

# TABLEAU

THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | FALL 2012



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ON THE COVER

At White Space Beijing—a gallery in the city's Caochangdi art zone—a student contemplates an untitled work by Chinese artist He Xiangyu.

Photo by Laura Letinsky.



At “Comics: Philosophy and Practice,” a May 2012 conference at the Logan Center for the Arts, English professor W. J. T. Mitchell (left) interviewed cartoonist Art Spiegelman.

## Dear Alumni and Friends,

This fall marks a significant moment for me as I reflect on my first term as dean and anticipate the exciting new initiatives that the next five years will bring. I am thrilled to be reappointed to the helm of the Division of the Humanities, particularly at a time of such great possibilities for our students and faculty. Please read more about the division's proud accomplishments and our priorities for the future on page 12.

One particularly striking achievement is the launching of the Neubauer Family Collegium for Culture and Society, a joint venture with the Division of the Social Sciences that will establish a global destination in Chicago for innovative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary research. The Neubauer Collegium builds on the University of Chicago's long-standing reputation as an incubator for new schools of knowledge, drawing international scholars of the highest caliber to our campus. To learn more about how this initiative aims to transform the humanities and humanistic social sciences, see page 10.

On campus and around the world, UChicago scholars are redefining the humanistic enterprise. In this issue of *Tableau*, we feature faculty members who have discovered unexpected opportunities for global collaboration at the University's Center in Beijing (see pages 2–3). We also profile Peter Selz, AM'49, PhD'54, whose career as an art historian and curator has influenced the history of modern art (pages 4–5).

We are pleased to introduce the division's eight newest faculty members, including one Neubauer Family Assistant Professor. All of these new colleagues will play important roles in shaping their respective fields and departments (pages 8–9). This issue also includes stories from alumni who have applied their humanities education to entrepreneurial ventures (pages 6–7) and interviews with current graduate students who represent the increasingly diverse and global profile of the division (see page 13 and the in-depth article at tableau.uchicago.edu).

If you are reading *Tableau*, you are a part of a vital community of individuals who are invested in humanities research and education at UChicago, whether as students, faculty, alumni, parents, donors, or intellectually curious friends. Each fall, this community comes together at Humanities Day, an annual event that gives our faculty members a chance to share their ideas with the general public. I invite



you to join us on October 20 to participate in this exchange; learn more at [humanitiesday.uchicago.edu](http://humanitiesday.uchicago.edu).

Finally, I offer a special word of thanks to our donors, acknowledged by name online at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu). Joe and Jeanette Neubauer's decision to endow the Collegium for Culture and Society furthers their commitment to the humanities at UChicago, and they are joined by hundreds of others whose ongoing support is crucial to our continued success. Also online, we showcase the recent publications and creative accomplishments of our faculty members and an impressive list of recent job placements by the graduates of our master's and PhD programs.

Thank you for your engagement with the Division of the Humanities. I remind you that I am always pleased to receive any feedback you may wish to share. It is a privilege to be a part of this community, and I look forward to advancing our mission in my second term as dean.

Sincerely yours,

Martha T. Roth  
Dean of the Division of the Humanities





# CHINA CONNECTIONS

Professor Laura Letinsky and MFA students met with Chinese artist Jin Zenghe in Beijing's 798 arts district.

Humanities faculty members are making the most of the Center in Beijing, with unexpected projects in fields from Jewish studies to music theory.

BY SUSIE ALLEN, AB'09

**JOSEF STERN KNEW THE IDEA** of a conference on Jewish studies in Beijing was unconventional.

Early on, some of his colleagues were “frankly, somewhat skeptical,” admits Stern, the William H. Colvin Professor in Philosophy and director of the Chicago Center for Jewish Studies.

Yet with the help of contacts in China, Stern was able to gather a robust group of scholars and students from China and the West to attend the conference “Maimonides and Medieval Jewish Thought” at the University’s Center in Beijing.

The April event focused on the work of the medieval rabbinic scholar and philosopher Maimonides, whose twelfth-century *Guide of the Perplexed* is arguably the greatest medieval text in Jewish philosophy.

“There turned out to be considerable interest,” Stern says. The Jewish studies community in China is “relatively small, but it’s growing. The students are superb.”

The collaboration was so fruitful that Stern is organizing another conference in Beijing on Jewish and Chinese ethics, tentatively planned for spring 2013.

Since opening two years ago, the Center in Beijing has become a major draw for China specialists from across the Division of the Humanities, including faculty who teach in College study-abroad programs and scholars whose work has brought them to East Asia for decades. Lectures and conferences have spanned topics from Chinese opera film to contemporary ink painting to ancient history.

Yet the center also has opened its doors to humanities scholars whose work lies outside the field of Chinese studies. For example, Shadi Bartsch-Zimmer, the Helen A. Regenstein Distinguished Service Professor in Classics, has long studied Roman literature and culture. In 2012 she traveled to Beijing to host a conference investigating modern China’s engagement with Greco-Roman antiquity.

“It is extremely gratifying to see such a rich variety of projects at the center, and to see University of Chicago scholars making strong connections with their counterparts from across China,” says Dali Yang, a professor in Political Science and the center’s faculty director. “There’s a remarkable diversity of interest among Chinese scholars, so they’re very open to exploring new cultures,” adds Stern.

### Making sense of the foreign

In November 2011, Thomas Christensen, the Avalon Foundation Professor in Music, helped organize “Music Theory between East and West,” a three-day conference that attracted students and teachers from top Chinese conservatories as well as Western scholars of music theory.

The event was designed in part to celebrate the 2011 publication of the Chinese edition of the *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*. Christensen edited the English edition of the more than 1,000-page volume. As he noted at the conference, there was only one earlier translation of the book—into Macedonian—and the Chinese translation “expanded by a factor of some 650 the potential number of non-English readers.”

With globalization, Western audiences have gained interest in Chinese music, but in China, “much of music theory is oriented toward teaching Western music,” Christensen explains. “It’s not dealing with indigenous Chinese classical music. That’s fallen behind in interest.” He says Chinese conference participants were especially interested in pedagogy and using music theory to improve musicianship, in contrast to many Western scholars.



Left: Students visited contemporary art galleries on their September 2012 trip.

Despite subtle differences in approach, Christensen hopes music theory might help bridge gaps between the East and West. “Music theory might play a role in helping us translate the many musical languages to which we are now constantly exposed,” he said at the conference. “For music theory is, if anything, a means by which people make sense of something that is often difficult, perplexing, and foreign.”

### Art and antiquity

“Difficult and perplexing” could also describe the state of China’s antiquities market, according to Lawrence Rothfield, an associate professor in English, who gave a lecture titled “Antiquities Under Siege” at the center in June 2012. Although Rothfield’s talk focused on looting in Iraq, Cairo, and Libya, discussion quickly turned to the fate of China’s own antiquities.

The country’s massive economic boom has “led to some big problems in terms of tombs being dug up around the country, corruption, and a loss of knowledge about the past,” says Rothfield. “That’s why I wanted to go to China—to begin to look at what the problem was, and to see how the problem was understood from the point of view of the Chinese themselves.”

The visit also allowed Rothfield to discuss his research on urban cultural scenes at several universities outside Beijing. At Shandong University in Jinan, Rothfield met with civic leaders, and they discussed ways to improve the neighborhood adjoining the university.

“It was like a psychoanalytic session,” Rothfield jokes. “It took us a while to get to the city’s deeper anthropological and social qualities.” Yet the discussion also revealed that Jinan is

undergoing massive demographic change, “with new ethnic groups with different attitudes, tastes, and manners posing a challenge to the self-image of the city, in a way not unlike the experience Chicago has had in incorporating waves of immigration and migration.”

China’s urban cultural landscape—and particularly its art scene—also has been on Laura Letinsky’s mind. In September Letinsky, a professor in Visual Arts, took 14 MFA students to Beijing to explore China’s exploding contemporary art community. Assistant Professor Geof Oppenheimer accompanied them.

In previous years, the department led trips to New York to help familiarize students with the art world. But after visiting China in 2011, “I realized that taking them to Beijing would give them a broader, global view of art practice,” Letinsky explains.

Certainly, there are many similarities between the US and Chinese art markets: “Art is a commodity, and it’s also an intellectual activity that



incites dialogues,” says Letinsky, but “the philosophical tradition is different. All of that has resulted in a different emphasis in attitudes toward labor and individualism and community.”

During the trip, students met with artists, curators, and gallery staff to learn how artists navigate the global art market. Letinsky said before the group departed, “I think it’ll blow their minds—in a great way.”

**FOR MORE ABOUT PROJECTS** involving the Division of the Humanities at the Center in Beijing, visit [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).

Left: In 2011, Professor Wu Hung (center) led an international conference on ancient tomb art at the Center in Beijing.





# LIFE EMBRACES ART

A new biography chronicles the remarkable career of Peter Selz, AM'49, PhD'54, and his contributions to modern art history. BY ELIZABETH STATION

**ASK THE 93-YEAR-OLD ART HISTORIAN** and curator Peter Selz what he is working on now, and his answers reveal the boundless energy and wide-ranging interests that have shaped his long career.

A trustee of the Neue Galerie in New York, he is planning to attend the museum's upcoming board meeting in Vienna. A prolific author and critic, he is writing a long essay for a book about the American painter Arnold Mesches. In 2012 he co-organized two exhibitions at San Francisco's nonprofit Meridian Gallery—one of artworks by beat-generation poets, another by the contemporary Irish painter Patrick Graham. And he serves on the acquisitions committee of the city's de Young and Legion of Honor museums.

Officially, Selz retired to his modernist home in the Berkeley

Hills when he became an emeritus professor of art history at the University of California in 1988. But he has never stopped looking at, writing about, and delighting in art that he believes to be important, whether contemporary audiences have heard of the artist or not.

"I've always worked with artists who were not part of the mainstream," he says. "I've always been, in a way, an outsider."

Yet Selz became an insider who landed prestigious jobs. He organized groundbreaking shows as curator of modern painting and sculpture exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York from 1958 to 1965, and later became the founding director of the UC Berkeley Art Museum. Well before he studied art formally, family connections gave him a privileged entrée to the art world.

Selz at home in Berkeley with *Iris*, a painting given to him by the artist Sam Francis.

barred from pursuing his education in Germany and at age 17, he took a boat to New York City, alone. On the eve of World War II he spent a year at Columbia University and supported himself by working at a brewery. Still hoping for an art career, he introduced himself to Alfred Stieglitz, a distant relative whose Madison Avenue gallery, An American Place, was a hub for modern artists and photographers. "He took me in hand," says Selz, "and I learned a lot from him."

Selz became a US citizen and served in the Army's Office of Strategic Services during the war. In 1946, he took advantage of the GI Bill to attend the University of Chicago. "I never got a BA; you could go straight for an MA and on to a PhD at that time," he recalls. "The three most important professors for me" were two respected art historians, Ulrich Middeldorf and Joshua Taylor, and Committee on Social Thought cofounder John U. Nef, whose economic history course Selz took before deciding to concentrate on art.

"I've always worked with artists who were not part of the mainstream," says Selz.

Middeldorf, an anti-Nazi German émigré and expert in Italian Renaissance sculpture, encouraged Selz to write a history of the German expressionist movement. For a doctoral student to focus broadly on art in its political and social context "was very unusual then, as it would be now," says Selz, but "it was a marvelous thing for him to suggest."

Taylor joined the department in the mid-1950s and would soon publish the popular primer *Learning to Look: A Handbook for the Visual Arts*. He was just two years older than Selz, but the Princeton-trained art historian "knew a lot more," says Selz, and helped him complete one of the country's first PhDs on twentieth-century art.

Selz's dissertation became *German Expressionist Painting*, a book that remains in print more than 50 years later. "There's really nothing else out there yet that quite matches that book," says Reinhold Heller, an emeritus professor in Art History who also specializes in German art, citing the work's "deep-seated scholarship, historical analysis, and visual acuity."

In Chicago, Selz immersed himself in the local art scene, forging close relationships with visual artists such as Leon Golub, AB'48—a practice he continued in New York and California. As a student, he helped organize a well-received show of contemporary Chicago art at the Renaissance Society. He also taught part time at the Institute of Design (also known as

the New Bauhaus), "a marvelous place [and] the most progressive art school in the country."

When the financially strapped Institute of Design was absorbed by the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1955, Selz happily accepted an offer from Pomona College to chair its art department and direct its museum. In California, he mounted imaginative exhibitions and kept up his New York connections. Those efforts and his Chicago training, Selz believes, led MoMA to hire him as curator of modern painting and sculpture exhibitions in 1958.

At MoMA, Selz was given the freedom to conceive and organize provocative new shows that advanced his reputation as a canon-challenging curator and critic. For the 1959 exhibition *New Images of Man*, he embraced outsider artists and works that celebrated the human figure at a time when abstract expressionism was most in vogue. For *Homage to New York*, another Selz show, the Swiss artist Jean Tinguely

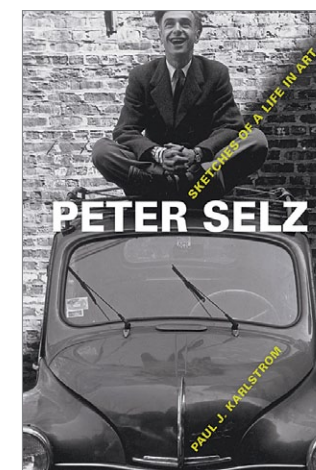
created a machine designed to burst into flames and self-destruct in the museum's sculpture garden—a daring conceptual proposition for 1960. Selz also organized major exhibitions of works by Mark Rothko, Jean Dubuffet, Auguste Rodin, Max Beckmann, and Alberto Giacometti.

Moving back to California in the mid-1960s, Selz continued to make pioneering contributions as a curator, teacher, and writer. He organized the country's first kinetic sculpture exhibition and served as project director for Christo and Jeanne-Claude's outdoor installation *Running Fence*. To date, he has published more than 50 books and catalogs on modern art. Those accomplishments, Selz's biographer writes, "have secured his position as an important presence and voice in his chosen field."

In his so-called retirement, Selz champions artists who are politically and socially engaged and "art that matters" rather than works that sell well or draw crowds. He counts the contemporary artists William Kentridge, Anselm Kiefer, and Patrick Graham in this group—although he believes there is no longer a consensus about what makes a great artist or work of art.

Over time Selz has developed a definition that captures his strongest feelings about art and explains the choices he's made over a remarkable career. "Good art," he argues, "is a visual metaphor for significant human experience."

**READ MORE** about Peter Selz and his Chicago contemporaries at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).





# A poet and a philosopher venture into business.

BY CARRIE GOLUS, AB'91, AM'93

## SELL ME A STORY



A typical day takes Brown to design showrooms around the city.

**“FOR MANY HUMANITIES STUDENTS**—and I put myself in this boat, too, initially—there seems to be a great divide between the humanities world and the business world,” says **Starr Marcello**, AM’07. A graduate of the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH) with a focus on cinema and media studies, Marcello is now director of the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

The center seeks to encourage student entrepreneurship throughout the University, most notably by sponsoring business competitions. “Occasionally I work with humanities graduates, but it’s rare right now,” says Marcello. And that’s a shame, she adds, because “humanities students have a skill that makes them really valuable on a start-up team: being able to tell a story really well. In a start-up, you have to pitch your story over and over again to investors, advisers, customers.”

*Tableau* spoke with two entrepreneurs in Chicago who overcame that perceived divide between the humanities and business, putting their graduate studies to work in unexpected ways. Here are their stories.

**Meghan Brown**, AM’03, graduated with an architecture degree from Cornell in 1999 and worked as an architect before earning her MAPH degree. She launched her interior design company, *Occupi Design*, in Chicago in 2007.

**Poems about architecture:** For my thesis, I wrote poetry about the experience of architecture in Chicago and about Chicago as a globalizing city. So I was the artist, writing the poetry, and then also the critic, looking at both the architecture and my own poetry through the lens of sociology.

**Recession timing:** When I started my business, I just ended up diving right in. The business was the result of a few inquiries from people I

knew. I thought, if they have work they would like to have done, let’s do it. Looking back, it was a crazy time.

**Recession-proof:** Staging and redesign—which is the moving of furniture and whatnot—is probably about 30 to 50 percent of my business, with remodels of kitchens, bathrooms, et cetera, being the remainder. If someone wants a new sectional, for example, I help them figure out if they really need a new sectional, or if we can move around a few pieces they already have and get the same or better effect.

**Advice:** There’s a certain amount of curiosity you have to have to be an entrepreneur and a humanities student. I would say, be open to any ideas, and be open to sharing your ideas—put it out there, just like in a discussion in class.

**Matt O’Brien** started the MAPH program in 2009 with a focus on philosophy and will finish his thesis this fall. Until recently, he was working 80 hours a week as CEO and co-owner of *Songlyrics.net*, a website that earns \$1 million in advertising revenues annually. He recently resigned to focus on a start-up of his own, *Aletheia* (Greek for “truth”), based at the 1871 technology hub in Chicago’s Merchandise Mart. One of his employees is MAPH grad **Clark Feusier**, AM’12. The idea for the company, as improbable as it sounds, grew out of his philosophy thesis.

**Wikipedia for opinions:** *Aletheia* lets people collaboratively map arguments and the logical relations between ideas. It’s about seeing all

“There’s a certain amount of curiosity you have to have to be an entrepreneur and a humanities student,” says Brown. “Be open to sharing your ideas—put it out there, just like in a discussion in class.”

sides of a controversial issue in one place. If Wikipedia is for facts, *Aletheia* is for opinions. In philosophy you’d say we’re trying to map logical space.

**How it works:** Imagine that you want to know something about the government in Iran. Wikipedia is a great place to go. But imagine that you want to figure out what the United States should do about a situation with Iran—this is where *Aletheia* steps in. Currently there is no central place for people to go to see all sides of any issue. We’re out to change that.

**First steps:** We competed in the Social New Venture Challenge run by the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship. We got a lot of attention and interest from potential investors and people who might help us one way or another. Rather than go for funding, we decided to build the product, because there were still a lot of questions about whether this could be done. That’s where we’re at right now.

**Why MAPH:** When I started, my reasons weren’t as clear as they are in retrospect. As I went through the program, the project I wanted to

work on also became a website. It was a happy outcome.

**Advice for entrepreneurs:** There’s no substitute for starting to do it. I would say, get going as soon as you can. Skip business school—you can read a few books. Take the money you would have put into business school and use that to start your business.

Humanities alumni have tapped their creativity to launch companies around the world. Trained as a sculptor at UChicago, **John Kuhns**, MFA’75, went on to launch a dual career in finance and energy—and recently published a semiautobiographical novel about it, *China Fortunes*. **Zoka Zola**, AM’09, who had a successful architectural practice in Croatia and Britain, took time out from her career to pursue humanities studies through MAPH before returning to her architectural practice in Chicago; her projects include her own modernist home, the award-winning *Pfanner House*.



O’Brien (left) and Feusier share space with other entrepreneurs at Chicago’s 1871 technology hub.

## WHAT’S YOUR START-UP STORY?

Send an e-mail to [tableau@uchicago.edu](mailto:tableau@uchicago.edu) or leave a comment online at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).



“I am excited about the chance to let myself be influenced and disturbed.”

## NEW FACULTY FALL 2012



Florian Klinger, one of eight new arrivals to the division.

### PRODUCTIVE DISTURBANCE

Literary scholar Florian Klinger counts philosophy, poetry, and music among his influences.

Florian Klinger deals in what he calls “questions” in philosophy and literature, involving texts in his native German as well as other languages. This approach naturally fits with his graduate training in comparative literature and philosophy; it also relates to his artistic background—he holds a concert diploma in violin—and to his early engagement with literature.

“I used to be a musician, and I have always been an ardent reader of poetry,” says Klinger. “An intellectual preoccupation with aesthetic questions drew me to texts in ancient rhetoric and poetics as well as philosophical aesthetics first. From there, I made my way into more defined problems of both literary poetics and philosophy.”

As Klinger’s academic work evolved, he continued to draw on his artistic interests. The influence of his performance background goes beyond an artist’s awareness of the audience or of the euphony of a poem; it has also given him a sensitivity to the multifaceted nature of literary works: “Apart from theoretical concerns with questions that derive directly from musical experience, I also, as a reader of literature, fine-tune my ears to the nonsemantic, the more musical parameters of language—such as rhythm, tonality, phrasing, and so on.”

Klinger joined the UChicago faculty this fall as a Neubauer Family Assistant Professor in Germanic Studies and the College. Neubauer professorships are awarded to junior scholars across the University who are expected to have a transformative impact on their respective fields. Klinger says he is grateful for the resources, such as additional time for research, that come with the title: “It gives me the chance to do more of my own work: it’s a little bit of extra freedom, and I really appreciate that.”

After completing two books—the second, on artistic form in the painterly process using the German painter Gerhard Richter as an example, will be published in February 2013—Klinger is eager to embark on the next phase of his research. He plans to examine “poetic ‘force’ (energy, motion, kinetic energy) in literary texts at the beginning of the twentieth century,” work that aligns with a graduate seminar he will teach in the spring. Yet he is careful to keep an open mind about what the next year will bring. “It depends a lot on the people I meet and dialogue with, and that’s part of the thrill of being here,” he says. “I am excited about the chance to let myself be influenced and disturbed. I think that in the humanities, productive disturbance is one of the most important resources we have.”—Courtney C. W. Guerra, AB’05

■ **CLAUDIA BRITTENHAM** is Assistant Professor in Art History and the College. After receiving her PhD and BA from Yale, she held fellowships from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/American Council of Learned Societies and the University of Michigan, where she also was an assistant professor. Her research focuses on ancient art from Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras, with a particular interest in issues of identity, cultural exchange, materiality, and politics. Her dissertation, “The Cacaxtla Painting Tradition: Art and Identity in Epiclassic Mexico,” was awarded Yale’s Frances Blanshard Prize and Theron Rockwell Field Prize for excellence. Before returning to Yale for her doctoral degree, she was the assistant curator for Eastern Hemisphere collections at the Textile Museum in Washington, DC.

■ **FRANCES FERGUSON**, the Ann L. and Lawrence B. Buttenwieser Professor in English Language and Literature and the College, previously taught at Johns Hopkins University, where she was the Mary Elizabeth Garrett Professor in Arts and Sciences. Her work is primarily concerned with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature and literary theory, although she also is interested in issues of gender and sexuality. Her current project examines the political perspectives of Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Bentham, with a specific focus on how their analyses of children and education informed those views.

Ferguson was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2010 and received the Keats-Shelley Association’s Distinguished Scholar Award in 2011. Her books include *Solitude and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individuation* (1992) and *Pornography, The Theory: What Utilitarianism Did to Action* (2005). She holds a PhD from Yale.

■ **ITAMAR FRANCEZ** officially joins the faculty in Linguistics and the College as Assistant Professor after serving as Collegiate Assistant Professor in the University of Chicago’s Society of Fellows. Prior to that, he held postdoctoral positions at UChicago, the University of Konstanz, the University of Manchester, and Yale. Francez’s research interests include semantics and pragmatics, syntax-semantics interface, and the philosophy of language. He attended Stanford for his PhD, writing a dissertation entitled “Existential Proposition.” His BA is from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he focused on English and general studies.

■ **PATRICK JAGODA** is Assistant Professor in English Language and Literature and the College, where he was previously appointed as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in New Media. He holds a PhD from Duke, where he also earned a graduate certificate in information

science and information studies. He is interested in many different types of media—including twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction and film, as well as digital games—but his primary focus is on how the concept of “the network” informs our understanding of these cultural entities, a theme he addressed in his dissertation, “Network Aesthetics: American Fictions in the Culture of Interconnection.” Jagoda also uses technology to facilitate new learning experiences and has been engaged in an ongoing collaborative project with Melissa Gilliam (Professor in Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Pediatrics) to use digital storytelling and game production to promote sexual health in adolescents.

■ **FLORIAN KLINGER**, the Neubauer Family Assistant Professor in Germanic Studies and the College, received his MA and PhD in comparative literature from Stanford. He also holds an MA in comparative literature, philosophy, and Latin American studies from Freie

Universität Berlin, and an undergraduate degree in violin from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich. His dissertation, “Judgment and Kairocentric World,” investigates the structure of human judgment in the post-Kant era of modernity; it was published in Germany in 2011 as *Urteilen* (Judgments). His teaching interests include eighteenth- through twenty-first-century German literature and culture, ancient rhetoric and poetics, philosophical aesthetics, lyrical poetry, literature and music, and literary theory.

■ **DAVID SIMON**, Assistant Professor in English Language and Literature and the College, obtained his PhD in comparative literature from the University of California, Berkeley, where he received a student fellowship at the Townsend Center for the Humanities and an award for outstanding teaching. His dissertation, “Careless Engagements: Literature, Science, and the Ethics of Indifference in Early Modernity,” explores

the ways in which literary forms responded to emergent techniques in experimental science during the seventeenth century. In addition to his academic work, he has reviewed contemporary fiction for the *Nation* and won an award for “best fiction manuscript by an undergraduate” for the creative-writing thesis he produced while pursuing his BA at Brown.

■ **CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR**, Assistant Professor in English Language and Literature and the College, studies the hemispheric Americas, particularly the British West Indies, in the nineteenth century. He received his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, where he won awards for best graduate essay in American literature and excellence in teaching. He completed his BA at New York University, where he also received an award for best English thesis. His dissertation, “Empire of Neglect: Caribbean Literature, British Liberalism, and New World Asylums, 1776–1888,” engages with economic history, political theory, and literary studies in its analysis of Creole literature as a means of anti-imperialist resistance. Similar themes were explored in the recent conference “Transnationalism: A Useful Category of Analysis?” which he co-organized while at Penn.

■ **SONALI THAKKAR**, Assistant Professor in English Language and Literature and the College, received a PhD from the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society and a certification from the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Columbia, where she also held a Mellon Interdisciplinary Graduate Fellowship at the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy. She earned an MA in rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley; as an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, she specialized in international relations, peace and conflict studies, English, and literary studies. This complex educational background informs her scholarship, which examines the cultural memory of the Holocaust in the context of literary works dealing with postcolonialism and migration. Her dissertation is entitled “Continental Drifters: Holocaust Memory, Decolonization, and Post-war Migration to Europe.”





Director David Nirenberg outside the future home of the Neubauer Collegium.

## TO COLLABORATE IS HUMAN

The Neubauer Family Collegium for Culture and Society will “tackle the biggest questions on their grandest scale.”

**IN ANCIENT ROME**, a collegium brought people together for a common religious, professional, or social cause. At the University of Chicago, the same name will launch a new venture to gather the world’s most promising scholars and ask them to explore ideas without regard for narrow specialization.

Announced in June, the Neubauer Family Collegium for Culture and Society will create an incubator for boundary-crossing research and a structure to connect UChicago faculty with top international scholars. A joint venture of the Divisions of the Humanities and Social Sciences, the initiative represents “a new model for humanistic inquiry,” says Martha T. Roth, dean of the Humanities.

“The humanities is no longer exclusively a ‘lone-scholar’ discipline; it’s much more collaborative; there are many more large-scale projects and higher, more ambitious aspirations,” explains Roth. A major ambition for the Neubauer Collegium is to create a global destination where scholars in the humanities and humanistic social sciences can join forces to create and disseminate new “Chicago schools” of knowledge.

The Collegium is named to honor University trustee Joseph Neubauer, MBA’65, and Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer, whose landmark \$26.5 million gift will bring the project to life.

The couple’s vision and generosity have had a far-reaching impact on the University’s humanities programs, which Joseph Neubauer has called “one of the great treasures of American education.” The Neubauer Family Foundation endowed the division’s most prestigious fellowships for incoming PhD students in 2002 and established the Neubauer Family Assistant Professorships, which help attract and support outstanding junior faculty, in 2007. Their support also underwrites the Oriental Institute’s Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, an archaeological project in southeastern Turkey.

For Joseph Neubauer—who came to the United States from Israel at age 14 and held senior executive positions before becoming CEO and chairman of Aramark—the Collegium represents “an investment in human capital and an investment in what makes this University distinctive. It’s really designed to create a natural platform for the University’s scholars to cross disciplinary boundaries to consider the complicated multidimensional problems of everyday life.”

“Any time there has been a flowering of civilization, it is because great ideas have been tested, shared, and disseminated widely,” agrees Jeanette Lerman-Neubaer, who founded the marketing and communications firm J. P. Lerman & Co. and is a former vice president of corporate communications for Time Warner.

Planned activities for the Neubauer Collegium include a visitors program, public lectures, and symposia. Collaborative research projects will bring together scholars “to tackle the biggest questions on their grandest scale,” says David Nirenberg, founding faculty director and the Deborah R. and Edgar D. Jannotta Professor in Medieval History and Social Thought.

“Any time there has been a flowering of civilization, it is because great ideas have been tested, shared, and disseminated widely.”

—Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer

Many of the most pressing questions facing societies around the world defy easy academic categorization, adds Nirenberg. Religious conflicts are a leading source of global instability, for example; historians, theologians, and anthropologists could work together to make critical sense of such processes. Similarly, scholars of language, linguistics, and migration might partner to explore the impact of globalization on language change. Yet another interdisciplinary team could study the political, economic, and cultural consequences of the massive flows of people and capital between China and Africa.

Visiting scholars will begin arriving in 2013–14; they’ll stay for a quarter to a full academic year, and some will teach in addition to pursuing research. The University will renovate the former Meadville Lombard seminary building at 5701 South Woodlawn Avenue to provide a home for the Neubauer Collegium. It’s just a short walk from the main quadrangles and the Regenstein and Mansueto Libraries—but could represent a giant leap for ideas in the new century.—E.S.

**LEARN MORE** about the Neubauer Family Collegium for Culture and Society at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).



The Neubauers say their support for the humanities is “an investment in human capital.”

### FIND IT ONLINE



### LOOKING FOR FACULTY BOOKS AND AWARDS?

Longtime readers of *Tableau* will notice that our print edition has fewer pages. To better steward the division’s resources, our annual list of faculty publications, awards, compositions, and exhibitions is now available online. To see the 2011–12 list, visit [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).

### GRADUATE STUDENT PLACEMENTS

When *Tableau* asked a group of recent humanities graduates, “To what do you owe your success in the job search process?” they responded with honesty and practical advice that came directly from their own experiences.

Read reflections by graduates and view a list of job placements for 2011–12 master’s and PhD degree recipients from the division at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).

### HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

The Division of the Humanities relies on gifts of all sizes to provide critical support for our faculty, students, and programs. We are profoundly grateful to the alumni, friends, and organizations whose generosity helps to sustain and advance our tradition of academic excellence.

Please visit [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu) to view our Honor Roll for Fiscal Year 2012 (July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012). In the year ahead, we’ll also share stories that show the impact of your philanthropic support.



Martha Roth reflects on her accomplishments and shares her vision for keeping UChicago at the forefront of humanistic scholarship.

# A LEADER IN THE HUMANITIES



Martha Roth

also proud that we kept our ambitions strong, hiring and retaining faculty members even through the financial crisis.”

### THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Looking to the challenges facing the Division of the Humanities and her ambitions for its continued growth and vibrancy, Roth has outlined a set of goals for the next five years that will coincide with a major, University-wide fundraising campaign.

One of her top priorities is to continue making strategic hires while ensuring that current faculty members have the tools they need to succeed as scholars. “For many of us, those tools are quite tangible: studio space, laboratory space, library acquisitions,” she says. “For everyone, ongoing intellectual interactions are also essential, and this means finding support for lecture series, visitor programs, funds for research and travel to archives.”

Helping graduate students succeed is another priority. “Having all of our PhD students funded equitably and adequately has made a big difference in the morale of our students and faculty, and it’s much more productive to community interaction,” says Roth. But since most PhD programs can’t be completed in five years, the division needs to offer more fellowships for students in the dissertation phase.

Roth also would like to provide more financial aid for students in dedicated master’s programs: the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities, the MFA program in Visual Arts, and the master’s programs in Latin American and Middle Eastern Studies.

“Globally, the University of Chicago holds a respected and responsible

position as a leader in humanistic inquiry,” says Roth. To help ensure the continued excellence and strategic expansion of research and teaching in the humanities, in May she announced the creation of two new deputy dean positions.

On July 1, Mario Santana (Romance Languages and Literatures) began a term as deputy dean for languages. More than 50 languages are taught in the division, reflecting what Roth calls a “mission-driven commitment” to language instruction as a means of acquiring knowledge about cultures. Santana will oversee language instruction and pedagogy in a way that defines and advances this mission, working with departments, centers, study-abroad programs, and the University’s global centers.

In July 2013, Bill Brown (English and Visual Arts) will begin an appointment as deputy dean for academic and research initiatives. In this role, he

“I’m proud that we kept our ambitions strong,” says Roth.

will work closely with faculty to develop and articulate innovative projects that advance humanistic inquiry, including the development of new graduate tracks and programs.

The study of the humanities at UChicago comprises a vast enterprise of complicated moving parts: 15 departments, 26 affiliate centers and institutes, four joint degree programs, four master’s programs, and eight academic journals. Citing the critical role that “administration and staff at every level, dedicated faculty, and outstanding students” have played in moving the division forward, Roth says, “It is truly an honor to serve as dean of the Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago.”—E.S.

“THE DIVISION is something that I feel deeply invested in—personally as well as intellectually,” says Martha T. Roth, dean of the Division of the Humanities and the Chauncey S. Boucher Distinguished Service Professor of Assyriology.

In July, Roth began her second five-year term as dean, reappointed by President Robert J. Zimmer and Provost Thomas F. Rosenbaum.

### THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

At a time when many institutions have scaled back investment in the humanities, the division has grown and thrived. Since 2007, the size of its faculty has increased by 12 percent—from 186 to 208 faculty members. New endowed professorships were added in English literature and American culture, two new University Professors joined the faculty, and five promising young scholars were recruited to the University as Neubauer Family Assistant Professors.

During Roth’s first term, the Chicago Center for Jewish Studies was launched and the Logan Center for the Arts and Mansueto Library opened their doors. New initiatives such as the University’s Center in Beijing, the Neubauer Family Collegium for Culture and Society, and the Indian Ministry of Culture Vivekananda Visiting Professorship have all contributed to raising the University’s and the division’s global profile and provided vital resources for collaboration and dialogue.

All incoming PhD students in the division now receive five years of fellowship funding, thanks to the Graduate Aid Initiative. In her previous role as deputy provost, Roth was charged by President Zimmer to lead the team that shaped the program, helping the University to attract and support top doctoral candidates in the humanities and social sciences.

“Every department is at least as strong or stronger than it was five years ago, an accomplishment of which I’m extremely proud,” says Roth, who sought both to bolster core programs and encourage new interdisciplinary initiatives in her first term. “I’m



Since 2007, the faculty has grown by 12 percent—including University Professors Augusta Read Thomas and Haun Saussy (above)—and the Graduate Aid Initiative has increased funding for doctoral students (below).



From left: PhD students Kang, Joho, and Chiuppani.



## GLOBAL GRADUATE STUDENTS

What leads international students to study the humanities at UChicago?

UCHICAGO HAS LONG been a destination for scholars from around the world, whether they arrive as faculty, students, visiting fellows, or conference participants. Globalization has reinforced that trend—from 2001 to 2011, international students grew from 21 to 26 percent of master’s and PhD students in the Division of the Humanities.

In the online edition of *Tableau*, four doctoral students talk about where they came from, why they chose UChicago, and what they’re studying: Arum Kang, a young linguistics scholar from South Korea; Tobias Joho, who came from Germany to pursue a joint degree in Classics and Social Thought; Beppi Chiuppani, an Italian who specializes in non-European literatures; and Igor de Souza, a Brazilian focusing on Jewish Studies.

Read their stories at [tableau.uchicago.edu](http://tableau.uchicago.edu).



