

Meredith, Hallie G., Robert Hamilton, and Andrew Hershberger. 2024. Making Technical Art History Accessible: Stories from the Summer Teachers Institute in Technical Art History (STITAH). *Materia: Journal of Technical Art History*. Special issue, *Interdisciplinary Research: Benefits and Challenges*, vol. 4 (May): IV.1-23. https://issue-4.materiajournal.com/essay_meredith-et-al/

IV

Making Technical Art History Accessible: Stories from the Summer Teachers Institute in Technical Art History (STITAH)

Hallie G. Meredith
Robert Hamilton
Andrew Hershberger

PROLOGUE

Part of our vision at *Materia* is to highlight ways that technical art history can engage a broader audience in the study of cultural heritage. Discussions, and/or hands-on experiences, exploring how an object was made, the materials it was made from, how it may have altered over time, or the physical signs of use are highly impactful ways to attract diverse audiences through a shared connection to materiality. Due to the relatively high costs of performing technical art history, however, this area of study has historically been relegated to well-resourced institutions. Consequently, the objects studied are generally those by already well-researched artists. Sharing and engaging scholars from a wider range of institutions and backgrounds is critical to bridging this resource and scholarship gap.

The following is the record of a conversation prompted by questions from *Materia* editors to three professors who participated in Yale's 2022 Summer Teaching Institute in Technical Art History (STITAH), a program designed to introduce faculty in art history, conservation science, and studio art to the material study of art. Hallie G. Meredith is assistant professor of art history at Washington State University in Pullman. Robert Hamilton is senior instructor in art and visual culture at Spelman College in Atlanta. Andrew Hershberger is professor of art history at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. This conversation shares their reflections on how they have incorporated what they learned at STITAH into their teaching and demonstrates the impact and value of engaging educators as collaborators and community partners in our endeavors.