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ART HISTORY  
GRADUATE  
SYMPOSIUM

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

**MARCH 6 - 7, 2026**

**FSU** | DEPARTMENT  
OF ART HISTORY  
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**MARCH 6 – 7, 2026**  
**WILLIAM JOHNSTON BUILDING**

**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY**

Florida State University  
1019 William Johnston Building  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-1233

**[arthistory.fsu.edu](http://arthistory.fsu.edu)**



## Friday, March 6

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1:00pm / WJB G40

### Welcome

Quentin Clark, *FSU PhD Candidate*

1:00–3:15pm / WJB G40

### Session I: Materiality and Cultural Memory

Session Chair – Isabel Brady, *FSU PhD Student*

*Izunna Sanctus Ugwu – University of Delaware*

*Santana Nash – Georgia Institute of Technology*

### Break

*Thaís Wenstrom – The University of Utah*

*Madison Gilmore-Duffey – Florida State University*

3:15pm / Art & Design Library, 2020 WJB

### Coffee Break

4:00pm / WJB 2005

### Welcome & Acknowledgements

Lorenzo Pericolo

*Vincent V. and Agatha Thursby Professor and Chair,*

*FSU Department of Art History*

### Keynote Lecture

#### **Dr. Claudia Brittenham**

*Professor of Art History and Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity*

*University of Chicago*

“Telling Time: Periodization, Analogy, and Mesoamerican History”

# Schedule of Events

## Saturday, March 7

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8:00am / WJB 2020 Art & Design Library

### Breakfast

9:00am / WJB 2038

Speakers meet with *Athanos* editor Serena D’Alessandro

9:30–11:45am / WJB G40

### Session II: Processes and Modes of Production

Session Chair – Hudson Kauffman, *FSU PhD Student*

*Molly Mapstone – Temple University*

*Artie Foster – University of Illinois Chicago*

### Break

*Raigen Sumrall – Florida State University*

*Ana Rodríguez Castillo – Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid, Spain*

11:45–1:00pm

### Lunch on your own / FSU Student Union

1:00–2:30pm / WJB G40

### Session III: Ambiguous and Multivalent Imagery

Session Chair – Serena D’Alessandro, *FSU PhD Candidate*

*Joel T. Bowers – University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa*

*Jayne Horne – Lindenwood University*

*Jessica Braum – Temple University*

### Closing Remarks

Lorenzo Pericolo



Yaxchilan Lintel 48. Photo by Jorge Pérez de Lara.

# Keynote Lecture



## Keynote Speaker Dr. Claudia Brittenham

*Professor of Art History and Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity  
Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies  
University of Chicago*

### **"Telling Time: Periodization, Analogy, and Mesoamerican History"**

As art historians, one of our fundamental tasks is making sense of change over time. We divide history into different phases and assign works of art to them. But the ways that we name and divide time into periods are never neutral. In Mesoamerica, the chronological frameworks used over the past two centuries have created various analogies with Old World cultures, from Egypt and Babylonia to Classical Greece. Our current system stresses a kind of sine-wave narrative of progress, where things start in the Preclassic, reach their peak in the Classic, and then decline in the Postclassic. But are there other ways to think about the Mesoamerican past? Could we instead see the regional styles of the Classic period as a moment of isolationism and xenophobia that interrupts a striving for interconnection throughout the region and beyond? How might Mesoamerican people themselves have narrated their own histories? What is at stake when we tell stories about time?

*Claudia Brittenham is Mary R. Morton Professor in the Department of Art History and the Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity at the University of Chicago. She is also Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Her research focuses on the art of Mesoamerica, with interests in the materiality of art and the politics of style. She is the author of Unseen Art: Making, Vision, and Power in Ancient Mesoamerica; The Murals of Cacaxtla: The Power of Painting in Ancient Central Mexico; The Spectacle of the Late Maya Court: Reflections on the Murals of Bonampak (with Mary Miller); and Veiled Brightness: A History of Ancient Maya Color (with Stephen Houston and colleagues). Her next book focuses on the interconnectedness of the ancient Mesoamerican world.*



**Izunna Sanctus Ugwu**

University of Delaware

**Enduring Feathers: Material Embodiment of Power, Spirituality, and Colonial Legacy in Igbo Traditional Regalia**

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In Igbo art and kingship traditions centered on the Nri Kingdom—the cradle of Igbo civilization—feathers have long functioned as potent markers of political authority, ancestral legitimacy, and divine embodiment. The Igbo-Ukwu excavations (c. 880–1160 CE) reveal the early ritual use of *ugo* (eagle) feathers in leadership regalia, yet the material and symbolic significance of Igbo feathered crowns remains understudied. This paper offers a historical and material analysis of feathered crowns as an enduring cultural practice, tracing their cosmological meanings and transformations from precolonial sacred kingship through colonial disruption and Christianization to contemporary practice. Drawing on archaeology, ethnography, art history, and early colonial photography, the study examines how feathers embodied divine authority transmitted from *Chukwu* (the creator) to kings and titled leaders. Colonial interventions altered materials and visual forms but did not obliterate ritual significance;

instead, feathered crowns remain dynamic sites of cultural negotiation and continuity.

*Izunna Sanctus Ugwu is a PhD student in Art History at the University of Delaware, specializing in the visual and material cultures of early modern and modern Africa and the African diaspora. His research examines a wide range of artistic forms—including painting, sculpture, architecture, and photography—across African and diasporic contexts. Through visual and material culture, Ugwu investigates the socio-cultural, political, and religious lives of African societies, as well as representations of slavery and colonialism, and the African presence in American artistic expressions.*



**Santana Nash**

Georgia Institute of Technology

**What Must Burn? Creative Destruction in the Art of Kerry James Marshall**

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This paper argues that destruction functions as a generative aesthetic force in the work of contemporary Black painter Kerry James Marshall. Situating Marshall within a lineage of Western and anti-colonial theories of creative destruction, I bring together the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, F. T. Marinetti, and Franz Fanon to articulate a specifically Black theory of creative destruction. While Nietzsche and Marinetti frame destruction as a condition for renewal, Fanon grounds it in the lived realities of anti-colonial struggle and revolutionary remaking of identity. Through close readings of Marshall's works *Black Painting* (2003) and *Untitled (Studio)* (2014), I demonstrates how Marshall transforms European theories of destruction into a Black aesthetic strategy. Read together, the works visualize a movement from refusal and obscurity to reconstruction and creative agency, revealing destruction as a necessary condition for Black cultural presence and renewal.

*Santana Nash is an art historian and arts professional dedicated to expanding access to visual arts and cultural engagement. She serves as Artistic Residency and Student Programming Coordinator at Georgia Tech, developing initiatives that connect students and the Atlanta community. Santana is also an Adjunct Professor of the Arts in Atlanta. She holds a master's degree in Art History from Georgia State University and is pursuing a PhD in Visual Arts through the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts with a concentration in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Art Theory.*



**Thaís Wenstrom**

The University of Utah

**Jonathas de Andrade's *Eu, mestiço*:  
Visual Strategies of Remediation and  
Immediacy**

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After World War II, UNESCO launched projects to combat racism, reflecting the political and social tensions of the period. The 1952 book *Race and Class in Rural Brazil: A UNESCO Study* by American anthropologist Charles Wagley resulted from this initiative. In response, Jonathas de Andrade created *Eu, mestiço* (Me, mestizo) (2017), a work that engages critically with Wagley's ethnographic study. Through his series of photographs paired with selected words from Wagley's text, de Andrade transforms the study into visual form, prompting viewers to confront reactions ranging from curiosity and surprise to discomfort. *Eu, mestiço* illuminates how race and class were framed within mid-twentieth-century anthropological discourse and invites viewers to reconsider how these representations continue to shape contemporary understandings of race in Brazil. The work challenges conventional viewing through strategies of remediation and immediacy, reworking models of biologically fixed notions of race.

*Thaís Wenstrom is a graduate student in Art History at The University of Utah. She earned her bachelor's degree in Art History and Visual Culture from Michigan State University, where she worked as a Curatorial Assistant at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum. She currently serves as a graduate teaching assistant in the Art History department. Originally from Brazil, her research and curatorial interests focus on modern and contemporary Latin American art, with particular attention to race and visual culture in Brazil.*



**Madison Gilmore-Duffey**

Florida State University

**From Egypt to Constantinople:  
Recontextualizing the Obelisk of  
Theodosius**

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The Obelisk of Theodosius, constructed in the fifteenth century BCE in Thebes, Egypt, was relocated to the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 390 CE and placed on a newly constructed base. Although the monument is well-known, scholars have given little focus to the obelisk's pre-Constantinopolitan history or the broader imperial context. I argue that Late Antique knowledge of the historical context of the obelisk—particularly its origin site—is central to understanding its function in the context of Theodosius' (r. 379–395 CE) imperial ideology. For some contemporaneous viewers, the monument expressed imperial victory in relation to the rebellions and religious unrest in Egypt, serving as a demonstration of imperial dominion over the region and as a reminder of the ways in which the empire and emperor would continue as *invictus/invictum*. Ultimately, I consider how one aspect of an antiquity—its origin—could be invoked to convey multivalent messages within Late Antique Constantinople.

*Madison Gilmore-Duffey is a PhD candidate in the Department of Art History at Florida State University specializing in Late Antique material culture. Her dissertation, "The Classical Past in the Art of Late Antique Byzantium," reconsiders the monuments brought to the Hippodrome of Constantinople in the fourth century and argues that their assemblage functioned as a deliberate act of narrative construction.*



**Molly Mapstone**

Temple University

**Collective Engagement and the Politics of Access: The Material and Narrative Life of *Étant donnés***

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After unveiling a permanent installation by Marcel Duchamp without announcement on July 7, 1969, the Philadelphia Museum of Art tripled its ticket sales. Documents mined from the museum's archive attest to a wide range of viewer experiences with *Étant donnés*: 1. *La chute d'eau* 2. *Le gaz d'éclairage* and reactions directed toward the museum. Chewing gum, "nose grease," and phonebooks turned into stepstools animate the ongoing social history of *Étant donnés* as viewers negotiated issues of access and disability through the installation. Unveiled after the Civil Rights Act and before the Americans with Disabilities Act, *Étant donnés* materialized an ongoing debate regarding who belongs in which spaces and under what conditions they might be allowed in. In this paper, I analyze the role of viewers in determining the form, appearance, and narrative of *Étant donnés* to demonstrate their function as a critical yet frequently ignored aspect of artmaking itself.

*Molly Mapstone is a PhD candidate studying American art at Temple University. Her dissertation, "Mediating Vision and Negotiating Narratives: Contemporary U.S. Installation Art and Its Expanding Publics, 1966–2019," investigates key works of installation art from a perspective that centers viewers and uses media created by the viewing public as evidence. Her research has been supported by the Getty Research Institute, Harvard Art Museums, and the Society of Winterthur Fellows.*



**Artie Foster**

University of Illinois Chicago

**"A Very Different Light": Frank Bowling at the Limits of Formalism and Biography**

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There has long been a question about how the Guyanese-British painter Frank Bowling figures into the history of Euro-American avant-garde painting. His 1970s works have been described as "High Modernist" for their self-reflexive interest in facture. Bowling favored these "boundaries of formalism," as he called them, because they enabled him "to test and ultimately prove [his] own freedom." Yet, during a 1989 visit to Guyana, Bowling was gripped by a revelation: "the light in my pictures is a very different light," he realized, "the light is about Guyana. It is a constant." Henceforth, Bowling openly embraced associations between form and biography, imbuing the latter with near-totalizing power.

This paper explores what Bowling gained and lost with this abrupt turn towards biographical explication. It examines how his oscillation between these competing tendencies foreshadowed the struggle faced by many artists seeking to balance their personal aesthetic expression with their broader political commitments.

*Artie Foster is a PhD candidate in the Art History department at the University of Illinois at Chicago, specializing in modern and contemporary Euro-American art. He is especially interested in the material and cultural changes painting underwent from the 1960s to the 1990s—wherein issues of form, identity, representation, and perception were hotly debated—and the aesthetic and political shifts these changes signal. Artie is currently writing a dissertation about the work of painter Frank Bowling and his anachronistic embrace of modernist formalism after 1970 as a case study.*



**Raigen Sumrall**

Florida State University

**The Page as Stage: Augustin Hirschvogel's Dramatic Recasting of Geometric Figures and the Performance of Configurational Thinking in Early Modern Geometric Treatises**

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In 1541, renowned artist and cartographer Augustin Hirschvogel published a book on geometry which contained only diagrams and geometric figures, with no textual instruction for how to use them. In contrast to earlier publications, most notably Albrecht Dürer's *Underweysung der messung* (1525), which placed geometric images between paragraphs and pages of text, Hirschvogel was eager to publish a book that was of use to artists who could efficiently study its figures without having to read a text. Hirschvogel's book presented new formal interpretations of geometry, which freed geometric figures of their symbolic and cosmological meanings, and opened up opportunities for artists to invent new geometric figures, as well as new practical applications for the study through the exploration of three-dimensional space in images.

*Raigen Sumrall is a doctoral student at Florida State University in the Art History department. She studies printed media and drawings produced in Germany in the early modern period. Her research focuses on the artistic depictions of math and the proto sciences, and the creative endeavors to visually define geometry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She recently presented a paper on Lorenz Stoer's watercolor illustrations of geometric objects at the Newberry Library Multidisciplinary Graduate Conference in Premodern Studies.*



**Ana Rodríguez Castillo**

Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid, Spain

**Green, a Modern (Re)invention: Pigments, Practice, and the Material Limits that Shaped Artistic Languages**

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Although green dominates the natural world, few natural substances yield a permanent and satisfactory green pigment. In Europe, meaningful advances in green pigments emerged only after the Scientific Revolution. Focusing on a single color and its technical challenges, this project investigates how material constraints and production systems shaped artistic practice and visual language. The research combines archival study, material analysis, and hands-on reconstruction of historical pigments and painting media. Recreating documented recipes with period-appropriate materials provides insight into their behavior and workability while revealing the practical limitations that shaped historical artistic decision-making and workshop practice. These technical challenges are examined alongside broader social and economic developments, including the expansion of artistic education, the textile industry, and the professionalization and globalization of the colorant trade. I argue that material limitation was a structuring force in art history, shaping genre hierarchies, market dynamics,

artistic labor, and the symbolic meanings of color.

*Ana Rodríguez Castillo is a PhD candidate in Art History at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid, where her research examines materiality, pigments, and the technical limits shaping artistic practice and color use. She holds an MA in Art History Research from UNED and an MFA and BA in Fine Arts from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Ana has presented internationally and was awarded the 2025 Jim Falls Graduate Student Paper Prize by the Mid-America Medieval Association. Her professional experience includes museum research, curatorial practice, and digital exhibition development at the University of Pittsburgh and The Frick Pittsburgh Museum.*



**Joel T. Bowers**

University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

### **Constructing a Sodomite: Sexual and Moral Anxieties in Theodor de Bry's Iconography**

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This paper examines Plate 22 from Volume IV of Theodor de Bry's *India Occidentalis* (1594), depicting Vasco Núñez de Balboa ordering indigenous men accused of sodomy to be torn apart by dogs. In early modern Europe, sodomy was widely understood as an “unspeakable vice” requiring public eradication through bodily destruction. Situating the plate within sixteenth-century Protestant and Catholic discourses—particularly Spain and the Netherlands—I show how De Bry drew on contemporary iconography of sexual deviance and witchcraft to moralize colonial violence. Given this is the earliest visual depiction of “New World” sodomites, the image projects European sexual anxieties onto indigenous people, transforming imperial domination into religious cleansing that both repelled and fascinated early modern viewers. Rather than reading the image solely as evidence of European brutality, I argue that it functioned as a morally sanctioned spectacle of divine punishment.

*Joel Bowers earned his Bachelor of Arts in Art History from Roanoke College in 2019. From 2021 to 2023, he served as a curatorial assistant, art handler, and educator at the Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke, VA. Joel received his Master of Arts in Art History from the University of Alabama in December and is currently pursuing a PhD. Joel's research examines violence in Theodor de Bry's India Occidentalis, investigating how De Bry edited and authored images and texts to construct knowledge of the “New World.”*



**Jayme Horne**

Lindenwood University

### **Third Gender Expression at Copán: Reconsidering Stela H**

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In art, the Maya elite recorded their legacies, and Stela H from Copán is considered one of the most beautifully crafted examples of a ruler's legacy. Stela H was commissioned alongside six other sculptures depicting King Uaxaclajuun Ub'aah K'awiil, also known as Eighteen-Rabbit. Stela H challenges the ways in which scholars have conceptualized gender in Mesoamerica, as it depicts Eighteen-Rabbit in feminine attire. Scholars have long recognized Stela H as an example of cross-dressing, an act in which a king or queen assumes the garb of a deity of the opposite sex. However, cross-dressing does not account for the blending of masculine and feminine attributes. Instead, Stela H depicts a third gender identity. Through an analysis of the seven stelae informed by Maya ideology, this reinterpretation offers a new understanding of how the ancient Maya may have conceptualized gender and rulership.

*Jayme Horne is a Master of Arts candidate at Lindenwood University, studying Art History and Visual Culture. His work focuses on ancient Mesoamerica, with an emphasis on depictions of ancient Maya gender and sexuality. His master's thesis, “Ambiguous Bodies: Third Gender Expression in the Ancient Maya World,” explored third gender expression in art across the Classic Maya world through an interdisciplinary approach that combined art-historical practices with anthropology, archaeology, and gender studies.*



**Jessica Braum**

Temple University

## **Mapping the Hyperhorizon: Relational Visuality in Artistic Depictions of the Caribbean**

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This paper examines how visual representations of the Caribbean negotiate scale, perspective, and intimacy through the concepts of relational visuality and the hyperhorizon. The hyperhorizon denotes an expanded visual and epistemic field that exceeds colonial limits of perspective, foregrounding implicit contexts, multidimensional relations, and non-linear temporalities shaping Caribbean experience. Building on Husserl's concept of Horizont, Édouard Glissant's Poetics of Relation, and relational aesthetics, I trace a shift from externally imposed, abstract modes of seeing to situated, embodied visual knowledge. Through case studies spanning colonial imagery and modern and contemporary Caribbean and diasporic art—including works by Wifredo Lam, Lisa C. Soto, Asilia Guillén, and Veronica Ryan—I contrast colonial visual regimes that sever place from context with practices that enact relational specificity. These works visualize entangled temporalities, shifting legibilities, and diasporic

memory, ultimately demonstrating how Caribbean artists reclaim visual sovereignty and articulate a more expansive epistemology of islandhood.

*Jessica Braum (she/her) holds an MA in Printmaking from the University of the Arts, London, and is currently a doctoral candidate in Art History at Temple University. Her dissertation examines Kim Lim's print and sculptural practices through decolonial frameworks, reassessing postwar British and Southeast Asian art histories. Engaging feminist theory and multidisciplinary methods, she studies artists working across geographic and cultural contexts. Jessica serves as co-chair of the College Art Association's Committee on Research and Scholarship and as Graduate Representative for the Society of Contemporary Art Historians. Her writing has appeared in Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas, ASAP/Journal, Sequitor, and Passage.*

## Thank You

Our special thanks to the student speakers who made time to share their research with us, and to our keynote speaker, Claudia Brittenham, for presenting her engaging and influential research.

Many thanks to the members of the Graduate Symposium Committee of the Department of Art History and their advisors, Jean Hudson and Lorenzo Pericolo, whose assistance was essential for the success of the symposium.

The Committee would like to thank James Frazier, Dean of the College of Fine Arts; and Sheri Patton, Art History business administrator, for their generous assistance. We also appreciate the support of the FSU Congress of Graduate Students. We are especially indebted to the officers of the Art History Association – Taylor Nelson, Jolie Rambin, and Sam Sonken – for their contributions to the success of the event.

### Günther Stamm Prize

The Department faculty evaluates the student papers on the basis of originality and presentation, and recognizes one participant with the Günther Stamm Prize, in memory of a founding professor of the Department of Art History.

### *Athantor*

Papers presented at our symposium are considered for inclusion in *Athantor*, a publication for art history graduate students sponsored by the Department of Art History and published by FSU Libraries. *Athantor* is indexed by the Bibliography of the History of Art and is held in the collections of research libraries worldwide.

### Symposium Committee

Isabel Brady  
Quentin Clark  
Serena D'Alessandro  
Hudson Kauffman  
Anna Vincent

