

# Rachel Stephens

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## Academic Appointments

The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL  
Associate Professor of Art History, 2019- present  
Assistant Professor of Art History, 2013-2019

Assistant Professor of Art History, Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, LA, 2010-2013 (Visiting Asst. 2009-2010)

## Education

Ph.D., Art History, University of Iowa, 2010

M.A., Art History, Vanderbilt University, 2004

B.A., Art History, Sewanee: The University of the South, 2002

## Books

*Selling Andrew Jackson: Ralph E. W. Earl and the Politics of Portraiture*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018.

[Reviewed in *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* (Fall 2019) and H-Net Reviews]

*Hidden in Plain Sight: The Concealment of Slavery in Antebellum American Art* (in progress; under contract).

## Articles and Chapters

“Reconsidering History’s Huts: A Travelogue of Thirty Plantation Sites,” *Buildings and Landscapes* (submitted for consideration, March 29, 2020)

“Whatever is un-Virginian is wrong!’: The Loyal Slave Trope in Civil War Richmond and the Origins of the Lost Cause,” *Panorama* 6:1 (Spring 2020).

“Curious Men and their Curiosities: Ralph E. W. Earl’s Nashville Museum and the Precedent of Charles Willson Peale” *Early American Studies* 16:3 (Spring 2018): 545-577.

“Making a Display’: Adelia Acklen’s Tennessee Family Portraits” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* LXXVI: 1 (Spring 2017): 80-102.

“Portraits of Early Tennesseans by Ralph E.W. Earl: A Case Study in Southern Art” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* LXXIII: 3 (November 2014): 178-208.

“The Cyclorama of the Battle of Shiloh: A Biased Commemoration” *Montage* 2:1 (2008): 103-116.

“Grant Wood’s Lithographs: An Artistic Culmination” in *A Democratic Age in Printmaking: Realism and Regionalism, 1935-1944*. Winnetka, IL: Prints America, 2008.

## Other Publications

Book Review: *Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now* by Asma Naeem et al (Princeton, 2018) *Nineteenth-Century Studies* online reviews (Summer 2019).

Book Review: *Enduring Truths: Sojourner’s Shadows and Substance* by Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby (Chicago, 2015) in *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 3:2 (Fall 2017).

Artist interview: “An Interview with Derek Larson,” *SECAC Review* XVI: 5 (2015): 641-44.

Exhibition Review: *Purchased Lives* and *To Be Sold*, *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 1:2 (Fall 2015).

## Recent National Fellowships and Grants

Virginia Humanities, spring semester fellowship, awarded for Spring 2021

CASVA, Visiting Senior Fellowship, Sept-Oct. 2020, National Gallery of Art, Washington

Rose Library, Emory University Short-Term Fellowship, 2020

CAA, Art History Fund for Travel to Special Exhibitions, Spring 2019

Gilder-Lehrman Center, Yale University 4-month Faculty Fellowship, Spring 2019

Tyson Scholars Fellowship, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Fall 2018

Breaux Fellowship, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky, 2017

Mellon Research Fellowship, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, 2017

Chavic Summer Seminar, AAS, “In Black and White: Race and American Visual Culture,” 2017

NEH Summer Institute participant, “Visual Culture of the Civil War and Its Aftermath,” 2016

(finalist) Fulbright-Terra Foundation Award in American Art History, 2015

Visiting Scholar - American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, 2013

## University of Alabama Grants

Research Grants Council Award, The University of Alabama, 2019

CARSCA Research Grant - The University of Alabama, 2018

CARSCA Research Grant - The University of Alabama, 2015

Research Grants Council Award, The University of Alabama, 2014

## Awards

SECAC President’s Award of Distinction (in recognition of work as editor of *Art Inquiries*), 2018

UA President’s Faculty Research Award for Arts and Sciences- Humanities and Fine Arts Division, 2015

Educator of the Year (co-awardee), Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society, 2014

## Invited Lectures

"Loyal Artists, Loyal Slaves: Confederate Artists in Civil War Richmond,"  
Virginia Humanities, invited guest lecture, January, 21, 2020.

“‘The Family Black and White’: Pro-Slavery Visual Art and the Cult of Justification,”  
Auburn Avenue Research Library, sponsored by the Baton Foundation, Atlanta, GA, August 25, 2019.

“Justify, Conceal, Destroy: Antebellum Pro-Slavery Art and the Politics of Representation,”  
Yale University History of Art Department, April 18, 2019.

“The Power of Portraiture: Ralph E. W. Earl’s Tennessee Sitters,”  
Travellers Rest Historic Home, Nashville, Tennessee, January 24, 2019.

“Silhouettes, Snuff Boxes, and the South: Slavery and the Paradox of Plantation Decorative Arts,”  
Greenberg Steinhauser Forum in American Portraiture, National Portrait Gallery, December 14, 2018.

“The Portrait that Created a President: Ralph E. W. Earl’s Andrew Jackson,” at *Food for Thought*, monthly  
lecture series, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, November 15, 2018.  
Video available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjUdG0fYjKM>

“Whatever is un-Virginian is Wrong’: Pro-South Paintings on the Eve of the Civil War,”  
Roanoke College, Virginia, September 24, 2018.

“Making a Display’: Adelia Acklen’s Tennessee Family Portraits,” at Tennessee Historical Society and  
Belmont Mansion Association September Lecture Series, Nashville, Tennessee, September 19, 2017.

“Making a Display’: Adelia Acklen’s Tennessee Family Portraits,” at Tennessee Decorative Arts Symposium,  
Nashville, Tennessee, April 22, 2017.

“Aunt Chloe to Aunt Jemima: The Static Image of the African American Housemaid,” Hope College Arts and  
Humanities Symposium, “Am I not Human? Racial Identities in Modern America,” Holland, Michigan,  
September 30, 2016.

## **Conference and Symposium Presentations:**

2021 CAA, New York (virtual)

Paper: “‘Too Independent for a Lady’: Art, Capital, and Propriety in Nineteenth-Century Tennessee”

2020 SECAC, Richmond (virtual); co-presentation with Katie McKinney

Paper: “*The Heroine of Virginia*: Anti-Abolitionist Violence in a Rare 1814 Watercolor”

2020 *Landscape Art of the Americas: Sites of Human Intervention across the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (rescheduled for  
2021) Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia (Terra Foundation Symposium)

Paper: “Plantation Paintings in Cuba and the United States: National Identity versus Slavery Justification”

2020 CAA, Chicago

Paper: “Selling Andrew Jackson: Ralph E. W. Earl’s Portrait Project”

2020 Southern Studies Conference, Auburn University Montgomery

Paper: “*The Heroine of Virginia*: Slavery and Domesticity in a Rare 1814 Watercolor”

2019 Southern Historical Association, Louisville, KY

Panelist, “Championing Justice and Rejecting White Supremacy: The Public Role of Southern Historians?”

2019 SECAC, Chattanooga, TN

Paper: "Reconsidering History's Huts: A Travelogue of Thirty Plantation Sites"

2019 University of Havana, Havana, Cuba

Paper: "Nineteenth-Century Plantation Paintings in Cuba and the United States: National Identity versus Slavery Justification"

2019 Nineteenth-Century Studies Association, Kansas City, Missouri

Paper: "Thomas Waterman Wood and the Abolitionist Landscape"

2018 SECAC, Birmingham, AL

Paper: "White Heroes, Loyal Slaves: Pre-Civil War Virginia Paintings and the Origins of the Lost Cause"

2018 College Art Association, Los Angeles, CA, AHAA-sponsored panel, "America is (Still) Hard to See"

Paper: "Seeing the Unseen: Suppression within the Visual Culture of American Slavery,"

2017 UVA Symposium, "Universities, Slavery, Public Memory, and the Built Landscape,"

Paper: (co-written and presented with Nadia DelMedico) "Slavery and its Built Environment at The University of Alabama as Revealed in the Basil Manly Diaries"

2017 College Art Association, New York, NY

Paper: "From Invisible Slave to Comforting Mammy: The Evolution of Nursemaid Imagery in Nineteenth-Century American Art"

2016 Nineteenth-Century Studies Association, Lincoln, NE

Paper: "Abolition and Justification in Slavery Photography: Two Case Studies"

2016 College Art Association, Washington D.C.

Paper: "From the Wounds of Slavery to the Wounds of War: Visual Culture in Support of the American Civil War"

2015 Southeastern College Art Conference, Pittsburgh, PA

Paper: "Subtle Abolitionism in Thomas Waterman Wood's African American Paintings"

2015 Digitorium, Digital Humanities Conference, Tuscaloosa, AL

Paper: "Digital Humanities Curation in the American Art History Classroom"

Chair: "Approaches in Digital Pedagogy"

2015 College Art Association, New York, NY

Paper: "The New South, Jim Crow and Architectural Manipulation in the Negro Building at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition"

2012 Louisiana Studies Conference, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA

Paper: "The Bayou School: Landscape Painting in Reconstruction New Orleans"

2012 Auburn University Montgomery Southern Studies Conference

Paper: "Race Relations and African American Arts at the Southern World's Fairs"

2011 Southeastern College Art Conference, Savannah, GA

Paper: "Investigating the New South via the Tennessee Centennial Exposition: Reflections on the Negro Building"

2011 American Studies Association/ Pop Culture Association, Regional Conference, New Orleans, LA  
Panel Chairperson: "The Appropriation of Art Sources in Popular Culture"

2011 "The South" Liberal Arts Conference, Auburn University Montgomery  
Paper: "Cultural Expansion: Early American Art Museums in the South"

2010 Center for Historic American Visual Culture Symposium, American Antiquarian Society "Historical Prints - Fact and Fiction"  
Paper: "Jackson in Print: Politics, Competition, and Propaganda in Presidential Printmaking"

2010 Southeastern College Art Conference, Richmond, VA  
Paper: "Repeated Imagery: Ralph E.W. Earl's Jackson Portrait Copies"

2010 Art Institute of Chicago, Graduate Student Seminar  
Paper: "Ralph E.W. Earl: A Case Study in Jacksonian Culture"

2009 Southeastern College Art Conference, Mobile, AL  
Paper: "Ralph E.W. Earl's 'Striking Likenesses': An Examination of Early Portraiture in Tennessee"

2009 Frick Museum, Center for Collecting in America Symposium, "The Artist as Collector"  
Paper: "Early American Portraits in Ralph E.W. Earl's 'Nashville Museum'"

2008 Southeastern College Art Conference, New Orleans, LA  
Panel Chairperson: "American Art: Challenges to the Mainstream"

2008 Tennessee Historical Society, Brown Bag Lunch invited guest speaker  
Paper: "Ralph E.W. Earl and Early Tennessee Culture"

2008 "The Art of Persuasion," Indiana University Art History Graduate Student Symposium  
Paper: "Ralph E.W. Earl and the Myth of Jacksonian Portraiture"

2007 Jacobsen Forum, Graduate Student Conference, University of Iowa  
Paper: "Small-Scale Spectacle: Civil War Chromos and their Monumental Inspiration"

2007 "In the Cross-hairs: Intersections of Art and War," University of Iowa Art History Graduate Student Symposium  
Paper: "The Cyclorama of the Battle of Shiloh: A Biased Commemoration." (Awarded 'Iowa Prize' and selected for publication in *Montage* journal)

2004 Vanderbilt Graduate Student Symposium  
Paper: "The Cultural Influence of Madame de Pompadour"

### **Sessions Organized:**

2019 CAA, New York  
SECAC at CAA session: "Below the Mason-Dixon Line: Artists and Historians Considering the South"

2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 SECAC annual meeting  
American Art Open Sessions: Panel Organizer and co-chairperson

## **Other Recent Invited Appearances:**

2020 October, CASVA research circle presentation  
2020 January, “The Benefit of Graduate School in the Humanities,” Southern Studies Conference  
2019 July, SHEAR Second Book Writer’s Workshop  
2019 May, Yale University Art Gallery talk  
2019 April, Yale MacMillan Center research talk  
2019 February, Yale University’s Gilder Lehrman Center brown bag lunch research presentation  
2018 August, Share Out, Crystal Bridges brown bag lunch research presentation  
2017 May, Filson Historical Society research presentation  
2017 July, Virginia Historical Society research presentation

## **Courses Taught:**

### **The University of Alabama, 2013-present**

#### Undergraduate courses:

ARH 253: *Survey of Western Art II*  
ARH 374: *Art of the American South*  
ARH 375: *19<sup>th</sup>-century art*  
ARH 376: *American Architecture*  
ARH 377: *American Painting and Sculpture*  
ARH 377: *American Art before 1815*  
ARH 379: *American Art 1815-1880*  
ARH 477: *Southern Architecture*

#### Graduate seminars:

ARH 477: *Archiving Lyon Hall*  
ARH 550: *Theories and Methods of Art History*  
ARH 577: *Civil War and American Art*  
ARH 577: *Slavery and American Art*  
ARH 577: *American Portraiture seminar*

### **Nicholls State University, 2009-2013**

ART 110: *Art Appreciation* (in-person and online)  
ART 280: *Survey I: Ancient to Medieval Art*  
FNAR 301: *American Art*  
FNAR 301: *Art of the American South*  
FNAR 301: *Race and Gender in American Art*  
HUMA 381: *History of British Art* (taught in Plymouth, England)  
FNAR 301: *American Modernism*  
ART 383: *Modern Art, 1850-1950*  
ART 480: *Contemporary Art*  
FNAR 301: *Louisiana Art and Architecture*  
ART 499: *Senior Capstone Seminar*

## **Master’s Theses Directed:**

Morgan Heard, “May the points of our needles prick the slaveholders’ conscience’: Women’s Abolitionist Needlework” (May 2019)

Kelby Cox, “Stitching Culture: Enslaved African American Quilting in the Prejudicial South” (Summer 2018)

Caitlin Huber, "Examining the Battle House: The Greek Revival, Religion, Race Relations, and Slavery Justifications" (Summer 2015)

### **Master's Thesis Committees:**

Rebekah James, MA Art History, UA, 2019  
Taylor Lawhon, MA Anthropology, UA, 2018  
Allison Springer, MA Art History, UA, 2017  
Becky Robinson, MA Advertising, UA, 2017  
Amelia Hobson, MA Art History, UAB, 2015

### **Professional Activity**

CAA: Committee on Research and Scholarship, 2019-2022; grant reviewer/juror Art History Fund for Travel to Special Exhibitions

SECAC: Committee chair, SECAC at CAA; Board Member 2012-2013, 2019-present; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee member, 2020-present.

Editor-in-chief, *Art Inquiries* (formerly *The SECAC Review*), 2014-2017

Peer reviewer, *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 2014-present

Visiting Curator of American Art – New Orleans Museum of Art, curated "*The Bayou School: Nineteenth-Century Louisiana Landscapes*," 2012

Summer Fellow – Louisiana State Museum, Co-curated educational exhibit, *Degas in New Orleans*

Research Assistant – Vanderbilt University, 2002-2004

### **Media**

Slavery and its Legacies [podcast](#) interview, recorded May 17, 2019

The Age of Jackson [podcast](#) interview with Daniel N. Gullata, released Sept. 21, 2018

Peter Grier, "The (semi) Secret History of Trump's Andrew Jackson Portrait," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 9, 2017.

C-SPAN Cities Tour, Tuscaloosa, "History of The University of Alabama," April 16, 2016.

### **Professional Memberships**

College Art Association  
Southeastern College Art Conference  
Association of Historians of American Art  
19<sup>th</sup>-century Studies Association  
Southern Historical Association

### **Select University of Alabama Service:**

Search committees: 2013 Asst. Prof (Medieval); 2014 Asst. Prof. (African American); 2015 Asst. Prof. (Medieval); 2016 (Global Contemporary); 2017 Asst. Prof. (Graphic Design); 2019 Dean's Diversity A & S Post-Doc.

Other service: Scholarship committee: chair of art history division 2013-2018; committee chair 2019- present; Museum Studies Steering Committee 2015-present; Tenure and Promotion Committee, 2019- present; Core Curriculum Oversight Committee, 2019- present