American art historian Meyer Schapiro (1904-96) has long been considered one of the most significant Euro-American art historians of the 20th century, yet the ways in which the increasing prevalence of racism and nationalism in the discipline in German-speaking nations shaped his art history remain unconsidered. This study undertakes essential research in previously unconsidered and newly available archival material that will allow for a better understanding of Schapiro’s participation in a complex dialogue with his German-speaking colleagues about the nature of style. Schapiro sought to develop an art history that addressed historical meaning without resorting to racial or national determinants. The results of this study are of particular interest to art historians because of the impact that Schapiro, with both his embrace of German-speaking art history and his rejection of racism and nationalism, had on a newly developing American art history.
I. Background and Significance

Meyer Schapiro (1904-96) has long been recognized as one of the most significant Euro-American art historians of the 20th century, yet until now, many of his intellectual debts and their motivations have remained speculative. Schapiro was a medievalist who is best known for his early championing of modern art and for his leftist art history of the 1930s. He was practically an institution at Columbia University; he earned his PhD there in 1929 and he remained at Columbia for the duration of his career. Not only did he advise and teach several generations of museum professionals and art historians, but his art history also appealed to many modern artists who sought out his courses, advice, and friendship. Schapiro’s crucial position in the discipline of art history in the US is indisputable.

Yet scholarship on Schapiro has tended to neglect the complexities of his approach focusing instead on discrete aspects of his art history such as his Marxist art history of the 1930s, his treatment of style in the 1950s, his application of semiotics to art in the 1970s, and his relationships with artists over the course of his career. No book-length treatment of Schapiro has yet been published; instead, scholars have addressed specific aspects of his art historical praxis in journal articles. In 1978, the journal *Social Research* dedicated its spring issue to Schapiro. The issue contained eight essays on Schapiro: four dealt with either his Marxism or his semiotics; three addressed his treatment of style; and one focused on his relationships with artists.¹ In contrast to the varied focus of the 1978 articles, the March 1994 issue of the *Oxford Art Journal* dedicated to Schapiro and guest-edited by David Craven is dominated by articles that explore Schapiro’s Marxism. Of the nine articles in this issue, six focus on his Marxist art history of the 1930s.²

This emphasis on discrete aspects of Schapiro’s methodology as well as a lack of recent publications has left a critical gap in the scholarship. This lack of scholarly publications on Schapiro since 1994 can be attributed to the fact that Schapiro died in 1996. Since his death, scholars have been unable to access his papers until the summer of 2010, when his papers were made available at the Rare Books & Manuscript Library (RBML) at Columbia University in New York, New York. Focused research in this previously unconsidered archive, combined with findings from earlier research, will provide a vantage point for

---


understanding the previously unconsidered complexities of Schapiro’s debts in shaping a unified art historical praxis.

In my dissertation, “The Politics of Style: Meyer Schapiro and the Crisis of Meaning in Art History,” I argued that Schapiro’s disciplinary, intellectual, artistic, and political investments all shaped his art history. I addressed what I have chosen to call the politics of style: the ways in which art history in general and the concept of style in particular have been implicated in racial and national politics since the discipline’s institutionalization in the 19th century and how these implications have continued to complicate an understanding of art historical meaning throughout the 20th century. Racial and nationalistic characterizations of style have been a part of art historical praxis since the institutionalization of the discipline in German-speaking countries in the 19th century. But in the years between World War I and II, the attribution of particular styles to different races or countries became increasingly pernicious, thereby creating a crisis in the discipline at the very moment that Schapiro was emerging onto the art historical scene. Schapiro is among the few art historians of the 20th century who attempted to negotiate this tricky terrain. In order to do so, he swung his net wide, considering not only the ideas of art historians, such as the well-known Erwin Panofsky, but also those of linguists such as Roman Jakobson, anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Gestalt psychologists such as Max Wertheimer.

While art historians recognize the crucial role that Schapiro’s art historical praxis has played in shaping the field in the US today, no one has yet considered the ways in which Schapiro’s critical embrace of the art history of German-speaking scholars has emboldened American art history. While others have seen his art historical practice as disjointed, the results of this project will demonstrate that the unifying feature of his work is his combined concern for addressing the historical meaning of a work of art while avoiding racial and national determinants. The project will bring attention to this overlooked aspect of the history of the field and thereby encourage the development of a more socially conscious art historical praxis – one that takes into account the role that racism and nationalism have had in the development of the discipline.

Preliminary research has been presented and well-received at conferences including the Comité International d’Histoire de l’Art in Montreal in 2004 and the Viennese Art Historiography Colloquium in Glasgow, Scotland in 2009. Research is also presented in “Reconsidering Meyer Schapiro and the New Vienna School,” which appears in the December 2010 volume of The Journal of Art Historiography.

II. Goals and Objectives
The project will enhance my professional development as I:

1. Gain a fuller understanding of Schapiro’s art historical methodology: both its development and its role in the development of art historical praxis in the US. This will be accomplished through the completion of three weeks of focused archival research in the newly available Schapiro Collection at the RBML and the collection and processing of at least 5,000 image files.

2. Share this knowledge with disciplinary colleagues. This will be accomplished through at least one conference presentation, at least one article in a peer-reviewed journal, and a book proposal. The long-term goal is to publish a book-length treatment of Schapiro, racism and nationalism, and the development of American art history.

3. Share this knowledge as well as the process of doing archival research with students in my advanced courses, particularly the writing-intensive theory-driven capstone course for all art students: “After Modernism.” This will be accomplished through the development of a research and writing assignment that incorporates the data collected in this project.

4. Employ this knowledge in lower-level courses, particularly “Art Appreciation.” This will be accomplished by the refinement of the pedagogical framework of the course.
III. Description of Project
A. Research Accomplished to Date
Dissertation research was completed between 2000 and 2004 at various archives including the Warburg Institute Archive in London, the Archives of American Art in Washington DC, the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library at Yale in New Haven, the Archive of the Museum of Modern Art, and the RBML at Columbia. Archival material in the form of correspondence between Schapiro and New Vienna School art historian Otto Pächt was also obtained from Dr. Jonathan Alexander of the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. This archival data provided an original argument regarding Schapiro’s art historical praxis for my dissertation and a starting point for this project.

Preliminary research has been completed in the Schapiro Collection at the RBML at Columbia in 2010. Following the death of Schapiro’s widow in 2006, Schapiro’s papers were given to the RBML at Columbia where an archivist was hired to process his papers. Early contact with the archivist resulted in an initial consultation in January 2010 of still publicly unavailable material. Funding from the West Virginia Humanities Council enabled two weeks of exploratory research in the archive during the summer of 2010 in which the breadth and significance of the materials deposited was established. Biographic files, awards, obituaries, correspondence with key figures, and lecture transcripts, notes and audio recordings from his graduate level theory course at Columbia were consulted. Photographs of 5,262 pages were taken and are currently being processed.

B. Research to Be Completed
The Schapiro Collection contains 398 linear feet of materials; initial research has only considered a very small portion of the materials. Several areas of the collection will be explored in greater depth; these areas are correspondence, writings, research files, sound/video recordings, and lecture transcripts and notes.

Sixty-nine boxes of correspondence dating from the 1920s until 2001 exist in the collection. Prior research has considered folders with key correspondents. Alphabetical folders of general correspondence, for example Correspondence, General – A, will be consulted and digital image files of pertinent data will be taken. Previous research has shown that valuable materials exist in these folders.

Numerous boxes of archival material on both published and unpublished writings exist in Series II of the collection. Material that will be considered includes: annotated transcripts, notes, and correspondence for published articles; and notes and manuscripts of unpublished articles from 1930s to 1990s.

Numerous boxes of research files from the 1930s to 1990s exist in Series V of the collection. Folders addressing topics of significance to the project will be consulted. I will focus on key individuals and themes. For example, folders labeled “semiotics,” “meaning,” “representation,” “semiotics of visual art,” “Style,” “interpretation, meaning, iconography,” “Theory of Art,” “Interpretation,” “Alois Riegl,” “secular iconography,” “Erwin Panofsky,” etc. will be consulted.

Sound and video recordings from 1952 to the 1990s also exist in Series VII of the collection. I will focus on several including twelve recorded lectures from 1974 course “Theories and Methods of Investigation of Art.”

Lecture transcripts and notes from 1929 to 1977 exist in “Professional Papers,” Series III of the collection. Research will focus on those transcripts and notes from his theory courses that have not yet been consulted for this project.

The boxes for the Schapiro collection are stored off-site and need to be requested in advance of my arrival requiring careful preparation. In addition, researchers are only able to request 4 boxes per day. These restrictions require careful planning and preparation for research, which will be facilitated by the careful
organization of the archive and the detailed finding aid that the RBML has made available for this project prior to public availability.

Two discrete research trips to the RBML in New York City will be made during the summer of 2011.

C. Tentative Schedule

June 2011  One week of research at the RBML at Columbia in New York. Photographs and photocopies will be made of pertinent data. Preparation for this initial research trip and then initial processing of data will occur during the remainder of the month.

July 2011  Two additional weeks of research at the archive. Photographs and photocopies will be made of pertinent data. Preparation for this second trip and continued processing of data will occur during the remainder of the month.

Academic Year 2011-2012  A research assistant will be trained in the use of Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, introduced to the project, and given the task of organizing the materials into a searchable database through the use of folders, metadata, and keywords. Undergraduate art education major Rosanna Paterra, who has an interest in pursuing a graduate degree in art history, has agreed to work on the project. Proposals for conference papers will be submitted; papers will be written and presented. An article will be written and submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. A book proposal will be marketed to the University of Minnesota Press and to be circulated at the Book Fair at College Art Association’s annual conference in Los Angeles in February 2012. Final report will be prepared and sent.

Expected Outcomes

1. Funding of this project will enhance my professional development by enabling me to collect and process archival data relating to Schapiro’s personal and intellectual ties to artists, linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, art historians, and others; his critical responses to the ideas of others; and his system of art historical praxis as presented in his teaching and both published and unpublished documents. A fuller picture of his network of friends and colleagues and their shared concerns and debates regarding the historical meaning of style and racial and national determinants will be developed from this research. These results will be achieved by the collection and processing of material in the Schapiro Collection that is pertinent to my long-term goal of a book.

2. The findings of this project will be disseminated to the art historical community. Conference presentations will be proposed for College Art Association (CAA) and Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC.) An article will be submitted for consideration to The Art Bulletin and/or to The Oxford Art Journal. A book proposal will be marketed to University of Minnesota Press, who previously expressed interest, as well as to other publishers.

3. and 4. Undergraduate students will benefit from the research, which will be incorporated directly into my upper division capstone course “After Modernism” and will indirectly shape my teaching strategies in my lower division courses. Upper division students will gain experience researching in primary sources via digital images. I will be better able to equip lower division students with the tools necessary to understand the meaning of art. Lastly, a student worker will gain valuable skills and experience working on the project.

The results of this project will provide the basis for a book on racism and nationalism in the discipline of art history and Schapiro’s role in the development of American art history that will be written beyond the grant period.
## Project Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Grant</th>
<th>University Contribution</th>
<th>Other Revenue Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries/Stipends</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Wages</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>XXXXX</td>
<td>$720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honoraria (for consultants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$1,136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expenses</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>$599</td>
<td>$599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>$7,995</td>
<td>$720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Budget Notes**

- **Salaries/Stipends**: Project director will be compensated at a rate of $2,000 per month for full-time work for two months during summer 2011. During this time the project director will spend a total of three weeks gathering archival material on Schapiro at the Rare Books and Manuscript Library (RBML) at Columbia University in New York and the remainder of the time in preparation and processing the materials back in Pittsburgh.

- **Student Wages**: A student worker will be hired to work a total of 210 hours during the 2010-2011 academic year at a rate of $10/hour ($2,100). The student worker will be responsible for creating a searchable database of at least 5,000 image files with Adobe Photoshop Lightroom. This image database software will allow the worker to add metadata and keywords to image files organized in a logical filing system to create an easily searchable database.

- **Equipment**: An Apple IPad is necessary for archival research onsite in New York. The IPad will provide easily portable computing capacity for research and internet access in the archive. The IPad also provides a convenient format for sharing image files once it has been collected and will be used in the classroom. The cost is estimated at $837 for 32GB Apple IPad with Wi-Fi and 3G with protective case and keyboard dock.

  - Adobe Photoshop Lightroom is image database software that will allow the student worker to organize the archival material for easy storage, searching, and retrieval. Cost is estimated at $299.

  - Project director will supply camera equipment necessary for creating the image files of archival documents.

- **Operating expenses**: Photocopying, estimated at $160, will be necessary at the archive. (Costs are $.25/page.)

- **Travel**: Airline expenses: $500 for two roundtrip tickets for project director to JFK and associated costs.

  - Airport parking: Project Director will personally assume all parking costs.

  - Ground transportation: $20 total for Airtrain to/from JFK 4 times; $27 for one 7-day unlimited Metrocard; $51.50 for one 14-day unlimited Metrocard

  - Lodging/Food: Project Director will personally assume all lodging and food costs.


Cindy Persinger
2629 Glenchester Road
Wexford, PA 15090
Office:  
Cell: 412-512-4672
Home: 724-759-7081
E-mail: Persinger@calu.edu

Education

2007  Ph.D. in Art History, University of Pittsburgh  
Dissertation: The Politics of Style: Meyer Schapiro and the Crisis of Meaning in Art History  
Advisor: Barbara McCloskey  
Additional Ph.D. certification in Cultural Studies, 2005

2000  M.A. in Art History, University of Pittsburgh  
Thesis: Meyer Schapiro and the Jongleurs: Reexamining Identity at Silos

1994  M.A. in French Translation, Kent State University  
Thesis: Translation and Critical Analysis of Jean Genet's "L'Atelier d'Alberto Giacometti"

1992  B.A in French, Kent State University

Areas of Specialization
Historiography of Art History, American Art, and European Modernism

Professional Experience

2010-present  Assistant Professor, California University of Pennsylvania

2009-2010  Visiting Assistant Professor, West Virginia University

2009, Summer  developed online courses, University of Pittsburgh

2008-2009  Visiting Assistant Professor, West Virginia University

2008, Spring  Full-Time Visiting Lecturer, University of Pittsburgh

2007, Fall  Full-Time Visiting Instructor, University of Pittsburgh

1998 – 2007  Teaching Assistant and Teaching Fellow at the University of Pittsburgh

2002 – 2004  Part-Time Adjunct Lecturer at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh

2001 – 2003  Instructor at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh  
Adult education and docent training lectures

2000  Instructor, Pitt’s Informal Program at the University of Pittsburgh  
Adult education courses taught
Publications


Selected Conference Papers and Invited Lectures
2011  College Art Association, New York, NY (upcoming in February)  
Paper: “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Is Photography’s Past its Future?”

2010  History of Art and Architecture Departmental Colloquium, University of Pittsburgh  
Invited Lecture: “Teaching Art History in an Online Learning Environment”

2009  Viennese Art Historiography Colloquium, Glasgow, Scotland  
Paper: “Meyer Schapiro and the New Vienna School”

2007  Southeastern College Art Conference, Charleston, WV  
Paper: “Meat is Murder: George Grosz and the Modern City”

2005  Eleventh Annual Duquesne University GSO Conference, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh  
Paper: “The Nation, the Academy and the Politics of Style: The Anti-Nationalist Art History of Meyer Schapiro”

2004  Congress of the Comité international d’histoire de l’art, Palais des Congrès de Montréal  
Paper: “Meyer Schapiro and the Possibility of an Anti-National Narrative of Style”

2003  Midwest Art History Society, Annual Conference, University of Pittsburgh  
Panel Chair: Open Session, 20th century art  
Paper: “Meyer Schapiro and Erwin Panofsky: Let’s Talk Method”

2000  History of Art and Architecture Departmental Colloquium, University of Pittsburgh  
Paper: "Meyer Schapiro and the Jongleurs: Reexamining Identity at Silos"

Recent Fellowships and Grants
2010  West Virginia Humanities Council Grant  
West Virginia University, Innovative Summer Course Grant through Extended Learning

2009  West Virginia University, Mesaros Summer Research Grant  
West Virginia University, University Faculty Travel Grant  
West Virginia University, College of Creative Arts Professional Activity Grant