

Winterthur Program in American Material Culture

Class of 2023



Grace Ford-Dirks

Grace Ford-Dirks was born and raised in Charleston, South Carolina. School field trips to local museums and family vacations to historic sites fueled her interest in American history from an early age. Grace followed that interest to William & Mary in Virginia, where she majored in history and earned a NIAHD certificate. While at William & Mary, Grace interned in architectural research at Colonial Williamsburg, in the curatorial department at Winterthur, and at the Historic Charleston Foundation. At the Historic Charleston Foundation, she contributed to the Nathaniel Russell Kitchen House project and worked to recover and analyze material remains from the enslaved quarters on the Russell property. Grace received a Charles Center research fellowship that funded work on her honors thesis in Summer 2020. Her thesis, which drew an ideological link between Confederate memorialization and early historic preservation movements in Charleston, was awarded highest departmental honors and the university's Fraley Prize for excellent undergraduate research. Grace graduated summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from William & Mary in May 2021. She attended the 2021 MESDA Summer Institute, where she continued her research on the material culture of the American South. Grace plans to continue studying objects, architecture, and their connections to public memory during her time at Winterthur.

Ann Hewitt hails from Fairfield, Connecticut. A 2020 Mount Holyoke College graduate, she double majored in Ancient Studies and Anthropology while also completing a nexus in Museums, Archives and Public History. Studying abroad at College Year in Athens gave her the opportunity to work with ancient objects and to appreciate the challenges and necessity of preserving cultural heritage. Through the lens of archaeology and working on excavations in Cyprus, Italy, Kazakhstan, and on the east coast of the United States, her interest in the multifaceted nature of material culture deepened. However, it was Barbara Mathews's Smith College seminar on the material culture of New England 1630-1860 at Historic Deerfield that inspired her to pivot her focus. She attended the PINES course at Historic New England, interned at the Porter-Phelps-Huntington Museum in Hadley, Massachusetts and in the Nels Nelson North American Archaeology Department at the American Museum of Natural History. A 2021 Summer Fellow at Historic Deerfield, she researched the ideals embedded in Staffordshire ceramics marketed to children in the 19th century. Ann is looking forward to the Winterthur Program to further understand North Atlantic trade, cultural entanglement, and lives of artists and artisans and how their work illuminates American History.



Ann Hewitt



Sylvia Hickman

Sylvia Hickman grew up in the Boston area, where her interest in the historical lives and spaces of everyday people was stoked by frequent visits to museums and historical sites. As an American Studies major at Amherst College, she discovered the field of material culture and became fascinated by late 19th to early 20th century household objects and ephemera, the advent of manufactured goods, and foodways. She went on to spend two summers at Colonial Williamsburg interning with the curators of furniture and metal and undertook a yearlong curatorial and collections internship at the Nantucket Historical Association. Throughout her time at Amherst, Sylvia worked in the Archives & Special Collections, processing collections and cultivating a parallel interest in library work. After college, Sylvia designed and built sets and lighting for theatrical productions at Amherst College. She returned to archival work with a position at Smith College Special Collections, most recently as their Exhibitions Coordinator. In this role she led the development of the exhibition program for the new campus library. At Winterthur, Sylvia hopes to hone her skills at object analysis and bring those methodologies into broader conversations around exhibit design and object literacy.

Raised in East Brunswick, New Jersey, **Austin Losada** spent most of his life unaware of the complex stories hidden in art and material culture. It was not until he took an elective in Art History that he began to view objects and artworks as pathways to understanding cultural and social phenomena. After graduating from Rutgers University with a B.A. in Art History and German, Austin pursued an interest in curatorial work as the McCrindle Intern at Princeton University Art Museum, immersed himself in the art market as an intern in the Decorative Arts department at Christie's New York, and developed a love for collections as an archival intern at the John Chamberlain Estate. For two and a half years before coming to Winterthur, Austin developed his skills and interests as the first Mellon Post-Graduate Intern at the Zimmerli Art Museum where he assisted the American curator with exhibition planning, academic programming, and collections management. In this role, he independently curated the exhibition "*Beauty Among the Ordinary Things: The Photographs of William Armbruster*" (September 1 – December 30, 2022). At Winterthur, Austin hopes to explore vernacular photography's value as material culture and its ability to offer insight into diverse topics like class, leisure, and cultural identity.



Austin Losada



Abigail Lua

Abigail Lua was born in Olongapo City, Philippines and raised in North Wales, Pennsylvania. At an early age, she developed passions for reading, writing, and art, all of which informed her decision to study the History of Art at Bryn Mawr College. At Bryn Mawr, Abigail was especially eager to learn about global art histories and the ways in which cultural hybridity appeared in works of art. She explored this theme further through exhibition work at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Bryn Mawr College Special Collections. Beginning her junior year, she focused these interests on Philippine art histories, undertaking an independent research project where she discovered the vibrant world of Philippine *piña* (pineapple leaf) textiles. For the remainder of her undergraduate career, Abigail devoted herself to extensive study of these textiles, conducting research supported by the Hanna Holborn Gray Fellowship and working with the *piña* collection at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. This work culminated in her honors thesis, where she explored how the production, consumption, and exhibition of *piña* unveils interwoven politics of race, class, and gender of nineteenth-century Philippine society. At Winterthur, Abigail looks forward to exploring the ways in which American and global material cultures simultaneously challenge and expand one another.

Katrina Reynolds grew up in California, by way of England, Ethiopia, Bosnia, Kenya, and New York, where as a British-American she developed an appreciation for transcultural histories and objects. Katrina received her B.A. in History of Art and History and a minor in Journalism from UC Berkeley in 2019, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and with high distinction. Her award-winning undergraduate thesis in History of Art on John Singer Sargent’s portrait of Colorado Springs’s Elsie Palmer fueled an interest in material culture of the American West during the Gilded Age. Her thesis in History, which was awarded honors, probed ideas of kingship in Stuart Britain from a material culture perspective. Before joining the Winterthur Program, Katrina worked at Resnicow and Associates, where she supported strategic communications campaigns for cultural institutions and furthered her commitment to broadening access to the arts. As an undergraduate she supported projects in the curatorial, education, and development departments of Gainsborough’s House, Maidstone Museum, and the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology. At Winterthur, Katrina looks forward to immersing herself in the world of material culture and exploring how objects can be used to understand and connect the diverse communities of the past and present.



Katrina Reynolds



Riley Richards

During her childhood in Dunedin, Florida, a small town on the Gulf of Mexico, **Riley Richards** developed a passion for craft and art, learning techniques of ceramics and fiber arts from local teachers and family members and pursuing painting in her teenage years. As an undergraduate at Wesleyan University her love of art history and material culture blossomed as she became fascinated with the unwritten histories that could be told by the activities of artists and craftspeople, especially those in marginalized communities. This culminated in a senior thesis, for which she received high honors upon graduation that reconstructed the history of Newcomb Pottery in New Orleans, Louisiana in an attempt to recover the voices of the craftswomen who were employed and educated there at the turn of the twentieth century. During her time at Wesleyan she served as the Jim Dine Curatorial Intern at the Davison Art Center, the print collection held by the university. Here, as she presented works on paper to the public, Richards gained an understanding of the cultural contexts and implications which are held in each art object. At Winterthur she hopes to further her skills in object-based research and continue exploring craft as a practice integrally connected to subjects of gender, race, class, and labor.

Growing up in Philadelphia, **Ethan Snyder** was surrounded by rich and fascinating historical narratives. He studied English at Kenyon College, where he discovered a fascination with the interpretive significance of objects, spaces, and collections. Through his love of the novel, Ethan found himself taken by the power of narrative to imaginatively shape history, culture, and society. His thesis in part explored the connection between the historiographic projects of narrative and collecting through an analysis of Ralph Ellison’s object-laden novel *Invisible Man* and Walter Benjamin’s cultural criticism. After graduating, Ethan was able to work with and explore his interest in fin de siecle decorative art and craft at Freeman’s auction. In a rather circuitous series of events by way of his studies on the modernist writer Jean Toomer, he found himself at the Wharton Esherick Museum outside of Philadelphia, working in their collections and archives, as well as gathering oral histories. His experience at this unique studio museum has strengthened his appreciation of 20th century craft’s audacious ingenuity. In his free time Ethan enjoys reading and spending meaningful time with friends. At Winterthur, Ethan looks forward to exploring the library’s Arts and Crafts resources and learning about material science.



Ethan Snyder