

CURRICULUM VITAE

Suzanne Preston Blier

Harvard University, Allen Whitehill Clowes Professor of Fine Arts and Professor of African and African American Studies

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Faculty Member: Departments of History of Art and Architecture
Faculty Member: Department of African and American Studies
Faculty Associate, Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University

EDUCATION

1973-81
Columbia University, Dept of Art History & Archaeology
Master of Arts (January 1976)
Master of Philosophy (May 1976)
Doctor of Philosophy (May 1981)

1967-69 and 1971-73
University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt.
Bachelor of Arts (May 1973)

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

1993- Harvard University, Professor
1983-93 Columbia University, Assistant, Associate and Full Professor
1981-83 Northwestern University, Mellon Assistant Professor
1979-81 Vassar College, Lecturer
1969-71 Instructor with the Bureau Technique d'Etudes et Documentation, Republic of Benin; Peace Corps.

AWARDS, HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS

2005-6 Evelyn Green Davis Fellow, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University
2005- Chair, Editorial Board, Art Bulletin
2005 Ad. E. Jensen Memorial Lectures, Frobenius-Institut, University of Frankfurt
2005 Charles W. Wampler Jr. Lectures, James Madison University
2004 Eminent Scholar Lecture, Dartmouth College
2004 Daniel H. Silberberg Lecture, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University
2004 Presidential Instructional Technology Fellowship
2004 CAA's Distinguished Lifetime Achievement for Writing on Art Award, Committee Member
2001-04 Getty Center for the History of Art and Architecture, Collaborative Research Grant (Bamum Art Worlds).
Team Leader.
2000-01 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (Imaging Amazons)
1999-2002 Herskovits Award, Book Selection Committee (2001-Chair)
1999 Choice Award, Book Selection - for *African Royal Art, The Majesty of Form*
1998 Finalist, Melville Herskovits Award for African Vodun.
1998 Finalist, Arnold Rubin Award for African Vodun

1997 Charles Rufus Morey Award from the College Art Association, for African Vodun as the distinguished book in Art History published in 1996

1993-98 Seaver Foundation, Grant for the "Social Roots of Creativity" project.

1990-91 Getty Scholar, Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities

1989 Arnold Rubin Outstanding Publication Award (for *The Anatomy of Architecture*). Selected as the outstanding book of the last three years on the subject of African art

1988 Finalist, Herskovits Award (for *The Anatomy of Architecture*)

1988-89 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship

1988-89 Member, School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

1988 Ailsa Mellon Bruce Senior Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (declined)

1987 Millard Meiss Award, College Art Association (Publication Subvention for *The Anatomy of Architecture*)

1987 Society of Fellows in the Humanities, Columbia University, Associate Fellow

1985-86 Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship

1985-86 Social Science Research Council Fellowship

1984, 1985, 1988 Council for Research in the Humanities Grant (Columbia)

1983-84 American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship

1981 Richard Lounsbery Fellowship, American Museum of Natural History

1979-81 Metropolitan Museum of Art, Curatorial Assistant

1976-77 Fulbright Hays Research Abroad Fellowship

1976 Columbia University, Ph.D. Orals Examination-passed with Distinction

1975-76 George W. Ellis Fellowship, Columbia University

PUBLICATIONS

Books and Catalogues

Forthcoming: *Imaging African Amazons: The Art of Dahomey Women Warriors*

In Press: Past Presence: Ife Art and Yoruba History University of Washington Press/ Museum for African Art.

2005 Italian translation of *Butabu: Adobe Architecture in West Africa (2004)*

2005 Chinese translation of *African Royal Art: The Majesty of Form (1998)*

2004 Korean translation of *African Royal Art: The Majesty of Form (1998)*

2004 *Art of the Senses: Masterpieces from the William and Bertha Teel Collection* (Editor). Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

2003 *Butabu: Adobe Architecture in West Africa* (with James Morris photographer). Princeton Architectural Press. New York Times Book Review, Holiday Selection 2004 for *Butabu: Adobe Architecture in West Africa*; also honored among "Best of Year" The Washington Post.

1998 *African Royal Art: The Majesty of Form*. London: Calmann and King; New York: Abrams/Prentice Hall.

1998 *L'Art Royal Africain*. Paris: Flammarion (translation of above)

1996 *The Art of Identity: African Art in the Teel Collection*, exhibition flier with Aimee and Mark Bessire, Fogg Museum, Harvard University.

1995 *African Vodun: Art, Psychology, and Power*. (University of Chicago Press)

1987 *The Anatomy of Architecture: Ontology and Metaphor in Batammaliba Architectural Expression*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

1982 *Gestures in African Art* (L. Kahan, New York).

1980 *Africa's Cross River: Art of the Nigerian Cameroon Border Redefined* (L. Kahan, New York).

1980 *African Art as Theatre: The Mount Collection* (Vassar College).

1976 *Beauty and the Beast, A Study in Contrasts* (Tribal Arts, New York).

Articles

In press "Capricious Arts: Idols in Renaissance era Africa and Europe (The Case of Sapi and Kongo)" in Idols in the Age of Art editor: Michael Cole, Publisher: Ashgate

In press "Meeting the Amazons," in Human Zoos Liverpool University Press.

In press "Europa: Nineteenth Century Dahomey Portrayals of the West" in Europe Observed, edited by Clement Hawes.

In press « Histoire de l'art et création dans les sociétés « traditionnelles » : une perception ethnocentrique de l'objet « d'art. » editor Annie Dupuis.

In press: "The Wild Women of Africa: Dahomey Amazon Performances in the West" in *Living Display*, ed. James Drobovnick, University of Chicago.

2006 "Vernacular Architecture" in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by Webb Keane et. al London: Sage Publications.

2006 In "Mapping the Ituri: Mbuti Bark Cloth Painting and the Art of Anne Eisner." *Images of the Congo: Anne Eisner's Art and Ethnography* ed. By Christie McDonald. London: Five Continents.

2005 "Razing the Roof: The Architecture of Destruction in Dahomey" in *Structure and Meaning in Human Settlements*, ed. by Tony Atkin (University of Pennsylvania)

2005 "Mapping the Ituri: Mbuti Barkcloth Paintings and the Canvases of Anne Eisner," in *Imaging the Congo: The Paintings of Anne Eisner*, edited by Christie McDonald (Five Continents).

2005 "Fon Monkey Figure," "Fon Asen Memorial" in *Masterpieces of African Art in the New Orleans of Fine Arts*, Museum for African Art, New York.

2005 Review Essay, on three recent catalogues on African art (Pamela McClusky, Martha Anderson and Philip M. Peek, Frederick Lanp) in the *Art Bulletin*.

2004 "Conversation" in *Musings on Barbarous Beauty: A Conversation Series on Art and the Sacred*. Ed. by Ronnie Hartfield. Cambridge, Ma. Center for the Study of World Religions. Harvard University.

2004 "Trading and Transcending Places: A Hybrid, Multiplex Approach to Visual Culture" in Mariet Westermann ed. *Anthropologies of Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

2004 "Butabu: The Surreal Adobe Architecture of West Africa" in *ICON: World Monuments*

2004 "African Creation Myths as Political Strategy" in *African Arts* vol 37, no. 1, pp. 39-45, 94.

2004 "Ways of Experiencing African Art: The Role of Patina" in *Art of the Senses: Masterpieces from the William and Bertha Teel Collection* (Suzanne Preston Blier, Editor). Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

2004 "Catalogue Entries" (with William Teel) in *Art of the Senses: Masterpieces from the William and Bertha Teel Collection* (Suzanne Preston Blier, Editor). Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

2003 "Trone royal jandeme de style akan;" "Tabouret katake a trois pieds;" "Tabouret typique" in *Sieges d'Afrique Noire du musee Barbier-Mueller* ed. By P. B Johannot and J. P. Barbier-Mueller. 5 Continents. pp 138-144.

2003 "Assemblage: Dahomey Art and the Politics of Dynasty" *Res: Anthropology and Art*. Vol. 45. pp.186 ff.

2003 "Fertility: Representing Regeneration in Art," *Arts & Cultures*, Geneva, no. 4. pp.182-209

2002 "Vodun Art, Social History and the Slave Trade" in *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff, Routledge (reprint from African Vodun and earlier issue) pp. 323-330

2002 "Nine Contradictions in the New Golden Age of African Art," *African Arts*.

2002 "Les Amazones a la rencontre de l'Occident," in *Memoire Coloniale: Zoos Humaines*. Editions la Decouverte, Paris.

2001 "Autobiography and Art History," *Res: Anthropology and Art*. Vol. 29. pp. 24-40.

2000 "The Woman, the Snake and the Ocean: A Masterpiece of Vodun Sculpture from Southern Benin," *Arts and Cultures*, Geneva, no. 1.

1999 "African Art and Architecture;" "Dogon Art and Architecture;" "Benin, Art of the Early Kingdom;" and "Ife, Art of the Early Kingdom," in *Encyclopedia Africana*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Kwame Anthony Appiah.

1999 "Vodun Art, Social History and the Slave Trade," in *Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff, Routledge (reprint from African Vodun).

1998 Review of Jean-Paul Bourdier and Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Drawn from African Dwellings* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press) in *Common Knowledge*.

1998 "Batammaliba Architecture," in *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Paul Oliver.

1998 "Fon Architecture," in *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Paul Oliver.

1997 "Gesture and Art in Africa," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Hugh Brigstocke.

1997 "Fon Art," *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Hugh Brigstocke.

1996 "Le Roi Glele du Dahomey" in *Magi*, published by the Musee Dapper, Paris.

1996 "Enduring Myths of African Art," in *Africa: The Art of a Continent: 100 Works of Beauty and Power*. New York: Guggenheim Museum. pp. 26-32

1996 "Ritual" in *Critical Terms in Art History*, ed. Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 187-96.

1995 "Benin: The Place Where Vodun Was Born," *Natural History* (October) 40-47.

1995 "The Path of the Leopard: Majesty and Motherhood in Danhomé Dynastic Discourse," *Journal of African History*.

1995 "The African Roots of Vodou," in *The Sacred Arts of Vodou*, ed. Donald Cosentino, University of California Press.

- 1993 "Imaging Otherness in Ivory: African Images of the Portuguese Circa 1492," *The Art Bulletin*.
- 1993 "Truth and Falsehood: Fetish, Magic, and Custom in European and African Art," in *Africa and the Disciplines*, eds. Robert H. Bates, Valentin Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr. U. of Chicago Press, pp. 139-166.
- 1993 "Art and Secret Agency: Concealment and Revelation in Artistic Expression" in *African Arts of Secrecy*, ed. Mary Nooter, New York: The Museum for African Art.
- 1993 "Melville J. Herskovits and the Arts of Ancient Dahomey," reprint of 1988 Res article in *Art in Small-Scale Societies: A Contemporary Reader*, Richard Anderson, ed., Prentice Hall.
- 1992 "Shadow Plays: Reading between the Lines in Postmodern Criticism," *African Arts XXV*, No. 3., pp. 26-30.
- 1992 "First Word," *African Arts*, XXV, no.3: 1, 8-10.
- 1991 "Faces of Iron: Media, Meaning, and Masking in Danhomé," *Bulletin du Musée Barbier-Mueller*, Geneva, pp. 19-41.
- 1991 "Le Musée Histoire D'Abomey: Colonial and Princely Prerogatives in the Establishment of an African Museum, Quaderini Poro, Milan, Italy," *Arte in Africa 2*:140-158.
- 1991 "Comment" on W.E.A. van Beek's "Dogon restudied," *Current Anthropology*.
- 1991 "King Glele of Danhomé: Dynasty and Destiny (Part II)," *African Art 24*.1: 44-55, 101-103.
- 1990 "King Glele of Danhomé: Divination Portraits of a Lion King and Man of Iron (Part I)," *African Arts 23*.4: 42-53, 93-94.
- 1990 "African Art at the Crossroads: An American Perspective," in *African Art Studies: The State of the Discipline Smithsonian Institution*, pp. 91-107.
- 1989 "Moral Architecture: Beauty and Ethics in Batammaliba Building Design," in *Dwellings, Settlements and Tradition: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. J P.Bourdier and N. Al Sayyad, University Press of America, pp. 335-355.
- 1989 "Field Days: Melville J. Herskovits in Dahomey," *History in Africa* (16:1-22).
- 1988-89 "Art Systems and Semiotics: The Question of Art, Craft, and Colonial Taxonomies in Africa," *American Journal of Semiotics* (6.1: 7-18).
- 1988 "Melville J. Herskovits and the Arts of Ancient Dahomey," Res: *Anthropology and Art* (16:124-42).
- 1988 "Solar Plexis/Spatial Nexus: Architectural Dimensions of the Soul," in *Daidalos: Architektur*, Kunst, Kultur.
- 1988 "Words about Words about Icons: Iconology and the Study of African Art," *College Art Journal 47*:75-87.
- 1987 "Imagines Mundi: Narrative, Ritual, and Architectural Exemplars of Batammaliba Cosmogony," *Archaeoastronomy 10*:36-53, reprint of Chapter 1 of *The Anatomy of Architecture*.
- 1985 "Kings, Crowns, and Rights of Succession: Obalufon Arts at Ife and Other Yoruba Centers," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. LXVII no. 3: 383-401.
- 1984 "Antelopes and Anvils: Artistic Sources and Imagery in Tamberma Works of Iron," *African Arts 17*.3: 58-63.
- 1984 "Towards a History of Tamberma Two Story Architecture: Origins, Impetus, and Factors of Change," *Iowa Studies in African Art* vol. I: 115-134.
- 1983 "Houses are Human: Architectural Self Images of Africa's Tamberma," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 42*. 4: 371 -382.
- 1982 "African Art and Architecture," in *Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia*, I, pp. 215-221.
- 1982 "Masks," in *Encyclopedia Americana 18*: 423-426.
- 1982 "African Cosmogony," a review essay in *Archaeoastronomy 5*.4: 45.
- 1981 "The Dance of Death: Notes on the Architecture and Staging of Tamberma Funeral Performances," Res: *Anthropology and Art*, 2, Harvard University, pp.107-143.
- 1974 "Creative/Destructive," in *African Art as Philosophy*, ed. Douglas Fraser, New York, pp. 95-98.
- 1974 "Beauty and the Beast," in *African Art as Philosophy*, ed. Douglas Fraser, New York, pp. 107-113.

Films and Electronic Media Projects

- 1993 Editor-in-Chief, *Baobab: Roots of Creativity in African Material Culture*. Electronic Media Database. Harvard University.
- 1981 *Art of Cameroon*, text written for film Video Disk, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Michael C. Rockefeller Collection.
- 1974 Editorial Assistant for the film, *Out of Fire Comes Strength, The Somba of Dahomey*, prod. by D. Fraser

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE

- 2004- Distinguished Scholar Selection Committee, College Art Association
- 2004 Program Chair, 13th Triennial Meeting of ACASA, the Arts Council of the African Studies Association, March 31-April 3, Harvard University

2003- Editorial Board, Art Bulletin, College Art Association
2003- Editorial Board, Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians
2003-2007 Advisory Editorial Board, Journal of African History
2000-2002 Herskovits Prize Committee, Chair 2001
2001 Outside Review Committee, University of California, Santa Cruz, Art History Department
1997 Outside Review Committee, University of Michigan Art History Department
1989-94 Board of Directors, College Art Association
1986- Editorial Board, *African Arts Magazine*
1986-91 Member of the Permanent Working Group on African Humanities, ACLS SSRC Joint Sponsored Committee
1987-89 President Pro Tem. Arts Council of the African Studies Association (professional Association of African Art Scholars)
1986-89 Board of Directors, Arts Council of the African Studies Association
1983-93 Co Chairman, Columbia University Seminar in the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas

Films and Electronic Media Projects

2007- Co-Chair *Africa Map Geographic Information System Web Project* (with Peter Bol) Interactive data base and website <http://africamap.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k28501&pageid=icb.page125848>
1994- Editor-in-Chief. *Baobab: Visual Sources in African Visual Culture*. Interactive Data Base of 7000 + images on African art and material culture
1981 *Art of Cameroon*, text written for film *Video Disk*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Michael C. Rockefeller Collection.
1974 Editorial Assistant for the film, *Out of Fire Comes Strength, The Somba of Dahomey*, prod. by D. Fraser

M.A. and Ph.D. Theses

1981 "Architecture of the Tamberma (Togo)," Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University (Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1983).
1976 "Masking Traditions of Southeastern Nigeria," M.A. Thesis, Columbia University.

MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

2007 Curator, *Dynasty and Divinity: Ancient Ife Art (Nigeria)*. Exhibition to open 2009 with the Botin Foundation (Spain) and the Museum for African Art, New York.
1986-87 Consultant, National Museums, Republic of Benin.
1984 Consultant, Museum of Art, Duke University. (Evaluation of the African Collection).
1979-81 Metropolitan Museum of Art, Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection. (Curatorial research in preparation for exhibit opening).
1980-81 American Museum of Natural History, Collection of Artifacts, Dept. of Anthropology, Consultant.
1973-75 Columbia University, Slide Curator, Primitive Art Collection.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION

1995 Co-Curator, "African Art and Identity: The Teel Collection," (Harvard University)
1982 *Gestures in African Art*, New York (Organizer).
1982 *Architecture and Life in Mali and Ghana*, photographic exhibition, Northwestern University Library - Organizer
1980 *African Art as Theatre*, Vassar College (Organizer).
1976 *Beauty and the Beast*, Tribal Arts Gallery, New York (Organizer).
1976 *African Art as Philosophy*, photographic exhibit, Columbia University (Assistant).
1972 *Yoruba and Fon Art*, Fleming Museum (Organizer).
1972 *Art is Life in Africa*, Fleming Museum (Assistant).

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Harvard University

2007- Digital Humanities Committee
2007- IQSS Faculty Associate
2007- CGA Faculty Associate
2005- Expanded Traditions Committee, Member - Harvard Art Museums

2003- Convener, African Initiative - African Thought, Memory and Contestation
2003 -Admissions committee, Dept of African and African American Studies
2003- Selection Committee, Du Bois Fellows, Dept. of African and African American Studies
2003-Advisor, African Student Journal
2003-co-Chair African Dissertation Seminar
2003- W.E. B. Du Bois Board of Directors

2003- W.E. B. Du Bois Board of Directors
2002 Interim Head Tutor, Afro-American Studies Department
2002 Chair, W. E. B. Du Bois Fellowship Selection Committee
1995-1998 Director of Graduate Students, History of Art and Architecture
1993- Member, Committee on Africa
1993- Member, Faculty-Student Committee, History of Art

Columbia University

1992-93 Director of Graduate Studies
1991- Administration Committee, Dept. of Art History
1991- Member, Visual Resources Committee
1989-91 Member, University Senate
1990-91 Member, Security Committee
1989- Member, Faculty Planning Committee
1989-90 Committee Member, Columbia University in the 1990's
1989- Departmental Graduate Curriculum Committee
1989-90 Junior Faculty Review Committee
1989-90 Wallach Art Gallery Committee
1989- Departmental Representative, General Studies
1989-90 Co-Chairman, Modern Art Search Committee
1987-88 Search Committee, General Western Position
1987-88 Committee Member, Departmental Curriculum Committee
1987 Committee Member, Departmental planning for the 1990s
1987 Search Committee, Contemporary Art
1986 Committee to Reevaluate Art History Major Requirements
1986 General Studies Representative, Dept. of Art History
1984 Dept. Representative, Fulbright Selection Committee
1983-85 Chairman, Frick Talk Selection Committee
1983-85 Co Chairman, The University Seminar on Primitive and Pre Columbian Art

Northwestern University

1982-83 Co Chairman with Mary Douglas, Art and Anthropology Club
1982-83 Standing Committee, College of Arts and Sciences, on Study Abroad
1981-83 Faculty Associate, Humanities College
1981-83 Member, Executive Committee, Program of African Studies
1981-83 Departmental Advisor, Undergraduate Majors

GRADUATE STUDENT DISSERTATION SUPERVISING

Harvard University - Ph.D.

Cecile Fromont
Gemma Rodrigues
Dalila Scruggs
Genieve Hyacinthe
Ruth Kerkham Simbao
Leora Maltz
Prita Meier
Randall Bird
Jessica Levin

Steven Nelson
Aimee Bessire
Janet Hess
Pilar Quezzaire-Belle
Mercedes Trelles
Mark Delancey
Lauri Firstenberg
Kristina Van Dyke
Leora Maltz
Linda Rodriguez

Columbia University - Ph.D.

Shaalini Ranasinghe
John Peffer
Virginia Lee Webb
Lynn Spriggs
Gary Van Wyk
Anne d'Alleva
Alisa Lagamma
Anne Allen
Florina Capistrano
Dominique Malaquais
Sarah Travis
Mary Nooter

Northwestern University Ph.D.

Kate Ezra