

TABLEAU



THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | FALL 2016

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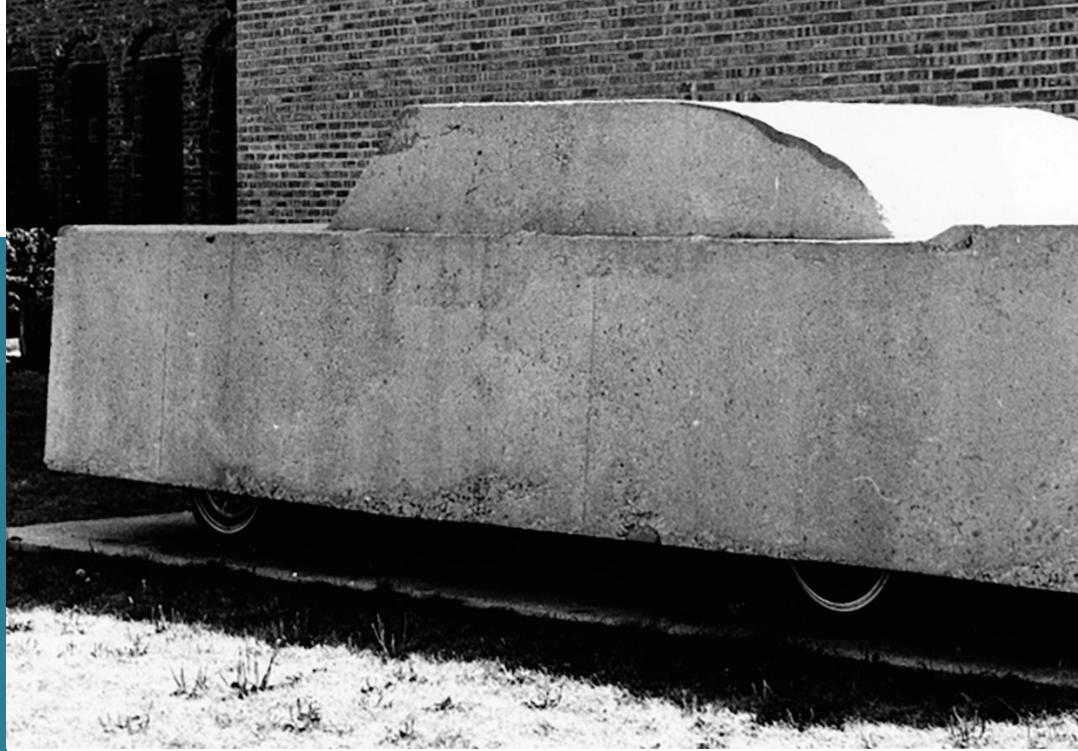
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ON THE COVER

Buzz Spector, MFA'78, has spent much of his artistic career combining images and words, sometimes with postcards, as in this 1999 collage, *Romance*, but more often with books. For more on his art and how the University fostered it, see page 6. Ink and watercolor on postcards on paper, 16 x 10 inches. Courtesy the artist and Bruno David Gallery.



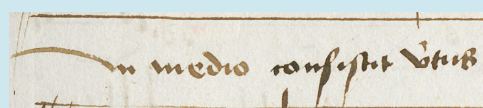


After a four-year conservation effort, Wolf Vostell's Concrete Traffic returns to campus this fall. The University will celebrate with a series of free exhibitions and public programs. For more information, visit arts.uchicago.edu/concrete-happenings.

TOP: COPYRIGHT 2016. THE CHICAGO MAROON. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION. MIDDLE: DAVID KATZNE, VIEW OF WOLF VOSTELL'S CONCRETE TRAFFIC AS IT MOVES DOWN I-90 TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, JUNE 1970. COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO. PHOTO © MCA CHICAGO. BOTTOM: DAVID KATZNE, INSTALLATION VIEW OF WOLF VOSTELL'S CONCRETE TRAFFIC, JANUARY 1970. COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO. PHOTO © MCA CHICAGO. RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ZICH

Dear Alumni and Friends,

"Virtue stands in the middle." I paused when I found this inscription in a fifteenth-century sacred musical composition by Flemish composer Jacob Obrecht. What was this phrase doing there?



I knew that the saying was paraphrased from Aristotle. But how did a line from pagan antiquity—"in medio consistit virtus," as it reads in Latin in Obrecht's mass—find its way into the Gloria and Credo of this composer's masterpiece? I puzzled over this question for some time. Was it the "performance of virtue" that Shadi Bartsch-Zimmer (Classics) writes about in her insightful *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire*? Was it a harbinger of Napoleon's struggle with the conflicting values of virtue and self-interest, as lucidly described by Robert Morrissey (Romance Languages and Literatures) in *The Economy of Glory: From Ancien Régime France to the Fall of Napoleon*?

In the end, the answer emerged in part because of something that our late colleague Michael Camille wrote in his seminal study of the margins of manuscripts in *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*. In the Middle Ages, people read books by studying both the main text on the page and the commentary that appeared in smaller letters around the edges. "Virtue stands in the middle" is one of

these glosses: an explanation of a line of Boethius's timeless *The Consolation of Philosophy*. It means that a virtuous person should stand her ground—in the exact middle, in fact—between the opposites of adversity and prosperity, and should resist being drawn, through lack of moderation, to either extreme. Here was an explanation that spoke to the theological context of Obrecht's mass.

As you can see, I have learned a great deal from my colleagues in the Division of the Humanities in three decades as a member of the Department of Music, and I am deeply honored now to serve as interim dean for 2016–17. My goal for the Division this year is to help every member of the faculty produce the most innovative research and teach our students in inspiring ways. These are the things that we do best: promote new ideas and encourage the next generation of scholars.

Let me close by thanking Martha Roth. For nine years Martha guided our Division as dean and has more than earned her return to scholarship and teaching. Martha's skill and vision leave us positioned for further success, and it is my privilege to continue this Division's legacy as a worldwide hub of humanistic thought and inquiry.

Anne W. Robertson

Anne Walters Robertson
Interim Dean, Division of the Humanities
Claire Dux Swift Distinguished Service Professor,
Department of Music



Anne Walters Robertson



SOCIAL LADDER

BY CARRIE GOLUS, AB'91, AM'93

Two MAPH alumni build careers in social media marketing.

Nine out of ten companies actively use social media for marketing.

That means a lot of people getting paid to spend their days on

Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, et al. *Tableau* spoke with two MAPH alumni who have found jobs in an industry that didn't exist a decade ago.

Sabrina Medora, AM'14, works as manager of social media marketing at the Chicago advertising agency Tom, Dick & Harry Creative—having used her half-finished thesis on feminism and Twitter to get the job.

Tell me more about this thesis.

I've always been interested in how linguistics work online. For my thesis I wrote about *The Bachelor*, when Juan Pablo was the bachelor [in 2014]. This guy was the epitome of all that is bad for women. One of the contestants had sex with him, and for the rest of the episode he was berating her for being easy.

Twitter exploded. Half of Twitter was angered like I was. But a significant number of other women were slut shaming this contestant. It spawned a whole new level of feminist conversation.

So the first half of my thesis was the summary of my findings—where I thought language was going on Twitter in terms of feminism. Part two was about how I used this as a tool to get a job.

And how did you manage that?

A social media manager isn't just someone who's on social media all the time. That's not what makes an expert. What you need is someone with the ability to tell a story. You have to understand how language works on the mind and how people interact.

I told them all about my immersive study of all of these things in Twitter. I leveraged my classes in lit and sociology. I said, with all of these skills combined, you're getting someone who can tell a brand story to the right people at the right time.

What is your day-to-day work like?

I act as a community manager for the agency itself, which means I create content, I run the social media meetings, I do analytics.

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL HERTZBERG

What you need is someone
with the ability to tell a story.
—Sabrina Medora, AM'14



Sabrina Medora

The second and slightly more robust area is I act as a strategist for our clients' social media. Now we're executing full-blown integrated campaigns. I work with our creative team, advise them on best practices, and do estimates and timelines. If we're doing a pitch to a potential client, I figure out how the campaign we're proposing can work on digital and social media.

Any advice for humanities grads who want to work in social media?

Humanities is one of the best tools you can have in your pocket, because you have those tremendous communications skills. You have a better understanding of how to read a room than anybody else will. You have the ability to dissect text in a whole different way.

Use that to your advantage. Those aren't just classes that you had to pass. Those are tools you can arm yourself with for the rest of your life.



Alfredo Lopez

Alfredo Lopez, AM'10, has the job title "marketing magician" at Camino Financial, a small business lender in Glendale, California, with a particular focus on Latino-owned businesses. Previously he worked as a marketing consultant and cofounded the start-up Social Chrome.

How did you break into marketing?

I got a job in sales. And as it turned out, I was really, really good at sales. I just had a talent for it.

The job was selling social media marketing services for small businesses. So I wasn't doing any creative work with social media; I was only selling it. But you have to educate yourself on your product. Eventually I started my own marketing firm, Social Chrome, in Los Angeles.

Was it focused on social media?

Social media marketing for small businesses. At the time [2010] social media was a novel concept for a lot of small business owners. Even if they

understood the importance of it, they weren't skilled at using it.

The company didn't survive, largely for personal reasons. There were three founders, and the other two dropped out.

Your current job at Camino Financial is also centered on small businesses.

When I sat down with the cofounders [twin brothers Sean and Kenny Salas], who are Harvard Business School grads, we really hit it off. I remember saying to them, if you're looking to target small business owners, I have personally spoken to thousands of them across the country.

Camino Financial is a venture-backed start-up. Less than 1 percent of all venture-backed start-ups are Latino owned. We wear that with some pride but a degree of responsibility too.

There's nothing exclusively Latino about what we do. We can work with any small business. But Hispanic-owned businesses are traditionally underserved and underbanked. So there's an opportunity.

What is your day-to-day work life like?

It's not like working a corporate job where roles are very clearly defined. I've done sales, marketing, PR. I've done things that I've never done before. For example, I was able to get them [the Salas brothers] on CNN, NBC, and other media networks.

Any advice for other humanities grads?

Get a sales job. You'll learn to deal with a lot of rejection, no matter how good a salesperson you are. You get a real sense of your strengths and weaknesses.

The other thing is, think about what kind of organization you want to work for. You can go do marketing anywhere. So find a company where you will feel some level of fulfillment. ■

FOLLOW SABRINA MEDORA'S CREATIVE PURSUITS at tableau.uchicago.edu/medora.



TWO PERSPECTIVES ON GHOSTS

AS TOLD TO MAUREEN SEARCY

From antiquity to modern times, ghosts have served as cultural metaphors, storytelling devices, and figures in religious or afterlife beliefs. Faculty members **Judith Zeitlin** and **Patrick Crowley** explore the role of ghosts within their particular disciplines.

In Chinese literature, ghosts often represented people who died “bad deaths” and had to come back from the afterlife to set matters straight, as in this detail from a late Yuan dynasty (14th century) mural.



Judith Zeitlin is the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor in East Asian Languages and Civilizations and the Committee on Theater and Performance Studies. Her teaching and research interests include Ming-Qing literary, visual, and cultural history, with specialties in drama, music, and the classical tale. A paperback version of her second book, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature*, is forthcoming in December with a Chinese translation in 2017.



Patrick R. Crowley is an assistant professor in Art History and specializes in the art and archaeology of the Roman world. His research interests include ancient optics, aesthetics, and phenomenological approaches to the matter of visual evidence. He is working on “The Phantom Image: Visuality and the Supernatural in Ancient Rome,” the first major historical study of ghosts in the art and visual culture of classical antiquity.

People ask if I’ve ever had a ghost encounter and then proceed to tell me about theirs. But I don’t believe in ghosts—I haven’t an occult bone in my body. My interest began with literature.

I wrote my first book on a Chinese collection of tales from the seventeenth century called *Liaozhai’s Record of the Strange*. I was interested in a broader understanding of what the author meant by “the strange,” which wasn’t limited to the supernatural. *The Phantom Heroine* ended up being about the ghosts that I had exorcised from the first book.

What fascinated me was the Chinese emphasis on female ghosts. In many traditions, ghosts aren’t gendered. Our image of a ghost as sort of a floating sheet is a perfect example of our obliteration of human characteristics. But during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, there was a veneration of love with great literature extolling the virtues of love, the power of love. What is love? Love is not love unless it can bring the dead back to life.

So many of these ghost stories and plays are about love and sex. My book focuses on stories involving a living man having sex with a female ghost, bringing her back to life, though sometimes the act would kill the man rather than resurrect the woman. In fact, in a few cases these female ghosts could even bear living children.

One distinction between our conception of ghost lore and that of seventeenth-century China is the intention of the ghost’s return. It’s not as much about vengeance as righting an injustice or fixing a perceived problem—such as rectifying an improper burial or a “bad death.”

A bad death—murder, execution, suicide—can prompt a ghost’s return. If a woman dies unmarried, that too is considered a bad death. She is an anomaly in much the same way ghosts are anomalies—spirits are not supposed to return in the normal course of things. In the Chinese patrilineal, patrilocal system, women belonged to other people’s families, in a sense; they married out of their natal family, entered new marital families as strangers, and rarely took the surname of the new family. If a woman died unmarried, she would have no one to perform her posthumous worship.

However, in Chinese literary ghost tradition, there are few stories about ghosts visiting their kin. The great ghost stories and plays are about meeting the ghosts of strangers—about romantic rather than familial love and obligations. Not all ghosts in Chinese literature are female, but women were more likely, based on Chinese family structures, to meet the criteria for returning after death. ■

I first became interested in the depiction of ghosts not through ancient studies but from an exhibition about ten years ago at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that explored the links between spiritualism and occult photography in the nineteenth century.

When I turned to my own field, I noticed that the vast majority of examples, most of them in funerary art, appeared around the second century CE, which coincides with a period the ancients called the Second Sophistic—a time when the fascination with Greek myth, philosophy, religion, and art played a crucial role in the shaping of an emergent historical self-consciousness in the Roman Empire.

Ghosts had special knowledge and could serve as a channel through which the past speaks in the present. A hero barely mentioned in the *Iliad*, for example, could come back to haunt the living and recount all sorts of events in the Trojan War that Homer “missed.”

Today we often speak of a “belief in ghosts.” But for the Romans, as for antiquity in general, belief was inferior to knowledge. It was more important at this time to have knowledge about ghosts than to simply believe one way or the other in their existence.

You therefore have learned men writing letters to their friends asking whether they think that ghosts exist or are simply the products of our imagination? But it’s more than simply wondering—they were looking for evidence, whether that evidence was based on hearsay or even higher standards of proof.

Visual evidence was paramount in this regard. Did you see something with your own eyes? And if so, how do you know that you can trust them?

For the ancients, the same words were used for ghost and image, whether pictorial, mental, or perceptual in nature. This raises the question: What is an image?

For the ancients, then, an image of a ghost is an image of an image. And it is precisely this redundancy—the way images of ghosts show us something about both what an image is and what a ghost is—that makes them look rather different from our modern ghosts.

For rather than depicting ghosts as luminous and semitransparent phenomena as we find in the gothic imagination of the romantics or the spirit photographs of the nineteenth century, the ancients insisted on their superficial, if elusive, solidity. ■

LEARN MORE ABOUT CHINESE GHOSTS at tableau.uchicago.edu/ghosts.

BY THE BOOK

BY JEANIE CHUNG

Buzz Spector, MFA'78, reflects on a life of art and words.

Buzz Spector drew inspiration for Malevich: with eight red rectangles, on exhibit at St. Louis's Bruno David gallery in 2012, from Russian artist Kazimir Malevich. The eight red books on the floor are the same length and width—but not the same thickness—as the eight recessed shapes on the wall, patterned after Malevich's painting Eight Red Rectangles.



While at UChicago, Spector had an idea for a book with page edges receding to look like ocean waves. To show the bookbinder what he wanted, Spector tore pages of a book and “became completely enthralled by the accident emerging from the increasing numbers of torn edges of pages, in which a letter in a word on one page was uncannily sequenced by an apparently readable letter in another word on another page. That torn book was the first of, I guess, now several hundred,” including *Effaced Nabokov* (2014).

A tour of **Buzz Spector**’s St. Louis studio necessarily includes a tour of his bookshelves.

“Here’s the poetry. The critical theory,” he says, pointing to different sections. “My favorite books don’t just include artists’ books and monographs.”

Spector, MFA’78, is fascinated by books as both subject and object. His art—featuring volumes he has made, built with, and altered—has been exhibited at galleries around the world, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Centro per l’Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci in Prato, Italy.

He grew up surrounded by books and went to college at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale with an eye toward a career in creative writing. When “a D in poetry convinced me that maybe English wasn’t my thing,” Spector says, his creative impulses drew him toward visual art. He chose the University of Chicago’s visual arts program—then known as the Committee on Art and Design (see page 9)—in part because he could take any kind of academic course, anywhere in the University.

“I wanted to immerse myself in philosophy as well as studio practice,” says Spector, who’s taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Cornell, and now at the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis. He drew inspiration from assistant professor of art history Richard Shiff, an insomniac who often dropped by Midway Studios in the middle of the night, when Spector was working, to “cri-

tique my work as I was making it.” He also talked ideas, philosophy, and literature with his neighbors in an apartment building south of the Midway:

Brent Staples, AM’76, PhD’82, now a *New York Times* editorial writer, and **David Shields**, AM’75, PhD’82, an English professor at the University of South Carolina. Along with **Reagan Upshaw**, AM’76, and Upshaw’s wife, Roberta, he started *WhiteWalls*, a magazine of writings by artists.

“The basis of my entire career as an artist and writer was established in those years in Hyde Park,” Spector says. After finishing his MFA, Spector spent three years editing publications at the University’s Graduate School of Business, now Chicago Booth. The job not only afforded him an employee discount to print *WhiteWalls* but it also led to a career break.

As a grad student, Spector had written a paper for Shiff’s contemporary art history seminar on the relationship between minimal art and corporate graphic design. Shiff showed the paper to Renaissance Society curator Suzanne Ghez, suggesting that Spector organize and curate an exhibit on the topic.

To prepare for the exhibit, Spector picked the brains of business school professors, who explained how changes in the legislation covering business expansion across industry categories helped contribute to the international style of graphic design: as companies diversified and acquired new, often disparate, divisions, they needed an all-encompassing visual image. “I could not have gotten those insights in the art world,” Spector

The basis of my entire career as an artist and writer
was established in those years in Hyde Park.

—Buzz Spector, MFA'78



In Writ Large, photos from Spector's vast collection of author photos clipped from book jackets populate an island of books. The authors, however, don't match the books.

says, “where it was a completely unacknowledged, invisible relationship.” The exhibit, *Objects and Logotypes: Relationships between Minimal Art and Corporate Design*, ran in early 1980. A quarter century later, *Art in America* called it “a prescient model for understanding the complex, often shifting relationship between art and corporate culture.”

In the studio, meanwhile, Spector was drawing and making wall-mounted shallow-relief sculptures by gluing the edges of strips of paper directly to the wall or onto backings, so the stiff paper would project into space. Using lighting angles and black paper, Spector found “a kind of perceptual interest” in playing with shadows, sometimes to the point where a viewer could barely differentiate shadow from solid.

But “what wasn’t in that work for me,” he says, “was an engagement with language.” After all, the great attraction to UChicago was what he calls its “intellectual-critical” emphasis.

So he changed focus—first to books that had been annotated by readers. For a while, he haunted Hyde Park’s Powell’s and O’Gara and Wilson’s

bookstores, “looking for densely overwritten books.” But other artists were doing similar work, and Spector eventually shifted to changing the form or function of a book while keeping its essence as a book.

For example, in one of his latest works, *Writ Large* (pictured above), exhibited at Milwaukee’s Ski Club gallery this past April, he plays with the idea of choosing what books someone might take to a desert island, by making an actual island out of books.

Spector has also taken an increasing interest in creating the words that fill the books. While he has written about art since his *WhiteWalls* days, he’s added more writing to his schedule, “warming up” for a book of essays: some new, some previously published—and not all about art.

In pursuing his interests wherever they lead him, Spector uses the same approach he takes with his students. “We’ll often have long conversations about unrelated matters,” he says, “at least as the young artist construes it. I’m trying to get my bearings about where there’s an extra enthrallment, an absorption, in the practice.” ■

DISCOVER SOME OF BUZZ SPECTOR’S FAVORITE BOOKS at tableau.uchicago.edu/spector.

PRESENT AND PAST

A brief history of the Department of Visual Arts.

The practice of visual arts began to play a larger role at the University of Chicago in the mid-'40s, when the University acquired Midway Studios from sculptor **Lorado Taft**. At that time both studio and art history classes were incorporated under the Department of Art.

Taft briefly served on the studio faculty, which over the years grew to include notable artists such as **Ruth Duckworth** and **Virginio Ferrari**. Meanwhile, the art history faculty was based in Goodspeed Hall, moving to the then-new Cochrane-Woods Art Center in 1974.

Like art departments everywhere at the time, UChicago's department had no special emphasis on contemporary art. The faculty was accustomed to reviewing dissertations, not MFA student work, and for both sets of faculty it was difficult to compare MFA to PhD candidates when it came to student funding. "I don't remember it as being extremely tense or anything like that," says **Charles Cohen**, the Mary L. Block Professor of Art History and an expert in the art of the Italian Renaissance, who arrived at UChicago in 1970. "It's just it was apples and oranges."

To separate the apples from the oranges, in 1975 a committee chaired by faculty from across the Division of the Humanities recommended that the studio faculty form a "semi-autonomous subsection" of the art department, to be known as the Committee on Art and Design (CAD).

Created, Cohen says, to be "forward looking and interdisciplinary," CAD featured studio faculty as well as more traditionally academic faculty, including Cohen as well as anthropologists and philosophers. These faculty members, and the



UChicago artists, including Buzz Spector, worked out of Midway Studios until the Department of Visual Arts moved to the Logan Center in 2012.

committee's requirement that students take courses outside the studio, were "intended to give a kind of support and clarity to the activity of the studio," says Cohen, who chaired both the department and the committee from 1976 to 1982 and 1986 to 1989.

In 1996, the beginning of Cohen's third term, CAD became the Committee on Visual Arts (CoVA) and the Department of Art officially became the Department of Art History. Ten years later visual arts became its own full-fledged department: the Department of Visual Arts (DoVA). Over the next six years **Laura Letinsky**—the most senior appointment in DoVA—with the help of **Elizabeth Helsinger**, the John Matthews Manly Distinguished Service Professor Emerita in the Depart-

ments of English Language and Literature, Art History, and Visual Arts, and DoVA chair from 2009 to 2011, worked to build the faculty in DoVA, and the department began to attract notice.

The Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, which opened in 2012, was the first successful effort in more than 80 years to build a dedicated multidisciplinary arts building on campus. The center was an added attraction for faculty hires, including artist **William Pope.L** and DoVA chair **Jessica Stockholder**, who came from Yale in 2011 to join what she termed a university community "full of conversation and energy." ■

—J. C.; additional research by Julie Mebane, AM'14, and Martin Schwarz

NEW FACULTY FALL 2016

COURTNEY C. W. GUERRA, AB'05

Emily P. Austin, Assistant Professor in Classics, studies Homer's portrayals of emotion. Her book project, "Grief, Anger, and the Iliadic Hero," traces terms associated with Achilles to reconsider his place within the larger narrative of the *Iliad*; a version of this analysis was published in the *New England Classical Journal* in 2015. After her BA at the University of Dallas, she received her PhD in classical studies from Boston University, where she held several graduate fellowships and was awarded two prizes for distinguished student scholarship from the BU Center for the Humanities.

Ethnomusicologist **Jessica Swanston Baker** joins the University as Assistant Professor in Music after a postdoctoral fellowship at Rutgers. She received her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Bucknell University. Her dissertation, "Too Fast: Coloniality and Time in Wylers of St. Kitts and Nevis," examines a genre of Caribbean music known for its rapid tempo and explores the social implications of its performances. She contributed two entries to Oxford University Press's *Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Biography* (2016), and her most recent article is "Black Like Me: Caribbean Tourism and the St. Kitts Music Festival" (*Ethnomusicology*, 2016).

Professor in Philosophy **Matthew Boyle** specializes in the philosophy of mind and the work of Immanuel Kant. He was previously a professor at Harvard, and he holds a BPhil from Oxford as well as a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh. He has held visiting appointments at the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought, Universität Leipzig, and Universität Basel, and has received research fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and the American Council of Learned Societies. His first book, *The Significance of Self-Consciousness*, is under contract with Oxford University Press.

Allyson Nadia Field joined Cinema and Media Studies as Associate Professor in January 2016; her previous faculty position was at UCLA. A scholar of African American cinema, she studies how moving-image media influence and are shaped by social perceptions of race and ethnicity. Her first book is *Uplift Cinema: The Emergence of African American Film and the Possibility of Black Modernity* (2015). She also coedited *L.A. Rebellion: Creating a New Black Cinema* (2015) with UChicago's **Jacqueline Stewart**, AM'93, PhD'99, and UCLA's Jan-Christopher Horak. After receiving an MA from Universiteit van Amsterdam, she completed her PhD at Harvard,



where she held fellowships at the W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Matthias Haase, Assistant Professor in Philosophy, specializes in ethics, history of ethics, German idealism, and philosophy of action and mind. In addition to his previous appointments—on the faculty of Universität Leipzig and Universität Basel, with a visiting fellowship at Harvard between them—he has also collaborated with his UChicago colleagues, participating in the Wittgenstein Workshop and **Candace Vogler's** project *Virtue, Happiness, and the Meaning of Life*. His graduate studies were conducted at Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and finally Universität Potsdam, and he spent several years at the University of Pittsburgh as a visiting scholar before completing his doctorate.

Assistant Professor in Music **Jennifer Iverson** was previously a fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center and a faculty member at the University of Iowa, where she received a fellowship from the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies. Her book project "Electronic Inspirations: The WDR Studio and Musical Thought at Mid-Century" explores the electronic music produced in 1950s West Germany. Other research interests include disability



Catherine Kearns, Matthew Boyle, Allyson Nadia Field, Jennifer Iverson, and Jessica Swanston Baker are among the nine new faculty members in the Division of the Humanities this year.

studies and their relationship to music composition and performance. Her PhD, in music theory, is from the University of Texas at Austin; she also holds an MM in piano performance and pedagogy from the University of Northern Iowa and a BS from the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse.

Archaeologist **Catherine Kearns**, Assistant Professor in Classics, investigates the Mediterranean world of the first millennium BCE. She is working on her first monograph, “Unruly Landscapes: Society and Environment on Ancient Cyprus,” on the island’s social and political developments and landscape changes, drawing on fieldwork supported by grants from the Fulbright Commission and American Schools of Oriental Research. She comes to UChicago after an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at Stanford; she received her PhD from Cornell University, her MA from the University of Arizona, and her BA from George Washington University.

Assistant Professor in Philosophy **Thomas Pashby** specializes in the philosophy of physics and of science as well as metaphysics. Following a master’s in physics and philosophy from the University of Bristol in the UK, he completed his PhD in history and philosophy of science at the University of Pittsburgh with a dissertation titled “Time and the Foundations of

Quantum Mechanics.” His scholarship concerns the interpretation of quantum mechanics and relativity theory, particularly with respect to our understanding of time. He was previously a provost’s postdoctoral scholar at the University of Southern California and a visitor at Ludwig-Maximilians Universität and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Before beginning his PhD, he worked as a designer of automotive sensors for a British electronics company.

Sam Pluta, Assistant Professor in Music, is a composer and improvisational musician. As a composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music, he has written works for many of the leading new music ensembles in the country. In addition to his creative pieces, he has studied the technologies of computer-aided music performance, culminating in his dissertation, “Laptop Improvisation in a Multi-Dimensional Space.” He has a DMA from Columbia University, master’s degrees from the University of Birmingham in the UK and the University of Texas at Austin, and a BA from Santa Clara University. A member of numerous performance ensembles, he has toured internationally and held several artist residencies. His commissioned pieces have been performed widely at prominent music festivals. ■

READ MORE ABOUT THESE SCHOLARS’ RESEARCH AND EXPANDED BIOS at tableau.uchicago.edu/newfaculty2016.

HUMANISTIC JOURNEYS

BY SEAN CARR, AB'90

Through Lindsay Fellowships, students explore premodern China and Renaissance Italy.

"I wanted a course of study that involved multiple cultures, multiple languages," says **Nora Lambert**, who entered Mount Holyoke College intending to major in international relations. But two art history classes in her second semester and a job at the college's art museum helped change her direction.

Meng Zhao was studying Chinese literature at Fudan University in Shanghai when a professor suggested she take a closer look at the pictures that accompanied a poem she was writing about. "Before I realized it," she says, "I started spending more time looking at paintings."

Now in their second year as graduate students in UChicago's Department of Art History, Lambert and Zhao are the first two students to pursue their doctorates with the help of the Lindsay Graduate Fellowship Fund in the Division of the Humanities. Established last year through a gift from **Bruce C. Lindsay**, MBA'65, and **Suzanne Glover Lindsay**, the fellowships provide a stipend and research funds for students in their first five years of graduate study, as well as dissertation-completion support for a sixth-year student.

Lambert's interest in languages and cultures comes into play in her study of Italian Renaissance art, with a special interest in Italy's interactions with Islamic cultures. She has written about the crusade imagery in the frescoes of the Piccolomini Library in Siena, Italy, commissioned to honor Pope Pius II. Part of what drew her to UChicago is the guidance and resources the program provides to students like her, who "really need a lot of languages." With Italian and French already in her tool kit, she's currently adding Arabic and "maybe another Middle Eastern language."

Zhao, meanwhile, focuses on the development of imagery in pre-modern Chinese art. She is particularly interested in the self-consciousness—an "awareness of the fictitiousness of representation," as Zhao puts it—shown by the act of looking portrayed in many works of Southern Song (1127–1279) court painting. What struck her, she says, was "the fact that someone, most likely the imperial patron, would enjoy seeing himself enjoying the landscape by commissioning paintings depicting himself gazing at the landscape." An early version of the selfie, perhaps.

Nora Lambert and Meng Zhao (not pictured) found art history as a means to examine languages, cultures, and ideas.



An additional benefit of the Lindsay Fellowships, she says, is that she and Lambert can talk shop with their benefactor: Suzanne Glover Lindsay is an art historian at the University of Pennsylvania and a former curator at the National Gallery of Art.

"It is not very often that people can have a serious discussion with their donors about the research they are currently working on," Zhao says. "This kind of interaction and emotional support really means a lot to me."

"Having a benefactor immersed in the profession," Lambert adds, "is profoundly motivating." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNE RYAN

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE LINDSAY FELLOWSHIPS at campaign.uchicago.edu/lindsay.

EXCERPT: *DRAGONFISH*

BY VU TRAN

“It was the sound of us
leaving everything behind.”

Vu Tran, assistant professor of practice in the arts in the Department of English Language and Literature and the Committee on Creative Writing, published his debut novel in August 2015. A noir hybrid of crime thriller and immigrant story, *Dragonfish* tells the story of police officer Robert, his ex-wife Suzy, and her new husband Sonny. The New York Times named it one of the year's Notable Books and praised it for “its risk taking, for its collapsing of genre, for its elegant language and its mediation of a history that is integral to post-1960s American identity yet often ignored.” *Tableau* is pleased to include an excerpt of the book, which came out in paperback in August 2016.

Our first night at sea, you cried for your father. You buried your face in my lap and clenched a fist to your ear as if to shut out my voice. I reminded you that we had to leave home and he could not make the trip with us. He would catch up with us soon. But you kept shaking your head. I couldn't tell if I was failing to comfort you or if you were already, at four years old, refusing to believe in lies. You turned away from me, so alone in your distress that I no longer wanted to console you. I had never been able to anyway. Only he could soothe you. But why was I, even now, not enough? Did you imagine that I too would die without him?

Eventually you drifted off to sleep along with everyone around us. People were lying side by side, draped across each other's legs, sitting and leaning against what they could. In the next nine days, there would be thirst and hunger, sickness,

death. But that first night we had at last made it out to sea, all ninety of us, and as our boat bobbed along the waves, everyone slept soundly.

I sat awake just beneath the gunwale with the sea spraying the crown of my head, and I listened to the boat's engine sputtering us toward Malaysia and farther and farther away from home. It was the sound of us leaving everything behind.

The truth was that I too thought only of your father. On the morning we left, I held you in the darkness before dawn and lingered with him as others called for us in the doorway. He kissed your forehead as you slept on my shoulder. Then he looked at me, placed his hand briefly on my arm before passing it over his shaven head. I could see the sickness in his face. The uncertainty too, clouding his always calm demeanor. He had already said good-bye in his

thoughts and did not know now how to say it again in person. I did not want to go, but he had forced me. For her, he said, and looked at you one last time. Then he pushed me out the door.

If you ever read this, you should know that everything I write is necessary to explain what I later did. You are a woman now, and you will understand that I write this not as your mother but as a woman too.

On that first night, as I watched your chest rise and fall with the sea, I wished you away. I prayed to God that I might fall asleep and that when I awoke you would be gone. ■

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