Vermeer's Fur Ladies: Tracing the Jack and High-Burgher Ideals in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Scenes and Costume History

One of the chapters of Elizabeth's dissertation discusses the jack, a fur-trimmed and fur-lined garment that figures prominently in Dutch genre paintings from the 1650s and 1660s. Her undergraduate mentee, Jeannette, will assist Elizabeth in collecting visual and textual sources for this chapter, to elucidate questions about how mercantilism, commodity fetish, and Dutch national values were inscribed onto images of fur.

Elizabeth is a Ph.D. candidate focusing on early modern fashion and dress. She is currently researching the iconographic tradition and cultural history of fur in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and Holland. She has presented papers on the materiality of fur at the Rubenianum and in the UK, and she has published papers on Jan Brueghel's The Allegory of Taste and Sofia Coppola's film Marie Antoinette.

With her mentee, she hopes to draw conclusions about 1) whether the visual representation of the jack corresponds to archival evidence; 2) the social context in which the jack is portrayed and whether the jack should be considered as maternity garb; and 3) whether the fur garment can be linked to other luxury objects.

Elizabeth McFadden
Ph.D. Candidate, History of Art

Jeannette Sturman is an Art History student originally from Minnesota. She is focusing on art created in Northern Europe in the centuries surrounding the Reformation. While also pursuing a minor in Medieval Studies. She was attracted to this project because it combines her interests in Dutch culture and art production, as well as her fascination for costume history, which stems from her youth growing up in a costume shop and her later forays into the world of theater.

In the spring semester, she worked for Professor Honig on her Brueghel project, focusing primarily on bibliography maintenance. This summer, with the help of the SMART program, she hopes to further hone her research preparation skills and get an inside look at the graduate school experience and application process, as well as learn about the work involved in writing a dissertation. She is looking forward to studying Vermeer, the jack, and its materiality and social context, and she is thankful for this exciting opportunity.

Jeanette Sturman
Undergraduate, History of Art

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Expenses associated with each team total $10,000 000 ($5K graduate stipend/ $3.5K undergrad stipend/$1.5K research and conference costs). As a donor-supported program of the Graduate Division, the majority of teams are underwritten through a combination of donor funds paired with matching support courtesy of the Graduate Division.

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