

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

Approved by the Regents
May 19, 2011

Kevin Gray Carr, assistant professor of the history of art, and assistant professor of Asian languages and cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of the history of art, with tenure, and associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2005	Princeton University
M.A.	1999	Princeton University
B.A.	1996	Amherst College

Professional Record:

2005 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan
2004 – 2005	Instructor, Department of the History of Art and Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan

Summary Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Carr’s innovative, interdisciplinary teaching has made a major contribution to the ongoing development of Asian art and visual culture studies at Michigan. He challenges students to critically consider a rich offering of contemporary issues ranging from entertainment on the internet to core humanities topics such as consumption and sexuality. He knows how to make sophisticated analytical concepts accessible without sacrificing intellectual content, and his infectious enthusiasm for the culture of Japan has attracted a large following. He is undoubtedly one of the most popular and effective teachers in the History of Art.

Research – Professor Carr has completed an impressive body of original work on medieval Japanese art and visual culture, including a major monograph on the influential cult surrounding the mythologized figure of Prince Shōtoku and four articles largely independent of the book. He is widely recognized as one of the leading scholars of his generation working in Japanese art history and visual culture. His scholarship is distinguished by intellectual depth, an innovative application of theory, and genuine interdisciplinarity. It engages with issues of broader contemporary relevance, while at the same time remaining deeply rooted in the most rigorous area-based research and linguistic expertise.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Plotting the Prince: Topographies of Shōtoku Cults in Early Medieval Japan, University of Hawai’i Press, forthcoming 2011.

“Pieces of princes: Overcoming absence through personalized relics in Early Medieval Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, forthcoming spring 2011.

“The material facts of ritual: Revisioning medieval viewing through material analysis, ethnographic analogy, and architectural history,” in *Blackwell Companion to Asian Art*,

Section II: "The Medium's Message," D. Hutton and R. Brown (eds.), Blackwell Publishing, forthcoming 2010.

"The evidence of our eyes: The epistemology of vision(s) in Early Medieval Japan," in *Friends at a Brushwood Gate*, G. Levine, et al. (eds.), P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, in association with Princeton University Press, forthcoming 2010.

Service – Professor Carr has been an exemplary citizen and colleague, and has compiled an impressive record of service to his departments and the University as well as to the profession. He has served on key committees and participated in manuscript workshops and guest lectures. Elected to the History of Art Executive Committee in 2009, Professor Carr also served as acting director of undergraduate studies during winter term 2010. He regularly reviews for several Asian studies and art historical journals, and offers curatorial advice to collectors of Japanese art.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

"Professor Carr is already a notable presence in the field, one who is defining an impressive path of intellectual originality and integrity in his lectures and writing. ... Professor Carr's study leads to a broadly embracing view of the sacred world of Japan in the premodern period, with a focus on how narrative art worked as a means by which to create 'religious, political, and cultural identities.'"

Reviewer (B)

"I believe he deserves to receive tenure at the University of Michigan and that you would be hard pressed to find a better scholar of Japanese art history to replace him. He has the full range of intellectual and linguistic skills needed to pursue top-level research and mentor graduate students in our challenging field. He is a sophisticated scholar... ..his dossier presents one of the strongest cases I have seen for promise of future scholarly productivity."

Reviewer (C)

"...Professor Carr has been a very active scholar who has given multiple lectures and conference papers, applied for and won major grants, written reviews, articles, chapters for edited volumes, and had his book manuscript accepted for publication by a major university press. It is most impressive that he has been awarded a Research Grant by the Social Science Research Council/Japan Society for the Promotion of Science."

Reviewer (D)

"Professor Carr is without a doubt one of the most promising and important art historians of Japan of his generation. Even more significant, however, is the fact that he is one of the very few art historians of Japan (at any stage in their career) whose intellectual depth and range of interest makes him an essential interlocutor and valued contributor for...those of us outside of the field."

Reviewer (E)

"I have found in Kevin an extraordinary intellect of uncommon commitment to the theorization of vision and visuality even as his work takes him deep into the terrain of iconographical and

iconological analysis. I cannot think of a single person in the field of Japanese art studies who has taken this turn, which will in time extend his work beyond its currently field-specific orientation.”

Reviewer (F)

“Professor Carr’s command of difficult and extensive primary and secondary Japanese sources, the imagination and intellectual ambition of his work, and the rigorous skepticism to which he subjects his own writing have made him one of the most well-respected scholars in his field in North America and Europe, but also within the Japanese art community in Japan.”

Reviewer (G)

“...[*Plotting the Prince*] is truly a path-breaking work, which will significantly change the way both art historians and historians of religion understand medieval Japanese religion. ... He clearly has a productive career ahead of him, and he will continue to make a strong impact on the field. I would not hesitate to rank him among the most interesting historians of Japanese Art today...”

Summary Recommendation:

Professor Carr’s research and teaching are distinguished by a bold and innovative approach, as a result of which he has had a significant impact on students and colleagues beyond his field. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Kevin Gray Carr be promoted to the rank of associate professor of the history of art, with tenure, and associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, without tenure, 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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