

# Tara Leigh Tappert, Ph.D.

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## PROFILE

Award-winning museum professional who excels at all aspects of curatorial and collections management work: including research and analysis; envisioning exhibition concepts; writing, editing, and critiquing arts and exhibition text; implementing educational programming; maintaining collection inventories; handling registrarial functions; and working with artists, academics, and other museum-related specialists. Research focused on late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> c. American art and culture— primarily portraiture, biography, women and art, family history, and genealogy; and on 20<sup>th</sup> c. American craft. Clients have ranged from individual families, to businesses and world-renowned cultural and educational institutions.

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## SUMMARY OF RELEVANT SKILLS

Through traditional employment and contract positions with Tappert & Associates I have worked with museums and cultural institutions throughout the U.S. on a wide-range of exhibition and research projects for more than thirty years.

### COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

- **Knowledge of current collections management practices and principles, including, but not limited to, inventory, copyright, and intellectual property**
  - ❖ Organized manuscripts and art for 11 children’s books by author/artist Nancy Patz for Goucher College – 2007
  - ❖ Sourced images from institutions and private owners, and secured permission to publish (rights and reproduction) for inclusion in the dissertation of the late art historian, David R. Meschutt – (1955-2005)
  - ❖ Prepared research reports for Board review for potential acquisitions at the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution – 1988-1990

### EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT

- **Envisioning Exhibition Concepts**
  - ❖ Conceived, proposed, designed, and planned a \$300,000 national touring exhibition about American portrait painter Cecilia Beaux that was on view at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery and the Westmoreland Museum of Art, Greensburg, PA –1995-1996.

### HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

- **Knowledge of American art and material culture with special emphasis on 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century fine and decorative arts**
  - ❖ Researched and have written about 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c. American artists and craft artisans for a wide range of museum and gallery publications, as well as auction houses and private families, including the American Trust for the British Library, Biggs Museum of American Art, Beveridge and Bunn families, Borghi & Co., Detroit Institute of Art, Freeman Fine Arts, Giampietro and Gilder families, Skinner Auctioneers and Appraisers, Museum of Arts and Design, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Williams College Museum of Art – 1985-2019
  - ❖ Academic work for Ph.D. included a year of study at the Library of Congress on a broad range of topics regarding the history of the Gilded Age to the Progressive Era; a year of coursework on American decorative arts from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> c.; and a Ph.D. dissertation on Gilded Age American portrait painter Cecilia Beaux (1855-1942), on whom I later guest curated an exhibition at the Smithsonian – 1980-1995
- **Demonstrated knowledge of the needs, methods, and techniques of scholarly art and historical research, including knowledge of print and electronic sources**
  - ❖ Applied art historical and cultural history methodologies in writing exhibition text panels and wall labels for the Cecilia Beaux exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery (described by renowned biographer, David McCullough as “the best he had ever read”), and for the six arts and military related exhibits at cultural and educational institutions in Maryland, Virginia, Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Indiana –1990-2018
  - ❖ Researched and have written about artists and artwork in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and the Roanoke Museum of Fine Arts while on staff at these institutions; and as a researcher for four 20<sup>th</sup> c. craft exhibitions at the Museum of Arts and Design – 1988-2011
  - ❖ Researched and have written many appraisals, including provenance, and authentication of portraits by Cecilia Beaux for museums galleries, auction houses, and private families – 1985 to the present

- ❖ Edited articles and other publications, and have written numerous book reviews – 1984-2016
- ❖ Trained to conduct art historical research as a graduate student at George Washington University; have used art historical resources in a wide range of Washington, DC cultural institutions, including the Smithsonian Institution and Library of Congress – 1980 to the present
- **Skill in writing articles, essays, or research papers for both general and specialized audiences**
  - ❖ Extensive publication record and presentation of research through PowerPoint presentations for a wide range of venues – from professional conferences to cultural and educational institutions (see Selected Publications and Selected Lectures and Activities) – 1982 to the present

## COMMUNICATION

- **Ability to work collaboratively with curators, editors, historians, webmasters and developers, as well as outside organizations and institutions**
  - ❖ Worked collaboratively with numerous institutional staff members and owners of art work during the planning of a \$300,000 national touring exhibition on American portrait painter, Cecilia Beaux (1855-1942), on view at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery and the Westmoreland Museum of Art, Greensburg, PA –1990-1996.
- **Ability to deal with others using tact and diplomacy**
  - ❖ Extensive experience communicating tactfully and diplomatically with a wide range of professionals – from artists and arts specialists to lawyers and public officials.
- **Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing**
  - ❖ Presented PowerPoint lectures at educational and professional conferences, and led gallery tours for curated exhibitions – 1982-2020.

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Familiarity with graphic design, desktop publishing, and digital-imaging applications**
  - ❖ Basic design skills for PowerPoint presentations, and for simple exhibition catalogues and brochures.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### CURATORIAL-COLLECTION MANAGEMENT-ARTS RESEARCH SERVICE *1990 to Present*

Sole owner and proprietor of Tappert & Associates, a small, woman-owned business that focuses on arts, exhibitions, archive collections management, and publication projects. Assignments range from exhibit conception and development, to research, writing, and editing; creation of archival finding aids, inventory holding lists, and bibliographies, appraisals, registrarial work, simple conservation and preservation, press and marketing initiatives, academic advising, teaching, tutoring and docent training, and supervision of interns.

## ACCOLADES

- *Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award* – Endorsed as a leader in the field of art – <https://www.24-7pressrelease.com/press-release/473156/tara-leigh-tappert-phd-presented-with-the-albert-nelson-marquis-lifetime-achievement-award-by-marquis-whos-who> -- **Marquis Who's Who** (2019)
- *Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture*, Smithsonian Institution, National Portrait Gallery – “These are the best exhibition wall labels I have ever read.” **David McCullough**, Biographer, (October, 1995).
- *Craft in the Machine Age*, American Craft Museum – “Our genius researcher and author.” **Kate Carmel, Art Historian** (October, 1994).
- *The Emmets: A Generation of Gifted Women*, Borghi & Co. – “For almost two hundred years now, the Emmets have been throwing off remarkable characters, perhaps more often in the female line than in the male.” “The Talk of the Town,” **The New Yorker**, (March 29, 1993).

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2014/15 – *David B. Larson Fellow for Health and Spirituality* – *John W. Kluge Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC*  
 2010 – *Research Grant* – *Center for Craft, Asheville, NC*  
 1999 – *John Benjamins Award* – *Art Librarians Society of North America*  
 1988 – *Beverly R. Robinson Doctoral Fellowship* – *Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, DE*  
 1986/87 – *Smithsonian Pre-Doctoral Fellow* – *Smithsonian Institution, National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC*  
 1986/87 – *Phi Delta Gamma, Beta Chapter* – *Award Recipient* – *George Washington University, Washington, DC*  
 1985/86 – *Library of Congress Fellow* – *American Civilization Department, George Washington University, Washington, DC*

## EDUCATION

1990 – Ph.D. – **George Washington University** Washington, DC – American Civilization – (arts and library research)  
1976 – M.S.L.S. – **Wayne State University** Detroit, MI – Library and Archives Administration  
1973 – B.A. – **Hope College** Holland, MI – History (minor, Art History)

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### **JOB RELATED TRAINING**

- 2003-2004 – **Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia -- Small Business Training Courses**  
Participated in technical training programs intended to help grow a small archives and American art consulting business. Classes included – The ABC's of Starting a Business; The ABC's of Starting a Non-Profit; Financing Your Business for Growth; Bookkeeping Basics; Developing a Business Plan that Works; Small Business Tax Planning, and the 12-week NxLEVEL class, designed for start-up owners to facilitate the development of a preliminary business plan.
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### **CURRENT PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- American Studies Association - Member -- (Student Committee, 1985-87)
  - Pennsylvania Historical Association
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### **SELECTED PUBLITIONS**

#### **Art and Culture**

Book Review – Bailey Van Hook, “Violet Oakley - An Artist’s Life,” *Nineteenth Century: A Magazine of the Victorian Society in America*, 36, no. 2, Fall, 2016, pp. 44-45.

Introduction – Elizabeth Shippen Green: American Illustrator, by Paul Giambarba, 2014 – [www.giambarba.com](http://www.giambarba.com)

Book Review – Natalie Dykstra, "Clover Adams -- A Gilded and Heartbreaking Life," *Nineteenth Century: Magazine of the Victorian Society in America*, 33, no. 1, Spring, 2013, pp. 42-43.

Resource List –Crafting Modernism: Mid-Century American Art and Design, exh. cat. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2011.

Craft in Action: “By Hook or by Crook.” *American Craft* 71, no. 1 February/March, 2011.

Out of the Background--Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture, 2009 <http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/9aa/9aa211.htm>

“Personal Perspective – Stephen Bauer, Bradbury & Bradbury Art Wallpaper Co.,” *Style* 1900 22, no. 1 Spring, 2009.

“Personal Perspective – Tom Richard, Old California Lantern Company,” *Style* 1900 21, no. 4 Winter, 2008.

“Personal Perspective – Davey Willans, President, Craftsman Farms Foundation,” *Style* 1900 21, no. 3 Fall, 2008.

“Hunting & Gathering–Private Pleasures: Collecting Contemporary Textile Art.” *American Craft* 68, no. 1 Feb./Mar., 2008.

Book Review – Virginia Gardner Troy, “Anni Albers and Ancient American Textiles – From Bauhaus to Black Mountain” and Nicholas Fox Weber and Martin Filler,” *Josef + Anni Albers – Designs for Living*” (Exhibition Catalogue), *SECAC Review*, Fall, 2005.

Catalogue entry –The Neville-Strass Collection -- American Women Artists 1819-1947, exh. cat., The Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 2003.

Book Review – Nina de Angeli Walls, “Art, Industry, and Women’s Education in Philadelphia,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 126, no. 3 October, 2002.

“Aimée Ernesta and Eliza Cecilia - Two Sisters-Two Choices.” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 124, no. 3 July, 2000. Guest co-editor for special issue on Cecilia Beaux – <http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/3aa/3aa335.htm>

“William Sartain and Cecilia Beaux: The Influences of a Teacher,” in *Philadelphia's Cultural Landscape: The Sartain Family Legacy 1830-1930*, Temple University Press, 2000 (2001 award winner-- Ewell L. Newman Book Award from the American Historical Print Collectors Association and the Philadelphia Book Clinic's 56th Philadelphia Book Show Award in the category of subsidized books).

Book Review – Page Talbott and Patricia Tanis Sydney, “The Philadelphia Ten: A Women's Artist Group 1917-1945,” *American Studies International*, October, 1999.

Book Review – Bailey Van Hook, “Angels of Art: Women and Art in American Society, 1876-1914,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of*

History and Biography 122, no. 4 December, 1998.

Catalogue entries – American Paintings in the Detroit Institute of Arts. Volume 2. Hudson Hills Press, 1997.

Book Review –Ellen G. Miles, “St. Mémin and the Neo-Classical Portrait in America,” The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 120, no. 3 July, 1996.

Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture, exh. cat., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995.

Resource List –Craft in the Machine Age: 1920-1945, exh. cat., Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995.

Resource List –Revivals! Diverse Traditions: 1920-1945, exh. cat., Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994.

Resource List –The Ideal Home: 1900-1920, exh. cat. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1993.

The Emmets: A Generation of Gifted Women, exh. cat. Borghi & Co., New York, NY, 1993.

”American Viscose - When Roanoke Supplied a Nation with Hosiery,” Roanoker Magazine 19, no. 11 November, 1992.

“Choices - The Life and Career of Cecilia Beaux: A Professional Biography,” Ph.D. dissertation, The George Washington University, 1990.

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### **Recognized Scholar of American Portraitist Cecilia Beaux**

#### ***Guide Private Collectors, Art Galleries, Museums, and Cultural Institutions Interested in Cecilia Beaux Artwork***

- Provide documented histories of specific paintings, drawings, and sketches
- Write appraisals
- Authenticate works of art by Cecilia Beaux

#### ***Articles and Essays Written About Cecilia Beaux***

- *The Sewell C. Biggs Collection of American Art – A Catalogue of American Art* (2002), *Dreams-American Art to 1950 in the Williams College Museum of Art* (2001), *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (2000), *American National Biography* (1999), *Dictionary of Women Artists* (1997), *The Dictionary of Art* (1996), *Pennsylvania Heritage Magazine* (1996), *American Art Review* (1995), *Victoria Magazine* (1990), and *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (1988)

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## **SELECTED LECTURES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Arts – Decorative Arts – Women's History –Biography – American Studies**

Lecture – “A Preference for the ‘Finer Types’ – Cecilia Beaux’s Portraits of Gilded Age Boys and Men,” Pennsylvania Historical Association Conference, Session 5, Panel 15 – New Approaches to Material Culture, Lancaster, PA, Oct., 2018.

Lecture – “A Preference for the Finer Types: Cecilia Beaux’s Portraits of Gilded Age Men and Boys,” Springfield Art Association and Sangamon County Historical Society, Springfield, IL, October, 2017.

Presentation – “Out of the Background: Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture” Shenandoah University, Winchester, VA, October, 2006 – (Virginia Wojno-Forney Art Lecture Series 2006-07).

Lecture – “Impressions of the Impressionists,” - Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Smithsonian Institution, June, 2004 (co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Associates and the Smithsonian American Art Museum).

Presentation - “Historic Brookland Main Street” community meeting sponsored by the Brookland Community Development Corporation, Washington, D.C., November, 2003.

Presentation - "Honors Award for Barbara Gilbert Carson, Decorative Arts Professor and Consultant," Women's Caucus for Art of Greater Washington, D.C., April, 2001 - (Washington Women Artists - Marching into the Millennium).

Lecture and Book Signing - "William Sartain and Cecilia Beaux" and "Cecilia Beaux Project-Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography," National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, December, 2000.

Lecture – "The History of China Painting in America, 1860-1930," Masters in Decorative Arts Program, Smithsonian Institution, offered through the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Design, Parsons School of Design, and Resident Associates, Washington, D.C., November, 2000 - (for the Fall 2000 course The History of Ceramics taught by Cynthia Williams.)

Lectures - "Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture," Women's Caucus for Art of Greater Washington, D.C., November, 2000, and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October, 2000.

Lectures - "Freelance Careers and Independent Scholarship in the Arts and "Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture," at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, April, 2000 - (Focus on the Future series sponsored by School of Art and Design and Lowe Art Gallery).

Lecture - "Research Methodologies for Contemporary Crafts," Masters in Decorative Arts Program at the Smithsonian Institution, offered through the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Design, Parsons School of Design, and Resident Associates, Washington, D.C., February, 1999 - (for the Spring 1999 course Crafts in America taught by Barbara Carson.)

Lecture - "Leisure and Work - Cecilia Beaux in New York and Gloucester, 1890s-1940s," The Highlands Mansion & Gardens, Ft. Washington, PA, April, 1998 - ("The Enchantress of Philadelphia: A Symposium on Caroline Sinkler and her Friends," supported by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council with funds from the Independence Foundation).

Lecture - "Painting is a great deal of trouble: Cecilia Beaux as an Educator," 26th Annual Conference, Art Libraries Society of North America, Philadelphia, PA, March, 1998 - ("Education of Women in the Arts: An Historic Overview" session).

Lecture - "William Sartain and Cecilia Beaux: The Influences of a Teacher" Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, PA, April, 1997 - ("The Sartain Family and the Philadelphia Cultural Landscape 1830-1930" symposium).

Lecture - "Research Methodologies for Contemporary Crafts," at Sotheby's, New York, New York, May, 1997 - (presentation for a symposium on American Contemporary Crafts).

Lecture - "Cecilia Beaux: An Amalgam of Styles," at Sotheby's, New York, NY, February, 1997 - ("American Women Impressionists: The Giverny Legacy" symposium).

Lecture - "Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture," Columbus Art Museum, Columbus, OH, May, 1996 - (docents).

Gallery tours - Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture exhibit, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, October 6, 1995 - January 28, 1996 and Westmoreland Museum of Art, Greensburg, PA, February 25 - May 5, 1996.

Symposium - "Cecilia Beaux and Her Contemporaries: Women Artists in the Gilded Age," National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., October, 1995 - (symposium for exhibit, Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture, National Portrait Gallery, October 6, 1995 - January 28, 1996 and Westmoreland Museum of Art, Greensburg, PA, February 25 - May 5, 1996).

Lecture - "Cecilia Beaux's Paintings at the Chicago World's Fair," National Portrait Gallery and National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., August, 1993 - (lecture series for exhibition, American Art at the 1893 World's Fair, April 16 - August 15, 1993).

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### **Archives and Libraries**

Lecture - "Words and Pictures – Pictures and Words," Goucher College, Baltimore, MD, November, 2007 - (for Who Was the Woman Who Wore the Hat? – Memory and Story workshop celebrating the Nancy Patz Collection).

Lecture - "But What Do I Do With All These Papers?," Roanoke Valley Estates Planning Council, 1992.

Lecture - "Archival Records Research," for Public History Seminar, Roanoke College, Salem, VA, November, 1991.

Oral History Interview - The late Judge Wade H. McCree, Jr. - Oral History Collection, Walter P. Reuther Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 1976.

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