

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

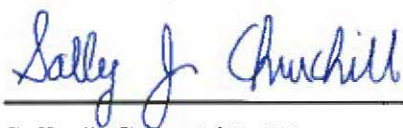
Alexander Potts, Ph.D., Max Loehr Collegiate Professor of the History of Art and professor of history of art in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2019.

Professor Potts received his B.A. degree from the University of Toronto in 1965 and his Ph.D. degree from the University of London in 1978. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as chair of the Department of the History of Art, Max Loehr Collegiate Professor of the History of Art, and professor of history of art in 2002.

Widely regarded as a leading voice in the history of art specializing in modern and contemporary subjects, Professor Potts was deeply engaged with questions of method, historiography, artistic media and realism with particular expertise in the art of Western Europe and North America. Described by colleagues as “commanding” and “brilliant,” he addressed questions of broad significance to art historians. His prolific output spans more than one hundred and thirty articles, essays, and reviews, which have profoundly impacted generations of scholars both within and outside the field of modern art. Among his books, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (1994) is an ambitious intellectual biography of how one of the most important historians of art engaged with the arts of antiquity as a function of broad investments in Enlightenment values. *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (2000) is a magisterial examination of the distinctive claims of sculpture vis-à-vis closely argued readings of works from the late 18th to 20th centuries. His most recent book, *Experiments in Modern Realism: World Making, Politics and the Everyday in Postwar European and American Art* (2013), makes a compelling case for the necessity of realism as a fundamental channel for thinking through the social, economic, and political realities that defined postwar artistic experimentation. In addition to receiving multiple awards and honors, including the Slade Lectureship of Fine Art at Oxford University in 2008 and the Kirk Varnedoe Visiting Professorship at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University in 2009, Professor Potts received the Distinguished Teaching of Art History Award from the College Art Association in 2018.

The Regents now salute this distinguished scholar and teacher by naming **Alexander Potts, Max Loehr Collegiate Professor Emeritus of the History of Art and professor emeritus of history of art.**

Requested by:



Sally J. Churchill, J.D.

Vice President and Secretary of the University

December 2019