



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Samuel H. Kress Foundation has a strong and abiding commitment to institutional advancement. Among its regular grantees are outstanding colleges and universities, as well as archives, libraries and museums, and independent research institutes, both in North America and abroad. Literally hundreds of institutions have benefited from Kress grant support since the incorporation of the Foundation eighty-five years ago, in 1929. And yet Kress's greatest legacy might well be the nearly 5,000 Kress Fellows whose lives and careers have been touched and in some instances transformed by the Foundation's longstanding fellowship programs in art conservation, art history, art librarianship, and in the art museum professions. In any given year nearly 50% of the Foundation's charitable giving supports professional development and growth on the part of students and emerging scholars, mid-career professionals, and senior practitioners.

So central to its mission are the Kress Fellowship programs that in 2003 the Foundation published a slim booklet<sup>1</sup> on the history of these programs, spanning four decades (1962–2002) and entitled “Launching Careers in Art History and Conservation.” The Foundation's increasingly diverse fellowship program has now passed the half-century mark, and it seems an opportune moment to reflect on our abiding commitment to investing in institutions by investing in individuals.

### *Careers in art history*

Let us begin with a brief retrospective on Kress's signature pre-doctoral art history fellowship program. For half a century (1962–present), the Kress Foundation has supported an important suite of residential, two-year pre-doctoral fellowships at art history research centers in Europe and the United States. Intended for doctoral candidates studying pre-modern European art history at North American universities, these highly coveted fellowships have long been regarded as among the most prestigious in the field of art history. They were originally dedicated on

<sup>1</sup>Perry, Marilyn. *Launching Careers in Art History and Conservation: The Kress Fellowship Program 1962–2002*. Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York, NY. 2003.

a recurring basis to the modest number of American PhD programs in art history, initially sixteen in the 1960s, subsequently expanded to twenty-five in the 1980s. These fellowships were the keystone of an effort to integrate the academic study of the history of art into the higher education landscape in the United States and build capacity nationwide. In the early 1990s, as new PhD programs in art history began to proliferate in the US, Kress made these fellowships competitive, requiring that candidates be endorsed by their academic departments, which could only nominate one applicant per year. Some of these Kress fellowships were administered by the host institutions here and abroad, while others were, until recently, administered directly by Kress and selected with the help of an external review panel.

In recent years, the Foundation has introduced several changes to this program, based in part on an analysis of historic fellowship application patterns. First, the essential focus of the program on art history research centers here and in Europe has been reaffirmed and strengthened. Second, six key art history research centers in Europe (in Florence, Leiden, London, Munich, Paris, and Rome) – by far the most sought-after European fellowship sites – were each invited henceforth to host one new Kress fellow annually and thus, since these are two-year fellowships, two Kress fellows at any given time. These six centers<sup>2</sup> were simultaneously invited to administer the recruitment process directly, in close consultation with Kress, as several other longstanding Kress fellowship hosts – including the American Academy in Rome and the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art – have successfully done for decades. This change in administration was intended primarily to strengthen the host institutions' sense of identification with and commitment to the Kress fellowship program. This transition has now been successfully accomplished.

<sup>2</sup> The centers are: the German Art History Institute in Florence, the Art History Institute at the Rijksuniversiteit in Leiden, the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes (jointly) in London, the Central Institute for Art History in Munich, the National Institute of Art History in Paris, and the Hertziana Library in Rome.

*Saint Barbara*, c. 1860/1910,  
(Probably French or Belgian);  
Samuel H. Kress Collection,  
National Gallery of Art,  
Washington, DC



With Kress's signature pre-doctoral fellowship program now half a century old, the following questions naturally arise: Are our art history fellowship programs achieving the desired goal of strengthening the field of art history as practiced not only in our colleges and universities but also in art museums, art libraries, art publishing, etc.? Are these programs sustaining the study and teaching of European art history of the pre-modern era? Are successive generations of Kress fellows finding gainful employment in their chosen field, and are our fellowships preparing fellows for success?

In order to answer these questions, we performed an informal survey of our recent art history fellowship alumni/ae. For this study, we looked at the two-year pre-doctoral fellowship awards from 1995 to 2013. Since 1995, 248 individuals have been appointed to Kress two-year residential fellowships. We attempted to locate these individuals and determine their current professional status, and in most instances we were able to locate the fellows and trace their professional trajectories. The results of this informal study are found below.

Where are they now?  
*Kress Pre-Doctoral Art History Fellows 1995–2013*  
 (248) Two-Year Fellows

138 (55%).....	Academic Faculty Academic Art Historians: 85 (62% of all academic faculty, 34% of all fellows) Faculty Outside of Art History: 53 (38% of all academic faculty; 21% of all fellows) includes anthropology, archaeology, classics, history, languages, religion
44 (16%).....	PhD Candidate
14 (6%).....	Museum Professional
14 (6%).....	Unable to locate
12 (5%).....	Post-doctoral/Visiting Fellow
10 (4%).....	Other (Unrelated Profession)
8 (3%).....	Independent Scholar
5 (2%).....	Scholarly Organization Professional
2 (1%).....	Library Professional
1 (0%).....	Publishing Professional

As this summary shows, no fewer than 138 (55%) of the 248 Kress pre-doctoral art history fellows appointed from 1995 to 2013 are now academic faculty, mostly in the United States, but in a very few instances abroad. Of these 138 former fellows, 85 (62% of all academic faculty

and 34% of all fellows) are now academic art historians, while 53 (38% of all academic faculty and 21% of all fellows) hold faculty positions in departments outside but tangent to the history of art, including anthropology, archaeology, classics, history, languages, and religion, to which fields they bring a sophisticated understanding of the history of art and material and visual culture. The faculty rank of former fellows varies significantly, of course, ranging from adjunct faculty and instructors/lecturers to assistant, associate and full (tenured) professors. Not surprisingly, these rankings seem to correlate with seniority: fellows from the 1990s tend to have advanced further professionally than their juniors.

Looking beyond academe, we found that another roughly 10% of the former Kress fellows are active in the art history field outside academe. Fourteen (6%) former fellows have found jobs in museums; five (2%) work with scholarly or professional organizations in the art history field; two former fellows are now working in art libraries, and one has found a home in art publishing. The data suggest that another 8% of former Kress fellows – mostly recent graduates – might still be finding their way into the academic job market. Thus twelve (5%) of the former Kress fellows have or have recently held post-doctoral or visiting fellowships, mostly at universities, and the majority of these individuals are relatively recent graduates (2005 to present). And eight (3%) former fellows seem now to be active as independent scholars. While independent scholars have always been a significant community within the field of art history, most of these individuals are, as noted, relatively recent graduates (2006 to present). Hence our suggestion that both individuals on post-graduate fellowships and individuals practicing as independent art historians might still be finding their way into academe during unusually challenging economic times. It is actually surprising and encouraging that the number of such individuals is not larger.

Ten (4%) former Kress fellows have adopted unrelated professional roles, ranging from administration to fashion, from journalism to law, and from real estate to social services. Finally, forty-four (18%) of the fellows have yet to finish their doctoral programs. This reflects the fact that our

survey sample extends through 2013, and it is not at all unusual for a fellow to complete the PhD as much as five years after the conclusion of a fellowship. Of these 44 former fellows still pursuing their doctorates, only nine held fellowships prior to 2007.

*Careers in museums*

Perhaps the most intriguing fact to emerge from this analysis is that only fourteen (6%) of these Kress pre-doctoral fellows are pursuing careers in museums. Many museum professionals, to be sure, do not pursue PhDs, and many enter the workforce earlier than individuals who do pursue the doctorate<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, graduate school advisors throughout the arts and humanities often encourage their PhD students to pursue careers in academe, and all-too-rarely recommend to their students museum careers, or indeed any career paths that lead beyond academe.

Where are they now?  
*Kress Curatorial Fellows 1999–2009*  
 (64) One-Year Fellows

15 (23%).....	Museum Professional – Curator
14 (22%).....	Academic – Art History
9 (14%).....	Library Professional
8 (12%).....	Other (Unrelated Profession)
7 (14%).....	Unable to Locate
4 (6%).....	Independent Scholar
3 (5%).....	PhD Candidate
3 (5%).....	Post-Doctoral/Visiting Fellow
1 (2%).....	Scholarly Organization Professional

The same factors that have long kept art history PhDs from entering museum careers also seem relevant to the outcomes of the Kress Foundation's program of curatorial fellowships, which was operative

<sup>3</sup> Membership surveys conducted by the Association of Art Museum Curators and the Association of Art Museum Directors indicate that 44% of art museum curators and 40% of art museum directors have PhDs.

from 1999–2009 and the express aim of which was to encourage individuals with PhDs in art history to pursue curatorial careers. During that period, 64 individuals were appointed as curatorial fellows at 34 host institutions, some of which served as host institutions multiple times during the life of the program. Where are those 64 former curatorial fellows now? Instructively, only fifteen (23%) of these curatorial fellows ultimately pursued careers in museums. Roughly the same number – fourteen (22%) – have ended up in academe. Nine (14%) work in libraries, four (6%) seem to be independent scholars, three (5%) are on post-doctoral or visiting fellowships, and one (2%) works for a scholarly organization. Eight (12%) have left the field and seven (11%) have not been located yet. Three (5%) have not yet finished their degrees. Clearly the program was not entirely successful.

The successor to the Kress curatorial fellowship program is our current program of “Interpretive Fellowships in Art Museums,” launched in 2009. This program is intended to encourage art history students to explore careers in both art museum education and curatorial work. It is perhaps too early to assess the program’s results reliably, but the growth in the applicant pool in the first few years is instructive and encouraging. The number of institutional applicants has more than tripled over the course of the program. In 2010, the first year of the fellowship program, the fellowship host museums recruited only by word of mouth. In 2011, the four museums that advertised the fellowship opportunity received 165 applications. And in 2012, more than 250 individuals applied for fellowships at the four host museums that recruited publicly. At the same time, we have found that while the typical applicant is between degrees (often having finished a BA and contemplating graduate studies, or having completed the MA and contemplating doctoral studies), PhDs in art history are increasingly applying. For example, one art museum had 149 applicants for a single Interpretive Fellowship in 2012, of which fourteen (8%) had or were working on PhDs, and this despite the fact that at the time the museum did not expressly recruit doctoral candidates or PhDs. To some extent these numbers likely reflect a constrained market in

academe and the prestige of the host institutions, but they also suggest that the program might be succeeding in encouraging trained art historians to explore alternative career paths in art museums – and perhaps also succeeding in encouraging graduate advisors to be supportive of this option.

*Careers in conservation*

Alongside its fellowship programs in art history, the Kress Foundation has long sponsored professional development opportunities in the field of art conservation. These include the Kress Conservation Fellowships program, now ably administered by the Foundation of the American Institute of Conservation, which also manages a conservation publication fellowship program on behalf of the Foundation. Each year, nine art museums or other conservation centers are awarded a grant that allows them to host a Kress conservation fellow for one year – typically a relatively recent recipient of a graduate degree in art conservation. Simultaneously, a small suite of conservation centers have dedicated recurring funding in support of residential Kress conservation fellowships. Former Kress fellows are ubiquitous in the field of art conservation, both as practiced in the field and as taught in graduate programs around the nation.

As the Kress Foundation enters its 85th year, its strong commitment to investing in institutions by investing in individuals remains undiminished. We look forward to following the success of the next generation of Kress Fellows!



**Max Marmor**  
President