

# COLLECTING HER THOUGHTS

Lightning Talks on Women Art Collectors Across Time

JUNE 14 ✧ 9:30-5:00 ✧ Hybrid



# SCHEDULE

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9:00-9:30 Arrival & Breakfast (in person only)

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**9:30-10:45 Panel I - Space: Earth & Above**

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10:45-11:00 Break (in person only)

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**11:00-12:25 Panel II - Making an Amendment**

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12:25-1:10 Lunch Break (in person only)

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**1:10-2:20 Panel III - In a Different Light**

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2:20-2:35 Conclusions & Thank You

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2:35-3:20 Reception (in person only)

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4:00-5:00 Tour of the Boston Athenæum with Lauren Graves, Assistant Curator (in person only)

# SPACE: EARTH AND ABOVE

Introduction by Danarenae Donato, PhD Candidate, Boston University

## **Vittoria della Rovere's Collecting Practices and the Creation of Gendered Spaces for Display**

Alessia Silvi, MA Student, Sapienza University of Rome

## **Displaying the Sacred: A Study of Isabella Stewart Gardner's Chapel at Fenway Court**

Isaline Lefrançois, PhD Student, Boston University

## **Curating the 'Anti-Museum': Katherine Dreier, Galka Scheyer, Hilla Rebay and the Promotion of Spiritual Modernism in the United States, 1920-1945**

Rachel Denniston, PhD Student, The Courtauld Institute of Art

## **Mapping the Cosmos: Vera Rubin and the Art of Astronomy**

Ashar "Usher" Mobeen, PhD Candidate, Western University

# MAKING AN AMENDMENT

Introduction by Ilaria Trafficante, PhD Candidate, Scuola Superiore Meridionale

## **Female Collectors Navigating Media Systems during La Belle Epoque – a Scandinavian Example**

Mimmi Nihlén, MA Student, Uppsala University

## **M Is for Marie, Not Monsieur: Recovering the Women in the Sale of the Goloubew Collection of Persian and Indian Painting**

Roxanne Goldberg, PhD Student, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

## **The Loyalist Legacy: Martha Codman Karolik's Ancestry, Collecting, and Nationalism**

MaryKate Smolenski, PhD Candidate, Boston University

## **The Hidden Collection: Female Patronage and its Influence on the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art**

Raha Golestani, PhD Candidate, Goethe University Frankfurt

# IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT

Introduction by Toni Armstrong, PhD Candidate, Boston University

## **Private Devotion, Public Display: Situating the Enclosed Gardens of Mechelen within the Context of Women's Miniaturist Traditions**

Meredith Vigan-Wilbur, MA, University of South Florida

## **British Women and the Grand Tour: Not Only Travellers but Refined Connoisseurs of Baroque Neapolitan Art**

Alessia Attanasio, PhD Researcher, University of Birmingham (UK)

## **Gender and the Realpolitik of Collecting: Fanny van de Grift Stevenson's Collection of Barkcloth, Samoa 1890-1894**

Sophia Merkin, PhD Candidate, Columbia University and the Metropolitan Museum of Art

## **Palestinian Cultural Heritage as Cold War Propaganda**

Mary Lambert, MA Student, University of Utah

**This colloquium is organized by Danarenae Donato, Iaria Trafficante, and Toni Armstrong at Boston University. It is supported by Boston University's History of Art and Architecture Department, Archaeology Department, and the Women's and Gender Studies Department. With special thanks to Alice Barrett, Susan Rice, Cheryl Crombie, Lauren Graves, Maria Sousa, John M. Marston, Cynthia Becker, Michael Zell, Ana Maria Reyes, G Forristall, and Susan Sreedhar for their support and coordination.**

Cover image: Nicolas Vallari, mid 1600s, Hedwig Eleonora (1636-1715), Princess of Holstein-Gottorp, Queen of Sweden, married to Karl X Gustav of Sweden. Oil on canvas, National Museum, Sweden, public domain. Image at right: Leopold Syffert, 1917, Portrait of Sara Yorke Stevenson, Penn Museum Archives. PM image 15100.



# ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS & PRESENTERS...

## Danarenae Donato

Danarenae Donato is a doctoral student studying early modern Italian art in the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Boston University. She completed her undergraduate degree at Bucknell University before obtaining her Master's degree from The Institute of Fine Arts, NYU. Danarenae's dissertation "The Makings of Merchants: Collecting Practices and Visual Culture of Early Modern Merchant Collectors" focuses on the collections and happenings of early modern merchants and their families. Her research considers topics of class, gender, civic practice, and immigration through interdisciplinary methodologies. She has previously held positions in the Pascack Historical Society, Samek Art Museum, Studio Galleria Romanelli, and The Frick Collection.

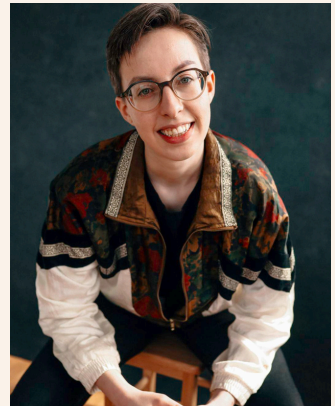


## Ilaria Trafficante

Ilaria Trafficante is a Ph.D. Candidate in Archaeology and Cultures of the Ancient Mediterranean at the Scuola Superiore Meridionale (Naples). She graduated from Sapienza University (MA, 2017) and the Italian Archaeological School at Athens (Postgraduate degree, 2020). In her research, she has focused on the study of material culture in Greece and Italy, publishing contributions on contexts and objects from these areas. She received a six-month fellowship from her home institution in support of her dissertation titled "Exporting Artworks: Classical Materials in the Lewes House Collection (1888-1904)". She is researching the activity of the Bostonian collector Edward Perry Warren (1860-1928), purchasing agent for several US based museums at the end of the 19th century. Thanks to Professor Becky Martin, she was sponsored by the Boston University Archaeology Program to conduct her research in the U.S.

## Toni Armstrong

Toni Armstrong is a PhD Candidate at Boston University, studying women's and queer history in the nineteenth- and early twentieth century in the United States. Toni's dissertation, *Taking Care: The Queer Making of American Modernism, 1914-1935* explores "queer arts advocacy" through case studies demonstrating alternative modes of collecting, exhibiting, and writing about modern art. Toni is dedicated to expanding the bounds of academia through community organizing, public history, and advocacy for local arts communities. Toni has held internship and research positions at the Worcester Art Museum, Musée national d'histoire et d'art in Luxembourg, Andover Center for History and Culture, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and most recently, the Nichols House Museum.







## Alessia Silvi

Alessia Silvi is a Master student in Art History at Sapienza, University of Rome, and Sapienza School for Advanced Studies. Her research focuses on women artists and their social and economic status, as well as female patronage in 17th-century Italy. She is also interested in the history of print and book illustration, particularly focusing on the role and legacy of women engravers in early modern Europe.

## Isaline Lefrançois

Isaline Lefrançois is a first-year PhD student in the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Boston University. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland before pursuing an MA in History of Art at Boston University. She then obtained a second MA in Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Columbia University. While her primary specialization lies in the study of English Romanesque sculpture, Isaline also has a keen interest in museum studies, with a focus on the process of collecting medieval art in the United States and on the curatorial choices regarding the display of sacred objects in the often-sterile environment of Western museums.

## Rachel Denniston

Rachel Denniston is an art historian, writer, and curator with a special interest in how alternative spiritualities shape the interstices of art, architecture, and design in the modern period across Europe and the United States. Her work explores how art and space function more broadly to inform new ways of living, being, and finding meaning in modern life. Her research at the Courtauld Institute of Art examines the influence of theosophy on the emergence of avant-garde abstraction, and the dissemination of modern art across borders from Europe to the United States, focusing on the efforts of three German-American, female collectors and curators Katherine Dreier, Galka Scheyer, and Hilla Rebay. She recently held a research residency at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and has worked in a curatorial capacity as an independent researcher and part of the curatorial team for the Jencks Foundation at the Cosmic House in London.

## Ashar "Usher" Mobeen

Ashar "Usher" Mobeen is a Canadian-Pakistani writer, curator, and second-year PhD candidate at Western University. His research investigates the manifestation of comprehensive astronomical understanding in the art and architecture of ancient and Indigenous civilizations across the globe. By reconstructing the cosmic perspectives of these societies through their art and conjoining his findings with modern scientific understanding, Ashar believes that he can potentially offer answers to questions that humanity continues to ponder. Ultimately, he hopes that his research can address the need for a post-humanist perspective, counter to the mandates of anthropocentric hubris and its imprisonment within binary power dynamics. In the face of catastrophes such as climate change, rising food insecurity, and collapse of biodiversity, he contends it is critical to re-evaluate not only our position in the cosmos, but with the very land we call home.



## Mimmi Nihlén

Mimmi Nihlén is a second-year master's student in Art History at Uppsala University in Sweden. She received a bachelor's degree in Art History from Lund University, Sweden, as well as a bachelor's degree in History from the same university. Currently, she is working on her master's thesis regarding the relationship between private and public media used by art collectors in Sweden during the late 19th- and early 20th centuries, shedding light on how spatial, visual and textual media helped form the role as collector. During spring 2024 she is completing an internship at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm - the national art museum of Sweden - where she is involved in several exhibition projects concerning, primarily, the time around the turn of the 20th century. Additionally, she is the co-founder and chief-editor of a student journal for art history connected to the Department of Art History at Uppsala University.

## Roxanne Goldberg

Roxanne Goldberg is a PhD Candidate in the History, Theory, and Criticism of Art and the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT. Her research focuses on questions of value and social belonging in relation to the cultural brokers who introduced Islamic art to the United States between 1870 and 1930. Roxanne's talk today is based on research that she conducted while working as Curatorial Research Associate for Islamic Art at the MFA Boston. Prior to starting her PhD, Roxanne worked at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin. She currently works as an academic editor specializing in developmental and line editing in art and architectural history.

## MaryKate Smolenski

MaryKate Smolenski is a PhD candidate in American Studies at Boston University. She studies the memory of the American Revolution through print and material culture, and is particularly interested in how descendants of Revolutionary-era loyalists remember their ancestors. Smolenski has previously worked with several museums and historical societies, including the Newport Historical Society, History Cambridge, and the GWU Museum and Textile Museum. Prior to starting her PhD, she completed a two-year fellowship at the Preservation Society of Newport County where she re-interpreted an eighteenth-century historic house museum, Hunter House. She also co-founded the non-profit, online publication, the Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture (CMSMC), which aims to fill a gap for master's students to share their material culture-related research.

## Raha Golestani

Raha Golestani is a Tehran-born interdisciplinary artist, researcher, and art educator based in Frankfurt am Main. She holds a BA in Fine Arts (University of Tehran) and an MA in Aesthetics (Goethe University Frankfurt). She obtained her master's degree with a Goethe Goes Global scholarship and a thesis on »The Veil as a Critical Aesthetic Device in the Art of Persian Diaspora.« She is currently a PhD candidate and scholarship-holder at Goethe University, researching »The Entanglements of Exoticism and Self-Exoticism within the Global Art Market.« She has worked for the Rooberoo Cultural Institute in collaboration with the Goethe Institute (Tehran), the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, and the Frankfurt Painting School (Frankfurt). Raha Golestani was a fellow at the Günther Uecker Institute in 2023.



## Meredith Vigan-Wilbur

Meredith Vigan-Wilbur recently graduated from the Master's program in Art History at the University of South Florida. Her main research focus is women's devotional artwork of the Early Northern Renaissance, particularly focusing on the sensorial experience. She intends to pursue a Ph.D. in Art History and hopes to become a professor of art history.

## Alessia Attanasio

Alessia Attanasio is an Italian art historian and PhD researcher at the University of Birmingham, focusing on Baroque Neapolitan art collected by English patrons from the Grand Tour to the present day (1680s-2020s). Her research interests include country houses, the history of collecting, and museum studies. Alessia has ten years of experience working in museums as an assistant curator and museum educator, including roles at the Capodimonte Museum in Naples and the Royal Collection Trust in London. Recently, she has been researching and writing about Baroque artworks in the Neapolitan Collection of Compton Verney, contributing to curating its permanent and multisensorial redisplay, Sensing Naples.

## Sophia Merkin

Sophia Merkin is a PhD candidate at Columbia University and the J. Clawson Mills Scholar at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her dissertation research focuses on the exchange of barkcloth in Samoa and greater Polynesia in the late nineteenth century. While at Columbia, she served as Rapporteur for the Columbia University Seminar in the Art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, and as Unit Coordinator for Art X Social Justice. She has previously received fellowships from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Columbia University Media Center for Art History. She holds a BA, MA, and MPhil from Columbia University and an MA with distinction from Goldsmiths, University of London. Prior to entering the doctoral program, she worked as a curatorial assistant at the Museum of Arts and Design and a research assistant in the Department of Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at Sotheby's.

## Mary Lambert

Mary Lambert will earn a Master of Arts degree in Art History this spring from the University of Utah. She is a community educator, a longtime docent at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, as well as a former metalsmithing and jewelry fabrication instructor. During her graduate studies, her research focused on jewelry and craft production, considering topics ranging from shell brooches made by incarcerated women at Japanese relocation centers during World War II to the creative role of the goldsmith during the late Medieval. Mary has also investigated sensorial relationships between jewelry, bodies, and the environments around them. She is currently developing an exhibition based on her thesis project, "Collecting Identities: Palestinian embroideries and jewelry at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts," research from which she has prepared today's talk. Mary lives in Salt Lake City with her husband and daughter.