Sotheby Institute of Art Research Award Committee

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Report Text The Sotheby Institute of Art Research Award committee again selected a winning contribution to be presented at the 2018 Annual meeting.

This year’s committee comprised Anne Trenholme, Cleveland Institute of Art (new); Meg Black, Minneapolis Institute of Art (new); Amelia Nelson, Nelson-Atkins Museum (new), Cara List, Northwestern University (returning) and myself as chair, succeeding Samantha Deutch. Several changes to the procedure were made this year. The committee changed the deadline for submission to December 15th (from November) in order to qualify papers written this academic semester. Sotheby’s elected to convert all publicity to electronic instead of printing and mailing a department poster. Outreach was increased to listserves for economics faculty provenance researchers in addition to the ARLIS-L. The award was announced in the fall and members routinely reminded through periodic listserv emails. Despite this increase publicity only three submissions met the requirement for consideration at the deadline. All three, however, came from schools with strong academic programs in art market analysis.

The winning paper was one written by two students from Duke University examining the Berlin art market during the years leading up to and including World War II. I recused myself from reading this paper until the unanimous decision to accept this paper was received. One and perhaps both students will attend the conference to receive the award and participate in the “New Voices in the Profession.” The students are submitting the paper to Art Documentation.

Future & Challenges. This is the final year of the three-year trial of the Sotheby award. The relatively poor submittal rate may have been the lack of physical departmental postings—electronic announcements tend not to be printed and posted as much as ready-made fliers. The award has also remained unclear as to who may apply; though open to graduate students, the emphasis is for undergraduates. Several international graduate-student papers were lost through this ambiguity. As renewal of the excellent award is uncertain, I suggest the Board affirm the award’s value and espouse broader publicity (both traditional and new) to the award.

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