

Creating and Implementing Authentic  
Assignments:  
Teaching with the “Working Collection”  
of the Johns Hopkins Archaeological  
Museum

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# The Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum



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*Courses for 1910-11*

[632

## CLASSICAL ARCHÆOLOGY AND ART

The work in Classical Archæology and Art is carried on by means of a Seminary, various courses of lectures, conferences with individual students and practical exercises in the museums. The archæological material in the possession of the university includes good collections of Greek and Roman inscriptions, marbles, bronzes, vases and other terracottas, coins, gems, etc., which not only serve the purpose of illustration, but also form the basis of original investigation. These are supplemented by squeezes, photographs, and lantern slides, as well as by the casts belonging to the university and to the Peabody Institute. The new Walters Gallery, which is not far from the university, contains a very valuable collection of Greek and Roman antiquities.

“...of even greater importance is the smaller working collection of the university, which fulfills in a general way the functions of a scientific laboratory. Nothing has more power to attract and hold the attention of students, to awaken and sustain their enthusiasm than the constant presence of the tangible remains of antiquity, the actual work of Greek and Roman hands. To students who by daily contact have become familiar with these things and understand their significance the men of old are real persons and their classical literature becomes the expression of a real life.”

-- *The Classical Weekly*, Harry Langford Wilson, 1908

# Courses at the Museum: 2010-2016



- 231 courses (563 class meetings) taught in the museum
- >8000 student visits to the museum for class
- 80% undergraduate courses  
11% graduate courses; 9% combination of undergraduate/graduate, high school or general public courses
- A majority of these courses involve handling and working directly with museum objects
- Courses have involved over thirty departments, programs and educational institutions





Is this a question I am genuinely curious about and don't know the answer to?

series of ten red-figured vases signed by well-known Greek artists, wh: Hartwig was making for the Berlin museum, but wh: he sold to Emerson for a song, out of pique, because the Museum was making him wait for the money. I am negotiating (secretly) for two superb black figured vases signed by Nikosthenes and by Kleokles. In this way we will have in Baltimore a splendid series of signed vases both of the black and red-figured species. I



Letter from A.J. Frothingham to JHU President Gilman, May 19, 1887  
Image courtesy of the Johns Hopkins University Archives

Kylix signed by Phintias as painter, ceramic, Greek, 510 BCE, The Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum  
<http://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/the-collection/object-stories/attic-red-figure-vases-in-the-johns-hopkins-archaeological-museum/>



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I knew that it was an experimental archaeology project, but I was not aware of quite how experimental it was. The idea that our teachers will be learning along with us is both exhilarating and terrifying. It is so different from the typical college course where the professor is an absolute authority on the subject and is there to pass on their knowledge to their students. Here we will all be learning together, and in an active, rather than a passive way. Thus, my extreme excitement.

Workshop  
journal entry,  
Anna Soifer,  
1/29/15





Is the question big enough, and are the stakes high?



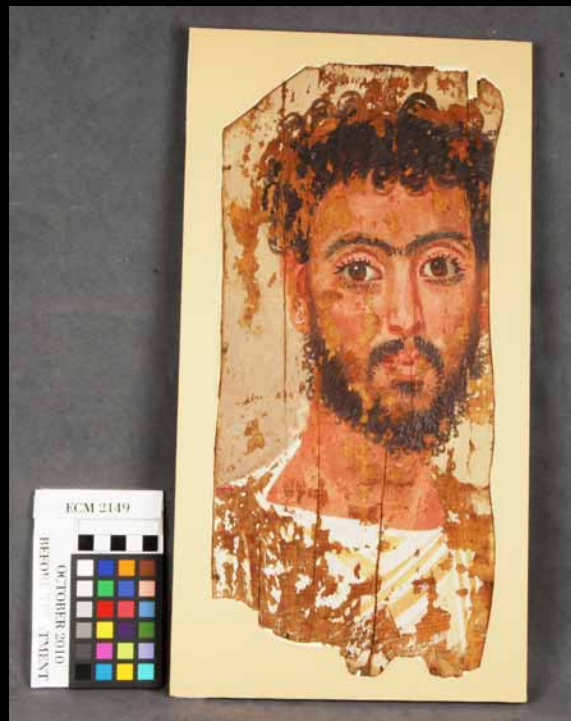


# Is the question big enough, and are the stakes high?



## Freshman Seminar on Technical Research

- 2 portraits from the Eton College Myers Collection
- Engage first year students in original research in an interdisciplinary manner
- Contribute to a scholarly conversation
- Make our findings publically accessible
- Funding support from the Deans Office, Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, Johns Hopkins University





✓ Do I have a physical thing that can be the focus of sustained and weekly examination and research?



"Fayum 4 Life"





# What methodology am I trying to teach?

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This hands-on course in “experiential archaeology” brings together undergraduate students across disciplines to study the making of Athenian vases. Students work closely with expert ceramic artists, and in consultation with art historians, archaeologists, art conservators, and materials scientists to attempt to recreate ancient Greek manufacturing processes.

We will be apprentices to both contemporary and ancient potters over the next 13 weeks. The focus of this course is on the physical experience and process of recreating ancient Greek red figure vessels. We are extremely fortunate to have access to the Archaeological Museum’s rich holdings in red-figure vases, and we will consult them regularly in our recreation process. Our aim is to take seriously the physicality of these ancient objects, while also trying to understand something of their original contexts and material characteristics.

- “Recreate” a Greek kylix or cup by apprenticing to a master potter
- Examine objects in the museum’s collection for guidance and questions
- Consult with specialists
- Document—through writing, photography and film—the process
- Share observations and reflections with a broad audience

<http://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/the-collection/object-stories/recreating-ancient-greek-ceramics/syllabus/>



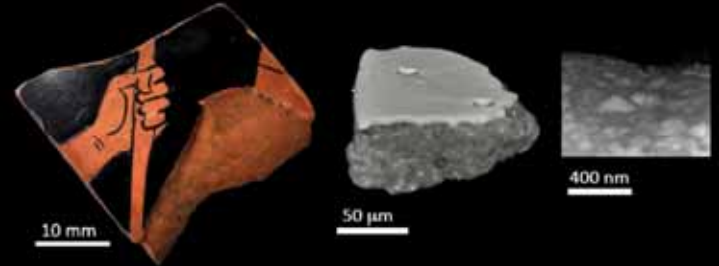
# What kind of expertise is needed and who has it and will help?



## The Athenian Pottery Project at the Getty: a scientific approach for the study of Greek ceramics

I. Cianchetta, K. Trentelman, J. Maish, D. Saunders, M. S. Walton, B. Foran, A. Mehta

## The Archaeology of Innovation



Understanding Technological Change Through Analysis of Athenian Pottery

Marc Walton



Clockwise from top left: Alan Shapiro, Department of Classics; Online chats with Marc Walton, Northwestern University/Art Institute of Chicago; Paula Artal-Isbrand, Worcester Art Museum; Ilaria Cianchetta, Getty Conservation Institute; Kilnside chat with John Wissinger, potter and kiln builder





# Is my class of students disciplinarily diverse?

## Johns Hopkins students recreate an iconic ancient Greek kylix

Mary Zajac / © May 7, 2015

Posted in *Politics+Society, Student Life, Arts+Culture*

Tagged *archaeological museum, pottery, program in museums and society*



IMAGE: COURTESY OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

### Student Participants:

Lauren Aldoroty

Madelena Brancati

Hana Chop

Dane Clark

Savannah de Montesquiou

Ashley Fallon

Haley Huang

Kelly McBride

Gianna Puzzo

Travis Schmauss

Anna Soifer

Elizabeth Winkelhoff

### Teaching Participants:

Sanchita Balachandran,

Matthew Hyleck, Camila

Ascher, Ross Brendle

<http://hub.jhu.edu/2015/05/07/recreating-ancient-greek-ceramics>



Is my class of students disciplinarily diverse?

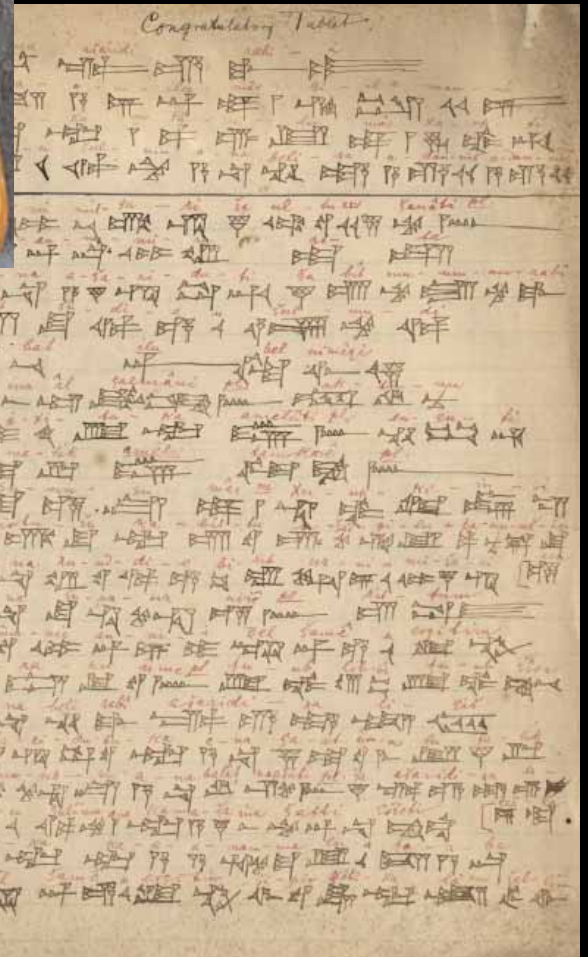


Building the Kiln, "Mysteries of the Kylix" (2015)





Is the class work challenging and is there a hands on component?



✓ Is the class work challenging and is there a hands on component?



Pigments prepared by Brian Baade and Kristin DeGhetaldi; wood recommendations by Marijn Manuels



# ✓ Is there an enduring “deliverable” or a regular public component to the class?

- >12,300 page views of student blog during semester
- >20,000 “people reached” on Facebook
- ~4000 film views (and on view at the Museum of Antiquities, NSW, Australia, and the Worcester Art Museum)
- 3 radio spots on WYPR (Baltimore’s NPR station) with listenership of 13,000
- Exposure through Archaeology Magazine’s website and social media, Johns Hopkins publications, and the Baltimore Sun newspaper



<https://vimeo.com/140393971>



# Do I see my students as collaborators?



- Fellow Makers: Matthew Hyleck, Patricia McGuigan, Ross Brendle, Cami Ascher, Anastassia Solovieva, Karun Pandian
- Funding: Getty Conservation Institute; Elizabeth Rodini, Program in Museums and Society, Johns Hopkins University and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Denis Wirtz, The Office of the Provost, Johns Hopkins University and the Discovery Grant Award; Mary Louise Healey, Sue Porterfield
- Students: Lauren Aldoroty, Madalena Brancati, Dane Clark, Hana Chop, Streit Cunningham, Savannah de Montesquiou, Ashley Fallon, Haley Huang, Evan Krumheuer, Kelly McBride, Gianna Puzzo, Travis Schmauss, Anna Soifer, Elizabeth Winkelhoff, Arthur Zhang
- 2015 Course Speakers, advisors, collaborators, colleagues: Eleni Aloupi-Siotis, Paula Artal-Isbrand, Betsy Bryan, Joe Campbell, Artemi Chaviari, Ilaria Cianchetta, Sylvie Dumont, Laura Garofalo, Eleni Hasaki, Glenda Hogan, Robert Holmes, Dennis Leikam, Lisa Kahn, Will Kirk, Takis Karkanis, Jeffrey Maish, John Papadopoulos, Emilio Rodriguez-Alvarez, Guy Sanders, Philip Sapirstein, David Saunders, Alan Shapiro, Janet Stephens, Karen Trentelman, Jay Van Renssalaer, Marc Walton, Vonnie Wild, John Wissinger
- Filmmakers: Bernadette Wegenstein, Allen Moore, Maxwell Anderson, Daniela Mileykova, Daniel Contaldo
- Getty Conservation Institute: Reem Baroodi, Dave Carson, Kathy Dardes, Anna Duer, Hanna Hoelling, Tom Learner, Gary Mattison, Nicole Onishi, Annabelle Sbarbatti, David Schow
- Museum of Fine Arts Boston: Jessie Arista, Christine Kondoleon, Phoebe Segal; Harvard Art Museums: Francesca Bewer, Amy Brauer, Angela Chang, Tony Siegel; Toledo Museum of Art: Suzanne Hargrove, Adam Levine, Scott Boberg, Kelly McGilvery; Emory University: Julianne Cheng
- Good folks: Diane Fullick, Anand and Uma Pandian, Lalitha and Ganesh Pandian, Devi and KB Nair







# Am I ready not be in control of what we find out?

**Johns Hopkins Discovery Awardees**


Reverse Engineering Ancient Ceramics

Sanchita Balachandran  
Krieger School of Arts & Sciences

Patricia McGuiggan  
Whiting School of Engineering

THE BALTIMORE SUN


## Unlocking the mysteries of classical Greek pottery



Where history has been made...

Celebrate 150 years of Towson University's rich history with the commemorative 150th Anniversary book.

By **Jonathan Price** - Contact Jonathan  
The Baltimore Sun



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e-News | 2016 | 05

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### New Light on Ancient Faces

Undergraduate Students at Johns Hopkins University Study Roman Egyptian Mummy Portraits

— Sanchita Balachandran, The Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum

Even first-year college students spent the fall of 2015 examining two Roman Egyptian mummy portraits on loan to the Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum from the Elton College Myers Collection in Windsor, UK. As participants in a course on the technical study of archaeological objects led by Sanchita Balachandran, the museum's curator/conservator, the students utilized non-destructive imaging and analytical techniques to generate data for the "Ancient Panel Paintings: Examination, Analysis and Research" (APPEAR) Project. Developed by Marie Svoboda of the J. Paul Getty Museum, the APPEAR database facilitates the sharing of technical research on these portraits between scholars in institutions across the globe, with the hope that a materials-based approach to these objects may provide new insights into their production and use. The students learned the historical and archaeological contexts for mummy portraits in concert with techniques that literally let them see the paintings through different lenses. Stereomicroscopy, x-radiography, multispectral imaging (MSI), reflectance transformation imaging (RTI) and x-ray fluorescence (XRF) were used to investigate the artists who had left their marks on these paintings.

X-rays showed that the portraits' lead white-based gray backgrounds and garments were rather generic and created with minimal brushwork, possibly by apprentices. Using RTI to see surface texture, the personality of the master painter became visible in the bristly brushstrokes of ECM 2149. By contrast, ECM 2150's painter made sculptural use of a spatula-like tool to model the sides of the face. The subtlety of paint mixtures emerged using MSI. In ultraviolet light induced luminescence, madder lake appears as a red undertone in the nose, lips and behind the eyelids of ECM 2149. In visible induced infrared luminescence, Egyptian blues' distinctive sparkle proved that it was mixed with lead white to create the gray background of ECM 2149. Curiously, the painters of ECM 2150 did not use Egyptian blue for their gray background, but chose indigo instead. The most useful results came from combining techniques; when x-rays revealed a ghostly gold wreath that once adorned the hair of ECM 2150, stereomicroscopy helped us discover gold flecks in that area, and XRF analyses confirmed the presence of elemental gold.

Students shared their discoveries in blog-posts on the museum's website, a resource that has had over 3,000 page views. This project was supported by the Dean's Office of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, Johns Hopkins University.

> Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum

Editor: Eddie | Copy: Editorial Board: The Staff, Tom Harkness, Adam Deason, Catherine Price | Contributor for future editions should be sent to: Catherine Price

# Authentic Assignment Checklist

- ✓ Is this a question I am genuinely curious about and don't know the answer to?
- ✓ Is the question big enough, and are the stakes high?
- ✓ Do I have a physical thing that can be the focus of sustained and weekly examination and research?
- ✓ What methodology am I trying to teach?
- ✓ What kind of expertise is needed and who has it and will help?
- ✓ Is my class of students disciplinarily diverse?
- ✓ Is the class work challenging and is there a hands on component?
- ✓ Is there an enduring "deliverable" or a regular public component to the class?
- ✓ Do I see my students as collaborators?
- ✓ Am I ready not be in control of what we find out?

# But What Did Students Learn Through That Assignment?

- Everything is more complicated than we think and merits repeated examination/re-examination
- Our work in the classroom produces unique specialized knowledge
- We can participate in and contribute to scholarly conversations
- We should broaden our own knowledge base and collaborate beyond our usual networks
- We must provide access to the knowledge we produce
- The process of trying to answer a question is more important than answering the question—and will lead to more interesting questions
- We can/must ask more daring questions