

Interview with Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Co-Founder of *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*

BB: This is Brigid Boyle, Franchesca Fee, and Virginia McBride of the *Rutgers Art Review* (RAR) interviewing Professor Petra Chu of Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, on September 17, 2019. So, *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* (NCAW) was founded in 2002 by you, Peter Trippi, and Gabriel Weisberg in part to fill a scholarly gap created by the discontinuation of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. Could you describe your motivations for establishing the journal and also some of the logistical challenges that you faced?

PC: The launch of NCAW was not a direct response to the discontinuation of *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, though they happened in the same year, 2002. Around 2000, I was the President of the Association of Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art (AHNCA); the association had been founded in 1993 and it was well-established, but after a lot of activity in the beginning, not many new things were happening. So the AHNCA board felt it might be a good idea to put together a questionnaire and ask the members what they thought the association could do. Overwhelmingly, the membership wanted to have a journal because there really wasn't one at the time. It is true that the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* was heavily (though not exclusively) focused on the nineteenth-century, but it was mostly devoted to French art.

We formed a small team, comprised of Gabriel Weisberg, Peter Trippi, and me. Initially we were not very forward-thinking and tried to create a paper journal. We found a publisher, and we were about to sign a contract, when he came up with some provisions that made us extremely uncomfortable, and so we didn't sign it. That put us a bit in a bind. First of all, we had promised the membership that we would publish a journal. Secondly, we had received \$10,000 to launch the journal from the Swiss art historian Hans Lüthy, who, after he retired, had created a foundation to support art history projects. So we felt that we had to do something and we decided to start a digital journal. We had no idea what we were getting into, but it seemed doable. We didn't need a publisher; we could do it ourselves and thus weren't dependent upon others. We were very lucky to find Emily Pugh, who was at that time a graduate student at CUNY (The City University of New York), which had a digitally published graduate student art history journal—I'm not sure whether they still have it—which Emily had developed. So, she designed the journal, and this is how it all got started. It was a bit serendipitous, really, and it wasn't what we originally had planned.

VM: Can I ask, if you recall, what are some of the conditions stipulated by the publisher that made you nervous?

PC: I don't remember. It was twenty years ago, but I think it had to do with some financial issues that the publisher had not made clear to us in the beginning—or that we had not understood.

VM: That makes sense.

FF: Okay, shall we move to the third question? Your current staff includes five Editors, a Web Developer, an Access and Preservation Advisor, and an Editorial Board comprising fourteen members from across the globe. How large was your initial team and how have your staffing needs changed since 2002?

PC: So initially we only had two Editors, whom we called Managing and Executive, in addition to a Book and Exhibition Reviews Editor. The Managing Editor does the front end of the production and the Executive Editor the back end. It's a crucial position that was initially held by Peter Trippi, then by Martha Lucy, and currently by Isabel Taube. The Book and Exhibition Reviews Editor, originally Gabriel Weisberg, now David O'Brien, works pretty much in his own niche. After a couple of years, we began to feel, "Well, this is all nice, we have this e-journal, but it might as well be a paper journal online." We weren't really using the medium effectively. So, that's how we came up with the idea of Digital Art History (DAH), because, of course, most digital humanities projects can't be properly published in paper journals.

At the time, I was a visiting scholar at the Getty Center, and the scholar who had the office next to me was Anne Helmreich, who was then, and still is, very active in DAH. (In fact, her current position is Associate Director of Digital Initiatives at the Getty Research Institute.) She encouraged us to embark on that road. We applied for and received a Mellon grant to do a series of DAH articles, and in 2012 we published our first DAH article by Anne Helmreich and Pamela Fletcher, together with David N. Israel and Seth Erickson. We immediately realized that publishing DAH articles was a much bigger job, on our end, than traditional articles. I know you have more questions about this, so we'll come back to it later, but we felt that we had to add someone with more technical expertise to the Editorial Board who would just deal with the DAH articles. Our first DAH Editor was Elizabeth Buhe, who also contributed one of the Mellon-funded articles. So that was one addition to the Editorial Board. At some point we also added an Editorial Board member who could help us with access and preservation. At first, this was an art his-

torian, Sura Levine, who did many good things for *NCAW*, including getting us an ISSN number. Later we invited Alexandra Provo, a librarian at NYU, to be our Access and Preservation Advisor, as we found that librarians know a great deal more about this than most art historians. In addition to the board members, we have a Web Developer. Emily Pugh was the first to hold that job, now it is Allan McLeod. And we have copyeditors. Now to the Editorial Advisory Board—do you have an Editorial Advisory Board?

BB: We have a student Editorial Board.

PC: It's not particularly useful to us and that is really our fault. We ask individual members sometimes to review an article or to recommend a reviewer. But that's about it. We could make much better use of Advisory Board, but it would require more time and effort on our part.

BB: Yeah, that's good to think about.

VM: So from the beginning, *NCAW* has been committed to open access, which means it does not charge readers or institutions to read, download, distribute, or print its content. How did adopting this open-access model affect the way that you operate, particularly in terms of finances?

PC: Yeah, it's a very good question. From the beginning, the three of us were committed to open access, and we were able to do so because we were part of AHNCA. AHNCA has something like 300 members, and they pay membership dues, and the organization doesn't really use the membership dues for much. It has a newsletter that comes out twice a year, but it's also electronic, so it's not that costly to produce. Maybe 50% of our budget comes from the AHNCA membership. Moreover, by the time we started *NCAW*, AHNCA had already applied for 501(c)(3) status. That was handy because we could accept gifts (including the \$10,000 starting grant that we received) and grants. In addition to membership dues and grants, we raise money. Almost all the money we have raised, with the exception of the DAH grants from the Mellon and Terra Foundations, has come from dealers and collectors. In the beginning, we used this money for operating expenses. In the last few years we have begun raising money for a *NCAW* endowment. Our ideal would be to have an endowment of half a million dollars. If the rates were not totally miserable, we could run the journal from the interest, maybe still with assistance from the AHNCA dues. But, raising money for an endowment is difficult. We are maybe a little bit over one-fifth of the way.

VM: That's something!

PC: And again, the people who have given to the endowment have been dealers and collectors. Very little from universities. Do you get some money from Rutgers?

BB: Our budget has fluctuated year to year.

PC: Well that's what we have found. In the past, many people told us, "Why don't you have a university adopt the journal?" And in the beginning we thought, "Yeah, that's a great idea." Well, my own university had no interest, nor did another university, with a great deal more money, that we approached. But, even if there were a university that wanted to adopt *NCAW*, I would worry about the continued support.

VM: Quite.

PC: That's been my fear. But the funding is a constant worry. We have also thought of connecting with a publisher, but there are not many publishers who want to publish open-access journals.

VM: Right.

PC: We are looking at all options. If we could build our endowment, that would be the ideal, because then we would be independent.

VM: Do these art dealers who contribute operational funds ever ask to advertise on the site?

PC: Yeah, they sometimes do and that's no problem. Our main problem with dealers is that some of them have shifted their interest from nineteenth- to twentieth-century or contemporary art.

VM: Of course.

PC: So at that point they are not interested in supporting us anymore—understandably. For many years we had a yearly grant from FADA, which is the Fine Art Dealers Association. Many of its members, the majority of them, were focused on nineteenth-century art. Almost all of them right now have moved on to twentieth-century art.

VM: That's a real shame.

PC: Yeah well, that's the way it goes...

BB: This is something that we've struggled with at the *RAR* as well, because we transitioned from a subscription-based, print journal to an online model in 2012, and that cut off some of our existing revenue streams. And a lot of students don't have the knowhow or time to fundraise, so it's been an ongoing problem.

PC: We get a little bit of money from EBSCO. Are you in EBSCO?

BB: We are.

PC: Apparently for the amount of users that come through libraries to your site, you get a little percentage. For us it's not negligible.

BB: Earlier you mentioned Emily Pugh, who served as your Web Developer for over a decade and helped design your original website using the Joomla! Content Management System. We were curious what features or criteria were most important to your team when you were building that first website?

PC: Well we initially did not use Joomla!.

BB: Oh okay.

PC: I forget what our first content management system was. We moved to Joomla! later. However, I'm interested in your question, because we now would like to redesign our site again. We've postponed it a little bit because of recent staff changes, including a new Book and Exhibition Reviews Editor and a new Digital Humanities Editor, Carey Gibbons. But in any case, we want to develop a short questionnaire to be sent to all AHNCA members and maybe other readers. We could ask such a basic question as, "What do you / don't you like about the site?" That would give us some pointers as to how to redesign it. We should also look at some other open-access art history journals developed in recent years. The *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* has just been redesigned. And then there are digital periodicals such as *British Art Studies*, *Panorama*, and *Journal18*. We need to look at all of them and come up with some ideas for our redesign.

BB: Yeah, sometimes we benchmark our own site against others, too.

PC: Which reminds me—I wanted to tell you that with several open-access e-journals in art history, we have formed a consortium. It's kind of informal, but we do get together at every College Art Association (CAA) meeting, and it is very helpful to talk to fellow editors, even if we usually just get togeth-

er for one or two hours. If one of you is going to this year's meeting, you should come. It's interesting to hear about new developments in e-publishing and also to learn about the different ways that journals approach peer review, production, and archiving.

BB: That would be great.

VM: Yeah, that would be really cool to hear about.

FF: Digital publications have some obvious advantages over print scholarship, and we've talked about some of these. For example, *NCAW* does not limit the number of images that can accompany an article or review. What other benefits does electronic publishing offer?

PC: Well, the number of pages is also, essentially, unlimited. We can go with a five-page article or with something really long, like a hundred pages. We don't really like long articles because our major cost—I'm not sure about yours—is copy-editing. From the very beginning we felt that we had to have a well copy-edited journal because, particularly in the beginning, people looked a little askance at online journals. There were a lot of scholars who didn't want to publish in them because they thought it wouldn't count for their tenure or promotion. This attitude has, I think, pretty much disappeared. But still, to have a journal that is not properly copy-edited is harmful to our reputation. So copy-editing is really our major expense, and a hundred-page article, unless it's very well written, is cost-prohibitive. But we have basically no requirements or restrictions on the length of the text. Another advantage, and this is really from the point of view of the authors, is that we have a quick turnover. August 15th is the deadline for our spring issue. If the article is okay, and the peer reviewers say yes, it will come out in March. To get that kind of turnover in a paper journal is impossible.

Another benefit of the open-access e-journal is that the outreach is unlimited. People in China or Australia can read our articles, as long as they have a computer. When we first started—I still remember this, because I was moved by it—maybe the second year, I got a check for \$25 in an envelope. It was from somebody who taught at a small American college that had no library to speak of. She wrote, "We have no art history journals in our library, but now, thanks to your journal, I can assign scholarly articles to my students to read."

Finally, an advantage of e-publishing that is often cited is that you can make changes, but that is a mixed blessing. If, after going online you find a mistake that is really egregious, you can correct it, which is nice. But you cannot

begin to allow authors to make changes all the time. We've actually just recently made a policy to severely limit that option.

BB: Right.

VM: So in the spring of 2012, *NCAW* received an Andrew Mellon Foundation Grant to support new approaches to digital research. Between 2012 and 2015, you published six articles that incorporated zoomable images, time-lapse maps, 3D modeling, and other innovative features. What were your biggest takeaways from this experimental series?

PC: It has been an incredible adventure and we have learned a lot from it. As for the biggest and most unexpected takeaway, it has been that DAH articles require new ways of thinking about peer review.

VM: Really?

PC: Well because, ideally, in a DAH article or project, the conclusions come from the digital tool the author has developed. So, the tool comes first, the article second. If we put the peer review at the end of the process, and we reject the article, the author will have spent a great deal of time on developing a tool without the desired result of publication, at least not in *NCAW*. This is even more problematic because all of our DAH articles are grant-funded, and since the grant money goes to the development of the tool, it is difficult to reject the article in the end. Our former Digital Humanities Editor Elizabeth Buhe has been very helpful in creating a special peer review process for DAH articles, whereby we ask DAH authors to submit very detailed proposals, which we then send out to two peer reviewers: a technical peer reviewer, who looks primarily at the proposed digital tool, and a content peer reviewer, usually an art historian specialized in the area of the proposal. And that has worked, up to a point. We ask that authors have a research question that their digital tools may answer, and we ask them to think about the conclusions that may come out of it, realizing that, in the end, the conclusions may be different. But, at least there should be a hypothesis. Once authors have completed their digital tools and written their articles, we send both the article and the digital tool to a peer reviewer again. So it's a cumbersome process that takes a large amount of time. The timespan that we have for a regular article, whereby you submit August 15th and you publish in March, is impossible for the digital humanities articles. They require at least a year, and sometimes even more.

BB: Have you ever been in the situation of funding a digital humanities project that then, after peer review, you decided wasn't suitable for the journal?

PC: Let's put it this way, some articles have been better than others. But in the end, we have published all that were accepted in the approval stage, except for one, but that was because the authors withdrew.

BB: Have your technical reviewers come from museum contexts or from outside the field?

PC: Some from museums, some from universities. Many universities right now have digital humanities professors. That's all they do. They come from different backgrounds so it is a question of finding one with an interest related to the project at hand.

VM: As the site's technology continues to improve, are there new types of digital research that you're especially excited about featuring?

PC: We are looking for a certain amount of variety. Many of the projects that are proposed to us are mapping projects, and though they have obvious merit, they are not all equally exciting. On the other hand, 3D projects are appealing, but they're very expensive. In the last few years, we have changed our minds a little about DAH projects; initially we were very rigorous, and we felt that in a serious DAH article, by definition, the conclusions had to come from the digital tool. But ever since we did the special issue on Hiram Powers's *The Greek Slave* in the summer of 2016, which had a good deal of low-tech features that served to enhance the articles rather than shape them, we have become more lenient, as we received so much positive feedback.

BB: That was a fantastic issue. We really loved that one. As a follow-up to that, you mentioned that you received another grant from the Terra Foundation to publish digital humanities articles on American topics. I'm curious as to how those digital projects have compared to your earlier Mellon-funded articles, in terms of sophistication?

PC: The main change, I think, is that there is now more open-source software available, and that the software is becoming increasingly user-friendly. I also believe—but perhaps it is wishful thinking—that increasingly software programs are designed with archiving in mind. Archiving, of course, is especially problematic with these digital humanities projects, and no one quite knows what the future will bring.

VM: It's a huge problem. Nobody really knows what to do, so you're certainly not alone.

BB: So with both the Mellon and the Terra articles, have you had any way to measure the performance of their different digital features in terms of popularity, like the number of clicks or downloads that they have?

PC: To tell you the truth, most of our performance measurement has been through anecdotal means—feedback we have received from readers. *The Greek Slave* issue, for example, was very popular and we have received quite a bit of feedback as a result. The same is true for the article by Sally Webster and David Schitek on the Lenox Library Gallery, which is visually quite stunning and has a more immediate impact than some other projects.

FF: In 2017, the *RAR* began soliciting digital humanities projects in its annual Call for Papers, inspired in part by *NCAW*. So far we have not received any projects for consideration. How can we help make the digital humanities more accessible and attractive to graduate students?

PC: I'm not surprised. We really have had to work hard to find projects, even with money to offer—thanks to the Mellon and Terra grants. There are not that many people doing DAH projects. We know because we have put out many calls for proposals. If you have no money to support them, it's even more difficult. I really have no answer to your question. Perhaps it would be useful to contact some professors who supervise thesis projects and ask whether any of their students are involved in the digital humanities. This is definitely something that a younger generation of art historians is interested in.

BB: Yeah, we could take a more active approach to recruiting.

PC: Yeah, just putting it out there is not enough. Now, there's also a new digital humanities affiliate society of CAA called the Digital Art History Society. Did you know about this? It will have its first session at the 2020 annual conference in Chicago, where, I presume, people are going to talk about their projects. I think that is the purpose. I have not been that involved, but we're trying to make our consortium an affiliate of this society.

VM: Yeah, I think you're right that there are a lot of people who, even if they have an interest in conducting digital humanities research, don't have the skill set or the training. I was talking to someone just yesterday at the University of Virginia who was telling me about their new year-long digital humanities training program. For the first half of the year, they teach you different digital skills. In the second half of the year, you are encouraged to implement them in a collaborative project with other graduate students.

BB: That's fantastic.

VM: Yeah, it sounds really cool. Universities are starting to help inculcate some of this skill set. But, we have a lot further to go, it seems.

PC: Yeah, when looking for DAH articles you could also write to some of these new digital humanities specialists, you know. You have a digital humanities specialist at Rutgers?

VM: Yes, Francesca Giannetti is the Digital Humanities Librarian at Rutgers, and she's consistently offered us great advice.

PC: Of course, when you talk to these specialists you will find that some people work on very large digital humanities websites. For example, we were contacted by someone who did a huge website on World War I. But we don't want to publish websites. We are a journal, and a journal publishes articles, in which authors have to make a point; there has to be an argument.

VM: We talked a bit about digital preservation initiatives, but we'd like to ask you specifically about the Mellon-funded project Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe (LOCKSS).

PC: Yes, that's a very good question.

VM: You partnered with them in 2004. It's operated out of Stanford, and it seeks to safeguard data. Can you describe the services that this project provides?

PC: Yes, we did partner with them in the beginning, but when we switched to Joomla! LOCKSS discontinued the partnership. That's why we invited Alexandra Provo, who is a librarian in New York, to join our board and look into the sustainability issue. Now we are archived by NYARC (New York Art Resources Consortium). NYARC is a Mellon-funded initiative of the Frick Art Reference Library, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art. Among other initiatives, they archive digital publications. For the last three years, our consortium has also met with a representative of JSTOR. And JSTOR is interested in incorporating open-access journals into their digital library. They don't want to just link to the site, they want to put them into their own format, so that basically means archiving. Now JSTOR does everything by discipline. We have to wait until they get to art history, and we don't know when this will happen. To be part of JSTOR would be great because it is also a major indexing tool, so it would benefit both access and preservation.

Speaking of access, searching, and indexing, perhaps I should say a little bit more about impact factors. For many years, we had very few submissions from European authors. I talked to a European colleague about it and she said, "Well you're not in the Web of Science." The Web of Science is a citation index, which measures articles' impact factor. In America, especially in the humanities, the impact factor is not that important. But, in Europe, if you apply for a job, you have to indicate the impact factor for each one of your articles.

VM: Wow, I did not know that. That's horrifying.

PC: I know, it's scary, but it is important to know. We realized that European authors did not want to publish in *NCAW* because it was not indexed in the Web of Science. So now we are indexed there, but the process has been quite difficult.

BB: Along similar lines, in 2018, the journal joined Crossref, a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) Foundation, which of course helps publishers assign stable links to articles, making them easier to find and cite. Have you enjoyed that collaboration with Crossref?

PC: Well, I think you have to do it. Librarians feel that you're not serious if your articles don't have DOI numbers. It's a mark of professionalization. From our point of view, there are two aspects to DOI numbers. One is that your own articles get such numbers; the other is that you need to encourage authors to use DOI numbers for digital articles that they cite. That's not always easy.

FF: One challenge shared by both digital and print publications is navigating copyright laws and image licensing policies. Does the journal's open-source model present obstacles to image publication? Are the image reproduction possibilities offered by an electronic format somewhat tempered by rights restrictions?

PC: In the beginning, we went about obtaining permissions in the traditional way, and we told authors to obtain licensing agreements for all of their images. But to our surprise and shock, the licensing agreements that were sent to us were for limited time periods. So, authors received a license for, let's say, three or six months, but when that period was over, the license had to be renewed, and the authors or *NCAW* would have to pay a relicensing fee. Or else, the image would have to be removed from the site. You understand that that would be impossible. If the journal were to continue for more than a few years, we would need a full-time person to deal with the relicensing,

and the accumulated fees would become prohibitive. Today museums have given up on the idea of relicensing for online publications. But because this issue came up right at the beginning, we became very nervous about the licensing issue. As I gave a talk at CAA about digital publishing and image licensing, I fell in with an informal group of art historians and editors interested in licensing and copyright. We met several times and consulted with a lawyer who was an expert in copyright. He explained to us that there is a big difference between copyright and licensing. The first has a firm legal basis, the second does not. Because *NCAW* is a journal of nineteenth-century art history, it doesn't have to worry about copyright, because, with a few exceptions, the works of the artists discussed in *NCAW* are in the public domain. Of course, there is the issue of the photographer's copyright. This was the subject of a lawsuit in 1999, *Bridgeman Art Library v. Corel Corp.* The ruling was that a reproduction of a two-dimensional image, though it may require some technical skill, is not an artwork, and so it can't be copyrighted. It's a little different with sculpture, since there's art involved—you know, Edward Steichen photographing Auguste Rodin—and the same is true for architecture. As for the licensing, we try to bypass it. For images of two-dimensional artworks, we encourage our authors to get their images from sources other than the museums or collections that own them, unless these museums have abandoned licensing fees, as many recently have. There is much open-source imagery available right now, even for images of three-dimensional artworks, and we list some of these sources on our site. In the case of sculpture or architecture, authors can also take their own photographs. Copyright and licensing were our biggest worries in the beginning, but now that's not the case anymore.

VM: It's a pretty refreshing approach, actually. To turn to the content of the journal, a typical issue of *NCAW* contains four or five articles and ten to fifteen reviews. However, you also publish periodic thematic issues, beginning with "[The Darwin Effect: Evolution and Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture](#)" in the spring of 2003, which was guest-edited by Linda Nochlin and Martha Lucy. How did this collaboration come about?

PC: Well, at that time, Martha Lucy was on our Editorial Board.

VM: There you go.

PC: She approached us about publishing the symposium papers in *NCAW*. At first we thought of making it into a regular issue. But then we felt that it would have too much of an impact on our regular submission and acceptance flow. So we decided to do a special summer issue, and since then all of our special issues have been published in the summer. Many requests

have come to us for these special summer issues, but we don't have a budget for them, so the condition is that the guest editors of the special summer issues have to find their own money. That is a bit of a barrier, though it's not really that expensive. Many of the proposals for special issues are the result of symposia, like the Darwin issue, and sometimes the organizers of a symposium can find money for the special issue from their universities or from the agencies that funded the symposium. In the case of the *Greek Slave* issue, the Terra Foundation and the Yale Center for British Art paid for it.

BB: As a follow-up to that, since "The Darwin Effect," you've published thematic issues on Art Nouveau, British Art, the *Greek Slave*, and also a special issue dedicated to Patricia Mainardi. Do you have any upcoming thematic or special issues in the works?

PC: We have a special issue coming up in summer 2020. The multi-year Terra grant that we received is for six articles and a special summer issue on "The Ambient Interior." It's on the effects that interiors have on the people living in, or visiting, them—with a focus on the late nineteenth century. We had a very successful symposium on this topic in New York in February 2019.

FF: In the spring of 2006 you debuted "New Discoveries," short articles in which authors highlight previously unpublished artworks that either resurfaced at market or were recently acquired by a museum. For example, the [first installment](#) of "New Discoveries" discussed an unsigned portrait that had been newly attributed to Eugène Delacroix. What prompted this new content section?

PC: Well, I told you that we receive much support from art dealers and collectors.

All: Yes.

PC: We felt that the "New Discoveries" articles might be of interest to them. We wanted to show that we had something to offer to the art market—that we publish not just academic articles, but also pieces about new works that have resurfaced, often thanks to dealers. Generally speaking, we have tried to bridge the gulfs that exist between academia, museums, and the art market, as we feel that they have much in common and much to offer one another.

VM: Since 2003, NCAW has co-sponsored an annual graduate student symposium with AHNCA and the Dahesh Museum of Art. Each year, one

presenter is awarded a \$1000 prize and given the opportunity to publish her paper in *NCAW*. How did this partnership come about?

PC: Peter Trippi, when we started *NCAW*, worked for the Brooklyn Museum, and then became Director of the Dahesh Museum. As the Director of the Dahesh Museum, he started a graduate student symposium. It was really his idea, and it was a Dahesh Museum initiative. But, because Peter was part of *NCAW*, and *NCAW* was affiliated with AHNCA, we became close to the Dahesh Museum, which has been very generous both to AHNCA and the journal—one of our staunchest supporters, in fact. When the Dahesh Museum closed, we were afraid that the graduate symposium would disappear. But Pat Mainardi, the Programming Chair on the AHNCA board, continued it at other locations, and the Dahesh Museum continued to fund it. Part of the funding is used for awarding a prize for the best paper, which then may be published in *NCAW*.

BB: To backtrack slightly, you yourself have contributed several reviews and “New Discoveries” articles to the journal over the years. What’s it like to publish in a journal for which you yourself are Managing Editor?

PC: Well I told you already that the book and exhibition review section is rather separate. For a long time this was Gabriel Weisberg’s domain, but since 2019, the Reviews Editor has been David O’Brien. Whenever I did write a book review, it was always because Gabe Weisberg had asked me. The “New Discoveries” section is different. It is not peer-reviewed. Sometimes an author comes to us with an idea; at other times, we hear of a newly discovered work, which we then try to match with an author. Finding an author is not always easy, and sometimes if I am desperate, I just do it myself.

FF: In your inaugural issue, you asked five scholars to reflect on future areas of growth in the field of nineteenth-century art history. Among other things, they envisioned an increase in interdisciplinary studies and intermedial approaches, and they argued that nineteenth-century art would remain relevant in the new millennium. Seventeen years later, how have their predictions borne out?

PC: It’s a good question. I’m not sure whether you heard Pat Mainardi’s talk at CAA a couple of years ago about where art history is going [“The Crisis in Art History,” 2011]. She, of course, feels that there is an increasing emphasis in academia and museums on contemporary art, and that this emphasis comes at the cost of the art of earlier periods. There’s some truth to that. If you were to study art history faculty replacements over the past ten years, you would probably find that a number faculty members teaching, let’s say,

medieval, baroque, or nineteenth-century art have been replaced by specialists in contemporary art. Is that true at Rutgers?

VM: I don't feel that way, but we may just be behind the curve a little bit.

FF: I think we've got a good balance.

BB: At least right now.

PC: In the art market too, there is a shift away from nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century art to contemporary.

VM: Oh yeah.

PC: However, all of that being said, we still get many proposals for articles for *NCAW*, and I feel that there is still a lot of interest in the field. Much of it is, indeed, interdisciplinary: in fact, I am just now working on the spring issue and sending submissions to peer reviewers, and I felt that almost every article needed to be sent to an art historian and to someone in a different discipline, to do justice to the interdisciplinary character of the article. Judging by the submissions we receive, the field is getting more interdisciplinary and less Franco-centered. I am not sure whether this is because authors feel that *NCAW* is more open to non-French art or because more people are, in fact, working on non-French art. Among students, would you feel that to be the case?

BB: Certainly at Rutgers. We have a strong Soviet art collection at the Zimmerli Art Museum that attracts students working on Russian art, for example.

PC: Would I like to see more non-French and particularly non-European article proposals? Yeah, we have never published anything about nineteenth-century art in Africa, and we publish very little on Asian art.

VM: To follow up a little bit more on broadening the purview of the journal, I'm curious whether you sense that your international readership has grown over the years. We've been talking about the movement to look beyond France, Britain, the United States, and Germany as the main countries of nineteenth-century scholarship, and I'm curious if you find that the readership of the journal itself has also become increasingly international?

PC: Good question. We have used Google analytics primarily to determine the total number of readers and the length of their engagement with the site. We have not looked much at the geographic distribution. Much of what we

know about our international readership is anecdotal. Certainly it's pretty widely read in Europe, including Russia, and also in Latin America—particularly Mexico because we have published a number of articles on Mexican art, so I think people know us there. But it might be worth looking more closely at Google analytics with regard to the geographic distribution of our users. Of course, there is not that much we can do to change the numbers.

VM: Yeah, it would be interesting to see.

BB: Has *NCAW* ever considered publishing articles in languages other than English?

PC: That's another good question. Yes, we have thought about it, but we have not done it. It's a tricky problem. If you do it for one language, you have to do it for all. And then you run into problems with reviewing, peer reviewing, and copy-editing. From our point of view, for academic purposes English has become the Latin of the twenty-first century, and if our journal is international and worldwide, English, for better or worse, is the language to publish it in. Of course, we do realize that this choice presents problems for some authors, who need to find money to translate their articles into English. We have helped to an extent, but our resources are limited.

FF: How have approaches to digital humanities changed since the journal's founding?

PC: I don't know how to answer this question. When the journal was launched in 2002, very few people were involved in the digital humanities. The field as a whole has really emerged in the last ten years—twenty years ago, we barely knew what digital humanities was.

BB: Now it's a hot-button topic.

PC: Now most universities do have a digital humanities specialist, or they have a digital humanities faculty group and they award small digital humanities grants. Another thing that has changed is the availability of open-source software. In the beginning, people had to go to an expert, or they had to learn coding and become experts themselves. Now there is a much open-source software available on the internet. In fact, one of the things that we would like to do with the consortium of e-journals is to create an inventory of open-source software, with a very brief description of what can be done with it, and a user assessment section. That would really be helpful, I think. We are looking for a volunteer to put this together.

VM: Do you feel that the journal has influenced some of these developments? Do you claim any credit for all of this?

PC: When we started, we were the only open-access digital art history journal; now there are probably a dozen. We have been asked by many of them for advice on how to start such a journal, and while we don't claim credit for the burst of open-access journals, as it was bound to happen, I do think we have cleared the way.

VM: Is there any other advice that you have for people managing digital journals—particularly graduate student digital journals?

PC: Well, can I ask you some questions?

VM: Yeah, absolutely.

PC: Do you get a lot of submissions?

VM: It could definitely be more robust. Students want to save their best work for publication in non-graduate student journals, which is a natural impulse.

PC: You know for the next issue we received two submissions based on undergraduate theses. There was much good in them, but they were not quite at the level of a scholarly journal and we turned both of them down. Could I have referred them to you? Would you publish very good undergraduate articles? There are undergraduate journals, too, I guess, but they are always interdisciplinary right? There are no undergraduate art history journals?

BB: We limit our submissions to graduate student papers, but we might consider a manuscript from a master's student that is derived from her undergraduate thesis, or something like that.

PC: It would be nice for the undergraduate theses to get some visibility.

BB: What we've found is that even if the submission is somewhat strong, the student needs to have the skills of at least a master's student to do the revisions and follow-up.

PC: Yeah that's true. Well what other advice can I offer—where to find money?

BB: That's something of a concern for us.

PC: Yes, it is for everyone. Do you make a budget for each year? We have

found that, in addition to our major expenses, copy-editing and web development, there are smaller budget items that we sometimes forget about: the site registration, Crossref, etc.

BB: We do all of the copy-editing in-house, so we don't have that expense. And since becoming an open-access online journal, our expenses have decreased. The biggest challenge is that we transitioned our website from a different platform to WordPress recently. We chose WordPress because it's free and fairly user-friendly, but not all of us have extensive digital skills, and we've discussed the possibility of outsourcing some of the work, but we would need more reliable funding to do so.

PC: Oh, so currently you do most of the work yourself?

BB: Yes, it's a bit of a crash course in digital art history, which is great.

PC: Yeah, but it takes a lot of time. You do the copy-editing also? Wow, that's like a full-time job right?

BB & VM: It's a lot of time.

PC: Is it just the three of you, or do you have more people?

BB: We're the three Editors and then we have board members, who help us review submissions earlier in the process.

PC: So how much time do you spend on average? You do two issues annually right?

BB: We publish one annual issue, which typically has between three to five articles, and we usually do three to four rounds of edits for each article.

PC: And you have no book or exhibition reviews?

VM: Historically we have had them, in the distant past. We're open to reviews and interviews like this one.

FF: Exhibition reviews are something we've discussed.

PC: Our reviews section is very popular. People really love the reviews. And that's another advantage of the e-journal: we can do the reviews relatively quickly. For exhibitions they sometimes come out when the exhibition is still on view. Of course, we are not as fast as a newspaper, but then again, the reviews are more thoughtful.

VM: And it's nice that you review things that wouldn't get as much coverage in classic venues for exhibition reviews.

PC: Yeah that was Gabe Weisberg's doing; he liked promoting the "underdogs"—exhibitions no one else was reviewing. But I think that's good—you don't have to review every show in the Met, many of which already have been reviewed a hundred times over.

BB: That's true. We'll keep that in mind for the future.

We thank Petra Chu for sharing her insights and experience with us, and also for her gracious hospitality.