BU Art History Alumna is the Curator of the Castello di Rivoli Museum, Turin

In this edition of the Newsletter, Martina Tanga interviewed Marcella Beccaria (MA 1994). Marcella is the curator at the Castello di Rivoli Museum, an important center for contemporary art in Italy. She has curated shows of acclaimed international artists such as Vito Acconci, Thomas Demand, Yang Fudong, Franz Ackermann, and Vanessa Beecroft as well as emerging national artists such as Alice Guareschi, Grazia Toderi, and Francesco Vezzoli. She also has numerous publications in the field of contemporary art. Marcella received her Masters from Boston University in 1994 completing her Master’s paper Piero Manzoni Responds to Yves Klein with Professor Caroline Jones.

What did you learn at Boston University that helped you in your early career and then land the curatorial position at the Castello di Rivoli Museum?

My Masters from Boston University gave me an essential education in Art History and specifically Contemporary Art. It helped me understand some major issues that are highly important to me as a curator. Professors at Boston University taught me to train my eyes as well as my critical skills. Not only did they give me a complete academic overview of Art History, they also helped me understand the subject critically. I am not only talking about the writing skills that a Masters gives you, but also the ability to solve problems and to think about the subject in different ways. I also want to mention the extraordinary international environment I encountered at BU. This proved to be very important in my job as a curator at an international level with artists working from different cultures.

Was there anything that stands out as special about Boston University Faculty?

The faculty was wonderful – in particular I remember Hellmut Wohl and his course on Renaissance Art and studying American Art with Patricia Hills. Overall they had a great ability to share their knowledge with students. But more than this, they were sensitive human beings. As a student coming from abroad I was in need of more than just a teacher; in all of them it was possible to find a wonderful person behind the professor. Last but not least, I am in debt to Caroline Jones with whom I did my master’s thesis. She really followed my studies. She is one of those teachers that leaves you with something that stays with you forever.

What was your first job after completing your MA at Boston University?

I started working at the ICA in Boston while finishing my degree. Originally I planned to spend one or two years in the States, but then I ended up working there for an additional four years as an assistant curator. That was a wonderful experience for me because, at the time, the ICA was really focused on the...
News from the desk of Patricia Hills, Faculty Liaison for the Art History Graduate Alumni Association

Dear Alumni and Friends,

This year the Alumni Newsletter is publishing an interview our current doctoral student, Martina Tanga, conducted with Marcella Beccaria (MA, 1994), who is now the Curator at the Castello di Rivoli Museum in Turin. We are pleased that our graduates are located around the globe.

Professor Fred S. Kleiner, Chair of the Department of History of Art and Architecture and Professor Patricia Hills hope to see many of you at the CAA conference in New York this February 2011. The BU Art History Alumni Breakfast will be held from 7:30 – 9 am on Friday, February 11, in the Lincoln Suite, 4th Floor, New York Hilton, 1335 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY. We will be joined by faculty and students from the School of Visual Arts at BU.

At CAA Sang Seung Yeon will be presenting a talk, "Cultural Essence and National Ceramics: Hybrid Ceramic Production from the Japan House Kilns during the 17th to 18th Centuries" at the Japan Art History Forum Graduate Student Panel on Thurs, February 10. BU faculty member Professor Jessica Sewell will be presenting a paper, “Seduction Machine: The Libidinous Modernism of the Bachelor Pad,” in the Visual Culture Caucus session “Let’s talk about Sex” (Not Gender): Sex and Modernist Practices,” on Friday, February 11. Alumna Frances Altwater (PhD) will discuss “The Sound of Art: Audio-Casting and Student Engagement,” in the session sponsored by Art Historians Interested in Pedagogy and Technology, on Wednesday, February 9. Alumnus Paul H. D. Kaplan (PhD 1982), will speak on “George of Freecastle: Giorgio da Castelfranco’s Self-Promotion as a Martial Painter,” at the session sponsored by the Italian Art Society, on Fri, February 11.

Also at CAA Ross Barrett (PhD 2009) will receive the Arthur Kingsley Porter Prize for his article, “Rioting Refigured: George Henry Hall and the Picturing of American Political Violence,” published in the September 2010 issue of The Art Bulletin, and BU faculty member Patricia Hills will received the “Distinguished Teaching of Art History Award.”

During 2010 the following received the PhD degree: Stacey McCarrol Cuthaw, John Keith Doherty, Holly Markowitz Goldstein, Dalia Habib Liassenn, and Ellen Roberts.

The following received their M.A. degrees: Christina Lee An, Hannah Williams Blunt, Karaug Brown, Martha H. Clawson, Lynne Cooney, Jenny L. Ernst, Melanee C. Harvey, Amy Huang, Lili Camille Mugnier, Sarah Parrish, Natania Remba, Deborah Hartry Stein, Jing Sun, Katherine Shoemaker Sutlive, Deanna West. Christina, Lynne, Melanee, Sarah, and Deborah are continuing into the PhD program.

We thank Martina Tanga, a doctoral student in our department, our editor for this issue.

Brief Recent News from the Faculty:

Emine Fetvaci gave a paper at the Biennial Symposium of the Historians of Islamic Art Association about a seventeenth-century Ottoman album. She also gave two talks at BU, one was for the Faculty Lunch Series of the Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations, and the other was a part of the conference, Leisure and the State Across Eurasia, organized by BU’s Center for the Study of Asia.

Melanie Hall has turned a conference paper into a publishable version, for the edited volume of the conference, “Plunder or Preservation? Negotiating an Anglo-American Heritage in the Later Nineteenth Century in the Old World and the New,” which will be published as part of the Proceedings of the British Academy.

Patricia Hills reports that she plans to visit Cuba the first week of March 2011 with a group from the American Association of Museums. While there she will be exploring possibilities for an exhibition of Cuban art to be shown at the Boston University Art Gallery. During 2010 she gave several lectures on her book Painting Harlem Modern: The Art of Jacob Lawrence (University of California Press). On April 3 she will be lecturing on Lawrence at the Meadows Museum in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Keith Morgan has given invited papers at several conferences this fall including “The Pre-Modern New England Collegiate Landscape,” at Shaking Their Yankee Foundations. He also submitted the final version of Community by Design: The Olmsted Firm and the Planning of Brookline, Massachusetts, 1880-1936, to be published in 2011. In January, he begins his sabbatical with a trip to Africa and India to see architecture and to visit family and friends.

Paolo Scrivano has been working on his next book, titled Building Transatlantic Italy: Architectural Dialogues with Postwar America; he aims to complete the manuscript by the end of the year. In addition, he is in the final stages of preparation of the special issue “Intersection of Photography and Architecture” for the journal Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation, co-edited with Maria Antonella Pelizzari (Hunter College, CUNY).

Kim Sichel is Director of American and New England Studies. She is organizing a yearlong seminar series titled "House and Home in American Culture" for the program. She published an essay, “Deadpan Geometries: Mapping, Aerial Photography and the American Landscape,” in Reframing the New Topographics (ed. Greg Foster-Rice and John Rohrbach), Center for American Places, 2010. She is also publishing an article on Lyonel Feininger's photographs. She is researching for a new book project about "reading photographic books," with case studies that span the 1920s to 1960s in Europe.

Alice Tseng: Professor Tseng spent the summer of 2010 researching the controversy that surrounded the design competition in 1990 for the mega-structure known as the Kyoto Station Building. Her larger book project on modern Kyoto architecture and urbanism investigates the challenges and tensions arising from the modernization of an old capital.

Gregory Williams delivered a paper “Retreat to the Private Sphere: In-Jokes in West German Art of the 1980s,” in October 2010 at the annual conference of the German Studies Association in Oakland. He is currently in the final (grueling) stage of gathering all images and copyright permissions for his book, Permission to Laugh: Humor and Politics in Contemporary German Art, to be published by the University of Chicago Press.

Michael Zell has an article, "Rembrandt's Gifts: A Case Study of Actor-Network-Theory," in press with JHNA, the electronic journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art. Professor Zell has also completed another article, entitled "Liefde baart kunst: Vermeer's Poetics of Painting," and is continuing work on the manuscript of his next book, For the Love of Art: Rembrandt, Vermeer, and the Gift in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture.
BU Art History Alumni Updates

Giovanna de Appolonia (PhD 2009) is still teaching Italian language at Boston University and has just had a baby boy in May 2010.

Janis Bell (MA 1974) is currently working on a translation project with Claire Fargo.

John J. Bishop (PhD 1962) retired in 2007 after teaching at Vanderbilt University; Bowling Green; State University, SUNY, Buffalo; Florida Atlantic University; Palm Beach Atlantic University. John also lectured extensively on cruise ships in Europe during his career.

Carl Chiarenza (MA 1963) is Artist-in-Residence, and Fanny Knapp Allen Professor Emeritus of Art History, at the University of Rochester. Carl recently had an exhibition of his photography at the Photographic Recourse Center in Boston.

George M. Cohen (PhD 1962) has recently retired from Hofstra University on Long Island.

Amy E. Cohn (PhD 1976) has been managing design and construction projects in New York City in various settings since completing her PhD. Currently she is overseeing the creation of a new Visitor Center for the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and the construction of a new 9-story school building.

Ellen B. Cutler (MA 1985) recently published an article on L’Enfant’s design for Washington D.C in Sculpture Review magazine. She is still an Adjunct Professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art and a Lecturer at the Osher Institute for Life-Long Learning, Johns Hopkins University.

Stacey McCarroll Cutshaw (PhD 2010) has been appointed Editor of exposure, the national journal of the Society of Photographic Education.

Krista Dahl (MA 2008) is working in the Education Department at the ICA Boston.

Julia Dolan (PhD 2009) is Curator of Photography at the Portland Museum of Art in Oregon.

Jeannine Falino (MA 1984) is the curator at the Museum of Arts and Design, NY and is currently working on the exhibition “Crafting Modernism: Midcentury American Arts and Design” scheduled to open in October 2011. She was also a Juror at the Nissionmakers, Brady Craft Alliance, Tulsa Oklahoma in September 2010 and a panelist at the American Craft week in 2010.

Alicia Craig Faxon (PhD 1979) gave a talk on “Women Artists, Past and Present” at the Loring-greennough House Museum in April 2010 and wrote three reviews for Art New England.

Michèle Furst (MA 2000) is senior associate vice president of Academic planning and support at Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

Holly Markowitz Goldstein (PhD 2010) is Assistant Professor at Savannah College of Art and Design. In November a baby girl, Eloise, was born to Holly and Jonathan Goldstein.

Patricia Johnston (PhD 1988) has received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities for 2011-2012 to work on her book Visual Arts and Global Trade in the Early American Republic. This topic was the basis of a international conference she organized in November 2010 in Salem, Massachusetts, with support from the Terra Foundation for American Art (website: http://terra.salemsstate.edu). In summer 2009 and summer 2010, she directed NEH Institutes for school teachers, who explored how to incorporate American art into their teaching (website: http://picturingamerica.salemsstate.edu). In April, she will be an invited scholar at Yale University Art Gallery, presenting on Samuel F. B. Morse.

Linda Markson Kruger (MA 1964) has retired from Columbia University as rare book cataloguer and later Head of Art and Architecture Cataloging.

Dalia Habib Linsen (MA 2001; PhD 2010) is a Lecturer at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Katherine Nahum (PhD 1993) is teaching 19th and 20th century architecture in the Fine Arts Department at Boston College. Her seminar Art and Mind addresses how various psychologies can be applied to art; it is a focused interest. She has published mostly catalogue essays for exhibitions on Irish and Belgian art, Munch, and Ensor held at the McNullen Museum. Currently she is completing a paper on Cézanne.

Melody N. Rod-ari (BA 2002 and MA 2004) completed her PhD dissertation at UCLA in the spring and is now the Assistant Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art at the Norton Simon Museum, a museum that has one of the best collections of South and Southeast Asian art in the States.


Nancy Tieken (MA 1989) recently moved to Denver, where she will be working for the Denver Art Museum.

Jennifer Uhrhane (MA 2006) is currently working on freelance curatorial projects. She is curating for the DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum on photojournalist Lucien Aigner. She is also continuing to work with private art collectors, cataloguing their collections in the Boston area.

Ann Prentice Wagner (MA 1987) In 2009, co-curated with Deputy Chief Curator George Gurney the exhibition 1934: A New Deal for Artists at the Smithsonian American Art Museum; She was lead author of the exhibition catalogue of the same name. The exhibition is touring the country until 2014 and she will be speaking at some of the venues. She also worked with Dr. Virginia Mecklenburg on the Smithsonian American Art Museum exhibition and book Telling Stories: Norman Rockwell from the Collections of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. In 2009, she taught as an adjunct at the University of Maryland and will do so again in 2010, and will also teach at Towson University.


Eleana Whyte (MA 2009) has accepted a position as Curatorial Assistant in the Division of European and American Art at the Harvard University Art Museums.

Christina Y. Yu (MA 2004) is completing her dissertation at the University of Chicago. She has been offered a curatorial position at LACMA, where she will be the assistant curator of Chinese art starting from February 2011.
presentation of cutting-edge contemporary art. As a young member of the curatorial team – comprised of Catherine de Zegher, now the Artistic Director of the Sydney Biennial, and Dr Christoph Grunenberg, now director of Tate Liverpool – I had the privilege of working at a small institution, understanding the complexities of the job whilst working closely with the artists.

How long have you been the curator at the Castello di Rivoli Museum?
I joined the Museum in 2000. This was my job after coming back from the States. For me it was a great opportunity to put into practice what I had learned. When I joined the Castello, it was one of the few institutions solely devoted to the presentation of contemporary art and culture in Italy. Today the landscape has changed as new museums have recently opened. But still, the Castello is an important historical record.

Was 2000 a crucial time?
Yes, I would be proud to think that. The Castello was founded in 1984. When I arrived the permanent collection was formed but also in the process of expanding. It was also a moment when the Castello was opening up to younger artists, not only established ones. As the curator I had the privilege to develop a program focused on emerging contemporary artists: “A Project for the Castle” – the first of its kind in Italy. One of the first artists I had the opportunity to invite was Olafur Eliasson, who then was not the international star he is today. It was very exciting to be able to present the work of a new artist to the Italian audience. Even though I was limited both in terms of square footage and budget, I was able to ask most of the artists for brand new projects especially designed for this space. Specifically in the case of Eliasson, the museum was only recently able to purchase the project he made for this program ten years earlier. As a curator, this was a wonderful accomplishment. I have also invited others to participate such as Elizabeth Peyton, Hannah Starkey, and Italian artists such as Paola Pivi. I have understood that even with a small space and budget, you can actually have challenging international exhibitions.

How did you first get involved with the Museum?
I sent my résumé to Ida Gianelli, the director, in which I stated at the very top my education at Boston University. I knew the work the museum was doing and I saw it from a distance, from the vantage point of the States. She liked that I had gotten such a rich educational experience.

What was your first project at the Museum?
I co-curated a show on Grazia Toderi, an Italian artist mainly working in video and installation. Her work has been recently featured at the Venice Biennial and this April she will have a mid-career retrospective at the Hirshhorn, in Washington, DC.

How has the Museum evolved during your time there?
The challenge has been to work in a professional and scientific way. By this I mean to produce a coherent program of exhibitions and to publish each year a certain number of catalogues put together by rigorous academic research. We have devised a meticulous curatorial approach based on complete biographic and bibliographic research on the artists. Our aim is not to produce beautiful coffee table catalogues with alluring images, but publications that can be useful to other scholars and artists. To do this you need to invest time and resources on each project.

What is important to you as a curator?
The most important aspect of my work is the time I spend with artists and everything I can learn from them directly. As a curator of contemporary art I have the privilege of working with living artists and I try to take full advantage of this. It is the reason I chose to work in this field – to really have the possibility to understand the art not only with my eyes but also through the critical and cultural exchange I can have with the artist. For me, this is the basis of my job. It is important not to fall under the trap of trends or easy choices.

Since you have been the curator at Castello di Rivoli, what would you say has been your most interesting project and why?
That is a tough question – I guess each project is unique. I will mention two that are particularly dear to me for different reasons. The first is a show I did in 2005 with the Chinese artist Yang Fudong. I wrote his first catalogue. At the time, Yang Fudong could only speak Chinese and his English was very minimal. The entire preparation for the exhibition and catalogue process was conducted in different locations in the world and with different people translating. Despite the huge amount of misinterpretation that could have happened, somehow everything went really smoothly. And even recently, Yang Fudong has asked...
Alumna is a curator at the Castello di Rivoli Museum (continued from page 4)

me to write about his work. It’s a particular case where the lack of a common language was not a barrier to understanding each other.

Another significant project was the big retrospective I curated with Ida Gianelli, “Claes Oldenburg Coosje van Bruggen, Sculpture by the Way” on view from October 2006 until February 2007 at the Castello, also travelling to the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona later that year. In this case, the challenge was to work with Claes and Coosje who have been actively creating the history of contemporary art. There have been many catalogues and a huge amount of material published on them. Still, the fascination for me was the possibility to work directly with these two iconic artists – to understand their work with them and through them. This was a gift I will never forget. As you know, unfortunately Coosje passed away in 2009 and that was also her last show.

What was the focus of the Claes Oldenburg Coosje van Bruggen, Sculpture by the Way exhibition?
The angle was their collaboration. This is an aspect that seems to slip away from traditional art historical discourse. Of course everyone knows the work of Claes Oldenburg is linked to the history of Pop Art, Performance and Happenings. The work of Coosje van Bruggen is known for her writing, for example her important book on Bruce Nauman and her curatorial work for Documenta. But since they met and started working together, they initiated a new model of artistic practice. The exhibition focused on their collaboration, their unique exchange of word and image. Word from Coosje, and image though Claes’ production. Through this encounter they have been shaping a modus operandi that has no precedent in art history. There is a bit of resistance against this interpretation. Not everyone has been able to acknowledge the contribution Coosje has given to this process. But it is only through this process that they have been able to create the large-scale projects that have reshaped public sculpture since the 1980s. I hope that the exhibition and catalogue might begin to write the first part of this history.

Castello di Rivoli grants a fellowship “Borsa per I Giovani Artisti Italiani”
What is the aim of this grant?
This program also started around the year 2000. I was one of the founding members. Each year with the support from the Friends of the Museum we are able to award a fellowship to an Italian Artist. The program was created especially because Italy is so far behind in promoting young artists and helping them get out of the country. The idea was to create a project with easy guidelines – and not be a bureaucratic nightmare – to allow them to go abroad. The artists have to imagine a project in any country they choose, where they might conduct research or produce a new piece. We invite a number of artists, all younger than 40 years old, to present each year. They win 20 000 euro and the museum helps the artists get connections wherever they go. After one year, we present their project in the museum.

What is the criterion for the selection of artist?
We try to understand how this project will help their career paths. This possibility should give them new tools to advance their work. We also try to challenge ourselves by giving a grant to an artist whose work might not be so project-based. It is a formula that many prizes have, favoring post-conceptual work. But for someone working with more a traditional medium like painting, it might be more difficult for them to describe how integral traveling to a specific place is to their projects. We try not to privilege a specific medium.

What project are you working on currently?
At the moment I have just published a catalogue on the CRT collection. This is a collaboration project between the Castello, the GAM (Galleria d’Arte Moderna) and the Fondazione CRT in Turin. The Fondazione CRT began a collection of contemporary art about a decade ago in order to provide both the Castello and the GAM with more resources. The CRT collection is on loan to both museums and can be used in order to develop exhibitions and projects. This is all part of the important cultural initiative actively happening in Turin. As you might know, Turin is changing its identity. It is vital that we invest in the future. I hope all of these new centers that have been created to promote culture will stay. I hope it is not a trend. Because we have the big heritage of the past to preserve, a huge amount of public money has to go into that. The fear is that Italy cannot support so many contemporary initiatives. But because we are a living country, it is vital that we invest in the future. I do not see any better way than fostering creativity, giving artists places to work and ways to express their ideas. This is really what I learned while living in the States. Art can become a critical tool in shaping people’s identity. We are not only the country of Berlusconi, I hope!

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 the following address:

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Since the last Newsletter was published in January 2010, the following students have been given travel funds from the Patricia Hills Endowed Graduate Fellowship Fund in Art History and the Art History Graduate Alumni Fund:

Melissa Renn delivered a talk, “Women at War: Life Magazine’s Women Artist Correspondents in World War II,” for the SECAC conference in Richmond, Virginia, on October 23, 2010.

Naomi Slipp delivered her talk, “Thomas Eakins’s Anatomical Casts: An Investigation of Realism, Vision, and Subjectivity in Late Nineteenth-Century America,” for the “Sculpture” panel at the Association of Historians of American Art conference, held in Brooklyn, New York, on October 9, 2010.


Mamie Hyatt delivered a paper, “Homeboy Cosmopolitan? Kehinde Wiley and the World Stage,” at the 36th annual Cleveland Symposium hosted by Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Museum of Art, and held on February 26, 2010. The theme of the symposium was, “The Art of Exchange: Cross-Cultural Ideas in a Visual World.” For her paper she was presented a second place award for most innovative research and best overall presentation.


Beth Pugliano attended the conference on “Romanesque and the Past,” sponsored by the British Archaeological Association in London from April 9-11, 2010. Professor Deborah Kahn presented a paper at the conference.


In addition the Dean’s office gave Special Research Funds to the Department so that we could make available funds for research and conference travel to Jeong Hye Kim, Ellen Roberts, Melissa Renn, Lana Sloutsky, Catherine Walsh, and Katherine Carroll.

The 27th Annual Boston University Graduate Student Symposium on the History of Art and Architecture

This Symposium will consider the use, over-use and re-use of gold both from a material and a symbolic viewpoint.

Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Rico Franses, Chair, Department of Fine Arts and Art History, American University of Beirut
The Blinding Light: Gold in Roman Egyptian, Byzantine and Islamic Art

Keynote lecture information:
Friday, March 4th 2011, 5:30pm
Boston University Art Gallery
at the Stone Gallery
855 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA, 02215

Graduate Symposium
Saturday, March 5th 2010
10 am- 5 pm
Riley Seminar Room,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
465 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA, 02115

Symposium Moderators
Martina Tanga, Boston University
Kenneth Hartvigsen, Boston University

Graduate Speakers:
Roland Betancourt, Yale University
The Hermeneutics of Gold-Ground Technology in Middle Byzantine Art

Ilaria Patania, Boston University
Bronze is the New Gold!

Esther van Duijn, University of Amsterdam
Gold Brocaded Fabrics and the use of Gold in Northern Netherlands

For more information please contact Lana Sloutsky, Symposium Coordinator, Department of Art and Architecture History, Boston University at lsloutsk@bu.edu, or visit www.bu.edu/ah/news/2010-2011/symposium.html.

This event is sponsored by The Humanities Foundation at Boston University; the Art History Department, Boston University; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and the Boston University Art Gallery at the Stone Gallery.