Bachelor of Arts
Art History
Senior Thesis Presentations

May 16, 2015
Moulton Hall Room 213
Featuring the Senior Thesis presentations of:

Lynn Aljadda
Monica Beyon
Yelena Liepelt
Lauren Moritz
Chase Murphy
Elise Pultasati
Ivy Withrow
Department of Art Mission Statement

The Mission of the Department of Art at Chapman University is to offer a comprehensive education that develops the technical, perceptual, theoretical, historical and critical expertise needed for successful careers in visual art, graphic design and art history. The department supports artists, designers, and scholars within a rigorous liberal arts environment that enriches the human mind and spirit. We foster the artistic and academic growth necessary to encourage lifelong study and practice of the arts through a curriculum that contains strong foundation and history components as a basis for continued innovations in contemporary practice and scholarship.

Art History Program

Chapman University Art History majors work with their faculty advisor to design a program of study that reflects their personal interests and professional goals. They have the opportunity to work closely with faculty specializing in the fields of Ancient Art and Archaeology, Italian Renaissance and Baroque Art, and European and Russian modern art and design. The degree’s capstone course is the Senior Thesis, a self-directed research project that formulates an original thesis. Graduates may pursue a wide range of arts-related professions or go on to further training at the graduate level.
Purpose of Senior Thesis Program

The Senior Thesis is a self-directed research project that formulates an original argument. In their last year, students work closely with two faculty members of their choice to develop an avenue of inquiry with the goal of yielding original insight. The Senior Thesis is a fundamental step in the students’ scholarly growth and vital for graduate school applications.
Lynn Aljadda

I will be graduating in May 2015 with a BA in Art History.
The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Syria and Iraq

The looting and destruction of cultural heritage has been an ongoing problem since ancient times. Periods of conflict only heighten the danger of damaging cultural heritage either directly or indirectly. This paper is going to use a particular situation to examine flaws and failings in Syria and Iraq. It is going to examine specific examples such as the Mosul Museum in Iraq and the city of Aleppo in Syria. These examples cover a range of threats to heritage such as vandalism, looting, and physical destruction. Following this, international and government-issued laws will be examined regarding cultural heritage. After analyzing these problems and legal frameworks that deal with the protection of cultural heritage, this paper will suggest alternative measures for the protection of heritage.
Monica Beyon

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Abstract will go here

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Yelena Liepelt will be graduating in May 2015 with a Bachelor of Art in Art History and French. Her plans after graduation include moving to Lille, France, where she will teach English at the primary school level for a year. Afterwards, she hopes to further pursue her education in Art History with a Master’s Degree.
Mark Rothko and the Search for Time

Mark Rothko is best known today for his paintings of modulated rectangles of color that float on an expansive, colored background. The strikingly reductive quality of these works has made Rothko’s mature artistic style difficult to articulate and discuss. Although these paintings’ simplified formal elements should enable infinite interpretations, art historical discourse has failed to examine their pluralistic nature, thus preventing diverse understandings of the work. His simplified rectangular forms are repeatedly described as “doorways” that can be “entered”, as “pigmented containers of emptiness”, which allow the viewer to “transcend the profane world.” It is not my intention to argue against these statements. Instead, I would like to open the doorway of interpretation further, allowing room for other interpretations of Rothko’s work.

By reexamining the connections between Rothko’s early, often neglected figurative and biomorphic paintings and his mature style, I will uncover new ways of experiencing his later work. Rather than being solely read as spatial voids, I argue that his paintings explore the passage of time, with space and light used as the means to a transcendental end. Thus, the objective of his works is to spatialize time, allowing the spectator to find a place for him/herself in relation to his/her surroundings, while simultaneously transcending into another cosmic realm.
Lauren Moritz

My education has truly been an adventure. I graduated at 16, moved to LA at 17 and went to the Art Institute for graphic design, before realizing that this was only a hobby for me. I then spent another year studying court reporting before having to switch yet again. I ended up having to start over at Orange Coast College, which thankfully offered me three years of freedom to study what I pleased. I realized that I had a strong passion for ancient Egyptian culture and art, and took nearly every class I could that offered anything that had to do with this subject: archaeology, anthropology, history, and of course, art history. I applied to Chapman University intending to study as much ancient art as I could (which I did), with the intention of continuing to pursue a graduate degree in Egyptology, but in my time at Chapman I discovered other areas of interest, as my senior thesis shows, which discusses the benefits of using semiotics to interpret prehistoric art. I am proud of this paper, as well as thankful for all that I have learned at Chapman, which has prepared me to continue my education at the graduate level, hopefully in attending the University of Glasgow in Scotland to gain a Master’s degree in Museum Studies to continue learning and working with ancient art.
Free Interpretation: The Semiotic Analysis of Prehistoric Cave Art

This paper discusses the merits of using semiotic analysis to interpret prehistoric cave art. It begins with a look at the early methods employed to study the art of this period. The early research on the interpretation of art from this period has been done mainly by archaeologists Andre Leroi-Gourhan and Henri Breuil (both working in the early 20th century). The most popular theories of the early period in the study of prehistoric art attempt to explain the signs and images found in relation to ritualistic or religious associations, such as the sympathetic magic, shamanistic activities, or even standing for male and female counterparts. The problem with these interpretations is that they were bounded within the social theory of their time, often bound by strict rules. A more open form of interpretations if brought about by using the more modern methodology of semiotics. It allows one to study prehistoric art without underlying assumptions, attempting to remain culturally relative, understanding that art of one culture may function differently from another. There has been some early work done using semiotic analysis to study prehistoric art by Paul Bouissac and Goran Sonesson. This research is successful in displaying the possibilities of semiotic analysis, but one completely ignores the presence of abstract signs within cave sites, while the other attempts to discuss the entire network of images and signs as a form of protoscript, rather than looking at individual images or image sets. This paper does just the opposite, focusing on individual sets of images within the sites of Cosquer, Chauvet, Lascaux, and Les Trois Frères. It studies the images based on semiotic analysis, by discussing prior interpretations of the images, then discussing the basics of what is depicted, before analyzing the images to come to an understanding.
Chase Murphy is graduating in May of 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts in Art History. While growing up in Southern California, he was always immersed within the art community. He focused his studies on the exploration of visual propaganda from ancient to modern day. He hopes to continue to work at art galleries around the Orange County
The Nazi Salute: The Art of Propaganda Through the Iconology of a Gesture

The Nazi salute is a well-known symbol in modern visual culture. Yet the origin of this gesture is from ancient Rome. This straight-armed Roman gesture was reinvented by both the Italian Fascists and the German National Socialists (Nazis) after World War I. Both claimed the right to this ancient gesture through their lineage to the Roman Empire. However, the Nazi party was the more successful in reclaiming the gesture by reinforcing the values of Totalitarianism. By manipulating the gesture and adapting it to fit their own needs, the Nazis made it a central feature of their propaganda.
Elise Pultasati

Elise is graduating from Chapman with a B.A. in Art History with minors in French and the Honors Program. She plans on taking a year off from her studies to au pair and work on her language skills before attending graduate school.
Francesco Primaticcio’s bronze Double Head blurs the line between a copy and original work. Made from a mold of the Cesi Juno, each face is an antique copy while the doubling of the head and the grotesque Mannerist style are original to the 16th century. Examining this piece within its context at Fontainebleau and the circumstances of its commission reveal how this work defies traditional art theory regarding the binary status of artistic works as either copies or originals. Instead, the exploration of this work alongside Early Modern and contemporary theories of originality opens a larger dialogue for other potential statuses and challenges the traditional requirements of
Ivy Withrow

Ivy will be graduating in May 2015 with a BA in Art History and a minor in Film Studies. She plans to pursue a career in film producing and screenwriting and will be attending law school in the fall.
Garden State: The Politics of Landscape Design at Stowe House

The English garden was an 18th century invention that had a distinct function beyond an aesthetic one. Though the landscape designs made popular during the 1700s provided an idealized and romantic setting for the aristocracy, the English garden that we have become familiar with today also served as a mechanism for the promotion of British ideals of modernity and autonomy. The gardens at Stowe are steeped in socio-political iconography, a palimpsest of horticultural and national evolution. This Buckinghamshire manor is considered one of the earliest prototypes of the traditional picturesque garden, but it was also a haven for those at the center of parliamentary politics. This paper presents the formation of Stowe’s landscape design as a manifestation of Whig ideology and shows how the estate was used as a pawn in the deliberate creation of “Britishness” as a domestic art form.

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Art History is one of the principal avenues of inquiry into the psychology of visual expression. All human cultures, regardless of time and geography, have resorted to visual communication to express, explore, understand, and reveal their public as well as their private lives.