People

Sarah James joined the Department in October as Departmental Lecturer for one year. Sarah works in the area of photography, theories of vision, and the relationship between aesthetics and politics. She is currently completing a book entitled German Photography: The Demands of Realism and the Aesthetics of Objectivity, examining the documentary photographic art of both key and neglected postwar East and West German practitioners in relation to the concepts of realism and objectivity. Other research interests include German Modernism, the art of the Cold War, and photographic art from the 1960s to the present day. Before joining the Department at Oxford, Sarah was an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, and has taught there, at the Courtauld, and at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Her articles have been published by Art History and Photographies, and she is a regular contributor to Art Monthly, Art Review and Frieze.

Sarah is with us while Geraldine Johnson is on research leave, spending the year as a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellow completing a book on how works of art, especially sculpted objects, were physically encountered by their original beholders in late Medieval and Early Modern Italy. Rather than focusing only on how such works were seen, she is instead considering how they were also touched, held, caressed and walked around by men and women in a variety of public and private, sacred and secular, artistic, social and political contexts. By attending to tactility (and other senses as well, such as hearing, taste and smell) and by contesting the ‘ocularcentric’ assumptions often associated with this period, her book will provide important new insights into Late Medieval and Early Modern art and culture.

Staff Publications

Craig Clunas’ book Elegant Debts: The Social Art of Wen Zhengming (1470-1559) which was published in 2004 by Reaktion Books, has just been published in Chinese translation by Rock Publishing, in Chinese - this is the first of his books to be published in a Chinese version. The translation was done by a team of three, one member of which was Liu Yu-jen, a doctoral student in the History of Art Department here at Oxford.


A new edition of Geraldine Johnson’s Renaissance Art: A Very Short Introduction (originally published by Oxford University Press in 2005) is to be published by Sterling Editions (a division of Barnes and Noble) in the U.S. in 2010. She also has an essay on sculpture and tactility to be published in an Oxford University Press volume on art and the senses in 2010.

Conferences

Hanneke Grootenboer will be presenting a paper at the next AAH conference in Glasgow in April on 'Dwelling in Painting? On Heidegger and Bachelard'.

Sarah James will also be presenting a paper at Glasgow, on 'Paper Revolutions: Late Modernism in East Germany?'.

Geraldine Johnson gave a paper on the photography of sculpture at a conference on photographic archives and the History of Art at the Courtauld Institute during the Summer. She will be giving a paper at the College Art Association conference in Chicago in February 2010, on sculpture and the collector’s touch in Renaissance Italy.
Projects

Oxford Internships

The Department, in partnership with a number of University Museums and Oxford Colleges, is setting up an internship scheme giving Second Year BA students the opportunity to be part of projects involving the care and display of objects in Oxford collections. Collections currently signed up are Christ Church Picture Gallery and Pembroke JCR Collection. The first internships will take place in HT11.

Your Paintings

Gervase Rosser has been collaborating with the Public Catalogue Foundation to develop a website which will make publicly available all the oil paintings in public collections in the United Kingdom. The site, to be called YourPaintings, and to be launched early in 2011, will be hosted by the BBC. Also working on the project this year has been Aimee Blackledge, who has concurrently been completing her DPhil thesis in the Art History Department on the image of the artist in eighteenth-century England.

Artist in Residence

This term the St John's artist in residence has been Mary Lum, an American artist whose work has been exhibited regularly in New York, Boston, and Paris and who teaches drawing at Bennington College in Bennington, VT. At the start of the term Mary gave a very well-received talk at John's, with a large number of History of Art undergraduates and M.St. students in attendance. The talk detailed her current work, which examines the poetic undercurrent of urban space using a strategy based on fragments and multiple viewpoints, collages and paintings, photographs, wall drawings, and short videos. Towards the end of the term Mary mounted an exhibition in the St John's Barn Gallery of work produced during the residency.

Museums

The Ashmolean Museum reopened on 7th November, following a major multi-million pound redevelopment funded with a £15 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), additional major support from the Linbury Trust, and numerous trusts, foundations and individuals.

The first major temporary exhibition, The Pre-Raphaelites and Italy, will run from 15th September to 5th December 2010.

The exhibition will explore the Pre-Raphaelites' interest in Italian literature and landscape for the first time and will feature cartoons and preparatory drawings for this project, which have never been exhibited before in England.

Student News:

Students formed the Edgar Wind Society at the end of last academic year to provide a social and intellectual base for all those within the University interested in the study and appreciation of visual culture.

The Society offers a number of activities for the student community, including two social events per term with performance art, installations, and guest speaker; a magazine including visual essays, features and reviews on exhibitions, news and information on the broader Oxford art scene, published once a term; and subsidised trips to galleries and museums throughout the country. In MT they held a successful event with Charles Saumarez Smith of the Royal Academy of Arts and the first edition of the 'Insight' magazine was also published. They have a number of events coming up this term, including conversations with JJ Chesterfield, Roger Hiorn and Dr Simon McKeown. If you would like to get in touch, you can email them at wind.society@gmail.com

Yu Ping Luk (DPhil 2007-, Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang (1493): Daoist Art, Ritual and the Domain of a Ming dynasty Empress) volunteered as an intern at the Asia Department of the British Museum during the summer of 2008. She conducted research for the Keeper of the department, Dr Jan Stuart, on the subject of seasonal flower images. It was for her work in this area that she was nominated and was runner-up in the London Museums Hub: Volunteers in Museums Awards 2009, ‘Bringing Innovation’ category.

Alumni news:

Hilary Floe (BA 2006-9) is this year's Waddesdon Manor/Department of History of Art Research Intern. Since September she has been working as part of the Collections Department, organising and researching for two upcoming exhibitions which she says has been "a fascinating experience which gives me obscure enthusiasms for, among other things, fob-seals and the 18th-century political board game!"

Nicola McCartney (MSt 2007-8) will be returning to the Department in February to talk at the Careers Seminar about her varied work experience since leaving Oxford, including arts PR work, notably for Frieze Art Fair. Nicola is a practising artist and currently writes for introducingart.com. She also gave a talk at the Ruskin School last year on 'Collective Identity and Authorship in Contemporary Art'.

And finally:

For details of forthcoming lectures and seminars, including Departmental Research, Art History Research (Ashmolean) and Slade, and news, keep checking the Departmental website.