



News Release

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Winners of 2009 CGS/UMI® Distinguished Dissertation Awards Announced

Awards recognize outstanding research by two recent doctoral graduates

San Francisco, CA (December 3, 2009) – The Council of Graduate Schools / UMI Distinguished Dissertation Awards, the nation’s most prestigious honor for doctoral dissertations, were presented here today to Mark Kiel and Kristel Smentek. Dr. Kiel completed his Ph.D. in Cell/Developmental Biology at the University of Michigan last year. Dr. Smentek earned her doctorate in Art History from the University of Delaware in January. The winners were announced at a ceremony during the CGS 49th Annual Meeting.

Bestowed annually since 1982, the awards recognize recent doctoral recipients who have already made unusually significant and original contributions to their fields. ProQuest, the world’s premier dissertation publisher, sponsors the awards and an independent committee from the Council of Graduate Schools selects the winners. Two awards are given each year, rotating among four general areas of scholarship. The winners receive a certificate, a \$2000 honorarium, and travel to the awards ceremony.

“The exciting thing about each year’s body of doctoral work is that it represents the leading edge of academic scholarship across disciplines,” said Austin McLean, ProQuest Director of Scholarly Publishing and Dissertations. “These two dissertations are extraordinary examples of how relevant doctoral work is to our society.”

The 2009 Award in Humanities and Fine Arts was presented to Dr. Smentek for “Art, Commerce, and Scholarship in the Age of Enlightenment: Pierre-Jean Mariette and the Making of Art History.” Her dissertation analyzed the scholarly and business careers of a celebrated 18th century French art collector, dealer, and historian as a microcosm of the transformation of art as

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both intellectual and commercial pursuit. Dr. Smentek is currently an Assistant Professor of History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture and Art at MIT.

Dr. Kiel received the 2009 Award in Biological and Life Sciences for his dissertation, “Identification, Localization and Characterization of Hematopoietic Stem Cells and Their Niche.” His research presented a novel, simplified method for isolating blood-forming stem cells, and proposed and validated alternate models to prevailing theories of stem cell biology. His findings have been published in the journals *Cell* and *Nature*. Dr. Kiel is currently finishing an M.D. degree in the Medical Scientist Training Program at the University of Michigan.

More information about the CGS / UMI Distinguished Dissertation Award is available at www.proquest.com/go/scholars or at www.cgsnet.org.

About the Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Among U.S. institutions, CGS members award 95% of the doctoral degrees and 78% of the master’s degrees.* The organization’s mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.

* Based on data from the 2008 *CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees*

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