

# VISUAL IMPETUS

ART HISTORY AND VISUAL STUDIES GRADUATE CONFERENCE

## 2023

### PATTERNS OF RESISTANCE: ART AS REVELATION

JANUARY 20 4PM-7PM  
JANUARY 21 9:30AM-4:30PM  
FIA BUILDING ROOM 103 & ZOOM

FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
INDIA YOUNG

FOR FULL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE SCAN:



# WELCOME TO VISUAL IMPETUS!

The Art History and Visual Studies Graduate Association (AHVSGA) is pleased to welcome you to the 26th annual graduate student conference, Visual Impetus (VI). This signature event is a multi-day conference at the University of Victoria that aims to promote inclusiveness among a range of departments across the university and beyond.

VI provides a unique opportunity for the unification of graduate candidates at both the MA and PhD level to present their research. This year we are pleased to present Visual Impetus' 2023 theme: *Patterns of Resistance: Art as Revelation*.

Art has the power to reveal radical new ways of understanding the human condition. Whether it be through entirely original insights or the reinvestigation of culturally held truths, creative representation is a tool that change-makers and thinkers harness to challenge hierarchies of power. However, artists are still subject to the same hegemonic structures they seek to oppose. Often, they too are challenged to create new meaning within the epistemological and cultural systems that precede them.

We suggest that art exposes patterns of resistance and allows viewers and scholars alike to visualize the systemic inequalities and inequities that permeate our lives. However, artists can also represent the values of the state or of powerful elites drawing attention to the complexities of these relationships. Art can picture imagined illusory worlds or dystopian visions, bringing into relief the realities of everyday life. In this way, creative works across media go beyond envisioning a change by making the need for change visible.

This year, we ask our colleagues, graduate students, and early career researchers to reflect on these ideas. How do artists picture resistance within the systems that may privilege, disadvantage, or define them? How can artists make innovative use of the tools, materials, and languages they inherit for new purposes? How do artists picture their revelations? And what can their work reveal about the human condition?

On behalf of the VI Planning Committee, we would like to thank the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Office of the Dean of Fine Arts, the Graduate Students' Society, and the Department of Art History and Visual Studies for their continued support. We would also like to recognize all those who contributed to Visual Impetus including: Our wonderful speakers, the VI Committee, volunteers, and our community partners. Lastly, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all of the participants and attendees—for the last 26 years, you have made this conference possible!

- Visual Impetus 2023 Planning Committee

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Visual Impetus Planning Committee would like to extend our gratitude to the following individuals and organizations, without whom this event would not be possible:

**Dr. Allana Lindgren**, Dean of Fine Arts

**Dr. Marcus Milwright**, Chair, Art History and Visual Studies

**Dr. Evanthia Baboula**, Associate Dean of Fine Arts

**Dr. Catherine Harding**, Graduate Advisor, Art History and Visual Studies

**Mike Huston**, Senior Scientific Assistant, Faculty of Fine Arts

**Sandra Curran**, Art History and Visual Studies Department Secretary

**Chris Sheaff**, Art History and Visual Studies Administrative Assistant

**Dr. India Young**, Curator of Art and Images, Royal BC Museum

The Department of Art History and Visual Studies

The Graduate Students' Society

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

Office of the Dean of Fine Arts

**Sarah Roberts**, Art History and Visual Studies MA Candidate

**Megan Austin**, Art History and Visual Studies MA Candidate

**Pascalie Sabine Ricard**, Art History and Visual Studies MA Candidate

**Vithória Konzen Dill**, Art History and Visual Studies MA Candidate

**Miranda Carroll**, Art History and Visual Studies MA Candidate

**McKaila Ferguson**, Art History and Visual Studies MA Candidate

The Art History and Visual Studies Graduate Student Association is comprised of graduate students in the Department of Art History and Visual Studies. The association provides a voice and an enhanced academic experience for all graduate students enrolled in the department. For more information, please visit:

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

# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and respect the ɫəkʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

# PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

## **Friday, January 20, 2023 (FIA 103)**

### WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

4:30pm Visual Impetus Day I Commences / Territorial Acknowledgement

4:35pm Hello from the Associate Dean of Fine Arts, Dr. Evanthia Baboula

4:45pm Hello from the AHVS Department Chair, Dr. Marcus Milwright

### PANEL 1: HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

4:55pm - 5:35pm Pascale Ricard & Ambreen Hussaini, "Visibility: Representation of the Hidden and the Mysterious"

Ann Edelstein, "Dressed to Kill: The Cranach Gown as a Symbol of Power"

5:35pm - 5:50pm Panel 1 Question & Answer Period

**BREAK** - 5:50pm - 6:00pm

### PANEL 2: RE-EXAMINING AND RE-CENTERING NARRATIVES PART I

6:00pm - 7:00pm Hala Qasqas, "Diplomacy and Architectural Ambience: Damascus in Renaissance Art"

Dersu Yazicioglu, "Creating Narratives: Kemalism's Influence on the Historiography of the Late Ottoman Women Painters"

Lewis Nicholson, "Enacting Rebellious Craft"

7:00pm - 7:15pm Panel 2 Question & Answer Period

**DINNER BREAK** - 7:15pm - 8:00pm - Join us in FIA 109 for pizza and snacks!

## **Saturday, January 21, 2023 (FIA 103)**

### **WELCOME BACK AND OPENING REMARKS**

9:30am Visual Impetus Day II Commences / Territorial Acknowledgement

9:35am Hello from the Visual Impetus Committee

### **PANEL 3: REDEFINING AND RESTRUCTURING IDENTITY**

9:40am - 10:40am Megan Austin, "Beside Ourselves: Subversive Humour in Rosemarie Castoro's Art"

Vithória Konzen Dill, "*Felsina Pittrice*: Self-Portraiture and Self-Promotion in Early Modern Bologna"

Miranda Carroll, "Altering Lacquer: Veneers of the East in *Ébéniste* Adrien Faizelot Delorme's 1750 Commode"

10:40am - 11:00am Panel 3 Question & Answer Period

**BREAK** - 11:00am - 11:15am

### **PANEL 4: ART AND SCANDAL IN ITALY**

11:15am - 11:55am McKaila Ferguson, "Apologies, We Laughed': Peggy Guggenheim's 1948 Venice Biennale Pavilion"

Dr. Brian Pollick, "Hell to Pay: Dante, the *Inferno*, and the Scrovegni of Padua"

11:55am - 12:10pm Panel 4 Question & Answer Period

**LUNCH BREAK** - 12:10pm - 1:10pm - Join us in FIA 109 for lunch and snacks!

### **PANEL 5: RE-EXAMINING AND RE-CENTERING NARRATIVES PART II**

1:15pm - 1:55pm Sarah Roberts, "Matriarchs and Mares: Exploring the Maternal Archetype in Buñuel's Mexican Cinema"

Shaylin Allison, "The Many Portraits of Mishipeshu: Anishinaabe Power, Art History, and the Stories of My Family"

1:55pm - 2:10pm Panel 5 Question & Answer Period

**BREAK** - 2:10pm - 2:25pm

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER PRESENTATION**

2:25pm - 2:55pm Dr. India Young, Curator of Art & Images at the Royal BC Museum

2:55pm - 3:10pm Keynote Speaker Question & Answer Period

**CLOSING REMARKS**

3:15pm Remarks from Graduate Advisor, Dr. Catherine Harding

3:20pm Remarks from the Visual Impetus Committee

# PRESENTER ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

## **AMBREEN SHEHZAD HUSSAINI**

Art History & Visual Studies PhD Candidate

### **Visibility – Representation of the Hidden and the Mysterious**

Co-presented with Pascale Sabine Ricard

**Abstract:** How the hidden and mysterious being represented and activated through art objects, and how are personal spaces marked off to make “hidden” as visible? To answer these questions, we will present and compare, in this short presentation, two case studies: a Jewish and a Muslim household entrance. Thresholds and entry points of a building are just as symbolic as they are practical. The symbolism associated with them is often connected to religion and spirituality; however, the interpretation of these art objects is also driven by believers. Baruch M. Bokser suggests that humans consecrate or mark sacred spaces in a physical way to denote sanctity. This position is based on Mircea Eliade’s “gestures of approach” where anything can be sacred while also being simultaneously profane. To understand religious visual culture, David Morgan suggests, we must study the “network of visual experiences” and consider relationships among the image/object, the viewer, the context, and the content of image/object (meaning, what it represents). Focusing our attention on two contemporary art objects, we investigate a Mezuzah, a small cylindrical object often found on the door frame of a devout Jewish home, and a wooden door frame, inscribed with sacred text. We argue, by studying the visual elements and applied features of traditional Jewish and Muslim private entryways, that believers not merely express their identity through these visual clues; rather, they practice remembrance, while activating the power of healing and protection for the home dwellers as well as visitors, regardless of their beliefs.

**Biography:** Ambreen S. H. is a PhD candidate at University of Victoria Department of Art History and Visual Studies. Before coming to Canada, she completed a two-years degree programme “Masters of Arts in Muslim Cultures” at the Aga Khan University – Institute for the study of Muslim Civilizations at London, UK. She also acquired a degree “Masters of Arts in Islamic Studies” from University of Karachi and a one-year diploma in Arabic Language from the Society for the promotion of Arabic Language – Pakistan. Currently, she is working on the “artistic expressions of the Qur’an” by investigating the creative uses of the sacred text in non-sacred spaces and on human body. Her research focuses on the use of Qur’anic text in material culture and modern arts. Ambreen enjoys teaching and learning from her students.

# **PASCALLE SABINE RICARD**

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

## **Visibility – Representation of the Hidden and the Mysterious**

Co-presented with Ambreen Shehzad Hussaini

**Abstract:** How the hidden and mysterious being represented and activated through art objects, and how are personal spaces marked off to make “hidden” as visible? To answer these questions, we will present and compare, in this short presentation, two case studies: a Jewish and a Muslim household entrance. Thresholds and entry points of a building are just as symbolic as they are practical. The symbolism associated with them is often connected to religion and spirituality; however, the interpretation of these art objects is also driven by believers. Baruch M. Bokser suggests that humans consecrate or mark sacred spaces in a physical way to denote sanctity. This position is based on Mircea Eliade’s “gestures of approach” where anything can be sacred while also being simultaneously profane. To understand religious visual culture, David Morgan suggests, we must study the “network of visual experiences” and consider relationships among the image/object, the viewer, the context, and the content of image/object (meaning, what it represents). Focusing our attention on two contemporary art objects, we investigate a Mezuzah, a small cylindrical object often found on the door frame of a devout Jewish home, and a wooden door frame, inscribed with sacred text. We argue, by studying the visual elements and applied features of traditional Jewish and Muslim private entryways, that believers not merely express their identity through these visual clues; rather, they practice remembrance, while activating the power of healing and protection for the home dwellers as well as visitors, regardless of their beliefs.

**Biography:** I am a first year MA student in the Art History & Visual Arts program at the University of Victoria. Before being accepted to the program I completed a BSc in Psychology and a BA in Art History also at the University of Victoria. Throughout my academic journey to date I found the interdisciplinary nature of Art History exceedingly rewarding. I have often found myself making connections between ideas from different subjects and especially through time.

My current research is somewhat personal since it is related to the Jewish house amulet the Mezuzah, and I am Jewish myself. But the underlining motivation to study this object is driven by my fascination with human rituals and practice. These can exist in our daily life, they can define a culture and they are often connected to art in one way or another, and often in a very performative way!

Outside of my academic work I find myself on walks in the forest, in the garden or creating strange music and videos!



## **ANN EDELSTEIN**

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

### **Dressed to Kill: The Cranach Gown as a Symbol of Power**

**Abstract:** The so-called "Cranach gown" is in many ways a mystery, in that the only surviving evidence of it comes from sixteenth-century paintings. Some, in fact, wonder if the gown even existed or if it simply came from Lucas Cranach the Elder's imagination. The fact that this form of sixteenth century Saxon court gown is named after Cranach himself speaks to how often Cranach painted this style of dress. Most agree that the gown did, indeed, exist, based on similar gowns appearing in paintings by other artists at the time, and the sole surviving extant garment of the period. While the Cranach gown was likely fashionable attire for court women in 1500s Germany, the details of its construction remain unknown. Perhaps more mysterious is why Cranach decided to paint the biblical Judith so many times, and why, in almost every version of the painting, she is dressed in sixteenth century luxury. An understanding of material culture during the Renaissance may provide an answer. In examining Judith's clothing and jewelry, one fact becomes clear: In *Judith With the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 1), *Judith and Holofernes* (Fig. 2), and *Judith Victorious* (Fig. 3), Cranach depicts Judith in lavish Saxon court fashion. This, in a period where luxury and wealth indicated status, is evidence that the artist wanted to portray Judith as a woman of power.

**Biography:** Ann Edelstein received her B.A. in creative writing at UC Riverside, then moved to Victoria in August of 2019. She loves all art forms, including literature, theatre, and music. She decided to pursue art history for her M.A. because of her fascination with fashion history.

Ann's specific area of interest is the history of women's fashion in the west, especially from the eighteenth century to the early 1910s. For her thesis, she intends to focus on mid-19th century women's fashion in Europe. Specifically, she plans to examine European gowns made of Indian muslin with beetle wing embroidery. She also enjoys exploring the creation of historical clothing by making reproductions herself, using historical methods and materials.

Outside of school, Ann has written four published articles on the history of Victoria for Capital Daily and has opened a children's entertainment business called Wisteria Productions, which offers visits and performances from fairytale characters.

# **HALA QASQAS**

Art History & Visual Studies PhD Candidate

## **Diplomacy and Architectural Ambience: Damascus in Renaissance Art**

**Abstract:** Damascus was a primary center for Venetian trading activity in the Levant. Venice comprehended cultural differences in the Levant from other European cities. Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus is a painting dated to 1511. It highlights the reality of the economic, diplomatic, and cultural relationship between the Mamluks and the Venetians in Damascus. This painting in the Musée du Louvre has been the subject of extensive study for a long time. After the consensus that this location is Damascus, all analyses were concerned with the political event that occurred in Damascus at the end of the Mamluk era, which depicts the Reception of the Venetian ambassador, Pietro Zen, by the Mamluk ruler. However, the painting was neglected from an artistry point of view, such as architectural details and costumes. This paper will examine and assess the architectural elements of the painting in order to understand if the painter who depicted this scene visited Damascus or if he obtained those details from other people who had visited Damascus.

**Biography:** Hala Qasqas is a doctoral Candidate in Islamic Art History awarded a Canadian Graduate Scholarship (CGS D) from SSHRC and a Graduate Fellowship at the Department of Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria. She holds a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts, Specializing in Interior Architecture, and she completed a master's degree in Islamic Art History at Damascus University. Also she studied 3D Animation and Visual Effects program at Sheridan College in Ontario. She is a researcher with over ten years of relevant experience. Specializes in socio-urban history in Damascus, the cultural history of Coffee and Coffeeshouses in the 17th and 18th centuries. Her Ph.D. project aims to study the impact of the emergence of coffee and coffeeshouses on the development of various social and recreational activities in Damascus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through a new reading and analysis of the primary historical texts.

# **DERSU YAZICIOGLU**

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

## **Creating Narratives:**

### **Kemalism's Influence on the Historiography of the Late Ottoman Women Painters**

**Abstract:** Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, aimed to create a new slate that was purified from its ties to the Ottoman Empire. It was observed by academics such as Şerif Mardin and Deniz Kandiyoti that this was not possible in the second half of the twentieth century and that the Ottoman past occupied a prominent place in present-day Turkey's politics and socioeconomic structure. Erasing the traces of the Ottoman Empire was a significant part of the Turkish Republic's policy from 1923 to the 1980s. Along with the Ottoman Empire, the multiethnic structure of the Ottoman Empire was erased from the historiography. Examining the effects of Kemalism, this selective forgetfulness system in art historiography is a much newer trend. Although there are articles by academics such as Edhem Eldem on the influence of Kemalism on famous male artists such as Osman Hamdi Bey, there is very limited research on its effects on the history of female artists born in the Ottoman Empire. How is the scholarship on the first-generation female painters in the Ottoman Empire affected by Kemalist nationalism in Turkey? What are the biases reflected in the current bibliography? In my presentation, I will show the influence of Kemalism on the historiography of women artists in order to explain their absence from the canon and locate them in Turkish art history.

**Biography:** Dersu is a MA candidate in Art History and Visual Studies. She completed her bachelor's degrees in Sociology, Arts Management, and Business Administration. Her research paper focuses on the female artists in the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century. Moreover, she is interested in Critical Theory and the Philosophy of Aesthetics. Her goal is to apply her lifelong fascination with cultures to a creative and educational career.

# LEWIS NICHOLSON

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

## Enacting Rebellious Craft

**Abstract:** Meticulously crafted from banal wood, Japanese woodcarver Yoshihiro Suda brings to life highly realistic representations of plants, a representation typically absent in a white-walled gallery space. Intentionally installed in particular locations within and outside the galleries, Suda's plants call attention to detail and to beauty, imparting fascination as well as investigation. When Suda's plants were displayed in the 2007 exhibition *Out of the Ordinary*, in tandem with other artists that also employed craft technics, a claim was made in Glenn Adamson's essay *The Spectacle of the Everyday* that such contemporary craftwork, must be considered void of political meaning. Contrary to this understanding, by placing Suda's work and practice within an interpretation of Thomas Markussen's 2013 framework for design activism, this essay proposes that contemporary craft, is political; it is rebellious, as it holds subversive qualities within its practice. In this way, Markussen's framework works to define craft in a specific way, illustrating its political nature. Highlighting an application of aesthetics within craft interpretation, this essay posits a theory called the *aesthetic of handwork* wherein viewing the craft object the viewer is able to perceive enacted labour. This essay contrasts Markussen's ideas against Guy Debord's concept of *the spectacle*, positioning contemporary craftwork outside of industrialized alienation. In doing this, contemporary craft is separated from the mass-produced object that is void of any perception of artistic effort. As such, Suda's plants are formed and perceived under notions of affective dissensus as Suda's plants reorient and disrupt entrenched norms of experience.

**Biography:** Born in the west end of Toronto Ontario, Lewis grew up in a household that encouraged creativity within a city where the arts flourished. After practicing graphic design, drawing and painting, and photography in high school, Lewis completed a professional diploma in Advertising & Marketing Communication from Humber College. Realizing his love for writing and academia, Lewis decided to pursue higher education with an interest in art historical writing. Lewis holds a Bachelor of Art in Visual & Critical Studies from the Ontario College of Art and Design University and is currently an MA Candidate at the University of Victoria in the Art History & Visual Culture graduate program with the Faculty of Fine Arts. Throughout academics, Lewis has written on a number of topics including contemporary craft, performance art, cultural studies and much more.

# MEGAN AUSTIN

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

## Beside Ourselves: Subversive Humour in Rosemarie Castoro's Art

**Abstract:** Gender has been, and continues to be, a fundamental category for the organization of culture. Moreover, the pattern of that organization favors men over women. My research looks at how Rosemarie Castoro challenges perceptions of gender, and reconfigures these power dynamics through the gender dichotomies embodied in her art. I seek to establish how the construction of gender within the dichotomies of Rosemarie Castoro's artworks communicate with audiences by drawing upon anthropomorphic elements. Rosemarie Castoro challenges conformity with traditional gender roles and pushes conversation towards an examination of gender constructs. I will be examining the complimentary contrasts in Castoro's *Land of Lashes* (1976) and *Land of Lads* (1976). *Land of Lashes* has characteristics that can be perceived as intrinsically feminine. In juxtaposition, *Land of Lads*, possesses characteristics typically associated with masculinity. Both works confront the false boundaries of identity, with humorous hostility. I argue that there are three types of 'body' in Castoro's work: the implied body, the fantastic absent body, and the present body, which are utilized by Castoro to create cohesive contradictions concerning identity, gender, and sexuality. The gender dichotomies within Castoro's sculptures function not as isolated opposites but as complementary and interdependent constituents. Castoro invites multiple interpretations by using epicene forms to conjure preconceived notions of gender within her audience. The success of a good joke lies in the intersection of contrast and convention, it is in this intersection that the success of Castoro's artworks lies.

**Biography:** Megan Austin is a second-year master's student with the Faculty of Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria. Megan's Bachelor of Fine Arts firmly reinforced her love of all fine arts and cemented her passion for art history. Since graduating in the spring of 2019 with a Bachelor of Education she has since spent time teaching in various classrooms. Her time teaching has reinforced her understanding of the integrality that students and individuals of all ages develop an educated, critical eye for examining art within their own communities. Currently Megan is working on developing her MA thesis which will culminate in a research paper that examines the gendered dichotomies within Rosemarie Castoro's art. Megan's paper *Confronting Gendered Dichotomies: An Examination of the Feminist Politics in Rosemarie Castoro's Art* seeks to establish how art can be used as a vessel for understanding complex issues such as identity, gender, and sexuality.

# VITHÓRIA KONZEN DILL

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

*Felsina Pittrice:*

## Self-Portraiture and Self-Promotion in Early Modern Bologna

**Abstract:** Significant changes in the arts took place in Early Modern Europe, especially when it comes to art as a profession. The individuality behind artistic production took shape, and artists argued in favour of their recognition and prestige in society. When the visual arts moved from being seen as a mechanical activity and towards being considered a liberal art, the role and status of artists changed as well. The impact of these changes can be noticed in the self-portraits produced at the time. In self-portraiture, the artist is the one in control of their own image — making this a compelling source for the analysis of self-image and self-promotion. Focusing on the context of Bologna, a city marked by an unusually high presence of documented female artists, it is interesting to notice how differently men and women approached self-portraits. While men tended to emphasize their status as *gentiluomo* and avoid any allusion to manual work, women would rarely depict themselves without adding explicit reference to artistic vocation. Through this comparison, it is possible to analyze the role and influence of gender in the artistic production of Early Modern Bologna.

**Biography:** Vithória Konzen Dill is a Masters student in the Department of Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and brings her background experience with primary sources and archives to her art-historical and visual analysis. Vithória's main area of research is Early Modern Italy, and she is particularly interested in studying women artists and female agency in the arts. Her current research focuses on Baroque painter Elisabetta Sirani, and takes into account the senses-oriented quality of art in that period. Vithória is also passionate about her experiences in teaching and education, and is currently working as a Teaching Assistant at UVic.

## **MIRANDA CARROLL**

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

### **Altering Lacquer: Veneers of the East in Ébéniste Adrien Faizelot Delorme's 1750 Commode**

**Abstract:** The East captured the imagination of Western countries such as France after contact was made between Asia and the West by Portugal in 1515. As the centuries continued, trade increased between Eastern and Western nations, and goods such as porcelain, silk, and lacquer-work began to influence Western tastes. When Emperor Louis XIV of France died, the regimented Classicist style that epitomized his reign began to shift, and Rococo along with Eastern inspired ornamentation became the predominant styles of the decorative arts in France.

Changes in regime and trade can be seen in master ébéniste Adrien Faizelot Delorme's commode from 1750. The bombé shaped Commode stands three feet wide and five feet tall, is made primarily out of oak and walnut, and is decorated with lacquer from China, imitation japanning, and bronze ornamentation. Delorme's commode incorporates Eastern styles into French furniture and as such shows the French fascination with the 'exotic' that epitomized the period.

This paper explores Delorme's veneering techniques along with the implications of re-affixing Chinese lacquer upon French furniture. It asserts that the re-contextualization of Chinese lacquer relates to Baudrillard's Procession of Simulacra as well as Said's Orientalism as it both simplifies and alters visions of the East, turning it into an imagined space and a fiction of the imagination. As such the commode represents not only fine craftsmanship but also sheds light on the interaction between Eastern and Western nations during the time of its creation.

**Biography:** Miranda Carroll is a writer, artist, and researcher based in Victoria, British Columbia. She is an MA candidate at the University of Victoria in the department of Art History and Visual Studies. Miranda received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto in 2021 with a major in English and a double minor in History of Art and Semiotics and Communication studies. Her current practice centres on notions of identity and social justice across media with a special interest in semiotic methodologies. Specifically, Miranda's research focuses on Canadian contemporary artist Ken Lum's 2021 Portrait-Repeated text series "Time. And Again." as it relates to social challenges associated with labour as well as those related to communication and creative expression. Upon the completion of her MA, Miranda plans to pursue a doctoral degree in Art History and continue her writing and art-making practices.

# **MCKAILA FERGUSON**

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

## **“Apologies, We Laughed”: Peggy Guggenheim’s 1948 Venice Biennale Pavilion**

**Abstract:** Following her time in New York, Peggy Guggenheim (1898-1979), one of the 20th century’s most influential art collectors, presented her collection at the 1948 Venice Biennale. The first display of an extensive modern art collection in Italy after two decades of a fascist regime, the 1948 Biennale sent waves across Europe, both dazzling and shocking the public. Guggenheim’s collection surveyed the most contemporary art at the Biennale, displaying European abstract and Surrealist works including masterpieces of both these styles. One room highlighted the newest American art movement, Abstract Expressionism. It was the European debut for many American artists, such as Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, and Clyfford Still.

Guggenheim’s Pavilion received much attention. Among her supporters were Italian president, Luigi Einaudi; founding director of MoMA, Alfred H. Barr Jr.; artist Henry Moore; and American photographer, Lee Miller. Her Pavilion was described in a French newspaper as, “the temple and symbol of the entire exhibition.” Despite various positive reviews, others were confused and taken aback. James Dunn, the US Ambassador to Italy, noted that a Picasso painting in her collection was “almost normal,” while her work by Paul Klee was reproduced in a magazine with the headline: “In Good Conscience, Do You Like It?” These misunderstandings were highlighted in the Biennale catalogue. It confused Abstraction with Surrealism and failed to mention the newest advances in American art. Acting quickly, she published a separate catalogue to sell at her Pavilion including writings by her early advisor, British art historian, Herbert Read, as well as some of her featured artists. Even if modern art perplexed and scandalized much of the public at that time, Peggy Guggenheim’s commitment to promote and support contemporary art was unwavering. More than 70 years later, these works are known as masterpieces of the 20th century.

**Biography:** McKaila Ferguson (she/her/elle) has been involved with arts communities and non-profits around the world for several years. She holds a MSc in Museum Studies from the University of Glasgow and a BA (honours) in Art History & Visual Studies from the University of Victoria. Currently, she is a Collections Technician at the Royal BC Museum. At the same time, you can find her back at the University of Victoria with a Graduate Fellowship and a Herbert Bertram Falkenstein Graduate Scholarship working towards an MA in Art History. Her research focusses on the histories of collecting and collectors in North America. She also sits on the Board of Directors for the provincial arts service organization, Arts BC.



## **DR. BRIAN A. POLLICK**

Associate Fellow at UVic's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society

### **Hell to Pay: Dante, the *Inferno*, and the Scrovegni of Padua**

**Abstract:** Dante's representation of Rainaldo Scrovegni (d. c.1286) of Padua as the archetypal usurer in the *Inferno* has been visually replicated in many of the illuminated manuscripts of the Divine Comedy and has forever tainted the name of the Scrovegni family. In fact, it is almost solely because of Dante's depiction of Rainaldo that his unsavory reputation as a "notorious usurer" has been maintained over the centuries.

Yet Dante scholars have never critically addressed the issue of why Dante might have chosen Rainaldo Scrovegni as his archetypal usurer, or even questioned whether Rainaldo was, in fact, seen by his contemporaries as the supposedly infamous usurer Dante depicted.

In this presentation I will suggest that the inclusion and representation of Rainaldo Scrovegni has more to do with the political struggles in the Veneto at the beginning of the Trecento than it does in Rainaldo's actual behaviour and contemporary reputation as a "notorious usurer". In particular, I will argue and show how the insertion of Rainaldo, and the unique way in which Dante's encounter with the usurers is constructed, served to bolster the status of his friend and patron, Cangrande I della Scala, ruler of Verona and enemy of Padua, at the expense of Rainaldo's son, Enrico Scrovegni, who built the Arena Chapel and had it decorated by Giotto in 1305.

**Biography:** Brian received his PhD in 2021 from the Art History and Visual Studies Department at the University of Victoria. His dissertation focused on how merchants in Trecento Italy used the imagery they commissioned to broadcast their Christian moral identity and serve their eschatological aspirations.

Brian's previous careers, spanning almost half a century, include teaching and various senior management positions in the justice field. Brian received a B.A. from York University (1967) and an M.A. in Art History from the University of Victoria (2011). He is the recipient of several awards including a SSHRC Bombardier Fellowship.

Brian has presented papers at numerous conferences in Canada and the United States and has had two peer-reviewed articles published in ARTiculate. He is currently an Associate Fellow at the University of Victoria's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society.

## **SARAH ROBERTS**

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

### **Matriarchs and Mares: Exploring the Maternal Archetype in Buñuel's Mexican Cinema**

**Abstract:** Director Luis Buñuel left his work among the European surrealists and spent thirty years making films in Mexico. He referred to several films he produced in the country as “bread-and-butter” films, dismissing their creative value. Though he was reliant on the financial support of the commercial film industry and subject to the pursuant expectations or power structures inherent to a national cinema industry, Buñuel was able to exercise irony and thinly-veiled critique while repeating popular formulas of Melodrama.

Investigating two of Buñuel's Mexican works, *Susana* (1950); and *Subida al Cielo* (Ascent to Heaven) (1952); this study examines the use of conventions of melodrama to parody and disrupt patriarchal mythology. Both works, set in rural Mexico, have drawn comparisons to the *Comedia Ranchera*, a melodramatic sub-genre that reinforced family value and religious morals in post-revolutionary subjects. Applying the theory of Melodrama as an “ideological safety valve”, proposed by Laura Mulvey and elaborated by Claire Johnston, this study identifies how Buñuel exaggerates feminine archetypes to absurdity. This confronts the audience with the undeniable hegemonic structures that perpetuate feminine stereotypes and the paradigm of mother/whore. In addition, this study adopts a cross-cultural lens. As a European who migrated to Latin America in the 20th century, the films can be viewed in line with Buñuel's international catalogue of work which addressed the patriarchal Catholicism of his native Spain. Simultaneously, they engage with Mexican cultural mythology to question the post-revolutionary identity of *Mexicanidad*; fostering a vision of progressive modernity at odds with colonial, moral ideas.

**Biography:** Sarah Roberts is a second-year Master's Student studying Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria. Originally from the UK, she holds a first-class BA in Art History Visual Culture with French from the University of Exeter. She was co-chair and panel moderator for Visual Impetus in 2021 and 2022. Her research interests include the cinema of Latin America, international avant-garde and feminist approaches to film. As part of the AHVSGA, she was the MA Board Chair in 2021-2022, Special Events Co-ordinator 2021-22 and has co-edited ARTBeat since 2021. She is an active member of the Graduate Students Society, serving on the Events Committee, Communications Committee and Ethics and Conduct Committee. In addition to this, she regularly volunteers with the International Centre for Students and has been a Global Community Council Representative since 2020. She is a representative on the Education and Learning Senate and the Faculty of Graduate Studies council.

# **SHAYLIN ALLISON**

Art History & Visual Studies MA Candidate

## **The Many Portraits of Mishipeshu: Anishinaabe Power, Art History, and the Stories of My Family**

**Abstract:** This research incorporates my family's ancestral and legal ties to the land as direct descendants of Chief Shingwauk, a renowned Anishinaabe leader, with a focus on both contemporary and historical art and visual culture of the area. I have been specifically investigating the Agawa pictographs on the north shore of Lake Superior, some of which were painted by Shingwauk and other members of my community, Garden River First Nation during the past few hundred years. I have also compared the portrayals of the nearby land and pictographs with the work of settler artists including art by members of the Group of Seven to the work of contemporary Anishinaabe artists with cultural ties to Lake Superior. As noted by Lakota-Scottish scholar Carmen Robertson, settler artists such as the Group of Seven depict the land devoid of its Indigenous caretakers and inhabitants and present it as their own discovery, effectively reinforcing and encouraging colonial objectives of land and resource dispossession. Conversely, the work of Anishinaabe artists Norval Morrisseau and Michael Belmore powerfully emphasizes the importance of Anishinaabe worldview, storytelling, and sovereignty. Both artists highlight the ways that Anishinaabeg maintain connections to our ancestors and culture as Indigenous peoples in contemporary times. This work seeks to assert the importance of Indigenous resurgence and sovereignty in representations of Anishinaabe worldviews. Anishinaabe worldview and context are inextricably linked to our relationships with the land, our communities, and our families, and so the urgency and value of performing research in unique Anishinaabeg contexts cannot be overstated.

**Biography:** Shaylin Allison (she/they) is a queer Anishinaabe-Korean art historian from Garden River First Nation in northern Ontario, currently pursuing her masters degree in Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria. She earned her undergraduate degree from Carleton University in the Bachelor of Humanities – Great Books program in 2022, where she also spent time on academic exchange at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. Their research looks at the intersections of sexuality, sovereignty, and land in contemporary Indigenous art with an emphasis on Anishinaabeg worldview and ways of knowing. She is also interested in artistic representations of motherhood, surrealist feminist painting, Indigenous futurisms, and Indigenous visual storytelling practices. Outside of academia, Shaylin is working towards completing her 200-Hour Registered Yoga Teacher training and learning Anishinaabemowin and Korean. She can also be found reading graphic novels, making matcha lattes, and walking her toy poodle Linus.

## **DR. INDIA YOUNG**

Curator of Art and Images, Royal BC Museum

**Biography:** India Rael Young joined the Royal BC Museum in 2019 as the Curator of Art and Images. She oversees the collections of paintings, prints, drawings and photographs, which are primarily housed in the BC Archives. Highlights of the collections include early BC photographer Hannah Maynard's BC Gems, Emily Carr's sketchbooks and the thousands of photographs from *Beautiful British Columbia Magazine*. She looks forward to expanding the collection towards artists working in the province after 1950 and artists previously excluded from institutional collections.

Dr. Young's research and exhibitions trace Canadian and American art histories through feminist, decolonial and critical race frameworks. Her curatorship has brought exhibitions of media arts and contemporary Indigenous arts to museums and art spaces in Canada, the United States and Russia. She also teaches and writes for arts publications.

Read more about Dr. India Young in this interview at the Royal BC Museum:  
<https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/blog/post/112922/day-life-india-rael-young>