

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Christiane J. Gruber, associate professor of history of art, with tenure, Department of the History of Art, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Islamic art, with tenure, Department of the History of Art, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2005	University of Pennsylvania
M.A.	2001	University of Pennsylvania
B.A.	1998	Princeton University

Professional Record:

2011 – present	Associate Professor, Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan
2005 – 2011	Assistant Professor, Department of Art History and Department of International Studies, Adjunct Professor, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, and Adjunct Professor, Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Gruber is a superlative undergraduate teacher, who is deeply responsible to her students and imaginative. Her regularly taught courses, “Visual Culture of Islam” and “Sacred Places,” introducing undergraduates to important issues of our time, receive high praise from student course evaluations. Undergraduate students regard her as a consummate lecturer and admire her ability to generate a sense of community in the classroom. Professor Gruber is also an extraordinarily effective mentor to graduate students in History of Art and in cognate disciplines alike. She is known for giving clear guidance and for enabling students to develop essential skills – helping them find opportunities to learn languages, travel, meet future colleagues, deliver papers, and participate in projects, including exhibitions.

Research – A prominent figure in Islamic art, with a major national and international reputation, Professor Gruber is an astonishingly productive scholar and an effective collaborator in large-scale, interdisciplinary projects. Since her arrival at Michigan in 2011, she has completed a major book on a topical theme (The Praiseworthy One) and published six edited volumes (three co-edited), two co-authored catalogues, twelve peer-reviewed journal articles, eighteen essays in edited volumes, and many encyclopedia articles and reviews. She has also written opinion pieces in the popular press (seven pieces in *Newsweek* alone) and given a good number of interviews (NPR, BBC, *The Guardian*, *Huffington Post*, *Slate*, etc.), increasingly assuming the role of public intellectual. Professor Gruber has certainly established herself as one of the most prominent figures of her generation in her field. The significance of her scholarly work was recently recognized with the award of a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship (2015-2016).

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Praiseworthy One: The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images, Indiana University Press, forthcoming spring 2018.

“Prophetic products: Muhammad in contemporary Iranian visual culture,” *Material Religion*, 12(3), 2016, pp. 259-293.

“Signs of the hour: Eschatological imagery in Islamic book arts,” *Ars Orientalis*, special volume on “Arts of Death in Asia,” M. Belli, ed., 44, 2014, pp. 40-60.

The Ilkhanid Book of Ascension: A Persian-Sunni Devotional Tale, I.B. Tauris and British Institute for Persian Studies, 2010. Honorable mention, 2011 Middle East Book Prize.

Service – Professor Gruber has actively served the department, college, and her field in many capacities. Her service activities for the department have been especially focused on the graduate program, where she served as the director of graduate studies and an ex officio member of the Executive Committee. She has been active on the college’s steering committees supporting Islamic studies. Nationally and internationally, she has sat on innumerable advisory panels, editorial boards, and grant-giving committees, making decisions about the future of the field.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“In her endeavor to move her expertise beyond pure scholasticism, Prof. Gruber offers a paradigm that is inspirational to the new generation of Islamic art historians that is currently being educated. ...I find the work compelling and of a very high quality.”

Reviewer (B)

“Christiane Gruber is one of the most energetic and prolific scholars in the arts of the Islamic world. Apart from her impressive number of articles and books, she has organized several exhibitions and has collaborated on a number of print and online catalogues. ...Gruber is recognized both nationally and internationally.”

Reviewer (C)

“In the field of historians of Islamic art—a field that has expanded steadily and significantly since the days of Grabar and Ettinghausen in the 1960s—[Gruber] ranks at the very top of the associate professor tier and—if Michigan promotes her—will fit securely in the ranks of the full professors. Her work is widely respected... ..in my estimation, [Gruber] is a prolific, important, and outstanding scholar who has emerged as one of the leaders in the field of Islamic art history.”

Reviewer (D)

“...[Gruber] is that rare scholar who imaginatively and persuasively is charting a historiography of Islamic art that renders it appreciable and comprehensible, and more importantly, current and crucially relevant. In this atmosphere of religious and national polarization that we are witnessing today, it is hard to find a better scholar to carry on that task as successfully and enthusiastically as Christiane does.”

Reviewer (E)

“...Gruber has consistently impressed me with her energetic and thoughtful approach to the areas of Islamic art that she has pursued in her scholarship... I have long considered her to be the star Islamic art historian of her generation, not just in the United States but internationally. I have no doubt that she will continue to contribute to the field at the highest level through her stimulating, probing publications as well as her service to the teaching, publishing and museum professions as a reviewer, editor, curator and board member.”

Reviewer (F)

“The Praiseworthy One...is an amazing manuscript which demonstrates [Gruber’s] mastery of both medieval and modern sources including those traditionally assigned to ‘art history,’ Islamic mystical studies, contemporary political debates on Islamic iconoclasm, and others. ... Every student of Islamic art history, Islamic history and even Islamic religious studies needs to read her work.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Gruber is a leader in her field. She is highly productive as a scholar and has made demonstrable impact in the public sphere. She is a very effective teacher of undergraduate students and a committed mentor to graduate students. She is also a colleague who willingly gives of her time in service to the department, the university, and the field. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Christiane J. Gruber be promoted to the rank of professor of Islamic art, with tenure, Department of the History of Art, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Andrew D. Martin, Dean  
Professor of Political Science and Statistics  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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