Pamela Patton and Eric White- A Unique BU Couple

In this year’s newsletter, alums Pamela Patton (PhD ’94) and Eric White (PhD ’95) reflect on the road that led them to their BU degrees and one another. Pamela is associate professor and interim chair of art history at Southern Methodist University, where her husband Eric White is curator of special collections for the Bridwell Library.

Lindsay Alberts: Your personal and professional situation is somewhat unique, in that you met each other while Boston University, and now you are married and employed at the same university. What attracted you to BU, how did you come to know one another and how did you find positions together at SMU?

Pamela Patton: I was attracted to BU by the prospect of working with Marcia Kupfer, who was there at the time. Having gone to college at Tufts before going to Williams for an MA, I was eager to get back to Boston to take advantage of the rich institutional opportunities there—like the unforgettable grad seminar on Italian panel painting that Eric and I took at the MFA with then-curator Larry Cantor. That was training I still use today.

Eric White: I knew that I wanted to be in Boston, such a wonderful city for so many reasons, and saw that I could study Renaissance art with Hellmut Wohl, Naomi Miller, and Fred Licht, with the MFA, Gardner, and Fogg museums as backdrops. I was also pleased to discover a real affinity for working with prints and drawings with Alice Binion.

PP: Eric and I met on the first day of grad school and got to be very good friends; we were each dating other people at the time. We had a lot of common interests, and eventually we had started spending so much time together that the other grad students started teasing us about it, and I guess at some point it made sense to admit it was more than just a friendship.

EW: I remember that first day, being quite pleased to be surrounded by so many smart eligible women! Pamela and I seemed to have everything in common, and one day it occurred to me that I hadn’t seen her at all that day— for the first time in two weeks— and I felt strangely incomplete. We’ve been together ever since.

PP: I wish I could say that we orchestrated anything about our jobs at SMU! It was mostly luck. We moved there just after we got married so I could fulfill the teaching year of a doctoral fellowship while Eric finished his dissertation. When a dual position in the Art History department and Meadows Museum opened up, I got the job, first for a year and then as a tenure-track position that eventually

Interview continued on page 2
became a faculty-only appointment. At the same time, Eric finished his degree and began doing teaching and curatorial work in the area, which led to his getting the Bridwell job.

EW: We newlyweds moved to Dallas for what we expected would be two semesters of culture shock and tangy foods before moving on to our next destination. But Pamela proved indispensable to SMU and I got used to the friendly people around the university and the idea that “we can do some good here.” While she made a place for herself at SMU, I had trouble marketing my Northern Renaissance specialty. When an opportunity to curate rare books in the theology library came along, I convinced the library (and myself) that my background in book illustration and Reformation-era culture had pertinence and value. I had to reinvent myself quickly and embark on a new path to make it work; this included going back to school to get a master’s degree in library science. I believe the good “generalist” background and solid academic training I gained at BU was profoundly helpful in this. I’m still an art historian – now it’s the art history of books.

LA: It seems as though there is overlap in your respective scholarly interests; Pamela, you frequently publish on religious identity, especially of Jews in Spain, and Eric, you are curator of special collections for a theological library. Have you been able to collaborate on projects (such as the 1999 exhibition “Faith in Conflict: Devotional Images and Forbidden Books from Spain’s Counter-Reformation” at the Meadows Museum), and what has that collaborative experience been like for you?

PP: “Faith in Conflict” has been our only official collaboration, but we collaborate informally all the time, reading each other’s work, calling on each other’s expertise, bouncing ideas off each other. I can point to several publications, including my recent book, that could never have been what they are without Eric’s input. We also collaborate in teaching—I bring my students to Bridwell all the time to be introduced to book culture, and Eric’s often a reader on student papers and theses. Working together has been a lot of fun, and I’m sure our respective scholarship is the better for it.

EW: We collaborate, give each other ideas and reality checks, all the time. In Spain, in one of Pamela’s cloisters, we noticed that one of the sculpted capitals depicted a Pharisee holding a strange looking book that was unmistakably an Islamic flap-binding book; I became an “advisor” of sorts on that article. Later, I noticed the long-forgotten fact that a Gutenberg Bible had been owned by the Dominicans of Santo Domingo de Silos; Pamela became my “advisor” for that and put me in touch with the right people. She’s a wonderful editor of my work, and I try to return the favor by checking footnotes and indexing her books.

LA: On a lighter note, what do you all talk about at the dinner table? When you are “off the clock,” is art history still a topic of conversation or do you tend to reserve those considerations for business hours, so to speak? What are some of the rewards and challenges of having a spouse in the same field as yourself? With two children at home, have you figured out any clever ways to balance child care and home chores with your scholarly pursuits?

PP: I have to admit that art history ranks toward the top of our dinner table conversations, but our kids keep us out of a conversational rut. They’ll tolerate just so much shop talk before they insist on moving on to more “normal” family topics.

EW: I get excited about the day’s discoveries, either something in my Gutenberg research or whatever I may have just noticed in a book at Bridwell Library. It’s nice to have someone across the table who cares about obscure provenance clues or bibliographical oddities. Art and books offer a nice break from daily responsibilities.

PP: Balancing family and an academic career has its challenges, but here too we were lucky. SMU offers paid maternity leave and temporarily stops the tenure clock for junior faculty, and I was able to take advantage of that. They also offer on-campus child care, so when the kids were little, I had more flexibility to take time with them than many new moms do. This doesn’t mean there weren’t many late writing nights after the kids were put to bed! It also helps that Eric and I are both academics and can share parenting responsibilities more evenly than many. As Eric used to say when he took a turn at child care, so when the kids were little, I had more flexibility to take time with them than many new moms do. This doesn’t mean there weren’t many late writing nights after the kids were put to bed! It also helps that Eric and I are both academics and can share parenting responsibilities more evenly than many. As Eric used to say when he took a turn at

EW: I think academia is a challenging sphere for raising children, but also one that offers many upsides. The university is a place where the children see us make a difference as opposed to a profit; we think about the world critically and morally; we are asked to think about how the past and the future might be connected in ways that matter. These are values and intellectual challenges that our kids have picked up without our even noticing. They’ve also seen their parents carve out time for our career pursuits without neglecting to share in the responsibilities of parenting and running the household.

LA: Eric, you have organized a number of exhibitions at the Bridwell Library, focusing on topics such as censorship, devotional books, and illuminations; what are some of the unique challenges and rewards of creating and organizing a show that focuses on books? As someone with a doctorate in art history, do you think that you approach texts in a different way than someone with a different background might?

EW: Bridwell Library has an unmatched, perhaps unique facility for exhibiting rare books, so I am spoiled in that I get to curate two or three major exhibitions each year. A main point to note is that when you exhibit books, you are not exhibiting the text, but the physical object that holds it. My labels summarize the textual significance, but move quickly to the questions the visitor will ask about the object: How was it made? Why was that passage scratched out? What’s in that woodcut? Who owned the book? How is this copy special? I think my art history and museum training prepared me well to think about what can be learned from looking at the object in the case in front of you.

LA: At SMU, what are some approaches that you have employed to bring students closer to the objects that they study, especially in relation to the collections and special exhibitions at the Bridwell Library and the university’s
Meadows Art Museum?
PP: I'm a firm believer in the impact of realia: students spend so much time in a virtual world that their encounter with a material object can have an enormous impact, one that is critical to their scholarly sensibilities. Every class I teach requires some kind of live study of object—some combination of a visual analysis, a research paper, or on-site lectures. I'm fortunate that the collections and exhibitions in both Bridwell and the Meadows are so germane to my teaching. Eric's willingness to offer my students access to his collections has been a big part of that; it's resulted in several excellent honors papers and master's theses.
EW: If my field is to survive, I have to engage the next generation in the books themselves, not their electronic surrogates. Every time I have students present I impress upon them what can be learned from the original that would be missed otherwise, no matter how "virtual" the on-line version might be.

LA: Pamela, have you found the Meadows Museum to be a useful resource for your teaching given that it has a focus that coincides with one of your research areas, the arts of Spain? How do you encourage your students to take advantage of the university's resources in a more than surface way?
PP: The collection of Spanish art at the Meadows has been a wonderful resource—it's given my teaching a raison d'être it wouldn't enjoy elsewhere. During my teaching-curatorial appointment at the museum, I got to know the collections extremely well, and I also was able to make some key medieval acquisitions. Knowing both the objects and the museum staff so well has really facilitated student research there. Another way in which I've tried to encourage student engagement at the Meadows was in creating the William B. Jordan Undergraduate Internships, named for the museum's first director, which place students in one of the various museum departments for the year or the summer. This gives them a firsthand look at how museums operate, an opportunity for mentoring by museum staff, and professional experience on which they can build after graduation.

EW: I'll just add that Texans have done a wonderful job as art patrons and book collectors, and we have been lucky to land jobs at a university with such strong resources and commitments to its collections.

LA: Eric, what are some challenges in mounting exhibitions in a library setting?
EW: Many people don't really think they will be interested in an exhibition held by a library. A main challenge is to get them inside. Another is to show that books have a history of artistic and technological change and intellectual impact that is essential to the development of Western culture (SMU's collections are mostly European and American.) Once in, people often become quite fascinated and study the labels in search of explanations of what they're seeing for the first time. Much of the appeal comes from the realization that these books were owned by such a broad representation of society (more so than many kinds of art objects.) Of course, they are often quite beautiful, as well.

LA: What is next for you both?
PP: I'm about to take a turn as department chair, and I've begun a new project on the depiction of skin color in medieval Iberia and its environs. It may become another book, but I'll have to give it some time to develop before I really know.
EW: I'm finishing a book on the history of the Gutenberg Bible—the whole edition, i.e., all of them. Surprisingly many of the provenances have not been recorded correctly, and untapped eighteenth-century sources offer a wealth of information on where the copies were during the crucial period when Europe's "first printed book" was emerging from centuries of oblivion. Meanwhile, for Bridwell Library, I'm curating an exhibition for this Fall (2013), provisionally titled "Fifty Women." It uses books from the library's collection to tell the stories of the fifty individuals from c. 1100 to 1900 who wrote, inspired, owned, printed, illustrated, or bound them.
News from the desk of Professor Patricia Hills, Faculty Liaison for the History of Art & Architecture Graduate Alumni Association

March 20, 2013

Dear Alumni and Friends,

This year Lindsay Alberts, one of our doctoral students, is assisting with the Graduate Alumni Newsletter. In February she took and passed her oral comprehensive examinations, which explains the delay in sending out this Newsletter. She then conducted interviews with Pamela Patton (PhD ’94) and Eric White (PhD ’95) both of whom are associated with Southern Methodist University. The interview is our front page story.

During 2011-12, Professor Alice Tseng was on leave with an ACLS grant to work on her book, Conspicuous Construction: New Monuments to Imperial Lineage in Modern Kyoto.

Professor Patricia Hills was also on leave with a Jeffery Henderson Senior Fellowship from the Boston University Center for the Humanities. Her book project is “A People’s Art: Democracy, Race, and the Visual Arts in 1930s New York.”

Professor Gregory Williams was on leave for the Fall 2012 semester; Professor Bruce Redford acted as Director of Graduate Studies during his absence. During this time, Professor Williams worked on two essays, one on the German artist Karin Sander, to be published in a book out this spring; the other on the artist Cosima von Bonin, to be published in the Winter 2012 Art Journal. His book, Permission to Laugh: Humor and Politics in Contemporary German Art, was published last summer by the University of Chicago Press.

In October the Association of Historians of American Art held their second conference in Boston. Holland Cotter, Pulitzer Prize art critic of The New York Times, gave the keynote speech at the Boston Athenaeum on Thursday, October 11. The presentations began the next day at the Boston Athenaeum; the second day, October 13, they were held at the Photonics Center at Boston University. David Dearinger, Curator at the Boston Athenaeum, and Melissa Renn (PhD ’11), of the Fogg Art Museum, were the co-chairs. Serving on the steering committee were Erica Hirshler (MA ’83, PhD ’92), Naomi Slipp, one of our own graduate students, and myself. The conference was a big success, with registration sold out (about 175 people). The Boston University Center for the Humanities funded the keynote speaker and the events at BU, which included a final reception at the Boston University Art Gallery. Several of our current students helped out at the event.

In December we also hosted the Visiting Committee that spent several days speaking with faculty, students, and deans. Professor Fred Kleiner, as Chair, and Professor Jodi Cranston, as Associate Chair, spent many days and weeks preparing for the departmental self-study that preceded the visit. We are very proud of what we have accomplished and what you, the Alumni, have also accomplished.

This winter and spring the Department has been conducting a search for a Latin American specialist—one whose scholarship focuses on the post-contact years of the Americas. During March four candidates came to give their job talks. We can let you know the results when I write my summer letter.

The talk of the Department are the competitive new five-year funding packages that we can start awarding to new doctoral students coming to BU in September 2013. The Dean approved six of these fellowships, which also includes the Ray and Margaret Horowitz Fellowship in American Art. That fellowship is mainly funded through the generosity of the Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Horowitz Foundation.

For the 2012-13 academic year, Ginger Smith is holding the Ray and Margaret Horowitz Dissertation Fellowship in American Art, which provides for a $25,000 stipend and a $2500 travel fund. During 2012 the following students received the PhD degree: Katherine Carroll and Amber Ludwig.

The following students received their MA degrees: H. Horatio Joyce, Katherine Kozelka, Shayna Nestor, Erin Hyde Nolan, and Molly Papows. In addition, Erin received the Mamie Elizabeth Hyatt Memorial Award for Scholarly Writing, and she is also continuing on as a doctoral candidate.

And to all the alumni, we thank you for your continued support and hope you will continue to be generous this year.

I am now off to Berlin where I will be teaching two summer courses at the Freie Universität from mid-April to mid-July. Come see me if you come to Berlin.

Most sincerely,
Patricia Hills

In Memoriam: Dr. Rod Henry
We sadly report that Dr. Rod Henry (MA ’52, PhD ’59) passed away September 22nd, 2012 in Pittsfield, MA, his hometown, after a short illness. Dr. Henry served in the army during World War II, and received both the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. After earning his PhD, Dr. Henry began a career-long association with Pine Manor College, where he ultimately became the chair of art history (a position endowed in his name in 1987); throughout the years, he also taught at Northeastern University, Wentworth Institute, and BU. He is survived by a sister, Fay J. Henry.
Carole Borggren (MA ‘83) is now serving as senior advisor to the Executive Vice President and CFO at AARP. She previously worked in the Office of Budget and Finance at Howard University in Washington, DC.

Eleanor Phillips Brackbill (MA ‘80) published An Uncommon Cape: Researching the Histories and Mysteries of a Property (State University of New York Press, 2012) in which she investigates mysteries surrounding her house and its property. Brackbill recently left her position as curator of education at the Neuberger Museum of Art after 29 years to devote more time to her writing.

On November 21st, 2012, Katherine Carroll welcomed her daughter Beth Carroll Zimmerman into the world.

Carl Chiarenza (MA ‘63) was the subject of the exhibition Transmutation: Photographic Works by Carl Chiarenza, at the Anderson Gallery at the University of Buffalo. The show, which ran from Nov. 2012-Feb. 2013, chronicled the evolution of his photography and collages. An accompanying catalogue, including an essay by curator Robert Hirsch, was published by the University of Buffalo Art Galleries.

Kathryn Delmez curated the first comprehensive retrospective of Carrie Mae Weems’ photography, which opened at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville on Sept. 21 and will travel to the Portland (OR) Art Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

After obtaining her art history degree, Lauren Downey (MA ‘05) continued in a MAT in Latin and Classics and is currently teaching Latin at Needham High School in Needham, MA. You might see her with fellow grads Esther (Brummer) Gabel and Andrea Diaz, and their little ones, around the Fens, spending quality time at the MFA or Gardner museums.

Holly Markovitz Goldstein (PhD ‘12) presented a talk on Laura McPhee’s images of Idaho at the Western History Association Conference in Denver this year. She also published an article on St. Augustine’s slave market in Southern Spaces, a peer-reviewed journal edited at Emory University. She is expecting her second child at the end of March.


Patricia Johnston (PhD ‘88) had been appointed as professor of art history to the Rev. J. Gerard Mears, S.J., Chair in Fine Arts in the Department of Visual Arts at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. She has been teaching American art and developing research projects and curatorial seminars with the Worcester Art Museum, the American Antiquarian Society, and other cultural institutions in the city and surrounding areas. Her current book-in-progress, Global Trade and Visual Arts in Federal New England, co-edited with Caroline Frank, will be published by the University Press of New England next year.

Kate Kozelka (MA ’12) has taken a position at Chicago’s Art Institute; she will be working in the development office on projects connected to educational programming and development.

Michelle Lamuniere recently worked on In Character: Artists’ Role Play in Photography and Video at the Addison Gallery of American Art and organized Laurel Nakadate: Say You Love Me at Harvard’s Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts. With Leslie Brown, she is co-curating Cultivated: New Photography from New England as part of this year’s Flash Forward Festival Boston in May 2013. She co-edited the anthology Instituting Reform: The Social Museum of Harvard University, 1903-1931 (2012) and contributed an essay. Her article on Jacob Riis’ lantern slide presentations was published in History of Photography (spring 2012) and reprinted in Screen Culture and the Social Question: Poverty on Screen 1880-1914 (fall 2013). She has also written short pieces on contemporary photography for Exposure and Contact Sheet.

Since 1989, Katherine Nahum (PhD ’93) has taught 19th-century art history and 20th and 21st-century architectural history in the Fine Arts Department at Boston College and has become a full-time Adjunct Associate Professor. She has published many essays in the catalogs of the McMullen Museum at Boston College, and has also co-curated exhibitions. She has published in Devenir and Medicographia, French journals dealing with the interface between psychology and art. In Florence, she presented her paper, “Cezanne’s Nature,” at the Fifth International Symposium on Psychoanalysis and Art in May of 2011, and that paper is now being considered by the Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association. She plans to retire at the end of the 2013 spring semester.

Roy Perkinson (MA ’70) was elected to membership in the Copley Society, the nation’s oldest not-for-profit arts organization. In October he was given a solo exhibition at the Wellesley Free Library. His work has also appeared in exhibitions and sales at the Copley Society of Art (Boston), Eventide Gallery (Essex), Fountain Street Fine Art (Framingham), the Concord Art Association, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston).

Ellen Roberts is now curator of American Art at the Norton Museum of Art, in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Anina Rosen (MA) is now co-director of Greenwood Gardens, a Gilded Age estate landscape in Short Hills, New Jersey that has recently been restored and will soon open to the public.

In 2012, Rebecca Senf (PhD ’08) published “Reconstructing the View: The Grand Canyon Photographs of Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe” with University of California Press. Senf continues in her joint appointment as Norton Family Curator of Photography at the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson and the Phoenix Art Museum. In 2012 she curated “W. Eugene Smith: Photo Essays” and “Made in Arizona: Photographs from the Collection” and upcoming 2013 exhibitions include “From Above: Aerial Photography from the Center for Creative Photography,” and “Debra Bloomfield and Christopher...


Alumni updates, continued

Churchill: Working with Sound.” In February 2013, she will be lecturing on contemporary trends in Western photography as part of Charles M. Russell Center for the Study of Art of the American West Merkel Family Foundation Distinguished Lecture Series. Her children Nick (7 years old) and Lilah (4 years old) and husband Jason remind her how lucky she is to have both a lively, dynamic family and a meaningful, vibrant career.

The Milwaukee Art Museum has hired Lisa J. Sutcliffe (MA) as curator of photography. Sutcliffe previously served as the assistant curator of photography at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She also served as assistant curator for a retrospective of Rineke Dijkstra, organized with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum this year.

Stephanie Taylor (PhD ’01) was hired as the interim director of the University Art Gallery at New Mexico State University, where she is also a tenured professor of art history. She will hold the position until June 2014 and plans to offer an array of contemporary art and culture exhibitions and events. In January she received the university’s Donald C. Roush Excellence in Teaching Award, a university-wide award based on student feedback. Last year she also received a Dean’s Award for Outreach for her “yarn bombing” event that attracted over 200 volunteers and brought together students, staff, and faculty to show the necessity of arts to a vibrant learning institution.

A new national group of emerging photography curators and scholars, FOCUS, has been established and features a number of BU alums. The group held their first annual meeting this past October at the Portland Art Museum (Oregon.)

Top left to bottom right:
- Lisa Sutcliffe, of Photography at the Milwaukee Art Museum
- Kate Albers (PhD ’08), Assistant Professor, History of Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson
- Laura Muir (MA ’93), Assistant Curator, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University Art Museums
- Julia Dolan (PhD ’09), Curator of Photography, Portland Art Museum
- Stacey McCarroll Cutshaw, Editor, Exposure (national peer-reviewed journal of the Society for Photographic Education)
- Michelle Lamuniere, Assistant Curator of Photography, Harvard University Art Museums
- Dalia Habib Linssen, Lecturer, Rhode Island School of Design
- Becky Senf (PhD ’08), Norton Family Curator of Photography, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson and Curator of Photography, Phoenix Art Museum

In Memoriam: Carole Calo

We mourn the passing of Carole Calo (PhD), who died on February 9, 2013, after a valiant two year battle with breast cancer. Carole had been a Professor of Art History at Stonehill College for many years. Hired by the college in 1990 to create a Fine Arts department, which she later chaired, her vision, imagination, and tenacity shaped a program that ultimately embraced both the visual and the performing arts. She is remembered with fondness by students and colleagues alike.

Help support the BU Art History Alumni Fund!

Donations from alumnae, alumni, and friends help to provide important funding for current graduate students to present conference papers, to conduct research trips, and to attend conferences necessary for their research.

Contributions may be made payable to the BU Department of History of Art and Architecture Fund #3148-3 or to the “Patricia Hills Endowed Fellowship Fund in Art History” #0889-2 and sent to the following address:

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Thank you for your support!
Art History Alumni Support News

We list here the students who received funds from the Patricia Hills Endowed Graduate Fellowship Fund in Art History and the Art History Graduate Alumni Fund since the last listing in the Graduate Alumni News:


Austin Porter, for “Power on the Farm: Promoting Rural Electrification During the New Deal,” Southeastern College Art Conference; Durham, North Carolina, October 18-20, 2012.


Lana Sloutsky, “The Transfer and Translation of Byzantine Visual Culture or ‘How Does an Italian House Become a Byzantine Church?’” at the conference Migration, Memory, and Place, Copenhagen, Denmark, December 5-7, 2012.


 Alumni Support News continued on page 8
The following students presented papers but did not require funding from the Pat Hills or Alumni Funds:


**BU History of Art and Architecture Reunion Breakfast at CAA**

*New York Hilton, February 13th, 2013*

L-R: Prof. Michael Zell, Prof. Becky Martin, Susan Ashbrook, Keith Doherty, Pamela Patton

L-R: Caitlin Dalton, Molly Scheu Boarati (MA), Lindsay Alberts