

# Director's Foreword

This publication marks a departure in the Focus Gallery Project series, for it is the first exhibition catalogue to be presented exclusively in a digital format. The curator of *Visualizing 19th-Century New York*, David Jaffee, proposed that the digital format would allow greater flexibility in presenting the research that he and his students have conducted in preparation for the exhibition. It also affords space for much more visual material than can be accommodated in the exhibition itself, enabling a far richer and more nuanced exploration of Broadway and its commercial and social life in the middle of the nineteenth century than would not be possible by more traditional means. It is no coincidence that Professor Jaffee is not only one of the most distinguished historians of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American material-culture history but also the head of New Media Research at the Bard Graduate Center. He has devoted great energy and imagination to the introduction of innovative research and teaching methods in the BGC's Digital Media Lab, now directed by assistant professor Kimon Keramidas, whose contribution to this project has been crucial.

The digital publication and the exhibition together explore a key moment in American history, when, in the middle of the nineteenth century, New York City emerged as the cynosure of urban development on the North American continent. New Yorkers developed a new, confident self-image in a variety of widely distributed media produced in New York workshops (daguerreotypes, stereoviews, lithographs, illustrated magazines, and others). These catered to an emerging middle class whose aesthetic and social values centered on the domestic parlor, where products reflecting its new status in society were put on display. Production and consumption were concentrated in the area of lower Broadway, with its workshops and elaborate showrooms.

David Jaffee began to define this nexus of social and cultural history when he was a fellow at the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History at Harvard University during the spring semester 2013. He followed this initial research with two successive graduate seminars in the Focus Project entitled “Envisioning Nineteenth-Century New York” in the fall semester 2013 and the spring semester 2014. In spring 2014 he also led a seminar in collaboration with assistant professor Catherine Whalen on “American Consumer Culture.” These over-subscribed seminars served in many ways as the key to the project, for this digital publication and the exhibition itself draw on the students’ detailed work carried out under their supervision.

Although this publication is digital, the exhibition itself is a display of actual objects. I wish to acknowledge our debt to the generous lenders to the exhibition, and to those who made reproductions available for this unique publication.

American Antiquarian Society  
Archives of American Art  
Boston Athenæum  
Chrysler Museum of Art  
The Daguerrian Society  
Dickenson College Archives  
George Eastman House  
The Gilder Lehrman Collection  
Graduate Center, City University of New York  
Johns Hopkins University  
Josh Brown/ASHP  
Library of Congress  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Museum of the City of New York  
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art  
New-York Historical Society  
New York Public Library  
David Rumsey  
Shelburne Museum  
Swann Auction Galleries  
University of Rochester  
Yale University Art Gallery

Peter Miller, dean of the Bard Graduate Center, continues to sustain the Focus Gallery Project, a collaboration between the Gallery and the Degree Program and Research Institute of the BGC. His contribution is complemented by those of Elena Pinto Simon, dean of Academic Administration and Student Affairs; Nina Stritzler-Levine, director of the Gallery and executive editor of BGC Gallery Publications; and Ivan Gaskell, professor and head of the Focus Gallery Project, who oversaw the endeavor.

Staff members of the Degree Program and Research Institute and the Gallery collaborated to realize Professor Jaffee's concept: Kate Dewitt, art director; Eric Edler, Gallery registrar; Alex Hills, digital designer; Kimon Keramidas, assistant professor and director of the Digital Media Lab; Marianne Lamonaca, associate Gallery director and chief curator; Alexis Mucha, coordinator of catalogue photography; Stephen Nguyen, exhibition preparator; Ian Sullivan, exhibition designer; Ann Marguerite Tartsinis, associate curator and Focus Gallery project coordinator. CHIPS, led by Dan Shields, Teddy Blanks, and Adam Squires, developed the gallery digital interactive and the digital publication. Martina D'Amato, PhD candidate and Gallery student assistant to Ivan Gaskell, performed invaluable work on the project. The production of this publication was aided by the thorough contribution of our copy editor, Barbara Burn. I extend my thanks to them all, as well as to all other members of the faculty and staff of the Bard

Graduate Center whose diligent work has made *Visualizing 19th-Century New York* possible.

—Susan Weber

Director and Founder

Iris Horowitz Professor in the History of the Decorative Arts

Bard Graduate Center