

Graduate Alumni News

Boston University Art History Department

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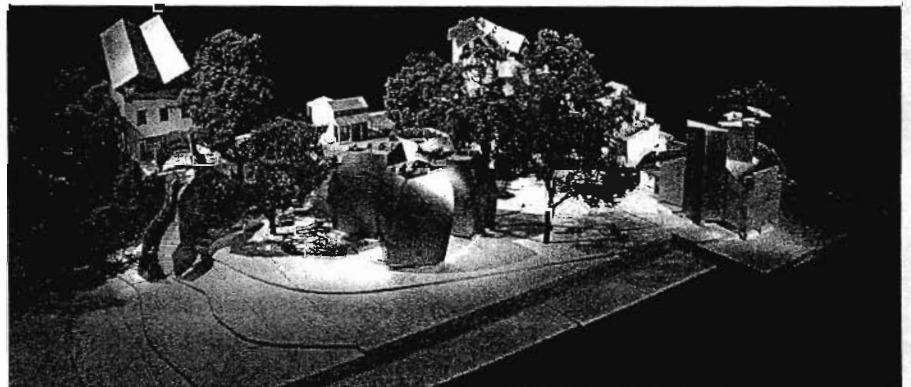
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Hurricane Katrina Affects Mississippi Museum and BU Art History Alumna

When Anna Stanfield Harris (MA 2003) moved back to Mississippi after graduating from Boston University, she had no idea what the future had in store for her. Harris accepted a job as the Director of Education and Exhibits at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi. The Ohr-O'Keefe collection is primarily composed of the whimsical clay pottery of George Ohr (1857-1918) and a collection of African American folk art. The museum also organizes special exhibitions of works by well-known American artists such as Winslow Homer and Andy Warhol as well as shows focusing on regional artists. As Director of Education and Exhibits, Harris worked on exhibition planning and schedules, educational programming, and ways to integrate the Museum within the community.

Harris is an ardent appreciator of Ohr's pottery, though she knew little about the artist before taking the position at the Museum. Self-styled as "The Mad Potter of Biloxi," the artist and his work have great popular appeal, which resulted in support from the family of Jeremiah O'Keefe, Sr. for a new Frank Gehry-designed complex to house the Museum's collections. Included in the capricious and exuberant design is a four-room gallery to house examples of Ohr's works and a recreation of Ohr's turn of the century studio, affectionately called Pot-Ohr-E Studio.

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Model of the Frank Gehry design for the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art

News from the Desk of Professor Patricia Hills, Faculty Liaison for the Art History Graduate Alumni Association

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Again, we thank you for your contributions to the B.U. Art History Graduate Alumni Association Fund. This past year we were able to contribute travel funds or conference registration fees to many graduate students, whose names and projects can be found on page five.

As to other department news: last spring we hired **Professor Emine Fetvacı** to teach Islamic art. Professor Fetvacı received her Ph.D. in art history from Harvard University in 2005, and her dissertation is titled "Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617."

This academic year she is a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University; she will then be joining us in September 2007.

I thank Amber Ludwig, a doctoral candidate, for assembling this issue of the Art History Graduate Alumni Newsletter. She had a long interview with **Anna Stanfield Harris** (MA 2003), who was working at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi when Katrina hit the coast last August. I can well imagine the situation. Last March I traveled through Biloxi by car and then stayed for three days in New Orleans, where I talked with professionals in the local museums. I have tremendous admiration for those who are soldiering ahead with optimism.

There is still so much that needs to be done to help people get their lives back together as well as to support the various cultural institutions there.

Some of you might want to see the October 2006 issue of the *Art Bull: The Newsletter of Boston University's Art History Graduate Students*. In it are profiles of fifteen alumni and their "advice for current students." The *Art Bull* also includes news from the faculty and staff. Becky Senf, the editor of that issue, can get you a copy, if you email her at bsenf@bu.edu. ■

Alumni Updates

Warren Adelson (MA) moved his gallery, Adelson Galleries, from the Mark Hotel at 25 East 77th Street to a new location at 19 East 81st Street. Pat Hills attended the gala opening on November 2, which featured "Andrew Wyeth: Helga on Paper." The exhibition will be up until December 22, 2006.

Ann Chase Allen (MA 1988) is an Adjunct Lecturer at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and on the Executive Committee of the Council for the Arts at MIT.

Fran Altvater (MA 1996, Ph.D. 2003) writes, "I am currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Hillyer College, the two-year college at the University of Hartford. I'm teaching all areas of art history—cave painting to soup cans. I'm on the job market again for the 2007-2008 year. As for current research, I hosted a panel on sacraments and art at the 2006 Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo and had a paper on baptismal fonts accepted for publication. I'm still an invited reviewer for *Years Work in Old English*, where I'm a part of the archaeology, artifacts, and numismatics team."

Peter Barr (MA 1989, Ph.D. 1997) was promoted to full Professor at Siena Heights University in Michigan in May 2006.

Marcella Beccaria (MA 1994) is Curator at Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Torino and co-editor of guides to the Museum's collection. After graduating from BU, she worked at the ICA and moved first to Milan and then to Turin. She has been at the Castello di Rivoli for seven years and works with the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions. She curated the *Project-Room Series*, which presented for the first time in an Italian museum the work of Olafur Eliasson, Alessandra Tesi, Elizabeth Peyton, Hannah Starkey, and Paola Pivi. She organized solo shows, including *Franz Ackermann*, *Teresita Fernandez*, and *Anna Gaskell*. Additionally, Marcella authored the first monographs on Francesco Vezzoli and Bruna Esposito. Recently, she curated exhibitions and wrote catalogues on the work of Thomas Demand, Vanessa Beecroft, Candice Breitz, and Yang Fudong. An exhibition of art by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen opened in October 2006.



Marcella Beccaria

Leonie Bradbury (MA 2001) is the Director and Curator of the Gallery & Visiting Artist Program at Montserrat College of Art. Among the many exhibitions Leonie curated in 2005-2006 are *Ryan McGinness: Mildly Subversive; Plastic Princess: Barbie As Art; Calamitrees and Other Works: Sally Heller; Rob Roy: Global Signatures*; and *Spin: A New Installation by Liz Nofziger*, an exhibition that was accompanied by an article in *Aspect Magazine*. The Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art honored Montserrat College of Art's exhibition *A New Order: Appropriation Art in the Digital Age* with a second place award for Best Group Show in an Institution or Gallery in 2005-2006. Leonie served on several informative panels, including a *Meet the Curators Panel* and a Women's Caucus for the Arts panel *Domestic Bliss to Domestic Violence*.

Megan Brown (MA 2005) graduated from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education in 2006 and is now working in Chicago at Bright Horizons School as Head School Age Teacher and Arts Specialist.

Esther Brummer (MA 2005) is undertaking her second year of research towards the Ph.D. with Professor Deborah Howard. Her research concentrates on patronage and noble identity in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Venice.

Joshua Buckno (MA 2005), Director of the Nielsen Gallery on Newbury Street, will be a guest juror for the Copley Society's Nineteenth Annual Student Art Show, which opens February 2007. In August, Josh ran and completed the Reykjavik Marathon with **Beth Pugliano** (MA 2005, current Ph.D. student)!

Donna M. Cassidy (MA 1982, Ph.D. 1988) was awarded the University of Southern Maine Trustee Professorship 2005-2006 for a new book project, *Transnationalism, Region, and American Modernist Art*, which will examine early twentieth-century American artists in southern France, Canada, Ireland, and Denmark. She will continue research during her sabbatical this upcoming spring semester.

Danielle Cavanna (MA 2006) began this fall at Harvard University's Arts Education Program in the Graduate School of Education. She remains active in the Boston chapter of Save Venice.

Liana DeGirolami Cheney (Ph.D. 1978) is Chair and Professor of Art History in the Department of Cultural Studies and Coordinator of Art History and Interdisciplinary/Intercollegiate Studies at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. *The Homes of Giorgio Vasari* was published by Peter Lang Publishers in 2006, and *Giorgio Vasari's Teachers: Sacred and Profane Art* will be published by the same house in 2007. In the spring of 2006, the article "Luisa Roldan, La Roldana" appeared in *Mediterranean*

Studies Journal. In 2005, "Giorgio Vasari's Studio, Diligenza ed Amorevole Fatica" was published in *Reading Vasari*.



Liana Cheney

Melissa Dabakis (Ph.D. 1987) writes, "I am the Founding Director of the Kenyon in Rome and Florence Program. In the spring of 2006, I spent four months in Rome and one month in Florence with 13 Kenyon College students. Teaching American Studies and Art History in Rome was very rewarding. I offered an advanced seminar 'Rome in the American Imagination,' in which we studied American writers and artists who traveled or expatriated to Rome in the 19th century."

Jeannine Falino (MA 1985), an Independent Curator and Consultant, recently contributed to the catalogue of the traveling exhibition *Craft in America*, which will open in spring 2007. Jeannine co-curated *Artistic Luxury: Fabergé, Tiffany, Lalique* with the Cleveland Museum of Art and curated for the Fuller Craft Museum the exhibition *Jamie Bennett*. Both exhibitions will open in the winter of 2008.

Alicia Craig Faxon (MA 1971, Ph.D. 1979) served on two panels in Boston during the College Art Association's Annual Meeting for 2006. She has also had reviews in *Art New England* and *Woman's Art Journal*.

Charles Giuliano (MA) plans to retire after the spring 2007 semester from teaching at Suffolk University, where he also runs the exhibition program at the New England School of Art & Design, a branch of the University. For the past several years he has published the on-line blog *Maverick-Arts*, and this past summer he launched another site, *Berkshire Fine Arts*, which publishes his writing as well as that of contributors. The monthly circulation is 5,000 and growing. Visit the site at www.berkshirefinearts.com, which also links to *Maverick*.

Karen Haas (MA 1989) is the Curator of the Lane Collection of Photographs at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Karen recently installed the exhibition *Ansel Adams* at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, and will deliver a lecture,

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Alumni Updates

"Beyond *Manhatta*: Charles Sheeler and Film," at the Art Institute of Chicago in December. Additionally, she is also co-authoring the MFA's upcoming publication, *Highlights of the Photography Collection*, which will be published in 2007, and is in the process of organizing and cataloguing the more than 2,000 Edward Weston photographs in the Lane Collection, with the hope of writing an in-depth major catalogue and organizing small focused exhibitions on aspects of the holdings.

Jaimey Hamilton (Ph.D. 2005) was recently appointed assistant professor on a tenure track at the University of Hawaii.

Margaret Hanni (MA 1988, Ph.D. 1996) received tenure in July 2004 and was promoted to Associate Professor at Simmons College. She is the Chair of the Department of Art and Music.

Erica Hirshler (Ph.D. 1992) is the Croll Senior Curator of Paintings for the Art of Americas at the MFA. She is very excited about the MFA's new wing for American art. She writes, "For the first time, the MFA will be able to present a comprehensive overview of its American holdings, from all ages in all media." Her most recent project is the exhibition "Americans in Paris, 1860-1900."

Michael Hoff (Ph.D. 1988) is Professor of Art History at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. In recent months, he has authored several articles and field reports on aspects of the archaeology of Roman Asia Minor. In addition, he published an article on graffiti from Roman Athens in the *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*. Michael is Director of the Antiocheia ad Kragum Archaeological Research Project that is currently excavating and restoring an imperial temple in southern Turkey and is co-recipient of a grant from the National Science Foundation for support of the Project's research.

James Housefield (Ph.D. 1999) continues to work as adjunct curator at the Austin Museum of Art, where his exhibit of Abstract Expressionist works from the Grey Art Gallery (NYU), *Radical! NY*, complements the exhibition *The Downtown Show: The New York Art Scene 1974-84*. In his capacity as Associate Professor of Art History at Texas State University, he was awarded the University's top teaching award in 2005, subsequently earning tenure and promotion. As NEH Distinguished

Teaching Professor in the Humanities, he will pursue a three-year program to interweave research, teaching innovation, and public programming/community outreach. Additionally, he is curating a traveling exhibition, *Sonic Visions: Art and Music Intersect*, for 2008 or 2009 and will be the lead curator for the next triennial of New Art in Austin.

Sheldon Hurst (Ph.D.) is in his second year as Interim Dean for Academic Affairs at Adirondack Community College, still paying close attention to the Visual Arts Gallery and the College Art Collection. The Gallery will publish a fourth book relating art and poetry. The forthcoming publication, *White Raven: Riting Vision*, combines the art of Laura Frare with the poetry of Stuart Bartow. The series was begun when a collection of art was given to Adirondack Community College by the late poet William Bronk. Other titles in the series are *It Becomes Our Life: The William Bronk Collection at Adirondack Community College* (2000), *Collage* (2003), and *Mythology of Stone* (2004).

Lawrence Jay Hyman (MA 1997) works for the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. Recent exhibitions in development include *Artists' Letters from the Archives of American Art, Animated Movie Posters from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*, and *Fifty Years of Art from NASA's Collections*.

Patricia Johnston (Ph.D. 1988) is Professor of Art History at Salem State College in Salem, MA. She recently published *Seeing High and Low: Representing Social Conflict in American Visual Culture*. Patricia also directed three large NEH grants to support research on the visual culture of early New England.

Deborah Martin Kao (Ph.D. 1999) is the Richard L. Menschel Curator of Photography at the Fogg Art Museum and Senior Lecturer in History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University. She is now working on an exhibition titled "Classified Documents: The Social Museum Collection of Harvard University, 1903-1931."

Allison Kemmerer (MA 1991) works at the Addison Gallery of Art as Curator of Art after 1950 and of Photography. She is working on a traveling exhibition featuring the graphic work of Carroll Dunham, as well as *Models as Muse*, an exhibition that invites four contemporary artists to create new work in response to the Addison's model ship collection.

Francine Miller Koslow (Ph.D. 1981) has been teaching for the past four years at

Northeastern University and continues to work on her book *When Politics Become Form* and write for *Artforum*.

Kathryn M. Kucharski (MA 1988) presented a paper on the Touro Synagogue restoration at the AIA RI Conference in Newport this past September. In October, she presented on the restoration of H.H. Richardson's Sever Hall at Harvard.

Kathy Lawrence (AMNESP Ph.D. 2002) is currently an assistant professor at George Washington University, teaching both undergraduate and graduate students in American art history and classes on American literature and art. She recently published an article in the Harvard Library Bulletin on Emerson's connection to American art through his relationship with artist Caroline Sturgis.

Amy Lyford (MA 1990) received her Ph.D. from U.C. Berkeley in 1997. She writes, "I am currently serving as Chair of the Art History and Visual Arts department at Occidental College in Los Angeles. Forthcoming publications include my first book, *Surrealist Masculinities: Gender Anxiety and the Aesthetics of Post-World War I Reconstruction* (University of California Press, Spring 2007); "Noguchi's Multiform Modernism," a review of a recent biography of Isamu Noguchi that will appear in *Art Journal* (2007); and a second book project, recently placed under contract with University of California Press, entitled *Negotiating Race and Nation: Isamu Noguchi's Modernism, 1930-1950*."

Emily Moore (MA 2001) is Assistant Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, where she organizes exhibitions and assists in developing the new permanent collection.

Susan W. Nessen (Ph.D. 1986) retired after eighteen years of teaching at Regis College. She is currently at work on a monograph of Yves Tanguy.

Chris Newth (MA 2001) was recently appointed Manager of Rotations and Installations at the MFA.

Pamela Patton (Ph.D. 1994) won a summer stipend from the NEH for work on a book on Christian images of Jews in medieval Spain. She spent a couple of weeks in Spain for research on the project. Pamela still lives in Dallas with her husband and BU alumnus Dr. Eric White, their two children, two cats, and now a hyperactive chihuahua!

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Alumni Updates

Todd Porterfield (MA 1986, Ph.D. 1991) co-authored a book with Susan L. Siegfried titled *Staging Empire: Napoleon, Ingres, and David*, which will appear in December 2006 from Penn State University Press. Also in December 2006, Todd will be the Fondation de France Visiting Fellow at the Institut National d' Histoire de l'Art in Paris.

Nancy Rich (MA 1988) writes, "Having started in art history from a love of landscape, I am now deepening my interest in human relationships with land by pursuit of a graduate program in Environmental Studies at Antioch University New England in Keene, NH. I am enjoying it very much and am finding time nevertheless to look at and think about art."

Jane Seney (MA 2004) graduated from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education this past spring and recently began working at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum in New London, CT. Her job involves recruiting and training docents, scheduling and designing curriculum-based tours, creating public programming for children and adults, and organizing art classes through the Museum.

Lindsay Shuckhart (MA 2001) has been working as the Curator of Collections at the New York Yacht Club. She manages the Club's art and model collections and organizes an annual marine and art history symposium in conjunction with an exhibition.

Anna Sparks (MA 2005) moved to Washington, D.C. and is now happily working as the Education Specialist for School and Family Programs at the Phillips Collection.

Annette Stott (PhD 1986) returned to the University of Denver as Director of the School of Art and Art History, after a sabbatical. She has just finished a book on 19th-century cemetery sculpture throughout the Rocky Mountains. She is now helping to develop an exhibition on American artists

working in the Netherlands a century ago, organized by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Telfair Museum and Singer-Laren in the Netherlands.

Catherine Wilcox-Titus (MA 1995, Ph.D. 2002) gave a talk at SECAC (South Eastern College of Art Conference) titled "Gender and the Neo-Baroque in Contemporary Art."

Nancy B. Ticken (MA 1989) is busy with involvement in various cultural organizations. She serves as an Overseer at the Gardner Museum and on the Collections Committee at the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego. She is a Panel Member for the outdoor sculpture selection at the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs and at the Justice Center at the Currier Museum of Art, as well as at the Foothills Art Center. As a Trustee at the ICA Boston, Nancy was the chair of two exhibitions.

Sarah McGaughey Trembley (MA 2000) is an editor at MFA Publications, the publishing imprint of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Jennifer Uhrhane (MA 2006) recently went on a three-week trip to Eastern Europe and shot about forty rolls of film. She visited the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary, where she saw lots of amazing examples of art nouveau and medieval, gothic, and baroque architecture. The Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps affected her greatly.

Sarah A. Vure (MA 1991, Ph.D. 2002) is teaching art history at Long Beach City College. She was guest curator for *L.A. River Reborn*, an exhibition of contemporary photography and video that was on view April 6 - September 3, 2006 at the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles.

Ann Prentice Wagner (MA 1987) finished her Ph.D. in May 2006 at the University of Maryland. Her dissertation is titled *Living on Paper: Georgia O'Keeffe and the Culture of Drawing and Watercolor in the Stieglitz Circle*. In September, Ann started as Curator of the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts in Hagerstown, Maryland. It is a small

museum with a collection of national importance, especially in the field of American art.

James A. Welu (Ph.D. 1977) has been the Director of the Worcester Art Museum since 1986.

Eric White (MA 1989, Ph.D. 1995) is the Curator of Special Collections at Southern Methodist University's Bridwell Library. Upcoming publications include "Newly-Discovered Fragments from Three 'Remarkable' Copies of the 1477 Delft Bible" in *Quaerendo, A Quarterly Journal from the Low Countries Devoted to Manuscripts and Printed Books*. In 2006, Eric published the article "Three Books Donated by Adolf Rusch to the Carthusians at Basel" in the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* and co-authored the exhibition catalogue *Six Centuries of Master Bookbindings at Bridwell Library*. Eric lives in Dallas with his wife Pamela Patton, a fellow BU alumna, and their two children, Emily (9) and Evan (5), and—not to be forgotten—the hyperactive chihuahua! ▣



Eric White, Gary Patton, Evan White, Emily White, and Lenore Patton at the Texas State Fair with "Big Tex"

BU at CAA 2007

Join us for the annual **Boston University Alumni Breakfast**, which will be held at the College Art Association's Annual Meeting in New York City in the **New York Suite, 4th floor** of the Hilton Hotel at 6th Avenue and 53rd Street, on **Friday, February 16, 2007 from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m.**

The Art History Department will conduct interviews at CAA for the position of Assistant or Associate Professor of Modern Architecture as a successor for Professor Emerita Naomi Miller. ▣

Hurricane Katrina (continued from page 1)

Nearby, Gehry planned another building for African American folk art and changing exhibitions of work by emerging African American artists. Separate buildings would house a visitor center, exhibitions gallery, and working ceramics studio. The five buildings were to be united under almost a dozen 300-year-old oak trees, historic symbols in the South.

In August of 2004, Harris and her colleagues were all busy with this building campaign and looking forward to opening the new, state-of-the-art campus in 2006. The mood was optimistic, enthusiastic, and expectant. Then, Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast with unexpected force, leaving incomparable devastation in its wake.

In the aftermath of the catastrophe, Harris's job changed from a forward-looking exhibition and programming planner to a collection manager in a

time of catastrophic disaster. The most immediate task was to find a temporary home for the collections, which survived the hurricane surprisingly well. Harris and her colleagues packed the collection in makeshift crates and moved it through treacherous conditions. "Robert Brooks, the Museum's exhibition installer, and I hurried to the Museum as the storm passed, knowing we had to get the collection to safety. We navigated downed power lines and flooded roads to get the collection to the Mobile Museum of Art. I had never seen such destruction, but we were lucky we got the pottery to a safe place and without significant damage."

The Gehry-designed buildings, which were under construction, and the oak trees were not as fortunate. A casino barge came unhitched during the storm and was blown ashore, critically damaging several trees and

demolishing one building. The image of the barge ashore, Harris reports, was incredibly shocking. Other buildings received some water and wind damage, but, for the most part, they responded to a category five hurricane as expected, especially in the low lying area in which they were situated.

Harris quickly applied for grants to insure that costs for damage to the collection could be kept to a minimum. She felt it necessary to communicate the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum's mission of community education to the public and other national institutions. Harris says, "I wanted to meet people, tell our story, and convince the community of the need for arts and culture in this time of disaster. We couldn't ask people in the community for money in this dire situation, but we still wanted to be able to provide people with leisure activities and stress relief."

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Art History Alumni Support News

Because of the support all of you give, through the Art History Graduate Alumni Association, we were able to give small travel grants for conference presentations and dissertation or master's paper research to the following students in 2005-2006.

- **Katherine Carroll** gave a paper in February 2006, "Big Dreams for Real People: Housing at the Durham State Land Settlement," at the 2006 Annual Conference of the Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association, held in Albuquerque.
- **Jenny Champoux** (MA 2006) delivered a paper, "Rogier van der Weyden's *Standing Madonna* and *St. Catherine: A Wedding Gift Symbolic of the Ideal Bride*," at the South-Central Renaissance Conference, held in Houston during March 2006.
- **Amber Ludwig** gave a paper, "Dangerous Beauty: Portraits of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in Turkish Dress," at the CAA annual conference held in Boston in February.
- **Holly Markovitz** also spoke at CAA on "No Place Like Home: The Homeless Body as Machine for Living." Additionally, Holly gave a paper, "Wish You Were Here: Postcards and the Imagining of the American Southwest," at the Southwest Art History Conference, held in Taos, NM in October 2005.
- In October 2005, **Keely Orgeman** traveled to Berkeley, California, to research the Jay DeFeo papers in the archives at the Bancroft Library for her M.A. paper; this research also generated a paper, "Underneath the Mushroom Cloud Tree: Atomic Imagery in the Art of Jay DeFeo," which Keely delivered at a conference called "(Be)longing: Art and Identity in an Age of Anxiety," held at Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia, in May 2006.
- **Melissa Renn** delivered a paper, "The For-Ever Spark Plug: Changing Representations of the Spark Plug in American Art and Advertising from 1908-1922," at the New England popular Culture Association Conference, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, during October 2005.
- In May 2006, **Becky Senf** traveled to Los Angeles, the Monterey area, San Francisco, and Berkeley to work in archives for her dissertation research on Ansel Adams's early photography.
- **Aaron Lecklider**, a doctoral candidate in the American and New England Studies Program, received a travel grant from a fund earmarked for travel to the American Studies Association annual meeting, this time held in Oakland, California, in November 2006; his paper was "'An Unapologetic Tribute to Hedonism': Frankie Goes to Hollywood's Queer Performance in 1980s America."

During 2005-06, ten students received M.A. degrees. In addition, four received Ph.D. degrees. The incoming class for September 2006 is thirteen students.

So your collective contributions make a difference to these students. Please consider sending us \$25, \$50, or what you like. Checks should be made out to B.U. Art History Graduate Alumni Fund (#20208-3148-3) and sent to the attention of Professor Patricia Hills. Again, thanks for your continued support. ■

Hurricane Katrina (continued from page 5)

Harris gives the Winterthur Museum her greatest appreciation, saying that “within weeks of Hurricane Katrina, they approved a \$400,000 grant to assist both the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum and Beauvoir House,” Jefferson Davis’s former home. The grant allowed the institutions to hire a much needed full-time conservator and hold workshops for museum professionals dealing with the aftermath of Katrina. Harris also secured grants from the NEH and the NEA. The Ohr-O’Keefe Museum received money from the Getty’s Fund for New Orleans to work on disaster preparedness plans, build a communal vault north of the coastline, create an evacuation-staging area, and hire consultants specializing in disaster-prone sites.

Money continues to be the main impediment to opening the new Museum. Harris says, “So much money was lost with the destruction of the new buildings. Getting money together—especially after so many people lost everything they owned—is difficult. We continue to try to show people that cultural institutions are good investments for communities. And, fortunately, the community is behind the project more than ever.”

The spirit of optimism has returned to the Ohr-O’Keefe staff, and, despite not having a main campus, the Museum

continues to sponsor arts-related programming. Educators visit schools and offer free art days and artists demonstrations in local parks, and they recently held a juried show at a local college. There was also a show of Ohr pottery at the Walter Anderson Museum of Art at the University of Mississippi. “Though it is difficult,” Harris says, “we are working hard to find new spaces where our members can go.” This winter the Ohr-O’Keefe staff will move into the historic Glenn L. Swetman House, which the city of Biloxi donated as a temporary location for the Museum. There will be exhibitions of Ohr pottery and shows of works by regional artists.

Harris is no longer a full-time employee of the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum, but she remains dedicated to the success of the institution and opening of the new campus. Harris needed a change from the constant stress of working in a post-Hurricane-Katrina museum. She is, however, still working part-time as a consultant for the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum. As a consulting curator, Harris is planning future exhibitions and continues to write grant applications so that the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum can open as soon as possible.

Hurricane Katrina still affects her life on a daily basis. The idea of collecting material goods—goods that can be destroyed in a matter of minutes by

unexpected disasters—has become more complex for her, and that old art historical theme of materiality versus ephemerality is never far from her mind. Before Katrina, Harris was conscious of the responsibility museum professionals had in caring for collections. “Now,” she says, “I am fully aware of the enormity of the duty, and, in retrospect, I wish I had taken more Museum Studies courses at BU. My coursework at BU did instill within me a great respect for what art historians undertake on a daily basis and, most importantly, gave me confidence to make on-the-spot decisions during this state of emergency.”

Harris encourages her fellow BU Alumni to stay educated about art collections in the Southeast. Though few people outside of the Gulf Coast may be aware of the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum and other important institutions like it, awareness of how these cultural organizations are responding to communities’ needs is one of the first steps toward protecting the collections and increasing support for them. Of course, financial donations are always appreciated, and information about donating to the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum can be found at www.georgeohr.org. Harris also encourages fellow museum professionals to have a disaster preparedness plan which employees read *and* practice. Museums along the Gulf Coast have learned a lot from Katrina, and we hope other institutions will, too. ■

The Boston University Art History Graduate Alumni Association was founded in 1995. The Association provides a forum to bring alumni together and also build support for current Master of Arts and Ph.D. students.

Donations from alumni help to provide important funding for current graduate students to present conference papers and conduct research trips.

Contributions may be made payable to the BU Art History Department Fund #3148-3 and sent to the following address:
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Newsletter edited by Amber Ludwig, amludwig@bu.edu.

Graduate Symposium on the History of Art

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

March 23-24, 2007

HEIST

The 23rd Annual Boston University Graduate Student Symposium on the History of Art will address stolen objects, pilfered motifs and uncited sources as well as the effects of those heists. Possible topics include: stealing as an alternative to modes of reading based on gift giving or economics, thievery as the sincerest form of flattery, mimesis as robbery, shoplifting as a way of establishing the autonomy of the artist, appropriation, and the means by which theft is regulated, e.g., copyright, repatriation agreements, iconography, and citation styles. Thievery in any medium (even theory) as well as topics in all fields and all disciplines will be considered.

Contact Tara Ward, Symposium Coordinator, with questions at taraward@bu.edu or visit www.bu.edu/ah/symposium.html.