



Letter from the President

August 4, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

These are difficult times and they touch each of us in different ways, I hope this newsletter finds you as well as can be. At times like this there is a need to not only appreciate the good things we have, but also rise to the challenge of doing better. The pandemic has forced us to rethink how we live, teach, and do our work – and HIAA members have been generous in supporting each other and sharing resources, as seen in recent articles, workshops and social media posts.

I hope you were able to read the HIAA Board’s Statement Condemning Anti-Black Bias and Systemic Racism. As a board we felt it was important to speak up, and to assert that we “strongly condemn[s] the systemic racism and violence enacted on Black Lives. We stand in solidarity with our Black and all other racialized colleagues and students and assert our support for those working to end the injustices that their communities have suffered. We take this moment of reckoning to also reflect on ourselves and what we, as individuals and as a community, must do.” In the spirit of self-reflection, we also decided to “prioritize the 2020-21 year’s awards -- the Grabar Postdoctoral Fellowship, Grabar Travel Grant, and the Sevchenko Prize -- and the 2021 CAA Majlis for research and activism that expands our understanding of race and its representation in Islamic art and culture, and to topics that deal with the way racism or race has played a part in writing about Islamic art.”

Taking advantage of the online medium’s ability to reach members across the world, HIAA will organize and make available online workshops and lectures on its website. We have already co-hosted one event with Christiane Gruber (President-elect, University of Michigan), who organized a highly successful workshop on Online Resources for Teaching Islamic Art on July 14, which was attended remotely by almost 100 people. Presentations on teaching resources and pedagogical strategies were given by board members Ruba Kana’an (University of Toronto) and Matt Saba (MIT), as well as Michael Toler (MIT). The video recording of the workshop will be made available to members in the coming days on the HIAA website.

Building upon the success of the July event, we will offer another workshop in mid-October 2020 (date tba), organized by Ladan Akbarnia (San Diego Museum of Art) that focuses on museums, collections, and the ethics of display. The goal is to emphasize the benefits of and opportunities for collaborative work across platforms (university, museum, cultural organizations, etc.), where increased communication and understanding of the issues and challenges involved (i.e., regarding the institution of the museum, the art market, decolonization as practice, national and international laws relating to art and heritage) leads to better practices in research, acquisition, display, and education.

In November, we will be co-hosting an event with the Middle East and Islamic Studies program at University of California, Riverside on research and pedagogy at the margins of Islamic art history. I'll write again with details once the programs have been finalized. We hope to co-host with colleagues in presenting 'local' events to a wider audience – please reach out if you'd like to share an event you're organizing.

The **August 15** deadline for proposals for the Annual HIAA *Majlis*, held in conjunction with the College Art Association, is fast approaching and we are looking forward to the event on February 11, 2020. The decision of the CAA board to move conference sessions online has prompted us to reconsider our plans and we will be hosting the *Majlis* **online**. Other upcoming deadlines to be mindful of are the Grabar Postdoctoral Fellowship and the Sevchenko Prize (submission deadlines **November 15, 2020**). In anticipation of travel restrictions, the Grabar Travel Grant (awarded twice a year) has been postponed, and the new deadline will be **December 15, 2020**. During that cycle we will award two grants, instead of the customary one, with extended dates for travel.

In the Spring, we look forward in February to the *Majlis* and the HIAA-sponsored panel at CAA, "Digital Humanities + Islamic Visual Culture," organized by Glaire Anderson (Edinburgh) and featuring papers by Lyla Halsted (IFA), Hussein Keshani (UBC), Michael Toler (MIT), and Yasaman Lotfizadeh (UBC), with Matt Saba (MIT) as discussant. We are also excited for the HIAA Biennial Symposium, postponed from this Fall. Christiane and the symposium committee, Michael Chagnon, Alain George, and Anneka Lenssen, have put together an exciting program, which you can view here:

<https://lsa.umich.edu/histart/hiaa-symposium/hiaa-symposium-program.html>. The symposium is scheduled for **April 15-17, 2021**, and we are looking forward to meeting in Ann Arbor, health advisories permitting. The symposium will otherwise be held remotely, so do look out for updates in the Spring.

An important addition to the HIAA board will be the addition of a **graduate student board member**, to better represent the voices of our growing student membership. The student member, who will serve on the board for a two-year term, will be in their third and fourth years of a PhD program, preferably ABD, and will be responsible for compiling member news and publications, gathering data on current graduate students and dissertations, and helping convene an annual professional development workshop. The election of the graduate student

representative will coincide with the election in November of a new editor for H-Islamart. Applications should be submitted by **September 1** to HIAA Secretary, Fatima Quraishi (sec.hiaa@gmail.com) and include the following:

- ** A short statement of interest (approx. 300 words)
- ** A 2-page CV
- ** Letter from your advisor/institution indicating you are enrolled and in good standing

Please apply or nominate your eligible students.

As you can see, the HIAA board is hard at work to build our community, and we invite suggestions and feedback from you, the members. Please tell us what interests you (what kinds of conversations would you like us to host) and what issues you consider to be most pressing.

I would also like to draw your attention to new on-line magazines, such as Jadaliyya (<https://www.jadaliyya.com/Category/125>) and Platform (<https://www.platformspace.net/home>), where the voices of Historians of Islamic Art and Architecture are sorely needed. There also exist opportunities for graduate students, such as *Lapis* (<https://wp.nyu.edu/lapis/>), an open-access, peer-reviewed journal published by the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU. Such sites provide opportunities for our work to be part of the public humanities discourse, and also to have an impact beyond our field. In the spirit of full disclosure, I am an editor at Platform and would love to work with you to get a piece published. Please feel free to reach out if I can help answer any questions and if you wish to share other resources and platforms.

With thanks for your continued support, I wish you and your loved ones a healthy and restorative remainder of the summer.

Kishwar Rizvi
President, HIAA



Note from the Secretary

August 4, 2020

Dear HIAA colleagues,

I hope that despite the various restrictions and uncertainties we are all contending with, you are all well.

As you can see from Kishwar's letter, the Board has been busy planning ways in which to keep our HIAA community connected through this pandemic and to respond actively to systemic injustice and racism within the academy and Islamic art history. Your comments, feedback, and participation are crucial in pushing our initiatives forward. I would especially highlight our addition of a graduate student representative to the board as an important step and would encourage students to apply by the **September 1** deadline.

In the coming months, we hope to add more content for members. This will include a census of academic and curatorial positions in Islamic art conducted and compiled by the previous HIAA secretary, Amanda Phillips. As we go forward, the census will continue to be updated every three years to be a useful resource for members.

A very important issue with regards to our records is member emails, which are sometimes out of date. Emails are especially important for official communications from the board. Please make sure to update your information on the website and help us maintain accurate records in the member directory.

Finally, a quick reminder to renew your membership and to encourage others to join HIAA, especially students and junior scholars. The website allows for automatic renewals, which has made it significantly easier to maintain active membership.

I look forward to hearing from all of you.

Thank you for your support of HIAA.

Fatima Quraishi
Secretary, HIAA