is now home to the largest donor-funded endowed award on campus, thanks to a major gift from BC sculptor Jeffrey Rubinoff and the Jeffrey Rubinoff Foundation.

The Jeffrey Rubinoff Scholar in Art as a Source of Knowledge Endowment establishes a recurring four-year PhD fellowship in the area of modern and contemporary art history, allowing doctoral students exceptional opportunities to study the complexities and richness of modern and contemporary art history.

This contribution is ideally timed to help the department celebrate 50 years of teaching, research and scholarship — ideas all strongly linked to the educational mission of the Jeffrey Rubinoff Foundation.



UVic President Jamie Cassels chats with Jeffrey Rubinoff at the announcement ceremony, September 21, 2016

“Jeffrey Rubinoff’s generous gift allows us to envision a brighter future for our vibrant and diverse graduate students,” says department chair Dr. Erin Campbell. “In our 50th anniversary year, as we look forward to the next 50 years and beyond, this legacy will deepen the impact of art history both at home and around the world.”

Studying world art creates opportunities for intercultural understanding, as people instantly connect with the visual. A greater awareness of the impact of modern and contemporary art can add to the richness of our lives, engage us with the past

and present, and inform how we think about our world.

“UVic is internationally recognized as a leader in creative innovation and arts knowledge, and Jeffrey Rubinoff has identified our extraordinary academic environment as being ideally suited to the goals of the Rubinoff Endowment — to expose students to the leading edge of art history,” says UVic President Jamie Cassels.

By John Threlfall,
Special Projects and
Communications Officer
Faculty of Fine Arts
University of Victoria

Welcome

Welcome to this new academic year!

Continuing students, welcome back! You who are new to UVic, are due a special welcome! We all know how confusing things can be during the first weeks in a new place. Savor the special sharpness and clarity all things have now, your senses all on acute high-gear. Take your time and ask lots of questions. Whether you are new or known, please feel free to drop by.

This is a special academic year for us: our Graduate Student Conference, Visual Impetus (VI), celebrates its 20th year. And a half-century of history has been made since the department's founding. Twenty-five of those years we have been in the Fine Arts building, with Theatre and Visual Arts, on one side, and a multi-faith sanctuary, garden, and small forest, on the other. Enjoy seeing the deer on early autumn mornings.

We celebrate being a department of great diversity ~ in teaching areas, pedagogical styles, research fields & output, experience and nationalities. We celebrate this not only for its variety and global linkages, but above all, for the many forms and faces of excellence we

model and co-create. I look forward to getting to know you all better, and witness your becoming ever fuller parts of this special departmental and disciplinary fabric!

Warmly,

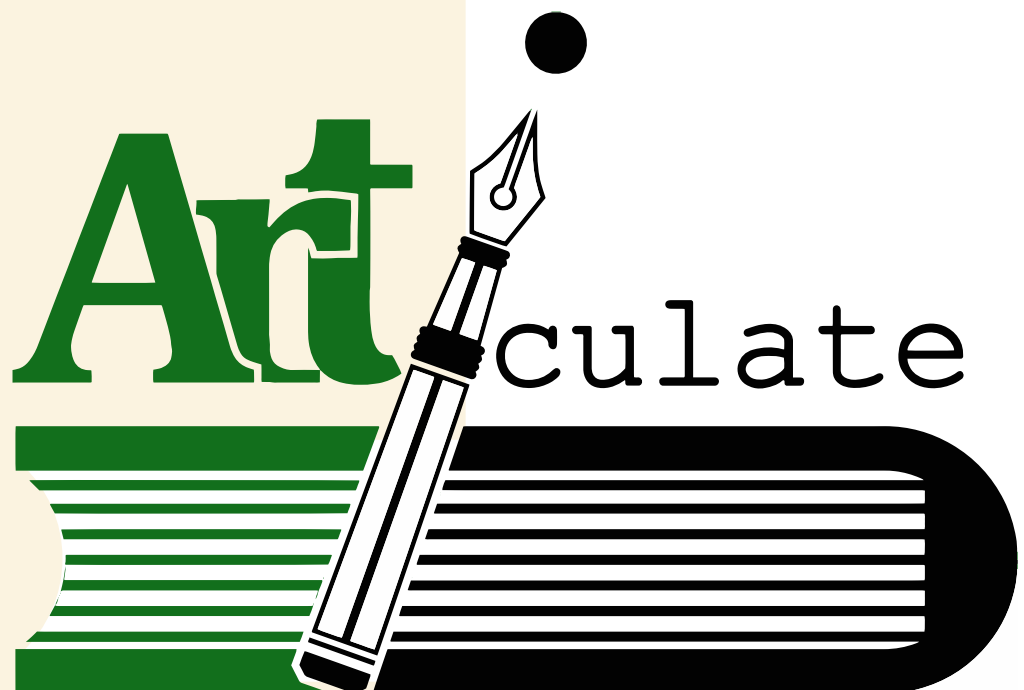
Professor Astri Wright
Your Graduate Advisor
astri@uvic.ca

Your graduate association, the AHVSGA, has a new website:

<http://www.finearts.uvic.ca/history-inart/graduateassociation>

Our online, graduate student journal *ARTiculate* also has a new website and our first issue will be out this fall!

<http://www.finearts.uvic.ca/articulate>



First Person



*Su Yen Chong,
First-year Master's Student
Art of Southeast Asia*

I am Su Yen Chong, a first-year Master's student in Art History and Visual Studies. I recently moved from Toronto to Victoria, but I grew up in a town named Tapah in Malaysia.

There were several defining moments in my life that led me to where I am today. One of them was when I visited the Cairo Museum as a young child. I felt so in awe of all the wonderful objects and thought to myself, "This is the type of place I would like to spend my time in!"

Fast forward to 2012: I moved to Canada for my undergraduate

studies at the University of Toronto where I majored in Art History and Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. At the end of my third year, when I realized that Southeast Asian Art History had not been through the same intensive research process as the rest of Asia, I decided to specialize in Southeast Asian Art History.

The Department of Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria was my first choice for graduate school because Dr. Astri Wright is one of the finest Southeast Asian art historians in the academics. Fortunately, I was accepted and I am so happy to be here!

Master's Students

My name is Alicia Hagy and I am a second-year Master's candidate in the Department of Art History and Visual Studies. My field of study is Islamic Art and Architecture, with a focus on Islamic Iberia and North Africa.

Before studying at the University of Victoria, I attended Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, for a general Art History degree. When I took a seminar class in "The Art and Architecture of Islamic Spain," I knew that this was the field I wanted to pursue. I began to ask around for recommendations of schools and professors, and every hand pointed to UVic. I was lucky enough to be accepted and here I am now!

Probably the most exciting part of attending graduate school in Victoria is the fact that there is such a strong community of Islamic art scholars and students. The seminar class that I took in my undergraduate studies was essentially the only offering on the topic, and so it is exhilarating to be part of a department where there are many options for research and study in this field.

The research I am conducting for my thesis is on a particular style of sword, called Jineta, used in the Nasrid dynasty (c. 1238-1492) in Granada. Jineta style warfare deals mostly with mounted cavalry and light skirmishes, which defined the martial efforts during the so-called Reconquista.

Within this time period, in the Iberian Peninsula, there is a paucity of written information from the Nasrids themselves; much of what is known about the time period comes from charters and chronicles of Christian kings. In light of this informational gap, the jineta swords provide a means to understand the ways in which Nasrid rulers defined and promoted their royal identities in a turbulent time.

*Alicia Hagy,
Second-year Master's Student
Islamic Art & Architecture*



“My PhD research project is about the urban centers that were established by the Mongol rulers of Iran (the Ilkhanid dynasty) as their administrative and political capitals throughout their greatest extent including all of today’s Iran, parts of Iraq, Turkey, and Central Asia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Considering the Ilkhanid capital cities in the historical setting of medieval Iran, I analyze their physical and social structure on the basis of the notion of cultural interactions between the conquerors (the Mongols) and the conquered (the Iranians). Dealing with the process of cultural exchanges at the core of the project, I uncover the items, perceptions, and principles circulated between Iran and her Eastern and Western neighbours first, and then the historical figures, institutions, and events through which such transmissions happened.”



Atri Hatf in Iran, Summer 2013

Q: What are the potential opportunities for your research?

A: Although different forms of Ilkhanid decorative arts including textiles, ceramic, metalwork, jewelry, and manuscript illustration as well as a large number of urban monuments such as mosques, madrasas, palaces, and shrines have been examined by scholars during the recent decades, we have an extremely obscure picture of the Ilkhanid city as a whole. Furthermore, numerous Ilkhanid urban sites dispersed all over the northern and western parts of Iran have been subject to severe destruction. This project will contribute to the identification and protection of this lesser-known aspect of the Ilkhanid architectural heritage in Iran.

Q: How did your previous studies inform your current research?

A: I graduated from the University of Tehran in Architectural Conservation in 2010 and then worked as conservator/restorer in the conservation project of a 19th-century royal complex in Tehran for about one year. My background in architecture as well as restoration of historical buildings led me to continue my studies in architectural history. I came to UVic in 2012 as a Master’s student of Art History.

Q: Why did you choose the University of Victoria for your PhD studies?

A: I started looking for the professors whose area of research was close to mine. I was accepted at different schools across North America, but I decided to continue my PhD studies at UVic because of my satisfying experience of being an MA student of Art History and Visual Studies. In addition, I wanted to work with Dr. Marcus Milwright as my supervisor.

Q: What has been the most rewarding experiences or learnings during your studies at UVic so far?

A: The most valuable experience of studying at UVic – as an international student – is the equal opportunities given by the university. Each individual student is given the chance to benefit from different kinds of resources and facilities in order to study and develop her/his knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Q: Tell us about your fieldwork and why this is important to your research.

A: Fieldwork is an integral part of architectural history. You cannot stay in your office and look for the photos of historical buildings. You need to travel and visit the sites in person in order to understand them within their environmental context. The experience of doing fieldwork is amazing! In the summer of 2013 my husband Hamed and I drove more than 8,000 kilometers in the central and eastern parts of Iran to visit the sites we were working on. I think that was quite an adventure since there were lots of historical and natural wonders there. We came back from Iran with lots of new ideas about our projects.

Q: What are you looking forward to this year?

A: I have completed my four-step comprehensive exams and now am working on my PhD dissertation proposal. My fellowship at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society lasts for the next year. I will focus on my PhD research as my primary activity throughout the duration of my fellowship.

Q: What words of advice would you have for new graduate students?

A: UVic is a good place to begin your journey as a graduate student. While there are many people who are ready to help you, you yourself play the most important role in shaping your academic life here. Find the research topics you are really crazy about and work hard!



What's Next?

Natalie Massong defended her Master's research paper in August of 2015. We caught up with her before she left for the University of Cambridge to do her PhD this fall.



Natalie Massong, former Master's student at UVic

Q: What was your Master's research about?

A: My Master's paper came from an interest in social spaces and the agency of objects. I believe that we can look to the past to answer problems that we face today when designing successful urban spaces that serve to promote community. My Master's paper, 'A World in Itself: The Forging of Civic Identity in Early Modern Bologna through Saint Petronius and his Miniature City' helped me to truly begin my own journey of research into social engagement and sculpture. Using the case study of Bologna, my paper looked to answer how the sculptural representations of Saint Petronius, patron saint of Bologna, who is depicted holding his model city of

Bologna, was effective in portraying Bolognese civic identity. Drawing on late medieval and early modern sculptural examples commissioned for the civic spaces of Bologna, I argued that the representation of Saint Petronius was the most influential civic image created in Bologna because of the miniature.

Furthermore, my paper demonstrated that the sculptures of Saint Petronius and his miniature city were active agents in the development of civic identity in Bologna throughout the early modern period.

Q: How did you become interested in this topic?

A: In my first semester of my Master's I took a course with Dr. Erin Campbell on the Miniature. This was quite influential as I was already curious about the images I had seen of Saint Petronius holding and protecting a miniature city of Bologna. After completing the research for this course, I knew that there were very few images published on Saint Petronius or on sculpture in Bologna.

Q: Tell us about your fieldwork.

A: One of the major aims of my field research was to document the images of Saint Petronius. This was extremely exciting because everywhere I turned I saw him. Unlike Florence, Rome, or Venice, Bologna is less of a tourist destination. However, it is a city intensely rich in culture. I was able to visit multiple museums in a day and often I would be alone and free to ask questions.

PhD Pursuits

Q: What were the benefits of your fieldwork?

A: One of the benefits of doing fieldwork is that it breaks your previous assumptions. I had no idea of the scale of space I would encounter. And you can imagine that getting a sense of the physical space was essential in my understanding of how people could interact in these environments - something I would never have gotten staying at home. Another benefit was that I could speak to locals. The greatest gift from this fieldwork I found, was that when I listened to local perceptions of these spaces, I had a few moments of doubt about what other scholars had said about Bolognese sculpture and I started to hear my own voice emerge through my ideas. Being there in person has sparked an ongoing passion for my broader research questions and for the city of Bologna.

Q: What's next for you?

A: My next steps include completing an MPhil and then a DPhil at the University of Cambridge. I will be working with the supervision of Dr. Donal Cooper.

My next stage of research will continue to examine questions of identity, social engagement in civic environments, and the agency of sculpture on early modern urban citizens. Through a broader range of civic sculpture in Bologna, I will expand my analysis of public space and sculpture throughout the early modern period from the 15th to 18th Centuries. I am looking forward to going deeper with my research questions. I am very excited about attending Cambridge and about making more connections with people within our subject.

Q: How did UVic prepare you for your PhD studies?

A: The department has offered me a great deal. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Campbell and Dr. Harding for their supervision and life guidance. I was nervous about finding the right person to oversee my PhD work. I benefitted greatly from the mentorship of friends, cultural historian Maria Tippett and historian Peter Clarke, who guided me through the many processes of entering Cambridge

and were there to offer me advice whenever I needed it.

Q. What will you remember most about being a graduate student at UVic?

A. My fondest memories of the AHVS Master's program are the people. I am incredibly grateful to my cohort of graduate students and for my supervisors.

In addition, I absolutely loved working as a teaching assistant and discovered that I had to teach! That experience brought me to the decision to complete a PhD and my current aim is to teach art history at a university level.

I also had the opportunity to co-chair a committee that setup the AHVS Graduate Association. I strongly believe in the community of people in the AHVS department and my hope is that this association continues for a very long time and helps to bring more people in our field together in the spirit of collaboration.

PhD Candidates

Brian Pollick is a PhD candidate in the Art History & Visual Studies department at the University of Victoria. His dissertation focuses on the ways in which imagery commissioned by merchants in Trecento Italy formed, affirmed and broadcast their moral identity. He commenced a PhD in 2012 and is the recipient of several awards, including a prestigious three-year Joseph-Armand Bombardier Doctoral Fellowship from the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada. He is currently the holder of a Graduate Fellowship at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria.



Brian has designed a course (AHVS 329) to be taught this coming January. In "Medieval Households: Spaces, People & Things," students will explore the cultural concept of the "household" currently and in the past.

Q: When did you realize you wanted to study art history?

A: I retired from my work in March, 2007 and for the next 18 months was in a real state of flux around what I was going to do with the rest of my life. In September of 2008 my wife, Heather, and I decided to go to Europe for the year and go to school to learn Italian. We were living in the country a little ways from Siena where we drove in to school every morning. In February, we went to Lucca one weekend and there was an art exhibition on the famous 18th century Italian portraitist, Pompeo Batoni. By the end of that day I knew I wanted to study art history and become an

art historian. I applied to UVic to do a Master's degree. The rest, as they say, is history (actually art history).

Q: What is the focus of your research?

A: My work focuses on some of the art commissioned by wealthy merchants in the Italian city states during the 14th century. In particular, I am investigating their motivations from the perspective of their moral identity, and the ways in which this art functioned as a visual moral network that formed, affirmed, and broadcast the merchants' identity as upright Christians.

In October 2016, I have been invited to present a paper at the Fifth Biennial Symposium of Historians of Islamic Art Association (HIAA), at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, UK. The overarching theme of the symposium *Regionality: looking for the local in the arts of Islam* invited paper proposals and pre-organized panels that take regionality as their principal theme, that complicate simplistic assumptions about ethno-national labels, and that highlight the local. My paper titled, 'Identity in Death: Expression of Identities in Samma Monuments of Makli Necropolis at Thatta', will examine select tombs built in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Thatta (Pakistan). I will demonstrate that the overall artistic program of these tombs simultaneously epitomizes multiple cultural identities and thus cannot be identified with any single culture, region, or religion. This paper is part of the panel that explores mediated identities in early modern architecture in South Asia.

In addition to the six panels, the symposium program will feature guided object-handling sessions at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum, allowing direct access to a wide range of media from these two remarkable survey collections.

The HIAA symposia are the foremost academic events on Islamic art history, attended by senior and early career scholars, as well as graduate students from all over the world. I anticipate that this conference will be extremely beneficial for me on multiple levels. It will give me an opportunity to network, discuss my work in front of a diverse audience, and expose me to new ideas and directions in my own research, which will greatly assist me in completing my dissertation writing.

For details on the conference program, visit:

<http://courtauld.ac.uk/event/regionality-looking-local-arts-islam>

Munazzah Akhtar
SSHRC Doctoral Fellow



The 20th Annual Graduate Student Conference: *Visual Impetus*

Visual Culture: Materiality and Memory

When: Friday, January 20th and
Saturday, January 21st, 2017

Founded in 1996, *Visual Impetus (VI)* is a collaborative graduate student conference held by the Department of Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria. This conference aims to provide graduate students the opportunity to disseminate their research efforts and knowledge to the wider Victoria community. Beyond this, participation in *VI* allows students to acclimatize themselves to the academic conference system and strengthen professional skills necessary in this field.

For more information, contact us at:
visualimpetus@uvic.ca

Introducing our new 2016-17 AHVSGA Executive Board:

Zahra Kazani, Co-Chair, (PhD)

Bailey Arnholz, Co-Chair (Master's)

Jaiya Anka, Newsletter Editor

Abbey Hall, Social Media &
Communications Coordinator

Kristen Matulewicz,
Events Coordinator

Astara Light,
Graduate Students' Society (GSS)
Representative

Kristen Matulewicz and Alicia Hagy,
Co-Chairs, *Visual Impetus*

Behrang Nabavinejad, Editor-in-Chief,
ARTiculate

Terry Rodgers,
Alumni Relations Coordinator