Abstract:

This presentation explores three decolonizing digital humanities (DH) fields that inform *Rhizomes of Mexican American Art since 1848*, a digital portal that will link libraries, archives, and museums across the nation. Digital humanities have the potential to decolonize American art. Their interdisciplinarity, emphasis on collaboration, and methodological innovations support linkages and relationships that are reciprocal, decentralized, and open—components of decolonial praxis. Although decolonial methods are variously defined, scholars agree that decolonial frameworks intervene in colonial legacies of representation and Enlightenment-era epistemologies. As such, decolonial digital humanities are uniquely positioned to expand American art history beyond its traditional foundations.

This paper examines the lessons of decolonial digital humanities, particularly the ways in which select projects prioritize the cultivation and maintenance of equitable relationships, transparency, and accountability with stakeholder institutions and communities. It focuses on three decolonial digital humanities fields—Indigenous DH, Black DH, and community-based archives—and documents how they offer insights for transforming American art history and *Rhizomes*. For example, Indigenous DH projects in visual cultural studies acknowledge proprietary knowledge as a strategy to undermine cultural appropriation, intellectual and cultural theft, and information misuse. Black DH insists that digital humanities are racialized, naming both white privilege and hierarchies across the humanities and technological innovations as well as blackness and the ability to recover Black humanities. Community-based archives operate independently of institutions of higher learning, locating control within groups dispossessed of social authority and cultural capital. The presentation concludes by discussing the impact these lessons have on American art history.