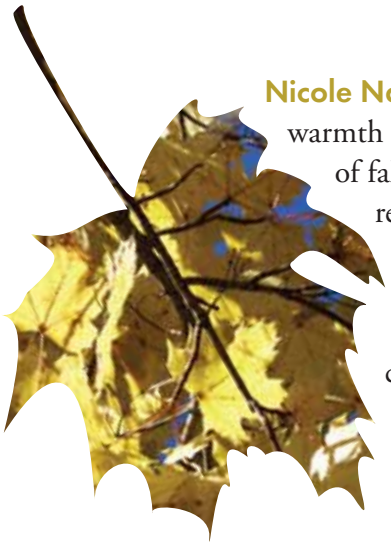
Registrar's Quarterly

Fall 2012

RCWR
REGISTRARS COMMITTEE
WESTERN REGION

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Nicole Nathan Summer's waning days of warmth are giving way to the hustle and bustle of fall. The coming months in the Western region are ripe with conferences, programs, happenings, and workshops. The topics and themes being talked about seem to focus or revolve around change—changing how we make exhibits, how we think about collections, how we write about objects, and whose stories we tell. Turning your museum on its head, the new normal, what's now, and what's next, are on our minds.

These rumblings of change are sure to be front and center at the Western Museums Association Annual Meeting in Palm Springs, October 21–24. Be sure to join us on the 24TH for the annual RC-WR luncheon, generously sponsored this year by Huntington T. Block. We also have space available in two great pre-conference workshops—

CSI: Registrar at Cabot's Pueblo Museum, Desert Hot Spring
Saturday, October 20 from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
(sponsored by Hollinger Metal Edge)
To sign up, visit our home page at rcwr.org.

Disaster Recovery for Collections: The First 24–48 Hours After an Emergency at Balboa Art Conservation Center, San Diego
Sunday, October 21 from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
To sign up, visit westmuse.org.

State museum associations are also busy with fall meetings. Utah Museums Association will hold its annual conference in Salt Lake City on October 1–3; the joint conference of Museums Alaska and Alaska Historical Society will be held October 10–13 in Sitka; and the Oregon Museums Association Annual Meeting will be held October 28–30 at the Schneider Museum of Art, Ashland.

A special note to Alaska, Oregon and Utah members: Your states need representatives. If you're interested, please contact me for more information.

If you're thinking about these issues, why not share your thoughts with colleagues? Our next newsletter is slated for December/January; the deadline for articles will be mid-December.

Enjoy the fall!

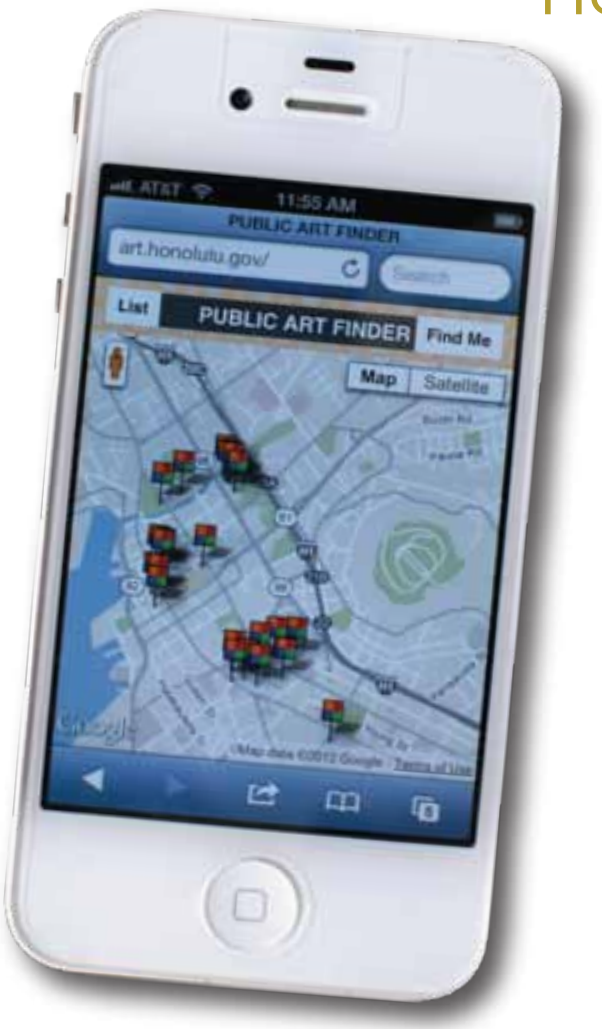
Newsletter Design by Allison Rogers Graphic Design

Since 1979, the RC-WR has cooperated with the RC-AAM in advocating for the profession of Registrars and Collections Managers across the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington, and promotes high standards and best practices in registration.

RCWR.org

RCWR
REGISTRARS COMMITTEE
WESTERN REGION

Honolulu Public Art Finder



by E. Tory Laitila

In June 2012, the Honolulu Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts (MOCA) introduced its first smartphone application, the Honolulu Public Art Finder. MOCA, in conjunction with the City and County of Honolulu Department of Information Technology (DIT) and Code for America, developed this app. Available for both smart phones and computers, it gives users a real time map showing the placement and descriptions of specific works from Honolulu's Art in City Buildings collection.

Initially, DIT approached MOCA about developing a smartphone app to view Honolulu's Art in City Buildings collection. The collection at that point was only publicly accessible through the MOCA webpage via PastPerfect online. The app as originally planned would have accessed mirrored data from the MOCA PastPerfect museum software database to provide direct access to information on the entire collection.

When Code for America joined the City in its goal to develop interactive applications, the design for the Art in City Buildings collection app changed. Instead of merely accessing MOCA's PastPerfect data, the new app would plot the position of the publicly accessible works of art on a map. Similar to Google Maps, to which MOCA had slowly been adding public art sites, this app would provide a visual guide to the locations of Honolulu's art works.

The information for the app was provided by exporting data from MOCA's PastPerfect database. In order to get an accurate location to plot on the map, each object needed exact longitude and latitude coordinates. The entire collection was sorted and a new PastPerfect data field created, "Public Art Access." Works that were identified with "full" or "limited" public art access had longitude and latitude coordinates acquired and entered in the database.

After this lengthy process, information on full and limited publicly accessible works of art was exported and utilized by Mick Thompson, a 2012 Code for America fellow, to create the app. Using the colors from the MOCA logo, flag points on a map show the locations of the works. Selecting a flag will show the title of the work with a thumbnail image, and if selected again a new page opens detailing the title, an image, object name, description, date, and any donor information. The app can also be used in a list view and will show users the closest works to their location.

Check out the MOCA Public Art finder at art.honolulu.gov. ■

Collecting History

COMPARING AN IDEAL ACQUISITION POLICY WITH ACTUAL MUSEUM PRACTICE

by Anna Rosenbluth

Every museum professional can tell you about the many objects in the museum's collection that are of unknown origin or that are stored improperly and in need of preservation. Indiscriminate collecting and poor documentation in the past are a major source of frustration in modern museums. The Heritage Health Index from 2005 shed light on the incredibly poor storage conditions and record keeping of current museum collections (Heritage Preservation, 2005). The conscientious history museum strives to achieve the highest professional standards and considers issues such as title, copyright, provenance, restricted gifts, potential use, and cost of care when addressing a potential acquisition. A strong acquisition policy, that is reviewed and updated regularly, is the only way to address such issues.

This article outlines the areas that an ideal acquisition policy should address and compares this ideal acquisition policy with the current acquisition practices of history museums in the United States.

For this study, I conducted a survey of 184 AAM-accredited history museums in the United States. Each museum received a 16-question survey and each was asked to provide a copy of its mission statement and acquisition policy. Fifty-eight museums responded to the survey, of these 58 museums, 47 provided their acquisition policy. The survey was designed to examine almost every aspect of acquisitions and the many issues that must be considered when making an acquisition. Surveys were analyzed and compared to the policies provided in order to discover how well practice and policy matched.

A brief look at several of the survey questions reveals what has been discovered regarding these important areas of the acquisition process.

The Statement of Authority: ***Who makes acquisition decisions and who is in charge of documenting the decision?***
The acquisition policy should delegate the authority to make acquisition decisions. Results showed that museums do a good job of stating who has the authority to make the final acquisition decision. Nearly all were able to report who had the authority to make the decision, and a very high percentage of the policies reviewed also mentioned authority, so that only a minor discrepancy existed between what staff reported and what the actual associated policy stated.

Frequency of Review: ***How often should the policy be reviewed and revised?***
Acquisition policies are evolving documents that should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. While three-fourths of museums reported a standard period for revision of their acquisition policy, only about one-fifth of the policies actually mention revision. In addition, roughly one-fourth of respondents reported updating their policy only every 8 years or more, which is not often enough. Overall, museums need to set regular and timely review and revision periods and to state clearly the revision period in the acquisition policy.

Criteria to be Considered: ***Mission? Use? Cost? Care?***
It is crucial to address the criteria that need to be met in order for an item to be accepted into the collection. Museums should consider the mission of the museum, the potential use of the item, the museum's ability to care for and properly store the item, the condition of the item, and the cost of maintaining the item for the long term. Some interesting results were found concerning the criteria to be considered during the acquisition process; while survey responses were all high, the review of the policies did not

show the same high percentages. For example, all museums reported considering the mission during the acquisition process, but only 91.5% of the policies did. In addition, potential use and the need for conservation were reported to be considered by nearly all of museums, but the policies showed that around two-thirds mentioned potential use and only roughly half mentioned the need for conservation.

Copyright: ***Who owns the copyright and can it be acquired by the museum?***
Often, even if ownership of an item is transferred, the rights to reproduce, adapt, or display the item may still be held by the donor. Museums are advised to make sure that they own the copyright, or if that is not possible, to arrange license agreements. The right of reproduction was the most often considered area of copyright, at nearly three-quarters of respondents. Indeed, while three-quarters of museums mentioned considering at least one form of copyright, only about 40% of policies addressed the topic. While all copyrights are addressed at low rates, the policies addressed them at an even lower rate.

Restricted Gifts: ***Should they be allowed and who has the authority to accept them?***
Marie Malaro, John Simmons, AAM, and ICOM all caution that museums should avoid restricted gifts as much as possible. If a restricted gift is approved, it should be on a case-by-case basis with detailed records kept. Museums should have policies on accepting restricted gifts, and a review of their policies on restricted gifts provided some interesting results. Only about 85% of museums reported having a policy in place, but upon review of the policies, it was discovered that about 93% actually did mention restricted gifts. Whatever the policy is on restricted gifts, staff must know it.

Unsolicited Gifts: ***Is there a procedure in place?***
It is not uncommon for people to drop off or mail items for donation without speaking to the curator beforehand, and the museum is left with items that may not fit the museum's mission. Every museum should have policy in place to dictate who has the authority to accept unsolicited donations and what steps to take when one is received. Only about half of the museums had either a formal or informal procedure in place concerning unsolicited gifts. Only around one-fifth had a formal policy in place. These two numbers show that history museums are leaving themselves open to the potential danger of taking custody of items without completing a temporary custody receipt or similar document.

Provenance and Cultural Property: ***Are they considered during acquisition?***
History museums should stress the importance of researching provenance, which is particularly important in the case of history collections. It is the provenance of the item that makes the object relevant. If a museum is acquiring items without being able to establish their provenance, then it is hard to argue that careful acquisition decisions are being made. In addition, the looting of historical sites and the illegal exportation of cultural items from their home country is a major problem. Museums should do their part to ensure that the items they acquire have recorded provenance and have not been illegally excavated or removed from their country of origin. The survey addressed acquiring items of cultural property that may fall under NAGPRA, in addition to international cultural property and the issue of provenance research. Overall, history museums seem to avoid acquiring items that belong to indigenous groups, especially if they are subject to NAGPRA. The museums that do accept indigenous items showed sensitivity to the need for researching provenance and adhering to NAGPRA regulations in their policies. However, only about half of the museums that contain items of international cultural property research provenance. Overall, only about 60% of the policies addressed provenance for any collection item, not just cultural property.

Documents and Records: ***What forms are used during the acquisition process?***
There are many documents and forms that should be used during the acquisition process. Unfortunately, the documents used by history museums in the acquisition process could be improved. A Temporary Deposit Agreement should be one

of the first steps in the acquisition process. The Temporary Deposit Agreement is a legal agreement, between the museum and those who leave objects with the museum, which protects the interests of all parties. Occasionally, an unsolicited object arrives at the museum without a temporary deposit agreement having been put in place. In such situations, "the museum should have a statement about the fate of objects left on the property without process and receipt" (Buck, 2010:38). Survey results showed that the temporary deposit form was only used by three-fourths of museums.

Other important documents include the Donor Questionnaire and the Curator's Proposal for Acquisition. The Donor Questionnaire is a useful tool for handling the issue of title and provenance. The Curator's Proposal for Acquisition requires the curator to review the item and consider its merit to be in the permanent collection, which helps to ensure that the object fits the museum's mission. Unfortunately, the Donor Questionnaire was used by only around one-fourth of museums, and the Curator Proposal by about one-third of museums.

Once an item has been deemed appropriate for acquisition, the Deed of Gift should be used. The Deed of Gift is the best way to address title, restricted gifts, the donor's intent, the museum's acceptance of the item, and receipt of the gift. Fortunately, the Deed of Gift was used by almost all museums.

Documents such as the Deed of Sale, collecting permits, and export/import permits are only needed on a case-by-case basis. When a museum purchases an item, it is important to document the sale with the Deed of Sale to protect itself from a breach in warranty. When a museum decides to acquire, or is required to acquire a field collection, it is important to obtain all collecting permits and associated records about the excavation. Possessing the permits not only helps to establish that the items were excavated legally, but also helps to document when, where, and by whom the objects were excavated. When acquiring an item that has been imported into the country, it is important to research and to document the export and import of the item. Survey results revealed that collecting permits and export/import permits were used by fewer than 20% of museums, and the Deed of Sale by 50%. However, the low percentages may be the result of the documents being irrelevant to the museum.

Finally, records to prove completion of gift, including a letter of acknowledgement, should be completed. Since donors receive tax benefits from donating items to museums, it is important that the museum keeps records of when a gift is completed. The AAM (Buck, 2010:49) writes that "written acceptance of the gift by the proper museum authority" is needed to complete a gift. While a thank you letter may sound like a simple formality, it actually holds very important legal implications and should not be neglected. Only about 40% of museums reported recording completion of the gift, but almost all museums provide a letter of acknowledgement. Small-sized museums were slightly more likely to neglect writing a letter.

Way Forward

It is clear that there are several areas where history museums can improve their acquisition process. For the most part, policies simply need to be updated to reflect the current practices being carried out by museums. Often, a museum may have a policy that is not followed. Conversely, some museums are quite conscious of proper museum standards and may have good practices in place despite having no written policies. Several areas, such as unsolicited gifts and legal documents used during the acquisition process, clearly need improvement.

Museums are still working to clear up the poor record keeping, unclear provenance, and unnecessary collecting that occurred in the past. Museums and their boards must take reports such as The Heritage Health Index seriously, and implement steps not only to correct existing problems but also to ensure that these oversights are a thing of the past. Museums are less likely to encounter problems in the future if they create an acquisition policy with detailed and complete documentation.

Number of Respondents Stating Policy Existed Compared with the Number of Policies that Actually Mentioned Topic

Topic	In policy %	In Survey %	Discrepancy %
Mission as a guide	91.5	100	8.5
Authority	87.2	93.6	19.1
Review and revision	21.3	76.6	57.4
Ability to care for item	85.1	97.9	17
Physical condition of item	51.1	95.7	53.2
Use of item in collection	61.7	95.7	34
Conflicts of interest	55.3		
Policy on Good title	89.4	100	10.6
Policy on Copyrights	40.4	74.5	55.3
Policy on Restricted gifts	93.6	85	17
Policy on unsolicited gifts	19.1	53.2	46.8
Policy on Research provenance	61.7	31.9	34
Policy on cultural property	61.7	42.5	34
Mention of documents and records to be used and kept	89.4	97.9	12.8

Collecting History continued...

History museums have shown that the basic procedures of considering the mission and filling out a deed of gift are in place, but it is time to go beyond these basics to a more nuanced method of acquisition that includes considering issues such as provenance and the potential use of the item in the collection. A detailed acquisition policy is the first line of defense against the undisciplined collecting that can lead to the poor collections conditions, and both legal and ethical conundrums.

Anna Rosenbluth earned her master's degree from the San Francisco State University Museum Studies program in 2011. This is a summary of her master's thesis.

References

Buck, Rebecca. 2010. "Initial Custody and Documentation." *In Museum Registration Methods 5th Edition,* ed. Rebecca A Buck, Jean Allman Gilmore, pp. 38-96. Washington D.C.: The AAM Press.

Heritage Preservation. 2005. *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections.* Washington D.C.: Heritage Preservation, Inc.

International Council of Museums (ICOM). 2001. "ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums." Accessed May 4, 2011. museum.or.jp/icom-j/ethics_rev_engl.html.

Malaro, Marie C. 1998. *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections.* Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books

Simmons, John E. 2006. *Things Great and Small: Collections Management Policies.* Washington D.C.: American Association of Museums.

THE PREMIER PROVIDER OF GLOBAL LOGISTICS SOLUTIONS,
WHERE TALENTED PEOPLE TAKE SERVICE TO A HIGHER LEVEL.

MASTERPIECE INTERNATIONAL LTD

LOS ANGELES
T: 310.643.7990
F: 310.643.7991
LAX@MASTERPIECEINTL.COM

SAN FRANCISCO
T: 650.244.0630
F: 650.244.0640
SFO@MASTERPIECEINTL.COM

SEATTLE
T: 206.568.3795
F: 206.568.3893
SEATTLE@MASTERPIECEINTL.COM

BOSTON NEW YORK WASHINGTON D.C. MIAMI ATLANTA CHICAGO HOUSTON DALLAS LOS ANGELES SAN FRANCISCO SEATTLE

Networking Nature

at the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections

by Rachel Marie Sargent

This past June, with the help of an RC-WR travel stipend, I attended the annual conference of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) and presented my Master's Project, *Networking Nature: Building Cybercabinets of Digital Curiosities*. It was an amazing opportunity to meet and speak with fellow natural history collections professionals on a topic about which I feel passionately: online access to digitized natural history collections. Digitizing collections and making them available online has been important to many types of museums for at least fifteen years, but while art and culture museums have seen the public as an important online audience, natural history museums, as science research institutions, have focused on accommodating the needs of their research community. Only in the past few years have these museums turned their attention to reaching the public as well. They already have significant digital collections; it's just a matter of presenting these collections in a public-friendly framework.

My research examined successful collections websites for their strengths and weaknesses through an heuristic evaluation based on a review of relevant literature, a remote user self study survey, and three detailed case studies. Based on these sources of information, I compiled eight guidelines aimed at supporting the development decisions of natural history collections professionals who want to build unique and creative websites to showcase their digital collections for the general public. These guidelines were the substance of the presentation I gave at SPNHC. During my research, I came across the term *cybercabinet* coined by Stephen T. Asma in *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums* to refer to online collections of digitized natural history

Rachel Sargent presenting *Networking Nature: Building Cybercabinets of Digital Curiosities* to the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections
Photograph: Marcus Krag

specimens, a direct reference to the cabinets of curiosity early in the history of museums. His image perfectly captures the wonder, mystery, and awe that online access to natural history aims to inspire for virtual visitors.

My first guideline for cybercabinets is that they be useful. This means that users must be able to find the site in the first place—it should be google-able—and content must be accessible through appropriate language, intuitive layout, and by following ADA standards. It is a good idea to keep any cybercabinet simple and flexible across software and device platforms because it will allow the site to fail gracefully, meaning that even when the site fails, it still allows users to access its basic functions. Cybercabinets are also more useful the more digital resources they provide. Users from the self study asked for abundant digital stuff to explore.

The second guideline is that cybercabinets be beautiful. User responses from the self study were very clear that users only want aesthetically pleasing online experiences. A beautiful site will win over visitors even

if they have little prior interest in natural history and have never heard of the host institution. It's especially important that the homepage be attractive because users will make snap decisions based on their initial impression of the homepage. Cluttered and convoluted sites are neither accessible, simple, nor attractive.

The third guideline recommends that cybercabinets keep the user experience personal. Site users engage more with sites that allow them to personalize their online experience. Personalizing provides a sense of ownership and control for users and supports online community building.

The fourth guideline reminds cybercabinet builders to incorporate serendipitous discovery tools into their site. Serendipitous discovery—the unexpected discovery of something users only realize they want after they find it—has become an important concern for many collections websites.

The most common serendipity strategy is simply allowing users to browse instead of search the collection. Browsing support tools range from simple similarity recommendations to algorithms that track and match user data to make personalized recommendations.

The fifth guideline concerns sharing. Sharing, through open access to content and linking between sites, is one of the primary advantages of the Internet, as recommended in the literature concerned with the evolution of the digital world. Through free and open access, users come to rely on sites that share as trusted and reliable resources. Sharing will spread a cybercabinet's web presence, build its online community, and promote unexpected and creative content re-use.

The sixth guideline suggests cybercabinets encourage participation. Visitors to a cybercabinet will engage more deeply if they can actively participate in some way that revolves around the content. Users from the self study repeatedly asked for interactive experiences they could tailor to their own needs. Sites that allow social media-like interactions among users or with staff members have received strong positive feedback. Online access should be thought of as an ongoing dialogue with the virtual visitors.

The seventh guideline recommends providing access to experts. Web visitors turn to museum sites because they provide access to knowledge from respected sources. While this can be challenging to implement, cybercabinets should try to provide interaction with experts, which will promote user engagement and trust.

The eighth and final guideline tells cybercabinet builders to take advantage of cross-institutional collaborations. As with sharing, the Internet facilitates cross-fertilization of ideas nurtured within different institutional microcosms. When institutions share through collaboration and linking, their pooled resources become a deeper source of content, thus building richer cybercabinets.

My hope is that these guidelines will be useful for natural history collections professionals, both in advocating for the creation of cybercabinets and in implementing such projects. Having the opportunity to present the guidelines at the SPNHC conference was just the beginning of joining a field-wide conversation that natural history collections professionals will be having about how to reach online audiences. Public online access to collections is becoming more important and increasingly we will have to think creatively about ways to engage these audiences through websites and dynamic web presences.

For additional information, please contact Rachel Marie Sargent at rachel.marie.sargent@gmail.com. ■

A Question of Lenders' Insurance Values

by Renee Montgomery

Scenario: Your museum is securing a loan critical to an upcoming exhibition. The lender returns the loan contract. His declared insurance value is high, but the loan is vital to the exhibition and it's ticklish to question this lender. The contract is countersigned with everyone hoping the loan will simply come and go without incident so the value never becomes an issue in an insurance claim.

The question of inflated loan values is a delicate area of exhibition production—both from your side and your insurer's. Once your institution has approved a value, under the conditions of most collection policies, your underwriters must honor this amount in the event of a total loss claim. In the case of a partial loss (or damage) claim, the value becomes the basis for adjustment, meaning, a damage to an object valued at $1 million rendering the artwork to lose half its value, let's say, will result in a $500,000 claim, but if the work had been valued at $500,000, the claim would settle at $250,000. As a result, underwriters depend on museums to carefully vet loan values. A massive settlement with one institution's lender, can translate into higher premiums for other museums upon insurance renewal. In some cases your museum might be purchasing special coverage specifically for your exhibition or paying the lender's premium, so a higher lender value will signify direct costs.

Following are some tactics helpful in resolving the issue of inconsistent insurance values assigned by lenders.

As with most controversies, an open dialogue is usually the best solution. The museum can explain to the lender "We've been seeing all the values come in from lenders for this exhibition and notice yours is high compared with similar objects. Can we ask what you based the value on?" In my experience, misstated values normally stem from unsophisticated lenders who were simply guessing at approximate values, and who are usually responsive to questioning. Of course, museums are careful not to furnish an appraisal during the course of these conversations, but will forward the lender to an appraiser(s), auction house, and/or artist's dealer for clarification.

Museums may also ask the lender to supply a copy of an appraisal—implying this is needed for bureaucratic reasons if necessary. For instance, at my museum, the curator handily blames me: "Gee, I'm sorry; our risk manager requires an appraisal." Or your museum can explain that your insurance company requires substantiation. In my experience, when lenders have been asked for documentation, I've been happily surprised. Many collectors closely follow the market. The lender may even respond with a bill-of-sale if he's acquired the object recently.

Sometimes we hear lenders claim: "This work is priceless, it's impossible to set a value!" Museums must tactfully push through that sort of description. The claim of pricelessness can be true in limited instances but almost every type of art or artifact is bought and sold on the open market nowadays and has a value, (e.g., George Washington's personal copy of the Constitution/Bill of Rights, recently sold at auction).

Another strategy is to agree to insure for the "fair market value at time of loss" rather than for a declared value, so the

issue is put off to experts until later if needed. Further ideas are conferring with other museums who've hosted exhibitions of similar material. Colleagues can't disclose their lenders' values of course but may furnish revealing information, e.g., "Yes, we dealt with that lender. He has a curator advising him." Or perhaps your own insurance agency knows the lender—through positive or negative loss history. Again, in my experience, most feedback from the insurance agencies regarding particular lenders has been favorable. Your brokerage may happen to serve the same collector and be aware of an appraisal you could request from the collector.

Another possible solution is to ask the lender to continue his own insurance, so any claim settlement impacts his record, not yours. Bear in mind that many lenders (or their agents) may wish to invoice a premium. Naturally in these cases, you're obtaining an insurance certificate naming all the borrowers (including tour venues) as additionally assured and/or waiving subrogation rights.

If dealing with other *institutions*, look for a quid pro quo situation before negotiating, for instance, "we are looking forward to lending to *your* upcoming exhibition and value our partnership with your museum, but must resolve this value issue." Most colleagues and private collectors are sensitive to the realities of budget limitations so if you mention the (inflated) insurance value could impact your costs, they may see the value less as an abstract approximate number, and be willing to pinpoint it better along market rates.

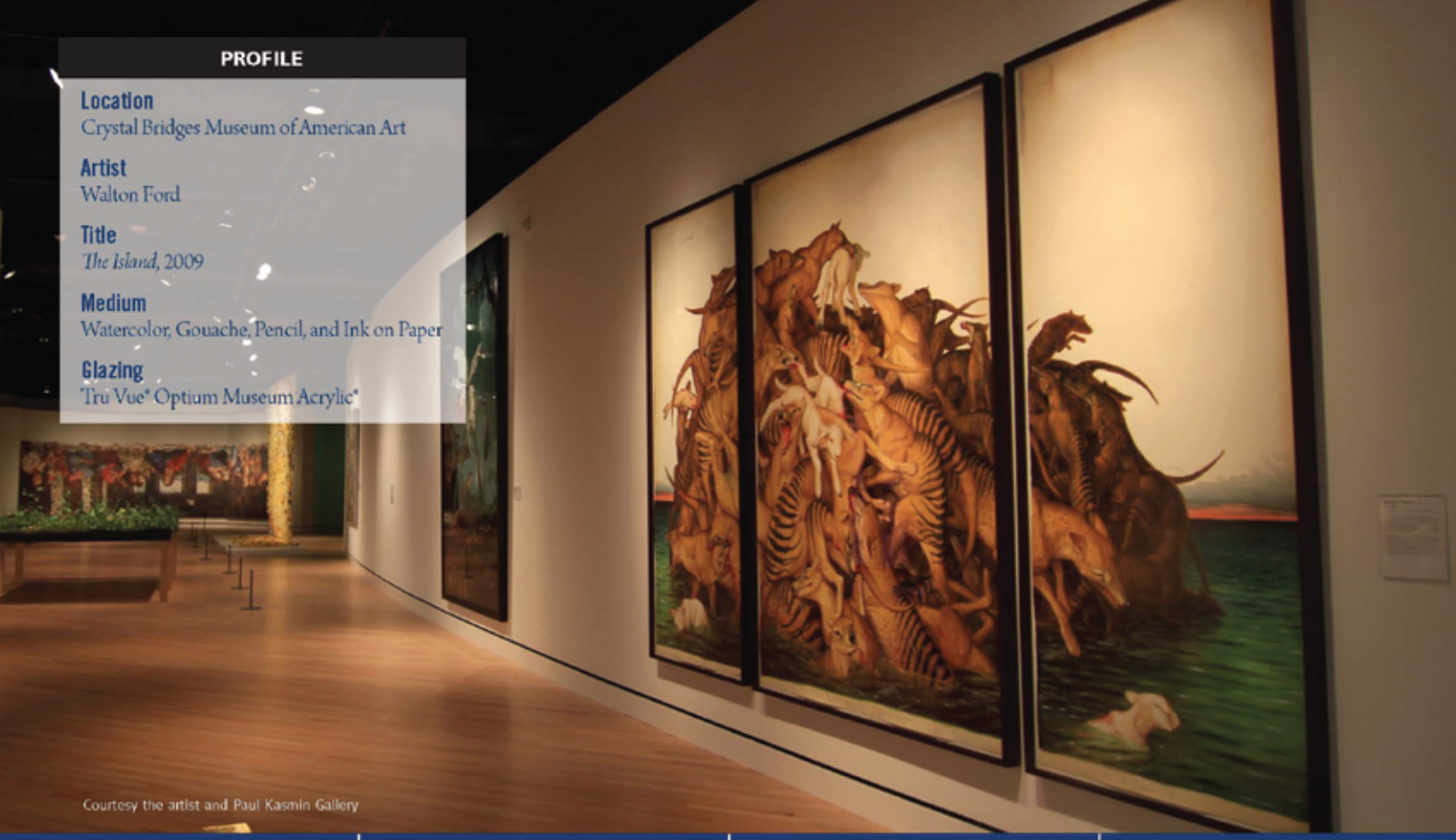
If the matter simply can't be resolved, an internal risk management discussion should occur (e.g., with your supervisor, curator, conservator), taking into consideration: the value, length of loan, lender, the relative fragility, and risks to which the object will be exposed or not, e.g. a complicated travel itinerary. Discuss any special mitigation measures you can employ: obtaining outgoing condition reports and photos preferably signed off by the lender and your staff (or your agent) at the lender's door, special advance inspection by a conservator, a possible courier, and/or special security safeguards, e.g., display under a vitrine. In some cases, the prudent approach may be to simply delete the loan from your exhibition.

If you must proceed, try to reduce your risks, for instance, by agreeing to insure on your premises only and not during transits, where damage is statistically more likely to transpire. Or, similarly try to limit your insurance responsibility to the less-likely risks of loss, theft or mysterious disappearance, thereby avoiding the whole issue of depreciation in the event of damage.

Of course, issuing loan contracts early allows more time to negotiate values. A loan form returned the day before the pickup date gives little time to sort out difficulties. Finally, developing internal procedures in advance, outlining how inconsistent loan insurance values will be addressed, will speed up the process and help you manage expectations. Procedures should be accompanied by staff training or sensitization.

Renee Montgomery is Assistant Director of Risk Management at Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Reprinted from the Western Museum Association Westmuse blog at westmuse.wordpress.com/



anti-reflective | anti-static | abrasion resistant | UV protection

The Finest Collections Depend on Optium® Acrylic Glazing

The result of years of collaboration with the museum community, Optium® Acrylic Glazing is the ideal solution for your demanding frame and display requirements.

Optium combines the best of both worlds, anti-reflective safety glass and UV filtering acrylic, in one product, for all your aesthetic and conservation needs. Find out why museums around the world depend on Optium to protect, conserve and display their most valuable and historic collections. Optium. The Difference is Clear™.

To experience the clear difference, contact your authorized supplier for a free Optium Sample Kit or visit **www.tru-vue.com/museums/rcwr.**

Optium®
Acrylic Glazing
TRU VUE
www.tru-vue.com

Follow Us:

Displayed Worldwide - New York | Los Angeles | Hong Kong | London | Paris | Tokyo | Amsterdam | Venice

OREGON 2012

by Heather Bouchey

The Oregon Museum Association (OMA) is holding its annual conference October 28–30, 2012, at the Schneider Museum of Art in Ashland. This year's topic is Museums and the New Normal: Building Relevance in Your Community. As stated by one of OMA's board members, this year's theme refers to the increasing need for museums to demonstrate their value as community institutions while facing persistent economic hardships. Museums are operating on limited resources, but more and more often we find that our traditional offerings just aren't enough to attract our local and tourist audiences. This "new normal" refers to the museum's need for constantly changing creative programming that doesn't break the bank.

The conference will host a wide variety of panel sessions and discussions ranging from community-based collections, exhibition evaluations on a budget, to building the community through heritage collaboration. A pre-conference workshop held by Balboa Art Conservation Center (BACC) will be creating an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Collections.

For further information please visit the OMA website www.oregonmuseums.org
All OMA members and non-members are welcome to attend!

Report Given by a Member of the Governor's Heritage Vitality Task Force The Oregon Governor's Heritage Vitality Task Force has created a draft of recommendations for legislative action, grouped into public funding, private funding, and best practices. Under public funding some examples of nods go to reauthorization of the Oregon Cultural Trust tax credits, emphasis on the obligation of city and county governments to continue to fund the heritage organizations which they have created and listing other options than general municipal and county general funds. This also includes a permanent check-off on Oregon taxes for an Oregon heritage fund, the creation of a public records filing fee specifically for the preservation of public records, and the obligation of the state to support the Oregon Historical Society. A long awaited study of economic value of heritage tourism in Oregon is also due October 1 with more on the final version of the recommendations after they are developed in September.

Please note that these reports and findings will be presented and open for discussion at the OMA 2012 Annual Conference.

Over the summer, the Southern Oregon Historical Society debuted the Origins dinner series, which seeks to connect local history and a sense of place with local foods. This year, SOHS partnered with the Jacksonville Market and CSA, Valley View Winery, and Chef Kristen Lyon. Each dinner focused on a different history topic, ranging from the Bracero Program in Southern Oregon to archaeology research at a former Chinese settlement, and the food served. The last Origins dinner of 2012 occurred Saturday, September 29 on Prehistoric Archaeology of Southern Oregon. *More info: sohs.org/events/origins-1*

History: Made by You is SOHS's new innovative and interactive outreach program through which SOHS works hand-in-hand with community groups to create relevant and engaging traveling exhibits. During a public forum, participants discuss local history topics directly related to their community. Staff and volunteers work together to research, design, and develop the exhibit, which is installed in public locations throughout Jackson County.

Updates on the Brigadier General James B. Thayer Oregon Military Museum: The Oregon Military Museum was recently renamed in honor of Retired Brigadier General James B. Thayer, one of Oregon's finest military

OREGON continued...

and civic leaders. Brig. Gen. Thayer joined the U.S. Army in 1942, earning the prestigious Silver and Bronze Stars for his combat service. During World War II, his anti-tank mine platoon discovered and liberated the Nazi death camp, Gunskirchen Lager, near Wels, Austria. More than 15,000 Hungarian-Jewish refugees were saved that day.

In preparation for the Museum's reopening (still TBA), an F-86 Sabre jet will return from being on loan in Eugene, Oregon. With the help of the Oregon Air National Guard, the aircraft will be disassembled and trucked up to the Museum's home in Clackamas, Oregon, to be reassembled for future display. This particular aircraft was used by U.S. forces during the Korean War.

Class on Textile Preservation Every Wednesday from September 26–November 14, the Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) Continuing Education department is offering an eight-week course on textile preservation held at and utilizing the Museum of Contemporary Craft (MoCC). This beginning-level class is being taught by RC-WR Treasurer and textile conservator, Kathleen Daly, and provides instruction on object handling, basic storage solution construction, and the fundamentals of fibers and textiles. ■

ARIZONA 2012 *by Pat Evans*

Easton Collection Center (ECC) at the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA).

Museum of Northern Arizona With funding from an NEH Stabilization grant, Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) just finished moving first and second priority Ethnographic holdings into the Easton Collection Center (ECC) which opened in 2009. The ECC is LEED certified at the platinum level and has a solar aperture that allows the cultural objects within to know the changing of the seasons. MNA, a private museum, worked with its federal partners (National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service) and Tribes (Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, and Apache Bands) to ensure that the ECC met the needs of this diverse group.

Besides Ethnology, the Botany, Entomology, and first and second priority Archaeology holdings have been moved into the ECC with funding from the Save America's Treasures and two Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Conservation Project grants. Grants from the NEH Preservation Assistance program supported rehousing efforts. MNA is currently moving Archives into the ECC with an NEH Sustaining Cultural Collections grant under the guidance of its new archivist, Patricia Walker. Ms. Walker is a Certified Archivist with over 10 years of experience in the field. Aiding her in this move is Melissa Van Otterloo, Archives Intern, who is a recent graduate of the Drexel University Library/Archives program. MNA will seek funds to move the Fine Arts and Zoology collections into the ECC over the next few years.

In May MNA received an IMLS CP grant to conduct a new general conservation survey. The Conservation Team, led by Preservation Conservator Wendy Jessup, completed the survey in August. Team members included Matt Crawford (Anthropology and Paleontology), Susan Duhl (Paper Archives and

Works of Art on Paper), Kim DuBoise (Photo and Digital Archives), Tom Fuller (Biology) and Michael Henry (Preservation Architect).

In addition to the Archives Intern, MNA hosted Amanda Kramp this summer as a Natural Science Intern. Ms. Kramp is completing her MA in Anthropology and Museum Studies at California State University-Chico.

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA) is proud to announce that our exhibitions manager, Laura Spalding Best, has been awarded a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Inc., for her artwork.

Best's oil paintings explore the collective aesthetic of the urban landscape. The idea that individuals and communities are connected literally and abstractly by common fixtures and sights—such as utility poles, power lines or streetlights—is a driving force behind her work. Her paintings separate and celebrate the blights on the vista, and emphasize and memorialize the unappreciated flaws of our everyday view. Painting directly on sheet metal and found objects, Best's work attempts to reconcile the manmade cityscape set against the wild, desert sky. Examples of her paintings can be seen at www.lauraspaldingbest.com.

SMoCA director Tim Rodgers said, "We are so pleased that the Pollock-Krasner Foundation has recognized Laura's artistic skill. SMoCA is proud to have her on staff as both a talented exhibitions manager and an artist. Laura's training as an artist provides her with a deeper knowledge of artistic practice. This extra layer of experience and skill lends SMoCA and its staff an incredible advantage: Laura is able to more effectively and intuitively help artists realize their vision while simultaneously enhancing the installation process, overall exhibition design and ultimately, the visitors' experiences in the Museum." Best said, "I'm honored by this recognition from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation and am excited to have the means to devote more time to my art practice."

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA) is also pleased to announce the arrival of the Museum's new associate curator, Emily Stamey, Ph.D., in early September. Stamey most recently served as curator of modern and contemporary art at the Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Kansas. She earned her BA in art history from Grinnell College, Iowa, and her MA and Ph.D. in art history from the University of Kansas, Lawrence. Stamey has also worked and interned in the curatorial and education departments at the Spencer Museum of Art; the University of Kansas, Lawrence; and the Smithsonian Center for Education & Museum Studies, Washington, D.C. Among Stamey's many accomplishments while at the Ulrich: co-authoring *Art of Our Time: Selections from the Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University,* the catalogue supporting the museum's 2010 collection exhibition that went on national tour; organizing the 2011 anniversary exhibition *Fisch Haus 21: An Artists' Collaborative Comes of Age*, for which she wrote the accompanying catalogue; and organizing *Stocked: Contemporary Art from the Grocery Aisles,* which opens at SMoCA in January 2013 and will include a catalogue she authored.

Ana Cox (left) and Laura Wenzel (right)

Phoenix Art Museum has finished year one of a two-year IMLS grant to initiate a revision, expansion and integration of its technology infrastructure that will result in increased public access to the collection. In conjunction with the project, the Museum has added two new positions in the Registrar's Office. Laura Wenzel has joined the department as the Collection Database Administrator; Ana Cox is the Museum's Visual Resource Coordinator. ■

NEVADA 2012 by Brian Eyler

I'm delighted to report that 2012 has been been an exciting year for Nevada museums. In January, the Nevada Museum of Art announced the appointment of JoAnne Northrup as Director of Contemporary Art Initiatives. Northrup joined the Museum's Curatorial Department after spending the second half of 2011 researching contemporary art and virtual environments on a Fulbright Scholarship in Europe, while based at ZKM Center for Art + Media in Karlsruhe, Germany. Northrup's appointment is critical to the Museum's strategic growth as it continues to develop its scholarship and research in the unique area of art and environments.

In 2009, the Nevada Museum of Art established the Center for Art + Environment (CA+E), an internationally recognized research center that supports the practice, study and awareness of creative interactions between people and their natural, built, and virtual environments. Northrup was one of the featured presenters at the first triennial Art + Environment Conference, which took place in 2008 and launched the CA+E.

Described by San Francisco Chronicle art critic Kenneth Baker as a curator of "demonstrated acumen and ambition," Northrup has served as the San Jose Museum of Art Chief Curator since 2008, and Senior Curator since 2001. Northrup's curatorial work focuses on 20TH and 21ST century art, with a particular emphasis on digital media and Pacific Rim artists. Her past major exhibitions include the nationally touring survey exhibition *Jennifer Steinkamp; Il Lee: Ballpoint Abstractions; Robots: Evolution of a Cultural Icon*; and *Leo Villareal*. In 2006, she authored the monograph on digital animation artist Jennifer Steinkamp, published by Prestel; and in 2010, the monograph on contemporary light sculptor Leo Villareal, published by Hatje Cantz.

"Northrup's appointment is a major achievement for the Nevada Museum of Art. To attract someone of JoAnne's caliber to lead our contemporary international art initiatives is a testament to the tremendous growth the institution has undergone since 2008," said David B. Walker, Executive Director/CEO.

Northrup will join Ann M. Wolfe, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections, who has directed the Museum's Curatorial Department for the past five years. "I cannot imagine a more dynamic and inspiring curator than Northrup to lead this critical and rapidly developing area of international focus for the Museum. She is a welcome and exciting addition to the Museum's staff," Wolfe said.

Northrup earned her Master's Degree in Art History and Museum Studies from the University of Southern California, and her Bachelor's Degree in Art History from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She has worked in various curatorial capacities at the de Saisset Museum at Santa Clara University, the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, the Musée de Grenoble in France, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Frances Smyth-Ravenel Prize In May, the American Association of Museums awarded the Nevada Museum of Art its coveted 2012 Frances Smyth-Ravenel Prize for Excellence in Publication Design for the Museum's publication *Altered Landscape: Photographs of a Changing Environment*. This grand prize award is bestowed upon only one museum in the United States each year. The deluxe 288-page publication, published by Skira Rizzoli, New York, highlights more than 150 photographic works, by more than

100 artists, from the Museum's permanent photography collection of the same name. Past winners of the Frances Smyth-Ravenel Prize for Excellence in Publication Design include the International Center of Photography, NY; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC.

'Venue' launch Under the direction of Geoff Manaugh of BLDGBLOG and Nicola Twilley of Edible Geography, "Venue" officially launched on Friday, June 8 with a public event at the Nevada Museum of Art. Venue is a portable, pop-up interview studio and multimedia rig traveling around North America through September 30, 2013. It is a collaborative project of the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art, Future Plural, and Studio-X NYC, with funding provided by the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF), Nevada Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Venue will traverse North America in a series of routes, visiting such sites as New Mexico's Very Large Array, Arches National Park, the world's largest living organism in the Blue Mountains of Oregon, and the 2012 Aspen Ideas Festival.

At these and many other locations, Venue will serve as a backdrop—or venue—for original interviews with people from an extraordinary range of disciplines, even as it records and surveys each site through an array of both analog and high-tech instruments. Many of these devices were conceived and fabricated by interaction designer and 2011 TED Fellow, Chris Woebken. In addition, key pieces of documentary equipment and Venue project ephemera will be stored in an intricate, hand-made toolbox by Semigood Design of Seattle.

Venue's online presence (at www.v-e-n-u-e.com, as well as at on their media partner The Atlantic, on Twitter, and in email updates) is equally important as a virtual platform from which we will broadcast original interviews, tours, and public events. As Venue sets out on its ambitious, sixteen-month series of loops across the North American landscape, its curatorial mission is to document often overlooked yet fascinating sites through the eyes of the innovators, trendsetters, entrepreneurs, and designers at the forefront of ideas today.

From architects to scientists and novelists to mayors, from police officers to civil engineers and athletes to artists, and from landfill-remediation crews to independent filmmakers, Venue's archive will assemble a cumulative, participatory, and media-rich core sample of the greater North American landscape, by means of a rolling festival of site visits, interviews, film screenings, discussions, debates, presentations, performances, and more.

Exhibition of Audubon Watercolors In September, thanks to the exclusive sponsorship of Goldcorp USA, a special traveling exhibition of watercolor prints by one of the most important artists of the nineteenth century, John James Audubon, began a tour of three Northern Nevada towns: Winnemucca, Elko and Ely. The exhibition *Explorer, Naturalist, Artist: John James Audubon and The Birds of America*, features twenty of Audubon's most dramatic and life-sized watercolor depictions from the first-edition printing of The New York Historical Society Edition. All of the artworks in this exhibition are from Dana Rose Richardson Memorial Collection of Audubon Prints at the Nevada Museum of Art.

Upon hearing of the exhibition, Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval commented, "It is my pleasure to congratulate the Nevada Museum of Art and Goldcorp USA for bringing *Explorer, Naturalist, Artist: John James Audubon and The Birds of America* to Winnemucca, Elko and Ely. The exhibition of this collection is a fitting complement to our "Discover Your Nevada" campaign, and another reason our rural communities should be visited by people from across the state."

NEVADA continued...

Nevada State Museum, Carson City Meanwhile, in Carson City, the Nevada State Museum's new exhibit *Gifts of Healing: French Travel Posters 1945-1949* is an example of how collections care, museum records, donor gifts, and historic research can come together to tell the gratifying story of the Friendship Train and the Merci Train—Le Train de La Reconnaissance. Forgotten for 60 years in the museum's collections, post-WWII gifts from French citizens and the personal notes that accompanied them have been reunited. Donors have contributed to improved storage of the collections and framing of the 21 French railway travel posters for exhibit. The posters and a selection of gifts including toy soldiers from a young boy, a copper pot from a concentration camp survivor, and a wedding dress from a designer in Lyon are now on display. Behind-the-Scenes tours can be arranged to learn more of the history of this unusual collection. Other happenings at NSM include the recent, successful Annual Coin Show featuring coin collectors and vendors and spotlighting the foundation of the museum—the historic U.S. Branch Mint, Carson City and our operating Coin Press No. 1. The Natural History galleries are being improved by additions of new mineral and bird exhibits and (coming soon) touch specimens of Ichthyosaur skeleton reproductions. Numerous improvements and touch-ups to old exhibits are happening throughout the museum, including restoration of the marsh scene in Anthropology's *Under One Sky*.

NSM has finalized its Collections Policy and placed the entire pdf document on its website—now accessible to all our staff and the public at museums.nevadaculture.org/.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA 2012

by Clare Haggarty

Workshop in San Diego Balboa Art Conservation Center (BACC) is hosting an exciting 2-day workshop on sustainable preservation practices for managing storage environments at the San Diego Museum of Art on October 9TH and 10TH. Jim Reilly from Image Permanence Institute will introduce participants to new tools and techniques, how to identify energy savings, optimal sustainable preservation climates, risk management for changes in temperature and relative humidity settings, and how facilities and collection staff can best work together. Cost is $50 for single registration and $75 for dual registration for staff from the same institution. *For more information or to register contact Kara West at kwest@bacc.org*

Workshop in Palm Springs *Disaster Recovery for Collections: The First 24–48 Hours After an Emergency*; BACC will also be leading a pre-conference disaster workshop at the WMA conference in Palm Springs on Saturday October 21. Join this workshop to jump-start your emergency plan for collection recovery in the event of disaster. *For more information and to register go to the WMA website westmuse.org/conferences/2012_annual_meeting_palm_springs.html*

Conference in San Marcos The 27TH Annual California Indian Conference takes place October 5TH and 6TH at the California State University San Marcos. The conference will focus on education, research, and community. Featured speakers include James Ramos, Representative of the California State Board of Education; Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Cynthia Gomez, the Governor's Tribal Advisor and Executive Secretary for the Native American Heritage Commission. Topics also include the latest Indian language preservation efforts, the Census Bureau's 2012 overview of California Indians; and the first-ever Report on the State of American Indian Education in California. *For more information and to register visit the*

CALIFORNIA continued...

conference website
csusm.edu/air/californiaindianconference/index.html

Exhibition Opening in Santa Barbara
The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in 17th-Century China
October 20, 2012–January 20, 2013
at Santa Barbara Museum of Art

This exhibition showcases nearly 60 paintings from an era of unrivaled historical drama and artistic achievement in China that spans from the late Ming (ca. 1600–1644) and the early Qing dynasties (1644–ca.1700). By adopting a novel, thematic approach centered on the concept of yin, or reclusion, this presentation brings the viewer deeply into the world of the literati—the educated elite who were at the forefront of historical change and voiced their thoughts and ideals through art.

The accompanying catalogue will be the first publication to explore in depth the theme of reclusion in painting and calligraphy within the broader context of political and social changes in the 17TH century.
For more exhibitions at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art go to sbmuseart.org/

Exhibition Opening in Los Angeles
A STRANGE MAGIC: Gustave Moreau's Salome
September 16–December 9, 2012

The Hammer Museum presents an exhibition devoted to Gustave Moreau's Salome Dancing before Herod, one of the most remarkable and best-known paintings in the museum's collection. The exhibition will include approximately 50 works—including related paintings, drawings, and preparatory studies—drawn entirely from the collection of the Gustave Moreau Museum in Paris. Many of the works have never before been seen in the United States, and the Hammer will be the sole American venue.
For more exhibitions at the Hammer Museum go to hammer.ucla.edu/

by Olivia Anastasiadis

MORE CALIFORNIA NEWS...

At the **Nixon Presidential Library** museum staff installed a small collection of memorabilia to commemorate the victims and the heroes who died on September 11, 2001. In addition, the Nixon Foundation held a 2-hour program free to the public.

The items on display include a flag, a glass vase with dirt from Ground Zero and a steel beam section from the World Trade Center wreckage. At the time, grieving family members were provided with an urn of dirt from Ground Zero and a flag at Manhattan's Pier 94 before bing escorted to Ground Zero to pay their last respects to World Trace Center victims. Exhibit ends September 13, 2012. ■

Photograph at left shows Exhibits Specialist Erik Christman installing a glass vase with dirt from Ground Zero.

Comprehensive Art Handling Services.

Call: 206.728.8822 | **artechseattle.com**

Transport

Networked globally, Artech is an expert in all aspects of traveling exhibitions and loans. We manage the entire process including documentation and condition reporting, crating and packing, air, ground or shuttle transportation, end-to-end couriering, temporary storage and security including supervised cargo loading/unloading, controlled screening and tarmac supervision.

Shuttle

Artech offers shuttle service throughout the West Coast including WA, OR, CA, ID, MT and Vancouver BC. Our dual driver, air-ride and climate control trucks are fully alarmed and GPS tracked to offer the highest caliber of transport at the most competitive rates. Exclusive and connecting shuttles also available.

Storage

AXA Approved, our storage offers redundant climate control and security systems, electronic inventory management, staff registrars and trained art handlers.

ICEFAT

AXA ART

Preserving the priceless ▸ Engineering the invisible ▸ ARTECH