

**BEREA COLLEGE  
ART & ART HISTORY  
DEPARTMENT**

# Art History Senior Capstone Projects

**SPRING 2020**



# INTRODUCTION

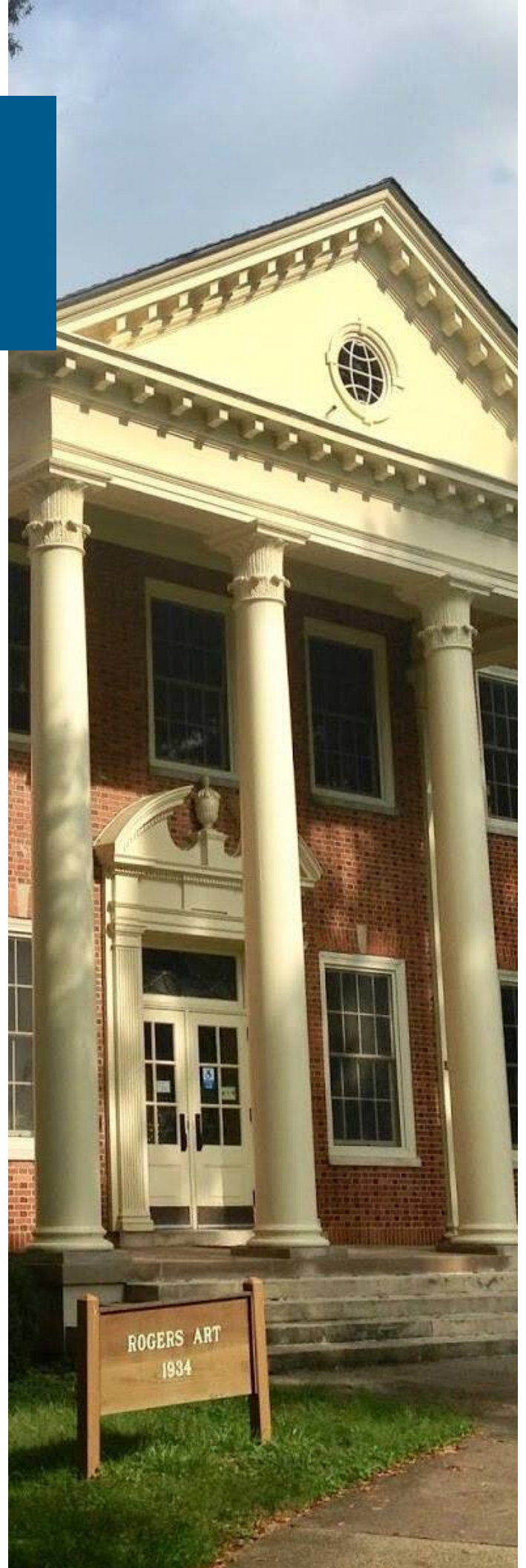
It is a great pleasure to introduce the capstone Art History research projects for 2020. Each of the four students enrolled in ARH 450: Advanced Research in Art History this spring showed not only great enthusiasm and creativity in their research processes but also tremendous commitment and resilience in seeing their projects through to successful ends despite the unexpected, abrupt changes that COVID-19 wrought on the second half of the semester. On behalf of the Art & Art History Department at Berea College, we commend you.

During the eight weeks that we met as a group on campus we had the opportunity to explore the history of the discipline and we had begun to grapple with the current directions of the field. The four research papers written for the course this spring reflect the distinct and wide-ranging interests that this excellent group of students brought to the Art History program at Berea. These papers explore works of art from ancient Greece to contemporary Japan and points between, and include a reexamination of iconographical shifts, a fresh look at the implications of female portraiture, an excavation of overlooked aspects of material culture, and an evaluation of the impact of digital technology on visual culture. As such, they demonstrate the rich possibilities of Art History and point to exciting directions for the future.

It is the department's tradition that Art History majors present their capstone research publicly at the end of the spring term followed by a celebratory reception. While we were not able to hold that event this year, this digital booklet allows their hard work to be shared. I'm sure you join with me in congratulating them on their achievements and wishing them well on their future endeavors!

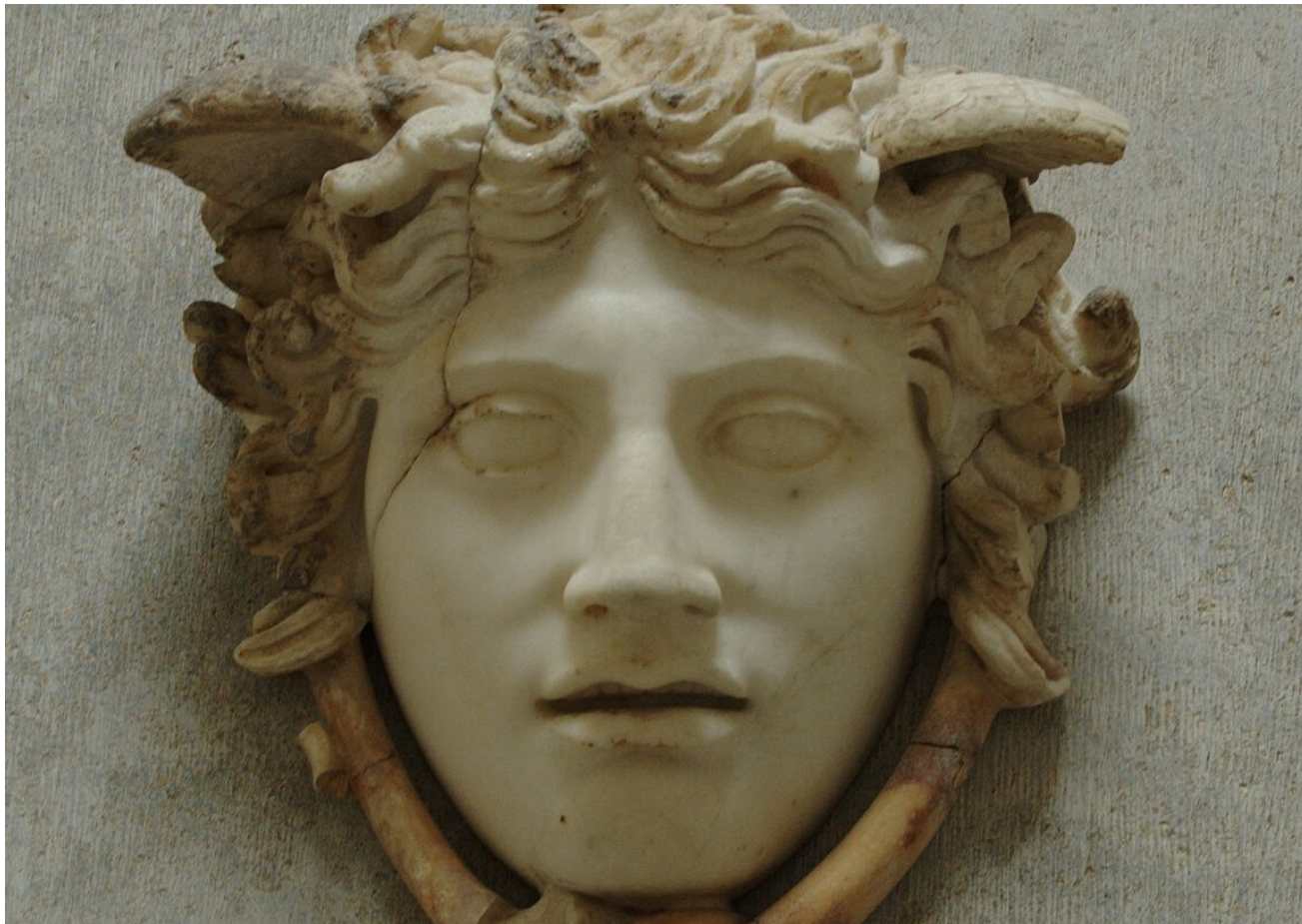
- Ashley Elston, PhD  
Associate Professor of Art History

Digital Booklet designed by:  
L. Abby Houston, MLIS  
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# BEAST TO BEAUTY: DEPICTIONS OF GORGONS IN GREEK ART

MEGAN HALL



Rondanini Medusa (Roman copy of Greek original), Glyptothek Munich. Image in the public domain from commons.wikimedia.org.

The Gorgon is one of the earliest figures in Greek art, appearing around the eighth-century B.C.E. Depending on the myth, the Gorgon is a born monster or a priestess cursed by Athena. She has a horrifying visage, with tusks for teeth, a head of scales, and eyes that petrifies to stone anyone who looks her in the face. With a long history, some iconographic changes are bound to present themselves. Still, the Gorgon, as a figure in the Hellenistic period of Greek art, is completely divorced in appearance and attributes from the Gorgon of the Archaic period.

In some 400 years between the introduction of the Gorgon in the late Geometric/early Archaic period and the beautiful Gorgon in the Classical

and Hellenistic periods, she loses her beard, fangs, wings, snarl, and open gaze. This change has been explained as a natural consequence of shifting stylistic preferences from early to late Greek art. This paper argues that the later depiction of the Gorgon is deliberately constructed to limit her power as a figure. The Gorgon is often considered a powerful figure. Her construction not only changes to be less threatening but also less masculine. She loses her fangs, but also her beard. In this way, she is being created as more feminine, less powerful, one and the same. This paper engages the idea that the treatment of her features cannot be adequately explained as a stylistic shift, but also incorporates an aim to limit the power of the Gorgon.

# IMPERIAL ART OF THE BYZANTINE PERIOD: THE DIFFERENCES AND DEVELOPMENT OF POWER STRUCTURES WITH REGARDS TO GENDER

MADELINE AVERETTE



Imperial art of the Byzantine Empire (5th to 12th century) contains many depictions of powerful women, all of which share qualities that draw the viewer in. Interested in what this iconography tells us about class and gender during this period, this paper looks at a few examples of Imperial artworks depicting specific women, Empress Theodora and Empress Eirene, as well as some general empress forms on counterweights and seals. Images of Imperial women, specifically Empresses, reflect a significant social and political role for women. This paper explores how the images reflect the structures that were in place during that time and how they changed over the span of a few centuries. We see a clear indication that these women had a substantial amount of power, and we can see how that power changes through the art that is produced and the choices made by both artist and patron.

In a series of case studies, the paper suggests that Imperial images reflect to the public a significant role for women, one that changes over time to become even more powerful. Before the sixth century, the empress was best portrayed through personifications or allegories of victory, or as a symbol of motherhood. The empress was shown in a generalized form, as images on objects like counterweights demonstrate. Then we start to see some changes with iconography, as the empress's depiction started to show some attributes that originally were considered masculine and reserved for the emperor. As we move towards the late centuries of the Byzantine Empire, we see representations of the empress become super individualized as well as breaking traditions that have been in place for centuries.

Left: Weight in the Shape of a Byzantine Empress, 5th century CE, Metropolitan Museum of Art.  
Above: Empress Irene mosaic, c. 1118, Hagia Sofia, Istanbul.  
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# CURIOUS CHRISTMAS CARDS: FESTIVE VICTORIAN ANOMALIES

MAGENTA PALO



Victorian Christmas Card, Nova Scotia Archives, Flickr. No known copyright restrictions from commons.wikimedia.org.

Before the contemporary phenomenon that is sending and receiving jovial Christmas cards, Victorians sent postcards that depicted horrific images of dead birds, anthropomorphized vegetables, and murderous frogs to wish loved ones a joyous holiday season. This paper proposes that this unexpected subset of Victorian era Christmas cards reflected evolving holiday and societal values within the United Kingdom from the 1860s through the 1890s as subjects of Queen Victoria attempted to establish firm and unique cultural Christmas traditions and iconography. Influences of the reign of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, as well as the economic and technological implications of the Industrial Revolution, shifted the values of British society.

This paper uses historical period analysis, understandings of Victorian humor and symbolism, and insight about the transition of Christmas into a consumerist

holiday to chart the material and visual evolution of Christmas cards. By mining this perspective, this paper argues that these bizarre cards were used as warm and comical Christmas greetings. Although today's viewers would regard these cards as horrifying, tasteless, or inappropriate, an understanding of contextual factors brings more accurate appraisals of these visual anomalies. Many of these Victorian cards focus on the natural world, with depictions of the human condition, and personified combinations and interactions with animals, plants, and insects. Often there is a communication of death or danger accompanied by friendly and delicately written well wishes for one's holiday season. To a contemporary viewer, these cards send mixed messages, however, in Victorian times, they had great social value and reflected that society's increased curiosity in regards to the natural world, spirituality, and symbolism.



# THE FUTURE OF MANGA IN THE ERA OF DIGITIZATION

RACHAEL LEZCANO PEREZ

A manga store in Japan, 2004. GNU Free Documentation License, CC BY-SA 3.0 from commons.wikimedia.org. No changes made.

Since their humble beginnings, manga have served the purpose of providing entertainment and being a form of expression that thrives off of satire. Manga, an art tradition surfacing since the 12th century, are visual narratives or graphic comics commonly produced in Japan, and the long-standing tradition of manga publication remains mainly in print form. Through clever story-telling and humorous illustrations, manga became the media where citizens could express their grievances and dissatisfaction of the state authorities. Even in the present era of rising technologies, print publications are the most common form of manga publications as the publishing industry depends on wholesale distributors and 73% of international copy-right related trade in Japanese books comes from comics compared to the 20% that derives from books.

Visual narratives exported internationally via print or digital publication continue to become more accessible, and Japanese manga faces the challenge of converging what has been a historically predominant print media into digital media. The rise of webtoons is used in this paper as a case study to further investigate how digital convergence will bring a considerable amount of change to the publication of manga. This paper questions whether the rise of webtoons will catalyze the modernization of manga publishing industries in the era of smartphones, instant connectivity, and emerging digital media and suggests that the aesthetic and publication traditions of manga will ultimately differentiate them from new technologies.

