

FACULTY ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY (FEO) APPLICATION

DUE March 20, 2009

Name (last, first): Victoria L. Rovine

UF ID: _____

Type of Appointment (check): tenured tenure-track
 clinical other (_____)

Date of Appointment to UF Faculty (month/year): 01/2005

Date Tenure Awarded, if applicable, (month/year): currently in t&p process

College: Liberal Arts and Sciences/Fine Arts (joint appointment)

Department: Center for African Studies/School of Art and Art History

Total Central FEO Funds Requested: _____

Total College/Department Funds to be Provided: _____

Any Other Funds to be Applied, if applicable: _____ (_____)

GRAND TOTAL FOR FEO: _____

ABSTRACT: (Provide **one** paragraph describing your proposed FEO project in a way that can be understood by colleagues outside your discipline, alumni, and educated members of the general public.

I am requesting support for research in Mali this summer, to continue a project that has borne substantial fruit in the past year. Last summer, I made my first research trip to Timbuktu (though I had been there several times for short visits). I accomplished a good deal, leading to a conference paper on the region's distinctive embroidery that was very well received, and I laid the groundwork for the research I plan to do this summer. This research is focused on the embroidery of the Inland Niger Delta region, an important art form with a rich history and deep cultural significance. My work this summer would enable me to realize two short term goals, and it will contribute directly to my long term book project. The short term goals include co-authoring an article with one of the artists I have worked with in Timbuktu, and planning a Samuel P.Harn Museum of Art exhibition on a specific type of visually engaging Malian embroidery that has not previously been the focus of academic study.

Please submit a two page *curriculum vitae* / resume with your application.

GOALS FOR FEO:

(List 3 to 5 succinct goals)

--Continue the research on changing styles of embroidery initiated last summer in Timbuktu (Mali). This research will be incorporated into one chapter of my book-in-progress on African fashion design and African dress as fashion.

--Co-author an article on contemporary embroidery in Timbuktu with Mr. Baba Djitteye, embroiderer and founder of the Atelier Conservatoire du Tilbi (the workshop to preserve Timbuktu's Tilbi style of embroidery). The article will be submitted to the journal *Textile*. A shortened, French version of the article will be submitted to the Malian magazine *Coura*, a new culture and fashion publication whose editorial staff I met with last summer. This publication will give local audiences access to the work.

--After last summer's research, I made an initial proposal for an exhibition at the Harn Museum on a specific type of Malian embroidery. Dr. Rebecca Nagy, director of the Harn, has written a letter endorsing the exhibition, expressing her strong (if preliminary) interest in presenting the exhibition. My research this summer will contribute directly to the my final exhibition proposal.

FEO PLAN/ACTIVITIES/SCHEDULES:

(Describe in the space allotted on pp. 2-3 of this form; plan cannot exceed one calendar year.)

SCHEDULE:

--July 1 - 28, 2009: Travel to Mali (with stopover in Paris on return)

--July 2-6: Bamako [renew contacts at the Musee National and with artist/private collector

Kletigui Dembele, specialist in Malian textiles and jewelry; interview urban embroiderers]

--July 6-13: Timbuktu [work with Baba Djitteye and other embroiderers to document current styles and markets for embroidered garments in Timbuktu].

--July 14-17: Djenne [work with embroiderer Ousmane Traore]

--July 18- 22: Bamako [view embroidery in collections; interview urban embroiderers]

--July 23-28: Paris [stopover in order to view Malian embroidery in the collection of the Musee du Quai Branly, the leading French museum in the field of African art]

--July 30-August 20, 2009:

--Write draft of article on embroidery in Timbuktu, co-authored with Baba Djitteye, for submission to the journal *Textile*

--Assemble materials for formal exhibition proposal on Malian embroidery for submission to the Harn Museum of Art

PLAN/DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

I am requesting Faculty Enhancement Opportunity support for research in Mali this summer, to continue a project that has borne substantial fruit in the past year. My work this summer would enable me to realize two short term goals, and it will make a substantial contribution to the longer term book project of which this research is one facet. I propose to spend three weeks in Mali, primarily in the cities of Timbuktu and Bamako, with a short trip to Djenne, and four days in Paris. In each of these cities, I will gather information on historical and contemporary embroidery from the Inland Niger Delta region of Mali, home to Timbuktu and Djenne, two important early urban centers that have rich histories as centers of trans-Saharan trade and Islamic scholarship. Trade and scholarship are both intimately tied to the practice of embroidery, making this study particularly significant. Embroiderers have historically doubled as Koranic scholars, their embroidery motifs making visual or symbolic reference to Arabic calligraphy. For men and women, richly embroidered boubous (robes) are important symbols of status and social identity; in Timbuktu today, marriages are still dependent on a young man's ability to commission an elaborately embroidered boubou for his bride. These garments are symbols of regional and ethnic identity that call to mind histories of trade and prosperity.

FEO PLAN/ACTIVITIES/SCHEDULES: (Continued: page 2 of 2)

No longer trade centers, both Timbuktu and Djenne are today dependent on tourism, an industry that brings with it new markets for artists and new sources of inspiration. Tourism has also led to the development of speedily produced forms of embroidery in styles aimed at foreign tastes. In addition, many residents of the region have sought work in large urban centers in Mali and beyond, bringing with them on their return still more new influences, products, and skills. My research will explore how these diverse cultural forces have affected the work of embroiderers, practitioners of an art form with deep roots in the region.

In Timbuktu, I will investigate the current status of a style of embroidered garment known as a tilbi. The tilbi is an elaborate type of boubou, associated with the Timbuktu region and with the Songhai ethnic group. The style is exceptionally labor intensive, requiring weeks or months of work for a workshop of embroiderers. It had nearly fallen out of use, with no new embroiderers learning the techniques and motifs. Baba Djitteye, a young embroiderer from a family with a long history in the trade, has initiated efforts to document and preserve the style. He is an amateur historian and a leader in the regional artisans association. In short, he is an ideal collaborator. We plan to co-author an article on the contemporary production of tilbi and other forms of embroidery in Timbuktu, which I will submit to the journal *Textile*, a leading publication in the field of material culture studies. A shortened, French version of the article will be submitted to *Coura*, an impressive new culture and fashion magazine published in Bamako (the capital of Mali). I met with the magazine's editorial staff last summer and I can draw on those contacts to facilitate this project. Our *Coura* article will give local audiences access to the work. In addition, I believe it is important to collaborate with my colleagues in Mali and elsewhere in Africa, facilitating their access to publishing opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach.

In Djenne, I will investigate a different type of embroidery, known as "Ghana Boy" style. This embroidery is not stylistically rooted in longstanding regional practices, though it does reflect the importance of embroidery more broadly in the region. Instead, my initial research—and the very limited published information on the garments in this style—indicates that the Ghana Boy style was developed in the 1960s and 70s by young men from Djenne and the surrounding area. These young men were migrant laborers in Ghana. They were influenced by new materials (machine-spun thread in brilliant colors) and new imagery (including crowded urban streets, Anglophone African popular culture, and Bollywood movie posters). The tunics and other garments created in the Ghana Boy style feature figurative as well as abstract motifs, while the Tilbi of Timbuktu never incorporate figures (a reflection of the Islamic prohibition against the representation of human beings and animals). My research will use these garments to illuminate the region's history and its participation in networks of images, commodities, and labor.

Like the research on tilbi embroidery, this work on Ghana Boy garments will contribute directly to my book on African fashion. It will also have another important outcome. I am convinced that an exhibition of Ghana Boy tunics would make a valuable contribution to the field of African art history, and it would surprise and enthrall non-specialists as well. The cartoon-like figures, surrounded by cars and airplanes and other objects that fascinated the young Malian laborers, have a powerful visual impact. The abstract patterns and colorful pompoms that further adorn the garments are also beautiful and distinctive. I have identified a small number of Ghana Boy garments in public and private collections, and I will locate more as part of this research. I have prepared an initial exhibition proposal for Rebecca Nagy, director of the Harn Museum of Art. She and Susan Cooksey, the Harn's curator of African art, are very interested and have invited me to make a formal proposal. I will use my research this summer to create this full proposal, which I hope will lead to an exhibition at the Harn and several other institutions.

OUTCOMES OF FEO: (Remember that you will be asked to submit a report of your accomplishments at the conclusion of the FEO. Please prepare this section with that report in mind.)

A. List specific outcomes of this FEO related to your own professional growth and development.

--This research will lead to my first coauthored publication with an African collaborator. Such collaborative publications offer a means of combining my academic research with the valuable experience and insights of a practitioner of the art form that is my subject. For too many African scholars and artists, access to the international venues that shape academic discourse about African culture is limited at best.

--This summer's work in Mali and France will enable me to create a formal exhibition proposal for presentation to the Harn Museum of Art. The exhibition, tentatively titled "Fashion, Youth, and Travel: Embroidered Images of Modernity in Mali," will explore one garment style that challenges many preconceptions about African art.

--All of this summer's research, in Bamako, Timbuktu, Djenne, and Paris, will contribute to one chapter in my book on African fashion designers and African dress as fashion. I have published several articles and chapters in edited volumes on aspects of this large research project, so that I have much to work with as I reshape these topics into chapters. I will also write a chapter on embroidery in Mali as an example of a local fashion system, connected to but not dependent on Western fashion and popular culture. I hope to complete a draft of the entire manuscript by the end of summer 2010.

B. List specific benefits of this FEO to your department, college and/or the university overall.

--This research will directly enhance my teaching at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels. I will incorporate the information I will gather into my classes, including "Clothing and Textiles in Africa" (undergraduate), "Arts of West Africa" (undergraduate), "Contemporary African Art" (taught at both graduate and undergraduate levels), and "African Visual Culture" (graduate). In addition to the information I will assemble, I have found that the research experience itself enhances my teaching because each research trip enhances my understanding of contemporary African cultures.

--My proposed exhibition at the Harn Museum of Art will make an important contribution to the UF community. Harn exhibitions based on faculty research provide the public at large with insights into the research agendas of the university's faculty.

--My planned publication with embroiderer Baba Djitteye will enhance the reputation of my department and my college, demonstrating the engaged nature of faculty research in this area. If I am successful in placing a French version of our article in a Malian publication, the University of Florida name will reach entirely new audiences in West Africa.

--The book that will be the result of my large research project on African fashion's many contemporary manifestations will reflect well on the school, the college, and the university.

CHECK ONE: I agree (✓) or I do not agree () that my proposal (WITHOUT budget information), if successful, can be shared with others applying for FEOs.

Revise

FEO Application – Summer/Fall 2009
Page 7 of 7

CENTRALLY-FUNDED FEO APPROVAL FORM


1. CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OR COLLEGE SABBATICAL COMMITTEE OR EQUIVALENT:

TYPED NAME: Scott Nygren

SIGNATURE: 

2. DEPARTMENT CHAIR:

TYPED NAME: Leonardo Villalón

SIGNATURE: 

3. DEAN:

TYPED NAME: Paul D'Anieri

SIGNATURE: 

Victoria L. Rovine

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EDUCATION

- 1998 Ph.D., History of Art. Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 1991 M.A., History of Art. Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 1986 B.A., Art. Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2005- Assistant Professor, School of Art and Art History, Center for African Studies
 (joint appointment) University of Florida
 Summer 2006 Lecturer, Drew University, West Africa program in Mali (4 weeks)
 Winter 2006 Lecturer, Textile Museum Study Tour, Mali (2 weeks)
 1995-2004 Curator, Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas
 University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, Iowa
 2002-2004 Other appointments at University of Iowa
 2003-2004 Adjunct Faculty Appointment, Anthropology Department
 2002-2004 Director, African Studies Program University of Iowa
 2003-2004 Adjunct Assistant Professor of Museum Studies University of Iowa
 2003-2004 Adjunct Assistant Professor, International Studies University of Iowa
 1999-2002 Visiting Assistant Professor Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa
 1993-1995 Assistant Curator of African Art The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS

- 2009 Harn Eminent Scholar Chair in Art History Program, funding for visiting speakers \$6120
 2009 Pasold Research Fund Grant (British textile research council) £500 (\$750)
 2008 Center for African Studies, University of Florida Curriculum Development Award,
 \$2500 [For research in Timbuktu, Mali, summer 2008]
 2007 University of Florida International Educator of the Year, junior faculty category
 (Two awards per year, one senior and one junior faculty member)
 2007 College of Fine Arts International Educator of the Year, junior faculty category
 2007 College of Fine Arts Scholarship Enhancement Grant, \$4300
 [For research in South Africa, summer 2008]
 2007 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Humanities Enhancement Grant, \$7500
 [For research in Mali, summer 2008]
 2007 Center for European Studies, University of Florida Faculty Travel Grant \$750
 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Florida Faculty Travel Grant \$400
 [For conference travel to La Rochelle, France]
 2007 Harn Eminent Scholar Chair in Art History Program, funding for visiting speakers \$6200
 (John Picton, Professor Emeritus, School of Oriental and African Studies, London)
 2005 Gwendolyn M. Carter Faculty Fellowship, 2006-2007. Center for African Studies,
 University of Florida. Funding and course release to organize international symposium
 "African Visual Cultures: Crossing Disciplines, Crossing Regions" \$17,500

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**Books**

- 2008 *Bogolan: Shaping Culture Through Cloth in Contemporary Mali* Republished with new
 preface, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
 2001 *Bogolan: Shaping Culture Through Cloth in Contemporary Mali*
 Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Journals: Articles and Guest Editorship

- n.d. "Colonialism's Clothing: Africa, France, and the Deployment of Fashion," *Design Issues*. Forthcoming, 2009.
- 2009 Guest editor, *Fashion Theory*. Special issue on African fashion. 13 (2) (June).
- 2009 "Africa in Paris: Visual Cultures of the Early Twentieth Century." Review essay *African Arts*. 42 (2): 92-95.
- 2008 "Couturiers: L'Afrique est une muse," *Courrier International*. #905 (March 6-12): 6-7.
- 2006 "Mode africaine: réseaux mondiaux, styles locaux," *Africultures* volume 69: 104-109.

Book and Catalogue Chapters

- n.d. "Waving to the Lion: Western Designers, African Style," in *The Art of African Fashion*. Edited by Els van der Plas. The Hague: Prince Claus Fund and New York: Thames and Hudson. Forthcoming, 2009.
- n.d. "African Fashion: Design, Identity, and History," in *Contemporary African Fashion*. Edited by Suzanne Gott and Kristyne Loughran Bini. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press. Forthcoming, 2009.
- 2007 "Handmade Textiles: Manufacturing African Authenticity," in *Dress Sense: Emotional and Sensory Experiences of the Body and Clothes*. Edited by Donald Johnson and Helen Bradley Foster. London: Berg Press. pp. 133-144.
- 2005 "A Meditation on Meanings: African Fashions, Global Traditions," in *Mode in Afrika: Mode Als Mittel der Selbstinszenierung und Ausdruck der Moderne*. Edited by Ilsemargret Luttmann. Hamburg: Museum für Völkerkunde. pp. 128-136.
- 2004 "Fashionable Traditions: The Globalization of an African Textile," in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*. Edited by Jean Allman. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press. pp. 189-211.
- 2004 "Working the Edge: XULY.Bèt's Recycled Clothing," in *Old Clothes, New Looks: Second-hand Fashion*. Edited by Alexandra Palmer and Hazel Clark. Oxford, Great Britain: Berg Press. pp. 215-228.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

- 2009 "Strangelove: Social Action through Fashion in South Africa," Dress, Popular Culture and Social Action in Africa (Symposium marking 60th anniversary of African Studies Program), Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois
- 2009 Panel co-chair and discussant, "Clothing, Flesh, Bone: Visual Culture Above and Below the Skin," (double panel) College Art Association, Los Angeles, California.
- 2008 "Fashion, Youth, and Travel: Embroidered Images of Modernity in Mali," American Anthropological Association, San Francisco, California.
- 2007 Panel discussant, "In and Out of Fashion? Politics of Dress and Style in Africa," African Studies Association, New York, New York.
- 2007 Panel organizer and chair, "The Uses of Tradition," Triennial Symposium on African Art, Gainesville, Florida.
- 2007 "La Mode Africaine: Early 20th Century Exchanges via Fashion," French Colonial Historical Society, La Rochelle, France.
- 2007 Paper co-author (with Florence Babb) "Heritage Recycled: Objects, Identities, and South African Tourism," Triennial Symposium on African Art, Gainesville, Florida.
- 2006 "Fashion and Authenticity: Inventing African Style," African Studies Association, San Francisco, California.
- 2006 "African Styles/Colonial Categories: Expositions and Other Encounters," College Art Association, Boston.
- 2005 "Indigenous/International: Contemporary South African Fashion," Dress in Southern Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzberg, South Africa.
- 2005 "The Texture of the Handmade: Manufacturing an Authentic Africa through Dress," Senses and Sentiments of Dress (Symposium in honor of Dr. Joanne Eicher) University of Minnesota, Minneapolis/Saint Paul.