



**A** Graduate  
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# AHVS Newsletter

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## Welcome to the 2017/2018 Year!

### A WORD FROM AHVS CHAIR, DR. ERIN CAMPBELL

Another exciting year in AHVS! I extend a warm welcome to all new and returning graduate students. I continue to be impressed by everyone's professionalism, dedication, and collegiality.

Our year started out with a truly inspiring Orion Guest Lecturer, Senator Patricia Bovey – the first art historian to be appointed to the Senate. Senator Bovey's strong advocacy for the arts bodes well for our discipline!

Some things to look forward to this year include the launch of our new art collections classroom. The transformation of FIA 115 from slide library, to visual resources room, to a purpose-built classroom for engaging with artworks in the university art collections is truly extraordinary. We also have a new interactive media lab, the FAIM Lab in FIA 140, initiated as a one-year pilot project to support the visual studies courses that examine the history and cultural significance of video games.

Later this year, we will be welcoming several visiting academics from universities across Canada who will provide feedback on our programs and the student experience in our department. Stay tuned for further details on this important process. I wish everyone all the best for your studies and look forward to seeing you at upcoming events, including the much-anticipated 21st Visual Impetus in January.

*// Read more about Visual Impetus on the next page.*



## CALL FOR PRESENTERS

The organizing committee for Visual Impetus is currently calling for interest in presenting papers at the 2018 conference. If you would like to be a part of this conference, please e-mail [visualimpetus@uvic.ca](mailto:visualimpetus@uvic.ca) with your declaration and all requirements listed below by **Tuesday, January 2, 2018**.

### Topics can include but are not limited to:

- The ethics of art and art institutions
- Propaganda, "false news," and manipulations of information by the media
- The role of visual media in the rise of protest movements
- Acting and thinking against dominant power structures
- Arts and activism

### Requirements:

- Title of your presentation
- A list of 3 to 5 key words describing your topic
- A 200 to 250 word abstract summarizing your presentation
- A 100 to 150 word biography written in the third person

We thank all who apply to become a part of this year's conference.

*Abbey Hall and Nellie Lamb,  
Visual Impetus Co-Chairs*

## 21st Annual Visual Impetus

Visual Impetus (VI) is a two-day conference hosted each year by graduate students in the University of Victoria's Art History and Visual Studies department. Founded in 1996, VI allows both MA and PhD students the opportunity to share their research, gain experience in an academic conference setting, and engage in critical thinking and discourse on an array of art historical topics.

This year's conference, which is entitled "For Your Viewing Pleasure? Ethics, Activism, and Visual Media," will focus on art objects that affirm, comment on, or challenge the ways in which visual media has skewed power dynamics throughout time. Research presented in this conference will explore how artists have had the unique opportunity to be able to depict struggle, polarize opinion, and ignite conversation in a variety of mediums. This conference will be held in the Fine Arts Building at the University of Victoria on Friday January 26th and Saturday January 27th, 2018.

## VISUAL IMPETUS

THE ART HISTORY AND VISUAL STUDIES GRADUATE CONFERENCE



### For Your Viewing Pleasure? Ethics, Activism, and Visual Media

University of Victoria, Fine Arts Building

- **Friday, January 26 | 4-7:30pm, Room 103**

(+ Poster Fair in Room 104)

- **Saturday, January 27 | 9am-6pm, Room 103**

Department of Art History & Visual Studies and the AHVS Graduate Association.





## Faculty Spotlight: Prof. Marcus Milwright

M.A. (Edinburgh), D.Phil. (Oxford)

*This issue our editorial team catches up with Dr. Milwright, faculty member since 2002, to ask about his current research projects on Islamic craft traditions.*

### Q: What was your inspiration for the “Crafts of Syria” research project and website?

I have been lucky to spend a lot of time in Syria, working on projects such as the excavations at Raqqa and studying traditional craft practices in Damascus. These are living traditions that have survived industrialization into the modern age, despite competition from European goods flooding the market. It's people who make these objects, often families developing specializations in media like metalwork and glass over many generations.

Today, Syria's ongoing civil war is causing the death and displacement of millions of people, and the looting or destruction of monuments and archaeological sites. While I already teach a course on the destruction of art, my goal with the Crafts of Syria web site is to record as much as possible the traditional crafts of the region. The displacement of these people and their traditions is a dislocation that is unlikely to be mended. With the Crafts of Syria web site, anyone can go on line and get an idea of their wealth of knowledge and artistic and technical skills.

### Q: Has your training in archaeology influenced this focus on material culture?

While art historians increasingly talk about “materiality,” it's something archaeologists and anthropologists have long been fluent in. Every object is seen as important, understanding it in its social context. My initial career plan was to be a professional painter. I have always felt it's important to understand how materials work.

In my Artists' Materials and Techniques 200 course I teach traditional craft practices, and include handling sessions for students with a range of historic materials, including ceramics, metalwork and medieval manuscripts. By connecting to materials, you learn their natural constraints and how to use them to their fullest extent.

### Q: Are you planning any other projects?

A site currently in development examines Post-Mamluk metalwork, with my research team comprising Atri Hatf and Ambreen Shehzad Hussaini. Another ongoing project with Dr. Eva Baboula and Elsie-May Mountford examines Ottoman architecture in the south of Greece. Also, UVic will host the 9th annual MEICON (Middle East and Islamic Studies Student Conference) in April 2018. It's a free, one-day event, and a fantastic opportunity for students from academic institutions across the Pacific Northwest and western Canada to present on topics ranging from politics, literature, social studies and activism to art history.



[www.craftsofsyria.uvic.ca](http://www.craftsofsyria.uvic.ca)

#### Research team:

Dr. Marcus Milwright, Atri Hatf, Hatef Naiemi, Siobhan Davis.



## Oral Defense Q&A: Kristen Matulewics

*Kristen Matulewics is a Master's student in the Art History and Visual Studies department. In October 2017, Kristen successfully defended her Master's paper, "Alma-Tadema: 'Life, Movement, Reality': Death and its Discontents in The Roses of Heliogabalus."*

### Q: What is the focus of your Master's research?

My research paper explores how Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema engaged with innovative aspects of painting's materiality in his 1888 Academic painting, *The Roses of Heliogabalus*. I assessed his study of contemporary photography, theatrical sets, and noted how Alma-Tadema attracted spectators to engage with his unusual painting of individuals succumbing to a violent, yet beautiful, death at the hands of one of history's most sadistic Emperors.

### Q: How did you prepare for your defense? Tell us about the process of completing the oral defense.

I was lucky enough to have just over two weeks between my defense date decision and my actual defense. The extra time this provided me really helped in preparation. My process was to go through my full paper and pull out what I thought were the most important aspects and sections of my research and then completely reorganize my research into a form that made sense in a twenty-minute format with about three-quarters of my information missing. After that I put together my slides—which left me about a week to rehearse my script.

### Q: Did the oral defense go as you expected?

It went better than I was expecting. Practicing once a day for a week was a life saver and I had a great time.

### Q: Do you have any tips for the oral defense?

Be confident—if you weren't ready you wouldn't be defending—and practice your presentation. My tips for presenting: divide your script by slide number, number the pages of your script, and use a big/easily read font. I personally use "Dyslexie" font since it is designed to be read quickly and easily, but find what works best for you.

### Q: What is next for you?

I'm moving back to Florida in December when I finish TAing and tutoring here, and then I'm hoping to either be off to another program in the Museum Education field or working in an art museum on the education team. Other than that, I am intending to publish my work and sleep more, maybe read a non-research book for fun; the world is my oyster.

## AHVSGA IS ONLINE!

Find us online to learn more about our vibrant community, current research endeavours, plus other news and updates!



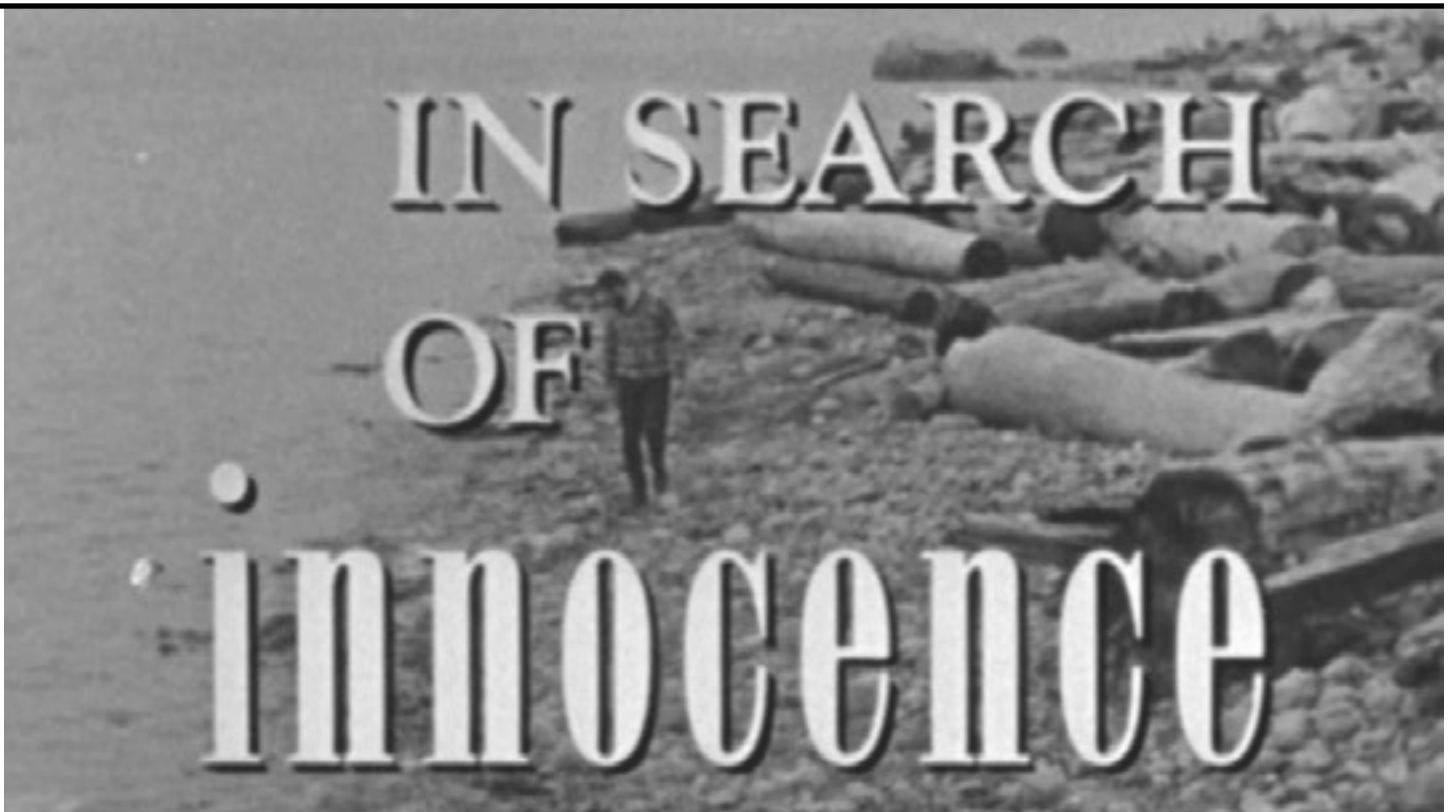
**AHVSGA Website:**  
[finearts.uvic.ca/historyinart/graduateassociation/](http://finearts.uvic.ca/historyinart/graduateassociation/)



**AHVSGA Facebook Page:**  
[facebook.com/ahvsgsa/](https://facebook.com/ahvsgsa/)



**AHVS Graduate Journal:**  
[finearts.uvic.ca/articulate](http://finearts.uvic.ca/articulate)



Screenshot: Leonard Forest, *In Search of Innocence*, Film, 1964.

## Graduate Student Spotlight: Nellie Lamb

Nellie Lamb is a second-year Master's candidate in the University of Victoria's Art History and Visual Studies department. Focusing on a film directed by Leonard Forest entitled *In Search of Innocence* (1964), Nellie's research interrogates what innocence means, the West Coast as a place of innocence, and how the film shows us Forest's own innocence.

As a highlight to this research, Nellie is currently curating an exhibition for Legacy Art Gallery entitled *West Coast Art and Artists Through a Visitor's Eyes*, which examines the notion of innocence as it relates to the West Coast in the 1960s and to the artists featured in *In Search of Innocence*.

"This exhibition is about the idea of innocence," Nellie explains, "it questions what *In Search of Innocence* shows us by using art work in the film to think about what innocence might mean." *West Coast Art and Artists Through a Visitor's Eyes* will include artwork that is from a similar body of work as those featured in the film, art that was made around the same time as the film, and works that explore the same themes they are working on in the film. "The artwork selected for this

exhibition relates to Forest's ideas of innocence in relation to purity of nature, freedom of improvisation, and willingness to engage in deep aesthetic contemplation. They are also very specifically of this place, the West Coast."

Curating an exhibition has proven to be an equally valuable and challenging experience for Nellie. "What I am looking forward to the most is that when this exhibition is out, there are going to be people who see it and react to it. I'm looking forward to their response, which I think will enhance my research."

*West Coast Art and Artists Through a Visitor's Eyes* will run from January 20th to March 29th, 2018. Nellie's curator tour is from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm on February 3rd, 2018.

## Research in the Field: Zahra Kazani

*We caught up with PhD student Zahra Kazani upon her recent return from London, where she conducted research for her fascinating doctoral project.*

**Q: You've just returned this week from London, welcome back. Can you tell us about your field research there and how it supports your long-term project?**

I'm in my third year of a doctoral research project uncovering the relationship between script, geometry and magical ideas and beliefs in material culture. I've now finished my comprehensive exams on the history of medieval Islamic art and architecture, and on the history of medieval magic. My research looks at cross-cultural exchanges within the Islamic world in the twelfth- and thirteenth-centuries in the region known as the Jazira, today made up of Syria, Iraq and Turkey. My case studies include a manuscript titled the *Kitab al Diryaq*, a book of antidotes. We actually have a facsimile here in our Uvic Special Collections.

On this trip I had only two weeks to visit three research institutions in England, which allowed me to identify options for future fieldwork. In London I visited the library at the Warburg Institute, one of the foremost institutions looking at the history of magic. I was privileged to meet with Professor Charles Burnett, a prolific Arabic scholar specializing in the history of medieval magic, who gave me a lot of insight into the range of source materials available. The Warburg Library is interesting because it sorts its material thematically, so in just one area I was able to look at a whole range of Mediterranean, Islamic and Byzantine sources on magic. And nearby were works on astrology and medicine, so it enabled me to do the cross-cultural research that I wanted to do.

In London I also visited the Wellcome Collection and Library, which looks at the history of medicine and healing. Because magic is so integrated with ideas of healing, I wanted to look at and explore their available materials. I'm trying to find patterns, both in manuscripts of magic and medicine, which the two London sites allowed, but also in magical objects, for which I traveled to the Pitt Rivers Museum and its anthropologic collection in Oxford.

**Q: What was your most exciting discovery?**

At the Pitt Rivers I was able to examine amulets and talismans (see photos). I was looking specifically at this combination of script and geometry found on amulets. What was really interesting was to see old coins being re-used as charms. I'm interested in how people used these, both in their construction and how people perceived them, depending on their levels of literacy and how people interacted with scripts, pseudoscripts, and the connection of script with magical ideas.



*Christian amulets and charms in Arabic script, Syria. Copper and Brass. Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Photos by Zahra Kazani.*

**Q: Do you have any recommendations for students planning research overseas?**

I am fortunate to have three-year funding through my SSHRC award, and I also applied for and was granted the Sheila and John Hackett Travel Award. These really help because, as you know, cities like London are quite expensive to navigate. I'd also like to thank my supervisor Dr. Milwright and my committee member Dr. Baboula for their guidance, support, and direction.

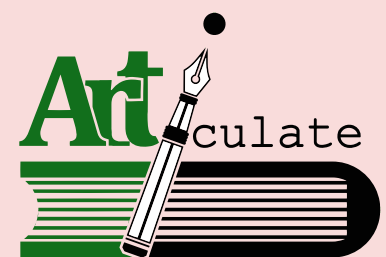


*Christian amulets and charms in Arabic script, Syria. Copper and Brass. Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Photo by Zahra Kazani.*

**COMING UP:  
CALL FOR INTEREST**

**ARTiculate** is a peer-reviewed graduate student journal of art history published by the University of Victoria. We are excited to have launched the second edition of the journal in Spring 2017. If you haven't had an opportunity yet, we encourage you to read the engaging articles, available on our website: [finearts.uvic.ca/articulate/vol-2-no-2-2017/](http://finearts.uvic.ca/articulate/vol-2-no-2-2017/)

The journal is a fantastic opportunity for graduate students to engage in the process of publishing their research. A call for expressions of interest for the next edition of the journal will be officially announced at the Visual Impetus conference in January 2018 – stay tuned!





*AHVSGA Board Members. Back Row (L-R): Lindsay Kaisla, Elsie Mountford, Su Yen Chong, and Gonzalo Gutiérrez. Front Row (L-R): Holly Cecil, Abbey Hall, Shanice Wolters, and Zahra Kazani. (Not pictured: Nellie Lamb, Terry Rodgers.)*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### December 5, 2017

AHVS 501/601 Poster Fair  
(10am-11:30am, Room FIA 104)

### January 2, 2018

Deadline: Presentation  
Submissions for Visual Impetus

### January 26 & 27, 2018

21st Annual Visual Impetus  
Conference (*Details on page 2*)

### February 3, 2018

Curator Tour: Nellie Lamb  
(3pm-5pm, Legacy Art Gallery)

## Meet the 2017/2018 AHVSGA Board!

### ABBEY HALL

Co-Chair,  
Masters Cohort

### ABBEY HALL & NELLIE LAMB

Co-Chairs,  
Visual Impetus Graduate Conference

### GONZALO GUTIÉRREZ

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### ZAHRA KAZANI

Editor-in-Chief,  
ARTiculate Graduate Journal

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AHVSGA Newsletter Team

### ELSIE MOUNTFORD

AHVSGA Website Development

### SU YEN CHONG

Social + Events Chair and  
Communications Coordinator

### TERRY ROGERS

Alumni Network

### *Interested in joining the AHVSGA Executive Board?*

We're seeking an AHVS Graduate Student to join us as the UVic Graduate Student Society (GSS) Representative. If interested, email us at [ahvsga@uvic.ca](mailto:ahvsga@uvic.ca).

### ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

*This newsletter is created by the Art History & Visual Studies Graduate Association once per semester to share news and updates from our academic community. Questions or ideas? We'd love to hear from you! Email us at [ahvsga@uvic.ca](mailto:ahvsga@uvic.ca).*

