
Editor's Note

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The cover image of issue twenty-one of the *Getty Research Journal* features a detail of a Los Angeles landmark from 1932: *América tropical oprimida y destrozada por los imperialismos* (Tropical America oppressed and destroyed by imperialism) by Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974). Painted on the second-story exterior wall of the Italian Hall along Olvera Street in El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument, *América tropical*, at eighty feet wide by eighteen feet tall, remains the artist and activist's only extant in-situ mural in the United States. Against the backdrop of Mesoamerican architectural ruins and sculptures overtaken by rapacious vines and roots, the crucified Indigenous peasant emerges from the painting's center. An imperial eagle, head in profile and wings outspread, perches menacingly at the head of the cross above the laborer's slumped body. From the distant top-right corner of the composition, two crouching sharpshooters take aim at the enduring symbol of American colonial dominance.

Siqueiros's audacious imagery is a far cry from the idyllic tropical landscape he was commissioned to depict. The intended mural was but one part of a broader civic campaign of Mission Revivalism that sought to sanitize the Spanish colonial past and gloss over the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Mexican Americans from Los Angeles and other US cities in the early 1930s. Refusing city officials' persistent disavowals of colonial genocide and ethnic cleansing, Siqueiros's mural puts the violence front and center. It came as no surprise that the work was censored within months of its completion in October 1932—city authorities wasted no time whitewashing *América tropical* in phases. As author in this issue Jonah Gray elaborates in his essay "Worldwide Emotion: Interhemispheric Dialogue in David Alfaro Siqueiros's *América tropical oprimida y destrozada por los imperialismos*," the two revolutionary riflemen in the far corner were the first to be withdrawn from view. For despite their seemingly marginal location and their diminished shock value compared to the crucified central figure, Siqueiros positioned the sharpshooters strategically. As the only figures visible from street level, the armed revolutionaries personified the potential to inspire, empower, and, ultimately, recruit the laboring class to the ongoing cause of resistance.

By 1942 the mural was painted over in its entirety and largely forgotten until the 1960s, when the emerging Chicano art movement reignited interest in the buried histories of Mexican immigrants. Pioneering historian of Latin American art Shifra Goldman was pivotal to the literal uncovering of *América tropical*. After learning of the mural's existence directly from Siqueiros in Mexico City in 1968, she joined countless Chicano artists and activists to lead a campaign for its preservation. A partnership between the City of Los Angeles and the nascent Getty Conservation Institute (founded in 1985) was established in 1988 to conserve and protect the mural, beginning what would be a twenty-four-year collaboration. During this period, *América tropical* was studied and digitally documented, a meticulous condition survey was conducted, and the mural was stabilized. In 2012, eighty years after it was first shown, *América tropical* was finally reopened to the public with a protective canopy shelter, a viewing platform, and an interpretative center.

Siqueiros's mural is no less resonant in 2026, when the current US presidential administration continues to enact and enforce new campaigns of ethnic cleansing and xenophobic policy across this stolen land and support similar campaigns by other governments abroad. We witness the latest catastrophic episodes of scapegoating by a ruling party as the 250th anniversary of this nation approaches with much fanfare. Collective grief and despair rise daily as heart-wrenching news from around the globe accumulates. But in these dark times we develop resilience. Renewing our commitments to care for our friends, neighbors, and strangers, and embracing kinship across differences, we strengthen our local communities to overcome together. As our predecessors have done many times before us, we build strategic resistance, remembering that it is, as Siqueiros's Los Angeles mural reminds us, a collective effort.

We offer this latest issue of the journal to our readers as an invitation to practice slowing down and remaining open. We hope that the *Getty Research Journal* can be a shared platform for reading closely and listening generously, connecting voices and narratives that challenge us to consider other values and hold opposing ideas together in thought. Through close attention to the works of visual culture, varieties of intellectual labor, and reflections of cultural workers contained in the pages that follow, we hope that our readers might be nourished and inspired in some small way for the ongoing struggle toward social justice, equity, and mutual care.

Issue twenty-one contains seven full-length research articles, two shorter notices, and the second installment of the journal's new Conversation series. In "The Getty Peacock Fresco: Unraveling Its History Through Technical and Historical Investigations" by Kenneth Lapatin, Maria Svoboda, Sierra Schiano, Monica Ganio, and Karen Trentelman, a curator, a conservator, a former Getty Graduate Intern, and two conservation scientists join forces to uncover the unlikely provenance of the Getty Villa's iconic peacock fresco fragment. In "Adding Works to Words: A Letter about Qing Court Painter Jean-Denis Attiret, S.J. (1702–68) in the Getty Research Institute," Kristina Kleutghen addresses the transcultural life and work of French Jesuit artist Jean-Denis Attiret, court painter to the Qianlong emperor in China. Patricia J. Yu considers the

extended afterlives of bronze sculptures from the looted Qing-era Yuanmingyuan (Garden of Perfect Brightness) in her essay “Fragmented Bodies, Substitute Bodies: Zodiac Heads from the Garden of Perfect Brightness and the Translation of Cultural Heritage.” In “The Global System of the Arts at the End of the Nineteenth Century and the Commissioning of a Sepulchral Monument in Santiago, Chile,” Fernando Guzmán offers insight into the complex negotiations at play in the process of commemorating the late archbishop Rafael Valentín Valdivieso (1804–78) in sculptural form. Roger Fayet’s essay “Flaunting the Unfinished: *Non finito* as a Classicist Gesture in the Work of Ferdinand Hodler” analyzes the traces of technical tools in the work of the famed Swiss painter of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Lexington Davis’s interpretation of a series of Los Angeles performances by a feminist art collective in “Cleaning Up in Public: Mother Art’s Domestic Labor Performances, 1973–78” highlights the historically gendered, classed, and raced dimensions of socially reproductive work. With “Primed to See: Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe’s *Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers*,” Emilie Chesnutt Boone advances a timely rewriting of photographic history and its canon. Richly contextualized by Boone, Moutoussamy-Ashe’s pioneering text on Black women photographers is “foundational—not only historically significant but still impactful today, inspiring scholarship and spurring inquiry,” in the words of *Getty Research Journal* Editorial Advisory Committee member Mazie Harris, who recently organized the J. Paul Getty Museum iteration of *Photography and the Black Arts Movement, 1955–1985*, an exhibition originating at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, where it was curated by Philip Brookman and Deborah Willis. Writing in the first person in “Becoming Simone Forti: California, 1970–72,” Megan Metcalf pursues the material traces of performance in the archive of multidisciplinary artist Simone Forti. In her diaristic text, Metcalf reflects on the unique affordances and losses inherent to both dance and archival research as embodied practices. Finally, in this issue’s Conversation, we listen in as Kristen Collins, Glenn Phillips, and Nancy K. Turner, the cocurators of *Lumen: The Art and Science of Light*, take us behind the scenes of making an ambitious exhibition at the Getty Museum that explored how Muslim, Christian, and Jewish thinkers in the Middle Ages and contemporary artists of our time make sense of light, vision, and astronomy. *Lumen* was just one of about seventy exhibitions across Southern California that formed the third edition of the region-wide PST ART, whose 2024–25 theme was Art and Science Collide.

To promote transparency and reflect evolving open practices in the field, a dedicated peer-review drop-down field accompanies each article in the online issue to indicate the type of review that each manuscript received. Double-anonymous peer review, in which an author’s identity is masked from the reviewer and vice versa, has long been the standard in academic publishing due to the belief that it reduces bias. Following from this, many tenure-granting institutions still require faculty going up for promotion to publish following this benchmark. As authors and reviewers become more readily identifiable with their subfields of expertise and institutions, the double-anonymous standard has become increasingly challenging to maintain. It is also the

case that more authors today are inclined to write from the vantage point of their own uniquely embodied subjectivity, implicitly or explicitly disclosing their identities in the process. Aspiring to respond nimbly to this changing landscape, the *Getty Research Journal* now facilitates, where relevant, single-anonymous review, in which an author's identity is known by the reviewer, and fully transparent review. Proponents of the latter make the compelling case that removing the proverbial "mask" of anonymity has the potential to reduce even more bias and gatekeeping. Additionally, in exceptional cases where external peer review is not required, an article or conversation will undergo internal editorial review by the journal editors. While double-anonymous review remains our central procedure to support the needs of scholars and their work, we offer this wider range of review types to advance scholarly collaboration and accountability, accommodating those who may prefer to engage in unmasked and possibly longer-term dialogue. We would also like to acknowledge the behind-the-scenes labor of our reviewers, whose contributions made this issue immeasurably stronger. Effective with the preceding issue (number twenty), each research article and shorter notice in the *Getty Research Journal* is evaluated by a minimum of two expert reviewers.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge new and departing members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Committee. In August 2025, we bid farewell to David Saunders, former associate curator of antiquities at the Getty Museum, who, having been part of the journal's previous Editorial Board for more than a decade, was among the journal's longest-serving members. David brought continuity of vision and rigor—and no small measure of wit and levity—to our committee, and David's deep insight and pleasant company will be missed. David has headed back across the Atlantic Ocean to London, where he has assumed the role of curator of the Greek World at the British Museum. Last summer, we welcomed Jens Daehner, curator of antiquities at the Getty Museum, to the journal's Editorial Advisory Committee. Trained in classical archaeology at the Freie Universität in Berlin and a seasoned curator at the Getty Villa Museum, Jens has organized exhibitions on Hellenistic sculpture, Roman imperial portraits and their modern copies, and the role of ancient art in twentieth-century modernism. The Getty Museum's catalog of Roman sculpture and the reinstallation of the Villa's permanent collection galleries are among Jens's current projects. This past spring, we also said goodbye for now to Editorial Advisory Committee member Kristin Juarez, who was previously senior research specialist for the African American Art History Initiative at the Getty Research Institute. A generous collaborator and inspiring visionary, Kristin helped us reimagine and realize the new chapter of the *Getty Research Journal*, which continues to take shape as an institutional endeavor fueled by a small, committed team of individuals. We wish Kristin the best as head of collections at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles and look forward to future collaborations across this complex city that many of us call home.

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