

## Session SECAC (Birmingham, 17-20 Oct 18)

The University of Alabama at Birmingham, AL, USA, Oct 17-20, 2018

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Julie Codell, Arizona State University

Session at the Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC), University of Alabama at Birmingham, United States

"The Collector and Cultural Narratives, 1845-1918"

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From mid-19th century, a new kind of art history narrative about private collectors appeared in Europe and the US, e.g., Anna Jameson's *Companion to the Most Celebrated Private Galleries...*, 1844, Gustav Waagen's *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, 1854-57; Dumesnil's multi-volume *Histoire des plus célèbres amateurs...*, 1853-1860; the *Gazette de Beaux-Arts*'s series on "amateurs," 1850s; F. G. Stephens's 90 *Athenaeum* articles on British collectors, 1873-84; Edward Strahan's (pseud. Earl Shinn) *The Art Treasures of America* (1879-1882); Wilhelm Von Bode's catalogues of private collections, 1913. Oscar Vázquez contends that these books, "a creation of the modern era," reflected "new discourses" with "increased attention to...the collector over the collected object" (*Inventing the Art Collection*, 57-58).

Collectors shaped new contexts, audiences and interpretations for art, new reputations for artists, national roles for themselves, and art histories fueled by cultural ambitions. Examining the cultural impact of these studies, panelists may consider questions such as (but not limited to): How were art's social and cultural functions defined by narratives about collectors? How did these narratives shape collectors' images? Did these narratives revise 18th-c. images of collectors? Did narratives about collectors inflect notions of the modern? Of tradition? Did studies of aristocratic collectors endorse cultural hierarchies? Did collector narratives privilege local, national, and/or global cultural ambitions?

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