

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 17, 2019 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

2A

ART'S HISTORIES AND FUTURES

Session Moderator: Sonal Khullar, Art History

MGH 171

3:30 PM to 5:15 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

David's Brutus as Dramatic Tableau*Jessamyn (Jess) Irvine, Senior, Art History, Western Washington University**Mentor: Javier Berzal de Dios, Art and Art History, Western Washington University*

Jacques-Louis David's 1789 *The Lictors Bringing Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* stages a harrowing scene from Roman history. Consul Brutus, upon discovery of his sons' treasonous plot to restore the monarchy, sanctions their deaths in defense of the Republic. Debuted in the 1789 Paris Salon and shortly after the fall of the Bastille, the political meaning of the colossal painting would have been explicit. In painting the return of the sons' bodies, David's composition reinforces the grave but necessary cost of revolution. Representing an event of classical antiquity as a moral exemplar, Brutus is firmly anchored in period conflict, evincing David's personal revolutionary values. This presentation is a survey of current art historic scholarship surrounding David's Brutus as a dramatic tableau that synthesizes antiquarian interest and theatricality. The purpose is to understand the aesthetic, social and historic influences of the painting and its presentation as a cathartic, timeless exemplar of nationalistic virtue told through the myth of Brutus.

Themes of Morality Present in *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, by Lawrence Alma Tadema*Kathryn (Katy) Caskey, Senior, Art History, Western Washington University**Mentor: Monique Kerman, Art and Art History, Western Washington University*

This is an analysis of *The Roses of Heliogabalus* (1888), by Dutch artist Lawrence Alma Tadema. Alma Tadema was an English classicist, creating art in the Victorian era, who participated heavily in the aesthetic movement of the Pre-Raphaelites. Alma Tadema was very successful in his time, mainly due to his use of color, photorealism, and meticulous attention to detail, which are all aspects that are very

present, and generally praised, in *The Roses of Heliogabalus*. He is known for painting classic scenes, mainly of middle-class women, performing everyday activities. However, *The Roses of Heliogabalus* departs from this usual rendering, instead focusing on a tyrannical historical event, where a young Roman emperor, Heliogabalus, drowns his dinner guests in an avalanche of rose petals, suffocating, and in turn, murdering them. Many recent critics have denounced this work for being antiquarian; a common critique of this specific piece is that the figures in the scene lack morality in their expressions. However, I think morality is the very thing that can be found in this creation by Alma Tadema. It was common for Victorian art to be created with the thought of moralizing in mind. Alma Tadema, though often depicted as a shallow man who valued schoolboy humor, could not have gone through this era without picking up on the themes of the time. Through visual analysis, comparison to Alma Tadema's peers, and an analysis of the time period and current events, I bring clarity to the themes of morality present in *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, and show that this piece, created by a man who was once dubbed "the worst painter of the 19th century," is more valuable than recent critiques that it is only a shallow, antiquarian artwork.

Nostalgic Mariana*Leilana Bill, Senior, Art History, Western Washington University**Mentor: Javier Berzal de Dios, Art and Art History, Western Washington University*

This presentation examines Sir John Everett Millais' 1851 Mariana, paying special attention to the ways in which the painting embodies and represents nostalgic desires. A hopelessness that provokes the historical encounter of distant past pervades the piece, which takes its inspiration from a 1830 poem that uses the characters from Shakespeare's play *Measure by Measure*. Moreover, the aesthetic vision of Millais, like many of his pre-Raphaelite contemporaries, is one framed by a trans-historical dialogue with tradition. The

painting depicts Mariana with an arched back and an outward gaze, reminiscing on her past love. Overall, the painting invites the viewers to reminisce about their personal and artistic past while getting lost in the details this painting offers.

If I Could Turn You Into Stone, I Would

Amanda M. Pickler, Senior, Art

Mary Gates Scholar, UW Honors Program

Mentor: Jono Vaughan, Fine Art, Bellevue College

What started as a recovery account on Instagram, about four years ago, quickly grew into something so much more. As I became transparent about my struggles with an eating disorder and mental health, after being sexually abused, this account became an avenue of guidance for others. Through this process I realized the disheartening need for support that was free of any fiscal burden that so often is unjustly required. My project, currently funded by a Mary Gates Leadership scholarship, aims to raise awareness while giving community and support to victims of sexual abuse. I contacted SARVA (sexual assault and relationship violence activists) on campus to receive volunteers to collaborate in my project. With their consent, I am drawing them with their eyes removed to create a conversation of the overwhelming number of individuals who've been assaulted. The censorship of the eyes allows a layer of anonymity for the volunteers as well as an unsettling feeling to the viewer. I am drawing them using ink on a 5"x7" aqua board. I meet with each survivor to present a healing opportunity where they can disclose their story to me. During this time, I take their picture and use that as my reference to draw them, capturing a powerful moment in that meeting. As of right now I have ten portraits to show, but underneath those ten portraits are hours of research, late studio nights, and forty previous paintings. I have written numerous essays just on Jenny Saville, but also researched Paula Rego, Marlene Dumas, Tracy Emins, and more. This process is crucial as it informs my practice and keeps me knowledgeable about previous works. With that said, there is another component to my project; psychology. These situations are extremely sensitive and my previous studies and research in psychology have been invaluable.

Approaching Architecture from an Interdisciplinary Perspective: Architecture as Demonstrative Art

Alexandra Carter (Sasha) Savenko, Senior, Art History

Mentor: Robert Peña, Architecture

As it stands today, there is a disconnect between the world of architecture and that of "art" - fine art, outsider art, and similar. This disconnect accounts for the loss of information on a grand scale, as each field continues to analyze itself from an insular perspective, rather than recognizing the interdisciplinary potential inherent in combining these studies. I am developing a foundation for understanding the built environment's role in shaping society and the world, one that high-

lights the connective role architecture plays between all the various components of contemporary life. By examining various interdisciplinary examples such as political theory, art scholarship, outsider manifestos, etc., I am synthesizing an understanding of how architecture has historically been approached and interpreted in industrial society, while drafting a manifesto to propose a new methodology for approaching architecture in the contemporary age. In the future, analysis like this could have impact on political or social policy, as well as construction and development, if we utilize this more thorough, interdisciplinary analysis to better understand the implications of what we build and how we will experience it as both art and architecture in contemporary society.