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Editors' Welcome: Special Semiquincentennial Issue

Cyle Metzger, Elizabeth McGoey, and Jennifer Van Horn

Anticipating the 250th anniversary of the United States' Declaration of Independence, the Executive Editors of *Panorama* put out a call for content engaging with the Semiquincentennial:

> We seek scholarship that examines how artistic practices, exhibitions, interventions, and more have impacted narratives of American identity and nationhood, especially perspectives that address commemoration and counter-commemoration. Topics may include, but are not limited to: foundational histories of colonization and displacement; diasporic art practices; collective memory; territorial transformation; the shaping of personal and collective identities; revivalisms; and the visual development of national myths and symbols.

Our community answered this call and more. Commemorations are complex: celebratory and critical, inclusive and exclusive, a time of nostalgia, revision, and myth-making but also for honest self-reflection and calls to action. Commemorations tell us as much about the current moment as they do the historical event they mark, and this is a charged moment of intense political polemicization under President Donald Trump and his administration, set in high relief against the undeniably blue wave that crested on election day 2026. The content in this issue exceeded our hopes for what a semiquencentennial-dedicated *Panorama* could offer. Across a featured In the Round as well as Research Notes, Colloquium, and Book and Exhibition Reviews, our contributors weave a rich tapestry of shared and contested histories and contemporary responses to the nation at 250. They also offer sharp observations on what it means to participate in a commemorative act. K. L. H. Wells, our guest editor for the featured In the Round, "The Art History of the 250th Anniversary" brings together a powerful group of ten scholars who ask us to "consider overlooked histories and to reconsider ostensibly familiar episodes in US visual culture." They recover the impact of overlooked women who shaped our early nation; address occupation, internment, colonization, and sovereignty; and offer methodological and curatorial approaches to unpacking the visualization and materialization of commemoration.

Four Research Notes offer deep dives into imagery of national symbolism, statesmanship, and freedom from engravings by Benjamin Franklin and a portrait of Thomas Jefferson to Andrew Jackson's Hermitage and abolitionist sculpture by John Quincy Adams Ward. This issue's Colloquium brings together a pair of essays that, in the words of the section editors Kiedra Daniel Navaroli and Frederica Simmons, "turn a self-critical lens on questions of lineage, legacy, and continuation in art-historical practice." Indeed, they encourage self-reflection on the part of *Panorama*'s own mission. Book and Exhibition Reviews reflect the work of years if

not decades of research and development, yet the range of scholarly perspectives questioning the canon and its limits—and the resulting expansive range of artistic approaches they encompass—befit this moment of commemorative inquiry.

This issue includes other contributions that cultivate collective memory. In Memoriam is a place for commemoration of our community and reflections on the impact we've had on one another. Our most recent tribute is to William H. Truettner. Hampton Smith's thoughtful synopsis of the 9th annual Association of Historians of American Art conference, held in Maine, brings us all into the rich and timely conversations about the current state of the field and what he saw as a collective questioning of the "responsibilities that accompany the production and interpretation of knowledge."

These same questions about intellectual freedom, responsibility, opportunity, and accessibility have driven—and will continue to drive—the work we do here at *Panorama*. To that end, we are thrilled and honored to share hot-off-the-press news that the journal will continue to be supported by the Andrew J. Mellon Foundation through a five-year, $500,000 grant in support of strengthening the journal's editorial infrastructure, expanding access to high-quality scholarship, and securing the long-term sustainability of open-access American art-historical content.

After our last issue, we bid a grateful farewell to Keri Watson, who sat at the helm of *Panorama* for six years as an Executive Editor and then Finance and Grants Manager. In addition to steering impactful content, Keri helped establish the journal's legal and financial infrastructure and sustainability, ensuring the vitality of the journal into the future. Jenni Sorkin will succeed her in the role of financial and grants management. We also offer our sincere gratitude to Book Reviews Editor Christa Noel Robbins and Exhibition Reviews Editor Adam Thomas as their terms come to a close, both for their dedicated service as well as for the lasting contributions to expanding the subjects and geographic areas reflected in these sections. *Panorama* is always evolving, and there are new opportunities to serve the journal as an editor and/or a contributor. Please see our calls for an Executive Editor, Book and Exhibition editors, and—in addition to the many ways you can contribute content—for an upcoming Digital Dialogues section.

We look forward to *Panorama* continuing vital conversations about what American art has, can, and should, mean—within, beyond, and in tension with the political space of the nation state— with you all.

Cyle Metzger, Elizabeth McGoey, and Jennifer Van Horn are the Executive Editors of Panorama.