

## New submission from ARC Award Final Report

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To: Scholarly Activity <scholarlyactivity@langara.ca>

**Name of Researcher**

Alena Buis

**Department/Faculty**

Art History and Religious Studies

**Position in Department/Faculty**

Chair/Instructor

**Project Title**

Erasing Colonial Encounter: Portraiture in New Netherland

**Term of Project**

Spring 2022

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

I am an Instructor and chair of the Art History and Religious Studies Department at snəwəyət̓ lələm-Langara College in Vancouver BC. My recent publications on pedagogy include a chapter on open educational practices in The Teaching the Ancient World Handbook, a post for Art History Teaching Resources Weekly and a Special Issue of the Sixteenth Century Journal "Teaching the Early Modern in the Era of COVID-19". I am also one of the founders of Open Art Histories (OAH) a SSHRC-funded collective, committed to building a generative and supportive national network for teaching Canadian art or art history in Canada and addressing pressing pedagogical challenges, including globalizing art history, decolonizing the discipline and using OER/OEP to advance accessibility and inclusion.

**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.**

This project was inspired by some of the content and conversation from Langara's Intercultural Engagement Employee program. In this groundbreaking research I suggest productive future directions and methodologies for culturally responsive approaches to art historical analysis. These engaged methods have an important place in application in the teaching of visual and material culture by seeking to broaden traditional art historical praxis, and incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and intercultural awareness. My contribution and participation in this very important conference will directly enhance student learning in the Department of Art History and Religious Studies.

**Please summarize your project in plain language that others not in your field could understand.**

In recent years, the study of early modern European visual and material culture has focused increasingly on colonial expansion and its consequences. This session aims to address the impact of this trend on the study of early modern Dutch art (c. 1550-1700) and to present case studies that suggest productive future directions. For example, the import of global material objects in the Netherlands is a lively topic, and there is more to say, but the interaction of Dutch and indigenous cultures in contact zones seems to demand more attention. Shifting from periphery to centre, one might ask how the study and appreciation of canonical "old masters" (a contested term in itself) such as Rembrandt, Hals, or Vermeer can continue to flourish while taking account of the human costs of the economy that supported their achievements.

**Identify the project goals and objectives. Explain how the results may be used to solve a problem or inform further research in the field.**

In contrast to the rich visual depictions of the Dutch East India Company's Asian headquarters, few images of the Dutch West India Company's North American outposts exist. Despite the recent interest in globalizing European art histories, the interaction of Dutch and Indigenous cultures in contact zones demands not just more scholarly attention but also culturally responsive approaches. To suggest productive future directions and methodologies, I take Gerrit Duyckinck's Portrait of an Unknown Woman (1690-1710) as a case study to explore the erasure of Indigenous trade partners and enslaved Africans from the visual culture of New Netherland. I investigate how a painting of a young girl, most likely from a patroon family of Dutch New York, holding a Japanese-style fan, beside a table displaying a "turkey-work" carpet, can be read through recent trends –and gaps- in the study of early modern Dutch visual and material culture.

**Briefly explain the steps taken (methods used) to conduct the research, and describe the key findings.**

I will be presenting a paper titled, "Erasing Colonial Encounter: A Portrait in New Netherland," in the Confronting Colonialism in Dutch Visual and Material Culture double panel at the Renaissance Society of America, RSA Dublin 2022 conference held in March 2022. In recent years, the study of early modern European visual and material culture has focused increasingly on colonial expansion and its consequences. The session I am presenting this paper in aims to address the impact of Indigenization, decolonization, and post-colonial theory on the study of early modern Dutch art (c. 1550-1700) and to present case studies that suggest productive future directions for scholarship and culturally responsive teaching.

**Who was involved in this project (eg. faculty, students, community partners)? How did their involvement contribute to the project's success? Were there any challenges to overcome?**

RSA is the premier conference for early modern scholars from all disciplines. Other academics on the panel include Angela Van haelen (McGill), Joy Kearney (Breda University of Applied Sciences), Sim Himan Wan (The University of Hong Kong), Nicole Blackwood (Savannah College of Art and Design) and Stephanie Dickey (Queen's University, Kingston). I anticipate some sort of publication, either a special journal issue or book of essays will be collected following the conference.

**Please share any personal stories that made this research experience memorable/valuable.**

While in Dublin I was able to visit the National Gallery of Ireland and see several works of art relevant to my study.

**What are the next steps for this project and for you as a researcher?**

I would like to work on a CCSIF public humanities project connecting art historical research related to key Vancouver sites (Hogan's Alley, Chinatown, etc.) and culturally responsive teaching practices.

**Langara Institutional Repository Consent**

By submitting, I consent to uploading my ARC Fund final report to the Langara Institutional Repository (The LaIR).