

**From:** [iweb.langara.ca](http://iweb.langara.ca)  
**To:** [Scholarly Activity](#)  
**Subject:** New submission from RSAF Final Report  
**Date:** September 26, 2020 11:04:13 AM

---

**1. Please introduce yourself – include pertinent background information relating to the topic of your research project. Include your project title.**

I am Chair of the Department of Art History and Religious Studies at snəwəyəŋ lələm'Langara College in Vancouver, British Columbia. In 2019 I founded Open Art Histories (OAH) a platform for art, art history, visual art, and museum studies teachers and instructors in Canada. Open to anyone who uses visual and material culture in their pedagogical practices, OAH offers a dynamic and collaborative space for Open Education Resources (OERs) and serves as a virtual community and repository for art and art history instructors at all stages of their academic and professional careers. In 2020 we applied for a SSHRC Connections Grant to host a 3-day Pedagogy Institute.

**2. Please discuss your educational background and your work experience that led you to taking on this research project. If possible, include a quote that helps define your interest in this project.**

I have an MA in Canadian Art History from Concordia University (Montreal) and a PhD in Visual and Material Culture from Queen's University (Kingston). My recent research focuses on the scholarship of teaching and learning for art history (So-TLA). As a research fellow with the Open Education Group, I am interested in the impact of open educational resources on the cost of education, student success outcomes, patterns of usage, and perceptions of OER. Since joining Langara in 2012, I have been increasingly reflective of my teaching practice. I have been challenged to meet the needs of increasingly diverse learners and this has led me to wonder how I can make art and its histories more accessible to 21st century learners. Some of the questions I have been asking myself and posing to colleagues are closely related to the Langara's strategic goals and academic objectives and are reflected in our interrelated paths of inquiry. Our research asks how we can in theory and in practice decolonize and indigenize our curricula, globalize our approaches, use digital humanities and open education to foster inclusion, and leverage object-based and active learning to promote expanded ways of knowing.

**3. Please explain the concept for your project in terms that others not in your field would understand, like an executive summary.**

Open Art Histories (OAH) was established in early 2019 by a group of art historians from across Canada whose areas of specialization include Canadian art, cultural diplomacy, electronic and digital media, fashion, global craft, Indigenous arts and material cultures, museum studies, pedagogy, and transnational feminist art. Encouraged by the success of early workshops, this network now proposes a SSHRC-funded Pedagogy Institute to collaboratively address new pedagogical ideas and enable to dissemination of the scholarship of teaching and learning of art history (SoTLA). The major proposition of this project is that the research-driven transformations in art history outlined above must be matched by transformations in teaching if they are to have a truly meaningful effect on the future of the discipline. Throughout Canada, individual scholars and departments are already hard at work reimagining introductory courses, Indigenizing syllabi, and internationalizing curricula. The OAH Pedagogy Institute will create an opportunity for these scholars to come together to share the work that they have been doing and encourage further academic investigation and discourse around teaching and learning in art history. In doing so, it will build the foundation for a supportive national network for tackling pressing pedagogical concerns including: teaching English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) students, decolonizing the discipline and classroom, teaching Canadian art or art history in Canada, globalizing art history, re-examining the introductory survey, and using Open Education Resources (OERs).

**4. Identify goals and objectives for the project, and how the results may be used, perhaps to solve a problem, or to inform further research in that field.**

Open Art Histories contributes to the developing field of scholarship on teaching and learning in art history (SoTL-AH). OAH will build a network of art history educators in Canada that will address this problem and work to assert the importance of teaching to our work as scholars. The overall goal of our collective is to support and disseminate SoTL-AH in Canada. To further this goal, we have set two specific objectives for the year:

1. To foster connections between scholars and artists across Canada who are independently facing many of the same disciplinary and pedagogical challenges, therefore facilitating collaboration and creating a national network for SToL-AH in Canada.
2. To deepen, innovate, and sustain engagement with SToL-AH in Canada.

As a platform for scholars and artists to share, discuss, and troubleshoot their teaching philosophies and practices, OAH will deepen our collective understanding of art history pedagogy across Canada and lead to innovation in SToL-AH. We plan to sustain engagement through the OAH website and by publishing discussions from the Pedagogy Institute in a co-edited special issue of RACAR (peer-reviewed journal of the Universities Art Association of Canada). Together our workshops, website, and publications will be the first steps towards preparing for another SSHRC Application in January.

Open Art Histories will focus on four interrelated paths of inquiry:

1. Decolonizing and Indigenizing art history and visual arts syllabi.
2. Globalizing the introductory art history survey.
3. Using Digital Humanities tools and Open Educational Resources to foster inclusion.
4. Using object-based and active learning to promote expanded ways of knowing.

#### **5. Briefly explain the steps taken to conduct the project research, and the results found.**

In January of 2020 we held a one day Pedagogy Workshop at Langara. The event attracted 35 art historians, librarians, administrators and graduate students and proved there is an appetite for further collaboration and future events. Over the following months we established a core working team, and proceeded to draft our SSHRC application. When the pandemic hit we were able to quickly pivot and began planning a series of virtual workshops to support instructors in online and remote delivery. On August 7th we hosted a Zoom workshop "Open Art Histories: Accessible Teaching in Remote Environments" that was so popular we had to add another iteration on August 10th. At the end of August we followed up with another "Open Art Histories: Ready for Remote?" that brought together art historians, and arts instructors to discuss our plans for the fall semester.

Unfortunately our SSHRC application was unsuccessful but we were very highly ranked (10th out of 23 applications with the top 9 being funded). We have however used the summer to build a website ([openarthistories.ca](http://openarthistories.ca)), host events, and work on publications.

This collaboration has been incredibly beneficial to my personal research on the scholarship of teaching and learning for art history. RSAF support for this project provided me with the time and resources to publish the following:

"Open Art Histories" Special Issue: Networks of Collaboration, *Journal of Canadian Art History* ed. Erin Silver and Elizabeth Cavaliere (Forthcoming).

"St. Corona: Teaching Art History During a Global Pandemic" Special Issue: Teaching the Early Modern in the Era of COVID-19 *Sixteen Century Journal* 51, no. S1 (2020).

"Art in Quarantine Assignment" *Art History Teaching Resources* (July 17, 2020)  
<http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2020/07/art-in-quarantine-assignment/>

"Open Access to Ancient Worlds: Why Open Practices Matter " in *An Educator's Handbook for Teaching About the Ancient World* (2020), Pinar Durgun (ed.), pp. 46-51. Access Archaeology Series (Open Access), ArchaeoPress.

"Roman Portraiture: #veristic, #classicizing" in *An Educator's Handbook for Teaching About the Ancient World* (2020), Pinar Durgun (ed.), pp. 125-127. Access Archaeology Series (Open Access), ArchaeoPress.

#### **6. Who else was involved in this project? How did their involvement help? ie: other faculty, students,**

## community partners

Open Art Histories (OAH) is a platform for art, art history, visual art, communication, and museum studies teachers and instructors in Canada. Open to anyone who uses visual and material culture in their pedagogical practices, OAH offers a dynamic and collaborative space for Open Education Resources (OERs), and serves as a virtual community and repository for art and art history instructors at all stages of their academic and professional careers.

Alena Buis, Langara College, [abuis@langara.ca](mailto:abuis@langara.ca)

Devon Smither, University of Lethbridge, [devon.smither@uleth.ca](mailto:devon.smither@uleth.ca)

Elizabeth Cavaliere, Queen's University, [e\\_cavali@live.concordia.ca](mailto:e_cavali@live.concordia.ca)

Jennifer Kennedy, Queen's University, [jk131@queensu.ca](mailto:jk131@queensu.ca)

Johanna Amos, Queen's University, [johanna.amos@queensu.ca](mailto:johanna.amos@queensu.ca)

Lisa Binkley, Dalhousie University, [LBinkley@dal.ca](mailto:LBinkley@dal.ca)

Sarah E.K. Smith, Carleton University, [sarahek.smith@carleton.ca](mailto:sarahek.smith@carleton.ca)

## 7. What were/are you hoping to get from conducting this research?

Ultimately our goal was to receive SSHRC funding to hold a 3-Day Pedagogy Institute. The OAH Pedagogy Institute is the first point of connection and opportunity for exchange between scholar-teachers on SToL-AH. The workshops, roundtables, panel discussion, and keynote presentation will be recorded and archived on the OAH website, where they will be publicly available to teachers across Canada and internationally.

OAH events will be an opportunity for art history and visual arts instructors from universities and colleges in BC and across Canada to reflect on and develop their teaching practices within a supportive and collaborative environment. Individual workshops, roundtables, and posters focusing on pressing pedagogical issues in art history—including teaching English-as-an-additional-language students, internationalizing curricula, using Open Educational Resources, and Indigenizing classrooms—will not only foster much needed dialogue and collaborative problem solving within this discipline, but will also encourage skill and strategy sharing amongst teachers from across the country. One of the shorter-term outcomes of this project will be realized by participants who use what they learn at the OAH Pedagogy Institute to enhance curricula and improve teaching at their home institutions, incorporating this knowledge into their own course design and by sharing it with their colleagues. Education is critical to diversifying Canada's arts and cultural sectors as a whole. Given this project's emphasis on accessibility and diversity in arts pedagogy, longer-term outcomes will reverberate as the next generation of art history and visual arts graduates enter these fields. Research shows that introducing students to diverse cultures, perspectives, and ways of knowing in school promotes continued critical and creative thinking, collaboration, and enables them to work more successfully with people from different backgrounds when they enter the workforce.

By inviting art history and visual arts instructors to systematically examine their own teaching practices, and share their successes and failures with their peers, OAH will create knowledge in the growing field of the scholarship of teaching and learning in art history (SoTL-AH). Selected participants will be invited to publish the ideas they develop at the Institute in a special issue of RACAR (the journal of the Universities Art Association of Canada), expanding the peer-reviewed literature on SoTL-AH. This outcome will also enhance teaching, as university and college instructors draw on this literature when preparing their own courses, lectures, and assignments.

## 8. Can you share any personal stories that made this research experience memorable/valuable?

Collaborating on this project with colleagues that have now become good friends has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional career. Especially during this challenging time it has been incredibly important to have a group of scholars with similar goals to support me.

## 9. Do you have any tips/suggestions/ideas for applying this research in your field? Or for others in their fields? Or for conducting future research of this kind?

One of our biggest obstacles has been navigating these unprecedented times. Due to the pandemic and

the questions around when we will be able to teach and travel to conference or conduct research has been challenging, but we have embraced the uncertainty as an opportunity to serve our colleagues and community.

**10. Any final comments? What are the “next steps” for this project? And for you?**

As a working group Open Art Histories is just hitting our stride. Our upcoming events I am organizing include:

Sponsoring the University Art Association's Professional Development Session presenting Amanda Coolidge of BCcampus (October 15)

Chairing the University Art Association's Pedagogy Caucus "Risky Business: What's at Stake teaching Visual Culture in the 21st Century" (October 16)

Presenting at the BCcampus' Open Access Week organized by the The BC Open Ed Librarians (October 21)

Sharing "Open Educational Resources and Open Educational Practices" with the University of Toronto Art History Teaching Discussion Group (November 6)

Hosting a workshop on "Re-imagining Open Art Histories" at the 2020 Open Ed Conference (November 9-13)

Facilitating a session on "Teaching Indigenous Art Online with Jackson Two Bears" (November 27)

Our website ([openarthistories.ca](http://openarthistories.ca)) launched at the end of September and we will continue to add resources to the platform. We meet every second week to write and strategize our next projects. Most importantly however, we are planning on applying for SSHRC funding again in early 2021.

**Please upload any images that will help to showcase your project.**

- [Open-Art-Histories-Website.png](#)
- [Open-Art-Histories.png](#)