



PANORAMA

Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art

Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art seeks proposals for papers on the topic of “Amateurism and American Visual Culture.” Accepted papers will appear in a guest-edited section of *Panorama* issue 5.1 (May 2019).

Amateurism, as both a praxis and an attitude, has been a fundamental concept for the development and reception of American art. In the Colonial period, for instance, trained painters and self-taught limners alike were measured against Europe’s professional portraitists, and producers of decorative arts were often viewed as craftspeople or artisans rather than fine artists. And during the nineteenth century itinerant painters and so-called “folk artists” established careers that had little in common with those of artists now recognized as American masters, like Thomas Cole and Frederic Edwin Church. At the same time, however, Americans (Benjamin Franklin, for example) have long admired the “Yankee ingenuity” and “useful knowledge” of self-starters and laypeople.

In the twentieth century amateurism emerged as an invaluable foil for American modernists: Robert Henri encouraged the painting of what one knows rather than what one learns; the regionalist artists disavowed the theoretical expertise of the Stieglitz Circle artists and writers; and the junk stylings of some Neo-Dadaists were complemented by their slapdash techniques and a casual disregard for “high art.” Snapshots, home movies, and hobby art are more obvious, though historically far less visible, examples of artforms that have been classified as amateur, and today, of course, DIY productions, both digital and analog, abound, and everyone with a smartphone is an accidental curator.

The various historical and contemporary categorizations of Native American visual culture are especially relevant to these themes. We know, for instance, that Abstract Expressionists borrowed from supposedly “primitive” artforms to heighten the aura of untutored amateurism around their works. But we also know that appropriation is just one context, and a flawed one at that, for analyzing Native American art, which for better and for worse, often finds itself at the crossroads of the vernacular and the institutional. And, of course, Native American artists have negotiated amateur and professional identities for their own purposes, in order to advance sovereignty, for example, or to participate in markets not entirely their own.

Refreshingly, scholars, curators, and publishers have begun to examine the art and visual culture of amateurism in recent years: there is the enduring appeal of the photographic snapshot and accompanying “snapshot aesthetic,” recent books and articles on amateur film, successful folk art exhibitions, and the National Gallery of Art’s

current exhibition Outliers and American Vanguard Art. Nevertheless, the significance of the amateur-professional dialectic to American art requires more critical attention, and, at a time when the arts and humanities are subjected to more and more evaluative measures, the insouciance of amateur art seems more and more urgent.

Panorama seeks papers of approximately 5,000 words that take innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to the analysis of amateur art and its material, historical, theoretical terrain. We encourage authors to consider the unique advantages of the journal's online platform, which permits various digital enhancements, such as high-resolution images with zoom capabilities, the embedding of moving images and films, interactive maps, and the reconstruction of historical exhibitions, to name a few possibilities.

To propose a paper, please send a 500-word abstract and curriculum vitae to Justin Wolff: justin.wolff@maine.edu

Deadline for proposals: May 15, 2018

Deadline for papers: December 31, 2018

For more information, see: <http://journalpanorama.org/submissions/>

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