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Editors’ Welcome

Jacqueline Francis, Naomi Slipp, and Keri Watson

Welcome to issue 7.1 of *Panorama*—our largest to date, and filled with timely scholarship and conversations on pressing issues in the field and beyond. Whether you are taking a much-needed summer break following this long academic year or working on planning exhibitions as museums and galleries reopen, we know there is content in this issue that will speak to you.

As we go to press, we recognize that—despite positive strides toward ending the spread of COVID-19 in the United States—the long-term impact of this global pandemic and its attendant economic crisis is only just being felt. We are saddened to learn that many departments of art history and visual cultural studies programs across the country are closing and that non-tenured and tenured colleagues are losing their positions. Similarly, many museums have been forced to let people go, as doors remain closed and galleries shuttered. It will likely take years to recognize the wider repercussions of the past sixteen months on our field, especially as relates to the departure of colleagues who are stymied in their professional advancement due to closures and layoffs, and young professionals who cannot carry the burdens of graduate study and elect to leave the field.

In many ways, the pandemic has magnified the precarity of our discipline and the systemic inequalities that undergird graduate study and professional advancement. Our hearts go out to those readers, contributors, and editors whose personal and professional lives have been affected by the many recent tragedies that have befallen our nation and world. However, we must also question what might come next. How can those of us with a platform and some security contribute to the work of making a more equitable field? How can we—as a community—come together and support those most impacted by what has occurred and what is yet to come? While we are cheered by the increased commitment to following public health guidelines and the declining numbers of coronavirus cases and deaths, which imply that better times lie ahead, we must not allow ourselves to become complacent, impassive, or indifferent, to assume the worst is over and the storm weathered. We ask readers to consider the future and what shape we want the field to take now. It is in this spirit that we invite you to engage our June 2021 issue.

Issue 7.1 is filled with exciting content. It continues important dialogues about systemic racism, Critical Race Art History, and their place within the study of American Art. We open with a reader’s response to a question raised in the previous issue’s Editors’ Welcome and [2020 Annual Report](#), namely “Who will we be?” in this era of racial reckoning and institutional inquiry. We offer *Panorama* as an arena for the consideration of the discipline of art history’s contributions to the construction of racial hierarchies and the advancement of white supremacy. Such scholarly work ably occurs in our “In the Round,” guest edited by

Marci Kwon and Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander. Contributors query the output of artists of Asian descent working in the United States, many of them understudied individuals, and the role of images of Asian Americans in constructing a racial identity. These writings serve as timely disciplinary interventions, not only to expand the field of American Art but also to, as Kwon and Alexander assert, make clear that “Asian American” is a broad, summarizing term used to describe heterogeneous histories.

This issue includes a Special Section, “Art and Politics in the US Capitol,” which explores the ways in which art participates in democracy. As Congress met on January 6, 2021, to ratify the results of the 2020 presidential election, a group of protestors stormed the US Capitol to disrupt the proceedings, resulting in widespread damage and six related deaths. In response to this event, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts hosted a symposium on January 26 and 27 that invited scholars, including Co-Executive Editor Jacqueline Francis and Book Reviews Editor Amy Werbel, to respond to the attack on a building that serves as both the seat of our nation’s legislative branch and an architectural landmark filled with historic paintings and sculptures. Building upon this robust virtual event, guest editors Wendy Bellion and Anna O. Marley invited seven scholars—including the curator of the Capitol’s collections, Michele Cohen—to explore the role of art, patronage, and propaganda in decorating the Capitol, establishing a national iconography, and conveying the country’s values.

This issue’s Colloquium, “American Art History in the Time of Crises,” organized by the Executive Editors, presents the individual experiences of nine contributors who personally reflect upon the events of the past year, including the impact of COVID-19 and entwined calls for social and racial justice within museums, teaching, and cultural institutions. We hope that their narratives create a rich stage for understanding how such critical issues and questions—many of them long lying in wait, but raised acutely by 2020—intersect. These reflections are by no means comprehensive. Instead, they contribute to an ongoing and timely conversation to which we hope and expect our readers will contribute.

We know you are excited to fill out your summer reading list, so we are happy to include seven book reviews and four exhibition reviews for your perusal. The publications discussed include attentive studies of the careers of Frank Duveneck and Eliza Pratt Greatorex; Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco’s critique of colonialism in *The Epic of American Civilization* mural; postmodernist art and architecture made in response to racist violence; and influential movements, among them sentimental art of the nineteenth century, “Pattern and Decoration” of the 1970s and 1980s, and the post-Black discourse in contemporary popular culture since the 1990s. Similarly broad in scope, exhibition reviews highlight the work of Frida Kahlo and Jean-Michel Basquiat, the mythic status of Winslow Homer and Frederic Remington within the canon, and the impact of nineteenth-century scientist Alexander von Humboldt on American art and culture. Finally, we are pleased to offer five research notes on topics ranging from new discoveries in Charles Willson Peale’s *Mastodon* (1801) and Robert S. Duncanson’s *Ruins of Carthage* (1845) to nationalism and transnationalism in the work of Edward Hopper and Paul Weber. A contribution from Kathleen Foster highlights a new resource on American watercolors and suggests expanding avenues for sharing scholarly research using online platforms and digital tools.

Aiming to foreground, honor, and support new directions in digital scholarship—including data-driven art history projects, digital tools and resources, online publishing, and digital art history (DAH) methods, *Panorama* is launching a new digital section tentatively called

“Digital Art History.” We seek an editor who engages digital tools or modalities in their work to help shape the direction of this new venture, which will premiere in 2022. Are you interested? See the [project description](#) and [call for nominations/proposals](#) for more information.

We hope that you will find much food for thought in these diverse and wide-ranging contributions, but we also want to hear from you! 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 [submission guidelines](#) for “Talk Back” for more information about how you can write to us and have your voice heard!

Finally, over the next month, we are asking for your help. To maintain the independence and rigor of our open-access digital journal, we do not run ads, charge author fees, or hide content behind a paywall. In fact, we offer image subventions for our authors in order to facilitate early-career publishing and enable equity. But open-access publishing incurs costs. One issue of *Panorama* costs about \$15,000 to produce. While we are grateful to our volunteers, contributors, sustainers, and grantors, *Panorama* also needs you! Last year, we had more than 55,500 unique visitors to the site. If each reader gave just \$5, we would double our target Reserve Fund and could ensure that *Panorama* is free, available, and accessible for years to come. Please choose to support the journal by [giving now](#).

Thank you for being a loyal reader and thank you for your support. We look forward to seeing responses to this issue on social media—use the hashtag #journalpanorama on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram—and to hearing from you directly!