

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

Matthew N. Biro, associate professor of history of art, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of history of art, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1994	State University of New York, Stony Brook
M.A.	1987	Pennsylvania State University
B.A.	1983	Swarthmore College

Professional Record:

2005	Acting Chair, Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan
2000 – present	Associate Professor, Department of the History of Art and the Residential College, University of Michigan
1994 – 2000	Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and the Residential College, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Biro works to enhance his students’ visual acuity and theoretical sophistication to enable them to engage confidently with visual worlds of the past and present. His courses draw effectively upon his scholarship in twentieth-century and contemporary art and visual culture, especially on Weimar Germany, Dada and Surrealism, and the history of photography. Since being awarded tenure in 2000, he has supervised nine senior honors theses and served on thirteen doctoral dissertation committees. Attesting to his impressive cross-disciplinary scope, a number of them are in other departments and programs—Romance Languages and Literatures, Comparative Literature, Germanic Languages and Literatures—and in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Research – Professor Biro has completed his second book, *The New Human as Cyborg*, and published four articles in leading academic journals. *The New Human as Cyborg* offers a significant reinterpretation of transgressive Dada art in Berlin during the Weimar Republic (1918/19-1933). It historicizes the more recent idea of the cyborg—a synthesis of organic and technological elements—and traces it back to the Dada movement. Professor Biro is planning a third book, tentatively entitled *Photography Since the 1980s*, which will engage the dominant medium of recent artistic practice and offers an innovative “mapping” of the field of contemporary photographic art. In addition, as an active art critic, he publishes several reviews of contemporary art exhibitions every year.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The New Human as Cyborg: Cultural Critique and Artistic Self-Fashioning in Berlin Dada Art, University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming 2008.

“Raoul Hausmann’s revolutionary media: Dada performance, photomontage, and the cyborg,” *Art History*, 30(1), 2007, pp. 26-56.

“Representation and event: Anselm Kiefer, Joseph Beuys, and the memory of the Holocaust,”
The Yale Journal of Criticism, 16(1), 2003, pp. 113-146.

“History at a standstill: Walter Benjamin, Otto Dix, and the question of stratigraphy,” *Res*, 40,
Autumn 2001, pp. 153-176.

Service – Professor Biro served as director of graduate studies (2001-2003) and initiated program improvements that resulted in higher student morale, a shorter time to degree, and a better rate of job placement. He has served three times as acting chair of the Department and has been associate chair since 2006. In the latter capacity he has overseen a major transformation of the Department’s Visual Resources Center to accommodate the faculty’s rapid transition to the use of digital images in teaching.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“...both of Biro’s books, as well as three or four of his articles, would have to be ranked in the ‘top five’ internationally in their respective areas of inquiry. ... What distinguishes Biro’s writings...is the singular, multi-disciplinary range he brings to a topic and the rigorous – but non-polemic – nature of his approach.”

Reviewer (B)

“I think Biro’s work makes a major contribution to the area by historicising the more recent idea of the cyborg and so deftly tracing it back to the transgressive moment of Berlin Dada. ...Biro bears comparison with the best of the scholars that I have mentioned and would be successful if he were to seek a similar promotion at my own institution.”

Reviewer (C)

“His work is extremely solid and Biro is, certainly, not only one of the top Germanists but also modernists in the field.”

Reviewer (D)

“Biro is unique in the combination of philosophy and art critique and history which he displays in his work. ... He is a very smart and critically minded guy, and the approach he takes is original and does not fit into any simply trendy or faddish mode.”

Reviewer (E)

“Biro is a creative and independent scholar who has the increasingly rare capacity to work on all moments of the 20th century.”

Reviewer (F)

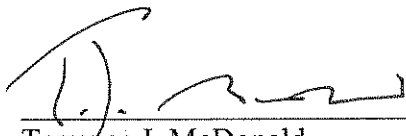
“...Biro brings a unique perspective to the field of art history, being equally at home in the field of philosophy and employing methodological approaches of that discipline to reconsider German art of the interwar and post war era as well as contemporary art. ...Biro will continue to have a strong impact on his fields of interest.”

Reviewer (G)

“His work reveals a particular ability to straddle the boundaries of art history, art criticism, philosophy, cultural theory and the history of photography. In the process, he has helped to expand and enrich the discipline of art history, pushing it towards a more self-reflexive and theoretically engaged form of academic study.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Biro is one of the leading Germanists and modernists in the field of art history. His teaching has been central to the Department of the History of Art's pedagogical program and has attracted many new students to the department. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Matthew N. Biro be promoted to the rank of professor of history of art, with tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Terrence J. McDonald
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,
Professor of History, and Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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