

# ARTBeat

ART HISTORY & VISUAL STUDIES GRADUATE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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*Department Chair: Erin Campbell at the Legacy Downtown Gallery for the Installation of 'Life Stories' Dec 2020. Photo: John Threlfall.*

## Art and Community

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

There is never a dull moment in the life of a department chair! I am so grateful to be able to work with our talented students, dedicated staff, and brilliant faculty members. There have been many exciting developments since my appointment as AHVS Chair on July 1, 2023. We had dreamed of creating a space of belonging at the heart of our community, and then we made it happen! The AHVS Commons is a place for students, staff, and faculty to enjoy. It can be used for relaxation, quiet conversation, and reading as well booked for events and meetings. We continue to look for ways to grow our AHVS community, including conducting a search this year for a new Indigenous faculty member to teach Indigenous Art History.

I am continually impressed by the creativity and initiative of our community. The Art History & Visual Studies Student Association hosted their first film night since the pandemic this Fall in the AHVS Commons. In October, our Orion Visiting Filmmaker Velcrow Ripper inspired us to take action on climate change. More recently, the impressive range of innovative topics at the undergraduate research poster fair demonstrated the continuing vitality and relevance of critically examining art and visual culture.

In a world of constant change the passion of our students for critical engagement with art and visual culture continues to inspire me. Every time I sit down with students to talk about their research and activities I am energized. Your curiosity and drive to uncover new knowledge and your keen desire to make a difference are proof positive of the value of our collective inquiry into art and visual culture. It was amazing to see how packed the museum was with people of all ages and from all walks of life on a recent visit to MOMA in New York City. The art on display was provocative, vital, and engaging. Such creativity inspires hope for the future. When I walked by the museum the following day, there was a line up around the block to get in. Now more than ever the world needs the arts as a force that can bring us together, advocate for the world we want to see, and help us imagine brighter futures for all.

**Dr. Erin Campbell, AHVS Department Chair | email: [erinjc@uvic.ca](mailto:erinjc@uvic.ca)**



## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

*The ARTbeat Editorial Team is always looking for updates from graduates, faculty and alumni. Have a project, book, exhibition or anything else you'd like to share with us and the Fine Arts community? Please reach out to the AHVSGA.*

*Other questions, comments, or story ideas for upcoming issues? Email us at: [artbeat@uvic.ca](mailto:artbeat@uvic.ca)*

# Department Spotlight: Dr. Melissa Berry

PHD ART HISTORY VISUAL STUDIES (UVIC), MA ART HISTORY (COURTALD INSTITUTE),  
BFA (LETHBRIDGE) | SESSIONAL INSTRUCTOR

By Melody Ray, MA Candidate



Dr. Berry discussing Luncheon on The Grass by Edouard Manet in the Orsay. 2023. Photo: Richard Marshall.

On November 21st, I spoke with Dr. Melissa Berry over a cup of coffee about what made her interested in Art History, her tour through France, and her passions as a professor. Dr. Berry earned her PhD at the University of Victoria, studying the Société de Trois. She discovered the trio – Whistler, Fantin-Latour, and Legros – from a footnote in a 1950's book that sparked her interest. Berry has always been interested in trans-border relationships, so this trio of friends from both sides of the English Channel aligned with her interests. Berry's 2018 publication, *The Société des Trois in the Nineteenth Century: The Translocal Artistic Union* was inspired by them. This teaching was cultivated from her PhD research. She continues to study how humans moved, travelled, and made friendships regardless of their nationality.

## ABOUT DR. MELISSA BERRY



CONNECT WITH DR BERRY  
ON INSTAGRAM

@ARTHISTORYANDME

Dr Melissa Berry has been teaching Art History Visual Studies at the University of Victoria since 2009. While her primary areas of research are rooted in Western European art in the 19th Century, her enthusiasm for art history and visual culture constantly expands.

She has given conference and public talks in England, France, the United States, and across Canada on topics such as "The Great Wave in Britain: The Artistic Influence of Japan in the 19th Century." Dr. Berry has taught numerous courses related to Impressionism and Post-Impressionism.

This past summer, Dr Berry led a tour, "On the Trail of Impressionist: Paris, Normandy, Provence," in conjunction with the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV). She led twenty people, older patrons of the gallery, on a seventeen-day voyage through Paris, Normandy, and Aix-en-Provence, France. They looked at the works of impressionists and the vistas that inspired them. Before the trip commenced, Berry hosted two art history classes, offering background knowledge on the group composed of Whistler, Fantin-Latour, and Legros. Along with these classes, Berry was responsible for creating travel plans, writing the curriculum for the tours, planning which paintings to see in each museum they visited, walking time, and breaks for her fellow travellers. One of her favorite locations during the trip was the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, where she was able to discuss Monet paintings in front of the works themselves. Discussing art in the presence of the original paintings was surreal for Berry. After each day of tours, Berry would walk the tour of the next day to ensure the paintings she discussed were on display in the same location, ensuring that the paintings were not moved or on loan somewhere else. In the case that they were not in the museum, Berry would have to shift and discuss a different piece the following day. She loved seeing

Cézanne's studio in Provence, experiencing the same surroundings that Cézanne depicted. In Étretat, the city where Monet created many studies of the shoreline, the group was awestruck by the natural beauty of France. The group was able to see, not only the magnificent paintings, but also the landscapes that inspired the artists.

When she came back, the gallery asked Berry if she would be willing to lead another tour, discussing a trip through Spain looking at Spanish artists. There are no concrete plans in place, but Berry is keen to explore her knowledge gaps in Spanish art history. She hopes to study Spanish artists beyond Diego Velázquez, Salvador Dalí, Pablo Picasso, and Francisco Goya while continuing to link her work back to the nineteenth century, focusing on how people travel and create friendships regardless of borders. Berry expressed her desire to continuously broaden her research cross-culturally. The inspiration from Spanish art, she hopes, will provide a way to publish more works.

When Berry discusses her career with people outside of the discipline, they tend to think that art history is an escape from the chaos of the day. However, Berry begs to differ. She asserted that art history is a discipline that impacts the way we see the world. Art history, if taught correctly, teaches us to look closely and understand the multicultural influences around us. Art history needs to be an interdisciplinary field, Berry says. Art Historians must bridge disciplinary gaps, much like the artists of the nineteenth century. Art historians should not stop at working with interdisciplinary people but practice all forms of art. Handling the materials can help the historian understand the intricacies of the medium and the reasoning behind the different techniques. Without this interdisciplinary work, art history cannot grow creatively, and many areas of study will be neglected.

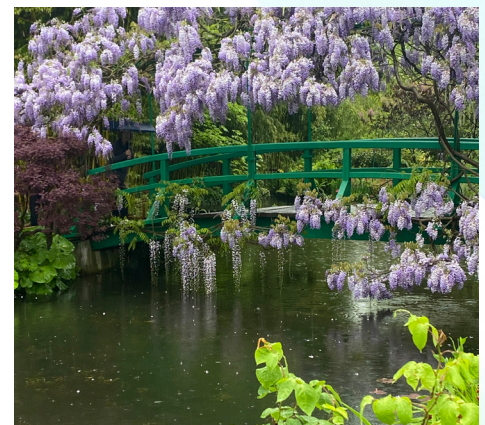
Above all, during our conversation Melissa Berry reiterated her love for teaching. The world of academia can be isolating, especially given the emphasis placed on publishing. However, Berry enjoys attending to the teaching aspect of her position. She loves discussing art with her students and aspires to be the professor that students will send their work to. When Berry published her first book, she sent a signed copy to one of her undergraduate professors. Berry hopes that she can be that for someone else down the road. She enjoys supporting her students through their writing and artistic endeavors. She loves "nerding out" with students, discussing their interests and hopes to take her UVic students on a tour similar to the one she hosted for the AGGV. Having critical discussions in the presence of the art is a crucial experience.



*The gardens at one of the hospitals Van Gogh stayed at in Arles. 2023. Photo: Melissa Berry.*



*Cézanne's Studio in Aix-en-Provence. 2023. Photo: Meissa Berry.*



*Monet's Garden in Giverny. 2023. Photo: Melissa Berry.*

# Student Highlight: Miranda Carroll

MA ART HISTORY VISUAL STUDIES (UVIC), BA ART HISTORY, CRITICISM AND CONSERVATION (UOFT)

## Curating Art Historians as Artists

Why is there such a stark distinction between artist and art historian? As an art history student in the second year of my master's degree, I am surrounded by art. While studying the lives and practices of artists together with my cohort, I am often reminded that so many of us are artists ourselves. In the academic context, there is a gulf between artistic practice and art historical study. But what if an art historian's art making was not peripheral to their research and scholarship? In an attempt to bridge this gap, I am planning a curatorial project that will mount the work of artists in my cohort alongside their research projects. My goal is to celebrate the artist inside the art historian and to express how embodied artistic practice can inform our research.

I have always been a painter. But, at some point, while reading about Fauvism and Flemish Primitives, I stopped making art for the love of it, feeling like my academics were at odds with my art making. My formal training became eclipsed by my academic study and even though I was studying art the act of making it was diverting energy away from my studies. Having taken up my artistic practice again, I have been wondering what might come of our research if we celebrate the creative impulse associated with both the study and creation of art. Maybe if we attend to the creative parts of ourselves, we can harness our creative energy and become better art historians in the process.

My proposed exhibition will focus on the 2024 graduating cohort including bead work by Shaylin Allison who's research is focused on contemporary



Miranda Carroll. *Fleur de Fromage*. Collage. 2023.

Anishinaabe women's art-making as asserting agency and resistance; Lewis Nicholson who practices experimental pottery-making and whose research centres on Chinese-born Canadian artist and potter Wayne Ngan; Ann Edelstein who sews historical garments and researches muslin and beetle wings as wearable cabinets of curiosities; and my own work in multi-media photography and drawing that parallels my research centering on the composite photographs of Yukon 'explorer' Esther Lyons.

There is power in embodied practice. There is power in knowing how a woodblock print is made, because last year you got really into making shirts with linocut prints for your friends, or in knowing how Rothko created that luminosity, because you have also experimented with building layer upon layer of colour. As art historians we must value and create space for our artistic impulses because we are also artists.

I hope to mount this exhibition in the summer or fall of 2024 and am in the process of determining the logistics. My email is [mirandacarroll@uvic.ca](mailto:mirandacarroll@uvic.ca)

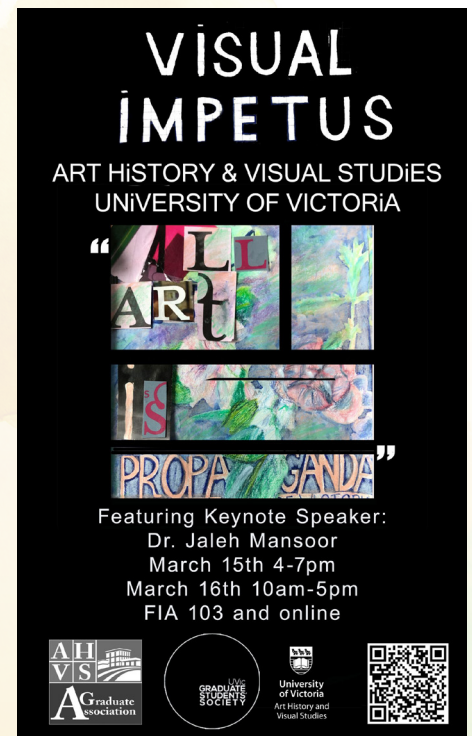
and I would be thrilled if anyone in the department had comments, academic sources, or pictures of their own art to share.

## NEWS: UPDATES FROM VISUAL IMPETUS

On March 15th and 16th, the AHVSGA held their annual conference, Visual Impetus. A new Spring date brought March sunshine and refreshing energy to FIA103 as students, staff, and alums gathered for another successful multi-day conference, exchanging knowledge and hearing from researchers across campus whose work foregrounds visual media.

Students responded to the provocative statement “All Art is Propaganda,” fostering lively scholarly discussions and presentations that considered diverse media, and temporal contexts, from documentary photography of Japanese incarceration to decolonial approaches in museums.

A pizza social and a delicious lunch catered by local business Fig Deli offered further opportunities to extend conversations, network, and bridge connections. We rounded off two days of excellent student papers with a keynote from Dr. Jaleh Mansoor from the University of British Columbia. Dr. Mansoor’s presentation reflected on the ethical challenges of volunteerism and exploitation in contemporary performance art and was followed by an engaging question-and-answer period.



*Visual Impetus Poster 2024, design by Anna O'Meara.*



*The 2024 Visual Impetus Organizing Committee. (Left to right) Zoe Kolodnicki, Peter Grauer, Anna O'Meara, Pascallec Ricard, (Dersu Yazicioglu (not pictured)).*

A huge congratulations to this years organizing committee, Pascallec Ricard, Anna O'Meara, Dersu Yazicioglu, Peter Grauer, Zoe Kolodnicki. With gratitude to the Department of Art History Visual Studies, The Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, the GSS, Dr. Allana Lindgren, Dr. Erin Campbell, Dr. Catherine Harding, Sandra Curran and Mike Huston and all of the AHVS Department faculty and staff.

# Art Gallery of Greater Victoria Review: *In the Flesh*

By Peter Grauer, MA Candidate



Michael Morris. *Man and Mirror*. 1983. Pastel and watercolour on paper, 64.5 x 48 cm. Image Courtesy of Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Elly Smallwood. *Garden Creatures*. 2019. Mixed Media. Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo: Peter Grauer.

This brief exhibition review will discuss the *In the Flesh* exhibit at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV), curated by the Chief Curator and Director of Collections and Exhibitions at the AGGV, Steven McNeil.

McNeil brings us an event themed around the nude, highlighting various works in the gallery's collection from historical and contemporary artists. The exhibit takes place across four spaces showcasing works dated to pre-1920s, 1920-50, 1960-70, and the 1980s to today; with each section having a unique title and textual element that introduces a theme. Because the exhibit takes up two rooms in the gallery, the first room encompasses the first three eras, while the last room is solely devoted to the works made after the 80s.

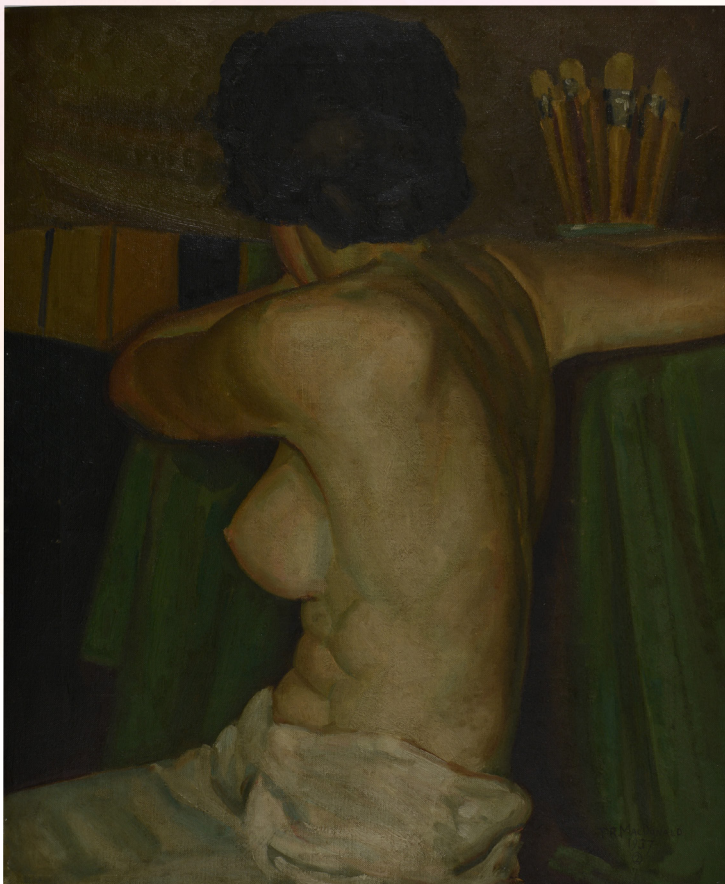
McNeil has two separate thematic aims in this exhibit. First, reference the act of bringing people 'in the flesh' into the gallery to look at art of the human body. Secondly, to create a timeline between the different eras that tracks how the nude was used as a mode of artistic expression in each historical context. The 'timeline' concept of the exhibit is evident through the organization, but McNeil makes good use of the first room's angular central wall to highlight a progression between works of various sizes and subjects. As people circumambulate the first room of the gallery, they are experiencing "a visual journey through time" with text marking their transition between segments.

With notable works including Carole Sabiston's *Woman in Time* (1975), Pol Mara's *Fallen Male Object* (1971), and Emma Schkangenhansen's *The Emotions Series* (ca. 1910). The contemporary arts room features a similar progression towards newer works, starting with a collection of 80s-era photo-collages by the pseudonymous artist, 'Evergon,' and then Elly Smallwood's *Garden Creatures* (2019), a work comprising two portraits of nude women drawn onto boxing gloves. Overall, the curatorial expertise on display is very potent and McNeil's choices in placement and layout incorporates the 'timeline' concept to a great degree.

I would contend that the strict chronological order lightly isolates discussing the nude in a queer or progressive light until the latter half of the exhibit. Recalling the writings of David J. Getsy, the nude is a strange type of portraiture because it enables observation of primary sex characteristics, allowing for confluences of sex and gender, and turning the body into a weapon for "[policing] the appropriateness of gender assignments."<sup>[1]</sup>

McNeil's curation demonstrates how the nude can be used to communicate intimately queer and feminist messaging, but I wonder if there was a way to have those contemporary works intermingle with the older works to challenge modern connotations of sex and gender. There is an opportunity to potentially guide viewers backwards through the exhibit after demonstrating how nudes can challenge the 'gender assignment' complexities Getsy describes: reintroducing the older works with a nuanced perspective. It is, admittedly, cruel to ask anyone to organize an exhibition with this complicated idea in mind because of how unfortunately politicized trans and genderqueer bodies are, but the opportunity for an exhibition of nude art that challenges any assumption of queerness as a modern phenomenon is too exciting to not consider. This is in no way a damnation of McNeil's curatorship because the exhibit meaningfully spotlights the queer and adventurous nude art at the AGGV, while creating a digestible timeline for the nude in art history. McNeil's work is exemplary, and the fact it's prompting me to consider how you could innovate upon *In the Flesh* demonstrates how fascinating the material is.

1. Getsy, D.J. 'How to Teach Manet's Olympia after Transgender Studies.' *Art History*, 45: 342-369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8365.12647>.



Thomas Reid MacDonald. *Untitled*. 1937. Oil on canvas, 56 × 46.6 cm. Image Courtesy of Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

## **A NOTE FROM THE GA THANK YOU, DR HARDING**

*We want to take a moment to thank Dr. Catherine Harding for her service as AHVS Graduate Advisor. Dr. Harding put in countless hours, championing graduate students work, supporting research and seeking out funding. In addition, she has been an instrumental presence in GA activities, shaping our graduate journal ARTiculate as faculty advisor and contributing wise words to ARTbeat.*

*As she steps into the role of Acting Associate Dean, we want to acknowledge Dr. Harding's unwavering support and selfless contributions to the Graduate Association.*

*We warmly welcome the new graduate advisor into the role, Dr. Carolyn Butler-Palmer, whom we have no doubt will continue this commitment to graduate students.*

*In the Flesh* was on display at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, from December 9 2023-March 31, 2024. For more information about this and other exhibitions, current, upcoming and previous, visit [aggv.ca/exhibits](http://aggv.ca/exhibits).

Take advantage of feel free days: free general admission the first Saturday of the month (10am-5pm), and every Thursday late (5pm-9pm).

Visit [aggv.ca](http://aggv.ca) for up-to-date opening hours and admission.



# CELEBRATING SUCCESS IN ART HISTORY VISUAL STUDIES

Congratulations to the following students on completing your defense in the 2023-24 academic year.

**Sarah Roberts, MA**, is delighted to be rejoining the department to commence her PhD this fall. She will be pursuing her interests in Latin American film, exploring intersections between surrealist artists and film-makers in Mexico. She is also committed to continuing her campus activities including working with the Global Community, Senate and GSS.

**Ann Edelstein, MA**, completed her masters research project where she looked at Barbara Morrison's beetle wing dress. She is currently working to finish making her own beetle wing dress this spring. Ann plans to apply for the PhD program next fall to continue her research on a larger scale. In the meantime, Ann is working on her small business, [Wisteria Productions](#), and seeking part time employment.

**Miranda Carroll, MA**, is enthusiastic about continuing her research on Esther Lyons and questions of the fluidity of truth in both art and the historical record that extend beyond this project. In the short term, Miranda is working to publish her MA research, to continue teaching painting classes and curating, and to travel! With gratitude to this department and the wonderful people she met and learned from, Miranda looks forward to beginning the next chapter. She knows her academic career will not stop with this MA, and is excited for whatever the future holds.

**Vithória Konzen Dill, MA**, is excited to return to the department this fall to start her PhD. She plans to expand on her masters research, covering Elisabetta Sirani's artistic agency through her signature practise. She is a valued member of the department, working as a teaching assistant and research assistant, as well as dedicating her time to part-time employment at the Graduate Students Society.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### *Fire Season*

Legacy Gallery, 630 Yates St.  
April 20, 2024 - September 7, 2024

### *louder than the sum of its parts*

the fifty fifty arts collective, 2516 Douglas St.  
May 2 - 25, 2024

### *Generations: The Sobey Family and Canadian Art*

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1040 Moss St.  
June 29, 2024 - October 27, 2024

## FOLLOW AHVSGA ONLINE!

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

### **About ARTbeat**

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

### **EDITORIAL TEAM**

Miranda Carroll, Melody Ray, Sarah Roberts, Peter Grauer

With thanks to Professor Mitch Parry, Dr Campbell, Dr Berry, Mike Huston and Sandra Curran.

