The Board of the Association for Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art strongly condemns the increasing acts of violence perpetrated against the Asian, Asian-American, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in the United States and beyond. The ruthless murders of Soon Chung Park, Daoyou Feng, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Paul Andre Michels, Yong Ae Yue, Delaina Ashley Yaun, and Xiaojie Tan—and countless other victims of recent attacks—are yet another staggering reminder that xenophobia never sleeps. The increase in harassment, threats, and hate crimes against the AAPI communities brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic is rooted in a much longer history of bigotry and violence with which we must contend.

Much of the history of anti-Asian prejudice in the US took root in the nineteenth century. The Los Angeles massacre of 1871 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 were the culmination of decades of racialized violence, and their legacies continue to be felt today. As historians of this period, it falls to us to shed light on the dark corners of the nineteenth century and its cultural production, to tell the truth about topics that remain underexamined in our field. AHNCA is actively working to counter these silences and gaps in the art historical record, as well as to address the geographical imbalance of our field and the whitewashing of art history.

So too does this moment recall us to our duties as historians and educators: to consider and counter the role of misinformation and scare tactics in fueling bigotry and ignorance. Teaching—whether in the classroom or elsewhere—remains our most immediate avenue for engaging with these issues and countering the biases that are inherent to the methodologies of our field.

We stand in solidarity with the AAPI community. We acknowledge our responsibility to do more to stand up against the ignorance, hatred, and violence wrought by white supremacy, and to root it out within our own organization, institutions, and lives.