

## UAAC AWARDS 2022

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# UAAC AWARDS 2022

## UAAC Recognition Award 2022

It is an honour to present the UAAC Recognition Award to long-time UAAC member **Dr. Joan Coutu**, from the University of Waterloo.

Joan Coutu's research concentrates on the built environment at the bookends of the British Empire: in eighteenth-century Britain and its colonies, and in Canada in the early Commonwealth era. Her focus is on monuments, buildings, sculpture, and park design, and their relationship with politics, time, and identity. She has published extensively on eighteenth-century British visual culture, notably *Then and Now: Collecting and Classicism in Eighteenth-century England* (2015) and *Persuasion and Propaganda: Monuments and the Eighteenth-century British Empire* (2006), and co-edited (with Jon Stobart and Peter Lindfield), *Politics and the English Country House, 1688–1800* (2023), all published by McGill-Queen's University Press. She is currently editing (with David Galbraith), *Utopia and Hubris: Classicism in Canada, ca. 1900–1950*. Joan teaches Visual Culture and Art History courses in Fine Arts at the University of Waterloo and is the former coordinator of the interdisciplinary program in Visual Culture (1996–2022), based in Fine Arts. She also organizes and teaches several course trips—to Rome, Venice, England, Berlin, etc.—and is actively involved in the MFA program as a co-supervisor. Originally from Toronto, Joan graduated with a BA from the University of Toronto, an MA from Queen's University, Kingston, and a PhD from University College, London (England), all in the History of Art. She joined the Department of Fine Arts in 1996.

## Lifetime Achievement Award

The 2022 UAAC Lifetime Achievement Award has been presented to **Dr. Ruth Phillips**.

The UAAC Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to a senior scholar who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession over the whole of a career either through leadership, creation, education, curatorial projects, service, or publications. In the case of my colleague Ruth Phillips, it is not “either/or” but “all/and.” Ruth has been a leader in educational initiatives, curatorial projects, service, and publications. I'll highlight some of her many, many accomplishments.

Her publications are well known. *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900* (McGill-Queen's UP, 1998) is a ground-breaking study that questioned art-historical norms by taking tourist art seriously and by showing how post-contact construction of Indigenous identity was affected by specific transactions between Indigenous peoples and settlers. *Native North American Art* (Oxford UP, 1998, rev ed. 2014), co-written with Janet Berlo, is a standard textbook for university courses on North American Indigenous Art. *Museum Pieces: Towards the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (McGill-Queen's UP, 2010) was awarded the Donner Prize and an Ottawa Book Award. Ruth has published approximately 100 articles in edited volumes, journals, and exhibition catalogue on a wide range of topics from twentieth-century and contemporary artists like Norval Morrisseau and Rosalie Favell to the relation between Art History and Anthropology. Ruth has also co-edited a series of books on colonialism, museums,

Indigenous art, and other modernisms. These publications, as well as the conferences she has co-organized, are an important part of Ruth's dedication to collaborative work. While Ruth is well-known for her work on Indigenous art, she is also a scholar of African art. Her PhD thesis from the University of London, published by the Museum of the University of California is 1979, is titled *Representing Woman: Sande Society Masks of the Mende of Sierra Leone*.

When Ruth began her teaching career in the late 1970s at Carleton University, she gradually transitioned away from African art and created new classes on Indigenous arts of North America. In the 1980s, Carleton was one of only a few universities in Canada to teach Indigenous art. In comparison, today there are now more than twenty tenured or tenure-track professors of Indigenous visual art history or theory in Canadian universities. This area of study has developed into a vibrant and growing field, and Ruth helped to produce this change through her scholarship, her engagement with Indigenous communities, and her training of students, Indigenous and settler. In 1997, Ruth moved from Ottawa to Vancouver to serve as Director of the Museum of Anthropology and Professor of Art History at UBC. During her time at UBC, in addition to teaching courses and running a museum, she led a fundraising campaign that raised close to \$35 million for a new facility for collaborative research at the museum.

In 2003, Ruth returned to Carleton as Canada Research Chair in Modern Culture. At that time, she received grants from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Innovation Fund to help build a new home for Carleton's Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art, and Culture, which houses the interdisciplinary PhD program in Cultural Mediations. The Institute also houses The Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts & Cultures (GRASAC), which Ruth initiated in 2005. Working with museums around the world, GRASAC members, which include settler and Indigenous scholars as well as Indigenous elders and knowledge-keepers,

have developed a web-accessible database for multi-disciplinary research into Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat cultures of the Great Lakes region. GRASAC is now housed at the University of Toronto. Through GRASAC and the Cultural Mediations PhD program at Carleton, Ruth trained a great number of PhD students, who have continued her pathbreaking work.

To list just a few more of Ruth's accomplishments: she was President of the Comité international de l'histoire de l'art (CIHA) from 2004 to 2008; she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2007; and in 2021 she was awarded a Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts Medal. In addition to these awards, Ruth has also held visiting professorships at Harvard, Cambridge, the Australian National University, and Yale, and she has served as advisor or consultant to many institutions, including the Acquisitions Committee of the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian History Hall project at the Canadian Museum of History, the Canadian Curatorial Committee at the AGO, and the Anishnaabe committee at the National Museum of the American Indian.

There's so much more to say about Ruth's career, including her curatorial work, her membership on a host of journal advisory boards, her projects on other modernisms, but I would like to conclude on a more personal note. I got to know Ruth and her husband, historian Mark Phillips, when they returned to Carleton in 2003. I had just started working at Carleton, and Ruth was (and still is) a model and mentor to me. I have admired her insightful and careful comments in departmental meetings, her patience with her students, her contagious curiosity, and her incredible work ethic. Yet with all her industriousness, what has always impressed me most about Ruth is simply her sense of humanity, specifically, how she always treats others with great respect and how dedicated she is to take care of those around her. It is a great honour for me to present Ruth Phillips with the 2022 UAAC Lifetime Achievement Award.

*Mitchell B. Frank*  
Associate Professor; Director, School for Studies in Art and Culture  
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Award for the Advancement of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

The UAAC-AAUC Award for the Advancement of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (established in 2022) is intended to recognize and celebrate the achievements of those whose work in our fields foster change and build an equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible community in Canada. The outputs of such work may look like many things, such as: building more inclusive, equitable, diverse, and accessible practices and working environments; increasing diverse representation; promoting research and insights relating to Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility; leadership and engagement in addressing systemic inequality. The inaugural recipient is **Dr. Alice Ming Wai Jim**, Professor of Contemporary Art in the Department of Art History at Concordia University in Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal, and the Concordia University Research Chair in Ethnocultural Art Histories (2017–2022).

An art historian and curator, her research on diasporic art in Canada and contemporary Asian art has generated new dialogues within and between ethnocultural and global art histories, critical race theory, media arts, and curatorial studies. Focusing primarily on contemporary Asian Canadian and Black Canadian artists, Jim has curated exhibitions of over sixty artists of colour and Indigenous artists and organized major scholarly events within academic settings and for the broader arts community in Canada and internationally. She has also been involved in a leadership capacity in several formal partnerships involving international networking and community building initiatives, with a strong commitment to research and social justice.

Through the establishment of research groups, journals, and long-term research projects, Jim has been foundational to building new platforms, supports, and resources advancing Asian Canadian and Black Canadian art histories and strengthening networks for collaboration between researchers, artists, and curators. She is founding co-editor-in-chief (with Alexandra Chang) of the journal *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures*

and the Americas, the first academic journal to focus on scholarship at the intersections of visual culture studies and the study of Asian diaspora in the Americas. At Concordia, Jim founded EAHR (the student-driven Ethnocultural Art Histories Research Group) in 2011 and is co-founding member of the EAHR|Media Working Group 2019–2022, and the *South South: Critiques of Global South Working Group* 2022–2024, both in affiliation with the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture (CISSC) at Concordia. Jim is a member of the College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists of the Royal Society of Canada and served as a board member of the College Art Association from 2017–2021. In 2015, she was the recipient of the Artexite Prize for Research in Contemporary Art, and she received a Concordia Academic Leadership Award in 2022.

A core scholar of the NYU Global Asia/Pacific Art Exchange (GAX) since 2014, Jim co-convened *GAX 2019 Tiohtiá:ke (Montreal): Asian Indigenous Relations in Contemporary Art*, which brought together sixty Asian diasporic and Indigenous researchers, artists, and students from Samoa, Hawaii, Australia, and across Canada and the US to consider the theme of “curating hospitality” in relation to care discourses in contemporary art, research that has continued into *GAX 2022 Venice*. She is currently a co-investigator of the SSHRC Trans-Atlantic Platform: Social Innovation and FQRSC-funded project (Montreal Team), *Worlding Public Cultures* (2020–2023), with international academies in Ottawa, Amsterdam, London, Heidelberg/Berlin, and Montreal, and a collaborator on the SSHRC Partnership Grant project, *Thinking Through the Museum: A Partnership Approach to Curating Difficult Knowledge in Public* (2021–2028), in the Critical Race Museology Cluster. Jim’s current SSHRC-funded research project, *Afrofuturism and Black Lives Matter in the Canadian Art Scene*, is part of a larger examination of the convergence of Indigenous and Afro-Asian futurism in contemporary art.

Jim’s written scholarship is similarly expansive and prolific: her writings have been included in *Third Text*, *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, *Journal of Visual*

*Culture*, *Amerasia Journal*, *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, and *Yishu Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*. She has chapters in numerous books including *Precarious Visualities: New Perspectives on Identification in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture* (2008), *Reel Asian: Asian Canada on Screen* (2007), *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Chinese Culture* (2005), *Racism, Eh? A Critical Inter-Disciplinary Anthology of Race and Racism in Canada* (2004), *Towards an African Canadian Art History: Art, Memory, and Resistance* (2018), *Encountering Strangers Within: Race, Diaspora, and Nation in Asian Canada* (2017), *Negotiations in a Vacant Lot: Studying the Visual in Canada* (2014), *Desire/Change: Contemporary Feminist Art in Canada* (2017), and *Narratives Unfolding: National Art Histories in an Unfinished World*. (2017). She co-edited, with Marie Fraser, the Fall 2018 RACAR issue, “What is Critical Curating?” that featured an unprecedented number of contributors of colour for the UAAC journal.

Jim’s pedagogical contributions and innovations are also immense, which I can attest to as her former student and TA at Concordia University, where I witnessed and learned from Jim’s nimble subversions and rejections of dominant Western canonical frameworks for teaching art history and, since then, watching admiring from afar at her work engaging and empowering students in early stages of their training. As a teacher and now senior colleague of mine, Jim has been an invaluable and generous interlocutor, sharing with me strategies for structural change, outlining and mapping for me the various steps, from the grassroots and through bureaucratic circuits, patiently undertaken and relentlessly pursued, to arrive at a place where that change is felt within our institutions. Jim has also generously engaged with members of the UAAC Board, helping us to see how we, too, may make such change within our organization. ¶

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