

Letter from the Editors

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ANDREW DAILY

We are delighted to introduce this fifty-first volume of the *JWSFH*. Our 2025 issue opens with two articles focused on the arts in the twentieth-century. Richard Sonn considers the challenges faced by Jewish artists in France under the German Occupation after 1940. Rather than concentrating on Paris, as much previous work has, Sonn shifts our attention to artists who fled south from the capital to Vichy France, illuminating forms of difference—in social networks, habitus, relative fame, and citizenship—that could mean life or death. Floriana Ceresato examines the career of the theater actor Claudius La Roussarie. Weaving biography, performance history, and literary analysis, Ceresato traces La Roussarie’s trajectory on stages from Lyon to Paris, in the film industry, and in historical literary studies. Together, these two articles deepen our understanding of the plastic and dramatic arts in interwar and wartime France.

At the Society’s 2024 meeting in San Francisco, Elinor Accampo, Linda Clark, Sara L. Kimble, Daniella Kostroun, and Jean Pederson gathered for a lively roundtable discussion of the profound impact Karen Offen’s research and writing on the “woman question” in France has had on their own work, and our field more broadly. We are so grateful to this group of scholars for sharing their reflections on Offen’s impressive body of work in this issue of *JWSFH*. The roundtable closes with a generous response from Offen.

This volume also includes two “Interventions,” a feature *JWSFH* introduced in 2023 to give scholars an opportunity to respond to emerging and developing events and debates. This year, an essay by Dónal Hassett and a conversation between Terrence Peterson and editor Meghan Roberts reflect on the depiction of complex pasts in contemporary memory and culture. Hassett’s piece shows how the French emphasis on the *tirailleurs sénégalais* in commemorations of the First World War has obscured the full scope of colonized peoples’ labor and experiences of the conflict. Hassett highlights the wartime labor of porters and women, as well as forms of resistance throughout the empire, calling for a broader conception of the war in the colonies. Peterson’s dialogue with Roberts digs into how the second season of *Andor*, the critically acclaimed *Star Wars* series, borrows and remakes French historical imagery and themes, especially the French Resistance during the Second World War. From the series’ characterizations of the bureaucratic mechanisms of fascist repression to the show’s contemporary resonances,

Peterson and Roberts explore the possibilities and limits of popular cultural understandings of political resistance and violence.

Our “Notes on Sources” section features short reflections focused on primary sources drawn from a range of areas of expertise. In this volume, Hannah Frydman discusses the perception of mediums and fortune-tellers as agents of vice in a 1931 French police report examining classified advertisements in the Parisian press. Jennifer Sessions shares an 1842 fundraising appeal by military officials, administrators, and commercial elites seeking to erect a statue in Algiers in honor of Ferdinand Philippe, duc d’Orléans, the recently deceased heir to the French throne. Testifying to the breadth and depth of research in French historical studies, Sessions and Frydman’s contributions make accessible to scholars and students two fascinating documents drawn from their own research.

Last year, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Society and this publication, we introduced the “JWSFH Mixtape,” an invitation to colleagues to highlight outstanding pieces published in the journal from 1974 to 2023. For this issue, we invited three new colleagues—Jean Beaman, Emily Marker, and Mathias Valverde—to select five books, articles, films, etc. from the past year that have stood out for them. Once again featuring unique artwork and a layout designed by Terrence Peterson, this volume’s “JWSFH Mixtape” provides a snapshot of the richness of recent scholarship in Francophone history and studies, making clear how the best work can challenge and move us.

This is our editorial team’s final issue. We have appreciated our time as editors and the trust placed in us by the Society. We have also enjoyed developing new features that give serious scholars the space to share their responses to contemporary issues; the sources and ideas that ground their research and teaching; and their practices as thinkers and writers. We are grateful to all the contributors, reviewers, and readers who have helped make the journal possible over the past few years. We would also like to thank the publishing staff of the University of Michigan Library, and editorial assistants Savannah Jackson-Cornell (vol. 49), Keith Donaldson (vol. 50), and Noah Jozic (vol. 51). Meghan and Roxanne will be stepping down after this issue goes to press, but Andrew will stay on to assist incoming editors T. Scott Johnson (Texas A&M Corpus Christi) and Patrick de Oliveira (IE University) as they take up their posts. We wish the new team all the best and are excited for volume 52!