

Dear Committee Members,

We would like to thank you for your highly supportive report and enthusiastic evaluation of our department of Art History, as well as for your illuminating remarks. We have followed your insightful suggestions carefully and reconsidered many aspects of our program accordingly. We note below the major queries you have raised.

A. Short Term, within 1 year:

1. **The Department should definitely remain in the Faculty of Arts and not be moved to the Faculty of Humanities. To strengthen the dynamic between departments and schools in the Faculty, a meeting for chairs should be convened and possible research groups that cut across the units should be identified. Cooperative ventures will be useful not only for faculty members but also for students. A list of the Faculty's courses that may pertain to art history students should be compiled and**

Meetings of the chairs of the various departments are **already** being implemented by the Dean, who convenes them periodically. Interdepartmental cooperation is currently taking place and includes, for example, a collaboration among the Art History Department, Department of Film and Television, and the University Gallery on the topic of Babylon ("The Towering Inferno"); Dr. Sefy Hendler invited scholars from the Azrieli School of Architecture for an interdisciplinary discussion on Renaissance architecture; and many others. For the next year, we already plan a joint course of medieval art and music; joint classes with the inter-disciplinary program, with East Asian Studies, and others. These collaborations will be posted in the Faculty's electronic Year Book.

2. **The Department should negotiate with local and national museums to improve on the current reduced admission fees by eliminating them altogether so that their students will visit area collections more often.**

Beginning in **October 2014**, the department will hold a seminar at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art financed by the department, as well as at several established galleries in the city. Tutorials are **already** being held at the TAU Genia Schreiber University Art Gallery.

A travel seminar to Paris is planned for **June 2015** (donations are already available). In addition, we are negotiating special fees for our students with the new curator of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Suzanne Landau.

3. **The Department must re-evaluate the limit of one course outside the Department within the major, particularly for non-European offerings. The new research clusters must consciously incorporate courses and faculty from non-European field**

Until the academic year 2013–14, the department had only a double major track in the B.A. program, comprising 60 credits in Art History and 60 credits in another major. Within this framework we allowed only one course to be taken outside the department (in addition to the second major) because the courses in the discipline were so limited. In the next academic year, beginning **October 2014**, however, we will initiate an Art History Major, in which students will be allowed to have up to 20 credits in other disciplines. Additional courses outside the department, especially in related disciplines, will be allowed following special request and approval by the B.A. counsellors. At the M.A. and Ph.D. levels, courses outside the department are allowed according to field of expertise.

Since **October 2013** we have incorporated course offerings for non-European cultures in our program.

4. **The Committee recommends that the Department establish a forum for graduate student presentations on work in progress to foster exchange of ideas. Such a forum might be expanded to include students from the entire Faculty of Art**

The Guild: A forum for graduate-student presentations of work in progress (“The Guild”) was established in **October 2012**. In this colloquium, each presentation is followed by critiques by the thesis supervisor, a graduate student from the discipline or other discipline in the faculty, and a guest lecturer from another discipline or institution. In addition, an open discussion follows each presentation.

Scholasticus: A graduate forum for medieval art was initiated in **October 2013**. The *Scholasticus* meets every two weeks to discuss new publications and reflect on theories and methodologies from all fields of Medieval Studies.

5. **The administration must move on a new appointment in medieval art and make a commitment to replace the professor of the Art of the Islamic Lands when she retires.**

Currently, we have two-and-a-half positions in Modern-Contemporary/Israeli Art; two in Renaissance; one in Islamic Art; one in Medieval Art; and one in Classical Art.

However, our most immediate need is a new position in Medieval Art. Apart from an expert in 13th–14th- century German Gothic art, we have no lecturer and supervisor

to cover the fields of 6th–12th century European or Byzantine art. In addition, we already have 5 Ph.D. candidates and more than a dozen asking to write the M.A. in the field, and it will not be possible to provide them the required guidance.

Medieval Art is the most requested field among the department's research students, and an additional position in Medieval Art is therefore an urgent desideratum. Dr. Gil Fishhof has been submitted by the Dean of the Faculty and the Rector of the University as a candidate for an Alon Fellowship given by the Council for Higher Education for the absorption of outstanding young faculty.

The 2.5 positions Modern-Contemporary Art should be kept because this is the track most relevant to local and global culture and because it will also provide the faculty for the new program in Photography Studies, which will have to be integrated after the three years financed by Yad Hanadiv. However, the half position might be directed to the field of non-Western contemporary art, a track that could profit from collaboration with East Asian Studies at TAU.

The department wishes to replace the professor of Islamic Art. A Call for a position in will be posted during **winter semester 2014**.

6. **The Faculty should promote the vibrant young faculty members as quickly as possible, not only to recognize their exceptional achievements but also to take advantage of the unfilled endowed chairs. It would be prudent to allow the current dean, who has overseen the transformation of the department, to remain in charge of the assignment of chairs, as she knows very well the department's inner workings.**

The Art History Department will reduce the teaching burden by using the means available to it. In order to advance the younger faculty members, the Department has stabilized the teaching program by requiring fewer alternative courses over the year and giving new faculty members the opportunity to repeat courses more frequently. Teaching release is given for one year, 2 credits for each new faculty member.

Because our faculty is small, but nonetheless required to fulfil all the various functions within the department, we believe that teaching release is crucial, and the Chair will apply to the university's administration to request further criteria for reduction of the teaching burden.

An additional way by which to increase faculty research time is to hire Teaching Assistants (TAs), see paragraph B4, B8.

All the endowed chairs remain unfilled due to the lack of Full Professors in the Department. Currently, the Rector is in charge of how the funds are used and distributed according to our needs.

- 7. The Department is advised to review the current policy on approval of courses taught in departments outside the major, and be certain that the standards for approval and denial are consistent and commensurate with the new pedagogical objectives of the department**

See paragraph A3.

- 8. The Committee is alarmed by inadequate infrastructure and recommends strongly that the deans work with the chair to find additional office space in Mexico Building sufficient to support the Department's basic needs.**

We are very anxious to improve our infrastructure. The lack of office space impairs our academic work and but so far the University has not changed the situation.

- 9. The Department should assess the slide digitization program to determine whether slides needed for teaching might be produced in a more economical way. It should communicate with the Tel Aviv Museum about establishing a free pass for TAU art history students.**

After a one-year leave at Stanford, our archivist, Jeanne Palevsky, has improved the digitization project in line with the experience she acquired there. The collection has now been uploaded to the central library catalogue and its searching tools were dramatically improved. In addition, slides are no longer being scanned; only new materials are incorporated into the collection, including Israeli art its original photo-documentation.

This project is crucial because it is a fundamental tool for our profession. For example: a Gothic portal contains five or six hundred individual sculptures. It is impossible for the lecturer alone to find all the details that are needed for both research and teaching. The images available on the Internet show only popular views and distorted low-quality images. Therefore we need a highly qualified staff (for scanning, cleaning, professional art-historical cataloguing and so on).

As for the economic aspect, it was rightly noted that a single position does not cover the hours needed for this project. We urgently need to find a way to support a tenured assistant, funded by the university and not by ancillary funds in the Department (i.e., from a lecture series), as has been the case thus far.

Due to copyright issues, collaboration with other collections does not seem feasible and should be considered cautiously.

B. Intermediate Terms (within 2–3 years)

1. More funding should be available to students for research and travel.

For the coming two years, the department raised donations that will permit 15 students to travel. In addition we have acquired two new M.A. scholarships in Art History; two M.A. scholarships in Photography Studies; and two Ph.D. scholarships in Photography Studies. We are working diligently to find additional funds for scholarships and hope to have support from the Dean or the Rector.

2. A third language should be required for all degrees.

Starting **October 2014**, third language will be required in the new curriculum of both degrees (this was introduced to the new B.A. major single track).

3. Within two years of the initial implementation of the curriculum changes, the Department should convene to re-evaluate the impact and success of the curriculum changes now being put into place. Both senior and junior faculty members should be involved in this evaluation

As suggested, the curriculum changes will be re-evaluated within two years (**October 2015**). As was the case with preparing the self-evaluation report and the program reforms, both junior and senior faculty will be involved in the re-evaluation process.

4. The Department should be provided with sufficient new funds to create a program of TAs. The program would not only relieve the exceptional teaching burden on the regular staff, but would also offer classroom training for the students intending to develop career

Funding for TAs is indeed crucial because our faculty, as already mentioned, is **overworked**. We earnestly hope that the University will support us in this regard in the faculty's five-year plan. Because our classes, especially the Introductions, have huge numbers of students, three TAs are the minimum required to maintain the quality of the teaching and effective completion of course-related tasks. TAs and research assistants were included in our budget but were cut during the economic crisis; we sincerely hope that now, with the financial situation improved, we will regain some of the lost TA positions.

5. Junior faculty should be given teaching release before they are reviewed for promotion and a sabbatical semester

The teaching burden for junior staff will be somewhat ameliorated by stabilizing the teaching program, as mentioned above (paragraph A6). Teaching release will be given following the Dean's policy. We encourage the faculty to have a sabbatical semester after three years on their tenure-track, according to their terms of employment. Because our faculty is small, but nonetheless required to fulfil all the various functions within the department, we believe that teaching release is crucial, and the Chair will apply to the university's administration to request further criteria for reduction of the teaching burden.

6. The Department should continue with the plan for curricular reform. It should also reconsider the question of a third language at the B.A. level. And it should increase contact with Israeli museums in general, and Tel Aviv Museum in particular.

Most recommendations have already been implemented; see above paragraphs A2, A3, B3.

7. The administration should recognize the importance of the two new Departmental initiatives in photography and medieval art through adequate funding.

See paragraph A5. As noted above, a new position in Medieval Art is urgently needed. We must keep the 2.5 positions in Modern Art in order to ensure the implementation of the Photography program after its three years of support by Yad Hanadiv. An Additional half position is needed in the field of Asian Art, a track that attracts the interest of many students.

Medieval Art is the most requested field in the department and has the most vibrant profile at international academic conferences and in publications by senior faculty, part-time instructors, and research students. Nevertheless, positions must be updated and an additional position in Medieval Art is urgently needed.

8. Research, especially by junior faculty members, should be actively supported through travel grants, teaching release time, and relief from administrative responsibilities

Junior faculty do not have any administrative responsibilities; only senior faculty (Lecturers and Senior Lecturers) do. However, because most senior faculty are

not tenured, we seek to reduce their teaching and administrative responsibilities. TAs and research assistant are needed, but we have no funds for them. We hope to have the University's support for this. TAs and research assistants were included in our budget but were eliminated during the economic crisis; we truly hope that now, when the situation is improved, we will gain back some of the lost TA positions.

During the past year, we expended considerable effort to attract donations for travel grants, and we will continue to do so.

Concluding remarks:

We will make every effort to maintain the Department's high standards of teaching and the high quality of its research and publications.

Medieval Art is the most requested field among our research students and has the most vibrant profile at international academic conferences and in publications, by senior faculty, part-time instructors, and research students. Nevertheless, positions must be updated and an additional position in Medieval Art is urgently needed. Dr. Gil Fishhof has been submitted by the Dean of the Faculty and the Rector of the University as a candidate for an Alon Fellowship given by the Council for Higher Education for the absorption of outstanding young faculty. We wish him and the department success in his candidacy.

Although students' contentment with our program at all levels is high, the lack of scholarships for M.A. students is problematic because it prevents our undergraduates from continuing their studies immediately after the B.A. Consequently, we either lose students or attract relatively "old" candidates with less future potential in the field.