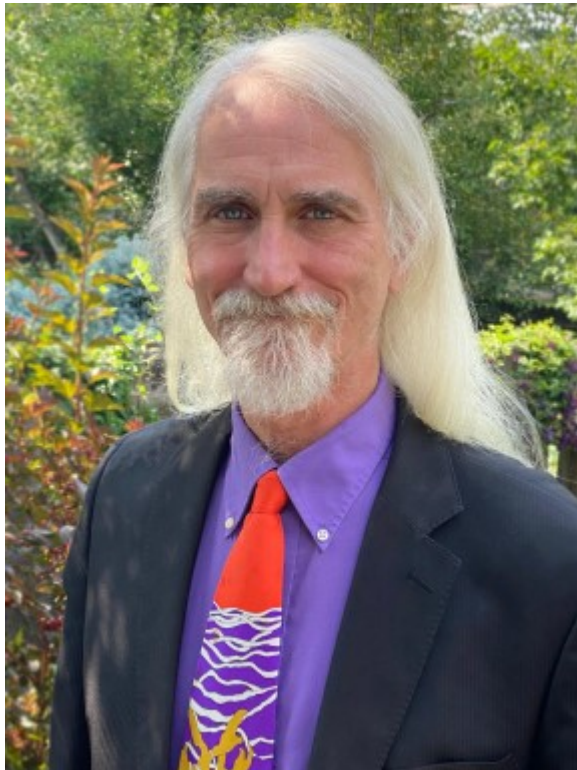


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1 WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE YOU BECAME A PROFESSOR? WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL, WHAT DID YOU STUDY, WHAT WERE YOUR INTERESTS IN THAT PIPELINE?

Boy, well it goes all the way back to taking art history in high school and I had that revelation that we did more as a species than kill each other and make kings. So, art history blew my mind in that respect. I was rare—I went to college as an art history major. Usually that's something that people arrive at later. From college, I took a year off and then went straight to grad school. I went to my master's program which was mostly in Italy, with Syracuse University. They have an MA program in Italian Renaissance art. After that, I took a year to work but then applied for PhD programs and went to Rutgers in New Jersey and did my doctorate there. I

finished a while ago. Then I had a series of one-year appointments fresh out of graduate school and arrived at DU. I've been here for about 21 years now. I'm sort of the geezer in the department, I've realized.

2 WHAT WAS THE INITIAL DRAW TO DU?

DU was a big draw for a lot of reasons. It was a position in my area of expertise which is Medieval/Renaissance art. That was intriguing because I knew I would actually be teaching in my area. I also liked that DU is relatively small—it's kind of like a small liberal arts college tucked into a university. My undergrad, alma mater was Pomona, a small liberal arts college. I had been teaching at large state schools up to this point where there just wasn't enough of me to go around. There were so many students, and I couldn't serve them all comfortably. DU appealed; it was smaller. You can get to know the students, you can work with the students, instead of having a line down the hall. The World Art survey, at the place I taught prior to DU had 300 [students] and here it has 45 [students]. So, I just looked at the numbers and it wasn't even about the amount of grading, it was about the simple fact that when you have 300 students, you don't know them. So, I liked the mission of DU, I liked the value on research as well as teaching. I like to do both. And of course it was Denver, I was in North Texas for five years so that made the decision easy. Sure, I'll go to Denver. Didn't even have to blink. A lot of it really was the appeal of DU and the department—I got a very good vibe from the place.

3 WHAT WAS THE DRAW TO TEACHING FOR YOU?

Some of it may have to do with being the son of a professor. Both my older brother and I are professors, so it may just be that you gravitate toward the norm you grow up with. I'm sure that was some of it. I always liked the life of the mind—intellectual pursuit and questions. Academia provided that. I don't think I'd be as good at K-12. I want more teaching of complicated ideas and historical understanding. To me the whole point

in studying history is it opens your mind to different ways things are done, different ways people do things. In the ideal world, it makes you a better person, more compassionate. I don't know if it does, but in the ideal world it does. I also enjoy people. I couldn't do a cubicle. I always said that the Humanities starts with those five letters for a reason. I like the human interface of teaching. One of my favorite parts is office hours. I like people.

4 HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RESEARCH IN LAYMAN'S TERMS?

First of all, my research is completely bifurcated—its split. I have two radically divergent lines of research, which is not normal. Traditionally, I study European Medieval Art—that's what my PhD is in. The bulk of my career has been working on that. Publishing books and articles on medieval pilgrimage art and saints' cults. I work with saints and relics, the body parts of saints, and what they would do with holy bones. It's holy art from the European Middle Ages and pilgrimage. I've done that for years. About ten years ago I also started branching out – which has now become my main line of research—into 1960's psychedelic poster art. I collected them from when I was younger and got to the point where I got to know most of the living artists and fell into a position where we became friends. They trusted me. I was an academic interested in their work so they were receptive. It hit me that I have a responsibility to capture all of this oral history that isn't written down. I've been working on posters more intently for the last ten years than I have on medieval works. The way I see it, my medieval saints will still be dead in ten years. These psychedelic poster artists will likely be dead. Most of them are in their 80s now. The likelihood is that I have a small period of time to capture as much of this oral history, work with them, and honestly, I enjoy watching the artists see their lives validated. I'm enjoying seeing the artists actually see the fruits of an art historian studying their work. I've been working lately with Lee Conklin. I wrote a book about him, just did an exhibition and catalog here at DU. He came out to visit in the Fall for the closing of the show. I love the idea that they're seeing that their place in history is well ensconced, and that they're being taken seriously by art historians, for the first time.

5 WHEN YOU'RE RESEARCHING PSYCHEDELIC POSTERS, WHAT DOES THAT PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

A lot of interviews. There's not much published out there. There's the basic history—there's the hippy movement in San Francisco and there's the catalogs of all the posters, but the stories behind them have never been

gathered. Michelangelo has tons written on him—if you're doing research on him, you've got a different problem. You have a ten-year reading list. But, if you're working on Lee Conklin, you have much less, so you piece together what you can. For me it's exciting to do something different because I'm a medievalist where you need a Ouija Board to talk to your sources, and that's unreliable. With posters, I can conduct first-hand research. Four years ago, I released a movie on Denver in the 1960s. It was a documentary that took five years to make, and it was much of the same process. We did a lot of first-hand interviews. Then I went through everything from the Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News back in the 60s to the DU Clarion. Just piecing through every scrap of history because there isn't much written on it. The film was on the Family Dog Denver, which was a rock and roll club which opened in 1967, just up Evans Ave. A lot of DU students worked there. That was a challenge because there is no footage of this place. There are five photographs and 16 posters. That's it. Nothing else. We practically made a movie out of thin air. It was all done through firsthand interviews. So lately my research has been really different than my traditional research, which was in libraries and archives, looking at old Latin books. Now, it's looking through newspapers, something that I think the Clarion has been hugely helpful on. Case and point, the first time The Doors played in the State of Colorado was at the DU Student Union.

6 WE INTERVIEW A LOT OF POLITICAL SCIENTISTS AND STEM FACULTY FOR THE JOURNAL; THIS IS ONE OF OUR FIRST ARTIST INTERVIEWS. I WAS CURIOUS IF YOU HAD ONE OR TWO ISSUES, HOWEVER YOU DEFINE IT, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO KEEP THEIR EYE ON?

Wow. Kindness. I don't see it as much anymore. To me, social graces can be wrapped up in kindness. People have gotten real intent on giving themselves a permission slip to say whatever they want, regardless of how it might be received. I would like us all to take a breath, formulate our thoughts a little more constructively, a little more compassionately. I do subscribe to—I'm not a Tibetan Buddhist, or even Tibetan—but their notion that wisdom and compassion are inextricably linked. I'd like to see that fostered a little more. Many voices that we grant authority to, many of them out there are not compassionate. There's anger. There's divisiveness. Art has the power to bring us together. Music does the same thing; it brings us together like few other things. I'd like to see us tap into what unites us, rather than what divides us. We're in a political mess right now. It's how we engage with each other. I would try to be

mindful of what's being said. Does it need to be said? If there's more compassion then there will be more wisdom, and we'll get through turbulent times.

7 WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT RESEARCHING, WHEN YOU'RE NOT TEACHING?

Any academic 'thing' is a 24/7 gig, that when you're not doing it, you're taking time off. It's not a 9-5 job. That being said, we're all nerds and we love that. I go on vacation and I look at medieval churches. It's what I like to do. That being said, on my own time, I play a lot of music, mostly guitar but really anything I can get my hands on. Not wind instruments, they're way above my paygrade. I doodle. I draw. Those are my biggest hobbies. There's always music in the house. I have a big record collection. A lot of music is made in the house. I used to make music with my kids when they were younger. I wanted them to grow up with the idea that music is not just something external that you digest but something you can also make. My eldest just graduated from Berklee College of Music, so I guess some of it sunk in.

8 WHAT WOULD BE A BOOK, PODCAST, OR FILM THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND TO PEOPLE?

Oh, my goodness. What a question. I don't listen to many podcasts because I'm not 'hip'. I tend to put music on. It's funny, there's the academic books which I would recommend for the nerds. If you wanted to study medieval art, I would say read Peter Brown's *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. I just gave it to my aunt for Christmas—a real nerdy present. For where we are historically—now, I would say something like *Piece Is Every Step* by Thich Nhat Hanh. It was written by a Vietnamese Buddhist—I believe Martin Luther King Jr. nominated him for the Nobel Prize. He preaches mindfulness. Back to my compassion issue, it's what we need right now. It's what I rationalize. I teach medieval church art which is really obscure arcane stuff. I hope that what is learned from that are ways of seeing other realities. I wasn't raised Catholic but spent my career studying Catholic art. I always joke that I'm not Catholic, but I could play one on TV as long as the show took place before 1500. I'd be toast if it was after that. It's that idea of walking, putting yourself in someone else's footsteps, and trying to think the way they think. It makes us more subtle, elastic thinkers. What I like to think I teach at DU is less just Medieval and Renaissance art, but modes of approaching other belief system, other ways of visualizing. Compassionate understanding.