

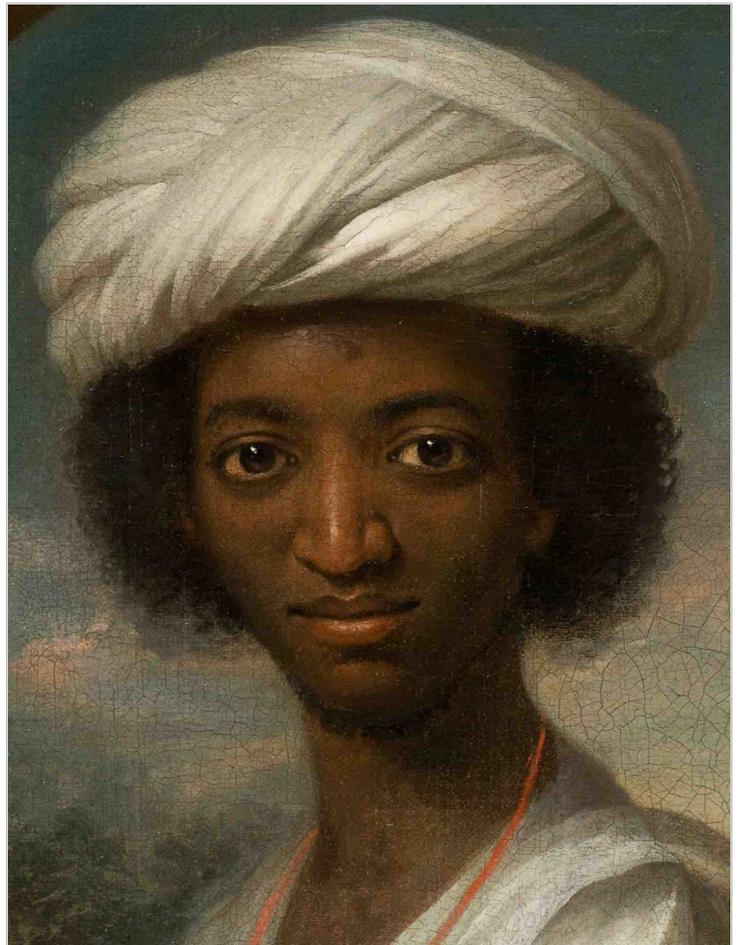
# hba

historians of british art

newsletter  
spring/summer 2015

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William Hoare of Bath's *Portrait of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo*, ca. 1733, has recently been acquired by The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation. For the full story, see *British Art in American Collections*, page 5.

## Call for Applications for Travel Grants, due Sept. 15, 2015

The award is designated for a graduate student member of HBA who will be presenting a paper on British art or visual culture at an academic conference in 2016. The award of \$750 is intended to offset travel costs. To apply, send a letter of request, a copy of the letter of acceptance from the organizer of the conference session, an abstract of the paper to be presented, a budget of estimated expenses (noting what items may be covered by other resources), and a CV to the Grants Committee Chair, Kimberly Rhodes, [krhodes@drew.edu](mailto:krhodes@drew.edu).



## a letter from the President

Dear HBA Members,

I hope many of you were able to attend the excellent lineup of HBA activities during CAA in New York. I'd like to congratulate in particular Morna O'Neill, Anne Nellis Richter, and Melinda McCurdy on the exceptional attendance and expert moderation of their HBA-sponsored panel "Home Subjects: Domestic Space and the Arts in Britain, 1753–1900." Jongwoo Jeremy Kim and Margaret Michniewicz, Commissioning Editor of Visual Studies at Ashgate, led an informative book publishing workshop following the business meeting. Thanks to Peter Trippi, members also enjoyed not one, but two (!)

special off-site visits to The Art Students League collection and to an exhibition of neoclassical decorative arts at Hirschl & Adler Galleries. Stay tuned for details about CAA 2016 in Washington, D.C. in the coming months.

Additional gratitude is due to Renate Dohmen, who is stepping down as Chair of the Travel and Publication Grants Committee. Two other valued Board members, Morna O'Neill and Emily Talbot, will be rotating off at the end of June as well. I know you will join me in extending our great appreciation for all of their hard work on behalf of HBA the past several years.

Former HBA President Kimberly Rhodes (Associate Professor and Chair of Art History, Drew University) has graciously agreed to step in as the new Grants Committee Chair. Also as part of these transitions, we welcome another former HBA President, Julia Marciari Alexander (Executive Director, Walters Art Museum) and Laurel Peterson (Ph.D. Candidate, Yale University) to the Board. Luckily we are not losing Emily, as she has agreed to assume the role of Treasurer/Membership Chair!

The biggest change will be Craig Hanson's succession to HBA President July 1. It has been a tremendous honor to lead this organization, and I am grateful to my fellow

officers—Craig, Jongwoo, & Keren Hammerschlag—as well as to my wonderful Board, for their counsel, support, and teamwork. They say the days are long, but the years are short (something I have been learning all too well recently as a new mom of twins). It has felt so true during my fleeting two-year presidency. While I am proud of the strides we have made with member communications (thank you Emily, Kate and Keren!) and our outstanding contributions to CAA, there were more goals I had hoped to accomplish for HBA. However, I look forward to contributing in new ways as a Board member and to the exciting developments that are sure to unfold during Craig's tenure. There is no one more dedicated to HBA or committed to its success than Craig, so I know there are great things still to come!

Best wishes,

Colette Crossman

Independent Scholar,  
Austin, TX

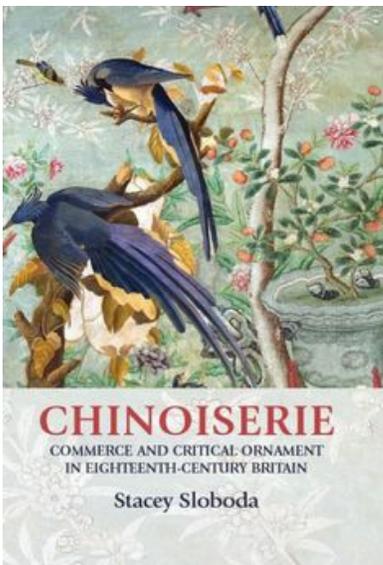
### Newsletter Contributions

Please send ideas for reviews or features, as well as items of member news, to the editor, Kate Roach, at [croach2@vcu.edu](mailto:croach2@vcu.edu)

## MEMBER NEWS

To submit an item, email the editor at: [croach2@vcu.edu](mailto:croach2@vcu.edu)

**Colleen Denney**, Program Director and Professor, Gender and Women's Studies, University of Wyoming, is currently on a year-long Seibold Fellowship granted by the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Wyoming to conduct research for several book projects and one novel based on the visual culture of the British suffrage movement. She has been able to spend time in London and Paris on the fellowship and has traveled to New Zealand to work in the National Library on the 1893 enfranchisement of New Zealand women as part of this research. On her return to her university, based on this work, she will develop a series of courses on the visual culture of women's activism, with a particular focus on the interrelationships between England, New Zealand, and America. She will also focus particularly on Wyoming, which was the first place in the world to grant women the vote, in 1869, at a time when it was still a territory. Suffragists the world over, but in England and New Zealand in particular, looked to the Wyoming enfranchisement in their arguments for the vote. She has also established the Women's Advancement and Research Center on the University of Wyoming campus that will focus, in the near future, on bringing in gender scholars for research and dialogue.



**Stacey Sloboda**, Associate Professor of Art History, Southern Illinois University, has just published *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament in Eighteenth-Century Britain* with Manchester University Press. In a critical reassessment of chinoiserie, a style both praised and derided for its triviality, prettiness, and ornamental excesses, Sloboda shows that chinoiserie was no mute participant in eighteenth-century global consumer culture, but was instead a critical commentator on that culture. Analyzing ceramics, wallpaper, furniture, garden architecture and other significant examples of British and Chinese design, this book takes an object-focused approach to studying the cultural phenomenon of the 'Chinese taste' in eighteenth-century Britain.

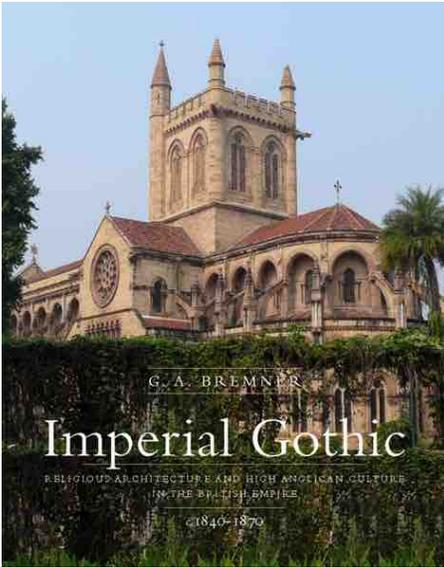
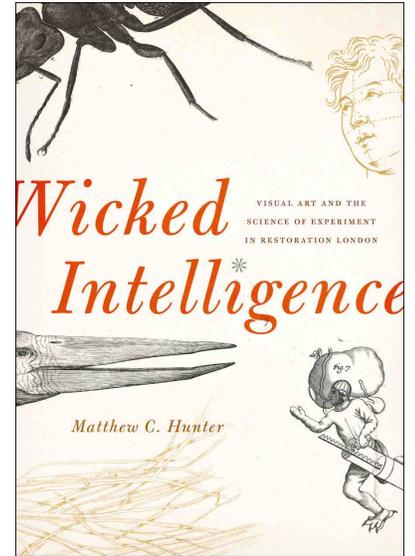
Demonstrating that the ornamental language of chinoiserie was mutually developed by Chinese and European artists, designers, craftspeople, and merchants, this book argues against the notion that chinoiserie was the product of European fantasy and ignorance about Chinese culture. Rather, it was a product of cross-cultural exchange of European and Chinese responses to expanding commercial markets and changing ideas about design.

As a popular, commercial style whose subject was commerce, chinoiserie offered a new group of consumers opportunities for aesthetic agency. Women, long associated with the style, were one such group, and this book also pays attention to the role of men such as merchants and craftsmen in the development of the style.

An innovative approach to art and cultural history, the book is essential reading for anyone interested in analysis of design and the decorative arts in eighteenth-century Britain. Students and scholars of art history, material culture, eighteenth-century studies, and British history will find a novel approach to studying the decorative arts and a forceful argument for their critical capacities.

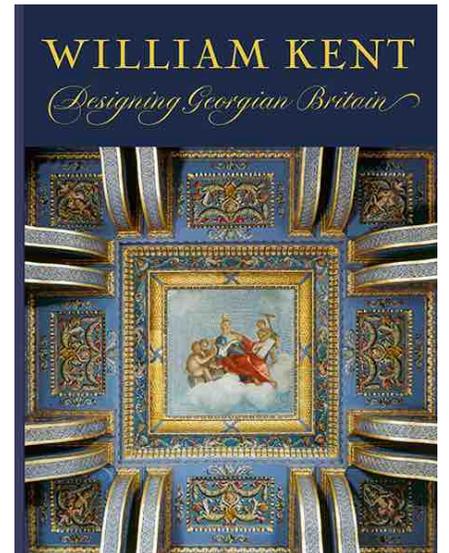
# Congratulations to the Winners of the Historians of British Art Book Prizes

Single Author before 1800: **Matthew C. Hunter, *Wicked Intelligence: Visual Art and the Science of Experiment in Restoration London***  
(University of Chicago Press)



Single Author after 1800: **G.A. Bremner, *Imperial Gothic: Religious Architecture and High Anglican Culture in the British Empire, 1840–1870***  
(Yale University Press)

Multi-Author: **Susan Weber, ed., *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain***  
(Yale University Press)



*A special thanks to the committee chair, Douglas Fordham, and to all the committee members.*

*To nominate a publication or if you are interested in serving on the reading committee, please contact Book Prize Committee Chair Douglas Fordham, at [Fordham@virginia.edu](mailto:Fordham@virginia.edu). Publishers should email him about nominating books for consideration and about sending books to members of the reading committee.*

# BRITISH ART IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS

Contributed by Sarah Meschutt, Senior Curator,  
Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Williamsburg, VA



William Hoare of Bath,  
ca. 1733

*Ayuba Suleiman Diallo*  
(lived ca. 1701-1773)

Oil on linen canvas

13 7/8 x 12 in

Collection of the  
Jamestown-Yorktown  
Foundation

Photograph by Richmond  
Conservation, Inc.

A little over a year ago, the foundation acquired this intimate portrait of an African merchant and scholar. Kidnapped and forced to undergo the Middle Passage in 1731, Ayuba Suleiman Diallo found himself enslaved in Britain's American colonies. In 1733, he regained his freedom and visited London on his way back to his homeland in Senegal. While in London, he became

acquainted with scholars who were studying Arab texts and was given hospitality and financial aid by officers of the Royal African Company. At that time, he also sat to William Hoare. After reaching Senegal in 1734, he resumed his trading activities as a prominent member of the Fulbe people and lived the life of a devout Muslim until his death in 1773.

Diallo was a famous victim of the transatlantic slave trade. His tale entered the literature about enslaved individuals at a time when abolitionism was gaining ground in Britain and in certain circles in the North American colonies. Tracts such as Anthony Benezet's *Caution and Warning to Great Britain and Her Colonies*, published in Philadelphia 1767, warned British authorities about the inhumanity of the slave trade taking place in the British dominions. However, the slave trade was a bulwark of the international Triangular Trade system that linked America with Africa and Europe and operated a network of exchanges of goods on a global scale to the benefit of European powers. Even after American Independence was won, the trade that brought thousands of enslaved Africans to America continued to flourish in the former British colonies.

Important for our understanding of Diallo is the narrative of his life published in 1734 by his friend and supporter Thomas Bluett, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job: The Son of Solomon The High Priest of Boonda in Africa*. This memoir recounts how Diallo eventually gained release from his bondage on the tobacco plantation of Mr. Tolley of Kent Island, Maryland, was given passage to England, learned English, and met Bluett. It also describes the devout Muslim's reaction to having his likeness taken by Hoare. At that time, he was about thirty-three years old and the memoir states that for reasons of his faith, he resisted the invitation to sit to the artist, until he was persuaded that his friends and his benefactors in England needed a portrait to be able to remember him. The artist succeeded in painting an engaging and youthful visage, with a hint of that charm and intelligence that impressed many acquaintances in Britain. The artist's detailed rendering even includes the ritual marking on the forehead that is a Fulbe tradition. The turban and white silken robe may be those provided for the event of Diallo's presentation to King George II.

There are two original versions of William Hoare's portrait of Diallo, which appear to have been executed at the same time. One is owned by the Qatar Museums Authority and is currently on loan to the National Portrait Gallery, London, and the other is owned by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation. The two versions of William Hoare's image of Diallo constitute the earliest known British portraits representing a named African individual who experienced enslavement in the thirteen colonies of mainland North America in the period before the War of Independence. Diallo's visit to Britain, Bluett's *Memoirs*, and Hoare's likeness gave him a lasting presence in abolitionist literature and in publications covering the social scene in London. An article in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in June 1750 included an engraving of Hoare's portrait, alongside remarks in the social calendar upon the arrival of William Ansah Sessarakoo, another notable African visiting Britain.

The two paintings of Diallo are in most respects very similar, but William Hoare adopted a slightly different pose and a landscape background for the foundation's portrait, which is also the smaller of the two versions. In the larger version, the figure is shown in a more formal state against a plain background, giving the painting monumental quality. In both versions, the dignity and immediacy of the expression in Diallo's face is captured by the skills associated with William Hoare's best portraiture. In both paintings, Diallo is dressed in a silken robe and turban of almost identical form and color, and his chest is adorned with the red leather pouch that most likely served as a receptacle of protective Arab scripture or verses

from the Koran, indicating his faith and clerical status.

This portrait will be a key part of displays interpreting topics such as the slave trade in the new American Revolution Museum at Yorktown. We will be exhibiting this important portrait in the context of Diallo's known experience as an enslaved person and alongside physical relics of the slave trade. The American Revolution Museum at Yorktown, which will replace the Yorktown Victory Center, is scheduled to open in late 2016. ✍

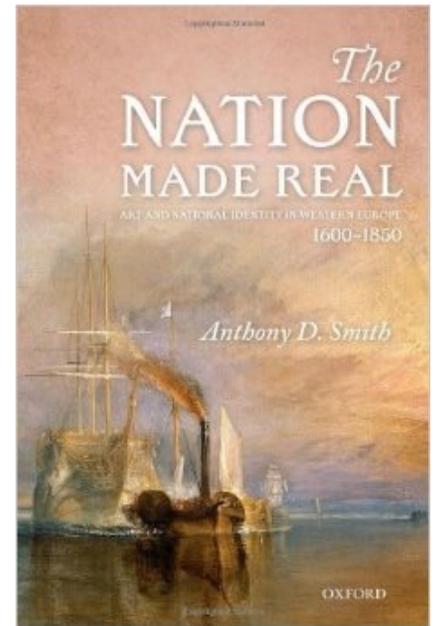
## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Would you like to contribute an item to British Art in American Collections? Are you a curator who would like to feature a new acquisition or a long-term holding? Or an art historian researching a work in an American museum? Items on sculpture, decorative arts, or works on paper are especially welcome. Please contact the editor, Kate Roach, at [croach2@vcu.edu](mailto:croach2@vcu.edu).

## REVIEW

Anthony D. Smith *The Nation Made Real: Art and National Identity in Western Europe, 1600-1850* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

Contributed by Abram Fox, Vice President,  
Laurel Historical Society



In *The Nation Made Real*, Anthony D. Smith gives himself a daunting task: exploring the “complex relationship between the rise of nations and nationalism in Western Europe and the role of visual artists, mainly painters and sculptors, in this process (p. 5).”

Smith, an emeritus professor of Nationalism and Ethnicity at the London School of Economics, claims nationalism in Britain and France as his primary interest, although his text also goes into detail on embryonic steps toward nationalism from antiquity through the early modern period.

*The Nation Made Real* is divided into six chapters in which descriptions of nationalistic aims are twinned with detailed discussion of works of art supporting those efforts. Smith is no art historian, however, and he acknowledges it. His remarks on paintings are largely superficial, no more than a few descriptive sentences, occasionally with citations from contemporary art historians providing deeper analysis. Nonetheless, imagery is central to this study. As the author admits, the “nation” is an abstract concept which has to be made “real” in some way to make it relevant, a task at which the arts excel. Painting and sculpture allowed ideas about the nation to transfer from the elite classes to the populace, through four major “dimensions” of a nation: community, territory, history, and destiny.

The first chapter, “National Imagery Before 1600,” justifies Smith’s claim that a coherent visual culture built around nationalism is a modern conceit. Following the history of the Western world from antiquity through the early modern period, he identifies communities such as ancient Greece, Judea, and Renaissance Venice, discussing their nascent nationalism while explaining how each fails to meet his definition of nation. Chapter 2, “The Visual Components of a Nation,” takes the seventeenth-century Netherlands as the first example of nation where “the full implications of a *national* visual culture were realized,” taking into account “a series of models of topic, genre, imagery, and style” which allowed the development of a national school of art in addition to a national identity (p. 35). Smith also uses his discussion of Dutch art as a means of displaying the utility of his four dimensions of the nation as applied to visual culture.

Having provided historical background, Smith turns to his four dimensions of the nation, spotlighting each dimension in chapters focused on the visual culture of England and France in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Chapter 3, “Celebrating the Nation,” examines the role of community in developing national identity through a discussion of the didactic and propagandistic effects of art as expressed in the French revolutionary period. He ties this moment, and subsequent approaches in England, to a lack of interest in religion which in turn “left an expanding ideological space in which new classical concepts of society could flourish in educated circles” (p. 55). This secular emphasis promoted the spread of neoclassicism, which in turn provided a language of allegory quite successful in “translating abstract ideals into

palpable and accessible images" (p. 66), a stumbling block for earlier attempts at developing nationalist imagery. Unsurprisingly, Smith turns repeatedly to Jacques-Louis David for examples of national visual culture across subject matter and public and private spectacle.

Readers interested in nationalistic visual culture in England are rewarded in the fourth chapter, "Evoking the Homeland," which Smith opens with a discussion of John Constable's *Flatford Mill* by way of exploring the nationalistic idea of territory. Constable's paintings serve as examples of "the rise of the cult of authenticity and the quest for self-identification" (p. 79), which Smith identifies as two crucial factors in landscape painting at the turn of the nineteenth century. Landscape becomes the primary means for depicting the nation, both in terms of subject and style, as artists fully embraced a Romantic approach toward landscape in the nineteenth century. Smith also perceives in this period a distinction between "arcadian" and "monumental" landscapes, the former "a picture of rural harmony, of man and nature in tune, passing perhaps but neither lost nor forgotten" and the latter "a darker, grander, and more elemental vision, one that focuses less on the many changes that nature undergoes than on what remains of nature beneath and survives those many changes" (p. 95).

Chapter 5, "Rediscovering the Past," uses history painting as a lens for exploring the historical dimension of national visual culture in much the same way the preceding chapter did with landscape painting and territory. Smith discusses how history painting, and particularly the concentration on antiquity, served to imbue the nation with a distinct historical character and value system through "verisimilitude" and "atmosphere" (p. 110). Artistic interest in Homer, Ossian, and Roman philosophers provided an opportunity to reframe regional, political, and religious history along broader nationalistic lines. Smith highlights the efforts of the Anglo-American painter Benjamin West to recreate subjects from the ancient, medieval, and early modern past to serve as *exemplum virtutis* for citizens of the English nation. He sees these efforts as going beyond purely didactic images because of their success in engendering a sense of "national community" (p. 139) of shared social and political values.

Smith closes the body of his text with a discussion of commemoration in his sixth chapter, "Commemorating the Fallen." Public images of ritual and memorialization serve to commemorate the nation's dead, but with their very existence reject the possibility of that nation's defeat. Sacrifice is reframed as a heroic act of civic responsibility and loyalty, while as suggested by Smith's argument in Chapter 5, commemoration can celebrate contemporary heroes or ancient models. He creates a distinction between commemorative painting, which tended to feature scenes of action, and commemorative sculpture, which more commonly depicted scenes of repose.

Despite his claim to not be an art historian, Anthony D. Smith's text would be of interest to art historians of all bents studying the time frame at the heart of his inquiry. In fact, an art historian would be better equipped to benefit from this text than a historian or sociologist. Smith's constant discussion of works of art without providing images – out of over 140 works referenced, the book includes only nine black-and-white illustrations and seven color plates – can make reading a daunting experience. Furthermore, Smith admits that his argument is only half of the story, focusing on the supply side of the market. A great deal of work remains to be done studying the development of market demand for national visual culture as well. Nonetheless, *The Nation Made Real* remains a valuable contribution to any art historian's bookshelf. It provides a crisp and concise analysis of nationalism across Western Europe, and essential context for a number of periods and movements. Smith has created a synthetic overview of the relationship between nationalism and the arts that can serve as a reference and launching point for more fine-grained analysis of artists, patrons, styles, and locations. ✍

## INTERVIEW

### *Bruce Davidson/Paul Caponigro: Two American Photographers in Britain and Ireland*

Yale Center for British Art, June 26, 2014-September 14, 2014

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, November 8, 2014-March 9, 2015

Curated by Jennifer A. Watts, Curator of Photographs, The Huntington Library, and Scott Wilcox, Chief Curator of Art Collections and Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, Yale Center for British Art.

### **Interview with Jennifer A. Watts, conducted by Vincent Pham, PhD student, Visual Arts, University of California, San Diego**

Image: Bruce Davidson (b. 1933), *London, 1960*, gelatin silver print. © Bruce Davidson/Magnum Photos, photo courtesy of The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.



### **Why bring "Bruce Davidson/Paul Caponigro" to the Huntington? How is the exhibition relevant to the Huntington's collection and mission?**

This institution holds one of this country's great collections devoted to British history, literature, and art, compelling interests of Mr. Huntington himself. We also have a robust photography program dedicated to research and exhibitions across the full range of our holdings, which numbers close to a million images. Finally, we have close ties with the Yale Center for British Art, which we consider a like-minded sister institution. The opportunity to exhibit these two virtuoso artists, each of whom has spent 60 years dedicated to his craft, offered a tantalizing opportunity that dovetailed with our scholarly and exhibition agendas.

### **When were you first exposed to Davidson and Caponigro's work? What was your initial reaction to the work of each of these artists?**

Over the years, I had been more intimately acquainted with Paul Caponigro's photography since the Huntington made concerted efforts to

acquire his work related to California and the American West, our contemporary collecting strength. No matter the subject, Caponigro's photographs exert a quiet power that demand attentive looking. They cannot be fully understood at a glance. This has enabled the work, at least for me, to stay relevant and fresh over time. As for Bruce's work, I was most familiar with his East 100th Street series, which offers similar demands, such as asking the viewer to enter the frame with the human subjects that the artist so evocatively portrays. With both artists, my sense of engagement with the work—the British and Irish work included—has continued to grow.

**When working on this exhibition, how did you and co-curator Scott Wilcox blend your knowledge and expertise?**

Scott and I began working on this project in 2009 when I accompanied my husband to Yale for his year-long sabbatical. I am a dyed-in-the-wool Americanist with an expertise in the history of photography, so I brought that knowledge and training to bear. Scott has an extraordinary grasp of British art and aesthetics that was fundamental to understanding the context in which both of these contemporary artists operated, even if unwittingly.

**What drew you to the particular bodies of work featured in this exhibition?**

The Bruce Davidson work made in England and Scotland on assignment for *Queen* magazine in 1960 is the series that sparked the idea for an exhibit. We discovered that Davidson went two more times to the UK and Ireland: in 1965 and 1967. Caponigro, on the other hand, established an extensive body of work by traveling to these overseas locales at least twelve times between 1966 and 1993, the last work we included in the exhibit.

**In your opinion, what do Davidson and Caponigro's photographs express about the British Isles? Did their American identity shape their work?**

I'll defer to Scott with regard to the express contributions these works make to the British Isles. I think, however, that each man's identity as an American—particularly in regard to his photographic training and praxis—has everything to do with his point of view. Both artists rose up through distinctly different American streams of photography: Bruce as a trained photojournalist with the Magnum agency and Paul as a student of Minor White with his inheritance in the f64 school of sharp focus, nature-inflected work that venerated the finished print. These distinctions certainly informed their approach to making their art. In addition, Paul was influenced by the strains of religious mysticism in vogue in American society in the 1950s and 1960s, including Zen Buddhism and the teachings of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff. Bruce embraced the then-radical aesthetic of Swiss photographer Robert Frank, whose autobiographical and inherently pessimistic vision took a certain branch of the American photo community by storm. ✍



Paul Caponigro (b. 1932), *Running White Deer, Wicklow, Ireland, 1967*, gelatin silver print, 7 1/2 × 19 1/8 in. © Paul Caponigro.



Cornelius Jabez Hughes, daguerreotypist (British, 1819-1884)  
*Portrait of a Yeoman*, about 1853, Daguerreotype, hand-colored ¼ plate  
 Image: 9.1 x 5.6 cm (3 9/16 x 2 3/16 in.) Mat: 10.6 x 8.3 cm (4 3/16 x 3 ¼ in.)  
 The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

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