

Cite this article: John P. Bowles, Naomi Slipp, and Jacqueline Francis, “Editors’ Welcome,” *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2020), <http://editions.lib.umn.edu/panorama/article/editors-welcome-6-2>.

Editors’ Welcome

It seems hard to believe that when we began drafting the Executive Editors’ Welcome for our June issue it was the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. At that point in time, it seemed like quarantine would last for a month or two. Here we are again, in late fall, facing mounting stress and anxiety caused by the catastrophic effects of global warming, a divisive election season, and a pandemic that surges forward. We exist in a transformed cultural and academic landscape, with uncertainty at every turn about what the future might hold. In this space, we turn to art—which can mount a challenge, serve as a voice in the darkness, and act as a balm that soothes—and we turn to community, to AHAA, and to each of you.

As described in the Anniversary section of this issue, in 1979 a maverick group of Americanists convened in a CAA conference room to discuss pressing topics related to studying the arts of the United States. This renegade bunch was the seed of what would become AHAA. Forty years later, some of these same individuals reflect back upon that pivotal moment, joined by voices from scholars working in adjacent fields of study. Together these contributors and AHAA’s current co-chairs, Louise Siddons and Jeffrey Richmond-Moll, consider the organization’s past and imagine its futures.

At *Panorama*, we are likewise celebrating an anniversary. It has been a little over five years since Issue 1.1 was published in February 2015. Editors reflect upon how *Panorama* came to be, highlight some of the early hurdles, examine the journal’s core strengths and limitations, and celebrate our growth. What have we learned? Where do we go now? As we look to the future and consider our next five years, we also discuss the challenges of our field and the ways in which *Panorama* has a responsibility to leverage our position and do the important work of promoting and publishing diverse scholarship and supporting scholars at all career stages and with various institutional affiliations.

In order to ensure the journal’s long-term financial stability, we are excited to announce the launch of a [sponsorship campaign](#) to coincide with our five-year anniversary. While a portion of our budget is sustained by membership dues from our parent organization, the Association of Historians of American Art, we rely heavily on revolving grants to support our annual operating costs. We are grateful for these grants, yet we cannot rely on them for long-term sustainability. We seek individual gifts in any amount to contribute toward a \$100,000 Reserve Fund that will support non-grant-funded operating expenses, when necessary. These costs may include professional editing services, website development and support, and subventions for media reproduction fees for our authors. Sustainer pledges of \$500 and above will be acknowledged on our website. We aim to raise \$25,000 in 2020–21, and we are thrilled to announce that the members of our Editorial Board have unanimously committed to this initiative in order to tangibly demonstrate their belief in the importance of the journal. We realize that this is a difficult time in which to petition people to give—the economic effects of COVID-19 are having disastrous effects on cultural institutions and

higher education. However, we must create a firm financial footing for the journal. We hope that you will join us in celebrating *Panorama's* first five years by supporting this campaign and helping us plan for the future.

As might be expected, the content in this issue deeply relates to our current moment. For example, Jenni Sorkin’s “Be a Generalist!” broadly responds to several questions raised in *Panorama* over the years: What is the work of art history as a discipline? How do we convey what is American art history in our pedagogy? Where do we find new projects? To teach her students at the University of California at Santa Barbara about the state’s visual cultural history, Sorkin researched the understudied subject herself. The forthcoming survey text *Art in California* is the culmination of her efforts; it also evidences the need to train a new generation of students about the wide and expansive terrain of American art.

We are hanging up the hat on “Bully Pulpit” and unveiling “Colloquium.” From the start, the Bully Pulpit admirably filled its role as a place for short scholarly and polemical essays, “a unique space for argumentation and investigation, a space where Americanists can jointly discuss pressing problems or difficult questions—be they scholarly, curatorial, pedagogical, or professional in character — of general interest to the field.” We are reckoning with the ways that “bully pulpit” brings to mind a cudgel and modes of behavior that are quite the opposite of the collegial exchange we intend to foster. Furthermore, the ineluctable link to Theodore Roosevelt, America’s 26th President, gives us pause in 2020. Years ago, the founding editors of *Panorama* acknowledged the Rooseveltian origins of this term and sought to depart from such resonances. However, in the spirit of reflection and self-criticality—which form the foci of this issue and our current moment more broadly—we also recognize the colonialism, militarism, and white nativism that characterized Roosevelt’s presidency and military campaigns. We recognize the urgent need to detach our language from associations of oppressive power; indeed, our editorial objective has always been to create a section where interpreters of American culture from a variety of backgrounds would address important topics. Taking its place is a conversational section titled Colloquium, which seeks to carry on the work of the Bully Pulpit, albeit with a new—and, we hope, more welcoming—name.

In this issue of *Panorama*, readers will also note a style change adopted by other publications in recent months: the capitalization of the first letter in the words Black and Indigenous when referring to ethnicities. The Associated Press, the New York Times, and other journalistic outlets explained the decision as one that reflects identities formed around a shared culture, ethnicity, and heritage. The term “white” will remain in lowercase, as its capitalization has signaled support of white supremacy, especially as expressed in the literatures produced and promoted by hate groups in the United States.

Guest editors Anne Monahan and Isabel Taube take up the idea of self-criticality in their introduction to Colloquium, describing how the experiences of 2020 encouraged them to consider how “assumptions embedded in our research, writing, and the shape of our field perpetuate, however inadvertently, biases and stereotypes we mean to dismantle.” Assembled through an open call, the six contributors highlight moments of self-reflection, share lessons on how to decenter oneself and the discipline, and inspire readers to likewise engage in productive self-examination. These authors consider the responsibilities that institutions carry; encourage “an intellectually honest call-out culture”; outline the constraints placed on research areas and specialist subjects for art historians of color; query how to decolonize efforts to decolonize; highlight the reception and representation of Asian

American art; invite readers to consider non-human actors, specifically animals, in their studies; and consider historical subject position, inviting scholars to embrace and reflect *the now* more fully in scholarship. These essays operate as a call to action, engaging contemporary debates and encouraging personal reflection and institutional change across our discipline. In the spirit of open dialogue, reflection, and self-criticality we invite and welcome letters to the editor from our readers. Such letters should respond to particular themes or topics from an issue, article, or suite of essays and may be published in a future “Talk Back” section. See our new [submission guidelines](#) for “Talk Back” for more information about how you can write to us and have your voice heard!

The “In the Round” for this issue, carefully organized and guest-edited by Emily Voelker and Monica Bravo, presents a timely reconsideration of Alan Trachtenberg’s foundational 1989 text *Reading American Photographs*. In “Re-Reading American Photographs,” the guest editors organize ten case studies that examine what “American” means in relation to the fields of photo history and American art history today. Contributions challenge traditional “American” geographic boundaries: Erin Pauwels explores José María Mora’s nineteenth-century studio photographs in the context of what she calls a “migrant surround”; Sarah Bassnett examines Susan Meiselas’s 1980s *Crossings* series on the US-Mexico border alongside the photographer’s work done in Nicaragua and El Salvador asking why we assume American photography stops at the border when US policies impact the entire hemisphere; and Josie Johnson considers the Soviet images of documentary photographer Margaret Bourke-White. Several essays deal with sovereignty, photographic portraiture, and settler colonialism, including photographs of Siñté Máza (Iron Tail), a Lakhóta Wild West performer, that reveal evidence of the roles he played in his representation, discussed by Emily Burns; Charles Milton Bell’s 1880 photographs of a delegation of six Apsáalooke leaders as re-read by Wendy Red Star and Shannon Vittoria; Ansel Adams’s *My Camera in the National Parks* (1950) as a vehicle of US imperialism in the Southwest and on Hawai’i proposed by Lauren Johnson; and anthropologist Frank Speck’s early twentieth-century album of Northern Ontario-based Temagami examined by Siobhan Angus. Finally, articles address materiality: Elizabeth Hutchinson explores the agency of localized material conditions of air, water, and light, which physically limited the efforts of survey photographers; Katherine Mintie highlights a robust transatlantic trade in early photographic materials via *The Philadelphia Photographer*; and Michelle Smiley asks how daguerreotypes failed ethnographers seeking to use them as objective evidence for the racist theory of polygenesis at the same time P. T. Barnum used similar images to introduce uncertainty into questions of his performers’ identities. Taken together, these essays are theoretically innovative and expansive in their scope and originality. The section introduces a range of methodologies for studying and thinking about photographs as material objects and promises to make a key contribution to contemporary discussions about what constitutes “American” photography.

Also taking up questions of canon formation and American (art) histories is a research note by ShiPu Wang. Wang introduces readers to Taiwanese profiles of Andrew Wyeth that positioned the artist as representative of the field of American art writ large and highlights how Wyeth was deployed as one arm of US Cold War cultural diplomatic operations in Taiwan. Anne Cross considers portraits of Martha Ann Banks that circulated in the post-Civil War period and queries the responsibilities of researchers when engaging with difficult but historically important imagery. Similarly invested in the shifting meanings of portraiture, Naomi Slipp identifies how a portrait of biracial Creek-American William

McIntosh functioned differently depending upon audience, while Janine Boldt reveals that a seventeenth-century portrait of Edward Hill III includes the first known representation of a person of African descent in a British North American painting.

The book and exhibition reviews in this issue are similarly diverse in content, time period, geographic region, and materials. They critically consider studies of Dakota Sioux artist Mary Sully as an American modernist; the career of curator, critic, and arts impresario Lincoln Kirstein; Malvina Hoffman’s “deeply problematic” Races of Mankind sculptures; Black Arts Movement—era artistic practices in Chicago; and a study of contemporary African American and Black British artists working between 1965 and 2015.

Disruptions to exhibition schedules and museum closures due to COVID-19 have made mounting and reviewing exhibitions particularly challenging this year. Our exhibition reviews editors have thoughtfully considered how commissioning reviews asks individuals to physically endanger their health or, at least, accept undue risk. They have also been particularly sensitive to the ways in which such requests perform unequally in relation to junior scholars, individuals with precarious professional ties, and those who are independent; such individuals might feel undue pressure to adopt greater risk for career advancement, if invited to review an exhibition. In light of these considerations, this issue includes a limited number of exhibition reviews that address the dynamic between twentieth- and twenty-first-century European modernist and African American artists; the impact of Mexican muralism on modern American art; outdoor sculpture, garden follies, and the environmentally-focused practices of Mark Dion; and a 2016 photographic series *The Levee* by Indian photographer Sohrab Hura, who documents a trip along the Mississippi River in the United States culminating in New Orleans.

We would like to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of our readers and colleagues. We send our deep sympathies to those who have been touched by tragedy during the pandemic, who have faced illness and the deaths of loved ones and friends. Beyond this, we hope to recognize the sweeping social effects of the pandemic on our field. Research is stymied and the productivity of female academics, in particular, has markedly dropped. Our contributors for this issue faced challenges in drafting and revising, accessing resources and archives, and placing image requests at institutions that are facing limited operating hours and staff shortages. A number of authors flag such issues in footnotes for their contributions. Beyond this, we want to recognize the incredible productivity of our managing editor, section editors, and guest editors, who have worked against the backdrop of increasing care responsibilities and transformations to the working environments of both museums and universities. We have all had to adapt this year to enormous challenges and that has impacted service loads and the ability to dedicate time and space to the work that needs to be done at *Panorama*. As the contributors to our Editors’ Reflection point out, the work of producing *Panorama* is unequally weighted as “service,” borne by those lucky enough to be situated securely in a shrinking academic and cultural field and/or who carry tenured or tenure-track positions. As a journal, we must work to destabilize such expectations within our field and to encourage broader equity; this is a call that also comes through loud and clear in the short essays for Colloquium. Acknowledging the work to come, we would be remiss to not warmly recognize the labor of all those who have helped to see this issue to fruition at every level of its production, especially Jessica Skwire Routhier, our Managing Editor. It is this teamwork—executed during a very difficult year—that allows us to be read at all.

Finally, we must note that this issue marks the last for exhibition reviews editor Diane Mullins, and executive editor John Bowles. Diane joined the journal in 2018 and—as Senior Curator at the Weisman Art Museum—brought her substantial experience working in museums to the role of reviews editor. We have been grateful for her willingness to share museum-based insight, especially in conversations focused on journal management and development. As an inaugural Board member, John has been deeply involved in advising and shaping the journal from its inception. His three years of service as an executive editor have been marked by his generosity of spirit, thoughtfulness, and steady calm. John spearheaded “Toward a More Inclusive Digital Art History,” a project that aims to make digital art history (DAH) methods and tools more accessible to Americanists working on underrepresented or understudied constituencies in American art and, ultimately, to publish three DAH articles with data sets and narrative summaries. The project is a testament to John’s vision and leadership—and the Terra Foundation for American Art seemed to agree, awarding a major grant to support the initiative. The individual contributions of John and Diane to the journal have been deep, and their departure will be keenly felt. We heartily thank them for their years of service—the journal is better for it!

As 2020 nears its end, we mark the passing of Americanists who irrevocably shaped the academic fields in which we work and society at large as well.

Cultural historian Maurice Berger (1956–2020) was Research Professor and Chief Curator at the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County. A scholar of race and its representation in art and visual culture, Berger organized influential exhibitions that explored this topic as well as major shows of the works of contemporary conceptual American artists Adrian Piper and Fred Wilson. His memoir, *White Lies: Race and the Myths of Whiteness* (2000), turns his critical eye on the field of art history, leveling a challenge for introspection that may still resonate with many of our readers.

E. Wayne Craven (1930–2020) was H. F. du Pont Professor Emeritus of Art History at the University of Delaware, whose faculty he joined in 1962. For both students and scholarly readers, Craven’s *Sculpture in America* (1968) and *American Art: History and Culture* (2008) are required texts, admired for their breadth and expertise.

Artist and art historian David C. Driskell (1931–2020) was professor emeritus of Art and Art History at the University of Maryland at College Park, which, in 2001, honored him by establishing a gallery and research center bearing his name. Driskell trained generations of scholars of African American art history and curated the landmark traveling exhibition “Two Centuries of Black American Art” (1976–1977).

Joanna Frueh (1948–2020) was professor emerita of art history at the University of Nevada at Reno. An authority on the work of Hannah Wilke, an editor of scholarly anthologies of feminist writing, and a gallerist, Frueh also was a photographer and performance artist.

William H. Gerdts (1920–2020) was Professor of Art History at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. A prolific writer, Gerdts authored more than two dozen books and contributed hundreds of articles and entries to journals and research publications on nineteenth-century still life painting, the American Impressionists, and neoclassical sculpture in the United States.

David Schuyler (1950–2020) was Arthur and Katherine Shadek Professor of Humanities and American Studies at Franklin & Marshall College. His scholarship extended from the history of the Hudson River Valley and the urban planning of American cities and towns to the life and career of architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

Historian Alan Trachtenberg (1932–2020) was Neil Gray Jr. Professor of English and professor emeritus of American Studies at Yale University. Trachtenberg’s *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, from Matthew Brady to Walker Evans* (1989) situated the photo as a cultural object and tool in the formation of a national narrative and had already been chosen as the point of departure for this issue’s [In the Round](#) before his passing.

With these memorials in mind, our thoughts turn to the course of our discipline—its past and its possible futures, and to *Panorama*’s role in asking tough questions and seeking—but not always finding—clear answers. This issue of the journal raises important questions about the responsibilities we all bear as scholars of “American” art: to do the work; to lift each other up; to seek equity in our institutions, departments, and scholarship; to support unaffiliated colleagues; and to shine a light on the margins. This issue also asks how we might, collectively, use self-criticality as a tool not of self-punishment but as a way to push ourselves and the field forward; how we might marshal sustained momentum that moves beyond mere tokenism. The two anniversary reflections query where we might go from here, as a discipline and as a journal. As Betsy Boone concludes, at *Panorama* what we can accomplish “depend(s) on our contributors and readers. . . . What the journal becomes is entirely up to us.”

We hope you will join us in visioning and shaping that future—one that seeks to celebrate disciplinary decentering and diversity—in all of its beautiful and rightly messy complexity.