

Gray Sweeney

COURSES TAUGHT:

- Visual Culture Studies
- Mapping Art Degrees/Making Markets
- Packaging Norman Rockwell (at the Phoenix Art Museum)
- Art and Cultural Activism
- Theories of Visual Culture
- History and Theories of Art Museums
- African-American Art History: A Critical Intervention
- Iconology, Ideology, and Semiotics (team taught with Corine Schleif)
- Research Methodologies: The Practice, History, and Theory of Art History
- Critical Issues in American Painting: Race, Gender and Violence in Western American Art

Professor Sweeney lectures widely at museums and universities in this country and in Europe. He lives with his wife, Glenda Folk, a figure painter and fine arts teacher in Scottsdale

Sweeney completed a monograph, **Gilbert Munger: Quest for Distinction**, with leading Microsoft computer scientist Michael D. Schroeder, for the Afton Historical Society Press & The University of Minnesota's Tweed Museum of Art in 2003. The monograph and traveling exhibition were supported by a \$50,000 grant from the Luce Foundation with a \$50,000 match from the Tweed Foundation and over \$200,000 in private subvention for the color monograph publication. Sweeney discovered Gilbert Munger, who was unknown to art historians in 1981. A catalogue *raisonne* and data archive on the artist is available online at GilbertMunger.org. Sweeney also coauthored a summary article in the prestigious *The Magazine Antiques* (July 2005) with Schroeder. Munger's work was featured on the magazine's cover.

In 2003, he completed a ground-breaking 20-year study of the historiography of Luminism in an article entitled **Inventing Luminism: Labels are the Dickens** for the *Oxford Art Journal*. Based largely on original archival research, Sweeney discovered the actual source of the popular term and analyzed its subsequent rise and fall.

In conjunction with a former graduate student, Pamela Belanger, Sweeney coauthored and contributed to a major exhibition, **Inventing Acadia: Artists and Tourists at Mount Desert**, distributed by University Press of New England for The Farnsworth Art Museum. His essay "An 'Indomitable Explorative Enterprise': Inventing National Parks," capstoned studies Sweeney began with his dissertation, "Artist — Explorers of the American

West,” which he completed at Indiana University in 1975. The project was supported by a \$150,000 grant from the Luce Foundation, with matching funds from the Farnsworth Art Museum and the state of Maine. **Beyond the Mississippi, 19th-Century Views of the West** is an exhibition catalogue Sweeney produced for the Federal Reserve Headquarters, Washington, D. C., in 1998.

In 1997, he wrote and guest curated **McEntee and Company** for the renowned Beacon Hill Fine Arts Gallery, New York. The exhibition was favorably reviewed by the New York Times. Sweeney’s study is the first and only study of McEntee, a major New York chronicler and artist of the Hudson River School. Sweeney served as guest curator, principal author, and editor of five accompanying essays for the Albuquerque Museum exhibition, **Drawing the Borderline: Artist — Explorers of the U. S.-Mexico Boundary Survey**. The study was the first to definitively explore the first paintings of Southwest and Arizona borderline following the Mexican War. The multi-author catalogue was distributed by the University of New Mexico Press in 1996, and cost over \$150,000 to produce. He contributed several major entries for **A Gallery of Modern Art** at Washington University in St. Louis on Frederic Ewing Church, George Caleb Bingham, Asher B. Durand, and Sanford R. Gifford. It was published by Washington University Gallery of Art in 1994.

A major study, **The Advantages of Genius and Virtue: Thomas Cole's Influence, 1848-1876**, summarized more than 20 years of research and critical thinking. It is one of four essays in the exhibition catalogue, *Thomas Cole and the Course of American Empire*, produced at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and traveling to the Wadsworth Athenaeum, and The New York Historical Society in 1994. The book was published by Yale University Press.

One of his most noted single-author studies is **The Columbus of the Woods: Daniel Boone and the Typology of Manifest Destiny**, exhibition catalogue for the Columbian Quincentennial at the Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis, 1992. It is distributed by The University of Washington Press, 1992. The study and exhibition cost over \$100,000. In the early 1990s, he had the good fortune to discover a major, never before known work by the African American painter Henry O. Tanner, which was subsequently purchased by Yale University. Sweeney’s essay, **The Rediscovery of Henry Ossawa Tanner's Lost Masterpiece: Spinning by Firelight — The Boyhood of George Washington Gray, 1894**, contributed to the art historical understanding of this lost “masterpiece.” Sweeney contributed to Robert Mugerauer’s **American Nature as Paradise:**

Hermeneutic Retrieval, in *Interpreting Environments: Tradition, Deconstruction, Hermeneutics*, University of Texas Press, 1996.

In 1991, Sweeney authored **Masterpieces of Western American Art**, a 240-page oversized book published by Bantam/Doubleday/Dell interpreting 125 masterworks of Western American art, all are reproduced in color; the first edition of 25,000 copies quickly sold out and a second revised Edition of 20,000 copies appeared in 1996 published by Random House. The publication cost around \$250,000.

One of Sweeney's most often cited articles, "**Racism, Nationalism and Nostalgia in Cowboy Art**," was published by the prestigious *Oxford Art Journal* (Special American issue), Winter 1992, and reprinted in *Race-ing Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Kymberly N. Pindar, Routledge, 2002.

"**A 'Very Peculiar' Painting: Martin Johnson Heade's *Thunderstorm Over Narragansett Bay***," is an interpretative study of Heade's luminous masterpiece published in *Archives of American Art Journal*, Summer 1990. One of Sweeney's many critical book reviews was published in the same issue on Franklin Kelly's *Frederic Edwin Church and the National Landscape* and Kelly's *Frederic Edwin Church*. Sweeney contributed a large number of entries to the collection catalogue, **American Painting: The Detroit Institute of Arts** for the Detroit Institute of Arts, Hudson Hills Press, 1990.

One of Professor Sweeney's seminal articles, "**The Nude of Landscape Painting': Emblematic Personification in the Art of the Hudson River School**," published in *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, Oxford University Press, Winter 1989. In 1989, Sweeney authored **Adventures West: Fifty Masterworks from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame Museum**, an exhibition catalogue for the Albuquerque Museum, featuring 50 works from the collection.

In 1980, Sweeney discovered Frederic Edwin Church's memorial painting, *To the Memory of Cole*. The painting was completely unknown to art historians, and in 1988, Sweeney published "**Endued with Rare Genius': Frederic Edwin Church's To the Memory of Cole**," in *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, Oxford University Press, Winter 1988. This article established that Church's painting preceded Asher B. Durand's better known *Kindred Spirits*, and decisively influenced it. In 1999, Sweeney was gratified to learn that his scholarship validated the cultural importance of Church's picture when it was sold at Sotheby's to a major Seattle collector for over \$5.5 million.