Although most people come to LA to make it in the movies, a funny thing happened to me last Fall while I was living in New York on a fellowship at the Cullman Center at the New York Public Library. It turned out the legendary Frederick Wiseman would be making a film about the Library and would be filming the fellows at the Center for three days. After our first day in the presence of his camera and sound boom, I knew I had to approach him because we had a Mellon Sawyer project for 2016-2017 on “Visual History” already planned and I wanted to not only study this in the past, but I also wanted us to consider those who today practiced a form of visual history which I think Frederick Wiseman’s work embodies. I couldn’t resist approaching him and asked if he would come out to USC the following year. With his generous enthusiasm and the endorsement of my Mellon collaborator, Daniela Bleichmar, we applied for additional funds from Visions and Voices and are glad to be kicking off the year and theme of “Visual History” with this legendary filmmaker’s first visit to Los Angeles in many, many years.

Before reporting on last year’s many accomplishments, I would like to thank Daniela Bleichmar who steered the VSGC with great success during 2015-16. Professor Jennifer Greenhill taught an amazing sixteen-person Visual Studies Grad Seminar on Visual Humor. We are also thrilled to announce that our undergraduate assistant Michelle Prestholt, graduated Summa Cum Laude in Art History, was a flag-bearer at graduation and will be starting a Ph.D. program in Art History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Our students and faculty continue to garner many prestigious awards as you will read below.
Images make history. They document events, preserve memories, allow us to witness at a distance, and move us to act. Images do more than pictorialize: they also serve as the records and the sources for the writing of history. With funding from the Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar program, VSRI will investigate the history of “writing” history in images (what Hayden White termed “historiophoty”) in the West from the rise of print culture ca. 1450 to the global spread of digital media in the present. We will welcome a series of filmmaker-historians to campus, we will hold a series of workshops on the subject and Daniela Bleichmar and Vanessa Schwartz will teach MDA 599 in Spring 2017 related to the subject. Additionally, we welcome a postdoctoral fellow and two graduate student fellows to the Visual History “team.”

**Allan Doyle** We welcome Allan as the Mellon Sawyer Seminar postdoctoral fellow. He received his Ph.D. in the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University in June 2016 where he defended his dissertation, “A Rule Without Measure: The Afterlife of Michelangelo Buonarroti in French Painting, 1814-1837.” Allan’s dissertation traced how Michelangelo was used by a network of critics, administrators and artists during the first half of the nineteenth century to embody the irreconcilable demands of tradition, on the one hand, and a new market-driven taste for originality, on the other.

At USC, Allan will investigate the early development of lithography in France. His research centers on Baron Isidore Taylor’s *Voyages Pittoresques*, a remarkable series of monumental, illustrated French travel guides, which involved an eclectic mix of prominent writers and artists. Spanning forty years, the Voyages were the most ambitious illustrated publication in European history. Taylor’s project was a laboratory for the development of lithography and a new pictorial idiom that would reestablish links between France’s present and the pre-Revolutionary past.

**Randall Meissen**, History

Is an EMSI/VSRI Mellon Sawyer Graduate Fellow. His research explores natural history in colonial Latin America and the role of visual representation in the production and circulation of knowledge about American nature.

**Aaron Rich**, Cinema and Media Studies, School of Cinematic Arts

Faculty

David Albertson, Religion

Held an ACLS Charles A. Ryskamp research fellowship in 2015-2016. He is working on a monograph for Oxford UP on the use of geometrical images as instruments of contemplation in the Renaissance. He also contributed a chapter on “Cataphasis, Visualization, and Mystical Space” to the forthcoming Oxford Handbook of Mystical Theology.

Daniela Bleichmar, Art History and History

Daniela Bleichmar gave the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Lecture in art history at Hunter College, the Lee Frank Lecture in art history at Swarthmore College, and the keynote lecture at the UCR art history graduate conference. She spoke at the Victoria & Albert Museum’s "salon" on "Europe through non-European eyes," which helped mark the reinstallation of the Europe 1500–1800 galleries. She published essays from her current book project on Mexican sixteenth-century illustrated manuscripts, and co-edited, with Meredith Martin, a collection of essays entitled Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World, which appeared as a special issue of the journal Art History and a paperback book from Wiley. A Spanish translation of her monograph Visible Empire appeared as El imperio visible. Expediciones botánicas y cultura visual en la Ilustración hispánica was published by the Fondo de Cultura Económica in Mexico City.

Vittoria Di Palma, Architecture

Her book, Wasteland, A History (Yale University Press, 2014) received the 2016 Elisabeth Blair McDougall Book Award from the Society of Architectural Historians. She has been named a faculty fellow of the University of Southern California Society of Fellows.

Phil Ethington, History

Completing, under contract with UC Press, his global-visual-spatial history of Los Angeles, in online multimedia form with a print companion: Ghost Metropolis: Los Angeles from Clovis to Nixon. He is the PI directing an NEH Digital Humanities implementation grant, to complete the latest author and publishing functions of Scalar, the USC-based open-access, open-source multimedia authoring and publishing platform.
Kate Flint, Art History and English

Completed the first draft of “Flash! Photography, Writing, and Surprising Illumination,” with support from a Fellowship at the National Humanities Center and a Fellowship from the ACLS. She also had a summer fellowship at the Georgia O'Keeffe Research Center in Santa Fe. She has given plenary lectures on Millais’s Autumn Leaves at the Arts and Feeling conference in London on “How Do We Read a Painting Now?” at a Mellon Futures event at Duke University; on Kracauer’s “On Photography” at the NHC’s 1927! conference; on “Shoddy Trollope” at the Trollope Bi-Centenary Conference in Leuven, and on “Seaweed,” at the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Association conference. She will begin observation of the ephemeral, a new project on the ordinary and the overlooked, which she will work on during the continuation of her ACLS Fellowship in the fall.

Jennifer Greenhill, Art History


Suzanne Hudson, Art History

Delivered a talk on Agnes Martin in Dusseldorf as part of a Terra Foundation symposium on the artist, and gave keynotes at University College London, Dia: Chelsea, and Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Vienna, among other lectures. She was also chosen to participate in the Artis research trip in Israel. Her book, Agnes Martin: Night Sea (Afterall / MIT Press) is forthcoming Fall 2016.

Amelia Jones, Roski School of Art and Design

Published (co-edited with Erin Silver) Otherwise: Imaging Queer Feminist Art Histories (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2016). She delivered the keynote at the “Curating in Feminist Thought” event in Zurich at the Migros Museum and has recently been appointed to the editorial board of The Art Journal.

Megan R. Luke, Art History

**Laura Isabel Serna**, Cinema and Media Studies

Was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Cinema and Media Studies in the School of Cinematic Art in May of 2015. With the support of a Fulbright Garcia Robles Fellowship she spent academic year 2015-2016 in Mérida, Yucatán conducting research on film distribution in Yucatán during the silent period.

**Ann Marie Yasin**, Art History and Classics

Published three articles this year and gave talks in Munich, Montreal and Irvine on her research on architectural memory and material histories of late antique buildings. She continued her work as Associate Editor for Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture for the three-volume Cambridge World History of Religious Architecture project, which went into production this Spring.

**Nancy Lutkehaus**, Anthropology


**Amy F. Ogata**, Art History

*Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America* (2013) won the 2016 Alice Davis Hitchcock Award given by the Society of Architectural Historians for the most distinguished work of scholarship by a North American author.

**Vanessa R. Schwartz**, Art History and History

Was on leave in New York at the Cullman Center at the New York Public Library researching her book, *Jet Age Aesthetics: The Glamour of Media in Motion*. She lectured widely, including at Princeton, the Smithsonian, Rutgers, the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem and was an invited professor of the Arts at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. She wrote several essays and reviews related to her research and the field of Visual Studies that will appear this Fall. She has been named a faculty fellow of the University of Southern California Society of Fellows.

**Laura Isabel Serna**, Cinema and Media Studies

Was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Cinema and Media Studies in the School of Cinematic Art in May of 2015. With the support of a Fulbright Garcia Robles Fellowship she spent academic year 2015-2016 in Mérida, Yucatán conducting research on film distribution in Yucatán during the silent period. She has been named a faculty fellow of the University of Southern California Society of Fellows.
Postdocs

Rhæ Lynn Barnes

Received a B.A. in History from the University of California, Berkeley and a Ph.D. in History from Harvard University. Her dissertation, “Darkology: The Hidden History of Amateur Blackface Minstrelsy and the Making of Modern America, 1860-1970,” received funding from the Library of Congress, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Western History Association, and the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia. She is a postdoctoral fellow of the USC Society of Fellows.

John Blakinger

Received his Ph.D. in Art History from Stanford in June 2016. From 2014-2016, Blakinger was a Chester Sale Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. In 2014, he curated an exhibition on Kepes as the first Andrew W. Curatorial Research Assistant at Stanford’s Cantor Arts Center. As a postdoctoral fellow of the USC Society of Fellows, he will revise his dissertation on Kepes into a book manuscript.

Estelle Blaschke

Received an M.A. in History of Art from the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and a Ph.D. in History from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales/Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne. She is a postdoctoral researcher funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation at the Université de Lausanne. From 2009 to 2011 and in 2014 she was a fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. She is the author of the book “Banking on Images: The Bettmann Archive and Corbis”, which was awarded the 2012 Research Prize by the German Photographic Society. Her current project investigates the history and imaginary of microfilm. She will also be at the Huntington Library.

Peter Collopy


Justin Underhill

Moves onto a Digital Humanities postdoctoral fellowship at University of California, Berkeley.
Robin Coste Lewis, Creative Writing & Literature

Was awarded the National Book Award for poetry for her debut volume, *Voyage of the Sable Venus and Other Poems*.

Jonathan Dentler, History

Received the 2016-2018 Andrew W. Mellon Digital Humanities Ph.D. Fellowship.

Nike Nivar Ortiz, Comparative Studies

Received a grant for summer research from the VSGC to work on his dissertation, “Contemporary Sovereignty and the Spectacle of Global War: Visualizing U.S. Intervention in Latin America,” and received the 2016-2018 Andrew W. Mellon Digital Humanities Ph.D. Fellowship.

Lauren Dodds, Art History

Received a grant for summer research from the VSGC to work on her dissertation, “Collecting the Renaissance: The Samuel H. Kress Collection of Italian Art.”

Chris McGeorge, Art History

Was awarded a Huntington Library Exchange Fellowship with Linacre College, Oxford. He also received a USC Gold Family Graduate Fellowship and was awarded a scholarship to the Victorian Society in America’s 2016 London summer school program, as well as a grant for summer research from the VSGC.

Maria Zalewska, Cinema and Media Studies

Was selected as a 2016-2018 Andrew W. Mellon Digital Humanities Ph.D. Fellowship.
Anirban Baishya, Cinema and Media Studies
“Viral Selves: Cell Phones, Selfies and the Self-fashioning Subject in Contemporary India”

Brianna Beehler, English
Pre-dissertation research on 19th century British doll-making industry

Sanders Bernstein, English
Pre-dissertation research on the first film adaptation of The Deerslayer

Melissa Chan, East Asian Languages and Culture
“Choreographing the Body: Martial Movements and Embodied Languages in Sinophone Media”

Lauren Dodds, Art History
“Collecting the Renaissance: The Samuel H. Kress Collections of Italian Art”

Robert Gordon-Fogelson, Art History
Pre-dissertation research on the Container Corporation of America

Chris McGeorge, Art History
“Mediums for the Masses: Stained Glass and Murals in the Age of Mechanical Reproductions”

Joshua Mitchell, American Studies and Ethnicity
“The Prisoner’s Cinema: Perception in Carceral and Cinematic Time”

Nike Nivar Ortiz, Comparative Studies
“Contemporary Sovereignty and the Spectacle of Global War: Visualizing U.S. Intervention in Latin America”

Aaron Rich, Cinema and Media Studies
Pre-dissertation research on Selznick International Pictures and Cecil B. DeMille Productions

Amanda Rudd, English
“Shakespeare’s Speaking Pictures”

Jacqueline Sheean, Comparative Literature
“Visualizing Folly: Madness and Modernity in Hispanic Literature and Film”
Nadya Bair, Art History

Was invited to present her work at the Smithsonian American Art Museum (as part of the Fifth Terra Symposia on American Art in a Global Context) and at "Print Matters: Histories of Photography in Illustrated Magazine," convened by The Developing Room at Rutgers University and hosted by the New York Public Library. This upcoming Fall, she will be the Nadir Mohamed Postdoctoral Fellow at the Ryerson Image Centre, Ryerson University (Toronto).

Umayyah Cable, American Studies and Ethnicity

Will begin in the fall a two-year Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Asian American studies and the Middle East and North African studies programs at Northwestern University. At Northwestern, she will design and teach courses such as "Introduction to Arab American Studies" and "Arab American Arts and Cinema." During her two years in Chicago, she will also conduct further research at the Chicago Palestine Film Festival as she further develops a book project based on her dissertation, "Cinematic Activism: Film Festivals and the Exhibition of Palestinian Cultural Politics in the United States."

Samantha Carrick, English

Defended her dissertation titled "The Somnambulist's Hour: Unruly Bodies and Unruly Modernism, 1913-1947."

Nadine Chan, Cinema and Media Studies

Defended her dissertation titled "A Cinema Under the Palms: The Unruly Lives of Colonial Educational Film in British Malaya" and will be joining the Society of Fellows at the University of Chicago in Fall 2016.

Karen Huang, Art History

Defended her dissertation titled "Artists' Reenactments: The Vietnam War, the War on Terror, and the Performance of American Activism."

Kate Page-Lippsmeyer, East Asian Languages and Cultures