

40

ART HISTORY  
GRADUATE  
SYMPOSIUM

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

MARCH 1-2, 2024

WJB 2005



**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY**

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
1019 WILLIAM JOHNSTON BUILDING  
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32306-1233

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



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**2005 WILLIAM JOHNSTON BUILDING**

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Florida State University  
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## Friday, March 1, 2024

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1:30pm / WJB 2005

### Welcome

Emmaleigh Huston

*FSU PhD Student & Editor, Athanor XL*

1:45–4:15pm / WJB 2005

### Session I: Community Spaces in Focus

Session Chair – Emmaleigh Huston

*Andrew Hansung Park – UCLA*

*Emily Morgan – University of Illinois at Chicago*

### Break

*Ivy Borden – University of Alabama*

*Emily Oxford-Pickeral – University of Denver*

4:15pm / WJB Lobby

### Coffee Break

5:00pm / WJB 2005

### Welcome & Acknowledgements

Lorenzo Pericolo

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

*FSU Department of Art History*

### Keynote

#### Dr. Richard J. Powell

*John Spencer Bassett Professor of Art and Art History*

*Duke University*

“Blackbeats: Cubism Reimagined”

## Saturday, March 2, 2024

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8:00am / WJB 2020 Art & Design Library

### Breakfast

9:00am / WJB 2038

Speakers meet with Madison Gilmore-Duffey, *Editor, Athanor XLI*

9:30–11:45am / WJB 2005

### Session II: Meaning and Materiality

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

*Danelle Bernten – Florida State University*

*Sydney Herrick – University of North Carolina Chapel Hill*

### Break

*Michaela Peine – University of St. Thomas*

*Naren Gao – University of Pittsburgh*

12:00–1:30pm

### Lunch on your own / FSU Student Union

1:30–3:00pm / WJB 2005

### Session III: Navigating Identity

Session Chair – Madison Gilmore-Duffey, *FSU PhD Candidate*

*Rachel Ciampoli – University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill*

*Vanessa Gillette – University of Florida*

*Damon Reed – University of Florida*

### Closing Remarks

Lorenzo Pericolo

# Schedule of Events



Nina Chanel Abney. *Boobie*. 2019.

On the cover: Mickalene Thomas. *Portrait of Qusuquzah #6*. 2015.

# Keynote Lecture



## Keynote Speaker

### Dr. Richard J. Powell

*John Spencer Bassett Professor of Art and Art History, Duke University*

## “Blackbeats: Cubism Reimagined”

In this talk, Dr. Powell explores the art of Cubism, but through an African American aesthetic and historical filter. The works under consideration – from the early twentieth to the early twenty-first centuries – are not derived from academic repudiations but, rather, are indented to the aural resonances and cultural effects of ragtime, jazz, hip-hop, and other Black performing arts traditions. Selected artists have employed geometric patterning and collage sensibilities that not only plumb Cubism’s well documented strategies and theoretical formations for rethinking pictorialism, but weigh the value of universal signs and imaging systems and, as artistic creations of an era of profound social realignments, probe modern art’s contested identities.

*Dr. Powell is a leading scholar in the field of African American art and culture. He teaches courses in American art, the arts of the African Diaspora, and contemporary visual studies; he has written extensively on topics ranging from primitivism to postmodernism, including Homecoming: The Art and Life of William H. Johnson (1991), Black Art: A Cultural History (1997, 2002 & 2021), Cutting a Figure: Fashioning Black Portraiture (2008), and Going There: Black Visual Satire (2020).*



## Andrew Hansung Park

University of California, Los Angeles

### Improvisation at Artpark: Composing Sam Gilliam's *Custom Road Slide*

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In 1977, African American artist Sam Gilliam (1933-2022) orchestrated a constantly changing, month-long event along the Niagara River Gorge in Lewiston, New York. Named *Custom Road Slide*, the dynamic assemblage of fabric, rocks, and wood was radically open to the public for Q&A and to the ecosystem's high winds. Gilliam's improvisatory approach, stemming from his knowledge of postwar jazz, is this paper's primary focus. I also consider the unique patronage of Artpark, a state park that brought some of the country's most advanced art to Western New York in the 1970s and 80s. My argument recasts the artist as a musically inclined "composer" who worked with all media, contrary to his general reputation as a painter. Accordingly, contemporaneous improvisations by the saxophonist Ornette Coleman and violinist Laurie Anderson are brought in to help contextualize Gilliam's process-based art.

*Andrew Hansung Park is an art history PhD candidate at UCLA, where his research explores the intersections between modern/contemporary art and histories of sound across North America and East Asia. Also active as a composer and violinist of experimental music, he has worked at the Getty Research Institute, Glenstone, and Walters Art Museum. His research has been supported by the Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies, and Andrew is currently writing a dissertation on the improvisatory art of Sam Gilliam. He completed his bachelor's degree at the University of Pennsylvania as a Benjamin Franklin Scholar in 2018.*



## Emily Morgan

University of Illinois at Chicago

### New Orleans in the Anthropocene: Rontherin Ratliff and the Ethics of Salvage

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In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans artist Rontherin Ratliff relives the process of rescue and preservation through his 2012 installation work *Things That Float*. His incorporation of found materials within this piece connects the nautical history of the term *salvage* with the foreshadowing of the climate crisis. Although his work expresses a personal lived memory of home within Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, it continues to showcase the more complex political and economic context of Anthropocene disasters. This project expands upon the question of salvage by intertwining the critical approach to *Salvage Accumulation* by Anna Tsing and the Archeological Salvage case study of the Merowe Dam in northern Sudan. These approaches are juxtaposed with Ratliff's artistic methods in order to explore the broader implications of Salvage processes.

*Emily Morgan is a current PhD student in Art History at the University of Illinois at Chicago studying race, gender, and sexuality in the art and visual culture of the American South. She received her BA in Art History and English from the University of Alabama in 2021 and her MA in Art History from University of Illinois at Chicago in 2023.*



**Ivy Borden**

University of Alabama

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**Creative Care: Artistic Action in the Stop Cop City Movement**

The Weelaunee Forest, also known as the South River or Atlanta Forest, is currently receiving national attention as protestors from the Stop Cop City (SCC) movement attempt to protect the land from being cleared for the development of a large-scale police training facility. Relying on a combination of existing scholarly literature, recent news articles, and two personally collected interviews, my research investigates the role of artistic and creative forms of activism, resistance, and community support in SCC movement. I apply ethics of care to this research by focusing on the ways artistic activism encourages multiplicity of perspectives, responds to psychological needs, and facilitates alternative forms of communication that bridge distances of difference. Ultimately, this paper advocates for the irreplaceable importance of creative expression and artistic meaning making in local efforts to resist cycles of institutionalized oppression.

*Ivy Borden is a graduate student at the University of Alabama in the department of Art History with a focus in contemporary art from the U.S. South. Originally from Birmingham, AL, Ivy has had a longstanding interest in the complexities of Southern culture and received her bachelor's degree in 2023 as a double major in Art History and Southern Studies. Ivy intends to graduate with her MA in May of 2024 and is currently working on her master's thesis, which focuses on the use of kudzu in contemporary Southern art.*



**Emily Oxford-Pickeral**

University of Denver

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**Creating Livability: Reclaiming Urban Space in Contemporary Barcelona**

This paper analyzes how contemporary residents of Barcelona, Spain, make claims to the space they live in. Barcelona has had a long architectural history, with the city undergoing many changes. A city has no stable identity, and in Barcelona particularly, that identity is fluid and changing. How residents express that identity emerges in many ways, but this paper will focus on three visual strategies. First, residents are reclaiming natural spaces by resurrecting overbuilt courtyards in the center of city blocks. Second, people are marking their identity on architecture with graffiti. Finally, photographers, bloggers, and videographers all document and publish their work to claim space in Barcelona and assert their relevance and existence through digital documentation. There is an art in living, an art in understanding spaces, and this paper attempts to highlight the visual and structural changes residents make to understand and appreciate a unique city.

*Emily Oxford-Pickeral is a second-year master's student in art history and museum studies at the University of Denver. She received her bachelor's degree from Florida State University in 2021 and will graduate with her masters in 2024. Her research focuses on the intersection between urban planning, public architecture, and art.*



**Danelle Bernten**  
Florida State University

**Illicit Possessions: Coded Argent  
Automation on Eighteenth-Century  
Black Necks**

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This essay examines the overt and covert exhibition of European colonial violence on the silver collared necks of Black male children portrayed as enslaved workers in French aristocratic and haute bourgeois portraits by Philippe Vignon and Nicolas de Largillière. I argue that the collar portrays practices of human trafficking and the illegal disregard of Louis XIV's 1685 Code Noir. More scholarship is needed on the actual material culture of these silver slave collars utilized on African or Caribbean subjects in elite households as visible instruments of illicit ownership and mechanization of the body. Since slavery was not permitted on French mainland soil, the use of the silver slave collar on a Black child in European households depicts a desire to "tame" or "mechanize" the Black body for full control, when the body is in fact legally free. The collars depicted on the necks on Black youth thus served as emblems of discipline and restriction, highlighting the lack of true liberty of the Black body on French mainland soil.

*Danelle Bernten is a PhD student in the Department of Art History at Florida State University. Her research interests are modern and contemporary African American art, art of the African diaspora, and Southern Art. Danelle received a BA from Princeton University and an MA in Art History from Louisiana State University. Danelle has been awarded the spring 2024 Martin Luther King, Jr. Book Award, Helen J. Beard Conference Travel Grant, and CIHA 2024 Travel Fellowship to Lyons, France. She has presented papers nationally on Black art at Mercer University and the University of Washington.*



**Sydney Herrick**  
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

**Breaking Chains, Forging Beauty:  
Redefining African Jewelry Design  
Through the Artistry of Emefa Cole**

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Within prevailing art historical discourse, contemporary African jewelry remains overlooked, primarily due to long histories of exoticization and jewelry's association with craft. This paper focuses on the work of British-Ghanian jewelry designer Emefa Cole, examining how her utilization of sticky materials, referential designs, and diverse display methods disrupts these conventional paradigms and position her work as fertile ground for exploring critical theoretical frameworks like Afrofuturism and Black Futurity. This paper positions contemporary African jewelry as a medium ripe for in-depth art historical and theoretical investigation, highlighting a significant void in the field and advocating for a renewed emphasis on jewelry as an autonomous art form capable of enhancing broader understandings of art, culture, and individual expression.

*Sydney Herrick is a merit scholar at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and is currently pursuing her master's degree in art and art history under the mentorship of Dr. Victoria Rovine. She specializes in contemporary African and African Diaspora arts, with an emphasis on gender dynamics, fashion, and jewelry design. Her notable publications include "Kara Walker, African/American" and "Performing Gender in African Masquerade." Moreover, she contributed to Dr. Jordan Fenton's monograph, Masquerade and Money in Urban Nigeria: The Case of Calabar.*



**Michaela Peine**

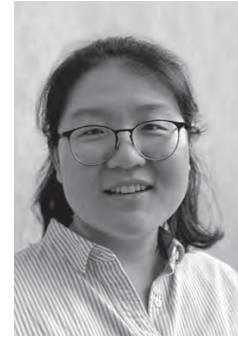
University of St. Thomas

**Tangible Devotion: A Tactile Understanding of Fra Angelico's *Virgin Enthroned***

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During his transition from Florence to Rome in the late 1440s, Fra Angelico painted a small, octagonal, double-sided panel: *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints Peter, Paul, and George, Four Angels, and a Donor*. This panel is not a static art piece; rather, its physical qualities reveal that it is meant to be held closely, turned over, and passed from hand to hand. By understanding the tactile qualities of this painting and imagining the spatial and physical environment it would have inhabited, it is possible to examine the psychological and spiritual narratives within it. Through this methodology I seek to “embody” the piece, understanding its spiritual impact through its sensory qualities. Activated by the physical presence of the viewer, this tiny panel encapsulates the complex relationship between art, devotion, civic engagement, and the gendered gaze in quattrocento Italy.

*Michaela Peine received her BA in English and Studio Art from Hillsdale College, specializing in oil painting and portraiture. She is pursuing an MA at the University of St. Thomas studying Art History with a certificate in Museum Studies. Her research is focused on a contextualized and embodied approach to Italian Renaissance art, as well as decolonial educational practices in national museums.*



**Naren Gao**

University of Pittsburgh

**Ritual Sculpture and the Materiality of *Jiaoyi* (Folding Chair): Monumentalizing Space in the Mongol Empire**

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In the Mongol Empire, how did the materiality and design of the folding chair affect human physical posture, which signals social status? How was the folding chair used by Mongol rulers to project imperial power? This paper studies three sculptures of seated figures made of marble between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, discovered at a historical ritual site near the Mongol imperial palace, Shangdu. The carved relief of joint points on the cross legs of the chair suggests that it may have been a folding chair. Despite the permanent marble medium, the foldable chair was not designed for a permanent location, spotlighting a paradox: the juxtaposition of permanence and portability in ritual monuments featuring the carved relief of the foldable chair. The paradox demonstrates the transformation of materiality from movable wooden furniture to an immobile artistic form, which in turn displays the immovable political sovereignty of the Mongol Empire.

*Naren Gao is a PhD student in the History of Art and Architecture Department at the University of Pittsburgh. She studies art of the Mongol Empire between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Her research focuses on visual and material culture, particularly the decorative arts, among Inner Asian ethnic, linguistic, and sociopolitical groups and institutions. She is interested in the transcultural exchange among different ethnic groups in which distinct aesthetics, techniques of craft, and cultural values were transmitted through the medium of art objects and yet also reinterpreted in different cultural environments.*





**Rachel Ciampoli**

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

**“The Indigenous Posey of the Soil:”  
Eastman Johnson’s Maple Sugar  
Paintings and the Aesthetics of Erasure**

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Between 1861 and 1865, American genre painter Eastman Johnson produced roughly twenty-five oil sketches in preparation for an ultimately unfinished master work depicting New Englanders engaged in the harvest and production of maple sugar. Although hailed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a potential domestic cash crop and a wholesome foil to the unsavory politics of cane sugar production, northeastern maple sugar was entangled in contentious Indigenous-settler relationships. Using Sara Ahmed’s theory of “stickiness” as a framework, I argue that Johnson’s sentimental and homogenously White characterization of maple sugaring should be understood in light of the erasure of Native American cultural practices and Johnson’s own relationship to Indigenous communities. Recovering Indigenous associations with the practice of maple sugaring engages in the very process of untangling—perhaps unsticking—historical assumptions and perpetuated myths and undermines the integrity of a single-origin narrative, thereby complicating typical expectations of place and people.

*Rachel Ciampoli is a doctoral student in the department of Art and Art History at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill specializing in nineteenth-century art of the United States. Her dissertation, supervised by Dr. Maggie Cao, proposes a critical reinvestigation of Eastman Johnson’s oeuvre. Her undergraduate honors thesis examined antebellum urban ecology, public parks development, and racial politics through the previously unexplored painting “Servants at a Pump” by Italian-American artist Nicolino Calyo. Before joining her PhD program, Rachel served as an educator at the National Museum of African American History and Culture.*



**Vanessa Gillette**

University of Florida

**Crowned in Paradox: Symbolism and  
Creole Nunhood in Maria Josepha Lina’s  
Crowned-Nun Portrait**

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The portrait of María Josepha Lina, a Creole nun of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, embodies the conventions of the “crowned-nun” genre that flourished in New Spain during the late colonial period. Scholars claim these opulent paintings were entangled in the eighteenth-century *vida común* reforms that aimed to restrict indulgent behaviors within colonial convents. Despite taking vows of poverty and obedience, Conceptionists were not known for austerity. María Josepha’s portrait appears to epitomize the Conceptionists’ affinity for the decadence the reforms opposed. However, an examination of La Purísima Concepción, the convent María Josepha professed in and founded, reveals her vision for a reformed institution strictly adhering to *vida común*. How can we reconcile María Josepha’s ascetic mind and vow of poverty with her sumptuous clothing? This paper attempts to navigate this paradox, framing the founder’s image as a promotion of Creole prestige and female submission to male authority.

*Vanessa Gillette is a doctoral student studying the arts of New Spain at the University of Florida. Vanessa earned an MA in Art History (2022) and a BA in English, Writing Studies (2020) from the University of South Florida. With a background in global early modern studies, she is drawn to cross-cultural translations of material culture and to the tensions, contacts, and identities born from Spanish colonialism. In her specialty area, Vanessa is looking at the material culture of the New Spanish convent and visual articulations of Creole identity.*



**Damon Reed**

University of Florida

**“I Live Life in the Margins:”  
Considering the Work of Tamara de  
Lempicka as an Avant-Garde Artist**

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Recent art historical scholarship has attempted to critically consider the work of queer and women artists who have been excluded from the dominant history of art, as is the case with Tamara de Lempicka. Born into a wealthy family in Warsaw, she experienced class privilege at a young age and with it, a desire to remain a member of upper-class society. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, she relocated to Paris, where she was determined to rise the socio-economic ranks of society. To do this, she began painting portraits of various members of Parisian society. This paper will explore the ways that portraiture facilitated de Lempicka’s contemporary success yet simultaneously marginalized her in art historical discussions. Moreover, de Lempicka’s status as a bisexual woman, an immigrant, and a person with conservative politics and capitalist ambitions further alienated her from the histories of modernism.

*Damon Reed is a Ph.D. student in Art History at the University of Florida under the supervision of Dr. Rachel Silveri. He holds an M.A. from Virginia Commonwealth University and a B.A. from Randolph-Macon College. His research focuses on twentieth century European and Latin American art, visual culture, and film, particularly on the intersections of marginalized identities, visual representation, and totalitarianism. More broadly, he is interested in feminist and queer discourses in modern and contemporary art.*

## Thank You

Our special thanks to the student speakers who made time to share their research with us, and to our keynote speaker, Professor Richard Powell, for presenting his engaging and influential work.

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 are also indebted to the officers of the Art History Association, Olivia Hackney, Rachael Fulmer, and Francesca Kern, 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. *Athantor* is indexed by the Bibliography of the History of Art and is held in the collections of research libraries worldwide.

### Symposium Committee

Brooke Belcher  
Hudson Kauffman  
Tanya Pattison  
Jessica Salaun  
Emmaleigh Huston  
Madison Gilmore-Duffey  
Serena D'Alessandro

