Report:

I was awarded a faculty development grant in spring 2007 in order to work on the exhibit Beyond the Iconic: Contemporary Photographs of Paris (http://www.lapl.org/sites/default/files/press/2008/pdfs/beyondtheiconic.pdf), which I curated with Béatrice Mousli and which was presented in the Getty Gallery of the Los Angeles Public Library from March 1–June 1, 2008. (The show was reviewed in the Los Angeles Downtown News and the Los Angeles Times (http://articles.latimes.com/2008/mar/09/entertainment/ca-paris9), among other publications.) The exhibit was one of an on-going series of projects focusing on franco-american literary exchanges and cross-cultural perceptions more generally speaking, the goal in this case being to re-examine the “iconic” status of the French capital, and consider to the degree to which its romanticized image actually reflects its current urban reality. The exhibit was the counterpart of “Los Angeles, un autre regard sur une ville autre,” a colloquium we had organized the preceding year at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (http://www.bnf.fr/en/tools/a.welcome_to_the_bnf.html) in Paris on the issue of the representation and perception of Los Angeles.

Grant moneys were used to pay for travel to and inside Paris, for research materials in the form of books and reviews, and for meals when out working. Curatorial work was done in the photographic collections of the Musée Carnavalet (http://www.carnavalet.paris.fr/en/museum-carnavalet) which graciously provided the photographs for the exhibit. Supplemental research was carried out in the library of the Maison européenne de la photographie (http://www.mep-fr.org/english/), which contained books and catalogs featuring several of the photographers included in the exhibit. In some cases we were able to meet and speak with the photographers themselves, which proved to be invaluable in understanding their working methods and materials, which were referenced in the panel texts and annotations of the exhibit, and discussed at length in the accompanying catalog, Beyond the Iconic: Contemporary Photographs of Paris, 1970–2003 (http://www.angelcitypress.com/products/beyo) (Los Angeles: Angel City Press, 2008), which I also wrote, designed, and typeset.
I am grateful to have received a grant in order to pursue this project, and thank the Faculty Development Committee for their consideration, and the college itself for supporting faculty projects.

--Guy Bennett (/faculty/guy-bennett)
Liberal Arts and Sciences, Graduate Writing

_Beyond the Iconic_ cover

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