

UC SANTA BARBARA

# History of Art & Architecture

## Note from the Chair

Dear HAA Community:

Fall is here! It is a joy to welcome you back to the 2025-26 academic year, and I am pleased to offer you the fall edition of our newsletter, which showcases the many accomplishments of our students, faculty, and alumni.

First and foremost, I am pleased to announce the new **Jeanette Hanisee Gabriel (MA '88) Memorial Fellowship**, a gift to honor the life and legacy of Jeanette Hanisee Gabriel (1940-2025), who died on August 15, 2025, after a long battle with cancer. She is survived by her beloved husband, Angelo (Gino) Gabriel, who has created this fund as a beautiful tribute to her time at UCSB, studying European decorative arts under Dr. Alfred Moir, which she not only found enriching, but also set her on her professional trajectory as a curator and scholar.

A distinguished scholar of European decorative arts, Hanisee Gabriel was a subject expert on micromosaics, tesserae produced in miniature by Italian and French craftsmen that was made into devotional objects and jewelry, and highly coveted as a luxury object throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

She is the author of two large volumes on the subject, *Micromosaics* (Gilbert Collection, 2000) and *Micromosaics: Private Collections*, assisted by Angelo Gabriel (McCarthy 2016).

Married for 32 years, theirs was a museum romance at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The couple met when she was working as Assistant Curator of European Decorative Arts, and he was a librarian at the LACMA library. Hanisee Gabriel went on to oversee the Gilbert Collection, based in London, which is now housed in perpetuity at the Victoria & Albert Museum. It is a pleasure to be able to name **Jasper Martens**, a Dutch national, and second-year doctoral student



Jeanette Hanisee Gabriel in London during her honeymoon with her husband, Angelo ("Gino") Gabriel, the first week of October 1992.

working toward a dissertation on 18<sup>th</sup> century European jewelry, as the first recipient of this award.

In Spring, we graduated four PhD students: **Letícia Cobra Lima**, **Ali Derafshi**, **Lilit Sadoyan** and **Rachel Winter**. Ali Derafshi was awarded the Dissertation Award for best dissertation, titled: "From Persomania to Persophobia: 'Persian Architecture' in Southern California." This project was advised by Professor Volker Welter, who called it a "veritable tour de force" for breaking new ground in the sociocultural influences of the Persian diaspora on architectural commissions, building programs, and domestic architecture in Southern California, after the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

We also celebrate the impressive lot of fellowships that our PhD students have received for this academic year: two students, **Alec Aldrich** and **Sylvia Faichney**, have been awarded the fellowships at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts (CASVA), at the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Advised by Emeritus Professor Ann Jensen Adams, Aldrich was named the Robert H. and Clarice Smith Fellow (2025-26) and Faichney, advised by Professor Swati Chattopadhyay, was awarded the two-year Wyeth Fellow in American Art (2025-27), as well as the Garden and Landscapes Junior Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks, (2025-26) a museum and research library also in Washington D.C., which she will take concurrently this year. Faichney's fellowship comes on the heels of **Elizabeth Driscoll Smith**, advised by me, who held the Wyeth Fellowship the year prior, in 2024-25, but left early to accept an endowed curatorial position as the Joyce Linde Assistant Curator of Self-Taught and Folk Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Please see the recent article on Smith and Faichney [in the HFA Divisional newsletter](#). The CASVA is hands down, the most competitive national fellowship in the field of art and architectural history. Only ten pre-doctoral fellows are awarded each year, and historically they have gone to students in Ivy League doctoral programs. To have three students win these within a two-year timespan is a testament to the strong mentoring and intellectual rigor of our doctoral program.

It is particularly exciting to welcome two new assistant professors to our department this academic year: **Professor Christine Garnier** (PhD, Harvard, 2022) and **Professor Brisa Smith Flores** (PhD, UCLA, 2023). Garnier is a specialist in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Art of North America, histories of photography, landscape and ecologies. Before coming to UCSB, she was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Southern California and held concurrent prestigious post-doctoral fellowships from the Huntington Library and Gardens and the ACLS/Getty.

Smith Flores is a specialist in racial identity formation, museum theory, and histories of representation and repatriation, with a particular focus on museology in Brazil and Mexico. Before coming to UC Santa Barbara, Smith Flores was a UC Chancellor's

Presidential Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Department of Black Studies at UC Irvine, and a Post-Doctoral Terra Fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C.

**Professor Swati Chattopadhyay** was awarded the Alice David Hitchcock Book Award by the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) for her book, *Small Spaces: Recasting the Architecture of Empire* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023). She was also awarded a Senior Fellowship from the Paul Mellon Center for British Art in London for this academic year.

This fall, we hosted two invited scholars for talks. The first was **Dr. Alison Perchuk**, Professor of Art History at Cal State University, Channel Islands, who gave a work-in-progress talk, "David Gebhard, Lucile Lloyd, and Medieval Los Angeles: The View from the ADC," to a full house on October 8, which showcased the archival research she has been doing at the Architecture and Design Collection (ADC) of the Art, Design & Architecture Museum, our campus museum. Dr. Perchuk followed this up by presenting, the morning of October 9, a deeply informative Graduate Student Workshop on application and interviewing skills at teaching universities and community colleges.

The second was Distinguished Alumnus **Dr. Amara Solari** (PhD, 2007), Professor of Art History and Anthropology at Penn State University, who gave a talk on November 5 titled "Pictorial Intermediality as Franciscan Strategy in the Pueblo Missions, 1610-1680." This was an interdisciplinary event, co-sponsored by the UC Santa Barbara Center for Latin American and Iberian Research (CLAIR), the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program (AIIS), and the Departments of History and Religious Studies. Currently a Guggenheim Fellow, the talk was from her current book project which charts the aesthetics of the New Mexican Missions, the friars who commissioned these monumental buildings in the Southwest United States, and the enslaved indigenous artisans responsible for the artworks. On November 6, Dr. Solari gave an enriching graduate student workshop on her scholarly and professional trajectory after her time at UCSB.

Please take some time to read about the important work our current students, faculty, and alumni are producing in the pages that follow. Art and architectural historical scholarship is truly a bright spot as the national funding for the arts and humanities continues to stand on shaky ground.

Warm wishes,

**Professor Jenni Sorkin, Chair**