



# Year In Review 2010–2011



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Detail of "Good Catch"  
advertisement, 1965.  
Herbert Matter. ■



## Director's Welcome

As the BGC approaches its twentieth birthday, it seems appropriate to create a new forum in which we can communicate with our friends, colleagues, and well-wishers in the wider world. As the institution has matured, its teaching, gallery, and research arms have pursued ever more ambitious programming. It has been a particular pleasure to observe this flourishing and to look back on the distance traveled in such a short time toward the original goal of creating a center for the historical study of things of all sorts, both art objects and objects of daily life. But a consequence of this flourishing has been that those who know our Gallery often do not know about the activities of our Research Institute, and those who know us through our MA and PhD teaching programs may not know about our Gallery, or about our innovative exhibition-related education programs. It is to provide a common point of access into all the varied activities of this institute that this publication is intended.

At the heart of our project is thinking. Our faculty and curatorial staff are engaged in pursuing their own lines of inquiry deep into terrain that speaks to them about what is significant. What I have come to especially prize at the BGC is the way in which scholars from a variety of backgrounds and with very different research interests have created a common intellectual approach, which is registered in the tenor of questions asked at our Wednesday night seminars, in the annual course listings, and in the convergence between our exhibition programs and teaching. "Out of many one" is a familiar enough phrase, but how many academic institutions, of whatever size, can honestly boast of having a "house style"? Yet, anyone who reads this annual or, better, spends any time in our buildings on West 86th Street will soon pick this up.

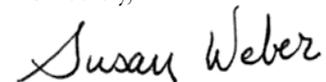
This annual looks at the year past. But if I am allowed to look ahead, I would call your attention to our renowned Gallery exhibitions. This fall, our Main Gallery will open to a spectacular hats retrospective organized by Stephen Jones and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and following that will be a remarkable exhibition devoted to the American circus. The first full year of our new Focus Program—every semester there is a faculty-curated exhibition and another course beginning its evolution toward the Gallery—marks the arrival of Ivan Gaskell from

Harvard to oversee the project. The first volumes in our new book series, *Cultural Histories of the Material World*, will be published by University of Michigan Press in the spring of 2012. All of these initiatives emphasize our commitment to the study of our human heritage and confirm our resolve to be the leading center for the study of the cultural history of the material world.

What changes every year is the student body. I think I can honestly say that each year impresses me more than the next, and yet it is the achievements of those who graduate and go off to important positions in museums and academia that make me most proud.

I am happy that we can keep you informed through this new medium, and I look forward to seeing you in person on West 86th Street.

Sincerely,



Susan Weber  
*Founder and Director*



"Champion Vase,"  
Qing dynasty

## Degree Programs

The BGC offered a full slate of thirty-six courses to enrolled MA and PhD students over the last academic year. These ranged in subject matter from late antiquity to objects of the present day. Students explored architectural and furniture fragments at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Renaissance books, mid-twentieth-century textiles, the American home in the nineteenth century, the antiques trade, the arts and material culture of the Hispanic world, and design in Qing-period China, among many other fascinating offerings.

In addition to research seminars, students participated in three special seminars to produce future Focus Gallery exhibitions. These courses are designed as collaborative experiences led by a professor's research interests, and they will result in exhibitions on Christmas cards, fashion and theater from about 1780 to 1920, and the work of the collector and designer Georges Hoentschel. Aaron Glass taught a seminar based on his Focus Gallery exhibition on the native arts of the American Northwest Coast, which was then on view, and David Jaffe led a course on visualizing nineteenth-century New York with the New York Public Library. Two materials days gave BGC students site-specific, hands-on experience of materiality from the maker's perspective. In the fall, a group participated in a workshop on the art of glassblowing at Scanlan Glass in Brooklyn, and in the spring there was a day devoted to working with clay at Greenwich House Pottery in Manhattan.

The BGC is keen to give doctoral students opportunities to teach and to present their work. Amy Bogansky and Sonya Topolnisky, both currently enrolled doctoral candidates, assisted with the required two-semester survey, and Yenna Chan, another PhD candidate, offered a seminar on landscape and urbanism in the spring. The Doctoral Forum, an informal monthly meeting of enrolled PhD students, met ten times over the last year. Students presented and discussed research and circulated chapters from their dissertations. They also had a workshop on grants and a special session on biography led by Professor Pat Kirkham. Eleanor Dew represented the BGC at the annual Frick Symposium in April with a paper on early twentieth-century tax law and the international antiques trade.

The admissions season began with a series of three open houses in the fall. In January and February, applications were reviewed and selected candidates were interviewed for both MA and PhD degrees. The diversity of interests and the preparation demonstrated by the pool of candidates were excellent, and the BGC looks forward to welcoming a new incoming class in late August.





In addition to the wide scope of internships that MA students complete each year, the BGC has encouraged career development through workshops on resumé and c.v. writing, giving conference papers, and applying to PhD programs. Dean Elena Pinto Simon has initiated a career-development wiki site to post announcements of jobs, calls for papers, and useful information for current and former students.

Degree Programs ended the year with the annual Graduate Student Symposium, whose theme this year was Material Networks, Networked Materials. Entirely organized by current students under the guidance of Professor Deborah Krohn, the symposium showcased eight excellent papers, including those by enrolled MA student Einav Zamir and MA alumna Hi'ilei Julia Hobart. Finally, the first-year MA students spent ten days in early May in London studying modern and Chinese design, decorative arts, and material culture.

Amy F. Ogata  
*Chair of Academic Programs*

## Student Internships 2010 Academic Year

All MA Students must do an internship for which they receive three academic credits.

**Erin Allaire-Graham**  
David Webb, Inc.

**Sarah Brown-McLeod**  
The Frick Collection

**Richard Carroll**  
The Merchant's House  
Museum

**Martina D'Amato**  
The Frick Collection

**William DeGregorio**  
Museum of the City of  
New York

**Caitlin Dover**  
The New York Public  
Library

**Shoshana Greenwald**  
Liz O'Brien: Modern  
Design and Decorative  
Arts

**Alice Heinz**  
Metropolis Magazine

**Hannah Kinney**  
The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, Education  
Department

**Jay Lemire**  
Acanthus Press LLC

**Katrina London**  
Bartow-Pell Mansion  
Museum

**Whitney May**  
The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art

**Emily McGoldrick**  
American Museum of  
Natural History

**Sequoia Miller**  
The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art

**Rebecca Mir**  
The Brooklyn Museum  
of Art

**Ruth Osborne**  
Mount Vernon Hotel  
Museum & Garden

**Sara Spink**  
The Magazine Antiques  
and MODERN Magazine

**Elizabeth Vondran**  
The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art,  
Department of  
Asian Art

**Amber Winick**  
The Thomas Jefferson  
Foundation

**Einav Zamir**  
The Brooklyn Museum  
of Art

## BGC Degrees Granted, May 2011

### **Doctor of Philosophy**

Yumiko Yamamori, Yokohama, Japan

*A. A. Vantine and Company: Japanese Handcrafts for the American Consumer, 1895–1920*

### **Master of Philosophy**

Christine Erina Brennan, Geneseo, New York

*The Brummer Gallery and Its Impact on the Market for Medieval Art and Collectors in Twentieth-Century Paris and New York*

Yenna Chan, Ottawa, Canada

*Narrating Montreal: Critiques of Urban Renewal in the 1970s through Exhibition and Documentary Film*

Gabriel Max Goldstein, New York, New York

*'Look At It': Visuality, Materiality, and Belief in Jewish Ceremonial Objects*

Sonya Anne Topolnisky, Edmonton, Canada

*Westernwear and the Postwar American Lifestyle, 1945–1975*

### **Master of Arts**

Lucas Theo Baker, Norridgewock, Maine

*A Story around an Object?: Functions of Production Design in Jane Campion's The Piano*

Adrienne Jean Bateson, Santa Cruz, California

*Sofas of the American Empire: A Search for American Distinction*

Elizabeth Berszinn, New York, New York

*Collecting European Ceramics in Twentieth-Century America: R. Thornton Wilson at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*

Meaghan S. Cain, Larchmont, New York

*Appalachia in Scraps: Interpreting Five Scrapbooks from the Pi Beta Phi Settlement School, 1919–1941*

Elena M. Cordova, Brooklyn, New York

*Fashion and Futurism: Giacomo Balla and the Suit, 1913–1918*

Emily Partain Deason, Tampa, Florida

*Redeeming Value: A Discussion and Case Study of Salvage Culture in Brooklyn, New York*

Julia Elizabeth Domning, Houston, Texas

*Regional Characteristics in American Silver Tea Sets: New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, 1810–1830*

Kate Elizabeth Clough Fox, Washington, D.C.

*A Primitive Lure: The Sidney Lanier Camp, 1906–1940*

Berit A. Hoff, New York, New York

*Conversation Pits in Dialogue, 1953–1958: The Conversation Pits in the J. Irwin and Xenia S. Miller House and Joe Price Studio*

Alexandra F. Irving, Cambridge, Massachusetts

*Collective Creativity: Two Case Studies of Makers and Their Communal Living Environments in Providence, Rhode Island*

Mei-Ling Israel, New York, New York

*Learn to Draw with Jon Gnagy: The Legacy of America's First Television Artist*

Anna R. Kaplan, Buffalo, New York

*Kidrobot and the Designer Art Toy Phenomenon in the United States*

Rebecca D. Klassen, San Francisco, California

*Constructions: U.S. Fiber Artists and Pre-Columbian Peruvian Textiles*

Christian A. Larsen, New York, New York

*Módulo: Media, Modernism, and National Identity in Postwar Brazil*

Cassidy C. Luitjen, San Antonio, Texas

*Late Nineteenth-Century Shame and Rivalry Poles on the Northwest Coast*

Emily Roberta Luski, Charlotte, North Carolina

*Mirrors and Modernism in Viennese Café Design, ca. 1880–1914*

Lauren Estelle Mcdaniel, San Jose, California

*The New York City WPA Federal Art Project Poster Division: 'Boondoggle' or Design Crucible?*

Leanna Shea Palmer, Montreal, Canada

*Between Protest and Politics: Atelier Grapus (1971–1991)*

Catherine Brooke Penaloza Patzak, Vienna, Austria  
*Hochverehrter Lieber Herr Professor: Contextualizing the Exchanges Between  
Aby Warburg and Franz Boas, 1896–1928*

Rebecca A. Perry, Princeton, New Jersey  
*‘Girllies’ and ‘Grannies’: The Influence of Kate Greenaway on Historical Styles  
of Girls’ Dress in Late Nineteenth-Century Great Britain*

Anne Riker Purcell, Richmond, Virginia  
*A National Enthusiasm: Brass Rubbing in England, ca. 1830–1900*

Quillan Cason Rosen, Princeton, New Jersey  
*Consumerism and Style: The Development of the Toilette in Eighteenth-Century  
France*

Lily Hersker Rubinstein, Havertown, Pennsylvania  
*Facing Death: Death Masks in the Nineteenth-Century United States*

Rachael Dealy Salisbury, Charlottesville, Virginia  
*The Weight of Good Measure: A Reassessment of the Balance Weights from the Late  
Bronze Age Shipwreck at Uluburun and New Thoughts on the Zoomorphic Weights*

Kimberly L. Sorensen, Wycombe, Pennsylvania\*  
*Prints Charming: Nineteenth-Century New York Cake Boards and New Year’s Cake*

Elizabeth A. St. George, Akron, Ohio  
*Aliso Village, Los Angeles: A Case Study of a Mid-Twentieth-Century Attempt  
at Racially Integrated Public Housing*

Ann Marguerite Tartisinis, Brooklyn, New York\*  
*‘Intimately and Unquestionably Our Own’: The American Museum of Natural  
History and Its Influence on American Textile and Fashion Industries, 1915–1927*

Emily Vanderpool, New York, New York  
*‘Livable Qualities of Good Taste’: Defining the Modern in House & Garden’s  
‘Little House’ and W. & J. Sloane’s ‘House of Years,’ 1932–1934*

Valaer Montrose Van Roijen, Orlando, Florida  
*The Sale of Lady Blessington: Creating Narratives and Establishing Value in  
Nineteenth-Century Estates Sales in London”*

\*This year, Kimberly Sorensen and Ann Tartisinis were the winners  
of the annual Wainwright Award for best theses.

## Incoming BGC Students, Fall 2011

The BGC is excited about the group of students selected to join  
Academic Programs in August 2011. At the doctoral level, we have three  
entering students—Marjorie Folkman, is from Barnard and Columbia,  
and currently teaches part time at Bard College; Mei-ling Israel, who  
did undergraduate work at Stanford and her MA here at the BGC; and  
Mei Mei, who comes to us via Nanjing University and the University of  
Chicago, and who currently works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The MA cohort includes:

Tenann Bell, CUNY, Art History

Nynne Christoffersen, University of Copenhagen, European Ethnology

Colin Fanning, Syracuse University, Interior Design

Zahava Friedman-Stadler, Touro College, History

Andrew Goodhouse, Macalester College, Anthropology

Christine Griffiths, SUNY Stony Brook, Art History

Hadley Jensen, Colorado College, Religion

Suk Young Kang, Harvard University, Sociology

Anna McDonald, University of Virginia and NYU, English

Sarah Pickman, University of Chicago, Anthropology

Sophie Pitman, Jesus College, Oxford, Modern History and English

Nicole Pulichene, University of Chicago, Art History

Sarah Rogers, New York University, Art History

Yitzchak Schwartz, Yeshiva University, Jewish Studies

Laura Speers, University of Delaware, Art Conservation

Edward Styles, Harvard University, History and Religion

Maxwell Tielman, Pratt Institute, Art History/Theory/Criticism

Sharon Twickler, University of Connecticut, History

Katherine Tycz, Holy Cross, Italian

Meredyth Winter, Holy Cross, Art History

Elena Pinto Simon

*Dean for Academic Administration and Student Affairs*

## Fall 2010 Courses

- 500 Survey of the Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture; François Louis
- 566 Rites of Passage: Arts of Marriage and Childbirth in the Italian Renaissance; Deborah Krohn
- 611 Oriental Carpets; Sarah Sherrill
- 627 Western Luxuries and Chinese Taste; François Louis
- 738 Readings in Design History; Amy Ogata
- 739 Christmas Cards in America, Part II: Exhibition and Publication; Kenneth L. Ames
- 741 Renaissance Mythologies; Andrew Morrall
- 743 Popular Entertainment in the United States; Matthew Wittman
- 744 Anthropology's Collection Histories, ca. 1840–1911; Erin Hasinoff
- 775 Visualizing 19th-Century New York: A BGC-NYPL Digital Exhibition Course; David Jaffee
- 776 Self-Fashioning and American Portraiture, from 1700 through the Advent of Photography; David Jaffee / Kevin Murphy
- 780 Georges Hoentschel: Collector, Designer, and Architect in Belle-Époque Paris, I; Deborah Krohn / Ulrich Leben
- 801 Other Europes: Design and Architecture in Central Europe, 1880–1940; Paul Stirton
- 822 Foundations of Material Culture; Peter Miller
- 832 English Silver; Kenneth L. Ames
- 847 Fashion and Theater, ca. 1780–1920; Michele Majer
- 849 Visual and Material Cultures of the Middle Ages: An Introduction; Ittai Weinryb
- 851 The Occult and Its Artifact in the Middle Ages; Ittai Weinryb
- 859 Interface Design: Material Objects and Immaterial Culture; Kimon Keramidas

## Spring 2011 Courses

- 500 Survey of the Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture; Pat Kirkham
- 730 The Social Lives of Things: The Anthropology of Art and Material Culture; Aaron Glass
- 740 Native Arts of the Northwest Coast: Material Culture, Historical Change, and Exhibition Practice; Aaron Glass
- 761 Design and Material Culture of the Qing Period, 1644–1911; François Louis
- 772 The Aesthetic Movement: Designing Modernity, 1865–1905; Paul Stirton
- 777 Field Seminar: Readings in Early Modern Visual Culture; Jeffrey Collins / Andrew Morrall
- 781 The Renaissance Book: Cookbooks as Case Study; Deborah Krohn
- 782 Decorative Arts and Material Cultures of the Hispanic World; Jeffrey Collins
- 785 The Antiques Trade in America; Kenneth Ames
- 786 Case Studies in Mid-Century Modernism: Knoll International; Pat Kirkham
- 788 Oriental Influences on 18th-Century Decorative Arts; Charlotte Vignon
- 790 Visualizing 19th-Century New York: A BGC-NYPL Digital Exhibition Course II; David Jaffee
- 791 Rus in Urbe: The Country in the Town, from the City Parks Movement to Urban Ecology; Yenna Chan
- 792 Georges Hoentschel: Collector, Designer, and Architect in Belle-Époque Paris, II; Deborah Krohn / Ulrich Leben
- 799 Material Culture of the 19th-Century American Home; Kenneth L. Ames
- 858 Ex-Voto: Votive Giving and Other Forms of Giving Across Cultures; Ittai Weinryb

## Faculty Year in Review

The faculty reflects on the year past

### Kenneth L. Ames

Months submerged in Christmas cards this year provided me with an opportunity not only to savor some of the many delights of the visible world but also to luxuriate in learning. Here is the story. The Focus Gallery exhibition opening in Fall 2011, *American Christmas Cards, 1900–1960*, and its accompanying book occupied most of my spring semester. The major tasks involved refining captions, editing or writing short interpretive texts, and creating suggestive timelines. All three were essential, but each was quite different in its demands. The first required consistency and a modicum of technical knowledge, the second attentiveness to conciseness and clarity, and the third imagination and a willingness to explore. It is the third I want to comment on here, for it may turn out to be helpful in understanding how we learn, at least some of the time, and how we can craft conditions so that others may also learn.

A couple of sentences of explanation may be helpful. The point of the Christmas card book is to serve as an introduction to the study of Christmas cards and to offer strategies for thinking about them. It was never intended to be a definitive account. The major pieces of the book are images of more than 300 cards, brief essays (600 words, more or less), and timelines for each of twenty-five different categories of cards. The purpose of the timelines is partly to offer data that could not fit into the essays and partly to suggest the broader contexts—social, cultural,

political, economic, psychological—that swirl around Christmas cards and may, in one way or another, have contributed to or shaped the meanings that people have made of them.

This may sound arbitrary, but the timeline provided a way of undercutting any notion of a master narrative or the idea that any card—or almost anything else, for that matter—had or has a single, fixed meaning. No, everything is not relative, but the generation of meaning is a complicated process to which the circumstances of the people making the meaning are critical. With our timelines we wanted to suggest multiple meanings constructed by people in the past and multiple meanings for the same objects that people might construct today.

The process of building timelines was obvious, to a point. For many of the categories, relevant material was easily come by, but others were more problematic. Here is where necessity prompted invention—lateral thinking, for instance, or analogical musing—and so one thing led to another. Not surprisingly, things in the past connected to things in the present. One instance of neither greater nor lesser significance than any other occurred when I was looking at cards that depict churches. A card that struck me as deliberately affecting bore an image of St. Paul's in London. Although the image seemed to date from the 1930s, the card was published in 1942, by which date the cathedral had survived the London blitz, although many of the buildings around it and some 20,000 people had not. Wondering about St.

Paul's got me to Google, where I found an iconic photograph of the church rising up above the smoke and flames of an attack on December 29, 1940, and a good deal more.

This discovery took place on April 29, 2011, the day of the royal wedding in London, with the requisite wave from the balcony at Buckingham Palace and all the rest. But now I knew that the palace had been bombed repeatedly. I was already aware of the significance of the Spitfires in the fly-by, but I had never fully comprehended conditions in London in 1940, nor had I any reason to. Yet a single Christmas card and the need to create a timeline led me to some unhappy episodes from the past that, in turn, enriched my sensitivity to the complexities and layers of symbolism of an event in the present. There is far more that can be said on this particular topic.

This is not a brief for monarchy, just an observation about making connections and the importance thereof. I could have written about New Jersey poet Joyce Kilmer or Dutch historian Johan Huizinga or any number of people, events, or phenomena that found their way into the timelines. The moral of the tale is that one never knows what will turn out to be meaningful at any given point, since situations and circumstances structure our thinking and the connections we make. Follow the questions: what you find may serve you in ways you cannot anticipate. That is, at least in part, what the Christmas cards book and Focus Gallery exhibition are about.

### Jeffrey Collins

After centuries of hiding, there they were—Thalia and Terpsichore, fixed in bold brown outline on a brittle sheet of

*papier calque* pasted into the Roman scrapbook of the sculptor François-Antoine Gérard. Like the album's nearly 300 other sketches, they were records of an artist's encounter with the antique when he was a *pensionnaire* at the French Academy at Palazzo Mancini in the early 1790s. Like his peers, Gérard trawled for models both in Rome's private palaces and villas and in the city's new state museums, founded in the 1730s on the Capitoline and a generation later at the Vatican. It was my study of the latter that had brought me to the Getty Research Institute to participate in its theme year on "The Display of Art." Gérard's album suggests the project's links between the physical and the conceptual; as a practitioner's working anthology scarred by excisions and additions, added captions, and complex collaging, the album offers a glimpse into how Rome's museums were received by one of their target audiences and sheds light on the ways artists selected their raw material and exploited those visual archives over the course of a career. Gérard, who went on to work on Paris's Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel, clearly downplayed Rome's canonical statues in favor of reliefs and multi-figure scenes useful for historical compositions. His choice of tracing paper—a medium sometimes used to copy the designs of others but here apparently chosen for its graphic purity, perhaps to clean up his own messy sketches—suggests that he was already thinking about abstracting his Roman material in pursuit of a neoclassical aesthetic.

For my purposes, however, the key was Gérard's choice to draw some of Rome's "newest" antiquities, and to do so in ways that reflected their display. After years in the Roman archives following the Vatican project and its cultural reverberations, I have chosen to focus on a specific group

of artifacts—Apollo and the Muses, with Greek philosophers and statesmen—dug up in an olive grove near Tivoli in 1775 and enshrined as anchors of a new and modern type of art museum. From their rediscovery in a clandestine excavation to their (temporary) seizure by Napoléon for the Louvre, the afterlife of these reconstructed fragments encapsulates the expanding ambitions and overlapping agendas of European neoclassicism. Who had a stake in “reviving” antiquity in late eighteenth-century Italy, and to what ends? How were specific artifacts transferred, transformed, and transmuted? The answers exemplify the links between the cultural and the material. For Roman landowners, antiquity meant a fortune to be mined; for laborers and carters, a day’s wage; for lawyers, a source of income when possession was contested, as with the Tivoli hoard; and for struggling sculptors, a lifeline as restorers amid the dearth of new commissions. For the enlightened Church, commandeering and showcasing the Tivoli sculptures offered a path to international prestige, despite their pagan origins, while for scholars and curators they promised direct connections to antiquity and new horizons of museum practice. Printers, bronze founders, and ceramicists all hoped to profit from the sale of replicas and reproductions, whereas poets and artists like Gérard approached works such as the Muses as sources or even symbols of aesthetic and cultural reform.

The Getty sketchbook reminds us that such dreams were rooted in physical reality, in part by showing what aspects of the Vatican Muses caught Gérard’s eye—here the silhouettes, the details of hairstyles and headgear, and diagnostic attributes, including drums, masks, or a primitive tortoiseshell lyre. Did Gérard know, as the archives reveal, that these were precisely the features most heavily

restored? Would he have cared? At least nine sketches document objects in the Vatican’s new Hall of the Muses, for their novelty perhaps or the favorable setting. In the case of the *calque* sheet, both their angles of view and their *mise-en-page* shows that Gérard drew in person and not from published prints; both Muses are seen from a position near the middle of the octagonal room, with a third antique sandwiched between them. A herm of Tragedy from Hadrian’s villa is shown in profile, as it would have appeared when one turned one’s stool toward the threshold of the museum’s rotunda. The Getty scrapbook, then, doubly embodies the cultural history of the material world: as a tangible record of ephemeral actions and values and as a testament to the power of display in shaping our understanding of the past.

## Aaron Glass

This past year I had the distinct pleasure and challenge of curating the first BGC Focus Gallery exhibition, entitled *Objects of Exchange: Social and Material Transformation on the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. The new initiative is devoted to exhibitions and catalogues that derive from the scholarship of our faculty and that originate in graduate seminars. It also encourages the expansion of conventional parameters for exhibition practice by offering a space to experiment with new media components, building on the presence of our new Digital Media Lab.

Drawing on the remarkable collection at the American Museum of Natural History—from decorated clothing to containers, ceremonial masks to trade goods—*Objects of Exchange* revealed the artistic traces of dynamic

indigenous activity whereby objects were altered, repurposed, and adapted to meet the challenges of intercultural encounter on the North Pacific coast.

Freed from the restrictions often placed on curators of non-Western material culture at art or anthropology museums, I was unencumbered by pressure to frame the objects as fine art or ethnographic artifacts per se. Given explicit themes of intercultural exchange and transaction, I sought out boundary objects that challenge standard museological categories and that suggest the complexity of indigenous responses to settlement and colonialism. We decided to focus on the entire social life of the things, attending variably to cultural contexts for production, indigenous meaning and use, moments of exchange and collection, and histories of reception and scholarly analysis by both Natives and non-Natives.

*Objects of Exchange* incorporated new media in a number of ways that helped us reach our curatorial and pedagogical goals. We installed small video screens for object labels that required a large number of comparative images. Gallery visitors were encouraged to borrow iPods, free of charge, that contained audio clips of interviews I conducted with First Nations artists and scholars (video interviews are available on the project website). My students and I built a course wiki that functioned as a collectively editable database for the exhibit research. We initially tagged each of the objects’ wiki pages with themes relevant to its interpretation: *Christianity, diffusion, English text, Hudson’s Bay Company, hybridity, indigenization, misidentification, models, mortuary, multiples, non-canonical, repurposing, ship imagery, souvenir, and transformation*. Every object’s wall label and catalogue entry included a

list of the thematic tags relevant to our understanding of that object. In addition, we developed an interactive “tag cloud” to further illustrate the relational nature of these concepts as they unite the objects in a complex conceptual network. This digital display (also available on the website) allowed people to visualize multiple curatorial positions and interpretive possibilities for engaging with the objects and ideas. In Fall 2011, new research that my current students are conducting will be added to the exhibition website, which will also archive all of the objects and interpretive texts as installed. In addition, we are developing an interactive map and timeline in order to dynamically plot the objects in geographical space and historical time. In this way, the BGC Focus Gallery is fostering the integration of academic and curatorial exploration across multiple courses, cohorts, and media platforms.

Please visit *Objects of Exchange* on the BGC Focus Gallery website: [www.bgc.bard.edu/gallery/gallery-at-bgc/past-exhibitions/main-gallery-2.html](http://www.bgc.bard.edu/gallery/gallery-at-bgc/past-exhibitions/main-gallery-2.html).

## Erin Hasinoff

In 1911 the world came to Boston for twenty-one days, when colorful views of the globe’s farthest reaches could be encountered in a morning’s stroll through the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association building. I spent the academic year completing a book about *The World in Boston*—promoted as “America’s first great missionary exhibition”—which explores how American Protestants participated in evangelism abroad during the early twentieth century. *The World in Boston* was conceived on the model of world’s fairs, but unlike those well-studied public

attractions, it has been entirely forgotten. My book, *Faith in Objects: American Missionary Expositions in the Early Twentieth Century*, will be published by Palgrave Macmillan Press in Fall 2011, on the exposition's 100th anniversary.

In the book I pay particular attention to the history of the objects that made up the exhibition, many of which had been gathered for an earlier eclectic exhibition, the Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions' *Missionary Exhibit* of 1900, and were later accessioned by and temporarily shown at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). The book is written as an "ethnography of collecting," an approach to understanding how museum objects are gathered and what ultimately happens to them. In analyzing the career of the *Missionary Exhibit*, I consider the intersecting histories of a range of actors (missionaries, exposition organizers, museum administrators, and anthropologists) who relied on the collection of objects to fulfill the divergent objectives of public education, missionary and volunteer recruitment, and the accumulation of raw data. My analysis of *The World in Boston* sheds light on how the material culture of missions shaped American interactions with evangelism, Christianity, and the utilization of evangelical and ethnological knowledge.

*Faith in Objects* focuses on how the Boston exposition provided visual object lessons for learning about the successes of evangelism. The object lessons of the *World* were its *raison d'être* and, in the view of its organizers, kept the displayed artifacts from being regarded as mere curios. Curiosity posed as much a promise for drawing an audience as it did a problem in exciting little more than a passing interest in the exposition's contents. In applying analyses of

Protestant visual piety, I consider how, at the *World*, object lessons were successful only if they revealed some higher truth that transcended the material forms of the objects on display. First-hand anecdotes demonstrate how curiosity was seen as threatening to debase its spiritual goals. My interpretation of the exposition dwells on both the potential and the struggles that the materiality of its contents created for its organizers and the dedicated docents who brought it to life.

Extraordinary in terms of content, geographic and cultural scope, and attendance (400,000 visitors in twenty-one days), the Boston exposition demonstrated how effective and far-reaching Christian missions were at the time. In *Faith in Objects*, I reveal how missionary expositions fostered a passion for the work of missions. *The World in Boston* did more than whet public appetites and loosen purse strings, as has been argued in the sparse scholarship on the exhibition; as descriptions in the press indicate, these expositions brought together imagined concepts of distant places and a moral community of believers.

## David Jaffee

Digital scholarship is changing the way we think about our work in the humanities. The digital exhibition genre provides us with an exciting possibility for the creation of student projects, as well as the exploration of online library and museum collections. The Bard Graduate Center opened a Digital Media Lab in Fall 2010 as a way to highlight the increasing importance of new media for teaching and learning with visual and material evidence in our graduate program. I have been

working with BGC students in a two-semester course on *Visualizing Nineteenth-Century New York*, a collaboration with the New York Public Library. The goal of the exhibition is to promote an understanding of how New York City entered visual and material consciousness in the nineteenth century through the use of engravings, daguerreotypes, lithographs, and maps. Recently, my own research has focused on envisioning how New York became a cultural capital in the nineteenth century through the proliferation of cultural entrepreneurs such as Currier & Ives or Harper Brothers. And I have been teaching a series of courses on the material culture of New York City. So the idea of building a digital exhibition on a nineteenth-century topic seemed quite natural. The project came about with the significant support of dean Peter Miller and chief curator Nina Stritzler-Levine, along with the expertise of Kimon Keramidas, our assistant director of the Digital Media Lab. At the NYPL, the director of digital strategy and scholarship, Josh Greenberg and digital experience producer, Amy Azzarito were critical in providing access to the collections and expertise in digital production.

In Fall 2010 we worked with the curators of various NYPL departments (Maps, Prints and Photographs, Rare Books, Local History) to acquaint ourselves with those materials. Students learned about these visual genres along with the various publishing technologies via hands-on work through the use of engravings, daguerreotypes, lithographs, and maps. One team decided to pursue a project based on re-creating the experience of visitors to nineteenth-century New York—immigrants or tourists or others—by "turning the pages of nineteenth-century

guidebooks" or looking at stereoscopic views or reading traveler's accounts. Indeed, their topic and design choices were very much guided by their own experience with the "real" object and seeking to convey that experience to the exhibition visitor.

In the spring we built the exhibition, which is composed of student-created displays along with a general production that I have provided. Some of the other exhibition topics include Central Park, the Seventh Regiment, and Maps & Views. The project is almost completed as I write this piece. The spring has been a busy one with a great deal of viewing and discussion of what a digital exhibit should look like and how it will work with users. Much of our time has been filled with writing the exhibition text and building the website. Over the entire year, I have been encouraged by the multitasking that has taken place—learning about the library collections and various visual media, thinking about the cultural historical issues of nineteenth-century New York life, taking the time and energy to ponder what a digital exhibition should be—and then building it. You can see it at <http://resources-bgc.bard.edu/19thcNYC/>. I believe that finding the balance between visual learning and cultural understanding is a big question, and how to achieve it is even more vexing. The demands and the time it takes to learn various digital tools are a significant factor as one continues to pursue the presentation of rigorous material scholarship and will be an ongoing issue.

## Pat Kirkham

For the last few years, my intellectual musings have kept returning to the topic of indoor/outdoor living in California in

the twenty years after World War II. I find myself wanting to qualify the narrowness and rigidity of the orthodox narrative (established largely by architectural historians), which claims that the benign Californian climate facilitated modernist architecture, complete with long sliding glass doors that gave direct access to outdoor space, thus achieving a “seamless integration” of indoors and out. Barriers between inside and out, it is claimed, were broken down. Yet the more I study contemporary photographs and ask people about living in those houses, and the more I recall living in Southern California during the summer of 1971, the more I find myself calling for a radical opening up of the ways in which we think about indoors and out in this period.

Most books about California modernist homes show low one-story buildings with the glass doors pulled back (no curtains in sight) to reveal patios and pool areas with people in leisure wear. In *Modernism Rediscovered* by Pierluigi Serraino and Julius Shulman (2000), for example, not one photograph of a house taken in the period 1945 to 1965 shows window draperies closed, although Shulman took many such. It may be that pure architectural space flowed freely from indoors to out in some buildings, but most houses did not then have air conditioning and on hot days curtains were often drawn across the divide in order to keep out the sun. In other words, in everyday use new barriers were created in these homes and conventional boundaries demarcated while many more conventions of formality and distinction continued than historians have hitherto acknowledged.

My increasing interest in difference and demarcation has led me to look at points of apparent seamless integration, such as what was on either side of those long glass windows.

Contemporary photographs indicate significant differences between the accoutrements of living on either side. The same materials and plants sometimes featured indoors and out, but usually only for a few feet, and they were differently configured. Even the now-famous firm Architectural Pottery, which claimed that its planters made patios more like indoor living rooms, introduced wooden stands in 1957, the better to integrate the planters with what it called “the softened, elegant, carpeted . . . décor” of the main living/dining areas. Although some furniture was designed and manufactured in the hope that it would bridge the divide, with a few notable exceptions consumers did not want inside the types of pieces designed for dual or outdoor use. Furthermore, consumers then, as now, were not prepared to pay as much for outdoor furniture as for indoor pieces. So, it is looking to me as if difference and contrast are as key, if not more so, to our understanding of the relationship of indoors to out as “seamless integration.” Tasks ahead involve more oral history, more detailing and analyzing a turn inward in the modern home, particularly in relation to television and new music systems, contemporary references to homes as “cavelike,” and the movement to find sanctuary in another type of cave, namely the bomb shelter, which in the event of an atomic explosion would take people not only from outside to in but sometimes also from inside to underground. But all that is for my next research leave.

## Deborah L. Krohn

A recent visit to the Discovery Center in midtown New York City to an exhibition devoted to the material culture of the

*Harry Potter* film series allowed me to reflect on contemporary museum strategies of collecting and display. The exhibition’s obvious commercial success suggests that our presentation concepts in more academic settings may not be designed to maximize viewer satisfaction. Consisting largely of clothing and props from the films based on the Rowling books, the objects are displayed without any indication of makers, costume or prop designers, or curators. Many of the costumes look surprisingly ordinary, as if they were purchased off the rack from your favorite mall store, whereas others were clearly invented by creative costumers or haberdashers who remain unnamed and unsung. Visitors file by the costumes, which are displayed on contextually presented headless mannequins and serenaded by snippets of soundtrack that emanate from hidden sources.

There are several period room displays as well, where entire environments have been reconstructed for visitors to walk through. The most evocative of these is Hagrid’s Hut, a study in rusticity. Rough-hewn timbers, rusted farm implements, bales of hay, and a dragon’s egg about to hatch re-create the look and feel of this forest idyll. The organizers were banking on the fact that the public would not be bothered by the lack of information about the objects. Is the emphasis on transparency and the providing of information just a misplaced academic preoccupation? Do people really enjoy looking at stuff, regardless of its facture? Why create an exhibition from a movie and assume that adoring fans will be interested in the disembodied garments and disenchanting objects used dynamically on the screen? Do the objects on display form a *collection*, and if so, to whom does it belong? At

one end of the spectrum is the recent BGC Focus Gallery exhibition curated by faculty member Aaron Glass with a team of BGC students, where even the person who collected the object was named in the credit line. The act of collecting is considered an essential stage of the object’s life cycle from creation, through ritual or practical use, to museum display. At the other end is *Harry Potter: The Exhibition*.

I suppose I’ve been thinking about all this as I maneuver through fragments of ancien régime-paneled interiors for the next Metropolitan Museum of Art/BGC exhibition collaboration (opening in 2013), which will focus on a collection of French decorative arts. How much is the viewer’s experience about re-imagining the object’s world versus understanding the thing in itself?

None of these deep thoughts troubled my spring class on Renaissance cookbooks and book illustration, however. The students read through the most important late medieval and early modern cookbooks from Italy, England, and France and visited the New York Academy of Medicine, the New York Public Library, and the Print Room at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to look at outstanding examples of illustrated cookbooks and other instructional or informational books: we also explored metallurgy, alchemy, botany, horticulture, and military technology, comparing word and image. Each week one of the students reported on a book, choosing a recipe to try out and serve to the class, with mixed but generally positive results. Cooking from a recipe is, of course, a form of interpretation, like so many others we undertake as students of the material world, and it is that process I hoped to capture through this assignment. Negotiating between the syllable instructions in

early cookbooks, which often lacked any indication of measurements, and our own often submerged assumptions about how things should be done, we were able to glimpse the ways that knowledge is transmitted and travels through time, through both texts and practice.

## Ulrich Leben

My interest in material culture and the decorative arts was fostered early on through an apprenticeship in cabinetmaking before I entered university, which gave me hands-on experience and enabled me to develop connoisseurship through direct contact with objects. After completing a PhD dissertation on the French cabinetmaker Bernard Molitor (1755–1833), I did post-graduate research at the Free Drawing School of Paris, an institution for the education of children whose later professional destiny would be in a trade or craft. Since the mid-1990s, I have been working for the Rothschild collection at Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, as associate curator for furniture and decorative arts. I have developed an in-depth understanding of the works of art in this renowned family collection (which consists of furniture, ceramics, silver, paintings, and sculpture) and their display in the context of a historic house. Given that the National Trust has operated Waddesdon Manor since 1957 and the collection is listed as a national monument, the focus and challenges for preservation and conservation issues involve the presentation of these objects in situ.

Parallel to my work at Waddesdon Manor, I was asked in 2002 by the German Forum for Art History in Paris,

headed by the German Foreign Office, to manage a conservation project of the historic furniture and reception rooms at the Hôtel Beauharnais, residence of the German ambassador in Paris. The concept for this conservation and reconstitution project is based on the 1817 inventory of the house and its contents that was discovered in 2003 in the archives of the Foreign Office in Berlin. In addition to documenting and researching this important collection, our mission was to establish an interdisciplinary collaboration between art historians on the Academic Committee and the various private conservation workshops involved.

Since Fall 2010, I have been preparing, in collaboration with BGC professor Deborah Krohn and Metropolitan Museum of Art curator Danielle Kisluk-Grosheide, an exhibition on the French architect-collector Georges Hoentschel, whose unique collection of historic woodwork fragments in 1906 was given by J. P. Morgan to the Metropolitan Museum, where it became the foundation of the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. The exhibition will tell the story of this remarkable collection, from its origins as interior decoration in significant French domestic settings of the pre-revolutionary ancien régime to nineteenth-century Parisian workshops, where it was studied and preserved by decorators and designers, to the first gallery of decorative arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and finally to a retrospective installation at the Bard Graduate Center scheduled for 2013. The collection was originally intended to be a model for craftsmen, designers, and amateurs to illustrate the supremacy of carvers and craftsmen. After its transfer to the Metropolitan Museum, it was seen by generations of students and scholars

as exemplary French decorative art. This collaboration between the museum and the Bard Graduate Center will return to view many outstanding examples of French decorative arts from both the medieval period and the eighteenth century. It will address the growing interest in art objects and fragments from different periods of the nineteenth century that led to the formation of the Hoentschel collection. The rediscovery of the collection today will raise questions about its significance in the twenty-first century, as well as a variety of issues surrounding the history of museum display and the role of the decorative arts in educating generations of visitors and collectors.

My educational background and professional experience in European decorative arts; organizing exhibitions and the presentation of collections in a thoughtful, respectful and creative manner; supervising and coordinating conservation treatments; taking charge of the opening of new galleries and object display in historic houses; and successfully working with collectors and donors, all feed into my current tasks as visiting professor and special exhibition curator at BGC.

## François Louis

Over the past year, I have been active in three research areas: Chinese maritime trade in the ninth century, Liao-dynasty material culture, and early Chinese cloisonné. Although my Liao and cloisonné research is not yet published, some of the work on maritime trade appeared late last year in the form of two essays in a catalogue for the exhibition *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, which

is currently on view at the ArtScience Museum in Singapore. This catalogue is the first book devoted to the oldest known example of a Chinese maritime cargo, a ninth-century shipwreck discovered in Indonesia in 1998. The wreck documents the earliest large-scale export of Chinese ceramics, having contained nearly 70,000 ceramic bowls and jars, and it provides, for the first time, substantial data on the medieval maritime trade in Southeast Asia. In addition to ceramics, the site also yielded metal artifacts and enough remains of the ship's hull to allow for a reconstruction of the vessel and for its identification as being of Arab origin. My first essay gives an overall assessment of the metalwork found on the ship, which included the most significant group of Tang-dynasty gold and silver vessels discovered in the past twenty-five years. The second essay discusses the twenty-nine bronze mirrors discovered on the wreck, the largest trove of medieval Chinese mirrors known from an archaeological context. These groups of artifacts are of major historical importance and would have been considered so even if they had been discovered within China, but their presence on an Arab ship that sank between Java and Sumatra makes them unique and particularly intriguing. The purpose of the precious metal goods on board nevertheless remains unclear. Further archaeological discoveries are needed to provide comparative data. Were they trade goods, personal possessions, or diplomatic gifts? They certainly suggest the involvement in this trading venture of high-level officials with direct connections to the Chinese court, but unfortunately no information relating to individuals was found on the wreck. Nevertheless, textual sources provide some background on maritime trade in Tang China in the 820s and 830s.

The story I found was one of diplomat-merchants and a good number of self-serving officials acting within a system of severe political factionalism, widespread corruption, and feeble imperial control.

Notions of profiteering and political expediency continue to accompany this shipwreck in its second life since its archaeological salvage. The cargo was excavated and conserved by Seabed Explorations Inc., a private salvaging company licensed by the Indonesian government. Seabed, which had already excavated a tenth-century Indonesian shipwreck the previous year, eventually sold the bulk of the Tang cargo to the city state of Singapore, and Indonesia retained a selection of some 7,000 ceramics, as well as the entire tenth-century Indonesian shipwreck. Singapore ostensibly purchased the cargo to market its image as the great center of international trade in Southeast Asia, using the cargo as evidence of the old “Maritime Silk Road,” an early version of globalization. The city plans to build a museum specifically for this material while the special exhibition is touring the globe, and American cultural institutions have lent their support. National Geographic has produced a documentary marshaling the imagery of Sinbad, and the Smithsonian Institution has produced the exhibition catalogue in collaboration with the National Heritage Board and the Tourism Board of Singapore. The first planned U. S. venue for the exhibition is the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, D. C. It is, however, uncertain whether this venue will indeed be feasible next year, for a number of U. S. archaeologists have recently advised the Smithsonian to cancel the exhibition over ethical concerns that the recovery of the cargo

was compromised by commercial interests and not completed according to sufficiently high archaeological standards.

Of course, BGC students who in earlier years have taken the course on *Issues in the Studies of Ancient Art* with Elizabeth Simpson and myself are well aware of the ethical and political complexities inherent in this particular discovery, as we have been following the cargo’s fate for several years. With the current debate over its exhibition at the Sackler Gallery, we may be witnessing one of the final stages in the laborious transformation of this historic discovery from private treasure trove to lucrative, nationalized cultural treasure. If you are interested in further information, go to <http://www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/SW-CulturalHeritage.asp>

## Michele Majer

For most of this year, I have been working on an upcoming Focus Gallery exhibition, *Staging Fashion, 1880–1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke*, scheduled to open at the Bard Graduate Center in January 2012. Through printed ephemera, clothing and accessories, *Staging Fashion* will explore the phenomenon of actresses as internationally known fashion leaders at the turn of the twentieth century and will highlight the mundane artifacts that constituted the primary means by which the general public—and women, especially—experienced the public visibility and influence of these three performers in their everyday lives. This hand-colored postcard of the British actress Lily Elsie (1886–1962) is one of many such objects that will be included in the exhibition. The photograph, taken by Foulsham & Banfield, a leading



Lily Elsie. Postcard from the collection of Michele Majer

London photography studio at the turn of the twentieth century, shows Elsie as Sonia in an English adaptation of the Franz Lehár operetta *The Merry Widow*. From its first performance on June 8, 1907, the production was an immediate success, and Lily Elsie became an instant celebrity. The oversized black hat with silver banding and roses, designed by the well-known British couturière Lucile (1863–1935)—as was the rest of her costume—sparked a controversial, international fashion craze for similarly large, extravagantly trimmed headwear, referred to in the press as “Merry Widow” hats. In addition to the countless postcards of Lily Elsie wearing her influential theatrical ensemble were numerous whimsical and satirical examples of women in fruit-, flower- and feather-laden hats of outlandish proportions that commented on issues of gender, class, propriety, and consumption.

During this period, actresses were key figures in the international cult of celebrity that flourished in the context of a nascent mass media and mass consumerism. Formerly ostracized as women of dubious morals, actresses were presented—and presented themselves—as role models for women across the social spectrum. Cheaply

manufactured postcards that circulated by the millions and thousands of magazine and newspaper articles, as well as print advertisements, celebrated them as exemplars of fashion, youthful beauty, elegance, and respectable femininity. The hundreds of thousands of used and unused actress postcards that have survived for a century are an indication of the intense, worldwide interest in these women; the insatiable demand for and production of their images in Europe and the United States; the practice of collecting these ephemera and sharing them with friends and family members; and the degree to which they were cherished. The women in these photographs cast a powerful spell; one is drawn into the glamorized world they inhabit and seduced by their beauty and elegant sophistication. Although in the twenty-first century we may experience these images in a very different context, they still impart their compelling aura that creates an intimate connection between viewer and subject.

As with many other stage women at the time, the fame and appeal of these three actresses who serve as case studies were by no means based solely—or even primarily—on their thespian talents. Rather, they exemplify the significant factors that contributed to widespread success and popularity: a leading couturier (or couturiers) who regularly designed for the stage dressed each in gowns that were integral to the creation of a glamorous image; each exhibits a type of physical beauty that conformed to elite notions of class and race; each had a distinct “personality” her stage roles often conveyed which was further underscored in photographic images and articles in the press; each appeared on postcards and in fashion and theater magazines, other periodicals, and newspapers; finally, each illus-

trates the phenomenon of actress-as-marketable commodity who promoted and depended on the consumption of her own image to create and maintain her celebrity status, and whose celebrity, in turn, was used to market an array of products that often stressed her appearance and encouraged a connection between the consumer and the actress.

## Peter N. Miller

I think I finally understood Rilke's *Duino Elegies* this year. I had read through them a couple of times in previous years and had taken to quoting from Elegy IX in my introductions to various BGC events. In this elegy Rilke is trying to figure out how to answer the uncomprehending angel, the one who always knows better, about transcendence. In the end, he comes to a decision:

... so show  
him [the angel] something simple which,  
formed over generations,  
Lives as our own, near our hand and  
within our gaze.  
Tell him of Things. He will stand  
astonished; as you stood  
By the rope-maker in Rome or the potter  
along the Nile.

What I hadn't quite grasped until this year was that this expression is part of a broader argument, beginning really in Elegy VII, that is designed to answer a question posed in different ways over the first six elegies, written more than a decade earlier. In these, Rilke grapples with the feeling of being cut off from the possibility of transcendence. How to connect with the angels? One possibility would have been to renounce the world and our creatureliness. But he does not want to go there. Finally, after years of living with this question, Rilke

found the answer in "being here." For him, then, unlike the various other "new objectivities" of the 1920s, materiality does not emerge as an opposition to an idealism, but as a genuine metaphysical answer to a metaphysical question.

At this level, Rilke has much to say about the meaningfulness of studying the material world. As I was pulling together the eponymous volume for our new University of Michigan Press series Cultural Histories of the Material World, Rilke helped me with the introduction. I was also editing another book destined for this series, also from a conference held at the BGC last year, on ways of writing histories of the sea, and Rilke on his cliff at Duino helped with that as well.

Peiresc has been at the back of my mind, though my Peiresc-related output has been mostly restricted to blog posts on my website (peiresc.wikis.bgc.bard.edu). My research assistants over the past couple of years, Christie Wilmot, Yenna Chan, and Maude Bass-Krueger, have helped me organize and calendar his surviving outgoing correspondence. Getting all of this material into a spreadsheet means that it is only a short step away from a publishable form. After more than a hundred years of people saying that Peiresc wrote "so many and so odd letters," it will soon be possible to know exactly how many, to whom, and when. This work is separate from but annexed to wrapping up my larger project on Peiresc and the Mediterranean. That's for next year's report.

## Andrew Morrall

*Danae to the stars*: the image came unbidden, as, traveling last

summer in the northern Jordanian desert, battered Penguin copy of the *Metamorphoses* in pocket, we stood—my wife and I—by the ruins of Umm Qais, in thrall to an immense night sky of roiling constellations spiraling above. The metaphor perfectly captured the sensation of giddy rapture before Nature, of the single moment flooded by Eternity.

Over the ensuing year, my personal dialogue with Ovid has continued in a series of flashing after-images, stimulated greatly by the Renaissance Mythologies class last fall and by questions that had been central to it: What was the addictive appeal of Ovid's fairytales and fantastic legends to Western culture? What might explain Ovid's saturation in subsequent art and literature to the extent that many of his stories are inseparable from our unconscious imaginative life? And what position do they command today? Danae, the beautiful girl impregnated by Jupiter in a shower of gold, has undergone her own multiple metamorphoses in her retelling. For people of the Renaissance, she could be a negative emblem of corruption by wealth, opening her apron to catch the shower of coins; conversely, as for Abraham Fraunce, she could represent "man's soule," and Jupiter's golden shower "the celestiall grace and influence derived into our mindes from above." Titian turned her into a meditation upon the universal, tragic, nature of human erotic allure and of the self-sufficient beauty of art.

Beyond the attraction of stories of human embroilment with the supernatural, it seems to have been Ovid's exploration of human passion, his obsessive pursuit of the theme of love, with its bewildering transformations of feeling and identity, that have touched

artists, writers, and composers most deeply and persistently. Yet just as important has been the poet's yoking of human passion to natural phenomena: the drama, violence, and enchantment of his lovers' tales offered explanations not simply for the etiologies of individual species of plants and minerals but also for larger principles of creation, generation, and change. Ovid's vision of a natural world animated by human passions provided a powerful means of linking man and Nature through a sense of the transcendent. When people of the Renaissance placed Ovid's centaurs and sphinxes, sirens and ariels, deep-sea tritons and hippocamps at their borders—around doorways, chimneys, title pages, bed frames—were these monsters, like their familiar homegrown hobgoblins and spirit fairies, still living beings that could pass through into knowledge of some other kind? At what point was this mythical path to a connectedness with Nature lost?

Two recent exhibitions seemed to demonstrate the twilight of the mythopoeic imagination. The first was the Neue Galerie's exhibition of Franz Xaver Messerschmidt's physiognomies, the series of some fifty sculpted self-portrait heads that he carried out in semi-seclusion. Here was the monstrous bereft of magic realism, of myth or metaphor, the master of the Enlightenment grimacing in his mirror, making and remaking again and again in his reasoned clarity of style, unbearable visages of self-asphyxiation, of induced apnea, the skull and face shrunk to a clenching fist, the bunched wrinkles around the mouth gathered in an act of willed withholding, in an effort to contain a terrible hilarity, as though he recognized that all laughter stems from the same source: an accidental glimpse of the Real Thing behind the curtain, a terrible void, an uncontainable afflatus

of nothingness, held in by an act of the rational will. Messerschmidt's observed madness seems to reflect the divorce of logos from the world.

In striking contrast was the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's heroic attempt to relocate the mythic in Nature in his epic "Sunflower Seeds," which recently covered the floor of the great Turbine Hall in London's Tate Modern with one hundred million tiny porcelain objects, each handmade by a master craftsman from Jingdezhen. Multitudinous, inexplicable, these representations of life, intended to be walked on, ironically gave off a fine dust when trampled, dangerous to the lungs. In the end, it was less Persephone's garden than bio-agricultural warehouse.

As we cast our unregenerate seed over the countryside, our tinnitus fills the oceans, the air spasms with our constant jabber, and our junk trails eternally in icy space, where all is in the sight of the camera or the gun (At the time of writing, Ai Weiwei is under arrest by the Chinese authorities for his acts of imagination and a bloody civil war has erupted in Dara'a, a few kilometers over the Syrian border from Umm Qais), Ovid's monsters have retreated, clustering now in the eddies of the psyche but offering still the possibility of connection through language and symbol.

## Amy F. Ogata

Over the past several years, I have been working on a book manuscript, which I have entitled *Object Lessons: Creativity and the Material Culture of Postwar American Childhood*. This study explores how a perception of children as imaginative and naturally creative was constructed, disseminated, and

consumed in the United States in the years after World War II. I argue that educational toys, public amusements, the plan and decoration of the smaller middle-class house, thousands of postwar schools, and special museums developed across the country were designed to cultivate an ideal of imagination. These objects and spaces are at once the material embodiment of the abstract social and educational discourse of creativity, and also actors whose material properties transformed popular understanding of childhood creativity during a crucial period of educational reform, economic expansion, and Cold War anxiety.

The dramatic rise in the U.S. birthrate from 1946 to 1964 thrust debates about raising and educating children into the public eye. Once specialized professional conversations on play, child psychology, school building, and teaching art and science were given coverage in mass-media publications. As the concerns of middle-class parents came to dominate the popular discussion, questions about nurturing individuality have acquired broad political significance. The discourse on creativity, therefore, is central to this historical moment and to the particular role children played in the Cold War imagination. If, as many suggested at the time, childhood creativity was an untapped natural resource, then it could be cultivated, harvested, and consumed, making the creative child both a sentimental and a strategic figure.

Scientific research on children's creativity expanded dramatically at precisely this moment of Cold War fear and social critique. In 1950 J. P. Guilford, in his inaugural address as president of the American Psychological Association, argued that although psychologists once neglected creativity,

it was quickly becoming a highly desirable economic value and government interest. Guilford's work stimulated a dramatic expansion in creativity research in the late 1950s and early 1960s. With support from the National Science Foundation, the U. S. Air Force, and major industrial enterprises and universities, creativity research quickly doubled and tripled every few years in the postwar era. One prominent theme was the somewhat paradoxical question of how to stimulate and then preserve the seemingly innate creativity of childhood.

The Romantic concept of the "object lesson," using things to stimulate the senses and thereby awaken curiosity, was a resurgent force in the educational ideals of mid-century America. Consumable objects, such as books, toys, art and science materials, playhouses, and juvenile furniture promised to release and enhance a child's imagination for parents anxious to provide "correct" amusements. But this ideal also affected the design of a large number of public playgrounds, schools, and museums and methods of teaching. Although children's material culture has long had didactic aims, these objects of the mid-twentieth century offer a means of understanding how the social value of creativity was normalized for specific cultural ends. By examining historically the mechanisms we adults have devised to cultivate, reinforce, study, and measure creativity in children (rather than essentializing childhood creativity as a "natural" fact), I maintain that we can learn more not only about postwar material culture, but also about the assumptions that underwrite our enduring preoccupation with creativity as an index of individualism.

## Elizabeth Simpson

Gordion, capital of the ancient kingdom of Phrygia, was ruled in the eighth century B.C. by the rich and powerful King Midas. Located in central Turkey, the site has been excavated by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology since 1950. The finds recovered from Gordion include spectacular pieces of carved and inlaid furniture and many fine wooden artifacts, most of which came from three royal tombs and a palatial building on the city mound, all dating to the period of Midas and his predecessors. The collection is now considered to be the most important group of well-preserved wooden objects recovered from the ancient Near East. I have been director of the project to study, conserve, and publish the Gordion wooden artifacts since 1981. In 2010, the first of my two monographs on the subject appeared (*The Gordion Wooden Objects*, vol. 1, *The Furniture from Tumulus MM* [Leiden and Boston: Brill]), detailing the fabulous furniture from the Great Tumulus, thought to be the tomb of King Midas or his father. I am now preparing the second volume for publication (*The Gordion Wooden Objects*, vol. 2, *The Furniture and Wooden Artifacts from Tumulus P, Tumulus W, and the City Mound* [Leiden and Boston: Brill]). In 2010–2011, I received a sabbatical-year fellowship for this project from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which allowed me to prepare the catalogue of objects and the layout for the illustrations (reconstruction drawings, black-and-white and color photographs, plans, and CD-figures). Our 2010 summer season of research took place in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, Turkey, with participation of the head conservator of the project, Professor Krysia Spirydowicz, Director of the

Art Conservation Program at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. This was the thirty-first consecutive season in the Ankara Museum for the Gordion Furniture Project team.

Tumulus P, the tomb of a prince, contained at least fifty small wooden objects and twenty-one or more pieces of wooden furniture. The furniture included several tables, one with geometric inlay (the "Mosaic Table") and another with ornately carved legs ("Tripod Tray Table"), an inlaid serving stand, eight or more stools, two footstools, an inlaid bed, a chair or throne, and fragments of miniature furniture. Also found were a wooden parasol, fan, box, bowls, plates, spoons, and a set of carved animals—royal toys for the tomb's young occupant. Tumulus W, the earliest of the three large tombs at the site, contained a magnificent wooden "screen," or serving stand, which was carved in openwork and decorated with bronze studs. Also recovered were several wood plates that were turned on a lathe, the earliest evidence for the use of the lathe from a securely dated archaeological context. Finally, the city mound at Gordion yielded numerous carbonized fragments from a serving stand, inlaid table, and other elaborate pieces of furniture. These rare wooden artifacts are the subject of my second monograph now in progress.

## Paul Stirton

Several years ago, when I was working on a film for the BBC, I interviewed the director of the National Museum of Transylvanian History in Cluj. The theme of the film was ethnic and cultural identity in Central Europe and how these categories are not easily mapped onto modern political borders.

Since artifacts and sites are often used in arguments over legitimacy, and archaeology has been a highly politicized discipline in the region, this section of the film was intended to subject the more emotional claims to rational examination. The interview was held in the main square of Cluj in sight of two key landmarks: the fourteenth-to-fifteenth-century Gothic church of St. Michael and the 1902 equestrian statue of Matthias Corvinus. Both of these monuments have special significance for the Hungarians who ruled Transylvania until the end of World War I, when the territory was handed over to Romania. Since then the Hungarian minority in Cluj have held on to their language, their customs, their religion, and sometimes even their currency, in the face of a concerted effort by the authorities to establish a new national identity based on a Romanian view of the region's history and culture. Much of this is rooted in a vociferous and bad-tempered debate as to which group had settled in the region first. The Romanians believe that they have an unbroken settlement in Transylvania since ancient times, having descended from the ancient Romans and Dacians, whereas the Hungarians claim to have arrived in virgin land in the late ninth century, when they settled and pacified the area known as the Danube Basin. The Romanian director of the historical museum explained to me in the film why, having found traces of an ancient settlement beneath the square, he now wanted to excavate the site, which would entail moving the statue and, if the Hungarians were to be believed, undermine the Gothic church.

This drew me to consider the ways in which objects, monuments, sites, and spaces become the focus of intense meaning and emotional attachment, far beyond any intrinsic aesthetic qualities

that they may have. The church, the statue, and the square are not particularly distinguished, but they have been imbued with a special significance that reaffirms the collective identity of the Hungarian community in Cluj, whereas to the Romanians they are obstacles to the establishment of a unified Transylvania under Romanian hegemony. In fact, the Romanians had for many years been setting up their own monuments in the area, thereby overpowering the Hungarian associations and "Romanizing" a site that resisted their political sovereignty. This appeal to archaeology was the last act of an ongoing political struggle.

The study of public monuments is not my specialty, but it seemed an interesting microcosm of the larger interethnic rivalry between these two groups. I was pleased, therefore, and a bit apprehensive, when I was invited to give a paper on this subject at a conference in Ljubljana in 2006. The wheels of academic publishing grind slowly, but over the years I have repeatedly returned to the topic. Finally, an essay will appear in Fall 2011 in a book entitled *Contested Pasts, Contested Presents: Heritage, Ideology, Identity in Central and Eastern Europe* to be published by Boydell & Brewer.

## Susan Weber

In researching the American circus show slated for Fall 2012, I came across a little-known chapter of circus history: the Works Progress Administration had a circus division active in New York from 1935 to 1939. Millions of New Yorkers, both children and adults, attended its performances. This was the only instance in United States history in which the federal government sponsored circus

performances. The main goals of the WPA Circus were to rehabilitate unemployed circus performers and to provide a professional-level circus for those who could not afford the commercial circus events. There is little or no mention of this important event in standard circus histories.

Researching this topic has taken me to the National Archives at College Park, Maryland, and the Music Division of the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., where I have discovered an important archive of materials that includes correspondence, official documents, press releases, photographs, and even drawings for costumes. A visit to the performing arts library of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center has led to the uncovering of volumes of press clippings preserved in the Hallie Flanagan Papers (she was the director of the Federal Theatre Project under which the WPA Circus operated). Perusal of theater magazines, such as *Billboard*, and specialty circus publications, such as *White Tops* and *Bandwagon*, in our own BGC library has provided additional information. The discovery of one unpublished master's thesis, John Stuart Fauquet's "Elephants on Relief? Circus and the WPA" (University of Wisconsin, 2007), and a chapter of a doctoral dissertation by Alan Kreizenbeck, "The Theatre Nobody Knows: Forgotten Productions of the Federal Theatre Project, 1935–1939" (New York University, 1979), chapter 3, "The Circus," has given me further insights.

My chapter on the WPA Circus is now a too-long account of this short-lived phenomenon in the history of the American circus. Footnote preparation and editing are about to take place. I'm thinking of turning this into a larger study!

## Ittai Weinryb

Among the many stories that intrigued me during the past year was this one, which especially preoccupied me: Chancellor Conrad, a late twelfth-century writer and the tutor of Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI, wrote to a friend in the monastery of Hildesheim about a legend in which Virgil made a fly out of bronze and placed it above the gates of Naples. The sole purpose of the bronze fly was to prevent other flies from entering the city. In the same letter, Conrad informs us that Virgil also made a bronze statue of a horse, which prevented other horses from having their backs broken under the weight of their riders. What is the common ground for these two objects? An object that prevents flies from entering the city and an object that preserves the health of horses: in what manner do these relate to one another?

My research on bronzes of the twelfth century has led me to believe that Conrad chose to describe these bronze objects because of the complex technique that was used to make them. Lost-wax casting is a technique in which molten bronze is poured into a mold and becomes, *ex nihilo*, an object. This technique appeared magical in the Middle Ages and undoubtedly explains the supernatural powers ascribed to Virgil's objects.

Another project in which I am engaged deals with votive objects, or *ex-votos*, which are made and given by church devotees either as a means of soliciting assistance from a deity or as a token of gratitude to a deity. In essence, the *ex-voto* is a material object that celebrates an immaterial event; a physical object that commemorates or anticipates supernatural activity. Of all the *ex-votos*, special casts of body

parts made of either wax or terra-cotta intrigue me the most. As with bronze objects, the molten wax or liquidized mud is poured into the mold, and once the material dries and hardens, the object appears as if by magic. Like Virgil's bronze objects, the *ex-votos* "work," so to speak, and have efficacy beyond their sheer appearance. *Ex-votos* function on behalf of the devotee: they present a similitude of his or her body part and can be expected to function as an agent of the live body part. Like the bronze objects, they are representations that have a function, that operate in the natural world, thanks to some life force we have yet to understand. In these two separate projects, objects appearing in the world after being cast from molds preoccupied my thoughts, as they did those of Conrad in the late twelfth century, because they demand a complex web of interpretation, where the material, materiality, molds, and functionality of these objects need to be aligned as a whole. Together, they pose questions to a large number of fields of study, such as art history, history of science, history of religion, and the cultural history of the medieval world.

## Catherine Whalen

I am at work on a book project entitled *Material Politics: Francis P. Garvan, American Antique Collecting and Cultural Nationalism* in the Interwar United States. Its subject is the remarkable life of Francis P. Garvan (1875–1937) told from the vantage point of his intertwined personas as an outspoken ideologue and an important collector of American antiques, the role for which he is best known today. A passionate enthusiast of early American decorative arts, Garvan amassed a renowned collection of furniture, ceramics,

glass, paintings, prints, sculpture, and especially silver. In 1930 he presented the collection to his alma mater, Yale University, where he envisioned it would become a source of patriotic inspiration to the nation and a bulwark against Bolshevism and Socialism. It has been a cornerstone of American material-culture scholarship ever since. During the same years in which Garvan built his collection, he held the two most important positions of his career, Alien Property Custodian during the World War I and later President of the Chemical Foundation. In the first capacity, he seized many German-owned businesses and much valuable intellectual property, including hundreds of important chemical patents. In the second, he engineered the formation of the Chemical Foundation, a hybrid public/private organization that licensed the seized patents to American manufacturers. Its stated purpose was to build up the U. S. chemical industry in order to protect the country from the "menace" of Germany's resurgent industrial expansion and future chemical warfare. However, critics contended that its policies primarily benefited large corporations such as DuPont, Dow, and the forerunners of Allied Chemical rather than national security. At the same time that Garvan instituted the Chemical Foundation, he also became an important player in the postwar "red scare," the anti-radical crusade launched by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and advanced by Garvan's protégé, J. Edgar Hoover.

Although Garvan has received brief mention in studies of decorative arts as well as in political, legal, and business histories, this project is the first to explicate the significant material and ideological consequences of his interrelated activities within the seemingly disparate arenas of his life,

which are isolated from one another in extant scholarship. It is also the first book-length treatment of Garvan. Rather than offer a conventional biography, I show how Garvan's political and business dealings informed his collection building, and I unpack the hefty symbolic freight that he believed American antiques carried in service of what was, by the 1930s, an ambitious project of cultural and economic nationalism. By doing so, I demonstrate how objects perform a material politics, that is, how they enact political agendas and operate as an important form of cultural power. I also reveal how, via collections, individual subjects manifest what philosopher Gaston Bachelard has called a material imagination, or, more specifically, how one imagines things in relation to oneself and oneself in relation to things.

In addition, this collector-driven study combines theoretical and empirical approaches that offer a new methodology for future scholarship on the history of collecting. Building upon the work of cultural theorist Mieke Bal, my interpretive framework theorizes collections as material narratives, meaningful sequences of objects created by selecting and placing things in particular relationships to one another, whether spatial, textual, or indexical. I position collectors as narrative agents of artifactual autobiographies, which I interpret in relation to other forms of self-representation, such as portraits, photographs, speeches, letters, publications, scrapbooks, genealogies, wills, and commissioned replicas of significant artifacts. I conceptualize collecting via the metaphor of alchemy, a transformative process through which individual subjects marshal groups of things to tangibly render abstract constructs including history, posterity, and morality, as well as personal identity vis-à-vis race and ethnicity, gender, class, religion, and nation.



## Research Institute

The numbers tell the story. During the twenty-five weeks of the academic year, the Research Institute of the BGC hosted twenty-eight seminars and lectures, seven lunchtime talks, six symposia or half-day symposia, five faculty work-in-progress seminars, and three digital salons screening new student and faculty work, as well as sixteen library workshops and eight digital tools workshops.

The Wednesday night seminars remain at the heart of the BGC's intellectual life. Large audiences of students, faculty, and visitors gathered, listened, and talked, sometimes lingering on into the night. A few long-distance visitors stayed overnight to talk with faculty, staff, and students at lunch the next day. Talk has been programmed into the institution's DNA, with the creation of informal opportunities for conversation, whether in a scholars' day associated with exhibitions or in a day-long discussion about "scholarly publishing and digital scholarship."

This was the first year of the two-year project inaugurated in 2010 with the Fundación Cisneros to help develop the field of Ibero-American material culture. Two half-day symposia focused on the study of material culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Peru, Mexico, and Argentina and on folk art and craft in Latin America from 1945 to 2000. Other symposia were devoted to the tenth-century Chinese nomad civilization of the Liao, the cross-cultural phenomenon of votive offerings, the convergence of mapping and digital technologies, and the exhibition on cultural contact on the late nineteenth-century Northwest Coast of America. This last symposium inaugurated the new Focus Gallery, an arena in which faculty can develop research seminars into exhibitions rather than journal articles, and as such it reflects the BGC's commitment to exhibitions as a research form appropriate to the study of artifacts.

The relaunching of the BGC's in-house journal as *West 86th* was another highlight of the year. Its first issue, and the launch lecture with David Freedberg's discussion of the brain's landscape, gave full representation to the broad scope of inquiry it foretells. *Cultural Histories of the Material World*, the BGC book series with University of Michigan Press, was pregnant this year with four books scheduled to appear in 2012.

Wednesday night seminar. Photo: Michael Nagle.

This year the Library acquired, in addition to monographs, two large collections of books: Jere Bachrach's library of Islamic material culture and history and Ted Dell's research collection on eighteenth-century French decorative arts. In addition, the estate of well-known historic landmark attorney, Dorothy Miner, donated hundreds of volumes from her personal collection, as did Christine Lilyquist, whose contribution included several on ancient glass, Mediterranean archaeology, and the Roman world.

This year saw the installation of the BGC's second post-doctoral fellowship program in collaboration with the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). This was designed to bring anthropology to the BGC and collections research to the museum's Anthropology Division. The first fellow was Aaron Glass, now a BGC assistant professor, and the second is Erin Hasinoff. Her research project is devoted to collecting Burma at the AMNH, and she is organizing a symposium in 2012 on expeditions in anthropology and a related Focus Gallery exhibition in 2013.

Finally, in July 2011 the BGC hosted its first National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for College Teachers, which is devoted to American Material Culture with a focus on nineteenth-century New York. Eighteen scholars were in residence for the month of July and were exposed to a rigorous and varied program organized by David Jaffee.

One of this year's speakers began his talk by saying, "I come to you from a great, crumbling university in the West, where there's no energy in the humanities. You may not know it, but you're where it's at."

Peter N. Miller  
Dean

Mask, attributed to  
sdiihldaa/Simeon  
Stilthda (ca. 1799–  
1889), Haida



## Second Cisneros Seminar: Folk Art and Craft in Latin America, 1950–2000

"Folk Art and Craft in Latin America, 1950–2000," the second edition of the Cisneros Seminar in the Material Cultures of the Ibero-American World at the Bard Graduate Center, took place on May 18. Created in conjunction with the Fundación Cisneros/Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, the seminar was established to advance scholarship on the cultures of the Ibero-American world through the study of the material artifacts of this region across space, time, media, and methodology.

In the United States, folk art has been a subject traditionally linked to Latin American art. Notable examples include the 1929–30 exhibit of Mexican fine and applied arts organized by René d'Harnoncourt at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*, the famous 1940 exhibition presented at the Museum of Modern Art, which devoted a large section to folk art. What was the continuation of this story in the second half of the twentieth century? How did folk art and craft from Latin America fit into the narratives of folk art and craft in North America, and where are things now? These were questions posed by *Folk Art and Craft in Latin America, 1950–2000*.

Participants included Paul J. Smith, director emeritus of the American Craft Museum (now the Museum of Arts and Design) who has been active in the American Craft Council since the late 1950s; Calogero Salvo, a New York City film maker and director of the award-winning 1982 documentary on Juan Felix Sanchez, the most important Venezuelan folk artist of the twentieth century; and Cándida Fernández de Calderón, director of Fomento Cultural Banamex, Mexico City. The evening's commentator was Francesco Pellizzi, associate of Middle American Ethnology at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, and the editor of *RES—Anthropology and Aesthetics*.

## An Interview with Ittai Weinryb

“Ex-Voto: Votive Images Across Cultures” was a symposium held on April 28 and 29. Ittai Weinryb, assistant professor, assembled scholars from the United States and abroad who discussed these objects as they relate to the material culture of the human world. In April he talked about this project and its purpose.

### What was the Ex-Voto Symposium?

The phenomenon of humans leaving votive objects to a saint or a deity can be found across histories, religions, and cultures: from archaic Greece to our era, from the Himalayas to Brazil. Given as a token of gratitude for a miracle performed or offered as a vow, the ex-voto is the most basic and fundamental form of material exchange between humans and their deities. This symposium is one of the few examples of trying to think about these objects and their relation to culture. In many cases, when scholars study, for instance, shrines, they focus on their architecture or the cult in which a deity is worshiped, but they have not traditionally studied the objects that people have left there, except to decipher them as structures of exchange and uncover their religious meanings. In its most basic form, this is the study of folk art. Interestingly, while votive objects are most often things that people make by themselves and leave in the shrine as part of their relationship with the deity, they also represent early examples of mass production. Objects were produced and then personalized by the consumer.

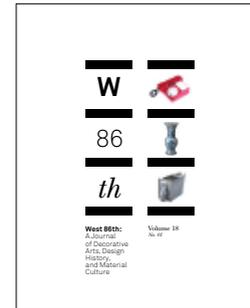
### How did you get interested in this project?

As a medievalist traveling the churches of Europe, I noticed the sheer amount of objects that people had left on the altars and continue to leave up until the present day. Across cultures people have left objects that symbolize a head or a torso, a hand or a foot, in an attempt to heal a budding physical problem, for instance. I have many examples that are Christian. I also have examples from ancient Greece, as well as present-day South America and Asia. Some of these objects are beautiful works of art.

### Where will this lead?

This marks the launch of a bigger project that will result in an exhibition centering on ex-votos in the main exhibition space of the BGC that is, for now, scheduled to open in 2015. This exhibition will, we hope, draw its material from private collections as well as from major museum collections in Europe. Both the symposium and the exhibition bring together a new appreciation for ex-votos within the context of material culture and, we hope, promote the comparative study of material culture.

## West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture



Published biannually by the University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Bard Graduate Center, *West 86th* (formerly published as *Studies in the Decorative Arts*) reaffirms the BGC’s commitment to expanding the conversation on the content, meaning, and significance of objects. *West 86th* will continue to present the type of material that was found in *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, but it will also focus on the wider crossroads where scholarship in the decorative arts meets design history and material culture studies. The journal aims

to enlarge the traditional canon to embrace the material culture of all periods and regions while maintaining the highest standards of scholarship. *West 86th* is open to new approaches and includes diverse fields of research, such as fashion, film, and graphic design, alongside the mainstream decorative arts—there is no narrow manifesto and no methodological axe to grind.

As well as articles and translations of primary sources, *West 86th* carries reviews that aim to do more than simply score points or provide a shorthand report on an author’s work. Books and exhibitions are analyzed and evaluated by specialists in the relevant fields, who also engage with deeper problems of meaning and feeling, to which even the casual reader should be able to relate.

The first issue of *West 86th* debuted in February 2011, featuring new scholarship from Nick Pearce on China’s first art exhibition, Pat Kirkham on the Saul Bass/Alfred Hitchcock collaboration, and Lourdes Font on the early career of Christian Dior. The second issue will appear in September 2011 with articles by Debora Silverman on Belgian art nouveau and imperialism in the Congo, Anthony Cutler on the art of working ivory in the tenth and the twentieth centuries, Sarah Guerin on Gothic ivories, Ben Kafka on Roland Barthes and paperwork, Miruna Achim on the origins of antiquarianism in Mexico, and Michael Yonan on the parallels (and contrasts) between art history and material culture studies.

*West 86th* is available in print and digitally through JSTOR. In addition, the website ([west86th.bgc.bard.edu](http://west86th.bgc.bard.edu)) not only includes a range of digital projects, debates, and related material that expand upon the articles but also serves as a free-standing forum for new scholarship. The editorial team is comprised of Paul Stirton, editor in chief, and Dan Lee, managing editor, relying on the assistance from other members of BGC faculty and staff.

# Academic Programs Seminar Series

## September

Robert Darnton  
*History, Harvard University*  
September 15  
**Bloggng, Now and Then  
(in the 18th Century)**

## October

Symposium:  
**Perspectives on the Liao**  
October 2  
  
Marian H. Feldman  
*Near Eastern Studies,  
University of California, Berkeley*  
October 6  
**The Materiality of Style:  
The Case of Ivories from Early  
1st Millennium BCE Syria**  
  
Symposium:  
**Rethinking Material Culture  
from the Americas: The Study of  
Material Culture in 18th and 19th  
Century Mexico, Peru, and Argentina**  
October 12–14  
  
James Clifford  
*History of Consciousness,  
University of California, Santa Cruz*  
October 13  
**The Second Life of Heritage**  
  
Fath Davis Ruffins  
*African American History and  
Culture, Smithsonian National Museum  
of American History*  
October 20  
**Do Objects have Ethnicities?:  
Race and Material Culture**

Angela Nuovo  
*History, Università di Udine*  
October 27  
**Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535–1601)  
and His Library: Book Collecting  
and the Republic of Letters in Late  
Renaissance Italy**

## November

David Nirenberg  
*The Committee on Social Thought,  
University of Chicago*  
November 3  
**Art's Struggle with Judaism:  
Medieval and Early Modern**  
  
Nuno Senos  
*Centro de História de Além-Mar,  
FCSH, Universidade Nova de Lisboa*  
November 10  
**A Ducal Inventory in  
Sixteenth-Century Portugal:  
From the Caribbean to China**  
  
Finbarr Barry Flood  
*Institute of Fine Arts, New York University*  
November 17  
**From Gilding to Whitewash:  
Aesthetics and Ethics of  
Distraction in the Early Mosque**

## December

Jeffrey F. Hamburger  
*History of Art and Architecture,  
Harvard University*  
December 1  
**The Hand of God and the  
Hand of the Scribe: Craft and  
Collaboration at Arnstein Abbey**  
  
Nicky Gregson  
*Geography, University of Sheffield*  
December 8  
**Souvenir Salvage and the  
Death of Great Naval Ships**

## February

Tristan Weddigen  
*Art History of Modern Times,  
Kunsthistorisches Institut,  
University of Zurich*  
February 8  
**The Warp and Weft of History:  
Raphael and Le Brun Reflecting  
on the Textile Medium**  
  
David Freedberg  
*Art History and Archaeology,  
Columbia University*  
February 9  
**The Materiality of the Brain  
and the Material of Culture**  
  
Melissa Hyde  
*Art and Art History,  
University of Florida*  
February 16  
**Needling: Embroidery and Satire  
in the Hands of the Saint-Aubins**  
  
Michael Shanks  
*Classics, Stanford University*  
February 23  
**Archaeology and Design History**

## March

Jeffrey Schnapp  
*Comparative Literature and Italian,  
Stanford University*  
March 2  
**The Crystalline Body**  
  
Mary N. Woods  
*Architecture, Cornell University*  
March 16  
**Eyes of the Flaneuse: Women  
Photographers and New York City,  
1890s–1940s**  
  
Valerie Hansen  
*History, Yale University*  
March 23  
**Assessing the Nature of the Silk Road  
Trade: The Material Evidence**

Symposium:  
**Mapping New Media**  
March 25  
  
Mimi Hellman  
*Art History, Skidmore College*  
March 30  
**Forms of Distraction: Towards  
a Decorative Imagination in  
Eighteenth-Century France**

## April

Symposium:  
**Objects of Exchange: Social  
and Material Transformation  
on the Late Nineteenth-Century  
Northwest Coast**  
April 1  
  
Jennifer L. Anderson  
*History, SUNY, Stony Brook*  
April 6  
**The Mahogany Connection:  
From American Rain Forests  
to New England Parlors**  
  
David J. Hancock  
*History, University of Michigan*  
April 13  
**The Body in the Library: Structure and  
the Collection of Useful Material in Early-  
Modern England and America**  
  
Lynn Meskell  
*Anthropology, Stanford University*  
April 20  
**Heritage as Therapy: The Materiality of  
Uplift in Post-Apartheid South Africa**  
  
Susan Taylor-Leduc  
*Trinity College, Global Learning Site,  
Paris, France*  
April 27  
**The “Pleasures of Surprise” in  
the French Picturesque Garden**  
  
Symposium:  
**Ex-Voto: Votive Images  
Across Cultures**  
April 28 and 29

# BGC Library

## Statistics for the Library

### Visiting researchers

66\*§ 64\*\*

Vistors included BGC alumni; graduate students from all over New York and the East Coast; curators and staff members from the Met, the Frick, and the Cooper-Hewitt museums; art dealers and auction house employees; fellows of the BGC research institute; and independent researchers of many stripes.

### Research questions answered at the reference desk

595 short\* 421 short\*\*  
215 research\* 152 research\*\*

### Research questions answered via email

166\* 147\*\*

BGC faculty tend toward the short or business-oriented questions while BGC students tend toward research questions, but the Library staff receives many types of questions from our constituencies each week. Longer or more involved research questions are often handled via e-mail.

### Interlibrary loans to other institutions

109\* 64\*\*

### Interlibrary loans borrowed for BGC researchers

74\* 56\*\*

The BGC Library participates in the OCLC Reseach Library Group's SHARES program, a collaborative ILL initiative of about eighty large research libraries, law libraries, and art museum libraries that work together to give first priority, extra attention, and set, lower-than-market-value prices to the ILL requests of their fellow members. The BGC Library lends only to SHARES member libraries, particularly to art museum libraries in the art-to-art subset. The Library is a net borrower and through membership in SHARES has been able to borrow unique materials for our readers from as far away as New Zealand and Australia.

### Research workshops offered

8 + 843 research course\* 23\*\*

In Spring 2010, BGC faculty and librarians team-taught Research Methods for first-year MA students as they prepared to submit thesis proposals. For the 2010–2011 academic year, we moved to a series of workshops offered

in conjunction with Visual Media Resources, Digital Media Lab, and Academic Programs staff, 8 in the fall and 15 in the spring.

### Library collections displays

4\* 3\*\*

The Library staff prepared several themed displays of material from the BGC Library collections in the nooks on the second and third floors, including exhibits on Japanese gardens, biographies of American landscape architects, American interior design manuals, stained glass windows, and Versailles.

### Acquisitions and Donation Highlights

The Library was pleased to receive the following gifts in the academic year 2010–11:

Christine Lilyquist, Lila Acheson Wallace Research Curator in Egyptology at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, donated hundreds of volumes from her personal collection upon her retirement from the museum in 2010, after 38 years of service. Among the books donated are several volumes on ancient glass, Mediterranean archaeology, and the Roman world.

The estate of Dorothy Miner also donated over 100 books from her personal collection. Dr. Miner was an attorney best known for her work developing legal protection for historic landmarks and was instrumental in the 1978 case of Penn Central Transportation Company v. New York City, which upheld the landmark status of Grand Central Terminal and set national precedents. However, she was also a passionate collector of ceramics and amassed a large library of volumes on the decorative arts and material culture. Among her donation is a nearly complete set of *Porcelain of the National Palace Museum*, compiled by the Joint Board of Directors of the National Palace Museum and the National Central Museum and published by CAFA Company Ltd, Hong Kong, 1961–69. This set is difficult to purchase and is a welcome addition to the Library's collection.

Heather Topcik  
*Chief Librarian*

\* 2010 calendar year

\*\* 2010/2011 academic year, through March 2011

§ The library was closed for construction from May to August, 2010

## Bard Graduate Center Gallery

This past year has been a tremendously exciting time for the BGC Gallery. In January, following the initial phase of our renovation project, we returned to a better-equipped building with more display space, a newly designed lobby, improved exhibition preparation areas, and more office space for administrative and gallery staff. While the Gallery was dark, we focused on programmatic changes in our exhibition schedule in order to better serve the public and to make the Gallery a unique pedagogical site. Three exhibitions were on view from January to August 2011, each one accompanied by a major publication and an extensive and diverse range of programs, which were presented both in the Gallery and outside our walls in schools throughout New York City. We were also actively engaged in preparing future exhibitions that will be on view through 2016.

The expanded display space in the Gallery now enables us to organize on average two exhibitions a semester. As Susan Weber indicates in the introduction to this Yearbook, one of these will be a Focus Gallery exhibition, a new initiative that began in January with the goal of better integrating BGC faculty and students in the research and planning of exhibitions. Although we have been located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan for many years, visitors assume the BGC is a museum. Certain aspects of our practice and the expertise of the Gallery staff suggest this; however, we do not have a permanent collection. Everything we show is on loan from museums and private collections throughout the world. What we do in the Gallery is closer in its mission to what in the German-speaking world is called a *kunsthalle*, although that term is frequently associated with the display of painting and sculpture, whereas the BGC is committed to the decorative arts, design history, and material culture. Ultimately what distinguishes our practice is how we curate exhibitions using objects to construct narratives, make arguments, and tell stories that elucidate different histories and lead to a better understanding of the different dimensions of everyday life.

Here, in the pages that follow, is a glimpse of what has happened in the BGC Gallery over the past eight months, including exhibitions, gallery publications, education programs, and gallery films.

Nina Stritzler-Levine  
*Chief Curator and Executive Editor, Gallery Publications*



## Main Gallery

### Cloisonné: Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties

Organized in collaboration with Les Arts Décoratifs—musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris

Curated by Béatrice Quette, Head of Adult Education, Musée des Arts décoratifs  
January 26–April 17, 2011

Last winter the BGC Gallery presented an exceptional selection of Chinese cloisonné from the renowned collection of the Musée des Arts décoratifs, together with loans from museums in the United States, including the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco; Brooklyn Museum; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Phoenix Art Museum; and Springfield Museums. Historically, cloisonné have garnered less attention from scholars than other arts of China, such as ceramics, bronze, and lacquer, and it is not surprising that exhibitions featuring Chinese cloisonné have been infrequent. This exhibition and the accompanying catalogue set out to re-elevate cloisonné and to dispel some of the myths associated with its production, function, and decoration in Chinese culture and society; and to explore the circumstances of its reception in the West.

Cloisonné exhibition.  
Photo: Michael Nagle.



Objects decorated with cloisonné enamel range from artifacts destined for Buddhist temples, such as bowls and vases, to refined and elegant objects intended for personal use. The exhibition brought into focus the issues of how, why, and for whom these enamels were produced, examining the changes in attitudes toward the reception of cloisonné over the centuries. Presented as a survey of cloisonné production from its beginnings in the late Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) to the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), the exhibition and catalogue illustrated the art of applying brilliantly colored enamels to metalware and the emergence of the technique in China. New studies by specialists and curators from the Palace Museum, Beijing, resulted in the reattribution of some cloisonné objects, a major contribution to cloisonné scholarship. In addition this exhibition included pieces newly attributed to the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties as a result of this research.

The exhibition was organized around three aspects of Chinese cloisonné production—decoration, form, and intended function. Distinct qualities about the decoration and form may indicate whether the piece was intended to serve a ritual, decorative, or utilitarian role. Certain motifs, such as the lotus flower, a Buddhist symbol of purity, appear again and again, assuming meanings according to the period in which the objects were produced. Shang-dynasty bronzes and Neolithic jades provided models for early Chinese cloisonné forms, to which were added updated versions deemed appropriate for domestic use in an ever-expanding repertoire of forms. The range of brilliant enamel colors also expanded over the centuries. By the nineteenth century, widespread Western interest, international expositions, and political events were having an impact on cloisonné production. The exhibition concluded with a selection of French cloisonné enamels from the nineteenth century featuring work by Ferdinand Barbedienne, who worked as a metalsmith for the Maison Christofle, and the painter James Tissot.

A film, edited and produced by Han Vu, revealed the fascinating enameling process, using never before seen footage taken at an enamel factory in Beijing, China.

*Cloisonné: Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties* was made possible in part with support from Mrs. Hélène David-Weill and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange.

## Focus Gallery

This year the BGC introduced the Focus Gallery, a program devoted to exhibitions curated by BGC faculty members with the participation of their MA and PhD students. These exhibitions derive from the multifarious research interests and expertise of the BGC faculty who serve as the curator. Created as a type of laboratory that encourages experimentation in display and interpretation, the Focus Gallery fosters new approaches to display and to the use of digital media and other forms of exhibition interpretation. To encourage collaboration between Academic Programs and the Gallery, the research and planning of each exhibition is conducted in the classroom where the designated professor-curator, students, and Gallery staff work together as a project team.

The inaugural Focus Gallery exhibition was the result of a new partnership between the BGC and the American Museum of Natural History—a two-year post-doctoral fellowship that focuses on the cross-fertilization between material culture, anthropology, and museum studies. *Objects of Exchange* approached the material culture of the Northwest Coast of North America as visual evidence of shifting intercultural relations.

### Focus Gallery

## Objects of Exchange: Social and Material Transformation on the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast

Inaugural Focus Gallery Exhibition

Curated by Aaron Glass, Assistant Professor, BGC

January 26–April 17, 2011

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of rapid and dramatic change for the indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast. Faced with increasing colonial interventions regarding commerce, Christianity, and settlement, they began to refigure earlier modes of cultural practice and artistic production to accommodate these new historical conditions. This was also a period of rampant museum acquisition on the coast, as thousands of objects—both quotidian and ceremonial—were transferred to global metropolitan centers. Yet the resulting exhibitions often dehistoricized the material in an attempt to reconstruct pre-contact cultural patterns or to classify tribal aesthetic styles. Although these collections

are typically seen to provide touchstones of “traditional” art, they represent repositories of objects that were witness to—and results of—significant cultural upheaval. *Objects of Exchange* focused on transitional or boundary objects that do not fit well-established stylistic or cultural categories but instead document patterns of intercultural exchange and transformation. Objects, all from the collection of American Museum of Natural History, such as decorated clothing, trade goods, and ritual masks, were selected to reveal the artistic traces of dynamic indigenous activity whereby objects were altered, repurposed, and adapted to keep up with their changing times.

The exhibition also marked a continued commitment to digital technology with more interactive media in the gallery and a growing presence for film and exhibition-related content on the BGC website. Graham White, Han Vu, and Kimon Keramidas designed a touch-screen program that featured an interactive tag cloud of key interpretation themes. Three films were created by BGC Films to accompany the exhibition, and the Gallery initiated its first use of an iPod application, which presented excerpts from interviews by curator Aaron Glass with First Nations artists and scholars. The full set of seventeen interviews was edited and produced by BGC digital technology designer Han Vu for BGC films and is available on the BGC website.

*Objects of Exchange* exhibition.  
Photo: Michael Nagle.





## Main Gallery

### Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010

Curated by Earl Martin, Associate Curator, BGC;

Paul Makovsky, Editorial Director, *Metropolis* magazine;

Angela Völker, Curator Emeritus, MAK, Vienna; and Susan Ward,  
Independent Textile Historian

May 17–July 31, 2011

*Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010* celebrated the extraordinary accomplishments in the field of textiles by one of the world's leading design companies. Textiles have been an essential part of Knoll's offerings since the company's earliest years, and this exhibition and the accompanying catalogue examined the largely untold story of the Knoll textile division.

The *Knoll Textiles* project provided especially fertile ground for new study. The exhibition and catalogue represented the culmination of more than four years of research that drew upon archives at Knoll and other sources. To compile the full history of textiles at Knoll, the curators undertook a comprehensive survey of period architecture and design trade literature, as well as extensive interviews with designers and executives who have worked with the company over the last seventy years. More than 250 objects were exhibited, having been drawn from diverse locations such as private collectors, designers, former Knoll employees, and museums, including the Brooklyn Museum; Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution; Cranbrook Art Museum; KnollTextiles Archive; Knoll Museum; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Minneapolis Institute of Art; The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Philadelphia Museum of Art. One particularly important group of textiles dating to the 1950s was discovered in the attic of a former Knoll employee where they had been stored for more than fifty years. Several key examples of original upholstery on Knoll furniture were located in private collections, and some of these pieces of furniture then underwent extensive conservation in order to present these important textiles as they were intended to be used.

The exhibition and catalogue considered the important leaders in design at Knoll over the last seven decades. Of particular focus was the period from 1945 to 1965, when Florence Knoll was at the helm of the company and built a reputation for achieving the highest level in design. She considered textiles as important to a total interior plan as architecture and furniture and her uncompromising vision was the basis for Knoll's leadership in the postwar period. Florence and Hans Knoll cultivated a significant group of textile designers to work for Knoll during this period, including Marianne

Strengell, Astrid Sampe, Noémi Raymond, Eszter Haraszty, and Sven Markelius. These designers and others contributed work that led the field of textiles for interiors after World War II.

The Knoll Textiles exhibition brought a large and diverse visitorship to the Bard Graduate Center, including many first-time visitors. We were especially pleased by the warm reception the exhibition received from professional designers and architects, as well as design historians and curators. A lasting impact of the exhibition, in addition to the catalogue, included the acquisition by the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum and the Philadelphia Museum of Art of several Knoll textiles that had been borrowed from private collections for the exhibition.

*Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010* was generously supported by Knoll, Inc. Additional funding was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

## Exhibitions in Progress

### Main Gallery

Fall 2012 *Circus and the City*

Curated by Kenneth L. Ames, Professor, BGC; Kory Rogers, Curator, Shelburne Museum; Susan Weber, Director and Founder, BGC; and Matthew Wittmann, Curatorial Fellow, BGC

Spring 2013 *The Georges Hoentschel Collection Between Paris and New York* (working title)

Organized in collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA)  
Curated by Deborah Krohn, Associate Professor, BGC; Ulrich Leben, Visiting Professor and Special Exhibitions Curator, BGC; and Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide, Curator, MMA

Fall 2013 *William Kent, 1686–1748: Designing Georgian Britain*

Organized in collaboration with the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A)  
Curated by Susan Weber Director and Founder, BGC, and Julius Bryant, Keeper of Word and Image Department, V&A

Spring 2014 *Artek* (working title)

Curated by Nina Stritzler-Levine, Chief Curator, BGC

Fall 2014 *Swedish Wooden Toys*

Curated by Amy Ogata, Associate Professor, BGC; Peter Pluntky, Independent Toy Historian, Stockholm; and Susan Weber, Director and Founder, BGC

Spring 2015 *Ex-Voto*

Curated by Ittai Weinryb, Assistant Professor, BGC

Fall 2015 *Charles Percier* (working title)

Organized in collaboration with the Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), Paris

Curated by Jean-Philippe Garric, Conseiller scientifique pour l'histoire de l'architecture, INHA and Ulrich Leben, Visiting Professor and Special Exhibitions Curator, BGC

Spring 2016 *Kitchen and Table in Renaissance Europe*

Curated by Deborah Krohn, Associate Professor, BGC

### Focus Gallery

Spring 2012 *Staging Fashion, 1880–1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, and Billie Burke*

Curated by Michele Majer, Assistant Professor, BGC

Fall 2012 *Styles and Practices of Technical Images*

Curated by Nina Samuel, Visiting Assistant Professor, BGC

Spring 2013 *Confluences: An American Expedition to Burma, 1935*

Curated by Erin Hasinoff, BGC-AMNH Post-doctoral Fellow in Museum Anthropology

Fall 2013 *Reconstructing Ancient Furniture*

Curated by Elizabeth Simpson, Professor, BGC

Spring 2015 *West Side Story*

Curated by Pat Kirkham, Professor, BGC

Fall 2015 *Before “Orientalism” Europe’s Polyglot Bibles (1500–1650) in Context*

Curated by Peter N. Miller, Dean, BGC

## BGC Gallery Publications

### Winter 2011

*Cloisonné: Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties*

Edited by Béatrice Quette, Head of Adult Education, Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris

The Bard Graduate Center and the Musée des Arts décoratifs, in cooperation with Yale University Press, published a full-color catalogue that documents advances in scholarship since the publication of the last important work in the field in English more than twenty years ago. Several essays by prominent scholars and catalogue entries are accompanied by reproductions of the exhibition objects, related illustrations, maps, a glossary, and a bibliography. The essays include Terese Tse Bartholomew, curator emeritus, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, on auspicious messages on cloisonné; Claudia Brown, professor at Arizona State University, on Chinese cloisonné and the relationship with painting; Rose Kerr, former keeper in the Far Eastern Department at the Victoria & Albert Museum, on the influences of form and decoration from Chinese antiquity; Lu Pengliang, PhD candidate at the BGC, on the role and function of cloisonné during the Ming and Qing dynasties; Béatrice Quette on form and decoration; Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, curator at the Musée des Arts décoratifs, on nineteenth-century French cloisonné enamels; Zhang Rong, director of the Department of Antiquities at the Palace Museum, Beijing, on Chinese imperial commissions; and Susan Weber, director and founder of the BGC, on the international reception of Chinese cloisonné from 1860 to 1930. This is the only publication to discuss cloisonné of such fine quality from such an extensive number of public collections and to include the work of both Western and Chinese scholars.

*Objects of Exchange: Social and Material Transformation on the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*

Edited by Aaron Glass, Assistant Professor, BGC

This fully illustrated catalogue includes a historical and cultural overview by Aaron Glass, research by BGC graduate students, and additional essays by specialists in the field. Margaret Blackman, professor emeritus

of the Department of Anthropology at SUNY Brockport, provides an intimate family portrait of the renowned Haida artist Charles Edenshaw; Kathryn Bunn-Marcuse, managing editor at the Burke Museum, Seattle, discusses the use of silver in economic and ceremonial contexts among the Haida and Kwakwaka'wakw; Megan Smetzer, independent scholar, reveals how Tlingit women adapted beadwork to crest display as well as the tourist trade; Mique'l Askren, PhD candidate at the University of British Columbia, offers a personal statement on twenty-first-century Tsimshian epistemologies; Judith Ostrowitz, independent scholar, presents the deeply intercultural vision of contemporary Haida artist Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas; Aaron Glass and Kimon Keramidas, assistant director for the BGC's Digital Media Lab, comment on the use of digital media in exhibition practice; and Nina Stritzler-Levine, chief curator of the BGC, introduces the experimental BGC Focus Gallery.

### Spring 2011

*Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010*

Edited by Earl Martin, Associate Curator, BGC

*Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010* is an extensively illustrated catalogue published by the BGC in collaboration with Yale University Press that provides an in-depth analysis of Knoll textiles. The contributors include Paul Makovsky, editorial director of *Metropolis* magazine, on the early years of the Knoll firm before the founding of Knoll Textiles; Susan Ward, an independent textile historian, on the context for modern textiles in America from the late 1930s to the early 1960s and Knoll's key contributions during this period; Bobbye Tigerman, assistant curator of decorative arts and design at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, on Florence Knoll and the Knoll Planning Unit; and Angela Völker, curator emeritus of textiles at the MAK, Vienna, on Knoll Textiles from 1965 to 2010. *Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010* makes a major contribution to modern design history by resurrecting the stories of more than eighty designers who created textiles for Knoll from 1942 to the present in an extensive biography section, which provides previously unpublished and critical information. The book's design is the innovative work of world-renowned Amsterdam-based graphic designer Irma Boom.

## Gallery Programs

The 2011 exhibition season at the BGC Gallery, which included *Cloisonné: Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties* and *Knoll Textiles: 1945–2010* in the Main Gallery and *Objects of Exchange: Social and Material Transformation on the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* in the Focus Gallery, was enhanced by a broad spectrum of exhibition-related programs, including lectures, conversations, study days, gallery talks, a concert, exhibition tours, and family days. Each program brought visitors into close contact with objects in the galleries, as they engaged in lively conversation with curators, scholars, artists, educators, and other specialists in the decorative arts.

### BGC Suitcase Exhibitions: Taking the Gallery to New York City Schools

How does an artist transform copper and cadmium into a radiant cloisonné vessel? Who splits and weaves cedar bark into baskets for gathering berries along the Pacific Northwest Coast? What is the symbolic meaning of the lotus blossom in Chinese decorative arts, and why is Raven considered a trickster figure in Tlingit culture?

This past winter, as part of an exciting outreach initiative, these and other fascinating questions were explored by students in New York City schools together with Tracy Grosner, gallery outreach educator, and BGC graduate student docents Alyssa Greenberg, Kimberly Vagner, Rebecca Mir, Ruthie Osborne, Sequoia Miller, Shahla Abdi, and Michelle Messer. The conversations were part of the BGC's Suitcase Exhibitions program that offers highlights of our Gallery exhibitions to K–12 students and educators and introduces school groups to the study of material culture. Two suitcase exhibitions, “Gifts from Our Ancestors: Native American Treasures” and “Radiance of China,” corresponded to our exhibitions *Cloisonné: Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties* and *Objects of Exchange: Social and Material Transformation on the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Filled with intriguing objects such as a Haida argillite carving, a sweetgrass basket, cloisonné bowls, and a Chinese silk robe, each suitcase generated excited anticipation when we rolled into the classroom. Students could not wait to see what was inside, to handle the objects, and speculate about what





they saw. Ultimately, these outreach visits prepare teachers and students to have a richer and more meaningful experience when they visit the actual exhibitions, and they contribute to a greater understanding and appreciation for the history and meaning of material culture.

For BGC students, this program provides an opportunity to gain professional experience as educators at work within a variety of school communities. Graduate student docents participate in training workshops with education staff before heading out to schools. They receive mentoring and guidance on best practices in museum education while interacting with students at all grade levels, and they learn to create connections between the school curriculum and the content of each exhibition. These important skills give BGC students a valuable advantage when they go on to seek positions in museums or educational institutions.

Since April 2010 more than 1,500 students in public and private schools across the five boroughs have experienced our suitcase exhibitions. This year, we welcomed many of those students to the BGC Galleries for tours of each exhibition and conversations in the presence of the actual cloisonné vessels, raven rattles, and other intriguing objects.

Rebecca Allan  
*Head of Education*

Right: "Radiance of China"  
 Suitcase materials.  
 Top left: Master weaver  
 Evelyn Vanderhoop (Haida)  
 with students at the study  
 day "Twine and Braid:  
 Materials and Meaning  
 of the Chilkat Blanket."  
 Bottom left: Student  
 Nicholas Balan with  
 cloisonné bowl.



# Gallery Programs, 2010–2011

## September

Gallery Talk  
**A Curator's View: Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties**  
 Thursday, January 27, 6–8pm

## February

**Evening for Educators**  
 Tuesday, February 1, 4–6:30pm

Lecture  
**Scholar Zhang Peeks at Yingying: Pictorial Aspects of Cloisonné and Their Relationship to Chinese Painting**  
 Thursday, February 3, 6–8pm

Lecture  
**The Artist in the Exchange: Charles Edenshaw, Master Haida Carver**  
 Thursday, February 10, 6–8pm

**Open House for Seniors**  
 Monday, February 14, 10:30am–3pm

**Open House for Neighbors**  
 Thursday, February 24, 5–8pm

## March

Conversation  
**Filled with Hidden Meaning: Sacred Iconography and Buddhist Ritual Objects in Cloisonné**  
 Thursday, March 3, 6–8pm

Conversation  
**Drawing on the Past: Activating the Legacies of Native Art from the North Pacific Coast**  
 Thursday, March 10, 6–8pm

Study Day  
**The Persistence of Ornament: Cloisonné in Contemporary Jewelry**  
 Friday, March 11, 9:30am–5pm

Lecture  
**Cloisonné in Qing Imperial Interiors and in the Qianlong Garden**  
 Thursday, March 17, 6–8pm

Family Day  
**Dragon Keeper with a Secret!**  
 Saturday, March 19, 12–4:30pm

Conversation  
**A Refined Eye: Important Collections and Connoisseurship of Chinese Metalwork**  
 Thursday, March 24, 6–8pm

## April

Concert  
**The Sound of Color**  
 Sunday, April 3, 2–5pm

Study Day and Film  
**Twine and Braid: Origins, Materials, and Meaning of the Chilkat Robe**  
 Friday, April 8, 10am–6pm

Lecture  
**Seeking the Beginnings of Cloisonné**  
 Thursday, April 14, 6–8pm

## May

Conversation  
**Working Fabric: Innovation in Design at KnollTextiles**  
 Thursday, May 19, 6–8pm

**Evening for Educators**  
 Wednesday, May 25, 4–6pm

Conversation  
**Suzanne Tick and Hazel Siegel: Material Thinking**  
 Wednesday, May 25, 6–8pm

## June

Conversation  
**Massimo and Matter: Shaping the Knoll Identity**  
 Thursday, June 2, 6–8pm

Walking Tour  
**Women and Modern Architecture in Midtown**  
 Saturday, June 4, 11am–1pm

Concert  
**New Room to Blue Room: Music of the Knoll Years**  
 Sunday, June 5, 2–5pm

Lecture  
**Florence Knoll: Textiles as Interior Architecture**  
 Thursday, June 16, 6–8pm

Lecture  
**Modern Furniture Conservation: Form and Material Challenges**  
 Thursday, June 23, 6–8pm

Lecture  
**Designing Woman: How Florence Knoll Created the “Knoll Look” and Revolutionized the Modern Interior**  
 Thursday, June 30, 6–8pm

## July

Forum  
**The Gestalt of Color**  
 Thursday, July 21, 6–8pm

Family Day  
**Design Your Own Textile!**  
 Saturday, July 23, 12–4pm

Forum  
**Photography and the Modern Interior**  
 Thursday, July 28, 6–8pm

## Outreach Suitcases

A total of 933 students across four boroughs have experienced the outreach suitcases “Radiance of China: Cloisonne Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties,” and “Gifts from Our Ancestors: Native American Treasures.”

**Bronx**  
 P.S. 86 Kingsbridge Heights School

**Brooklyn**  
 P.S. 133 William A. Butler  
 P.S. 20 Anna Silver School

**Manhattan**  
 Calhoun School  
 P.S. 199 Jesse Isador Straus School  
 Saint David's School  
 Elizabeth Irwin High School

University Neighborhood High School  
 P.S. 9 The Sarah Anderson School of Music & Art  
 High School of Art & Design  
 P.S. 87  
 P.S. 069 Daniel Tompkins  
 NEST+M Lower School

**Queens**  
 P.S. 169 Bay Terrace  
 P.S. 015 Jackie Robinson  
 J.H.S. 008 Richard S. Grossley

## Development

The Development Department at the Bard Graduate Center witnessed a successful year of fund-raising through both special events and major grant awards.

On January 19, 2011, the Bard Graduate Center hosted a benefit called *Mid-Century Modern: Designs for New Lifestyles* to benefit the BGC Scholarship Fund. The BGC was honored to have Eva Zeisel as honorary design chair. Over 250 guests came to Bonham's for a cocktail party and silent auction of classic items of 1950s design and fashion. The exhibition of auction items, curated by BGC PhD candidate Tom Tredway, came to life through the brilliant creativity of Isabel and Ruben Toledo who served as auction stylists. Some of the auction highlights included clothing by Bonnie Cashin, a tea service signed by Eva Zeisel, and a womb chair designed by Eero Saarinen for Knoll. The event raised \$145,000 for the BGC Scholarship Fund.

The Fifteenth Annual Iris Foundation Awards Luncheon for Outstanding Contributions to the Decorative Arts was held on April 6 at 583 Park Avenue. Over 150 people attended the event, which honored Shelley and Donald Rubin, John Harris, Juliet Kinchin, and Bernard Dragesco.

The BGC received a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund a Summer Institute on New York City Material Culture organized by David Jaffee. Other notable grant awards this past year included those from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts to support the exhibition, *Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010* and grants from the Windgate Charitable Foundation for scholarships for MA students studying craft-related topics.

The annual BGC Alumni Reunion took place this year on May 9 at the nearby restaurant Cotta. Over 70 past MA and PhD students gathered together to share what they have been doing since completing the program.

Susan Wall  
*Director of Development*

*Mid-Century Modern:  
Designs for New Lifestyles*  
Benefit for the BGC  
Scholarship Fund.





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|--|--|

Clockwise from top left: Anne Poulet and Armin Allen at the 15th Annual Iris Foundation Awards Luncheon. Ruben and Isabel Toledo, auction stylists at *Mid-Century Modern: Designs for New Lifestyles* Benefit for the BGC Scholarship Fund. Dr. Leon Botstein, president of Bard College speaking at the 15th Annual Iris Foundation Awards Luncheon. Dr. Peter Miller presenting John Harris with the Iris Award for Lifetime Achievement in Scholarship. *Mid-Century Modern: Designs for New Lifestyles* Benefit for the BGC Scholarship Fund. Eva Zeisel, honorary design chair, and Isabel Toledo at *Mid-Century Modern: Designs for New Lifestyles* Benefit for the BGC Scholarship Fund. Dr. Susan Weber with the awardees at the 15th Annual Iris Foundation Awards Luncheon: Shelley and Donald Rubin, John Harris, Juliet Kinchin, and Bernard Dragesco. *Mid-Century Modern: Designs for New Lifestyles* Benefit for the BGC Scholarship Fund.

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## BGC in the Press

Exhibitions at the BGC continued to garner rave reviews in the New York and international press.

The *New York Times* called *Cloisonné: Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties* “a ravishing exhibition.” The *Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, and *City Arts* also published glowing reviews. The exhibition was a feature of Channel Thirteen’s *Sunday Arts*, the magazines *Antiques* and *Apollo*, and *Asian Art Newspaper*. *Orientalism* magazine ran a feature article by the curator Béatrice Quette highlighting her approach to the dating of cloisonné objects.

*Objects of Exchange: Social and Material Transformation on the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*, the inaugural Focus Gallery exhibition, was a highlight of Eve Kahn’s March 25 “Antiques” column in the *New York Times*. When she visited the Gallery, Ms. Kahn spoke with curator Aaron Glass and the BGC students about how they uncovered the back stories of the tribal artifacts when, as Glass explained, “there is sometimes zero information in the archives.”

*Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010* was featured in the May issue of the *New York Times* style magazine, and Lance Esplund in the *Wall Street Journal* remarked on its “gorgeous array of archetypal furniture and textile designs.” The exhibition was also covered by Reuters, Thirteen’s *Sunday Arts*, the *New York Observer*, and *Elle Décor—Italy*; the websites of *Dwell*, the *Huffington Post*, and *WilsonArt*, and numerous design and textile blogs.

The following are excerpts from reviews.

On *Cloisonné*:

“Many human beings evidently share with the magpie a gene causing an irrational attraction to bright and shiny objects. If you suffer from this disorder, you will love *Cloisonné: Chinese Enamels From the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties*,” a ravishing exhibition at the Bard Graduate Center.” (Ken Johnson, “When Enamel Wares Adorned China’s Imperial Courts,” *New York Times*, February 18, 2011)

“For an institution dedicated to the study of decorative arts, design history and material culture, Cloisonné is a perfect way to reintroduce its main gallery after a yearlong renovation.” (Lee Lawrence, “Not Just Wares for Ladies Boudoirs,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 3, 2011)

“Many creatures make an appearance, among them an arrogant rooster, a pair of lions and a very annoyed-looking goose. An extravagant basin is enamelled on the interior with swimming fish. . . . A display to tempt the senses.” (Paula Weidigger, “Three Colours Blue,” *The Economist*, February 10, 2011)

On *Knoll Textiles*:

“Today this quiet giant is receiving the attention it deserves with a blockbuster exhibition. Unlike other exhibitions that have treated the entire cadre of the company’s products, including furniture and office systems, this exhibition pays homage to the most under-recognized divisions of the company.” (“Knoll Textiles at Bard,” *The Statement—by Wilsonart*, blog published May 24, 2011)

“Knoll Textiles, 1945–2010 . . . is the first comprehensive show devoted to the subject. Through a gorgeous array of archetypal furniture and textile designs from the ’40s through the present, it chronicles Knoll’s long love affair with fabric, as well as its ability to reinvent itself.” (Lance Esplund, “Showcasing Fabric of Art,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 25–26, 2011)

Full links to articles can be found on the BGC website ([bgc.bard.edu/about/bgc-press-room.html](http://bgc.bard.edu/about/bgc-press-room.html)).

Tim Mulligan  
*Director of External Affairs*

# The Bard Graduate Center Executive Planning Committee

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Photo credits: Front cover, clockwise from top left: Incense burner in the shape of a deer, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period. Les Arts Décoratifs - musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, gift of David David-Weill, 1923; *Prestini* upholstery on *Small Diamond* chair, ca. 1955. Antoinette Lackner Webster (upholstery), Harry Bertioia (chair). Plastic coated wire and rod frame, foam rubber cushion, cotton upholstery. Private collection. Photo: Bruce White; Dance legging. Unknown maker, Tlingit. Collected by George Emmons (1916). Cedar bark, mountain goat wool, leather, calico, puffin beaks. American Museum of Natural History; *Scotch Linen* swatch, ca. 1955. Franz Lorenz. Linen. Private collection: Photo: Bruce White. Page 1: Detail of “Good Catch” advertisement, 1965. Herbert Matter. Page 3: “Champion Vase,” Qing dynasty. Phoenix Art Museum, museum purchase and gift of Mr. Robert H. Clague, 1982. Page 36: Mask, attributed to sdiihldaa/Simeon Stilhda (ca. 1799–1889), Haida. Collected by Israel W. Powell (1881–85), Donated by Heber R. Bishop. Wood, paint, leather, metal. American Museum of Natural History. Back cover, clockwise from top left: Model house with pole, detail. Unknown maker, Haida. Likely collected by John Brady. Donated by Mrs. E. H. Harriman (1912). Wood, paint, metal. American Museum of Natural History; *Handwoven* swatch, 1953. Evelyn Hill Anselevicius. Wool and nylon. Collection of Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI (T2010.13.7 and T2010.13.11). Photo: R.H. Hensleigh; Qilin, Qianlong period. Les Arts Décoratifs- musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, gift of David David-Weill, 1923; Bag, Unknown maker, Tlingit. Donated by Michael Lerner (1969). Fulled wool, wool twill, cotton, glass beads, wool yarn, thread; *Rugby* upholstery on *Model 71* armchair, ca. 1955. Astrid Sampe (upholstery), Eero Saarinen (armchair). Wood legs, plastic shell, latex foam, cotton, wool and nylon upholstery. Private collection. Photo: Bruce White.



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