From the Editor

Catherine Seavitt Nordenson FAAR’98

Spring cleaning means polishing, vacuuming, window-washing, tossing out - evoking also a sense of the new - new carpets, clean sheets. For this Spring 2005 Laundry edition of the SOF NEWS, it is a pleasure to publish such a diversity of work relating to fabrics and textiles. Our cover image, a fabric miniature, O’weat, by Charles LeDray FAAR’98, powerfully evokes an eerily empty image of the embrace of Piero della Francesca’s Maddonna di Castello, symbolically gathering a diversity of creative work.

The work of our contributors this issue ranges from the restoration of modernist textiles - the upholstery of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Zimmerman modernist textiles - the upholstery of diversity of creative work.

One of the greatest gifts of a Fellowship at the Academy is never having to wash your own sheets, thus gaining plenty of extra time to spend in our studios and studies. This issue is a grateful tribute to all the Academy staff who have washed and pressed our laundry for years.

The Fall 2005 issue of the SOF NEWS will focus on ISLANDS. We seek contributions from Academy Fellows, Residents, and Visitors about island life and work. We will consider work from any medium or period. Articles and poetry are also encouraged, along with artwork. Please submit your contribution to the Editor, in care of the American Academy in Rome’s New York City office, or via email to info@sfo-aarome.org by August 1, 2005.

Cover:
Charles LeDray FAAR’98 Overcoat, 2004 211/2” x 20” x 17” Private Collection Image courtesy of Spirito Weisberger Galleria, New York

Left: Staff Laundry Room, pre-renovation, 1994
AAR Archive
Photo by Roberto Emaudi

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The holiday season at the American Academy in Rome is unique every year. A different group of Fellows, most previously strangers to one another, come together to celebrate as an extended family far away from the United States in their incredible new home. The shared customary events of meals, pages and parties unfold with all of Rome as a backdrop, and with an underlying sense that something very special is leaving its mark on each individual that they will cherish and long remember.

During the two short days I stayed in Rome this past December I witnessed the tradition continue for this year’s class. The Fellows glowingly spoke of their past few months together, the walks and talks, and trips to come, and how, unfortunately, time was moving too fast. My first evening before dinner I noticed that the salon was closed; the drapes pulled and the doors shut. Obviously seen as an interloper, I ventured into old, familiar territory.

The furniture was pushed to the side, the lighting bright, and Fellows, several with children, were rehearsing for the Christmas pageant scheduled for the next afternoon. Each person rehearsed with a clear focus: reading lines, coordinating choreography, and helping to move the sets that seemed to grow more and more elaborate and ridiculous as dinner grew closer. I was overwhelmed by their efforts, friendship, spirit, and unbridled commitment to make this the best Academy Christmas pageant ever, which it may have been.

The next day at lunch, I had the honor of presenting to the Fellows the gifts that had been sent from the Fellows in Los Angeles. The gifts were collected at a dinner this past fall at the home of Hsin-Ming Fung FAAR’93 and Craig Hodgetts. Each SOF member attending was asked to bring a gift that they would like to have received when they were in Rome. Of course this leaves a great deal open to individual interpretation, depending upon your year, discipline and personal interests, which certainly became evident when the gifts were opened during that lunch in Rome. They were a complete surprise! Not only were Fellows receiving them from past Fellows they had never met, but also by the strange and bizarre nature of some of the gifts themselves. It took a little explaining in some cases to these occupants of the newly restored Academy why they might need a flashlight, or a hot water bottle, or peanut butter and hot sauce, or other gifts that are beyond description here. The group then began to barter and exchange until all felt they had received a coveted prize. And at the end they turned towards me, each with their gift raised high in thanks (see photo below).

For the first time this group of Fellows realized that they were not going to be alone in their experiences, but were to be part of the larger family of Fellows - not just in Los Angeles, but throughout the United States - who continue to share, through the SOF, regardless of year and discipline, in the unique experience of the American Academy in Rome.

The Rome Fellows display their gifts from the Los Angeles Fellows, at lunch in the dining room. Nice tablecloths! Photo by James Bodnar
From the AAR President, New York

Adele Chatfield-Taylor RAAR ’84

Considering that our Director, Professor Lester K. Little RAAR ’96, and his wife, our Public Affairs Officer, Lella Gandini, are to retire from the Academy in July of 2005, this issue of the SOF NEWS would seem a good place to begin a “laundry list” of their accomplishments.

Lester and Lella have been at the Academy from 1998-2005, record service for the last 45 years of our history, and second only in duration to Gorham Phillips Stevens (who served for 15 years between 1917-32) and Laurnace and Isabel Roberts (who reopened the Academy after World War II and served for 16 years between 1946-60).

This long tenure has brought stability, leadership, intellectual” vigor, and happiness to our community. If they had done nothing else, they would be revered for their civilized presence, their quickly developed institutional knowledge, their love and appreciation of the community and staff, and their curiosity about the art and scholarship being produced year after year.

But here is a “laundry list” of some of their activities for this seven-year period:

In terms of intellectual leadership, the re-casting of the Humanities fellowships has to be the first on the list of this seven-year period:

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In trying to bring one Italian scholar and one Italian artist into the Academy community as Fellows each year for nine months, we are not so much starting something new as reviving an immensely successful program.

For over half a century we had fellowships for Italians under the aegis of the Fulbright Commission, which however phased out the program just last year. The ninety-one Italians who held that fellowship make for a most distinguished list, which includes no fewer than eleven members of the Accademia dei Lincei. All reports from these former Italian fellows indicate that their time at the Academy remains among their fondest memories, for the intellectually stimulating environment, for the friendships, for the great amount of work accomplished, and often enough for the new perspectives that they gained on their work and lives. So it seems clear that the program worked very well for them. Walter Cuppetti, an art historian at the Scuola Normale di Pisa, said of his experience at the American Academy as a Fulbright Fellow in 2003-04, "The friendly atmosphere of the Academy provided an ideal framework within which to improve my linguistic knowledge and my understanding of American mentalities and academic life. The other 2003-04 Italian Fulbright Fellow [Andrea Volpe] and I shared with great enthusiasm the challenge to communicate something in exchange, which we did by organizing site visits (both within Rome and elsewhere in Italy), Italian dinners, and videotape projections, besides engaging in countless spontaneous conversations."

Meanwhile, though, because the presence of these Italian Fellows within the Academy community was so important for the perspectives on language, culture, Italian politics, and so much more that they brought to the Americans, there can be no doubt that the program worked very, very well for the Academy. And indeed, the American Fellows have stressed again and again how crucial a part the Italian Fellows played in the success and enjoyment of their experiences. Thus, there has not been a moment of doubt in determining that the presence of Italian Fellows is essential to the well-being of the American Academy.

The twenty-five or so foreign academies in Rome were all founded for the purpose of bringing outstanding young scholars and/or artists from their respective countries to live and work in Rome. Laudable as this purpose is, these academies have always, right up to the present, run the risk of becoming culturally isolated compounds. For decades, the American Academy has tried to avoid this risk. At present we are very energetic in helping provide Italian lessons to our Fellows, as well as arranging off campus study or visits. Each year a series of lectures by distinguished experts on modern and contemporary Italy. Moreover, we strive to arrange socially, artistically, and also social gatherings for the Fellows with their Italian peers, both at the Academy and elsewhere in Rome. But by far the most successful (and obvious) way to foster the inter-cultural mix that we so desire is to have foreign fellows live in our midst.

The presence of Italians within our community should be seen as part of a broader international exchange. Each year we have three scholars from countries of the former Soviet bloc on fellowships offered by the Mellon Foundation. We also have a Russian artist (we’ve had both writers and painters) sponsored by the Joseph Brodsky Memorial Fellowship Fund.

The question is therefore not whether to revive the Academy’s program that offers fellowships to Italian scholars and artists but how. As for identifying outstanding young scholars, we are near to concluding an exchange agreement with the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa that will permit one of their students to spend a year at the American Academy, as well as for one of our fellows to spend another year in Italy, at that distinguished institution. The making of this accord has certainly been helped by the fact that the director of the Scuola Normale, Professor Salvatore Settis, himself held a Fulbright Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome in 1968. We are currently seeking a parallel way to identify outstanding young artists, that is, by first locating an institution that conducts a rigorous national art competition, so that we can be reasonably assured each year of having a pool of highly qualified candidates. And so the plan is to bring Italian Fellows back into the Academy just as soon as we are able to afford it.

Every day is wash day at the Academy. Six washing machines and five dryers service the three residential buildings. Roughly 120 loads of laundry are done weekly by mons and dads, Fellows, Visiting Artists and Scholars. One of the perks of living at the Academy is access to huge American style Maytag washers and -unheard of in most of Italy clothes dryers. Italian appliances are great, but they are miniaturized and have much longer cycles; we are all viziati, spoiled, by the luxury our machines offer. In Rome, makeshift clotheslines substitute electric dryers all over the city, gracing some of the most evocative corners of the center and Testaevre. But it is hard to imagine the Bees garden draped with clotheslines in spite of how beautiful fresh washing can be. As Jane Kenyon described in her poem, 'Wash,'

'A day the blanket snapped and swelled
at the line, roused by a hot spring wind…'

Sharing the washing machines and dryers is part of daily life at the Academy, as is the partaking of group meals, sharing information on lectures, exhibitions, libraries, and research possibilities. There is a certain intimacy, sometimes comfortable, sometimes not, that comes from all this sharing and working and living together.

The spring, as of this writing, looks equally exciting with a major exhibition in the Antiquarium. The winter brought an equally full program of events, starting in January with a conference on the history of music at the Academy led by Martin Brody RAAR’02. Visit from Michele Oka Doner and painter Mary Heilmann were featured through public lectures in February. This month also saw the opening of Spellbound by Rome, an exhibition celebrating the Anglo-American community in Rome (1890–1914) and the founding of the Keats Shelley house, curated by our own Christina Huemer, Drue Heinz Librarian.

The spring, as of this writing, looks equally exciting with a major lecture by architect Charles Gwathmey RAAR’05 to be held in the Accademia Romana, co-sponsored by the Ordine degli Architetti Italiani artist, Maria Dompé will present her dramatic, one-night-only façade installation piece called Tit for Tat. Artist Laurie Simmons RAAR’05 will also give a lecture and readings by Azar Nafisi (Reading Lolita in Tehran) and Frank McCourt RAAR’02 (Angela’s Ashes) will certainly draw crowds. Of course the year is most visibly punctuated by the end-of-year events by our own Fellows through Open Studios/Open Studios, the Fellows’ Concert, and Fellows’ Readings.

So, let the laundry at home wait! Check the website, get on a plane, and join us for any and all Academy activities. We look forward to welcoming you back.
Spellbound by Rome a hundred years ago
Christina Huemer, Drue Heinz Librarian

Several early Fellows are featured in the Spring 2005 exhibition at the Academy: Spellbound by Rome: The Anglo-American Community in Rome, 1890-1914, and the Founding of the Keats-Shelley House. This exhibition, divided among four locations (the others are the Keats-Shelley House, the American church of St. Paul’s Within-the-Walls, and the Museo Hendrik Christian Anderson), evokes the Rome of a century ago.

The exhibition (February 16 - April 16, 2005) reflects the Academy’s historic ties with the Keats-Shelley House. One day in 1903, Robert Underwood Johnson, an American poet and journalist visiting Rome, stopped to see the house in Piazza di Spagna where the poet John Keats had died eighty-two years earlier. He found the casa rosa at no. 26 in perilous condition and began a campaign to save it, as a memorial to Keats, Shelley, Byron, and the other Romantic poets. He was aided by the British diplomat James Rennell Rodd and by prominent members of the Anglo-American community in Rome. Italian anglophiles also embraced the project, and the Keats-Shelley Memorial House was opened to the public on April 3, 1909.

For the Spellbound by Rome exhibition, the library candelabrum (right) was restored, thanks to the generosity of Elizabeth Bartman FAAR’93 and Andrew P. Solomon. Architect Gerhard Phillips Stevens originally commissioned this bronze candelabrum from the Sangiorgio Gallery in 1914. It stood in the main reading room of the Library until 1991. The restorers, Aldo and Beatrice Frasca, discovered that it was a copy of a 15th-century bronze candelabrum formerly in the cathedral of Pistoia (left).

Thus the Keats-Shelley House, now celebrating a multi-year centenary, is a memorial not only to poets and poetry but also to the idealism and enterprise of its founders. These were men and women whose lives already intersected to a great extent. They met each other at salons or in artists’ studios or at the opera; some of them attended the same churches; some rode or hunted together in the Roman Campagna; all followed the progress of archaeological excavations and watched their native or adopted city change and grow. The presence of British and American expatriates and visitors in Rome had a long history, but by the early twentieth century the heyday of the artistic and intellectual community had passed. Those who remained were “spellbound by Rome,” buffeted by the political and social changes that accompanied the turn of the twentieth century but loyal to an older, romantic vision of their chosen City.

The section in the American Academy presents a selection of works by artists of the period. Three of these were directors of the Academy: George Breck FAAR 1899, Frederic Crowninshield, and Gorham Phillips Stevens. Elihu Vedder and Augustus Saint-Gaudens were among the Academy’s strongest supporters. Paul Manship FAAR’12 and Albin Polasek FAAR’13 are represented by sculptures in the courtyard. Paintings by their Italian friends are included. Patrons of the period are also featured. Richard Norton, director of the American School of Classical Studies, assembled the antiquities installed in the courtyard. Other scholars, such as Thomas Ashby and Esther Van Deman FASC/90, contributed to the archaeological collections. George Washington Wurts and Henrietta Tower Wurts, the Academy’s neighbors in the Villa Sciarra, amassed an impressive collection of Russian and Italian art. By the time the “new” McKim, Mead White building was completed in 1914, it was already part of a culture of philanthropy and good taste.

The exhibition is accompanied by a selection of music of the period, an exhibition catalog (published by Palombi), and a booklet of walking tours to other works of art around the city.

Recent Society of Fellows Events
Edited by Wendy Heller FAAR’01

Returning Fellows Celebration
Sunday, October 24, 2004, New York City
A reception to welcome home the returning 2004 Fellows was held at the home of James L. Bodner FAAR’80, president of the Society of Fellows. This was followed by a concert at the Guggenheim Museum, featuring compositions by Mason Bates FAAR’04 and Kevin M. Puts FAAR’02.

An Evening at the Sculpture Center
Thursday, October 28, Long Island City, New York
The Society of Fellows in collaboration with the Sculpture Center presented an evening in the Arena, featuring an installation by Rita McBride FAAR’07, with a reading by Mary Camponegrano FAAR’92, from her writing The Spell and D’ole Uncertainty Possibility D’eer.

The Castellani and Italian Archeological Jewelry
Thursday, December 16, New York City
Stefanie Walker FAAR’01, Curator, The Bard Center for the Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture led a tour of her exhibition The Castellani and Italian Aachneological Jewelry at the Bard Graduate Center, followed by a reception.

New Year’s Eve in Rome
Friday, December 31, 2004, Rome, Italy
The Society of Fellows sponsored the second annual New Year’s Eve Party at the American Academy in Rome. Organized by Jackie Saccocio FAAR’05, George Still FAAR’03 and Franco Mondini-Ruiz FAAR’02, and held in Franeo’s top floor studio and adjoining terrace, the party was enlivened by dancing, drinks, and the unofficial fireworks over the Roman sky.

AIA / APA Reception
Saturday, January 8, 2005, Boston, MA
A reception on the occasion of the annual meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America and the American Philological Association was held at the elegant Isabella Gardner Museum in Boston.

College Art Association Reception
Friday, February 18, 2005, Atlanta, GA
A reception on the occasion of the annual conference of the College Art Association was held at the Academy of Medicine, built in 1941 and designed by Philip Trammell Shutze FAAR’20.
Richard Brilliant: I was too old to be a student in school, so I was not as part of the Academy when I was a Fellow, and he and I have been friends was a man who became my colleague later on at Columbia, that is Alfred Frazer (FAAR’61, RAAR’87) who was a Fellow at the Academy. We over-looked. He was there one year before me, and left one year before I did, but we spent a marvelous time, traveling in Tunisia and in Libya in the spring of 1961. I had been actually in Libya before while I was a Fulbright student in the spring of 1959, but he and I spent six or seven weeks touring around in Tunisia and in Libya, where we had, as you may know, a series of interesting adventures. Including in Tunisia where we were cut off by the FLN when we were examining the ruins of Chemtou near the Algerian border, and but for the grace of God would’ve wound up dead in some ditch.

Elizabeth: Who do you remember from those years, who stands out? You mentioned Alfred Frazer.

Richard: Well, I was very friendly with Milton Lewine (FAAR’83), and who became also a colleague at Columbia later on, and Donald Posner (FAAR’61, RAAR’69), whose wedding I went to with the then Kathy Weil-Garriss… I also obviously got along with the professors in charge, Frank Brown (FAAR’53, RAAR’54, 55) when I was a Fulbright grantee, and Henry Rowell (FAAR’61) when I was an Academy Fellow. I very likely doing research in I was too old to be a student in school, so I was not as participating in his Latin reading sessions as he would have liked, but we got along anyway because he was really a very friendly man.

I also met a great number of foreign scholars… And I would say for me, (the) most important was Salvatore Settis (ITALIAN FULBRIGHT FELLOW ‘62), who had a Fulbright at the Academy when I was a Fellow, and he and I have remained friends ever since. In fact, I have been his guest as Lincel professor at the Scuola Normale in Pisa three times, in the 1970s and 1980s. That was obviously as a result of the fact that we spent time together.

So those years were very, very interesting, and I think because I spent time at the Academy and also time outside the Academy… And because my Italian got to be very good, it meant that I could mix very easily in many parts of the country, without having the kind of linguistic difficulty that many of the Fellows had, who never in fact got out of the Academy or the Academy environment. And I think I was the beneficiary of that very directly.

I also traveled widely, not only in Italy and in North Africa, but basically all over the Mediterranean in those years, sometimes alone, and sometimes with my wife. I went up the Rhine following the Roman times and towns up the Rhine, and indeed found these experiences very rewarding.

Of course, I should mention that although the first time I was in Rome was in 1951 on my honeymoon, that after 1957 I could figure that I was in Rome at least once a year ever since, sometimes obviously for longer periods of time, because I came back again in 1967/68 with a Guggenheim Fellowship and lived in Rome, again up on the Gianicolo. And then in 1972/73 when I had a senior Fellowship from the NEH, and lived outside of the Porta Flaminia on the river, which was really quite spectacular. These all blend together in my recollection of great years in the city. But I have spent summers in Rome, and I have spent weeks in Rome, so in a sense I consider Rome a second home, but my first home is in Scarsdale.

In the German circles, when I used to be very frequently at the German Archaeological Institute on via Serdenza, obviously I met Paul Zanker and I met Bernard Andreae… Probably in those years I would be at the German Academy. It was a pittance. So Milt and I decided to take charge, and in the end we had over 400 people at the party. He handled all the finances, I handled everything else. I hired the bands. We had three bands and a strolling musician. We had a competition for the best costume. And I not only hired all the waiters, many of whom came from the Academy staff but we needed other people, but also bought all the food. And as you know, I don’t eat pork, but certainly one of the highlights of an Academy ball were these great piglets. So there I went out into the countryside and shopped around, and negotiated for the purchase of these great roast pigs, without ever having eaten any. Everything came together for the party… The ball started at nine o’clock at night and went on until three or four in the morning, and it was a great success, and it was a lot of fun. But we didn’t get a lot of financial support from the Academy to do it, I think that we did and we did it successfully, but that was because I knew how to bargain and Milton knew how to squeeze blood out of a nickel… My wife went as Diana of Ephesus, and in order to do this we cut lemons in half and they were sewn on a black dress. And of course the jokers all went around trying to squeeze the lemons to find which one was [not]. At any rate, we had a good time. And I didn’t mention we had wine, no hard liquor, but a lot of wine.

To see a transcript of the entire interview with Richard Brilliant, please visit www.sof-aarome.org.
The Art of Napkin Folding in Baroque Italy

Stefanie Walker FAAR’01

In the hands of deft washerwomen, through starching, ironing, and meticulous folding, even lowly table linens can be turned into artistic productions. The amusing and intriguing picture comes from a 1639 treatise on folding napkins. It confirms what other descriptive accounts tell us, namely, that this kind of table origami was an integral part of the elaborate decorations devised for seventeenth-century banquets, especially in Italy and Rome.

Plate 4 of the book Gli tre trattati, shows napkins at different stages of the folding process. Illustrated are several initial forms with rectangular or triangular shapes laid into narrow parallel folds, straight, curving, or zigzagging. A triple-tiered fan reminiscent of a peacock’s tail, a whole fish (perhaps a sturgeon?), two ships, and even a turret-curving, or zigzagging. A triple-tiered fan reminiscent of a peacock’s tail, a whole fish (perhaps a sturgeon?), two ships, and even a turret-

Preservation in the broadest sense of the word reveals its true meaning when there is a strong relationship between the object, its use, and its context within an architecturally significant environment. So began the premise of a fruitful dialogue between Deirdre Windsor, Principal of Windsor Conservation and Hetty Startup, the Currier Museum’s Zimmerman House Administrator. Beginning in 2002, they started a conservation program for the original upholstery fabrics on public view at the Isadore J. and Lucille Zimmerman House in Manchester, New Hampshire. Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Zimmerman House, owned and operated by the Currier Museum of Art, in 1950. As his clients, the Zimmermans embraced Wright’s unique vision for residential design in conjunction with his use of simple modern design fittings and furnishings. The Zimmermans lived in this classic “Usonian” house for almost 36 years, immensely satisfied with its beauty and its impact on their lives. As the sole owners, Dr. Isadore and Lucille Zimmerman bequeathed their home and its entire contents to the Currier Museum in 1988. It is the only Wright home open to the public in New England and represents an outstanding example of his approach to domestic architecture at mid-century. Wright’s approach to design was what he called “organic”; he designed houses like the Zimmerman House to have implied connections between inside and outside space using devices such as covered walkways, loggias, bays spaced with piers, and mitered glass corners to doorways and entrances. The Zimmerman House is distinctive for the richness of its materials and the quality of its craftsmanship. The main building material used is a fine matt-finished red brick and it is this use of brick combined with glass, concrete and upland Georgia cypress wood that comprise the construction materials of the home. The interior also features Wright-designed, built-in and movable cypress and cypress veneer furniture; almost all pieces of furniture have a high-figured, warm orange grain. The original upholstery fabrics match these colors and textures of the home’s building materials.

Nothing is known about the author of the text and illustrations beyond what can be gleaned from the pages of the book itself. His name was Mattia Giegher, from Moosburg in Bavaria, and was the steward of a manor located in the territory of Moosburg, especially in Italy and Rome.

Plate 4 of the book Gli tre trattati shows napkins at different stages of the folding process. Illustrated are several initial forms with rectangular or triangular shapes laid into narrow parallel folds, straight, curving, or zigzagging. A triple-tiered fan reminiscent of a peacock’s tail, a whole fish (perhaps a sturgeon?), two ships, and even a turret-

Preservation in the broadest sense of the word reveals its true meaning when there is a strong relationship between the object, its use, and its context within an architecturally significant environment. So began the premise of a fruitful dialogue between Deirdre Windsor, Principal of Windsor Conservation and Hetty Startup, the Currier Museum’s Zimmerman House Administrator. Beginning in 2002, they started a conservation program for the original upholstery fabrics on public view at the Isadore J. and Lucille Zimmerman House in Manchester, New Hampshire. Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Zimmerman House, owned and operated by the Currier Museum of Art, in 1950. As his clients, the Zimmermans embraced Wright’s unique vision for residential design in conjunction with his use of simple modern design fittings and furnishings. The Zimmermans lived in this classic “Usonian” house for almost 36 years, immensely satisfied with its beauty and its impact on their lives. As the sole owners, Dr. Isadore and Lucille Zimmerman bequeathed their home and its entire contents to the Currier Museum in 1988. It is the only Wright home open to the public in New England and represents an outstanding example of his approach to domestic architecture at mid-century. Wright’s approach to design was what he called “organic”; he designed houses like the Zimmerman House to have implied connections between inside and outside space using devices such as covered walkways, loggias, bays spaced with piers, and mitered glass corners to doorways and entrances. The Zimmerman House is distinctive for the richness of its materials and the quality of its craftsmanship. The main building material used is a fine matt-finished red brick and it is this use of brick combined with glass, concrete and upland Georgia cypress wood that comprise the construction materials of the home. The interior also features Wright-designed, built-in and movable cypress and cypress veneer furniture; almost all pieces of furniture have a high-figured, warm orange grain. The original upholstery fabrics match these colors and textures of the home’s building materials.

Deirdre Windsor FAAR’01 and Hetty Startup, Zimmerman House Administrator, Currier Museum of Art

Garden Rains and Stains upholstery conservation in context

Deirdre Windsor FAAR’01 and Hetty Startup, Zimmerman House Administrator, Currier Museum of Art

Garden Rains and Stains upholstery conservation in context

Deirdre Windsor FAAR’01 and Hetty Startup, Zimmerman House Administrator, Currier Museum of Art

Deirdre Windsor FAAR’01 and Hetty Startup, Zimmerman House Administrator, Currier Museum of Art
interpretation is the late 1950s and 1960s. Due to this mandate, it is important to insure the longevity of the original textiles. Along with current historic house collections care, stabilization treatments and other recommendations were made for minimizing potential damage from exposure to the environment and from visitors accessing the house as part of a seasonal tour program. Diminishing the ongoing risks to these sensitive furnishing textiles on open display is the biggest challenge.

The fabrics used throughout the Zimmerman House for upholstery, bedcovers, curtains and pillows are a rare example of surviving original textiles selected by Frank Lloyd Wright (Fig. 2). The fabrics used for the furniture upholstery were possibly designed by Dorothy Leibes, whose work Wright appreciated and recommended to other clients in the 1950s. Leibes used many Bauhaus innovations in her designs including the use of plastics, cellophane, Lurex and novelty yarns, rather than complex weave structures. (See Weltge, S. W. W. man’s work 7. title A 7 from the Bauhaus, San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993.) There are a number of different upholstered furniture designs featured in the Zimmerman House. These include music stand stools, hassocks, dining loggia chairs and the quintessential cypress and plywood long bench with cushions (Fig. 3).

The mere fact that the original upholstery still exists in tact is a testament to the Zimmermans’ insight into the importance of preserving all the original design elements of their house. However, there are challenges to insuring their preservation now that the house is visited by at least 4,000 people per year. In the assessment of the condition of the textiles, it is clear that their fiber content and weave structure were not necessarily appropriate material choices for furnishing fabrics. Extensive use of the furniture for nearly four decades by the Zimmermans has left the fabrics in varying stages of disrepair. The coarse golden yellow and rust colored fabrics used to upholster cushions, chairs and stools are inherently weak as the main element is ramie - Boehmeria nivea L. - a short bast fiber that has little inherent strength or resiliency. Blending sharp metallic, plastic and Lurex yarns woven in with weaker ramie, wool and rayon yarns has caused severe mechanical damage along with general wear from use. The relatively open weave structure with this fiber content is clearly not a sturdy or practical choice for the home’s upholstery show fabrics. Since the house was opened to the public, visitors have not been allowed to sit on the furniture, but long-term exposure to fluctuating temperatures, humidity and exposure to sunlight over the last 55 years has contributed to their stressed condition. Despite the ongoing deterioration of the textiles, however, the museum is dedicated to preserving all original materials and seeking to clarify where and when future reproduction fabrics might be appropriate.

The most critical condition problem relating to the upholstered furniture is the instability of the original foam cushions. The wood frames of most of the furniture are covered with foam that was manufactured by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company using the trade name Foamer. The foam is a latex product and it is in an advanced stage of degradation from photo-oxidation so that it has become hardened, granular and misshapen due to shrinkage of the material. The granular form of the latex has worked its way through the fabric show covers requiring extensive suction cleaning with a H.E.P.A. vacuum. Due to the degradation and off gassing of the latex, in keeping with current conservation practice, new Ethafoam™ forms were custom shaped by Windsor Conservation to replace and to fit the latex foam. These replacement cushion forms are covered with a layer of thermo-bonded polyester fiber batting and lining, which are stable, inert materials. Conservation treatment to date has also involved stabilization of the original fabric show covers in areas of wear or loss by inserting custom dyed linen fabric underneath the damaged area and supporting it with conservation stitching techniques prior to inserting new cushions. Stain reduction was achieved by using a controlled suction device with deionized water and an anionic surfactant as a solvent to reduce stains, neutralize the fibers and improve the overall appearance. The visual impact of the degraded misshapen cushions and soiling of the fabric severely alters the aesthetic experience and the original intentions of the architect (Fig. 4). Wright’s fusion of clean horizontal lines in the architecture in unison with interior furniture design lines is lost by the physical changes in the materials of the furnishing fabrics. The conservation plan in place proposes to eventually replace all latex foam cushions with an inert archival material restoring the correct form and horizontal emphasis of Wright’s interior vision (Fig. 5).

As work has begun, there remains a caveat to the proposed course of treatment. Although the main goal for upholstery conservation is to preserve all aspects of the material, there is an increasing awareness by conservators and curators to consider the idea of preserving evidence of an artifact’s history. It is a known fact that the hassocks were taken outdoors to the garden terraces during the warmer seasons in what were no doubt variable weather conditions. The stains from outdoor use and wear patterns, including perhaps being exposed to rain showers, are evidence of this history. When evidence is embodied in an object in the form of physical change such as stains, abrasion and degradation, it still speaks of human use in a context that now becomes a part of the artifact. One could argue that to remove the charac-

FIG. 2 Garden Room interior
Image courtesy of Windsor Conservation

FIG. 3 View of the long bench before conservation treatment
Image courtesy of Windsor Conservation

FIG. 4 Hassock before conservation treatment, 2004

FIG. 5 Hassock after conservation treatment, 2005

teristic way in which the upholstered furniture has changed from human and environmental exposure would eliminate this aspect of the object’s evidence of use. Thus, the current shape and condition of the furniture could be interpreted as material evidence of the owner’s experience of their house, their love of its outdoor living opportunities and of the garden. In dealing with conceptual issues like this, one must weigh and balance the requirements for preservation of the object with preservation of the historical evidence. The complexities of conserving upholstery in context illustrate the importance of dialogue between conservators and curators to discover these associations, thus preserving a more complete history of this house, its owners and the intentions of its famous architect. The Currier Museum of Art and Windsor Conservation are fully committed to realizing a long-term solution to save the textiles and their vital relationship to the furniture and the interior design of the home.
Rome Prize Winners 2005-06

ANCIENT STUDIES

Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullinan Post-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

Kimberly Bowes
A visiting Professor, Fordham University
New York, NY

Samuel H. Kress Foundation / Irene Rosenzweig Pre-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship
(year one of a two-year fellowship)

Hendrik William Dey

Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology, University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

National Endowment for the Humanities / Andrew Heiskell Post-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

Carlos R. Galvez-Sobrinho
A visiting Professor, Department of History, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI

Arthur Ross Pre-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

Jacob Latham
A visiting Professor, Department of Religion, University of California, Santa Barbara
Los Angeles, CA

Samuel H. Kress Foundation Pre-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship
(year one of a two-year fellowship)

Sandra K. Lucore
A visiting Professor, University of Tokyo, Department of Near Eastern and Classical Archaeology, Bryn Mawr College
Tokyo, Japan

Samuel H. Kress Foundation / Frank Brown / Helen M. Woodruff Fellowship of the Archaeological Institute of America Pre-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship
(year two of a two-year fellowship)

David Petrain
A visiting Professor, Department of Classics, Harvard University
Cambridge, MA

ARCHITECTURE

Arnold W. Brunner Rome Prize Fellowship

Alex Schweder
Principal, A leo Schweder Projects, Houston House, Seattle, Henry U/tech A architecture, New York
Seattle, WA

Founders Rome Prize Fellowship

Eliza Silva
A visiting Professor, University of California, Irvine
New York, NY

Design

Rolland Rome Prize Fellowship

Pamela Howland
A visiting Professor, Pennsylvania State University, School of Architecture
University Park, PA

Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon Polsky Rome Prize Fellowship

J. Moonie Yoon
A visiting Professor, Department of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, MA

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

Booth Family Rome Prize Fellowship

Paul M. De Cristofaro
Paintings Conserver, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Oakland, CA

National Endowment for the Arts Rome Prize Fellowship

Robert E. Saarnio
A visiting Professor, The Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Garden Club of America Rome Prize Fellowship

Richard Barnes
Photographer / A/artist, San Francisco, California

Prince Charitable Trusts Rome Prize Fellowship

Anita de la Rosa Berticheita
A visiting Professor of Landscape Architecture, School of Design, University of Pennsylvania
Ann Arbor, MI

LITERATURE

Joseph Brodsky Rome Prize Fellowship, a gift of the D rue Loewy Trust / American Academy of Arts and Letters

Craig Arnold
A visiting Professor of Poetry, University of Washington
Seattle, WA

John Guare Writer's Fund Rome Prize Fellowship, a gift of Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullinan

Aaron Hamburger
A visiting Professor, New York, NY

MEIOEVAL STUDIES

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Post-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

F. Thomas Hupego
A visiting Professor of History, Tulane University
New Orleans, LA

MODERN ITALIAN STUDIES

Millicent Mercer Johnson Post-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

Patrick Barron
A visiting Professor, Department of English, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Boston, MA

Donald and Maria Cox Pre-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

Patricia Gaborik
A visiting Professor, Department of English, University of California - Berkeley
Ann Arbor, MI

Paul Mellon Post-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

Patricia Gaboik
A visiting Professor, Department of French, Italian, and Comparative Literature, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI

MUSICAL COMPOSITION

Frederic A. Juilliard / Walter Damrosch Rome Prize Fellowship

Susan Botti
A visiting Professor, University of Music Composition, Department of Music
Ann Arbor, MI

Samuel Barber Rome Prize Fellowship

Charles Norman Mason
Professor of Composition, Birmingham-Southern College
Birmingham, AL

American Academy in Rome

RENAISSANCE AND EARLY MODERN STUDIES

Phyllis G. Gordon Pre-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

Jana Elizabeth Cordie-Pugh
Department of History, Northwestern University
Evanston, IL

Marian and Andrew Heiskell / Samuel H. Kress Foundation Post-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship
(year two of a two-year fellowship)

Janna Israel
A visiting Professor of Architecture, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Ann Arbor, MI

National Endowment for the Humanities Post-Doctoral Rome Prize Fellowship

Emily Wilson
A visiting Professor of Classics, University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA

VISUAL ARTS

Chuck Close Rome Prize Fellowship

Boyece Cummings
Painter
New York, NY

Julius Caesar Rome Prize Fellowship

Yun-Fei Ji
A visiting Professor, Brooklyn, NY

John Armstrong Chaloner / Jacob H. Lazurus - Metropolitan Museum of Art Rome Prize Fellowship

Ward Shelley
A visiting Professor, Brooklyn, NY

Joseph H. Hazen Rome Prize Fellowship

Carrie M. Weems
Associate Professor of Theatre, New York, NY
Urban landscapes encode multiple ideas in many planes occupying the same space. During my tenure at the Academy, I employed painting, photography, and collage to consider the natural and cultural ideologies from which built landscape forms emerge. The 'stratigraphic section', used to describe geologic strata, and a topographic metric, based on the elevation above sea level where the Cloaca Maxima enters the Tiber, generated the framework for site investigations. Digital assemblaggi or "core samples" of the landscapes of five specific places were the result. Site selection was based on a decidedly personal and poetic response to the urban landscapes I encountered as I walked and photographed in and around Rome. When I returned to my studio from each walk or road trip, I painted or collaged miniature sketchbook studies to record the sense of that place. Initially, these studies were small horizontal rectangles with a proportion ratio of 1:4, dictated by the sketchbook page. One morning, I entered my studio to find that a window had blown open during a storm and the contents of the room were in complete chaos. One of the studies, however, clung to a wall, held by a single push pin. The sketch had pivoted on the pin to become vertical and the 'geologic column' idea materialized as a device for portraying urban landscape. I began to focus on five sites: Centro (Central Rome), Palatino (The Palatine), Caracalla (Baths of Caracalla) and San Leandro (the San Leandro neighborhood near Termini Station); the fifth "core sample" was in Pompeii. I enlarged the format to 60 x 15 cm collage-paintings, retained the 4 to 1 vertical-to-horizontal ratio and layered in a slightly irreverent narrative of geologic terms that also describe culture. Ultimately, it became apparent that the columns needed to be scaled so that they could make an architectural space; consequently, I moved to a 'digital assemblage' strategy. A series of five digital assemblaggi (stratigraphic 'columns') of portions of my photographs and paintings evolved and these were printed onto 1 meter by 4 meter vellum panels. For my show at the Academy, I wrapped the paper columns around a plexiglass frame to form literal, three-dimensional columns that hung from the ceiling as a portico. They were up-lit for dramatic effect at night. Flat, un-wrapped digital printouts were also exhibited in my studio with the smaller paintings and collages. I then became intrigued with the tapestry-like quality of the work and, at the urging of Dana Prescott and my fellow Fellows, began to explore options with textile fabricators in Italy. At the Ratti Foundation Library in Como, I rediscovers my passion for jacquard textiles. Their highly tactile quality - the topography or landscape of the fabric itself - seemed like the appropriate medium to express landscape stratigraphy. An interesting and coincidental magic emerged during the production of this edition of the tapestries. The jacquard loom was invented in 1805. It presented a new weaving technology driven by punch cards and, consequently, it became a precursor for the later invention of the computer. (This is obvious if you think of 'warp' and 'woof' as pixels.) The computer evolved in its direction and developed a rich and elaborate 'color space' with thousands of color options. The Jacquard loom, however, never expanded its color space much beyond what was originally invented - perhaps 25 rather muted colors. Since my images and colors were digital, no Jacquard loom could actually have 'read' and produced them until just last year. A team of artists in the San Francisco area had developed a translation program in 2003 that allowed a Jacquard loom to 'read' and produce about 250 colors. A small family-run mill in Belgium is, to date, the only location in Europe or the US willing to work with this experimental technology. Edition One of Tessuto Urbano was fabricated in Belgium last fall.
On November 18, 2004, the Friends of the Library sponsored a panel discussion with Anthony Grafton, Professor of History at Princeton University and author of many books, including A two-volume biography of Joseph Scaliger, a sixteenth-century philologist and historian of chronology. The panelists were A. F. Kendrick, Barbara Goldsmith, biographer of the early feminist Virginia Woolf, and the湿润的 Marie Curie. Nancy Siraisi, Professor Emerita at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center and biographer of two major Renaissance physicians, David A. L. Biddle and Girolamo Cardano, and Jean Strouse, Director of the Cullman Center at the New York Public Library who has written on Alice James, the sister of William and Henry James, on the psychoanalyst J. R. M. Ogden and produced an oral history of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The event drew an overflow crowd, but the presentations were so stimulating that we would like to present some excerpts below for those who couldn’t be there. A full version is available on the SOF website, www.sof-aarome.org

Harry Evans RAAR'73, RAAR'91

ANTHONY GRAFTON: Biography always charms us. It is always in vogue. It has always been in vogue. Romans smacked their lips and raised their eyebrows over Suetonius’ Lives of the Emperors just as we smack our lips and raise our eyebrows over lives of Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf and other worthies of the modern age. It is always popular. It is always readable. It is always critical. Every time a new literary biography appears, it attracts the flocks of reviews that say, “Tsk, tsk, tsk. Biography again? Reducing the creativity of a great individual to the historical circumstances of his or her life.” Every time a biography of someone not famous as a literary or political figure comes out—-a biography of a great individual to the historical circumstances of his or her life.” Every time a new literary biography appears, it attracts the flock of reviews that say, “Tsk, tsk, tsk. Biography again? Reducing the creativity of a great individual to the historical circumstances of his or her life.”

BARBARA GOLDSMITH: There are no rules about writing a biography. There is, however, no special way of doing it, and that is one of the challenges. At first, finding a subject is like a social meeting: you see somebody who seems rather interesting. At first, finding a subject is like a social meeting: you see somebody who seems rather interesting. You begin to wonder about this person, unless you know a great deal about the milieu in which you understand a personality as far removed in time and culture as Marie Curie was from our present world. As subject for biography, Cardano presents challenges in several senses. Writing about him involves coming to terms with the powerful, if in some respects misleading, image conveyed by earlier biographers, beginning with Cardano himself; with the extraordinary diversity of his interests and activities; with the very large body of his writings about them; with the complex social and intellectual context in which he lived and worked in Counter Reformation Italy and, briefly, in Northern Europe; and with the absence of all but a few documentary sources and personal papers. My book is a study of the professional life, writings, and ideas of Cardano the physician, that is of a 50-year long sixteenth-century, medical career.

Most of my endeavors involved trying to situate Cardano’s medical writings and his autobiographical accounts of his medical career in three interrelated contexts: that of his own ideas in other fields, especially moral and natural philosophy and natural magic; that of the broader picture of sixteenth-century medical ideas and practice; and that of the institutional and social worlds of the cities and universities where he studied, practiced, or taught medicine.

I looked at these people, situations, and events from the standpoint of two themes that in recent years have greatly interested historians of science and medicine in the Renaissance and early modern world: patronage and the relation of the physician and patient … Some of his patients and patrons were sufficiently well known to be traceable from other sources, and in other instances his accounts of cases usually indicate the patient’s class, gender, and occupation, so that I could build up a social, if not an epidemiological picture of his practice.

Writing about a figure such as Cardano is a very different enterprise from writing a biography of a more modern figure. Similarly, I’m not sure it’s ever possible fully to understand a personality as far removed in time and culture as Cardano is from ourselves, but as I spent almost 10 years with him on and off, a sense of his character gradually emerged. The un Guarded self-revelations—about his periods of impotence, his bi-sexuality, his conviction of his own great abilities, and his occult powers—that at least until the eighteenth-century century shocked readers or led them to think he was literally mentally unbalanced, perhaps no longer seems so startling today. Instead, I saw a man who overcame a difficult youth to achieve con-...
siderable professional success, someone who throughout his life endeavored to interpret and make sense of himself and his world, and who constantly sought to illustrate theory by example and evidence.

JEAN STROUSE: Alice James didn’t do any of the things that would ordinarily prompt someone to write a biography. She was a neurasthenic invalid who spent much of her life in bed with “the vapors,” which was a popular thing to do if you were a female in the late nineteenth century. There are all sorts of guesses as to how she happened to her.

Alice had an extraordinary intelligence, voice, and personality. She had no real education, although in that family being at the dinner table was like going to Harvard, because so many brilliant figures came to visit - including Emerson, Carlyle, Thoreau, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. But as you’ll notice, those are all men. No one in Alice’s immediate vicinity thought a woman could live an intellectual life, which was the most important thing in the James family.

So this work involved some of the problems that Nancy was talking about - working on the life of someone for whom there is not enough source material. But for me, those problems also conferred certain advantages; I had to write a sort of Jamesian biography. Like most of Henry’s novels, the story of his sister’s life was primarily an internal one, its dynamics were private, interpersonal, psychological. And it enabled me to give one kind of answer to the question Virginia Woolf famously asked, in A Room of One’s Own, about what would have happened if Shakespeare had had a gifted sister. Henry James actually did have a gifted sister, and it was possible to see what happened to her.

ANTHONY GRAFTON: I was struck by one common theme, which is the intimacy of the relationship you have with the person whose biography you write. I wonder if each of you would talk just a little bit more about this. On the one hand, it is a little bit like choosing a spouse: You live with these people for a very long time. But my impression is you don’t actually have to like the person to be a successful biographer. So I wonder if each of you would just talk about this. How do you see that it’s that close relationship at the party that you want to go home with?

BARBARA GOLDSMITH: You pick a person that you think will be somebody that you want to go home with, but it does not always turn out that way. [In Madame Curie] I found someone I desperately wanted to take home with me. Here was somebody who had such persistence and such a gloriously clear and simple mind, that one just thought it was breathtaking. It was thrilling for me to meet this obsessive genius and to see what she did, but it was also thrilling for me as a woman because I was brought up with a🤡 that had such resilience. She gave her children everything in the world but her life. That is why I call the book Obsessive Genius.

NANCY SIRASI: I have a much more prosaic and pragmatic reason for getting interested in Cardano. [...] I have truly to say that I came to Cardano partly by knowing that a friend and colleague I greatly respected had been interested in him, and partly simply by reading him. As to whether I would have liked to Cardano home, it depends on what you mean by that. I would be very interested to have dinner with him. I think he would be a very difficult person to live with for some of the following reasons: I don’t think it’s right to blame parents when children turn out badly, but it is in fact true that his eldest son, to whom he was devoted, was executed for murdering his wife. His younger son was arrested for robbery and stole from his own father. Certainly, one feels that he had problems as a family man. [...] So I would love to have dinner with him. I think he would be a most interesting conversationalist. That, perhaps, might be as far as I would go.

JEAN STROUSE: You do live with these people. They inhabit you and you inhabit them. I didn’t actually like either of my subjects when I started out. I ended up admiring Alice, and respecting the way she dealt with the difficulties in her life; but I never felt that she was a heroine. I specifically did not want to make her into a feminist victim-as-heroine, and I never grew wildly fond of her. One of the great things you get to do at the Academy is to hear extraordinary talents tell you about their work. Nothing is more fascinating than hearing a master talk about his or her work. We’ve heard three of them tonight.
Like so many architects before me, one of the things I did while I was in Rome was to draw Bramante’s Tempietto. I wanted to draw it, but not to end up with illustrations. I didn’t want calendar art. I decided to try to distill the act of drawing from its presumed purpose of accurate representation. I thought that perhaps by removing the usual primary task of drawing, representing its object, I could sidestep the bothersome question of whether or not I was doing so accurately.

I started tentatively, by doing blind contour drawings of the building. In this exercise one looks only at the subject while drawing, but the eye may not watch the hand as it draws on the paper. The method was invented by gestalt psychologists and nowadays is usually done as warm-up exercises in figure drawing class. It’s tricky; it takes discipline. I almost had to build a visor and sometimes I cheated, I couldn’t resist.

I ended up doing a yearlong series of these drawings, at first trying to capture the entire building at once on the page. That never worked. I started focusing on only a part at a time. I drew like this all year, going back at least once a week. Sometimes it felt like just something to do with my hands while sitting with the structure, for hours at a time, in studious contemplation.

The drawings never resolved into coherent images. In that way they are different from what I had previously learned about the Tempietto - i.e., that it is a complete, even perfect, thing. The drawings also happened to be beautiful. I sold several of them before I even made it home (I had never sold my drawings before). This was encouraging. It felt to me as if the magic I had experienced while making them was somehow being transferred.

When I returned to Los Angeles, the drawings also impressed a friend of mine who designs clothes: Antonia Carew-Watts, whose line is called Fig Fashion. We had wanted to collaborate for a while, and had discussed it before I left. She selected her favorite drawings from the series.

We worked with repeats and gradually developed one of the drawings into a pattern, and then made a textile by screen-printing it in either dark blue or grass green onto white cotton batiste. Antonia designed a dress and two blouses from that fabric. Then she selected another drawing and designed two jersey t-shirts around its shape. We screen-printed it in either black and white ink onto the shirts, choosing very bright colors as the field. My favorite is light, sky blue, with white ink. Plus, it was really fun to have the photo shoot, with lanky models and a photographer, make-up artist and hair stylist, here in my ordinarily staid and quiet architecture office. And the delicate little drawings were blown up into wallpaper and used as the photographer’s backdrop - now I’m thinking they might make nice wallpaper someday, too.

The pieces are only a part of Fig’s spring collection, which appeared in stores nationwide in March 2005 (www.figfashion.com). Bramante’s architecture has had many afterlives, but this is not one I set out intending to deliver. The process continues to be revelatory in the best sense, continuously unfolding and shifting my expectations. It helped to develop my appreciation of Bramante’s architecture in both its seriousness and its wit; strengthened my belief in looking in order to see before looking to record; and generally taught me to always remain open to unforeseen consequences. From my first visit to the building to wearing its derived image on a summery dress in springtime Los Angeles, the Tempietto continues to hold surprises, despite all the pages about it already on the record.

Rachel Allen FAAR’03

Fig Fashion, Model J1002, halter top

All drawings courtesy of Rachel Allen
Recent Books by Academy Authors
Compiled by Christina Huemer, Drue Heinz Librarian

This list of recent books (2000-2005) by or about Academy Fellows and Residents updates the one published in SOF News in Spring 2004. It is based on gifts to the Academy Library.


North, Helen F., RAAR’80, and Mary C. North. Cork and the rest of Ireland: a magical primer II. Philadelphia Iona Foundation, 2003 (Columbian Celtic series, 4)


Ville e giardini italiani: i disegni di architetti e paesaggisti dell’American Academy in Rome
by Vincenzo Cazzato

This is a monumental study (683 pages) of the drawings of Italian gardens by early Fellows of the American Academy. The volume includes significant biographical information on the Fellows and is lavishly illustrated with reproductions from our Photographic Archive. Vincenzo Cazzato is an Italian scholar of landscape history and a long-time Friend of the Library. There are also essays by six other authors, including Antonella Bucci, Alessandra Vinciguerra, and Laurie Olin FAAR’74.
Awards and Publications
Edited by Joanne Spurza FAAR’89

FAAR’50s
George Rockberg FAAR’51 has been awarded a 2004 Classical Internet Award, one of the "Outstanding New Distinguished Achievement Awards for the recording on Naos of his Symphony No. 5, Black Sounds and Transcendental Visions with the Southwicks Radio Symphony Orchestra. A revised and expanded edition of his essays, The Aesthetics of Survival: A Composer’s View of Twentieth-Century Music, has been published by the University of Michigan Press.

George Garrett FAAR'93 has been awarded the 2005 Cleeth Brooks Medal for Distinguished Achievement in Southern Letters, by the Fellowship of Southern Writers. An award ceremony was held on April 1.

FAAR’60s
AIA-New Jersey, a state chapter of the American Institute of Architects, has created a new honor, the Michael Graves Lifetime Achievement Award, and presented this award in its inaugural year to Michael Graves FAAR’82, RAAR’70 himself. The event was celebrated at the annual award design ceremony in January 2005, held at The Newark Museum.

Edmund Keeley FAAR’60 announces the publication of Byzantine A Mourn in 2005. In November 2004 he received the Philadelphia Award from the Hellenic Public Radio in New York City "for passionate advocacy of Hellenism,” and was feted with a banquet in his honor and, as he notes, “the gift of a small marble chalice, decorated by a necklace of linked runners in gold (I suppose representing the famous ancient runners).”

Robert Birmelin FAAR’64 was the recipient of a Painters and Sculptors Grant Program Award in November 2004 from the Joan Mitchell Foundation. He had a one-person exhibition of his paintings at the Galerie Barbara von Stechow, Frankfurt am Main, October 13 - November 20, 2004.


Dean Adams johnson FAAR’64 received the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects' highest design award for his Design Guidelines for the Town of Simsbury, CT and for the redesign of an historic-style light for its village center.

Anna Marguerite McCann FAAR’66 sends word of her new volume, written with John Peter Oleson, “Deep-water Shipwrecks off Sherki Bank; The 1997 Survey,” Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series Number 58 (2004). As she notes, "the book tells the story of the discovery of eight shipwrecks in the deep sea off Sherki Bank with Robert Ballard, about 75 miles northwest of Sicily. This is the first archaeological exploration of the deep ocean with robots and a nuclear submarine."

R. Terry Schnadelbach FAAR’66 has published Ferrante Viale: Landscape Architect of the Country Fair Era (Princeton Architectural Press 2001). He currently is Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin and serves as Program Director in Landscape Architecture at the University’s Paris Research Center.

FAAR’70s

FAAR’80s
Andrea Clark Brown FAAR’80 recently received three local design Awards of Excellence in Architecture from the Florida Southwest Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for the Mattsons Residence, for House HMM and for St. Agnes Catholic Church, all in Naples, Florida. In addition, she was honored by the Collin County United Arts Council as a “Star of the Arts” for 2005, a new award celebrating cultural leadership and multi-disciplinary contributions to the arts area. Andrea also writes to say that she is "sporting artistic turbans dur - ing [her] recovery from breast cancer this past fall and into the spring. Outlook is excellent!"


Eleanor Winser Lorach FAAR’84 announces the publication of The Social Life of Painting in Ancient Rome and on the Bay of Naples (Cambridge University Press) in June 2004.

Elizabeth Bartman FAAR’83 has received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities for 2005, for a project on ethnic identity and Roman portraiture.

Anna Campbell Bliss FAAR’84 describes her "full calendar this year.” She finished a commission for the Cowsie Mathematics Building at the University of Utah, published Intersections: the Art of a Mann Campbell Bliss and designed a retrospective of forty years’ work for the Utah Museum of Fine Arts (23 May - 3 August 2004). “Best of all,” she writes, “October at the Academy for new work.”

Pamela Starr FAAR’84 writes that she “has just completed a three-year appointment as Book Review Editor of the Journal of the American Musicological Society - hurrah!”

Frederic Schwartz FAAR’85 reports that the Los Angeles offices of Deutch, Inc., designed by Schwartz Architects, were named at NeoCon 2004 by the International Interior Design Association as one of the ten winners of the 2004 Decade of Design Competition,” honoring the top interior design projects of the past decade. Two ongoing projects include “The Rising,” the winning design for the Weschester County September 11th Memorial and “Empty Sky,” the winning design for the New Jersey September 11th Memorial.

FAAR’90s
Materia Prima, an Italian-language short collection of fiction by Mary Caponoge FAAR’92, was recently published in Italy by Leconte Press (2004). In March 2005 she will read at the Embro Live Literature Festival in Rome, as well as at the Centro Studi Americani and at the American Academy.

Thomas Cohen FAAR’92 has published Lost and Douth in Renaissance Italy (University of Chicago Press 2004), which he describes as “a new book of Roman microhistories...a cute, artful collection with gore, passion and intrigue.”

Hsin-Ming Fung FAAR’92 reports that Huddiget + Fung Design Associates received a 2004 Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects, Pasadena & Foothill Chapter, for their Sinclair Pavilion at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. Construction has begun their latest project, the Yamao Tower in Tokyo, a twenty-nine-story mixed-use high-rise building, which includes “parking for 1,000 bikes.”

Ellen Perry BROCKETT FELLOW ’94 announces the publication of her book, The Aesthetics of Architecture (Princeton Architectural Press 2004), which she describes as “a new book of Roman microhistories...a cute, artful collection with gore, passion and intrigue.”

Pamela Keoch FAAR’92 (Vedette at Piperino, 2003) has been awarded the Josephine Roberts Edition Prize for 2004 by the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women (Sixteenth Century Studies).

Legends of the Indies: Five E Pic Lc Lc Tales from the Indies V alley, an illustrated book of folk stories by Samina Quraeshi FAAR’98, has been published in December 2004. An exhibition of her prints was held at the Pakistan High Commission in London on December 8 - 10, 2004. Previously, she exhibited a series of hand-printed artist’s books at Volume Gallery in New York, in March 2004.

David Stone FAAR’98 wrote an essay and entries (with K. Sierba) for the Naples exhibition catalogue on late Caravaggio, Caravaggio: l’inizio tempo (1606-1610), (Museo di Capodimonte), and he gave a paper at the International Caravaggio Convogno (Naples, December 17-18, 2004). Earlier in June 2004, he presented a “Caravaggio’s Self-Portraiture” at the Malta venue of “Caravaggio: La Mostra Impossible,” a virtual exhibition produced by the Italian state radio and television network, RAI, comprising digital, actual-size transparencies of sixty-eight of...
Caravaggio’s paintings. For the show, “Caravaggio: The Final Years,” at the National Gallery, London (February 22 - May 21, 2005), he created a site-specific installation and a symposium (March 16 - 19). The Caravaggio Foundation of Malta has appointed him to the Editorial Board of caravaggio.com, a scholarly website devoted to the artist and his contemporaries.

FAAR’00s
Carolyn Yarnell FAAR’00 received a Guggenheim Fellowship in Music Composition for 2004-05. An enhanced recording of The Same Sky, an extended composition for solo piano, computer and visuals, which, as she notes, was completed and premiered in Rome in 2000, has been included on an expanded recording of The Complete Piano Music of Vincent Katz. The Complete Piano Music of Vincent Katz was released by the Glimmer Train Press in 2004. She also was named a finalist for the Otto Kinkeldey Prize, an annual award for an outstanding work of musicological scholarship, presented by American Musicological Society.

William Fein, Jr. FAAR’02 won a 2004 American Institute of Architects Honor Award for his Mission Bay Redevelopment Plan of the San Francisco Bayfront area. He recently published a new book, Figure G: mond: A D eign Conversation with Scott Johnson and Bill Fain (Balcony Press 2004), which he describes as “a discussion about architecture and cities with his firm’s partner, Scott Johnson.”

The most recent publication of Vincent Katz FAAR’02 is a work of translation, The Complete Opera and Woman’s Visions in Seventeenth-Century V axx (University of California Press 2003) by Wendy Heller FAAR’01 was awarded the 2004 Book Prize by the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women. It also was named a finalist for the Otto Kinkeldey Prize, an annual award for an outstanding work of musicological scholarship, presented by American Musicological Society.

Giorgio Morandi: The Art of Silence (Yale University Press 2005) has just been published by Janet Abramowicz, Visiting Artist and Scholar ’04, Morandi’s former teaching assistant. This book is the first and only study in English to cover Morandi’s career in its entirety as well as the sociopolitical and cultural background of his times, including the artist’s relationship to Fascist politics and its patrons.

The sculpture “Epitaph of St. Anthony,” by Paul Kubic FAAR’75, is featured in the exhibition, “Het Kwaad - All About Evil,” at the Tropenmuseum and Tropentheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 18 December 2004 - 12 September 2005. The work was made in his studio at the American Academy in Rome during his Fellowship year.

FAAR’01s

Harry Davis FAAR’81 showed Indiana Landmarks paintings in the exhibit “Hoolsie People and Places: Works by Harry and Lois Davis,” at the Bowne Thompson Memorial Center, Indianapolis, for the 2004 Spirit and Place Festival in November. Plans currently are underway for a two-artist exhibition of fifty works at the Honeywell Memorial Center in Wabash, Indiana, in August 2005.

FAAR’40s
The sculpture “Temptation of St. Anthony,” by Paul Kubic FAAR’75, is featured in the exhibition, “Het Kwaad - All About Evil,” at the Tropenmuseum and Tropentheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 18 December 2004 - 12 September 2005. The work was made in his studio at the American Academy in Rome during his Fellowship year.

FAAR’80s
The fifteenth birthday of Stephen Jaffe FAAR’85 was celebrated in sound on March 26, 2005 by the Civic Symphony Orchestra of Durham NC 27701 (please include “Jaffe concert” in the memo line).

FAAR’79s
The world premiere of “The Penobscot River” by Thomas Oboe Lee FAAR’87 was presented by the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, in Bangor, Maine on October 23, 2004. His Symphony No. 5, “Utopian Parkway” (2003) was premiered by the Civic Symphony Orchestra of Boston at Jordan Hall, the New England Conservatory in Boston, on November 21, 2004.

Exhibitions and Performances
Edited by Joanne Spurza FAAR’89

The world premieres of Symphony No. 6, “The Penobscot River” by Thomas Oboe Lee FAAR’87 was presented by the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, in Bangor, Maine on October 23, 2004. His Symphony No. 5, “Utopian Parkway” (2003) was premiered by the Civic Symphony Orchestra of Boston at Jordan Hall, the New England Conservatory in Boston, on November 21, 2004.

Gordon Powell FAAR’83 has had a sculpture installation at the Racine Art Museum of Racine, Wisconsin. He is featured in a Focus article, “Gordon Powell - Born to Build,” in the March 2005 issue of Sculpture magazine.

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An exhibition of paintings by Earl Staley FAAR’82, including pictures of Rome, is on view at Harris Gallery, Houston, April 2 - 30, 2005.

Jesse Reiser FAAR’83 reports that his firm, Reiser + Umemoto, was among the offices to represent the United States in the American Pavilion at the Ninth A rchitettura Biennale di V enice 2014 (September 5 to November 7, 2004).
Other News
Edited by Joanne Spurza FAAR'89

FAAR'60s

Ezra Laderman FAAR'64, RAAR'83 received a doctorate from SUNY Binghamton in 2004.

FAAR'70s

James Turner FAAR'76 and his wife, Mertiget, visited their beloved Jordan over the holidays to a rousing welcome. As he explains, in 1989-81 as a Fulbrighter at the University of Jordan in Amman, he stopped a crew of workmen from cutting down ancient trees on the campus by exhorting to throwing stones and screaming in this Arabic is poor. The University President, later Prime Minister Abul Salem Majali, decreed no further cutting of trees. Unknown to the Turners, a legend ensued, and this time in Jordan, they were wined and dined among all the Jordanians' rows and groves of new trees.

Judith DiMaio FAAR'78 reports of travel to northern India with a group of other architects, including Robert S. Davis FAAR'93 and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk RAAR'88 in January 2005. The itinerary of the trip, made in conjunction with a New Urbanists conference, covered Rajasthan, Bombay, Delhi, Agra and Chandigarh.

Donald Peting FAAR'76, as an Emeritus Professor of Architecture and Historical Preservation at the University of Oregon, continues to direct the annual summer program, the Pacific Northwest Preservation Field School as well as teaching in the University's Italy Field School in the Ossola Valley, north of Milan.

FAAR'80s

Steve Ross, Southern Arts Federation Fellowship '97 spent the last few months of 2004 completing principal photography for his documentation on the American painter, Winslow Homer. He took film crews to the Adirondacks; to Gloucester, Massachusetts; to Spotsylvania National Battlefield and to several museums, including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

Pritz Steiner FAAR'90 writes that he and Laurel McSherry FAAR'00 are among the five finalists in a national competition to design a memorial for victims of United Airlines Flight 93, which went down in Western Pennsylvania during the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001.

Alice Boccia Paterakis FAAR'90 writes that she has moved from Athens, Greece to Los Angeles where she is serving as consultant in the conservation of art and antiquities.

Deirdre Winsdor FAAR'91 was a guest lecturer at Harvard University for the Master of Arts in Museum Studies program in January 2005 and at Buffalo State College, State University of New York, Art Conservation Department in February 2005. She is writing a book on Roman women.

FAAR'90s

Pierre Jalbert - Chamber Music has just been released containing the music of Pierre Jalbert FAAR'81; Pierre Jalbert - Chamber Music on Gannaro Records and Nakatu Nakam - Trije Jump - New Original Fans on Helicon Records. His current projects include works for the Houston Symphony and for the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music. He also has been commissioned through Meet the Composer's “Magnum Opus” Project for an orchestral work to be premiered by three California orchestras over the next three seasons.

Pat Diszko FAAR'91, RAAR'83 The Mac-O-We-Colony Laundry - Big Artists, Big Britches, 2000

FAAR'00s

FAAR'01, married Nicholas Adams FAAR'88 in Litchgow, New York.

Blake Middleton FAAR'92 has just completed preliminary designs for a new urban development in Boston that includes the tallest building in the city and public open space, planned in collaboration with landscape architect Richard (‘Skip’) Burr FAAR'92.

Eve D'Ambrè FAAR'06 is a Scholar in Residence at the Academy for Spring 2005. She is writing a book on Roman women.

Frederick Biehle FAAR'87 and Erika Hänichs of Via Architecture PLLC announce the completion of the Conness' loft project and its publication in the April 2005 issue of A rchitectural D igest.

Maria Ann Conelli FAAR'88, RAAR'99 has been appointed the new director of the American Folk Art Museum in Manhattan. She will join the museum in June 2005.

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FAAR'90s

Laurie Nussdorfer
Anthony Hecht FAAR'52, RAAR'89

Anthony Hecht, poet, scholar, and educator, was born on January 16, 1923, in Washington, D.C. He was 81.

Hecht was a student of poetry at Kenyon College with Robert Frost and was strongly influenced by Frost’s poetic style. Hecht's first book, *Selected Poems*, was published in 1959, and his second book, *Saturday Walks with Brett*, won the Bollingen Prize in Poetry in 1963. Hecht also taught at the University of Pennsylvania, among other institutions. He received many public commissions, including the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.; the Harry S. Truman Memorial, Independence, Missouri; and the Hallmark Collection, Kansas City, Missouri, for the Gannett Building. Hecht was a Trustee of American Academy in Rome and a Trustee of the American Academy in Berlin. He was a Trustee of the American Academy in Rome and a Trustee of the American Academy in Berlin.

Hecht was a Trustee of the American Academy in Rome and served on the Board of Overseers of the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts and the School of Fine Arts at Boston University. Following his retirement, he lived and worked in his studio in Wellfleet, Massachusetts (1983-2004).

As a sculptor, Franklin worked in granite, marble, wood, and most notably in bronze. His pieces ranged from the figurative to the abstract, but retained a connection to the classical traditions of the figurative sculpture that he came to know so well in Rome. He listed Moore, Brancusi, Lipchitz, and Rodin among his major influences.

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In his 1989 catalogue of ancient glass at Toledo, Grose gave an overview of glass produced in the Mediterranean region and western Asia from 1600 B.C. to A.D. 50. Each of the book’s seven sections begins with a survey of glassmaking during the period in question, and these surveys form a comprehensive account of early glassmaking. Sixteen years later, they are still one of the best introductions to the subject.

Grose’s research on early glass began with a study of more than 15,000 fragments excavated at Cosa. This experience was the foundation of David’s formidable knowledge of Roman glass, which he displayed in several notable publications. One of these, “Cosa Group,” led to a larger survey of glass excavated at Tel Anafa in Upper Galilee.

Two major reports on the glass from excavations at Cosa and Morgantina will appear posthumously. Together with his Toledo catalogue, Tel Anafa, and other publications, they will form a lasting monument to this distinguished scholar.

In Praise of Ironing

Poetry is pure white.
It emerges from water covered with drops, is wrinkled, all in a heap.

It has to be ironed out, the sea’s whiteness; and the hands keep moving, moving, moving, the holy surfaces are smoothed out, and that is how things are accomplished.

Every day, hands are creating the world, fire is married to steel, and canvas, linen, and cotton come back from the skirmishings of the laundries, and out of light a dove is born – pure innocence returns out of the swirl.

Pablo Neruda
translated by Alastair Reid

Dr. David Grose, Professor of Classics and Archaeology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and an authority on ancient glass, died October 13, 2004. Grose was born in Fairbault, Minnesota, in 1915 and grew up there. His mother was a writer and his father a lawyer. He began his career with a survey of glassmaking during the period in question, and these surveys form a comprehensive account of early glassmaking. Sixteen years later, they are still one of the best introductions to the subject.

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Pablo Neruda
translated by Alastair Reid
RECENT WORK

Paul Lewis, Lewis.Tsutomu.Lewis Architects, PLLC
Felt Wall at Fluff Bakery, New York City
2004
Image courtesy of LTL Architects, PLLC    Photo by Michael Moran ©2004

With Fluff, we wanted horizontal seduction - the architectural equivalent of the image of the jump into hyperspace. But, what if this seductive effect could be made from an excessive number of strips of dumb materials (felt and plywood)? We prefer ordinary things used in exotic ways rather than exotic things used in ordinary ways, and enjoy the paradox of lush architectural surfaces built out of banal things.

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For those who wish to make a bequest to the Academy, the following language is suggested:

I give [the sum of _________ dollars or euros],
[all or __ percent of the residuary of my estate],
to the American Academy in Rome,
7 East 60 Street, New York, New York, 10022-1001,
for [its general purposes] or
[the Library, Fellowship Fund, Sustainability of the Buildings and Gardens, etc.]

The bequest may be funded with cash, bonds or marketable securities.
The Academy is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt entity 501 (c)(3).
Contributions are tax-deductible. For more information, please contact e.g.kogen@aarome.org or 212-751-7200 x 27

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Laundry Room, American Academy in Rome
McKim, Mead & White Building
1967

Photo by Fobemayer, courtesy of the American Academy in Rome Archives, New York