



# Josephine Powell and Anatolian architecture

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# Josephine Powell and Anatolian Architecture

*Walter B. Denny*



Josephine Powell. Main court, İshak Paşa Sarayı, Doğubayazıt, Turkey. 1955.  
Josephine Powell Collection, Special Collections, 159 D679 3I CMI.

SEVERAL EVENTS IN THE FINE ARTS LIBRARY COME QUICKLY TO MIND when I consider its impact on my career. One has little to do with books: it was the sight of a small “Lotto” carpet from Anatolia, woven in the seventeenth century, on the floor under the desk chair of then Fine Arts Librarian Wolfgang Freitag, that led in 1968 to events eventually resulting in my three-decades-long stint as Honorary Curator of Rugs and Textiles at the Fogg from 1970 to 2000. Discovering Josephine Powell’s magnificent black and white photographs of Anatolian architecture in the enormous array of cabinets of mounted photographs next to my carrel in the Fine Arts Library was an inspiration for me to begin my work as a serious photographer of Islamic art, a choice that has proven enormously fruitful over my career. But quite frankly, above all else, it was my first discovery, as a summer school student from Oberlin in 1963, of the Fine Arts Library as a place of refuge from the daily grind of seven hours of instruction in elementary Arabic that had the greatest eventual impact on my life. Returning to Oberlin for my senior year, I decided that my graduate school applications would be in fine arts rather than history—and, as they say, the rest is (art) history.

# Contributors

JAMES S. ACKERMAN is Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Fine Arts Emeritus, Harvard University.

GLAIRE D. ANDERSON is Associate Professor of Art History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

SUSAN ANDERSON is Curatorial Research Associate for Dutch and Flemish Drawings, Harvard Art Museums.

PERSIS BERLEKAMP, PHD 2003, is Associate Professor of Art History, University of Chicago.

FRANCESCA BEWER is Research Curator in the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard Art Museums.

KATHRYN BRUSH is Professor of Art History, Department of Visual Arts, University of Western Ontario, Canada.

ELLEN P. CONANT is an independent scholar.

HARRY COOPER, PHD 1997, is Curator of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art.

JAMES CUNO, PHD 1985, is President and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust.

WALTER B. DENNY, PHD 1971, is Professor of Art History at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

EMINE FETVACI, PHD 2005, is Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Boston University.

SHIRIN FOZI, PHD 2010, is Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Pittsburgh.

WOLFGANG FREITAG was Librarian of the Fine Arts Library from 1962 to 1989.

JEFFREY L. HORRELL was Librarian of the Fine Arts Library from 1992 to 1998 and currently is Dean of Libraries at Dartmouth College.

ADEN KUMLER, PHD 2007, is Assistant Professor, Department Art History, University of Chicago.

MELISSA BECK LEMKE is Image Specialist for Italian Art, Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art.

MEGAN R. LUKE, PHD 2009, is Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Southern California.

KATHARINE MARTINEZ was the Librarian of the Fine Arts Library from 1998 to 2010 and currently is Director of the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona.

CHRISTINE MEHRING, PHD 2001, is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History, University of Chicago.

JOHN E. MOORE, PHD 1992, is Professor of Art, Smith College.

ALEXANDER NAGEL, PHD 1993, is Professor of Fine Arts, New York University.

PETER NISBET is Chief Curator at the Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

LISA PON, PHD 1999, is Associate Professor, Department of Art History, Southern Methodist University.

SCOTT REDFORD, PHD 1989, is Professor in the Department of Archaeology and History of Art, Koç University, Istanbul.

MELISSA RENN is Senior Curatorial Research Associate, Harvard Art Museums.

CLAIRE ROBERTS is Senior Lecturer in Art History, University of Adelaide.

WILLIAM W. ROBINSON, PHD 1996, is Maida and George Abrams Curator of Drawings, Harvard Art Museums.

ERIC M. ROSENBERG, PHD 1992, is Associate Professor of Art History, Tufts University.

JOHN M. ROSENFELD, PHD 1959, is Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of East Asian Art Emeritus, Harvard University.

HAO SHENG is Wu Tung Curator of Chinese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

SEYMOUR SLIVE is Gleason Professor of Fine Arts Emeritus, Harvard University.

MIRIAM STEWART is Curator of the Collection, Division of European and American Art, Harvard Art Museums.

DENİZ TÜRKER is a PhD candidate in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University.

MICHELLE C. WANG, PHD 2008, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Art History, Georgetown University.

HENRI ZERNER is Professor of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University.