

Earlier this year we commissioned the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) to conduct a study of the undergraduate minor to ascertain whether the curriculum was meeting the ambitious learning objectives we had set for the minor. Findings from several focus groups reassured us on that point but also suggest that students find that having a “museum studies lens” additionally allows them to experience classes in their primary concentration area from a new perspective.

We also learned that students pursuing the minor like learning how museums work “from the inside” and that internship experiences are a key strength of the minor. This issue of SPACES highlights over 30 such experiences including a “Postcard from Venice,” which highlights Molly Stewart’s experience at the Peggy Guggenheim Villa. As with their graduate counterparts, MSP undergraduates pursue internship experiences that cover the globe.

Though we have had many generous benefactors over the last nine years, I thought I’d take this celebratory moment to single out one in particular, Helmut Stern, whose generous gifts to the Museum Studies Program have made it possible for a number of our graduate students to pursue internships abroad. A couple of years ago we established the Helmut Stern International Museum Internship. Mei-Chen Pan (MSP08), a doctoral student in Comparative Literature was the first recipient. The Stern Internship funded her work at the National Taiwan Museum. The second recipient, Sarah Gothie, is currently pursuing an internship at the Prince Edward Island National Park/Green Gables Heritage Site. Thank you, Helmut, and thanks to all of the other individuals who have contributed to our program.

To celebrate our tenth year we’ve organized a very exciting series that we are calling *Cross Currents: Transdisciplinary Dialogues on the Museum*. These public events will afford us an opportunity to spotlight the tremendous talent we have here at UM and in the regional museum community. Eight conversations have been planned dealing with topics that reflect the breadth of the field of museum studies, from the contested ownership of museum artifacts to the museum as sensorium, from the misrepresentation of science to the obligations of museums to society. Each conversation will bring together two individuals representing different disciplines in a conversation focused on a specific museum issue—the series thus foregrounds thinking across disciplines—the transdisciplinarity that has defined the UM Museum Studies Program since its inception. It goes without saying that I’m very excited about the series!

This will be our last newsletter. The costs of production, coupled with the flexibility afforded by various web-based technologies for delivering news on the fly rather than once a year, has led us to develop a new “newsroom” on the MSP website and on our new Facebook site. We’ll continue to feature stories of alumni, our students and faculty, and MSP events, but in a more dynamic context.

Finally, I haven’t mentioned this for a while, but it seems fitting as we enter our tenth year, that we’d love to hear from Museum Studies alums, both students who have participated in the new program as well as folks who were involved with the Museum Practice Program. Send us a few sentences about what you’ve been up to and we’ll post them on the alumni blog that we plan to roll out next year.

Here’s to our tenth year!



Ray Silverman
Director, Museum Studies Program

Newsletter Editor

Bradley L. Taylor

Newsletter Design

Chris VanWyck
CiesaDesign

Staff

Director,
Raymond Silverman

Associate Director
Bradley L. Taylor

Unit Administrator
Amy Smola

Student Services Specialist
Heather Piegza

Museum Studies Program

Charles H. Sawyer Center
for Museum Studies
University of Michigan
Museum of Art
525 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1354

Office phone: 734-936-6678
Fax: 734-786-0064

www.ummsp.lsa.umich.edu
ummsp@umich.edu

Regents of the University of Michigan

Julia Donovan Darlow, Ann Arbor
Laurence B. Deitch, Bingham Farms
Denise Ilitch, Bingham Farms
Olivia P. Maynard, Goodrich
Andrea Fischer Newman, Ann Arbor
Andrew C. Richner, Grosse Pointe Park
S. Martin Taylor, Grosse Pointe Farms
Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor
Mary Sue Coleman, ex officio



About Our Logo

The MSP mark is derived from an ideogram created by the Akan peoples of Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire. The name of the design, *nkyinkyin*, may be translated “twistings” and embodies ideas of change, resilience, adaptability, and creativity.

News from India

[Ed.: Neha Paliwal (MSP09) has recently returned to the United States following a year in India where she joined Sahapedia, a non-profit dedicated to developing an online resource focused on Indian culture and history. While she was in India, Neha wrote an op-ed piece (reproduced below) for the *Indian Express*, an English language newspaper. MSP graduate students come from a number of countries of origin, have research and professional interests that circle the globe, and are poised to positively effect change in museums in the years ahead.]

The National Museum, India's most important and flagship museum, is reeling under staffing shortages. It has been searching for a director-general for three years now, and what's more, an estimated 150 out of its 207 positions are vacant. It was recently reported that the administration's primary concern was to fill up second and third tier positions "to keep things going." But things have only been "kept going" at the National Museum for a while now.

Without thoughtful guidance, the National Museum is likely to become a relic of little or no interest to the public in spite of its wonderful collection of historical artifacts. This is not just because museums now have to compete with ever-increasing leisure options on offer, but also because the National Museum has failed to keep pace with international debates and developments in museum practices.

In the last few decades, there has been a shift in the way that museum professionals regard museums. Questions have been raised about whether a museum ought to be a temple dedicated to knowledge, as it has been in the past, or a forum that generates new knowledge through the interactions of the community members it serves. Stephen E. Weil, in an influential article written a decade ago, pointed out that museums are increasingly focusing on visitors rather than their collections, that is, they are moving from being about something to being for somebody. This is not to argue that collections or objects ought to be relegated to the sidelines and that pure experience is sufficient. The experience, in a museum, hinges on the objects. Whether it is the wonder that is evoked in the presence of an Amrita



Sher-Gil painting, or resonance felt upon observing the similarities between practices of Indus Valley craftsmen and those of contemporary Kutch craft technologies, the objects are what set the experience of going to a museum apart from watching a game of cricket, or going to a movie, or even visiting Disneyland.

The question, then, is how to evoke this wonder and resonance among visitors, and make their experiences in a museum personally relevant. It is hardly sufficient to just place the objects in a building and let visitors have free entry. Of course, free entry, as in the case of the National Museum, helps. It helps in as far as it removes a deterrent, but it is not driving the crowds in. If a museum is to have any function beyond being a mere repository for objects (in which case it may as well be a research facility), then it has to find ways to make its collections meaningful not only for its curators and a scant few researchers, but for its visitors. This is as true of public museums, such as the National Museum, as it is of privately run museums.

The latter have responded more urgently to this because they depend, to a much greater extent, on visitor fees and corporate sponsorships and endowments for their expenses. In effect, more and more private museums are being treated as businesses that need to provide services effectively and efficiently, as well as to produce profits, or at least, to not suffer losses. As a result, there is the building of such tourist attractions as the architecturally fantastic Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. Or, there is the hiring of an ex-Disneyland executive as a "visitor experience designer" at the Henry Ford Museum in Detroit. There is

even the appointment of general managers with corporate experience, instead of curators, as directors at some institutions in recent years.

While such measures can hardly be recommended for public museums (or even sometimes, for private museums—one wonders whether a visitor to the Bilbao Museum is interested in the exhibits or the architecture), their focus on the visitor is surely a crucial take-away. In a less radical manner, this may be achieved through increasing visitor access to objects (through optimal display techniques, multilingual guides, catalogues), or more opportunities for public interaction (through mixed-space use, hosting public events, and developing exhibits that challenge our current understanding and generate debate), or any number of other ways. Making the visitor central, however, is not a task easily undertaken—particularly when faced with deeply entrenched past practices and the understandably possessive attachments of curators to their collections. But if a museum can be made to engage its visitors as much as it engages its objects, it's got to be a good thing. Of course, this move requires a change in vision, determined leadership, and a commitment to the public. Which brings us back to the question of the National Museum.

This article first appeared in the Indian Express on September 10, 2010; reprinted with the permission of the Indian Express.

Visits to Regional Museums

Throughout the academic year, MSP students travel with faculty to visit area museums. MSP faculty work with museum hosts to identify an itinerary for the visits, which frequently include time spent with museum professionals learning about their areas of expertise and discussing the application of theory in real world situations. Site visits, which usually last for a half day, succeed due to the very sincere commitment of host institutions to the education of young professionals. We are pleased to acknowledge the contribution made by this year's site visit sponsors.

Fall

Detroit Historical Museum

Detroit Science Center

The Henry Ford

UM Nichols Arboretum

UM Museum of Art

Winter

Edsel & Eleanor Ford House

Heidelberg Project

UM Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

Toledo Museum of Art

Toledo Zoo

UM Herbarium



MSP10 students speaking with Tom Varitek, Senior Program Manager at The Henry Ford.



MSP10 students on a tour of the UM Nichols Arboretum with Arb Director Bob Grese.



MSP10 students in conversation with Ruth Slavin, Deputy Director, Education and Curatorial, at the UM Museum of Art.

A Letter from Detroit

[Ed.: MSP05 student Kelly Kirby recently completed her practicum at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. A doctoral candidate in Anthropology, Kelly's own research in textiles was put to practical use in assisting the museum in cataloguing and conserving its impressive collection. As is often the case, Kelly's practicum experience was a wonderful complement to her academic interests. We asked Kelly during her practicum if she would share her internship experience with us in the form of a letter to her MSP colleagues.]



MSP05 student, Kelly Kirby (right) with her staff mentor, museum archivist Alexis Braun Marks, at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History.

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History houses more than 30,000 objects and archival materials in its collections. My primary focus as an intern at the Charles Wright is researching, cataloguing and re-housing the museum's textile, quilt, and clothing collections.

When Alexis Braun Marks, the archivist at the museum, initially showed me the textile storage room—which consists not only of textiles from Africa and quilts from the United States, but also clothing

(wedding gowns, preachers robes, formal attire, army uniforms, Pullman porter uniforms, jackets, tablecloths, t-shirts, Ku Klux Klan robes, hats, shoes, etc.)—I was slightly overwhelmed and didn't really know where to begin. In my early attempts to organize the space which accommodates this diverse collection of objects, I thought to myself, "Okay, all military uniforms in this corner, all t-shirts on this shelf, all hats here, all shoes there." This process required a lot of planning since I had to consider space currently available, while allotting room for the possibility that additional objects in any given category might be donated to the museum in the future.

After researching "best practices" for conserving and storing textiles, I needed to figure out not only what materials are required to store objects properly, but also how in the world we could acquire them since they are expensive. Despite extreme budget cuts at the museum, we managed to order the supplies needed to properly conserve and store the textiles: non-acidic cardboard rolls to roll most of the textiles, tissue paper, muslin for wrapping, and cloth labels. I subsequently learned so much from this project, especially when it came to mistakes made. For example, I spent an entire day working on only 2 textiles—photographing them, describing them, giving them accession numbers, rolling them in tissue and muslin and placing them in storage, only to discover that I forgot to measure their length and width. This particular oversight did not occur again; however, I later encountered several similar mishaps where I learned a lot about what NOT to do!

Since my dissertation research focuses on textiles and dress in Senegal and in the Senegal diaspora, I was asked by museum staff to research, identify and describe the textiles from West Africa. This research has led to further work experience with Pewabic Pottery, a local nonprofit ceramic art education center. The goal of this outreach project was to encourage students at a neighboring elementary school to create a sculpture, made of clay, based on their understandings of history and art as a personal, meaningful, and imaginative process. My role was to identify certain textiles in our collection to provide some historical content and context and to encourage students to explore their creative potential. I used three pieces of hand woven cloth in my

presentations. The first was hand spun, hand woven, and hand dyed Korhogo cloth from Côte d'Ivoire, each motif indicating something symbolic. For example, the hunter figure symbolizes strength and mysteriousness in the forest and the bird figure signifies inner beauty. I also included a piece of appliqué from Benin commemorating the kingly dynasties of Dahomey and one piece of kente cloth from Ghana to discuss the relevance of color and design as it relates to symbolic motif and meaning. The students began their projects by sketching their ideas on paper. Soon thereafter, we joined them at their school where they transformed their visions into actual sculptures. Once the pieces were fired and glazed, the Charles Wright held a reception for students and their families. The kids were so proud to see their work on display and so excited to discuss their sculptures with their friends, family members, museum staff, and Pewabic Pottery staff.

I was recently asked to halt my work on the textile project and to work on *Crowning Glories: Status, Style, and Self Expression*. This hat exhibit features historical documentation of African and African American head wraps and headwear from the 1700s to today. Called upon as a content expert—content here meaning knowledge of the histories and cultures of West Africa—my role was to emphasize the many ways in which enslaved African women shared a communal identity and displayed their African roots through the symbolic use and wear of head wraps. This was, in fact, the intent of the museum's curator, whose vision not only incorporated using what we already have in the collection but also seeking out individuals in the community—wearers and creators of hats—who each have stories to tell about their own identity as it relates to African American history. I wrote the exhibit's introductory didactic materials, chose the images displayed alongside the didactic panels, and assisted the curator with other duties.

I'm back this week to finish up the remaining work on the textile project and only a few days away from completing my practicum. This challenging and rewarding experience has offered a window not only into perspectives outside of those we were exposed to in MSP proseminars but also into the reality of daily life and work in the museum setting.

Alumni Profile

Millard Rogers and the Origins of Museum Studies at Michigan

[Ed.: In July 2010, Museum Studies Program Director Ray Silverman and Associate Director Brad Taylor met with Millard Rogers, Director Emeritus of the Cincinnati Art Museum and one of the first students of Museum Studies at Michigan, over lunch in Mariemont, Ohio. After more than 60 years working in museums, Rogers offered unique insights on the field.]



Director Emeritus of the Cincinnati Art Museum and former MPP graduate, Millard Rogers.

It was a sunny July afternoon when we met Millard Rogers just outside Cincinnati, a man with the palpable respectability of an individual who has spent 20 years as a museum director. We sat down to chicken salad and iced tea in the Tudor Revival dining room of the Mariemont Inn to discuss Rogers' memories of the inception of the Museum Practice Program at the University of Michigan. The conversation wound its way from Rogers' years as an art history student at MSU (1950-1954), to his work in Madison, Wisconsin as Director of the Elvehjem Museum of Art (1967-1974), and finally to his optimism about the future of the museum world.

Rogers' involvement with museums began at the University of Michigan, as a master's student in art history. In 1957, when Charles Sawyer (former Director of the University of Michigan Museum of Art) arrived at the university, there was no formal program in museum studies. Dr. Sawyer began giving classes in museum practice and students like Rogers found the study of museum organization, history, and administration so helpful they just kept taking the seminars. In the early 1960s, the Museum Practice Program (MPP) was developed as a formal curriculum devoted to Museum Studies at Michigan. But Rogers' memories are of the collection catalogs the students would pour over, the museum site visits Sawyer would lead, and the opportunities these initial encounters later provided.



After leaving the fledgling program, Rogers completed practical training at the Toledo Museum of Art (where he would later work as both Assistant to the Director and Curator) and at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. But it was in his work as Director of the Cincinnati Art Museum (CAM), from 1974 to 1994, where Rogers left his greatest impression on the museum world. Rogers characterized his role at CAM as “professionalizing” the museum by standardizing practices, professionalizing the staff and administration of the museum, and by recruiting a Board of Trustees more educated about their role and museums in general. With respect to the collections, Rogers reconsidered CAM’s permanent holdings and identified gaps—he was the first Director to introduce photography to the collections. A major goal was to bring world-class exhibitions to Cincinnati that were not being shown elsewhere (rather than picking up shows that were originating in New York or Washington, D.C.). Rogers remembered the Old Masters exhibit brought from the Alte Pinakothek Museum in Munich, as well as the Arms and Armor from the Tower of London exhibit that broke attendance records with 173,000 visitors. Finally, it was during Rogers’ tenure at CAM that the first catalogs of the permanent collection were developed and published. Drawing from this legacy and his many years in the field, Rogers happily shared his thoughts on the state of the museum field today.

What changes have you observed in the museum field? What’s different today?

I’ve noticed quite a few changes. First, the transitory nature of directorships is new. A directorship used to mean an entire career; now, the grass becomes greener, and they move on. The composition of museum boards has certainly changed. Boards have more members now and reflect an ongoing need for diversity. More attention is being paid to the needs of diverse publics, as well.

In general, there are more museums on the scene than there were fifty years ago and this means there is strong competition for resources—a real challenge for established museums. There are also more PhDs working as curators and more interest in filling museum jobs with MBAs and individuals with business backgrounds.

And yet, you don’t seem worried about the future of museums. What makes you optimistic about these changes?

The educational activities that museums can provide are much more advanced than when I began working in the field. We have a far greater volunteer base working with us as well as greater diversity throughout the museum community. Museums are better poised to pay attention to visitors’ needs. All of these are very encouraging trends.

What challenges do you see the museum world facing in the coming years?

One word—funding. I’ve seen so many of our assumptions about the availability of funding change, not only as private and corporate sources dry up, but as the government reassesses the public value of museums and its role in supporting them.

What do students interested in museums today most need to know?

The most valuable component of their training will be internships—experiential learning of the broadest possible application within the museum environment.

What would you say to the new cohort of Museum Studies Program graduate students hoping to work with or in museums in the near future?

Are you enjoying what you’re doing and are you passionate about doing it? If so, you’ll be OK. For those already working in museums, the best thing you can do is to spend ten minutes in the galleries every day. Don’t lose touch with the museum environment you’re working to provide!

We’d very much like to connect with other graduates from the early days of the Museum Practice Program and hear your stories. Please contact Associate Director Brad Taylor at bltaylor@umich.edu.

2010/11 Public Programs

Reimagining Engagement: Emerging Opportunities for Museums and Audiences

The *Reimagining Engagement* series examined how recent developments—the rise of social networking technologies, the evolution of hybrid models of the virtual and traditional museum, the potential of cell phones to extend student learning, and a call for heightened visitor “participation” in museums—are building on earlier technological innovations and ushering in substantive changes that will allow audiences to assume new roles within the museum. Many of the lectures were preceded by an afternoon workshop in which members of the local museum community were invited to meet with the guest speakers in less formal settings.

September 28

The Participatory Museum: Inspiring, Supporting, and Evaluating Visitor Participation in Cultural Institutions

Nina Simon, Exhibition Designer and Author of the Museum 2.0 Blog.

November 16

Doing Science . . . Anytime, Anyplace: Using Web and Mobile Technologies to Support Nomadic Inquiry between Science Classrooms and Museums

Christopher Quintana, Associate Professor, School of Education, UM

January 11

Museum Exhibitions as the Public Commons

Wayne LaBar, Vice President, Exhibitions and Featured Experiences, Liberty Science Center, Jersey City, NJ

February 10

Enhancing the Magic: Reimagining Storytelling, Personalization, and Engagement at Disney's Flagship Park

Christopher L. Beatty, Senior Concept Designer-Director, Walt Disney Imagineering, Glendale, CA

Exhibition designer Nina Simon (top center) in conversation with participants in her Reimagining Engagement workshop.



Issues in Museum Studies

This year's lectures featured another broad assortment of museum related topics, both practical and theoretical, with presentation topics ranging from the representation of minority ethnic groups in Chinese museums to the role of the senses in experiencing museum objects, from the role cell phones in transforming the museum visit to the role of the curator within the artist community. Two of the lectures presented the research of recipients of the MSP's Fellowship for Doctoral Research in Museums (FDRM).



October 12

Materiality Matters: Experiencing the Displayed Object

Sandra Dudley, Programme Director for the MA in Interpretation, Representation and Heritage, School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK

October 26

Cultural Diversity and Chinese Museums

KeunYoung Kim (MSP 06), Museum Studies, UM; FDRM recipient

January 20

Ko Tawa: Where Are the Glass Cabinets?

Paul Tapsell, Chair of Māori Studies and Dean of Te Tumu, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand

February 1

Are Many Heads Better than One? Curating with, not about, African Artists

Pam McClusky, Curator of African and Oceanic Art, Seattle Art Museum

March 17

Private Collecting in the Age of Museums

Andrew McClellan, Dean of Academic Affairs for Arts & Sciences and Professor of Art History, Tufts University

April 14

Mediating Nomadic Inquiry: Using Mobile Tools to Support Student Exploration between Museums and Classrooms

Clara Cahill (MSP 09), PhD Candidate, Education and Museum Studies, UM; FDRM recipient

Brown Bags

Brown bag events continue to infuse the Museum Studies Program with new thought and fresh perspective on the world of museums. Designed as a showcase for graduate student research and practicum experiences, the series occasionally features Michigan faculty and museum professionals talking about their work. This year's graduate student coordinator, Kelly Kirby (MSP05), worked hard to make sure that the series had something to offer everyone; the topics presented underscore the rich diversity of interests among those involved with museum studies at Michigan.

30 September

These Images Are Similar, but Are Not the Same: Digitization and Colonial Archives
Ricky Punzalan (MSP 08, PhD Candidate, Information and Museum Studies)

15 October

Eliciting Visitor Feedback for Exhibit and Program Development and Assessment
Clara Cahill (MSP 09, PhD Candidate, Education and Museum Studies)

5 November

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' Chief Calvin McGhee Museum and Welcome Center: Building a New Museum
Kelly Fayard (MSP 06, PhD Candidate, Anthropology and Museum Studies)

3 December

In the Beginning . . . Reflections on a Visit to Northern Kentucky's Creation Museum
Raymond Silverman (Director, Museum Studies Program; Professor, History of Art and Afroamerican & African Studies)
Bradley Taylor (Associate Director, Museum Studies Program)

7 January

Islamic Art and the Royal Ontario Museum
Alison Vacca (MSP 09, PhD Candidate, Near Eastern Studies and Museum Studies)

17 February

Museum Space and the Visitor Experience: Balancing Old Architecture with New Exhibition Needs
Mei-Chen Pan (MSP 08, PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature and Museum Studies)

8 March

The Virtual Museum Project: Transcending Barriers, Engaging New Audiences
Jennifer Beyer (MSP 07, Researcher, Museum Studies Program)

24 March

Goethe's Der Sammler und die Seinigen: History and the Classicist Collection
Michael Andre (MSP 04, PhD Candidate, Germanic Languages and Literatures and Museum Studies)

8 April

Down the Rabbit Hole: Reflections on Work at the University of Michigan Museum of Art
Liz Vandermark (MSP 09, PhD student, Architecture and Museum Studies)



Distinguished Art Historian Delivers Annual Whitesell Lecture

Andrew McClellan, Dean of Academic Affairs for Arts & Sciences and Professor of Art History at Tufts University, delivered the Whitesell Lecture during his residency as the Museum Studies Program's annual Visiting Scholar in March 2011. McClellan's lecture, "Private Collecting in the Age of Museums," marked the fifth year in which this memorial lecture, honoring the life of former Bentley Library staff member Patricia Whitesell, had been given. McClellan's well-attended presentation addressed the dialectical relationship between public and private collections and museums, focusing on the tensions between modes of display, institutionalizations, and visitor engagement.

McClellan's research interests are focused on European art of the 17th-19th centuries. He is particularly interested in the evolution of the institution in which art is exhibited, the museum. McClellan is one of today's leading scholars of museum history. His first book, published in 1999, dealt with the creation of the Louvre. He then edited the important anthology, *Art and Its Publics*. And most recently, in 2008, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* was published. He is currently working on a book with Sally Anne Duncan focusing on the life and work of Paul J. Sachs, the founder of one of the country's first museum studies programs, at Harvard University.

McClellan's lecture was the highlight of a busy—if somewhat condensed—schedule during his Ann Arbor stay. In his time with us Prof. McClellan worked closely with our graduate students, leading an evening session of the proseminar and meeting with groups to critique their capstone projects, which ranged this year from nature parks to antiquities collections. He didn't leave the area before stopping by several Detroit museums prior to his return flight to Boston. Andrew McClellan is but the latest in a growing list of exceptional scholars and museum professionals whose presence on campus has enriched the experiences of students and faculty alike: Elaine Heumann Gurian, Harold Skramstad, Sharon Macdonald, and Ivan Karp have established a wonderful precedent for Andrew McClellan and others to follow.

Derrick Pitts, Chief Astronomer of the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, will deliver the next Whitesell Lecture in March 2012.

Mark O'Neill, Director of Policy, Research & Development, Culture and Sport Glasgow, and former Director of the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, Scotland, will be the 2012 MSP Visiting Scholar.

Watch the MSP website for upcoming details.



Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden at the Creation Museum, Petersburg, KY.

Graduate Students

MSPo4

After completing her practicum at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, **Lisa Cakmak** was offered the Niarchos Curatorial Fellowship to extend her residency. During the fellowship, Lisa's main responsibility was to catalog the ancient engraved gems in the MFA's collection, arguably the best gem collection in the country. She also worked with the curators to refurbish the Greek gem case and gave a gallery talk on the ancient Greek and Roman gems in the collection. Lisa has subsequently accepted a position as the Mellon Fellow in Ancient Art at the Saint Louis Art Museum.

Ipek Kaynar Rohloff has been awarded a three-year postdoctoral fellowship at Mount Holyoke College where she serves as the Five College Mellon Fellow in the capacity of Visiting Assistant Professor in Art and Art History.

Diana Mankowski helped to research, conceptualize, select images, and write the text for the Ghost Army exhibit on display in the University of Michigan's Hatcher Graduate Library in 2010. She also completed her dissertation, "Gendering the Disco Inferno: Sexual Revolution, Liberation, and Popular Culture in 1970s America," and successfully defended it in May 2010.

Following **Medha Tare's** work with Prof. Margaret Evans and Exhibit Museum of Natural History Director Amy Harris, she published a paper on museum learning work in the journal *Science Education*. Titled "Explanatory Parent-Child Conversation Predominates at an Evolution Exhibit," the paper analyses 12 family conversations which resulted from visiting the Exhibit Museum's *Explore Evolution* displays.

MSPo5

Hima Mallampati has been hired as Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow in the Program in Museum Studies at New York University. Hima teaches a course on museum history and theory during the fall semester and a course on museum law in the winter. In addition, she assists students with their master's theses and their internships. She's thrilled with the opportunity to be working with students on museum related issues and she's also happy to have access to all of the many museums in New York City.

Katie Raff received the Bothmer Fellowship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. During the

Kudos... a collection of updates on the activities and many successes of Museum Studies Program students, past and present...

one-year tenure of the fellowship, Katie plans to finish writing and revising her dissertation and will also have the opportunity to assist with projects in the Department of Greek and Roman Art and to present her research at the annual Fellows' Colloquium. She is looking forward to meeting with other curators and staff at events designed to introduce fellows to different aspects of the museum.

Kathy Zarur has accepted a position at the Sharjah Art Foundation in Sharjah, part of the United Arab Emirates. She'll work as the Managing Editor and Assistant Curator for the 10th edition of the Sharjah Biennale and continue to work on her dissertation.

MSPo6

Mya Gosling coordinates the International Giving Program for the UM Office of University Development. She remains involved in museum work and organized an exhibit in the University of Michigan's Hatcher Graduate Library lobby display cases called *A Look at Popular Political Movements in Southeast Asia*.

Ksenya Gurshtein was awarded a two-year curatorial postdoc at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. to begin in the fall of 2011.

MSPo7

On December 4, 2010, the Kalamazoo Valley Museum opened Kalamazoo Direct to You, a remodeled 5,400 square foot permanent history gallery. The exhibits were created by Good Design Group, a museum planning and design business co-owned by **Jennifer Beyer**. The family-oriented display features many interactive opportunities and histories of "everyday heroes" who shaped Kalamazoo.

MSPo8

Luciana Aenasoaie and husband Daniel welcomed their newborn daughter, Aida Aenasoaie, into the world on February 28, 2011.

Mei-Chen Pan was selected as the first recipient of the annual Helmut Stern International Internship Award in 2010. This award is presented to a graduate student in the Museum Studies Program who is pursuing their practicum outside of the United States and offers an additional monetary award in recognition of exemplary work in the Museum Studies Program.

MSPo9

Sarah Gothie was awarded the 2011 Helmut Stern International Internship Award, to assist in financing her three-month practicum at the Green Gables House in Cavendish, Prince Edward Island during the fall of 2011.

Kate Donovan Jarvis has moved to Atlanta to work as the Coordinator of University Archives and Records Management in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University. As the University Archivist, Kate will lead planning and development for all operations in the university archives, supervise the accessioning, processing, and preservation of archival materials, and promote University Archives collections through exhibits, presentations, instructional sessions, and other outreach activities.

Emma Wolman has moved to Portland, Oregon where she has accepted a position as the Digital Assets Manager for the Portland Art Museum.

Sarah Conrad Gothie (MSP 09), **Mei-Chen Pan** (MSP 08), and **Anna Wieck** (MSP09) gave a public lecture entitled "Lasting Legacy: Charles Lang Freer's 1910 'Exhibition of Oriental and American Art' and the University of Michigan," at Wayne State University's Charles Lang Freer House in January. This talk commemorated the groundbreaking exhibition of Eastern and Western art organized by Freer, a Detroit industrialist and art collector, at the 1910 opening of the University of Michigan's Alumni Memorial Hall (today's University of Michigan Museum of Art).

Undergraduate Students

Museum Studies Undergraduate Minor recipient **Katie Munn** enrolled in a master's program in Museum Education at George Washington University, where she spent the summer interning at the White House Historical Association in Washington, D.C. Her major project there was to design a family activity guide for use with a new exhibit called *An Artist Visits the White House Past: Paintings by Peter Waddell*. As a result of her summer work, Katie will be starting as a full-time Outreach Programs Assistant with the Education Department at the White House Historical Association in August 2011, taking their outreach program into local schools, developing programming for the Decatur Historical House, and assisting with future exhibits.

Congratulations to all!

MSP10 students, Joanna Steele and Liz Harmon (left) conducting onsite research for their MSP capstone project at the American Museum of Magic, engaged in conversation with (from left to right) Bradley Taylor, Jeff Taylor, Chris Beatty and Scott Mallwitz.

2010/11 Capstone Projects

As the capstone project of the proseminar sequence, students are assigned to participate as a member of a team charged with addressing a challenge faced by a local museum. A specific project is assigned to each group and teams work with MSP faculty and museum staff to find the best solution to their challenge. Past projects have yielded proposals for exhibitions, centered on best practices research, and provided marketing analyses for host museums. A final presentation is made at the end of the term to members of both the university and museum communities. In addition, student groups travel to host institutions to make formal presentations on these projects to relevant in-house staff. We are grateful to the many professionals who supported our students through their collaboration on this year's capstone projects.

"Fair Lane: Your Community Commons"

Ashley Miller, KT Lowe

Partner: Fair Lane Estate

Liaison/Mentor: Susan McCabe

"Afterlife: The Death and Life of Objects"

Gina Konstantopoulos, Emma Sachs, Katherine Larson

Partner: Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

Liaison/Mentor: Laurie Talalay

"Abracadabra: Michigan and Magic"

Elizabeth Harmon, John Kannenberg, Joanna Steele

Partner: American Museum of Magic

Liaison/Mentor: Jeff Taylor

"Thoughtful Wandering & Playful Discovery at Leslie Science and Nature Center"

Megan Banka, Reed Esslinger-Payet

Partner: Leslie Science and Nature Center

Liaison/Mentor: Greta Brunschwylar



Graduate Student Practica

Each year many MSP students who have completed the 601/602 proseminar sequence on museum history and theory begin work on their practicum requirement, the final step to achieving certification in Museum Studies. Students work with MSP faculty and staff to identify a location for their practicum and to propose a course of study.

Recently Completed

Chief Calvin McGhee Museum and Welcome Center, Poarch Band of Creek Indians' Reservation, Poarch, AL

Kelly Fayard (MSPo6) grappled with issues of tribal control over material and intellectual property during her four-month internship at the soon-to-be-opened Chief Calvin McGhee Museum. She began by organizing and cataloging the collections that had been placed in a newly acquired storage vault, but soon went beyond the museum to seek archival quality materials to add to the collection. Kelly was able to meet the anthropologist who had been studying and documenting Poarch Creek Native Americans for decades and shared in listening to oral histories recorded on audio cassette with members of the tribal community—only to become engaged in a debate about the ownership of these recorded stories: the University of Florida, the U.S. National Anthropological Archives, or the Poarch Community itself.

Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, PA

Working with the department of Research and Evaluation, **Clara Cahill (MSPo9)** was able to participate in the evaluation of a number of different components of the Franklin Institute's programming. She developed and administered a research study investigating what the underserved population of Philadelphia thinks about climate change and the environment. After her work executing the survey and evaluating its findings, the results were used to design community outreach efforts related to climate change education. Clara was also able to observe the rapid prototyping and evaluation of an exhibit on the human brain and to help develop and test outreach kits designed to teach about nanotechnology, energy, and electricity.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

Lydia Herring-Harrington (MSPo4) completed an internship in the Department of Art of the Ancient World, which was undergoing extensive renovation of its Greek and Roman galleries. While there her primary responsibility was to research the engraved gem collection of over 600 stones from Mediterranean sites dating from the Minoan period to Late Antiquity. Her research contributed not only to expanding the catalog of information on record about these gems, but also to making this information available to the public via the MFA's website. Lydia was also able to select objects for display in newly planned galleries and to replace objects taken off view for inclusion in a traveling exhibition.

National Taiwan Museum, Taipei, Taiwan

Mei-Chen Pan (MSPo8), recipient of the 2010 Helmut Stern International Museum Internship, worked in the Department of Exhibition Planning on the "Taiwan Museum System Project," a restoration project designed to transform three historical sites into new branches of the National Taiwan Museum. Mei-Chen evaluated visitor reactions to the first completed site, the Land Bank Exhibition Hall, and assisted at the Good Time Public Art Festival, a public art project including art installations and activities—the first of its kind to be hosted by the museum.

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, ON





MSPo6 student, Kelly Fayard (right), during her internship at the Chief Calvin McGhee Museum and Welcome Center.



Clara Cahill (MSPo9) during her internship at the Franklin Institute.



Mei-Chen Pan (MSPo8) during her internship at the National Taiwan Museum.

Once students have connected with a museum, they finalize a three-month full-time schedule of activities keyed to the student's area of interest and expertise and the museum's institutional needs. The MSP provides financial support to students so that they can pursue meaningful opportunities. Students end up both around the globe and in our own back yard. They frequently tell us that the practicum is the most significant part of the program.

Graduate Student Practica (continued)

Alison Vacca (MSPo9) spent three months working with the Islamic Art Collection at the Royal Ontario Museum. Her duties included researching and writing reports on two Armenian illustrated manuscripts, organizing a small display of Islamic Art for Muslim heritage month, and observing the planning for a future exhibit on the excavations at Godin, Iran. Alison was able to spend the rest of her internship researching and updating the database of Ayyubid, Mamluk, Abbasid, and Fatimid glass, which involved travel to the Corning Museum of Glass to compare the collections, collate information, and discuss her findings with the curators there.

McCaw Foundation Library, Seattle Asian Art Museum, Seattle, WA

While at the Seattle Asian Art Museum, **KeunYoung Kim (MSPo6)** compiled and posted academic resources on Asian art to the museum's website in English, Korean, and Chinese, compiled bibliography on the more than 50 previous exhibitions hosted by the museum, and assisted visitors, educators, and researchers at the McCaw Foundation Library. KeunYoung was able to attend and observe staff meetings as well as work closely with curators as they prepared new exhibits on Asian art.

Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH

Amadaeus Scott (MSPo8) participated in a number of projects while at the Toledo Museum of Art. She undertook the creation of educational experiences for a new exhibit on Egyptian funerary practices (both in the exhibit itself and as a classroom alternative), assisted with education classes and outreach programs, and worked to interpret the Glass Study Room for a public audience. In conjunction with the exhibit *Amina Robinson: Voices that Taught Me How to Sing*, Amadaeus was awarded an honorarium to create a book in which visitors could add pages reflecting on their own experiences, stories, and visions of their communities. The walnut-bound book mimicked Ms. Robinson's own hand-made books, and was such a successful community engagement project that the book was full after only two weeks in the gallery!

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI

Morgan Daniels (MSPo6) spent three months working in collections management where she worked extensively with the museum's database, adding records, updating files with newly researched information, and managing object images. She facilitated faculty and student study of objects from the museum's collection and assisted with exhibition preparation and installation. Toward the end of her internship, Morgan was involved in an unexpected small-scale museum controversy when the registration department identified a potentially offensive object on loan for a new exhibit. The situation was brought to the attention of the curators who, after much discussion, eventually pulled the object and replaced it with another loan.

The University of Michigan's Arts in Medical Education Project brings medical school faculty together with Museum of Art staff to provide humanities programming for medical students. **Liz Vandermark (MSPo9)** worked with this project, researching what peer museum institutions were doing with similar programming, and collecting research material in the medical sciences about physician empathy and the value of humanities training. She spent time in UMMA's galleries with a group of medical students, who were asked to mark works of art with "love" and "yuck" labels and to discuss their responses to art work in various ways. Liz also conducted a teacher focus group to evaluate a sketching workshop designed for a new Whistler exhibit, and she developed tour materials focusing on the experience of the museum's architectural space.

Working under the direction of the museum's registrar, **Emma Wolman (MSPo9)** learned to perform and coordinate a variety of museum needs related to the appropriate storage, care, handling, and access of the museum's permanent, loan and exhibited collections. Emma processed acquisitions and loans, updated the digital catalog, coordinated use of the Object and Print Study Rooms, and assisted with object storage and inventories.



Emma Wolman (MSPo9) at work in the UM Museum of Art.



Undergraduate Internships

MUSEUMS 409 requires that undergraduate museum studies students participate in an intensive semester-long internship experience at a museum or collecting institution of their choosing that is shaped in consultation with museum studies faculty and staff. These internships mostly take place in campus museums and generally involve student participation in several museum related activities. This year, 33 undergraduate museum studies students completed a host of exciting experiences.

Ann Arbor Art Center, Ann Arbor, MI

Chelsea Brown (American Culture and History of Art) created a series of city-wide, self-guided art and architecture scavenger hunts, which allowed visitors to select maps at the Center and tour the city on their own time. Chelsea also developed programs of art-based party packages for adults and children and assisted with a marketing campaign for the Center's upcoming fundraiser.

Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, Ann Arbor, MI

Laura Mason (Public Policy) assisted with the redesign and reorganization of the Preschool Gallery by observing the museum's youngest visitors, noting what they play with and what they find compelling. Of greatest importance were the "discovery boxes," which contain a collection of diverse learning devices. Laura researched other hands-on and children's museums to find similar "boxes," formally recommended new topics and content for the discovery boxes for the AAHOM, and compiled the new boxes.

Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati, OH

While interning at the Cincinnati Museum Center, **Laura Vincent (English)** worked as "Intern to the President." She attended daily meetings pertaining to day-to-day operations, the museum's pending accreditation, new acquisitions, and finances. She also worked with the marketing department on organizing and planning programming for an upcoming exhibition and wrote an op-ed piece on what the exhibit meant to her.

Denver Museum of Art, Denver, CO

Jodie Gorochow (History of Art) assisted with the re-installation of the museum's Native American collection. To do so, she researched artists and objects in the collection, gathered teaching materials, and assisted with the fabrication of the exhibit.

Freer House, Detroit, MI

Meg Urisko (History of Art) organized and expanded the Freer House archives by searching for additional materials in physical archives, filing systems, and an online database. She also conducted primary research on Charles Freer relating to his art collection, his Detroit home, and his connections to art and cultural institutions in Detroit and Ann Arbor. Finally, she assisted in the development of an initial case statement identifying the significance of the former "Whistler Gallery" at the Freer House.

Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, PA

John Weiss (History) assisted with the Small Craft Collection Assessment Project by drafting a "mini-collections policy" addressing the needs of the small craft collection. He also collated data from existing sources to produce catalog entry sheets for a prototype catalog of the collection. He worked with a number of departments to reach these goals, including the curatorial and archives departments, the boat shop, and the library.

Mackinac Island State Historic Park, Mackinac Island, MI

Natalie Morelli (Anthropology) interned in the Collections Department at Fort Mackinac, inventorying, cataloging, and organizing historic photographs. Natalie was ecstatic to learn that she would also play a role in the opening of the Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum by assisting with mounting the art and performing many behind-the-scenes tasks.

Hillary Pine (History of Art) interned as a Historic House Interpreter, interacting with the public on a daily basis. She taught visitors about the history of Mackinac Island and Fort Mackinac and demonstrated historic food and craft ways. Hillary also interned as a docent and ran a children's art program at the Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum.



Laura Vincent (English) worked as "Intern to the President" at Cincinnati Museum Center.

Undergraduate Internships (continued)

Michigan State University Museum, East Lansing, MI

Nicholas Malzahn (Anthropology)

interned in the Cultural Collections division of the museum, photographing artifacts from the ethnographic collections and recording image numbers. He learned proper handling procedures for artifacts, had instruction in object photography, and learned about preventative conservation methods in collections storage.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

Sara Olds (History of Art)

worked as a Program Evaluation intern in the Planning and Evaluation Department. She conducted visitor interviews, surveys, and gallery observations and then entered and maintained her results over the course of the internship. She also contacted other art museums to get a sense of how other museums grow their teen programs.

New York Historical Society, New York, NY

Dustin Eisenstat (History)

assisted the Manager of High School and College Programs in planning and developing programs and events for high school teachers and students. His work focused on creating a lesson plan and gathering necessary materials for a group of high school students participating in a summer internship about the Gold Rush. He also assisted in the preparation and development of programs and events surrounding a teacher workshop about the Underground Railroad.

Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC

Connie Cho (Anthropology)

interned with the Marine Mammals Collection Manager to assess and properly store tissue samples in order to share data with three ongoing projects: The Consortium for the Barcode of Life, the Genome 10K Project, and the Planetary Genome Project. Connie communicated with the managers of these projects and made arrangements to distribute tissue samples at periodic intervals.

University of Michigan Department of the History of Art, Ann Arbor, MI

In the Visual Resources Collection, **Amber Harrison (Art & Design)** was exposed to the documentation, organization, maintenance, and preservation of the many slides the department uses for teaching and research. By assisting in inventorying these slides, Amber helped create a record of the current collection and learned how museums and resource centers “access the importance” of an object.

University of Michigan Exhibit Museum of Natural History, Ann Arbor, MI

Leah Burgin (Anthropology) and Jillian Orr (History of Art)

received extensive training as museum docents and led guided tours on prehistoric life and other topics for preschool through high school students, led activities at public events, helped visitors with questions and logistics, and hosted natural history-themed children’s birthday parties.

Molly Stewart (History of Art)

helped the museum with social networking, marketing, and publicity. She performed research on how to improve the museum’s public resources and she made contacts with area schools and teachers in order to build more effective connections. Some of her internship was dedicated to discovering ideas to make the museum more “user friendly.”

University of Michigan Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, Ann Arbor, MI

Claire Chong (History of Art) worked with the Community Outreach Supervisor to create educational outreach kits for elementary and middle school instructors. Because teachers borrow these kits, many had fallen into disrepair and needed updating. She specifically focused on the creation of the “Near Eastern Kit,” performing research, creating PowerPoint slides, and collecting new materials.

Claire Malley (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology)

completed several independent projects at the Kelsey. She created a design for the Dynastic Egypt display’s open drawer storage and created web projects that included an online version of a special exhibition and documentation of the Abydos Middle Cemetery Project.

Molly Marcusse (Near Eastern Civilization)

interned at the Kelsey during the extensive building renovations, giving her a chance to help reorganize the archives. Molly was also tasked with double-checking the accuracy of the object inventory to locate and return objects to their set locations. Finally, Molly assisted in transferring data from old accession cards into the museum database.

University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, Ann Arbor, MI

Marina Mayne (Anthropology)

learned to identify objects in the museum’s collection, like ceremonial masks, considered to be culturally sensitive objects. She recommended and implemented appropriate treatments for the objects and made updates to the museum’s database. Her work at the museum allowed her to learn more about how the museum recognizes the changing context of objects as they become part of a museum collection as well as the ethics of collecting cultural property.

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI

Katharine Allen (History), Andrea Eggertsen (History and Education),

Marleigh Hill (History of Art and Psychology), Kristen Kovel (History),

Kelsey Neighbors (History of Art),

Summer Radtke (Communication Studies and History of Art), and Elisabeth Wilson (Sociology)

participated in the yearlong student docent program at the Museum of Art. This program offers an introduction to museums in general and museum education in particular. During the first semester of the program, students were required to attend training sessions each week where they learned how to staff the information desk and led “Saturday Morning Storytime.” During the second semester, students were given the chance to work with staff in individual departments according to their interests.

University of Michigan Museum of Paleontology, Ann Arbor, MI

As part of an NSF-funded grant, **Zach Bennett (Anthropology)** researched and implemented 3-D imaging techniques used for creating high quality, digital images of invertebrate fossils. He learned how to use three different imaging programs to compare how each works and helped determine which would be best suited to the needs of the UMMP.

Breezy Mullins (Anthropology and Classical Civilization) and **Warren Olivier (History)** interned in the collections department and learned about many of the activities that must occur to maintain a museum collection. They entered data about specimens into a database, assisted in cleaning and preserving specimens, and made 3D images of specimens in order to enhance their accessibility.

University of Michigan Sindecuse Museum of Dentistry, Ann Arbor, MI

Amber Ostaszewski (History of Art) assisted in the creation and development of a new exhibit at the museum illustrating dentistry offices and laboratories through the ages, focusing specifically on the dental prosthetics section within the exhibit. Working with another intern, Amber formulated the display concepts, content, design, and labels and made sure to keep a constant theme that melded with the current exhibition style. She also performed archival research, digitized three-dimensional objects, and created inventories.

Washtenaw County Historical Society, Ann Arbor, MI

May Oyler (History) interned at the Museum on Main Street, assisting with internal museum operations and also with the public. May organized, inventoried, and digitized specific collections, and helped to develop a new collections management policy consistent with standard museum practice. She also assisted in the design and installation of the museum's changing exhibits, improved educational tools within the museum, and worked with museum visitors through guided tours and public programs.

Acknowledgments

At the end of such a successful second year, we want to thank the internship mentors who made our undergraduate internship experiences possible.

- Nandini Bakshi** Education Programs Leader, Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum
- Josie Bockelman** Director of Programs, Ann Arbor Art Center
- Craig Bruns** Curator, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- Nancy Bryk** Director of Education and Public Programs, Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum
- Katie Cederholm** Curator of Education, Mackinac Island State Historic Park
- Judith Chrisman** Recording Secretary, Washtenaw County Historical Society
- William Colburn** Historic Preservation Specialist, Freer House, Detroit, MI
- Lynn Courtney** Head of Planning and Evaluation, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
- Sebastian Encina** Collections Manager, UM Kelsey Museum of Archaeology
- Todd Gerring** Community Outreach Coordinator, UM Kelsey Museum of Archaeology
- Betsy Gibbons** Manager of Secondary and Post-Secondary Education, New York Historical Society
- Amy Harris** Director, UM Exhibit Museum of Natural History
- Brian Jaeschke** Registrar, Mackinac Island State Historic Park
- Dan Madaj** Administrative Specialist, UM Exhibit Museum of Natural History
- Dan Miller** Collections Manager, UM Museum of Paleontology
- Elena Minarelli** Manager of Education, Grants, and Special Programs, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy
- Meghan Musloff** Assistant Coordinator, Visual Resources Collection, UM Department of the History of Art
- Heather Nielsen** Master Teacher for Native Arts and Head of Community and Family Programs, Denver Museum of Art, Denver, CO
- Karen O'Brien** Collections Manager, UM Museum of Anthropology
- Shannon O'Dell** Curator and Director, Sindecuse Museum of Dentistry
- Charley Potter** Collections Manager, Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History
- Pamela Reister** Associate Curator for Education, UM Museum of Art
- Janet Richards** Associate Curator, UM Kelsey Museum of Archaeology
- Sandra Shipley** Director of Exhibits, Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati, OH
- Lynne Swanson** Collections Manager, Michigan State University Museum
- Sarah Thompson** Program Coordinator, UM Exhibit Museum of Natural History



Special “TaT Cupcakes” . . . the graduate student conference *Thinking about “Things”* was more than food for the mind.

Research Spotlight MSP Grad Students Collaborate to Think about “Things”

[Ed.: MSP graduate students Sarah Conrad Gothie (American Culture and MSP09) and Kelly Kirby (Anthropology and MSP05) recently collaborated to organize and produce *Thinking about “Things” (TAT): Interdisciplinary Futures in Material Culture*, an international, interdisciplinary graduate student conference at the University of Michigan. We asked Sarah to report on this impressive undertaking.]

Thirty-four graduate student presenters representing twenty universities in eight states, five countries, and seventeen different disciplinary perspectives convened in Ann Arbor to participate in a dialogue about the study of material culture, including the role of objects in museums. The collaboration between Kelly and I began in Dublin, Ireland where we each presented papers at the inaugural TAT conference in May 2009.

Inspired by the rich intellectual environment and the potential for new ideas and collaborations that the conference encouraged, we submitted a proposal to host the next TAT conference with a theme of “preservation” and a special category for “objects in museums.” The proposal represented a nod to our own museum studies

interests and to the LS&A Theme Year, “Meaningful Objects: Museums in the Academy.” The conference received enthusiastic staff and financial support from numerous campus units, including the Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop in Museum Studies, the LS&A Theme Year, the University of Michigan Museum Studies Program, the Institute for the Humanities, the Departments of Anthropology, English, History, and History of Art, the Program in American Culture, the School of Art & Design, and the Exhibit Museum of Natural History.

The conference keynote address, delivered by Dr. William S. Pretzer, Senior Curator for History at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture (scheduled to open in 2015), explored

issues related to the interpretation of “objects of color” for a national audience. Dr. Pretzer’s account of his role in the interpretation and restoration of the Rosa Parks bus for The Henry Ford in Dearborn sparked a lively discussion in the Q&A about whether narratives and visitor experience or the objects themselves should be privileged in museum exhibits. Participants found the conference overall to be “intellectually engaging” and reported being “inspired by shared research.” One attendee commented, “It was helpful to hear perspectives from other disciplines, which helped me think about my work from different angles.” More information about the conference, including a downloadable file with presenter abstracts, can be found at the conference website: <http://www.tat2010.com>.

Tribute

Robert Lee Frost, II (October 25, 1952-March 26, 2011)

[Ed.: Bob Frost was a friend and advocate for the Museum Studies Program since its inception on campus 10 years ago. A highly engaged member of the MSP Steering Committee since 2007, Bob was a member of the special committee assigned to review the graduate curriculum after five years, he taught the MSP 601 class in the fall of 2008, he attended public events faithfully, and he ably represented the Program to students at the School of Information. For those of us who worked with Bob, we'll miss his enthusiasms, his strong commitment to teaching, and his singular sense of style.]

Bob Frost was born in Bethesda, Maryland on October 25, 1952 to William Prescott and Phyllis Gordon Frost. He was raised in Washington, D.C., Eugene, Oregon, and Panama City Beach, Florida. Deeply troubled by the violence and resistance to desegregation that he witnessed coming of age in the South in the 1960s, Bob devoted his life to a struggle for equality, peace, and social justice.

In 1971, as a sophomore at Grinnell College, he met his future wife, Margaret; they were married on June 5, 1976. Bob earned a B.A. from Grinnell College, and a M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Bob was a devoted, energetic, and beloved teacher throughout his academic career at Carthage College, Wabash College, American University, the State University of New York at Albany, and the University of Michigan. He brought his enthusiasm for information and ideas into the classroom to inspire his students, for whom he cared deeply.

He inherited a liking for tinkering from his father and expressed this in many woodworking and general “improvement” projects. He was also an audiophile and lover of all sorts of jazz, classical, folk, and world music.

In addition to his wife, Margaret Hedstrom, Bob is survived by a dear sister, Elinor G. Frost of Portland, Oregon, and two other siblings, Carol Frost Gustafson of Sacramento, California and Nicholas Frost of Ashland, Oregon; nephew Jef Beason and nieces Lilly Markowitz and Ellie Hanson.

He is also survived by a loving family of Hedstrom in-laws: father-in-law Herbert M. Hedstrom of Grand Marais, Minnesota; sister-in-law Mary Jane Hedstrom of Golden Valley, Minnesota; brother-in-law Alan Hedstrom of Fort Myers Beach, Florida; nephew Milan Hedstrom of Vienna, Austria; niece Amelia Hedstrom of Minneapolis, Minnesota; and many cousins-in-law.

In 2006, Bob established the Frost Open Access Fund at the University of Michigan School of Information by donating copyright royalties from the estate of his great-grandfather, the poet, to support open access to scholarly and artistic works. In Bob’s memory, contributions are welcome to the Frost Open Access Fund or to the Team Frost Relay for Life via the American Cancer Society.

Prepared by the University of Michigan School of Information; reprinted with the permission of Prof. Margaret Hedstrom.



Bob Frost, member of the School of Information and Museum Studies faculty.

A Post Card from Venice

[Ed.: Students in the Undergraduate Minor in Museum Studies have internship requirements, just like their graduate school counterparts. The majority of these internships are completed on campus—at one of the university’s many museums or through one of the yearlong student docent programs at the Museum of Art or the Exhibit Museum of Natural History. Very lucky students, like our own Molly Stewart, land summer internships at places like the Peggy Guggenheim Villa in Venice. Molly shares this extraordinary opportunity in the following “post card” from Venice. Her story reminds us of the exceptional opportunities available to both graduates and undergraduates at the University of Michigan.]


I was thrilled when I found out an internship was a requirement for the undergraduate minor in Museum Studies; it is easy for a university student to go through their entire undergraduate career without actual experience in their field of study. Once I found out I would be studying in Florence, Italy for the winter semester, I realized this opened up my internship opportunities to overseas.

I was lucky enough to have Bea Zengotitabengoa (MSP07) as my GSI for two semesters and she mentioned her experience at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. Once the seed was planted, I could not stop thinking about how perfect it would be to tack on two extra months to my time in Italy by living in Venice. I immediately sent in my application to the Collection and three months later my summer was planned for me.

On the train ride over from Florence to Venice, I went through a wave of emotions from really excited to extremely terrified—I was about to spend two months alone in a completely foreign place, more foreign than Florence, which had been my home for four months. The roads are made of water and the locals speak a completely different dialect that not even native Italian-speakers can entirely comprehend. The first day of work calmed my nerves; the internship program is set up as an opportunity to make friends from all over the world. After just one full day of orientation we were tossed into the museum and expected to run it. On any given day, a guest to the museum will encounter only interns; we sell the tickets, check your bags, guard the galleries and give tours.

The program is also set up as an educational one, so while we do “run” the museum daily, we are also offered opportunities to meet and converse privately with the Director of the museum, Dr. Philip Rylands, and the Chief Conservator, Paul Schwartzbaum, as well as the other amazing people behind the scenes. We are also surrounded by some of the greatest modern masterpieces in the world; just walking around the galleries I can refer back to my university lectures on modernism, only this time with the actual pieces as reference points. With such an amazing collection, the museum encourages us to learn as much as we can about both the collection and Peggy Guggenheim’s life as a collector. We are required to give talks to the visitors about this information and throughout the months we are encouraged to sign up to give private tours. This acts as extra incentive to study the collection and Peggy and helps us become more comfortable and confident with public speaking and our developing content knowledge.

This internship program has been in existence for thirty years, as long as the museum has been open, and I feel this contributes to a unique experience for both the visitors and the interns. I could never have imagined how much I would gain from this experience; I do not know if there is anything quite like it and I will remember it always as a highlight of my college career.

A photograph of Molly Stewart, a young woman with blonde hair, sitting on a large, ornate stone bench. She is wearing a bright pink sleeveless dress with a black cardigan. The bench is made of light-colored stone with intricate carvings. In the background, there are lush green trees and foliage, suggesting an outdoor garden setting. The lighting is bright, indicating it's daytime.

MSP minor Molly Stewart (History of Art) sitting in “Peggy’s Throne” in the Nasher Sculpture Garden at the Guggenheim Collection, Venice.



Research Spotlight The Virtual Museum Project: New Contexts for New Audiences

[Ed.: Jennifer Beyer (MSP07) reports on the results of a yearlong research project that was a continuation of work begun as a capstone project during the winter of 2008 with fellow student Alice Goff. Both Alice and Jen have subsequently advanced the working model presented in their initial proposal for a Virtual Museum Project and have presented at museums conferences to great acclaim and considerable interest. Through generous funding provided by the UM Office of the Provost, Jen spent the 2010/11 academic year paving the way for a working model for her Virtual Museum to be deployed at the University's Ruthven museums.]

A conceptual model for a highly decentralized museum space has emerged from multi-year research efforts at the University of Michigan. Research has explored how virtual and physical encounters with objects can be used to engage students with existing museum collections. Currently, collections at the Ruthven museums are under-utilized by undergraduates as they are primarily intended for research in specific disciplines such as anthropology, zoology, or paleontology. In the past year, the Virtual Museum Project has sought to explore modes of building connections between the museums' collections and students.

Work with students revealed several key barriers to engagement. Most undergraduates do not develop object literacy as part of their studies and do not know how to "use" collections without the support of museum staff. However, museum support comes almost exclusively from a disciplinary perspective—which is only relevant to a narrow group of undergraduates. While students studying anthropology or archaeology are often engaged with collections in the Ruthven museums, those outside the disciplines are not. Undergraduate students expressed strong and varied interest in object collections but often their knowledge base and interests did not match the disciplinary focus of the museums.

Object-centered activities with undergraduates revealed that a viable approach to engaging them with collections is to allow objects to be conceptually "moved" into different contexts. Students are more interested in objects and are more motivated to work with them when the surrounding context fits with their interests and level of object expertise. Allowing students to construct

their own context for collections has also proven positive for building object literacy and learning around objects. Museum objects are conceptualized more like library materials—where patrons are free to read, share, and use materials to further their own research. Museum collections, however, are not like library materials and cannot be readily checked out or handled by patrons. Additionally, they are not as easily "read" by those wishing to engage with them as most undergraduates do not have strong object literacy skills.

Technologies, however, can provide a space for students to actively use collections when it is nearly impossible to do so physically. In a new, virtual "work space" Ruthven museums' collections no longer need to reside in exclusive disciplines. Instead they can be shifted from one context to another and available interpretive assets can be made relevant to those using the collection. A subsequent step would be to develop a prototype digital tool that would allow virtual representations of objects to be endlessly re-contextualized. Such a tool would also allow users to create their own contexts around objects, using a variety of assets—not just those from the museums. Instead of relying on curatorial interpretation, this virtual museum tool would open collections through a neutral environment, allowing students to build object understanding within contexts that are personally relevant. We hope that this technology tool—which is proving to help students build object literacy—will be a catalyst for new ways of thinking about campus collections for both the museums and students. Instead of collections locked in disciplinary modes of understanding, they can become resources for research, exhibition, and learning across disciplines.

Fall 2011 Admissions

Laura Alcantara

Near Eastern Studies, PhD

Sanam Arab

Information, MSI

Keeley Briggs

Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, MS

Abigail Celis

French Language & Literature, PhD

Jenny Kreiger

IPCAA, PhD

Marissa Kuccheck

History of Art, PhD

Molly McGuire

Information, MSI

Kayla Romberger

Art & Design, MFA

Shannon Schmoll

Astronomy & Education, PhD

Anna Topolska

History, PhD

Alisha Wessler

Art & Design, MFA

Ning Wu

Natural Resources, MS



Charles H. Sawyer Center for Museum Studies
University of Michigan Museum of Art
525 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI unicon@ethionet.umich.edu 48109-1354

