

Winterthur Program in American Material Culture

Class of 2024



Dorian Cole
(they/them)

Dorian Cole grew up in Los Angeles before moving to Last Chance, Idaho in 2015. Between the many extraordinary museums in LA and the historic landscapes of Yellowstone, they developed an intense appreciation for public history, culminating in their work as a student ambassador at the 75th-anniversary commemoration ceremony for Pearl Harbor in high school. In 2022, Dorian graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from UC Berkeley with a double major in history and English. Their English honors thesis on Gothic constructions of class and gender in women's haunted house fiction received an honorable mention for the Dennis Lamb Award. Their history honors thesis investigating pre-Christian syncretism in the three earliest extant lives of the Irish Saint Brigid won the Berkeley History Department Citation and the Friends of Cal History Thesis Prize. Dorian has worked in both large- and small-scale museum settings ranging from the Smithsonian American Art Museum to Harriman State Park of Idaho and is excited to continue exploring the world of material objects. At Winterthur, they plan to cultivate the pedagogical strategies central to museum education and exhibit design in the hopes of creating more nuanced and insightful audience experiences at historic sites.

Em Dombrovskaya grew up in Moscow, Russia, exploring the city's rich history and cultural resources from a young age. As a history of art major at Haverford College, they became interested in intercultural communication and the stories of objects. Em's honors thesis examined works by photojournalist Max Penson in early Soviet Uzbekistan. While at Haverford, Em furthered their interest in museum work by interning in collections at the Museum of Russian Art in Minneapolis, MN, and the archives of the Woody Guthrie Center in Tulsa, OK. An interest in art as a means of communication also inspired Em's work with publications, first as a publications intern for both Philadelphia's Fringe Arts and the Fabric Workshop and Museum, and more recently as an editorial assistant focusing on books in language and literacy at Routledge. At Winterthur, Em looks forward to immersing themselves in interdisciplinary theory and honing their skills of interpretation which brings objects to life.



Em Dombrovskaya
(they/them)



Cecelia Eure
(she/her)

Born and raised just outside of Charlotte, North Carolina, **Cecelia Eure** is a 2022 graduate of the College of William & Mary with a double major in history and anthropology and a Certificate in Material Culture & Public History from William & Mary's National Institute for American History and Democracy (NIAHD). Though she has always loved museums, it was the discovery that compelling historical narratives are a form of advocacy that made her want to pursue a career in the field. She graduated summa cum laude with High Honors for her anthropology undergraduate thesis on historic trades interpretation in Colonial Williamsburg. She has completed internships with the National Park Service at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in interpretation and research as well as Colonial Williamsburg's Bob and Marion Wilson Teacher Institute. While at Winterthur, Cecelia is interested in studying how objects take on different purposes throughout time, memory (particularly concerning the American Civil War and Reconstruction), connecting material culture to the public, using objects to uplift underrepresented voices, and the American South.

Growing up in Wilmington, Delaware, **Laini Farrare** was surrounded by historical buildings and du Pont mansions. She spent her childhood and high school years exploring the many local historic towns in the Delaware Valley, with a particular love for African American history and historic preservation. She cultivated these interests at the University of Delaware, graduating with a BA in public policy and a minor in museum studies. Laini became further interested in historic architecture and found a passion to save older buildings from development. During her senior year, she interned with the University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture & Design. She also had the pleasure to research historic foodways at the Amstel House in Historic New Castle in Delaware. Post-graduation, she interned at Mt. Cuba Center, another du Pont estate, where she conducted an interpretive evaluation on new signage and interactive materials. All of these experiences have led her to be very interested in federal historic preservation initiatives, and public interaction with historical architecture and objects. At Winterthur, Laini greatly looks forward to learning about and from historic architecture and objects, and building skills to preserve and interpret the material past.



Laini Farrare
(she/her)



Becca Lo Presti
(she/her)

Becca Lo Presti grew up in Connecticut and reconnected with her childhood fascination with history at Hofstra University. In a seminar course about World War I, she developed an interest in the medical advancements associated with the war – specifically how the human body functioned as a material for medical use. She went on to write her honors thesis on the development of facial plastic surgery during World War I, with an emphasis on French veterans who received such procedures. In addition to these studies, Becca interned at Hancock Shaker Village, the Hill-Stead Museum, and the Nassau County Museum of Art. She also became President of Hofstra’s History Club and held a fellowship at Hofstra’s Center for Civic Engagement. Becca graduated summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Hofstra with her BA in history and minors in art history and French in 2020. Following this, she moved to Vermont to complete an AmeriCorps year of service at the Vermont Granite Museum in accessioning and development. Becca is thrilled to study at Winterthur and is especially excited to continue her examination of medical history through the lens of material culture.

When **Lyric Lott’s** unconventional high school education led her to enroll in university courses at the age of fifteen, she found in her studies that many of the museums she loved across the world were plagued with ethical and moral issues, ranging from cases of cultural destruction and looting to the unethical display of human remains. She made these matters the focus of her education at Smith College, where she received her BA in history and museums in 2021, concentrating her final capstone on the troubled history of the acquisition and exhibition of ancient Egyptian mummies. While at Smith, she also gained practical experience working with fragile volumes in the college’s Mortimer Rare Book Collection and intricate textiles at Historic Deerfield. In the past year, Lyric has completed a MPhil in early modern history at the University of Cambridge, where she received a distinction on her dissertation, *Curating the World in the First Decade of the British Museum*. In all of her work, Lyric strives to shed light on the darker histories, both past and present, of the museum world, advocating for more equitable and ethical museum displays, an endeavor which she is eager to continue at Winterthur.



Lyric Lott
(she/her)



Kelly Pedigo
(she/her)

Kelly Pedigo grew up in Fredericksburg, Virginia, a town brimming with museums and historic sites. There, her love for history and storytelling matured during the four years she worked as a docent and educator at the George Washington Foundation and Washington Heritage Museums. This work helped Kelly grasp the virtue of historic interpretation in making meaningful connections with visitors, and the power of everyday objects to convey stories of people underrepresented in the written record. After graduating from Germanna Community College, she pursued these interests at the University of Mary Washington, where she received her BA in historic preservation with a minor in digital studies. While a student, Kelly assisted in the creation of an on-campus, permanent exhibition and companion website honoring Dr. Venus Jones, a prominent neurologist and the University’s first Black female graduate. She also completed a research project focused on a quilt top in a local museum, blending textile studies with archaeological methods to learn more about its creator. At Winterthur, Kelly looks forward to advancing her skills in documenting object-driven stories as well as examining how the selection of objects for preservation and display shapes historical narratives.

Taylor Rossini grew up on the Connecticut shoreline, halfway between two institutions that were fixtures of her childhood: the Yale Center for British Art and the Florence Griswold Museum. Her love of historic homes and fine art led her to Middlebury College, where she received a BA in art history. While a student, Taylor was an interpreter at the Nantucket Historical Association and an intern at the Middlebury College Museum of Art, where she coordinated chemical testing on a Medardo Rosso bust of murky provenance. Taylor’s undergraduate thesis, which traced the “procession” of a life-size marble of St. Rose of Lima from Rome to Peru, won the Christian A. Johnson Prize for best art history thesis. After graduation, Taylor traded the early modern Spanish world for 19th-century Vermont, serving for two years as Grant Writer and Collections Associate at the Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History, where she developed exhibits and programming that reexamined the eclectic nineteenth century collection with an eye toward marginalized histories. Her time at the Sheldon inspired an ongoing interest in how objects are implicated in the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes. At Winterthur, she hopes to further explore hierarchies of race and gender in private-turned-public collections.



Taylor Rossini
(she/her)