

University of Aberdeen

# Art History *Roundup* 2022-23



Welcome to the first annual roundup of highlights across teaching and research in the Art History Department at the University of Aberdeen! Staff and students alike, we've been very busy with various activities throughout the academic year so I hope that you will enjoy this review, whether you are a current student, a graduate who's reliving the experience but also looking to the next steps, or one of our wonderful alumni who continue to take an interest, to participate in our events and support the work of the department. There are sections on opportunities, including internships and other work experience, something we are aiming to expand on; also, on how to get involved with the student-run Art History Society. Our contact details are on the last page, so if you have feedback or ideas for future development, please do get in touch – we'd love to hear from you!

*Joanne*

**Dr Joanne W. Anderson**  
**Head of Art History**

## UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

It's been a fantastic year, working with students across all levels of the programme. We've seen the full return of activities and fieldtrips in courses, meaning that the teaching and learning happened on and beyond campus. We also brought in new courses that reflect the research specialisms of staff in the department.

Level 1 students taking the courses, **Introduction to Modern and Contemporary Art** and **Encountering Art: Museums through History** were in Special Collections and Marischal College Museum Store, Aberdeen Art Gallery, The MacManus and the V&A Dundee. Thanks to all the curators and museum specialists who shared their time, insight and expertise! No one forgets these direct encounters with art and display spaces. They are vital to developing interests and ideas for coursework, and for careers aspirations. But they are also opportunities to meet other people taking the courses, to talk to lecturers and tutors more informally and to enjoy our beautiful part of the world.





**Level 2 Art Matters: Materials and Techniques** students were also in Special Collections, learning about material processes for books, prints and photography, the latter via the George Washington Wilson archive. Likewise, pottery in the Marischal Store. Big shout out to our fantastic colleagues in Museums and Special Collections for all that they do with and for us! In the classroom, students took on practice-based learning challenges. Squaring up is a Renaissance painting technique and Piero della Francesca was our guide – along with Walt Disney! We also experimented with making binders for ultramarine pigment following Cennino Cennini's *Il Libro dell'Arte* (c.1400).



Students excelled themselves in **Curation: Theory and Practice** at Level 3, which is co-taught with colleagues in Museums and Special Collections. Creativity and working within practical constraints is at the heart of the course, and this was illustrated in the first session with a trip up to the SDRL Gallery. Throughout the course, we saw professional pitching of exhibitions and team spirit in abundance as evidenced by eportfolios and position papers. Here's Hope, Jaelle, Daiana and Kelley pitching their exhibition to the review panel comprised of Joanne (AH), Neil Curtis (M&SC) and Shona Elliott (Aberdeen Art Gallery).



Level 4 **Art and the City** students went to Berlin with Hans in October to explore memory and monuments culture first hand. It was an intensive three days on site with fantastic presentations, including at the Berlin Wall (pictured here), the Memorial to Persecuted Homosexuals, Sony Centre, the Soviet War Memorial and the Alte Nationalgalerie. Special thanks to our generous benefactors for supporting this vital engagement and community building. Also, to doctoral researcher, Genevieve Strong for her assistance on the ground. This is a rotational course, so it's Berlin for at least one more year and then we spin the wheel of European destinations!



Honours students taking Catriona's new course, *Surrealism and its Legacies in Contemporary Art*, visited the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh to engage with archival materials. Curator, Kirstie Meehan is pictured here with the group, introducing the objects. Next year, she will be running another new course, *Performance Art and its Aftermath*.



## AY2022-23 Prize Winners

In Art History, we have a range of prizes to award every year in recognition of excellent work in the discipline. This year's awardees, as confirmed by the exam board:



L2 - **Laura Llobet Verdes** is awarded The Felicia Murray Lefebvre Prize for her essay, *Is Post-Modern art "Good" or "Bad Art"?* (AH2001 What is Art?).



L3 - **Allie Glew** is awarded the Donal Byrne Prize in Art History for her essay, *Why did court rulers commission wall paintings for their residences?* (HA301A Italian Mural Painting and the Making of Visual Cultures, 1400-1500).



L4 – **Sara Misuri** is awarded the Derek Ogston Prize in History of Art in recognition of her proficiency in the History of Art subjects taken as part of her degree programme.

Congratulations all round!! Their achievements will appear on their transcripts in addition to the receipt of their prizes.

Information about the prizes for the next academic year will be circulated in September.

## ART HISTORY SOCIETY



The **Art History Society** has recently reformed under energetic leadership and is looking for new members to boost its ranks. They will be on the AUSA stands during the AY2023-24 Freshers Week but it's also possible to join now [online](#).

The Society comes together to talk all things art and is already undertaking local visits, with Aberdeen's lively street art scene a



prominent feature. Trips further afield are in the planning, along with guest speakers and workshops. If this sounds like your bag and you have ideas then think about getting involved!

For more information, contact **President Rosemary Brumett**, **Secretary Nicole Lucchita** or **Treasurer Anna-Maria Fernandez**.

## POSTGRADUATE NEWS



In September 2022, we launched our new **MLitt Christianity and the Visual Arts**, taught in collaboration with Divinity. This interdisciplinary programme, which draws on one of our key research strengths - namely art and religion - can be studied on campus or online. For more information, see the [MLitt prospectus page](#) and the [On-Demand Learning platform](#).

Aberdeen University, the city and shire offer a wealth of religious objects and sites to visit. In the first semester course, **Art and Christianity**, students were in UoA Special Collections to study some wonderful manuscripts with Karl. In **Displaying Faith**, we were up at the Treasure Hub with AAG curator, Griffin Coe to explore the new facility and view some selected works from the collection made by our students, including those by Albrecht Dürer and William Dyce. We also welcomed Amy Miller, curator of Aberdeenshire Museums, to discuss her career and recent work at Blairs Museum, part of the [Scottish Catholic Heritage Collection Trust](#).





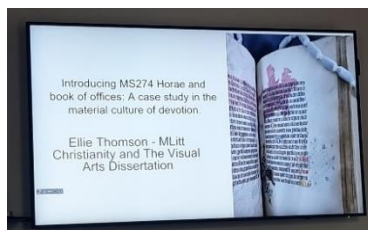
The weekly discussion videos or ‘Conversations with Karl’, as we dubbed them, for **Art and Christianity** were brilliant to make and tune into, especially for our online students. Karl’s a natural interviewer and we knew his acting degree would come in handy! Here he is with Helen – she’s just been posed a big



question about the printing press to get things started on a week about the Reformation and print!

In May we held our first **Art History Postgraduate Conference** with papers given by our MLitt and PhD researchers – topics ranged from medieval visual culture to contemporary art history, all with fascinating insight. Well done to Haley Turner, Ellie Thomson, Genevieve Strong and Freya Jensen for sharing their research and fielding our questions. We look forward to progress updates in a year’s time for some and to welcome new contributors to our growing PG community.

If you fancy being in their shoes, get in touch. Postgraduate study can be taken at MLitt, MRes and PhD level, full-time or part time, campus or distance/online.



## PHD SUCCESS

We are delighted to congratulate **Dr Kirsty Haslem** on successfully defending her doctoral thesis in May. Kirsty's thesis, "A Bellicose Burgh? The Social and Cultural Context of Martial Activity in Aberdeen, 1411-1651" was co-supervised by Helen Pierce and Aly McDonald in History. She's now in post as a Monument Manager for Historic Environment Scotland, based at Dumbarton Castle. All the best, Kirsty!

We also heartily congratulate **Dr William Paton** for the successful defence and completion of his doctoral thesis earlier in the academic year. William's thesis, "James Byres (1734-1817) as art-dealer and connoisseur" was co-supervised by Jane Geddes (now Professor Emeritus Art History) and Michael Brown in History. We cheered him on as he took to the graduation stage this week. Very well done, William!

## GRADUATION

The final flourish for UG and PG news is of course graduation, and we enjoyed a very happy afternoon at TECA on Wednesday 28 June. What a journey you've been on and here you are with degrees in hand and bright futures ahead. Keep in touch!



## EVENTS

**The Art History Research Seminars** kicked off in November with **Dr Sandra Cardarelli** (Art History Honorary Research Fellow) and her fascinating paper, *Visual Networks in Renaissance Florence: Filippo Lippi's Alessandri Altarpiece in the Met Collections*. If you missed it, check out the published article in the *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 2022, Vol.57 (1).

**Dr Barbara Barreiro Leon**, lecturer in Film-Visual Culture at Aberdeen, spoke to us about *Identity and Myth of the Spanish Folklorica in Art and Visual Culture* in January. Barbara's currently researching a book on the representation of cultural identities in Eurovision – she had backstage access to the event this year in Liverpool!

**Jon Reid** of Creative Aberdeen, NuArt, the Deen Scene and now general manager of Peacock, joined us on campus in February to talk about *Exploring Creativity in Aberdeen: Building Meaningful Social Mechanisms*. It was an energising evening and he encouraged participation in the local art and cultural scene.

Next up in March was **Dr Sam Rose**, senior lecturer at the University of St Andrews, who gave a rich paper on *David Hockney and the Early 60s Rediscovery of Representation*. Check out. Sam's most recent book is *Interpreting Art* (UCL Press, 2022).

The final seminar in early May was given by **Abigail Jubb**, PhD candidate at the University of York with a fantastic paper on *Reimagining the 'Thin Ideal': An Alternative Materiality of the Fashionable Silhouette, c.1880-1930*. Good luck Abi with the last stages and defence of your brilliant research project!

## GWW CENTRE FOR ART AND VISUAL CULTURE

Directors Silvia Casini (FVC) and Hans Hönes (AH) put together a fantastic programme this year! Some select highlights:



**Alberta Whittle, 'Lagareh – The Last Born', 2022.** Lux Scotland and Scotland + Venice film screening and discussion between dancer and choreographer Divine Tasinda and curator Eoin Dara (pictured above).

**Jo Macdonald**, PhD candidate Archaeology, artist and former professor of Anatomy here at Aberdeen gave a paper on *Drawing in Anatomy as Mode of Enquiry*.

**Isabella Engberg**, PhD candidate LLMVC, gave a paper entitled, *From Water Colours to Literary Nature Portraits: Ernst Haeckel's Dance with Romantic and Darwinian Views*.

**Jon Blackwood**, Reader and curator at Gray's School of Art (RGU), spoke on the *Problematics in Contemporary Art from former Yugoslavia*.

And in June, **ALL CHANGE! – new directions for Scottish Medical Humanities**. This workshop at Foresterhill explored the process, outcomes and possibilities through scholarship and creativity.

Keep an eye on the [centre website](#) for next academic year!

## GEDDES-HARROWER-CHAIR IN GREEK ART & ARCHAEOLOGY



In March, we welcomed the **Geddes-Harrower-Chair in Greek Art and Archaeology**, the first incumbent in over 10 years. **Professor Milette Gaifman** of Yale delivered four lectures on *How to Classify a Monument*, centring on the choragic temple of Lysicrates in Athens. It was a series of lectures that drew a wide and diverse audience. The lectures were also built into Hans' new honours course, **Climates of Classicism: Scottish Travellers to Greece, 1770-1880** including a masterclass with Milette. Now we know what's crowning Aberdeen Arts Centre we will never look at it in the same way again...



The G-H committee is now working on the 2024 iteration with an exciting speaker lined up – we'll keep you posted!

## OPPORTUNITIES



We are keen to create, support and facilitate as many opportunities as we can for our students to help with their career aspirations. This begins with the local. This year students have worked as interns at the university, including for the Barbara Rae exhibition in the SDRL Gallery, and as volunteers in the Zoology Museum. In the city, the Art Gallery regularly takes on volunteers, as do big cultural events such as Spectra and Nuart. Well done to everyone who got involved! One student featured on BBC Alba's *Tog do Shuil* (Painted City), 2022. We'll keep students apprised of opportunities as they arise.

We are liaising with the Grampian Hospitals Art Trust based at Foresterhill Hospital in Aberdeen with the aim of identifying voluntary work experience opportunities. Ainize Moschynski is a graduate of the department and is now collection manager at GHAT. It's a fascinating collection and speaks to the vital role of art for well-being and in care environments.

We are also working on international opportunities. In the next academic year, we will be advertising to honours students a 6-week paid internship at the Musée national d'histoire et d'art Luxembourg (MNHA), thanks to the generosity of one of our alumni employed there. More to come on this front when we are back in session, including a talk about the internship!



We also run careers events to bring students into contact with academics and museums professionals. In March, Helen co-organised and hosted with the Careers Service and Alumni Relations two events. They considered both degree-specific and transferable skills for employability and drew on the experiences of our graduates; speakers included Liz Louis now at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (Art History-English, 2013) and Lauren Mellor (Art History-English, 2015).

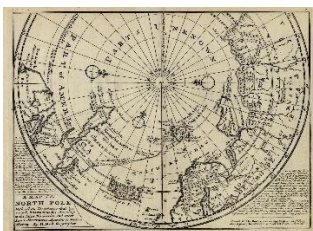
The Careers and Employability Service at the University offers a wide range of resources that can be used throughout student studies – from job opportunities to advice and support in making applications. Check out the [website](#) to see what's there, including the ABDNConnect Experience Programme.



## STAFF NEWS



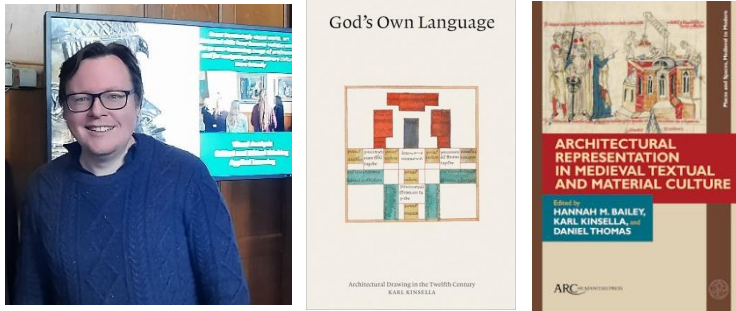
We welcomed **Dr Catriona McAra** to the department in November 2022 as Lecturer in Modern and Contemporary Art History, with her second book, *The Medium of Leonora Carrington* (Manchester UP) hot off the press. Catriona is a leading specialist in Surrealism, feminism and contemporary art curating. She recently co-curated the exhibition, *Sincerely Valentine* at the V&A Dundee. Catriona's had a couple of book launches, the first on Carrington's birthday (6 April) and recently presented at the *Women and the Natural Environment* webinar for the Scottish Women in the Arts Research Network.



In October, we'll be welcoming **Dr Isabelle Gapp**. Issy joins as an Interdisciplinary Research Fellow of the University, specialising in Arctic environmental art history and the intersections of landscape, gender and climate change. She was previously postdoctoral fellow in Arts and Science at the University of Toronto and has a forthcoming exhibition there. Her first book, *A Circumpolar Landscape: Art and Environment in Scandinavia and North America, 1890-1930* (Lund Humphries) is out in late 2023.

And as for the rest of the AH-Team...

**Dr Karl Kinsella** has just published his first book, *God's Own Language: Architectural Drawing in the Twelfth Century* (MIT Press). Congratulations, Karl! We feel a double book launch with Catriona coming in September...



Karl also published a co-edited volume, *Building Meaning: Medieval Architectural Representations* (Arc Humanities Press, 2023). This was in addition to the chapters, 'Material Exegesis and the Twelfth-Century Church' in *Lost Artefacts from Medieval England and France: Representation, Reimagination, Recovery* (York UP) and 'Visual Exegesis at St. Victor and its Jewish Influences', in *Studies in the Sacred Page: Encounters with Medieval Manuscripts, Texts, and Exegesis*. Karl also presented research papers in Jerusalem, London and Cambridge.



**Dr Hans Hönes** has just been promoted to senior lecturer – more congratulations! Hans completed his Paul Mellon Research Collections Fellowship, *The Fundaments of Knowledge: Art History in Britain between c. 1940-70*. For this he curated the display, *Fleeting Encounters: British Art and the Connoisseurial Gaze* at the PMC in London – download the [booklet](#) - and published an open access article: [The Rise and Fall of the “Clerks”: British Art History, 1950–1970](#), in *British Art Studies*, issue 24 (2023).

He also published “British Art and British Art History” in *Kunstchronik* (special issue *Nationale Kunstgeschichten und ihre Institutionen*, June / July/August 2022); and “Wölfflin’s North: The Burden of Belonging”, *Journal of the Northern Renaissance* (2023).

Hans gave papers on ‘Prehistoric art, climate change and 19th-century geographies of culture’ at the conference *Visualising Lost Origins*, King’s College London; ‘Archives and the Economy of Knowledge’ at *The Intellectual Histories of Art and the Archive*, PMC London, both May; and ‘Art History in Britain: A Scottish Innovation’ PMC Research Lunch Seminar in October.



**Dr Helen Pierce** participated in the "John Michael Wright and the Art of Invention" Knowledge Exchange Workshop at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh in November; a conference follows in October 2023. She published an article, 'The Pope and the Grindstone: A Jacobean Satirical Print' in *Print Quarterly*, vol. 40 (2022), 131-137.



**Dr Joanne Anderson** gave a lecture for the School of Art History Research Series, University of St Andrews, in October: 'Devotional Deposit: Mary Magdalen and Mining in the Late Medieval Alps'. In December, she participated in the *Mountains in the Humanities: Past, Present and Future Pathways* knowledge exchange [workshop](#), a final event of the Leverhulme Trust Research Project, 'Mountains in ancient literature and culture and their postclassical reception'. Joanne is now contributing to a multi-authored and cross-disciplinary article on the future of mountain studies. Her research spotlight on mountains, medieval art and pilgrimage can be read [here](#).

Special thanks to **Kathleen Brebner**, Art History's brilliant administrator for all her hard work on everyone's behalf! We've seen a lot of change yet again, and not least with the arrival of MyAberdeen Ultra. Thank you for navigating the challenges and ensuring that everything ran as smoothly as it did. Huge thanks also to **Kate Smith**, School Administration Manager, and the whole admin team. We wish you all a lovely, peaceful summer.



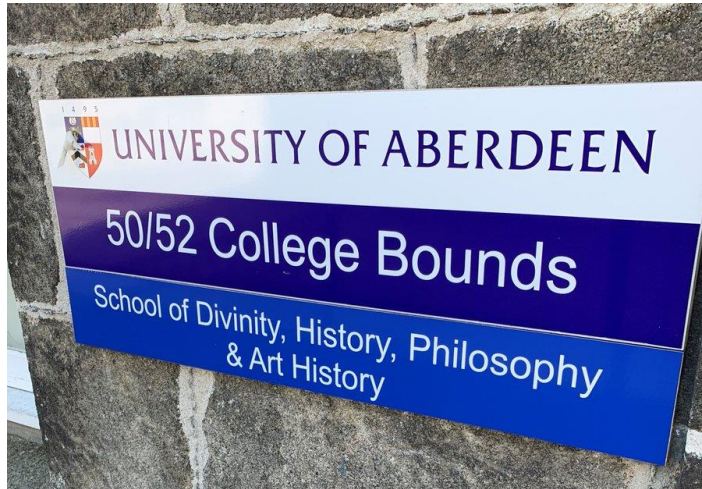


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All images courtesy of the Art History Department.

Front and back covers – [Fantastic Planet - Parer Studio for Spectra](#) 2023 in Aberdeen Art Gallery; [NeSpoon for Nuart](#) 2023.

