

## **Art and Art History Statement on Inclusive Excellence**

### **Art and Art History Diversity:**

The Department of Art and Art History (AAH) affirms the power of art to transform individuals and society. We are committed to the practice, production, critical and historical study of art within a liberal arts education that encourages experimentation and independence of thought. Our faculty offers a rigorous curriculum that crosses disciplines and invites inquisitive, dedicated students with wide-ranging interests, encouraging creative investigation as an essential skill informed by the highest standards of critical thought. Our diverse faculty, students, and staff are committed to ongoing engagement with communities locally and globally.

### **Art and Art History Inclusive Excellence:**

Our artists embrace a wide range of practices that are informed by multiple cultural traditions. While some art practices faculty exhibit in traditional venues, including galleries and museums, others engage myriad communities by exhibiting in public spaces or alternative venues. Similarly, our art historians engage with multiple cultural perspectives that inform the production and interpretation of art across time and culture. Particular emphasis is given to situating the arts of the Americas within their cultural and historical contexts in addition to a broader global framework.

Our introductory courses in art history and art practices foreground inclusive practices thereby establishing our department's expectations for the foundation of good citizenship as well as introducing students to heterogenous practices domestically and internationally. Our outward facing programs such as the Visiting Artists and Visiting Scholars Programs and the Rural Environments Field School create opportunities for AAH faculty, staff, and students to interact with a broader community. This is especially meaningful when we invite artists and scholars to CU whose works revolve around issues of social justice or when our students have the opportunity to work directly with rural communities in Eastern Colorado and the San Luis Valley through the Rural Environments Field School. In these ways as well as through more direct coursework and exhibitions, our community takes stock in the diversity of ideas, experiences, and practices outside of the confines of the CU Boulder campus. We encourage students to develop challenging intersectional practices that scrutinize social, cultural, ethical and economic norms along with critical thinking skills.

### **Defining Inclusive Excellence in an Art and Art History Context:**

Images and objects dominate our cultural landscape; it is incumbent upon us to be able to understand, interpret, and contextualize them. The Department of Art and Art History is well positioned to create, interpret, and critique images and objects in the broad sense. The research, creative work, and curriculum of AAH fosters inclusive excellence at all levels.

Through our teaching we have reimagined our introductory art history courses--*Global Art and Visual Culture* and *U.S. Art Across Cultures*--so that they provide a critical survey of creative production from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. Our *Foundations* courses in art practices foreground artists of color and socially engaged practices. As students move

through our program, we interrogate dominant voices and conventional historical representations. We encourage students to develop challenging practices that scrutinize social, cultural, and economic norms.

Before students even join CU and AAH, if they have completed AP Art History while in high school, they have done so under a revised curriculum facilitated by Prof. Robert Nauman. Between 2008-2014, Prof. Nauman organized a conference in Chicago with 50 scholars from throughout the US who taught in diverse areas of art history to change the Art History exam to more fully address global art and diversity issues in the exam. He also frequently met with high school teachers throughout the country to discuss how to deliver that content.

The Art Museum Internship class, run continuously for 20 years, places undergraduate students in a number of area institutions including the Denver Art Museum, the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, the Longmont Museum, the Kirkland Museum of Fine and Decorative Art, and the Clyfford Still Museum.

The Visiting Artists and Visiting Scholars programs complement coursework, research, and art-historical studies as well as art practices. Since 1978, AAH has been committed to bringing artists and scholars who expand the practice and definition of art, from Lucy Lippard whose foundational work established a more expansive view of contemporary art, to the socially-engaged practice of artist Paul Ramirez Jonas. Together, scholars and artists like these enrich AAH's continued commitment to inclusive excellence.

Faculty are regularly invited by national and international universities, museums, artist spaces, and professional organizations to present talks on their research and creative work as well as conduct workshops with other artists, scholars, and the broader community.

AAH also recognizes that inclusive excellence is a continual work-in-progress. To that end, we are committed to expanding resources and support to students from historically underrepresented communities. The Addison Scholarship supports students from rural communities in Colorado with demonstrated financial need. Working with the CU Foundation, we have prioritized fundraising for scholarships for students who have been historically underrepresented at CU and within AAH. We are committed to diversity in our hiring objectives, as our department's demographics attest. Our department's diverse faculty and staff work to create a climate that demonstrates our commitment to supporting those from varied cultural backgrounds. Since the 1980s, AAH has expanded faculty of color representation at all ranks, which now comprises nearly 50% of our faculty body. This is also reflected in our curriculum's inclusion of global art practices and art history. Moreover, 70% of the AAH staff are female and 25% of the staff are people of color. In addition to faculty, this is critical since staff work directly with students as mentors as well as supervisors. In particular, AAH is known as a flagship state institution that has a long-term commitment to supporting Indigenous art and artists. We currently have an art historian who specializes in this area and have recently begun a PhD program that specializes in the *Arts of the Americas*, including the specialty of Indigenous arts. We have had at least one Indigenous artist teaching in arts practices for the past thirty-three years.