

# Winterthur Program in American Material Culture

Class of 2022



Emily Bach

Raised in Maryland on Kent Island in close proximity to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, **Emily Bach** grew up frequenting museums and local historical sites. Since childhood, she constantly daydreamed about and reenacted how people in past centuries lived and, in particular, dressed. Pursuing these interests, she earned a B.A. in Public History with a minor in French from Shippensburg University. She developed a passion for costume history, textile conservation, and material culture while working at the university's Fashion Archives & Museum, interning at various museums, and participating in the Historic Deerfield Summer Fellowship Program. After graduating, she worked at the Maryland Historical Society as the Research Associate for the Fashion Archives—a repository holding more than 14,000 garments—and later as the museum's Curatorial Assistant. During this time, she co-curated *Spectrum of Fashion and Wild & Untamed: Dunton's Discovery of the Baltimore Album Quilts*, the latter being a unique exhibit that explored the connection between these quilts and the formation of modern occupational therapy. At Winterthur, she is excited to further her knowledge of objects and how they unravel the intimate stories often forgotten.

Growing up in western Maine, **Catherine Cyr** spent her childhood exploring historic sites and museums throughout New England. These visits inspired a deep interest in local history and material culture, which led her to Bowdoin College where she investigated the intersection of objects and society through a self-designed American Studies major. This path allowed her to begin considering objects, and their value to scholars and the public, contextually through multiple disciplines. While at Bowdoin, Catherine interned at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, researching the works of Winslow Homer and local Maine artists. She also interned at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where she researched eighteenth-century furniture in the Art of the Americas collection. Catherine later participated in the Chipstone Foundation's Object Lab and the Historic Deerfield Summer Fellowship Program. Most recently, Catherine worked at the Pejepscot History Center where she helped manage the museum's collection and two historic house museums. She extensively researched the Midcoast Maine region while at PHC, using objects to help weave the history of the area into engaging public programs. At Winterthur, Catherine looks forward to continuing her study of the history and material culture of Maine while also developing new research interests.



Catherine Cyr



Kelly Fu

A native of Xiamen, China, **Kelly Fu** received her B.A. from Yale University in 2019, graduating Summa cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and with distinctions in history. Her undergraduate thesis, a global microhistory, was awarded the Winifred Sturley Prize for best thesis in European history. She then studied at the University of Cambridge, receiving the Henry fellowship, annually awarded to one student from Harvard and Yale for study at Oxbridge, and as an honorary Cambridge Trust scholar. She graduated with distinctions with her MPhil in early modern history in 2020. Kelly's interests in global lives and transcultural itineraries prompted her journey into material culture. Researching projects that engaged with disparate corners of the global British Empire, from Barbados to Hong Kong, prompted Kelly to recognize the limits of textual archives in illuminating colonial lives: she is keen to learn how to read the archive of things at Winterthur. Working in multiple capacities at the Yale Center for British Art, from curating a student exhibition, to working as a research scholar in manuscripts, to heading the student guides program, also made Kelly aware of museums' powerful role in shaping ideas of the past: she is eager to tell better stories about people and things.

**Jena Gilbert-Merrill** grew up in New York City and developed a fond interest in objects and materiality from a young age. She spent her childhood engaged in art, dance, and music, exploring museums and architecture in the city, and poking around her grandparents' houses in rural Maine where she discovered the textiles, basketry, metalwork, horology, and farming that are in her family roots there. Jena brought her love of process and play to Swarthmore College where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in Studio Art and Educational Studies and became interested in the intersections between the hands-on work of art- and craft-making and experiential education. She completed a postgraduate program in Ceramics at the Maryland Institute College of Art, and began teaching at The Putney School Summer Arts, Waynflete School, and various community art centers, centering in her own making and teaching practices an attention to materiality, the processes underlying how things are made, and the empathy embedded in handmade objects. She is looking forward to her time at Winterthur where she hopes to immerse herself in all things material culture—to explore traditions in the creation and use of ceramics, to examine the pedagogic potential of objects and the untold stories they hold, and to reimagine her role as a maker & educator in this context.



Jena Gilbert-Merrill



**Rachael Kane**

**Alexandra Izzard** grew up in Los Angeles, frequently influenced by her grandmothers: one, a farmer who taught her the importance of utility in material, and the other a writer who fostered her appreciation of aesthetic. In the spring of 2020, she graduated summa cum laude and highest honors from Middlebury College with a major in Art History and a minor in Italian. Her love for the material world developed after she took a series of costume design classes only to realize that design frustrated her, but historic research was exhilarating. She continued her studies in historic dress through her research assistantship with the Middlebury College Antique Clothing Collection, taking on tasks from curation to education. She furthered her dive into the world of material culture with two summers at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History—the first in textile conservation and the second rehousing 18th century menswear. During her time at Middlebury College, she explored the world of technical art history, most importantly through her award-winning senior thesis that examined a Roman-Period Egyptian burial shroud through formal, scientific, and comparative analysis. Alexandra looks forward to bridging her knowledge of dress and textile history with the larger, inextricably connected world of material culture during her time in the Winterthur Program.



**Alexandra Izzard**

**Rachael Kane** grew up near Boston, Massachusetts, surrounded by rich narratives of regional history. Through educational programs at museums and national parks, she developed an early affinity for community storytelling and historical objects. This interest inspired her to major in cultural anthropology at Hamilton College, with a minor in Japanese language and literature. While a student, Rachael worked at the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art as a docent and educator, where she began to examine the complex ethical landscape of modern museum work. Drawing on her own hybrid background as educator, artist, and anthropologist, Rachael began to advocate for the use of material culture to help re-examine the historical record. After graduation, she returned to work for New England art and history museums with a new focus on institutional equality, especially in relation to race and gender. Through a variety of projects creating tours, writing curriculum and curating exhibitions, she worked to highlight untold stories from within each institution. At Winterthur, Rachael plans to continue this work, studying ways in which material culture can help us rediscover non-written histories and offer alternative perspectives on the complexities of American identity.

Born in Barranquilla, Colombia and raised in Colombia, Costa Rica, and Texas, **Laura Ochoa Rincon** grew up surrounded by a vibrancy of various different cultures. This exposure led her to develop a love and interest in the world of museums and material culture. From a young age, she and her father would spend hours discussing historical events and visiting museums together. This love of museums turned into a full-fledged passion during her undergraduate career at New York University where she double majored in History & Politics, Rights, and Development. During her time at NYU, she was able to work at the New-York Historical Society as a decorative arts intern and at the Prussian State Archives in Berlin, where she spent her junior year. Being a refugee, Laura's academic interests often intersect history, human rights, and their relation to objects. Her unique background has given her a love for immigrant history in the United States, and she hopes to take advantage of her time at Winterthur to further explore that passion and give voice to those whose narratives have often been ignored in museum settings.



**Laura Ochoa Rincon**



**Naomi Subotnick**

**Naomi Subotnick** has always seen objects as living stories. Originally from Providence, Rhode Island, she attended Stanford University where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in History and a minor in Art History. She earned honors with distinction for her senior thesis on the African American folk and blues musician Huddie Ledbetter, or Lead Belly. Her thesis focused on Ledbetter's fraught relationship with the white folk music collectors John and Alan Lomax, the ways in which his personal narrative has been obscured in the written archive, and the resilience of his own artistic agency. Naomi served as Editor-in-Chief of Stanford's undergraduate History journal, *Herodotus*, and has completed internships at the RISD Museum, the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, and the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. She has been a researcher for the Rhode Island Historical Society, using collection objects to restructure the narrative told in the John Brown House Museum. Naomi is interested in how archives shape public memory, and how visual art, music, and material culture can help us tell more ethical stories about the past. At Winterthur, she looks forward to further exploring these interests and developing new ones.