**URNA SEMPER**

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# **EDUCATION**

PhD, History of Art, Johns Hopkins University, 2000

Dissertation: “The Reliquary as Architectural Model in 13th Century France”

Advisor: Professor Hildegard Coolidge

MA, History of Art, University of Texas at Austin, 1994

Thesis: “Power and Belief: Relics and Reliquaries in Medieval Christianity”

Advisor: Professor Esther Drake

BA, Studio Art, Smith College, 1992

Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa

Areas of Specialization: Medieval European Art and Architecture

# **professional EXPERIENCE**

**Curator of Medieval Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA**

**2005–Present**

Responsible for the medieval collection with over 12,000 artworks. Developed and mounted three exhibitions: *Gilded Devotions: Medieval “Books of Hours” from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris* (5000 sq. feet; 74,600 visitors; $850,000 budget); *Draping the Sacred: Embroidered Altar Cloths from Medieval Spain* (3000 sq. feet; 62,300 visitors; $550,000 budget); *The Maltese Ivory Hoard* (750 sq. feet; 12,400 visitors; $125,000 budget).

**Lecturer, Art History Department, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA**

**2002–2005**

Taught a total of five courses. Instructor of record each term. In addition to lectures, led weekly discussion sections, held office hours, graded exams and papers, and filed final course grades. Courses developed: Medieval Art and Architecture; The Age of Cathedrals, and Art History 101.

**Curatorial Assistant, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD**

**2000–2002**

Conducted research on objects for exhibitions and the permanent collection. Wrote grant proposals and secured $5,000 in funding for docent training program. Coordinated training program for 45 docents to develop gallery talks on the permanent collection.

# **Scholarly and Professional Publications**

**Books**

Semper, Urna. *The Reliquary as Architectural Model in 13th Century France*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2002.

**Articles**

Semper, Urna. “A Newly Discovered Book of Hours from the Court of Louis XIV.” *The Art* *Bulletin* 132, vol. 4 (2014): 212–32.

Semper, Urna. “Embroidery Guilds in Medieval Spain.” *Gesta* 52, vol. 6 (2010): 42–86.

Semper, Urna. “A Sicilian Ivory Hoard from Malta.” In *Dumbarton Oaks Papers: Trade in the Medieval Mediterranean,* ed. Franklin Edwards.(Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2006), 82–104.

**Exhibition Catalogues**

Semper, Urna and Alice du Pré, eds. *Gilded Devotions: Medieval “Books of Hours” from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.* Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2015.

**Encyclopedia Entries**

Semper, Urna. “Ivory.” In *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture, volume 2,* ed. Colum Hourihane. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 746–49.

**Blogs**

Semper, Urna. “5 Amazing Relics from the MFA, Boston.” *MFA, Boston Now* blog *(*August 2012). The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

# **EXHIBITIONS**

“Gilded Devotions: Medieval ‘Books of Hours’ from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris,” Museum of Fine Art Arts, Boston, Curator, 9/14/2015–1/12/2016. Exhibition catalogue.

“Draping the Sacred: Embroidered Altar Cloths from Medieval Spain,” Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Curator, 3/14–6/20/2010.

“The Maltese Ivory Hoard,” Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Curator, 9/10–10/30/2007.

“British and Irish Medieval Stained Glass,” Trout Gallery, Dickinson College, Carlisle, Interpretation Advisor, 1/14–3/14/2005.

“Kingdom of Heaven: Jerusalem in Medieval Art.” Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Curatorial Research Assistant, 4/26–6/28/2002.

**NEW MEDIA**

Codirector with T. Hilman, *Collection Tour: Medieval Art,* Video,Museum of Fine Art, Boston, 2013.

# **conferences/invited lectures/presentations**

Speaker, “The Itinerant Gem Cutter—A Royal Myth?” Paper presented at the “Mediaeval Design and Craft Workshops” symposium, V&A Museum, London, UK, March 11–14, 2016.

Panel Chair, “Cloth of Gold: Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Weaving in Spain.” Panel chaired at the annual meeting for the Society of Textile Historians, New Orleans, Louisiana, May 7–9, 2014.

Discussant, “The City in Miniature? Architectural Models in Medieval Europe.” Comments presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Architectural Historians, San Francisco, California, October 22–27, 2007.

Invited Lecturer, “Un nouveau trésor d’ivoire de Malte.” Paper presented at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France, November 24, 2005. (Delivered in French.)

Speaker, “Encapsulating the Sacred: Architectural Models as Reliquaries in 13th Century France.” Paper presented at the CAA Annual Conference, New York, New York, February 23–26, 2000.

# **Professional Activities/Service**

Institute of Museum and Library Services, Grant Review Panelist (2015)

Young Professionals Mentor, Association of Art Museum Curators (2012–present)

Museum Committee, College Art Association (2008–2011)

# **Grants/Fellowships/Awards**

Fellow, Center for Curatorial Leadership, 2010

Travel Grant, Kress Foundation, 2005

# **Computer and Technical Skills**

Proficient in Adobe InDesign, Adobe PhotoShop, ArcGIS, AutoCAD, Microsoft Office Suite

Collections Management Software: FileMaker Pro, TMS, and KE EMu

# **languages**

French, Italian: Fluent (reading and speaking)

German, Latin: Reading knowledge

# **professional affiliations**

American Alliance of Museums

Association of Art Museum Curators

CAA

International Center of Medieval Art

# **references**

Portfolio and references available upon request.