

# The 2023

# Qualifying

# Paper

# Symposium

Heath Ballowe  
Daniel Foster Chamberlin  
Emily Harvey  
Jeffrey Law  
Louise Lui  
Isabella Margi

Joshua Massey  
Talia A. Perry  
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# Heath Ballowe

They Sound Different When They Break:  
The Scientific Struggle  
to Produce English Porcelain,  
1672–1821

*Advisor*

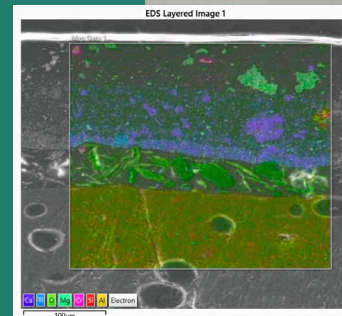
*Andrew Morrall*

*Reader*

*Jennifer Mass*

Ceramics are often what remain of our past and can embody our errors, excesses, and greatest successes. For this reason, looking at the history of English porcelain can reveal the earliest phase of experiments, enabling us to uncover evidence obscured in written records. For example, the first attempt to make true porcelain in England is chronicled in a patent application submitted by John Dwight in 1672, proclaiming that he had “discovered the mystery of transparent earthenware.” The document neglects to describe the methods and materials he used and the only way of assessing Dwight’s achievement is to inspect fragments excavated from his kiln site at the Fulham factory. Examining these sherds, coated with crusty yellow glaze, we can see that Dwight was unsuccessful. His attempts however, laid the groundwork for generations of makers in England and abroad, including William Cookworthy, who fabricated the first confirmed samples of hard-paste, English porcelain. By utilizing XRF (x-ray fluorescence) and SEM-EDS (scanning electron microscopy, energy-dispersive spectroscopy) analysis of period examples, with archival investigations of historical letters, patents, and recipe notebooks, a new narrative emerges that exposes the successes and failures that littered the production of English porcelain. England’s unique relationship with porcelain exposes the material complexity, economic ambition, and drive to achieve success over the long eighteenth

century. Reconstructing the story of porcelain during England’s industrial age illustrates that individual technological contributions can bring success and failure as well as explore deeper concepts of morality and honesty in mass production.



# Daniel Foster Chamberlin

Comprehensive Stewardship:  
Responsibly Reconciling the Past

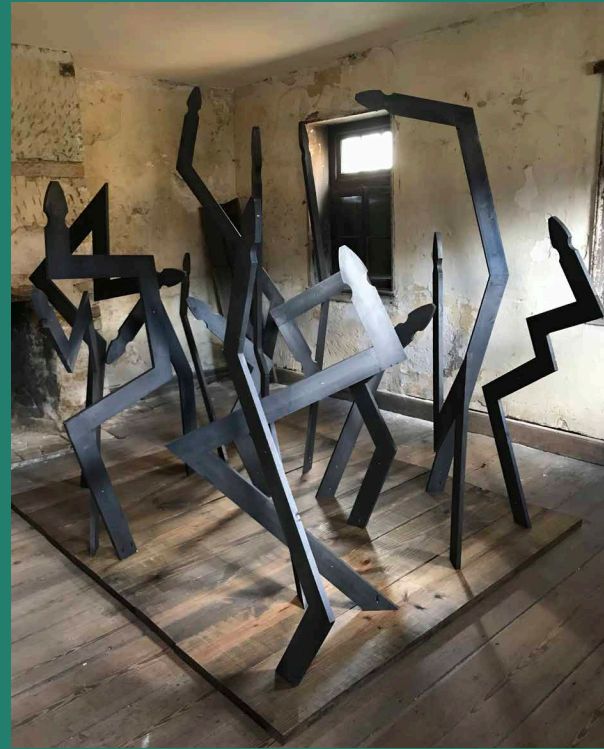
*Advisor*

*Ivan Gaskell*

*Reader*

*Drew Thompson*

Museums are beginning to address and interpret the problematic collections and histories they steward in many ways. One such tactic to meaningfully engage visitors is by appealing to their sense of empathy. By specifically engaging empathy, museums open the door to more sensitive, deeper understandings of the lives of historical figures. Of particular importance are the stories of groups and characters who have traditionally been omitted from American history books and guided tours—namely the narratives of Indigenous communities and enslaved African Americans. Including these narratives not only reflects the growing diversity of today’s museum audience but also enables collective and individual reckonings with the nation’s troubled past. Although there is no single formula for interpreting the history of American slavery, through collaborative work with artists, interpreters, scholars, and descendant communities, museums can expand the definitions of what they are and what they can provide to the people who seek them out. *Promiseland* by Fletcher Williams III at the Aiken-Rhett House Museum is one such installation that enables this kind of visitor engagement. Museums are places that hold stories to educate, enlighten, and entertain. By effectively creating situations in which visitors can empathically identify with characters from the past, museums can also be places of healing.



# Emily Harvey

## Seeing Women: The Rise in Popularity of Women's Vision Aids in Nineteenth-Century America

*Advisor*  
*Meredith Linn*

*Reader*  
*Catherine Whalen*

Straddling the line between assistive devices and fashionable accessories, nineteenth-century vision aids, such as spectacles and lorgnettes, were a topic of debate among many upper- and middle-class American women. While previous scholarship has focused its attention on the popularity of vision aids in the early twentieth century, this project dispels the myth of their universal unpopularity in the nineteenth century by tracking the changes in American attitudes towards women wearing vision aids during this period. Using portraits and photographs of nineteenth-century women of the period, I tell the story of the utilization of vision aids as items of individual expression and self-fashioning. In addition, I examine published textual sources such as etiquette guides and popular magazines including *Harper's Bazaar* that prescribed how and when nineteenth-century women should wear their vision aids and most importantly how to display and use them. Alongside these sources, I draw on the nineteenth-century novel to lend insight into the unconscious inclinations and biases women may have had towards vision aids, as in many novels only older women tended to wear their aids all the time. This research deepens our understanding of women's self-fashioning in nineteenth-century America by showing that women exercised agency in choosing how they wore and styled their vision aids by the end of the period.

Thus, by combining pictorial, material, textual, and literary sources, I argue that vision aids did not suddenly become popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but in fact slowly grew in popularity and acceptability from the beginning of the nineteenth century when they were only acceptable in theaters and outdoors to its end when vision aids were a popular and sometimes obligatory feminine social accessory.



# Jeffrey Law

*Advisor*

*François Louis*

*Reader*

*Caspar Meyer*

## Spiral Ornament in Shang Dynasty China

Spirals are ubiquitous in the decorative arts, and although their many variations share similarities despite having evolved independently across disparate cultures, since at least as far back as the Paleolithic, they are not homogenous in form, context, nor meaning. As the first installment of a larger project to classify the spiral's numerous instances and genealogies, this paper focuses on and constructs a typology for unique spiral patterns known as *leiwen*, which are incised onto bronzes of China's late Shang dynasty (ca. 1300–1046 BC). Simultaneously geometric yet stylized; structured yet textural; peripheral yet meticulous; their mysteries blur the lines of interpretation and raise questions of craft, value, and artistic representation. The mutual disproportion between their continued prevalence from the Shang dynasty into present day and our limited understanding of them as an ornamental entity provides an opportunity to develop a new lens through which to study the objects they adorn and the cultures that produce them.



# Louise Lui

## The Splendor of Silk in Clay: Mongol Luxury Textiles and Yuan Dynasty Blue-and-White Porcelain

*Advisor*

*François Louis*

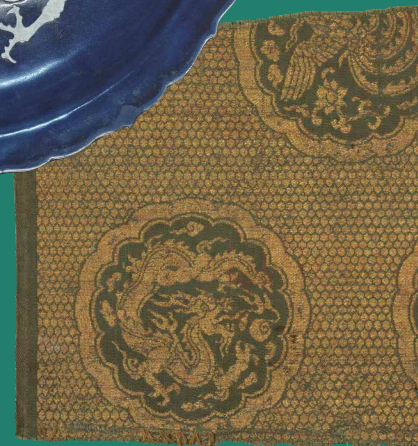
*Reader*

*Ittai Weinryb*

Blue-and-white porcelain was invented during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), a period when China was ruled by the Mongols. Over the course of just a few decades, it reached an astonishingly high degree of aesthetic sophistication and international commercial success. How did artisans at Jingdezhen decide to decorate blue-and-white, and how did it achieve such levels of fame so quickly?

Most scholarship suggests that the Mongols had little to no interest, nor influence, in the development of this dazzling new medium. However, the presence of distinctly Mongol designs on blue-and-white porcelain challenges this notion. This paper analyzes textiles, porcelain, historical records, and other visual material from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to demonstrate that blue-and-white was painted with patterns derived from Mongol luxury silk—a material the Mongols prized above all others. Reserve-decorated porcelains evoke courtly gold brocades like *jinduanzi*, while densely painted vessels echo the glittering “cloth of gold” (*nasij*). Motifs seen on imperial clothing such as dragons, cloud collars, and the “pond full of beauty” abound on blue-and-white. The presence of these highly regulated, exclusive textile designs on blue-and-white porcelain suggests Yuan elite use and appreciation of this ceramic medium. For the rest of the population, these porcelains afforded access to privileged textile patterns and

their prestige. Across Eurasia, Mongol culture was high court culture, and these designs were aspirational. It was precisely Mongol taste and culture, first conveyed through their textiles and then through porcelain, that fueled the rapid and enduring success of blue-and-white around the world.





# Isabella Margi

“A Poppet-Queen, Drest up by me”:  
Dolls, Propriety, and Girlhood in  
Early Modern Europe

*Advisor*

*Andrew Morrall*

*Reader*

*Freyja Hartzell*

A rare, sixteenth-century doll resembling a well-dressed courtly woman survives in the collection at the Royal Armory in Stockholm, Sweden, which scholars have categorized as primarily a fashion doll, though it might also have functioned as a plaything. A nineteenth-century museum label states the doll belonged to “Charles IX’s princess,” suggesting that at one point, the doll might have been played with by one of his wives or daughters. In early modern Europe, children across the economic spectrum had access to dolls made from a variety of materials, including cloth, wood, and metal. Though rare, there are several extant examples of well-preserved dolls from this period. Thus far, scholarship on pre-eighteenth-century dolls has focused primarily on dolls’ houses created for adults and fashion dolls used in the dissemination of sartorial knowledge, despite an abundance of visual, material, and textual evidence indicating that they were also playthings for girls. This study builds a case for the importance of considering dolls as entertainment and didactic tools, the means by which early modern European girls practiced and learned socially expected female propriety, bodily comportment, and appropriate dress. Dolls might also have encouraged girls to engage in imaginative play and envision their future vocations as wives, mothers, nuns, or even queens. These objects which resemble women frequently appear in visual representations, whereby their presence signified specific socially accepted ideas about gender roles,

girlhood, and maturation. By examining material and visual evidence of dolls, including family and individual portraits of children, genre paintings, and prints, with contemporary prescriptive literature, letters, diaries, inventories, and other textual references, this paper provides insights into how early modern girls played with dolls, and the lessons this play taught them about the social roles and behavior they were expected to perform as they grew into women.



# Joshua Massey

“To choose and be surrounded with the finest creations”: Assembling Value in the Ben-Zion House

*Advisor*

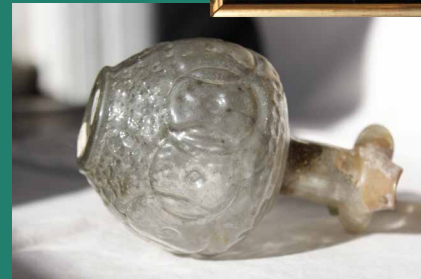
*Caspar Meyer*

*Reader*

*Peter Miller*

Ben-Zion Weinman (1897, Starokostiantyniv, Russian Empire–1987, New York City), called Ben-Zion after 1933, was an American artist known for his expressionistic paintings, iron sculptures, and works on paper, often of religious and mythical subjects. He was born in present-day Ukraine, raised in Poland, and emigrated to New York in 1920, where he lived until his death. In the 1930s, he began painting. He exhibited his works with other expressionist artists, including Marcus Rothkowitz (Mark Rothko), Ilya Bolotowsky, and Adolph Gottlieb, as part of an avant-garde group called “The Ten.” In the 1940s and 1950s, he exhibited regularly in New York City galleries and was the subject of several monographic exhibitions at the Jewish Museum. Between 1965 and his death, he lived with his wife, Lillian Ben-Zion (née Dubin) (1913–2012), in a townhouse in Chelsea, New York. There, they assembled a significant collection of natural and manmade objects, including fragments of Greek and Roman marble sculptures, Ghanaian bronze weights and measures, and “clay concretions,” which Ben-Zion plucked from a “magic” river in Vermont. This essay considers Ben-Zion’s collection of forty ancient glass vessels, gathered in a cabinet on the third floor of his home. Using the glass as a case study, it argues that value is generated through creative acts of assemblage. Chapters consider how value was generated through the production and functional use of glass vessels in antiquity and their collection and display in modern contexts. In conclusion,

this essay offers a “poetics of relation” as a method of engagement with objects. Through study of the structure and function of the assemblages into which things are placed, a poetics of relation provides more expansive, transdisciplinary, and autopoietic modes of thinking with and through them.



# Talia A. Perry

## Rooftop Fancy and Folly: Tudor Chimney Stack as Device and Discourse

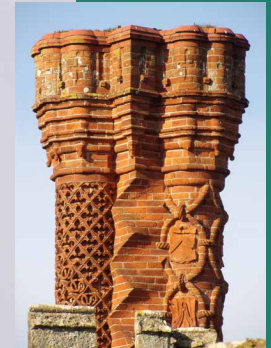
*Advisor*  
*Andrew Morrall*

*Reader*  
*Jennifer Mass*

With its richly decorated shaft and proud cap, the English Tudor chimney stack has been all too quickly dismissed as an enigmatic, idiosyncratic design. Emerging by the mid-fifteenth century as the product of technological and material innovation, it was also, significantly, bound to a medieval tradition of craft and design. Over the long sixteenth century, with social change and architectural construction greatly accelerated under the Tudor reign, chimneys advanced across the English landscape, increasingly entangled with displays of opulence and grandeur. By the pen of poets and pamphleteers, chimneys served as metonymic substitutes for power itself, implicated in anxieties of class hierarchy and national identity.

This topic is explored primarily through close architectural readings of extant chimney examples and the literary explication of select widely circulating books and pamphlets from the period; analysis of these primary sources is enriched by the inclusion of craft-based, archaeological, and economic studies of Tudor masonry. Deeper contextualization of Tudor chimney stacks—both as physical objects and as metaphors in Tudor literature and social commentary—shows they were explicitly positioned in relation to “a remote and idealized past.” From undulating brick geometries to triumphant classical colonnades, each stack was a unique expression of power; its connection to a specific idealized past justified the chimney’s performance of wealth, power, and responsibility within its own historical

context. The discursive capacity of the Tudor chimney stack is neither enigmatic nor wholly idiosyncratic, tied to pasts both real and imagined, and bound up in the expectations of early modern English society.



# Madeline Porsella

## The New Promethean: Modernism and the Occult in Claude Fayette Bragdon's *Projective Ornament*

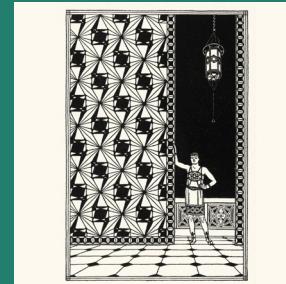
*Advisor*  
Freyja Hartzell

*Reader*  
Catherine Whalen

In 1915, Claude Fayette Bragdon (1866–1946), an architect, designer, and critic based in Rochester, New York, published *Projective Ornament*. The illustrated book laid out a speculative design program intended to ornament buildings, furniture, textiles, and lighting. Non-Euclidean geometries gave form to two-dimensional patterns derived from flattened four-dimensional objects or “hyperobjects.” Bragdon’s conception of the fourth dimension synthesized experimental mathematics with his belief in Theosophy, a religious movement that aimed to integrate the spiritual and the scientific into one coherent system of esoteric knowledge. Since the 1880s, Theosophy had posited the fourth dimension as a catch-all space between science and mysticism; extra-sensory phenomena from electrical currents to the supernatural were attributed to unseen activity in higher dimensions.

Bragdon believed that *Projective Ornament*, if widely adopted, could trigger a mass-evolution. Yet, his revolutionary ideas have been dismissed in histories of architectural modernism because of his interest in the occult and his persistent belief in the power of ornament to create social change. This paper argues that, contrary to teleological narratives, technological advancements did not spark a wholesale turn away from mystical beliefs. Rather, such beliefs were integrated into the early

engagement with these technologies, including and especially in Bragdon’s work. Tracing the development of his ideas, from their origins in Bragdon’s native Rochester to his later experiments with the modern technologies of X-rays, electric light, and new advertising techniques, further challenges the notion that mysticism and ornament were irreconcilable with modernization



# Anna Riley

## Crafting Stories of Value: Commodity Paths for Herati Glass

*Advisor*

*Aaron Glass*

*Reader*

*Arjun Appadurai*

From the 1960s to the present, stories have circulated about the famous blue glass made in Herat, Afghanistan. Of these, one story has been particularly durable, devised by American material scientist Robert Brill (1929–2021). Upon first witnessing the work of Herati glassmakers during a Smithsonian-funded expedition in 1968, Brill posited that their techniques were the last remaining “vestiges” of ancient Mesopotamian traditions. His hypothesis coincided with contemporary debates over new translations of cuneiform glassmaking instructions. Motivated to salvage this artistic tradition before it was lost, Brill made a documentary called “The Glassmakers of Herat” (1979). The film’s familiar storyline was shaped by romantic ideas of the authenticity of traditional handicrafts combined with anxiety about potential cultural loss as a result of oncoming modernity. The film’s narrative continues to circulate over forty years later in the marketing materials of the London-based gallery, Ishkar, a contemporary broker between the Herati suppliers and global consumers. Drawing on Arjun Appadurai’s notion of the “commodity path,” this paper tracks the circulation of Herati glass and related raw materials from their sites of production to their consumption as tourist souvenirs, museum artifacts, scientific specimens, and collectable crafts. Decades of geopolitical disruption have significantly influenced the production and circulation of glassware from Afghanistan. This paper argues that Ishkar’s imperative to save

global cultural heritage uses a similar conceptual scaffolding as the salvage paradigm that preceded it. Through the examination of expedition reports, scholarly texts, films, objects, commercial websites, and a visit to Ishkar itself, this paper tracks the ways in which an earlier generation of scientific debate continues to shape the perceived value and authenticity of Herati glass in the present.



# Maura Tangum

“Facing Determinedly Toward the Future”:  
Maxwell Shieff’s Involvement and Innovation  
within the Entertainment Industries  
of Canada and California, 1946–1959

*Advisor*

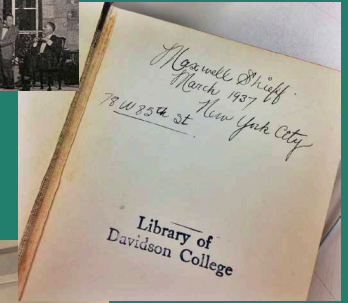
*Catherine Whalen*

*Reader*

*Rebecca Jumper Matheson*

In 1946, the Canadian-born fashion designer Maxwell Shieff staged a fashion show that was filmed by the Canadian National Film Board and included in its series “Canada Carries On,” which was intended to promote Canadian entrepreneurs and the Canadian economy following World War Two. This short film, titled simply “Maxwell Originals,” was the most decisive moment in Maxwell Shieff’s early career as a fashion designer and shaped the trajectory of his business. The 1946 film served as a catalyst for Shieff’s innovative use of popular media and entertainment as a method of publicizing his brand and developing his clientele. Between 1951 and 1959, Maxwell Shieff relocated his business to Beverly Hills, California, where he established himself as one of the area’s most prominent fashion designers and marketed his designs through his involvement in theater and television. Shieff took part in a well-established tradition of fashion designers promoting their brands through theater and television. This paper, however, marks the first research on Maxwell Shieff’s career and his particular use of popular media as a means of publicity, furthering his career and building his clientele in Canada and the United States from 1946 to 1959. My findings indicate that Maxwell Shieff’s uses of theater and television as marketing tools were critical to the growth of his

business and the expansion of his American clientele. Shieff’s skillful use of popular media not only enabled his integration into Hollywood and Beverly Hills but also determined his success as a distinguished Californian fashion designer.



# Zoe Volpa

## Imagining the French “Self” and Its “Others” Through the Display of Dress in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris

*Advisor*

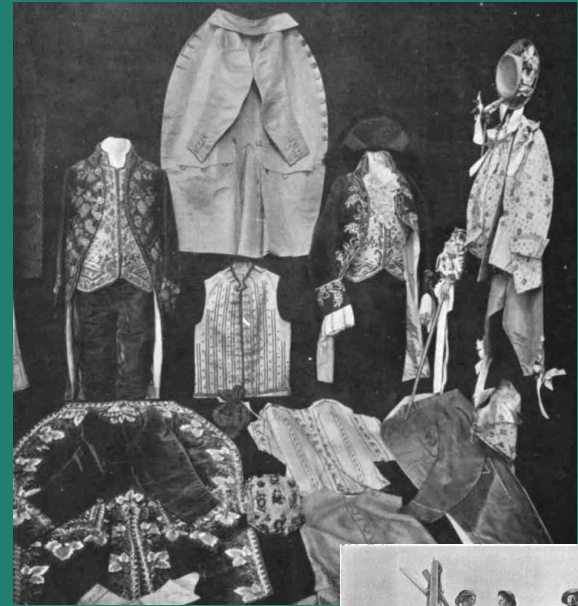
*Aaron Glass*

*Reader*

*Mei Mei Rado*

Late nineteenth-century Paris saw the mounting of the first dress history exhibition in 1874 and the opening of the first ethnography museum in 1882. Both coincided with the development and refinement of museum display technologies, including mannequins and dioramas. In the same period, scholars and politicians were theorizing ways to construct a unifying national identity after the tumult of the first half of the century. These theories were created alongside and at times overlapping with ideas about the evolutionary progress of cultures, which in the period, was considered inevitable. In this thinking, bourgeois Parisians were considered the “modern” citizen in contrast to the “pre-modern” figure of the rural French peasant and the foreigner. In this essay, I consider these historic developments alongside each other, emphasizing that the late nineteenth-century French national identity was developed by creating a unifying history and distancing the bourgeois French culture from its pre-modern “others.” With this distillation of national identity formation as my starting point, I compare the display of dress across a number of exhibitions, including the *Musée historique du costume* of 1874, the *Exposition des arts de la femme* of 1892, the two historic dress exhibits at the Exposition Universelle of 1900, and dress display at the Musée d’ethnographie du Trocadéro opened in 1882. Using exhibit catalogues, photographs, and contemporary journal articles that

discuss these museum displays, and relying on Benedict Anderson’s conception of a nation as an “imagined community,” I analyze the ways in which mannequins and dioramas were used to display dress, how these methods differed across time and context, and ultimately how national identity formation was, to use Benedict Anderson’s term, “imagined” into existence through these exhibits.







## Image Credits

### Heath

**Ballowe** Images by Heath Ballowe.

### Daniel Foster

**Chamberlin** Images by Daniel Foster Chamberlin.

### Emily

**Harvey** (Top) Jean-Joseph Vaudechamp, *Mrs. Antoine Julien Meffre-Rouzan*, 1839, 116.8 x 90.2 cm, Louisiana State Museum, 11427.2. <https://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/lsm-lps%3A378> (accessed February 25, 2023). (Bottom) Francois-Louis-Joseph Watteau, “39e Cahier (bis) des Costumes Francais, 35e Suite d’Habillemens a la mode en 1784. Vv.258 “Jeune Dame en Bergere seduisante...,” *Galerie Des Modes et Costumes Francais*, 1784, hand-colored engraving on laid paper, 37.1 x 26.4 cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 44.1572. <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/352851/gallerie-des-modes-et-costumes-francais-39e-cahier-bis-de?ctx=1b412de8-58fe-4e47-b901-6c439d4f55bd&idx=15> (accessed February 25, 2023).

### Jeffrey

**Law** *Rectangular wine container (fangyi)*. 12th Century BCE. *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/44776>.

### Louise

**Lui** (Top) Blue-and-white porcelain dish, Yuan dynasty, China. National Museum of Iran, Tehran. Chen Xiejun and Chen Kelun, eds. *Splendors in Smalt: Art of Yuan Blue-and-white Porcelain* (Shanghai: Shanghai Museum, 2012), 139. (Middle) *Nasij* with dragons and phoenixes, silk and gold thread lampas, Yuan dynasty, China. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (1995.73). Accessed December 4, 2022, <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1995.73> (Bottom) Blue-and-white porcelain flask, Yuan dynasty, China. National Museum of Iran, Tehran. Chen Xiejun and Chen Kelun, eds. *Splendors in Smalt: Art of Yuan Blue-and-white Porcelain* (Shanghai: Shanghai Museum, 2012), 120.

### Isabella

**Margi** (Top) Lucas Cranach the Younger, *Portrait of Prince Christian I of Saxony and Princess Marie of Saxony*, ca. 1564, Oil on panel, 49 x 24 in, Christie’s Auction House, New York. (Middle) Unknown British artist, *Three Young Girls*, ca. early 1600s, Oil on panel, 32.5 x 44 in, Denver Art Museum, 2021.30. (Bottom) Katarina Karlsdotter Vasa of Sweden

and Maria of the Palatinate, *Doll in the form of a small lady, Costume doll, Pandora*, ca. 1590s, Wire, silk, taffeta, velvet, silver thread, gold thread, seed pearls, hair, 195 mm, Livrustkammaren, 77\_LRK.

### Joshua

**Massey** Images by Joshua Massey.

### Talia A.

**Perry** Images by Talia A. Perry.

### Madeline

**Porsella** Claude Bragdon from *Projective Ornament* (Rochester, NY: Manas Press, 1915).

### Anna

**Riley** Box C105, Corning Museum of Glass Scientific Research Department Records, Circa 1956–2009, CMOG RG26. The Rakow Research Library, the Corning Museum of Glass. Corning, New York.

### Maura

**Tangum** (Top) This photograph is included in the front matter of Sylvia Regan’s *The Fifth Season* and shows an undated production of this play. (Middle) This is a 2016 photograph taken by the author (myself) that shows Maxwell Shieff’s signature and inscription within Davidson College’s copy of Paul Poiret’s *King of Fashion*. (Bottom) This undated photograph is from Bill Shieff’s private collection and shows Maxwell Shieff posing with a model at one of his backyard fashion shows.

### Zoe

**Volpa** (Top) *Musée rétrospectif des classes 85 et 86: le costume et ses accessoires à l’Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900 à Paris : Notices-Rapports de George Cain [et.al]* (Berlin: Saint-Cloud, 1900), 52, Exhibition Catalogue, HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.10058287400&view=1up&seq=11>. (Middle) *Musée rétrospectif des classes 85 et 86: le costume et ses accessoires à l’Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900 à Paris : Notices-Rapports de George Cain [et.al]* (Berlin: Saint-Cloud, 1900), 63, Exhibition Catalogue, HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.10058287400&view=1up&seq=11>. (Bottom) Anne Loyau, “Le Musée d’ethnographie du Trocadéro et ses transformations, 1878–1935 : configurations, espaces muséaux et réseaux,” in *La France Savante*, ed. Arnaud Hurel, 234–55 (Paris: Éditions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 2018), <http://books.openedition.org/cths/2714>.

# Colophon

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**Designers** Jocelyn Lau and Jackie Wang

