Research Grant – Fall 2009

Title or Proposal: Portrait Galleries in Venetian Archives
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Abstract:
I am applying for funds for research travel to Venice, Italy to complete my book project entitled *Privilege and Duty in the Serene Republic*. I have a largely finished draft of the book, and have begun to submit the proposal to readers and publishers. I need to consult some materials in the archives and libraries of Venice, however, to complete the final copy. This proposed examination of archival sources on the careers of certain Venetian patricians would refine my arguments on how they began to use the spaces of official documents to create portrait galleries in family archives.

Proposal:
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Most of the portraits I am examining have never been published before. Although the documents which contain them typically name the sitter, the identities of the patricians who are portrayed are sometimes difficult to pin down, because the documents are no longer in their original context of the family archive. This is an ironic twist to history, of course, because the purpose of these portraits embedded in documents was to memorialize individuals. More specific identities are difficult to locate because of the many branches of Venetian families with the same last name, and the tradition of naming sons after their fathers or grandfathers. To match the man imaged in these portraits with a broader identity of actions and art patronage, sometimes requires examination of manuscripts kept in the Venice State Archives, which recorded the nomination of patricians to official posts. In these documents (located under the name of the so-called *Segretario alle voci*), more specific identifying information is given. Some of these documentary records are published, but most of the ones critical to my study are not. Wills and inventories of the deceased also often provide more specific information about these patricians. From my previous research in the Venice State Archives, I know exactly which documents I need to consult, and how to call them up quickly. Access to these documents will provide more specific identifying information about the sitters of some key portraits. This will allow me to complete the sections of my book which examine portraiture in Venetian documents in relation to other art forms which promoted family identity and memorialization.

Publication of my book would raise the profile of the graduate program in art history, of the School of Art and Art History and the College, and of USF.