

# Registrar's Quarterly

Summer 2020



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State Updates



Since 1979, the RC-WR has cooperated with the CS-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.

**COVER:**  
Masked visitors admire a jaguar metate  
at the Bowers Museum during a brief  
reopening in early July.

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## Dear RC-WR Members,

It's a little late, but our Summer newsletter has arrived! As the COVID-19

pandemic has gained a second wind in the United States, it has become more difficult to communicate with you all and to gather content for this publication, so the newsletter is a bit more brief than usual. However, the topics included in this issue are nonetheless very relevant in this increasingly difficult time.

In this issue of the *Registrars Quarterly*, we take a look at a couple of perspectives from members whose museums have reopened or are preparing to reopen, the challenges they've faced, and the protocols put in place during the process. We also share news of some recent permanent museum closures in the region as a result of the pandemic, report on a poll asking you all how the pandemic has improved you as a museum professional, and share some helpful guidelines on couriering during the pandemic compiled by Registrars participating in the new Registrar Hour weekly Zoom call. Finally, in addition to our (somewhat brief!) state reports, this issue's New Reads by Nancy Arms Simon is a journey through varied resources she has found over the past few months of navigating the current sociopolitical climate. I highly recommend that you give it a read!

And speaking of the current sociopolitical climate, RC-WR would like to state that as an organization we stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and the peaceful pursuit of equality for all. As museum professionals, we make it our life's work to respect and preserve diverse artworks and perspectives from across the globe, and to educate the public with equity and inclusion. However, there is still much work to be done as many museums take steps towards decolonizing, equal representation, and working towards a better future. We look forward to reporting more on this subject within the museum world in future issues of the *Registrars Quarterly*.

It is very unfortunate to hear that many of you in our region and across the country have been laid off, furloughed, or had your hours cut back – with this in mind, our Secretary Helen Fedchak is keeping a vigilant eye on any and all job postings that come up (not just in our region, but all over the US) and is continuing to update **the jobs page of our website** every Friday, so please keep that resource in mind!

Finally, while it is still unfortunate that the cancellation of this year's WMA conference prevents us from hosting our annual luncheon, we are happy to announce that this year the luncheon will be held digitally, and all members and sponsors will be

able to attend and view the meeting via Zoom or another video conferencing service. We are also working hard to coordinate our first ever digital CSI: Registrars service initiative! Both events will be held in October, so please stay tuned and watch your inbox for further details. We are looking forward to welcoming more members than ever to participate in these annual events.

As always, my inbox is open to all our members, and I would love to hear from you. Our mission is to share the perspectives and accomplishments of

the museum professionals in our region, so if you would like to contribute content to an upcoming newsletter, submissions on any museum-related subject are welcomed and appreciated! Don't hesitate to reach out at any time and email me at [rcwrchair@gmail.com](mailto:rcwrchair@gmail.com).

Many thanks to you all,

Katy Hess | RC-WR Chair  
Registrar, Bowers Museum, Santa Ana, California



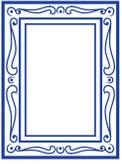
Though the COVID-19 pandemic has gained a second wind in the United States, and we all face unique challenges, the RC-WR Annual Meeting and CSI: Registrars Program will go on—via Zoom! Stay tuned and watch your inbox for details as they're available.



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# REOPENING THE CLARK COUNTY MUSEUM WITH COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS



—By Cynthia Sanford

Clark County Museum has been preserving and presenting the history and natural history of Southern Nevada since 1968. The 30-acre site contains: an exhibit center with a

permanent exhibit hall, a changing exhibit gallery, 12 historic structures moved to the site from around the region, non-historical structures, and ½ mile of nature trails. Before the COVID-19 pandemic the museum was staffed by four full-time staff, 12 part-time staff, and about 20 volunteers. The museum is part of the Clark County Parks and Recreation department. Due to COVID-19, all non-essential full-time Clark County staff were put on administrative leave starting March 18th and all non-essential part-time employees were laid off.

## REOPENING

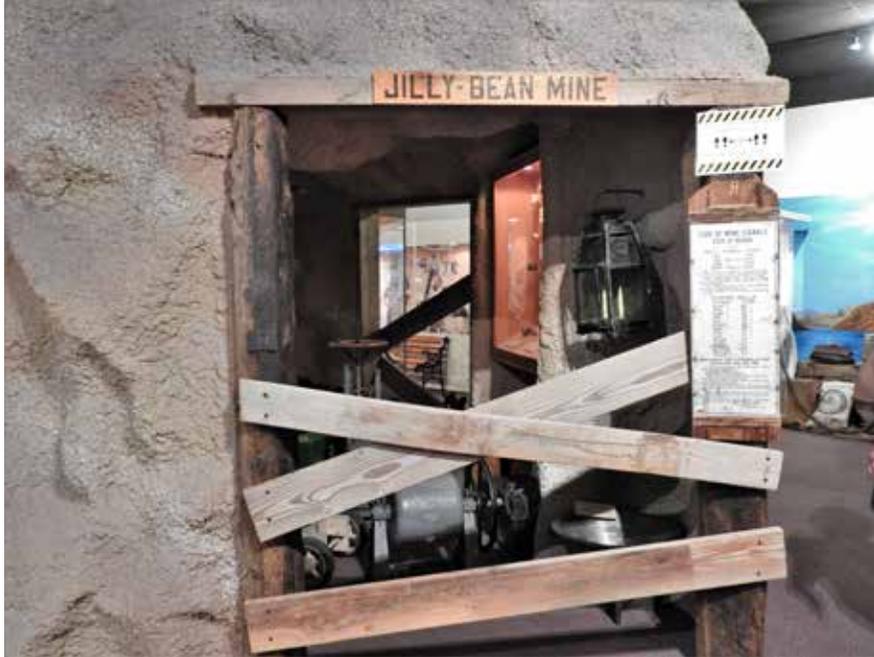
The full-time staff returned to work on May 18th. At this time, the four staff members began to plan how the museum could reopen. First, we purchased the necessary cleaning and disinfecting supplies. Then, we walked the exhibit areas and grounds to see where changes would need to be made to allow for social distancing. As part of the Clark County system, we were assisted by the County maintenance shop in building barriers and screens.

Chapel with wood and Plexiglas barrier in doorway ▼



We determined that three of the historic structures were too small to allow social distancing inside. Therefore, barriers were installed in the doorways of the building. The barriers were constructed of wood at the bottom and Plexiglas at the top, fitting in the doorway to prevent loss of air conditioning and entrance of pests. Staff had to be able to enter and exit the buildings to lock and unlock doors and turn lights on and off. For one structure, the barriers fit inside the doorway, so we simply had to switch the alarm sensors so that we could go in and out of a different door to lock up each night. One of the other structures had a door that opened to the interior, so the carpenters made a barrier that fit over one

of the hinges so that it was secure, yet allowed us to move it when necessary. The third structure had a screen door, to which Plexiglas was installed over the open sections, and a lock and hasp was added to the door.



Blocked entrance to the mine exhibit

staff could use the point-of-sale software we used for admissions and the gift shop. As a result, we decided to open for limited hours (9:00 am to

Three of the structures had large entryways but small and narrow hallways. For these, we used a combination of wood barriers and exhibit cases to block the hallways. By using the cases, we were able to share some of the artifacts and information usually displayed in the blocked rooms. The rest of the structures were large enough that no changes were necessary, other than signs reminding people to keep proper distance and directing traffic.

For our main exhibit center, we used a combination of signs and stanchions to direct people to go in a one-way direction. Our exhibits form a loop, so this was easily done. We removed all the hands-on activities and placed social distancing signage throughout. We determined that one area of our permanent exhibit had to be blocked. Since the exhibit was designed to look like a mine, the carpenters added boards across the entryway, which made it look like a closed mine. We also closed off the gift shop by pushing the counter to the doorway of the shop and adding a Plexiglass barrier, with a six-inch opening over the counter. We moved exhibit cases into the lobby to fill the space and display items. Visitors could see items for sale in the lobby and inside the gift shop and ask for assistance if they wanted to purchase anything.

Once these changes were made, the museum was able to open on June 15th. Unfortunately, only the full-time staff were working, and only one of the

1:00 pm, Monday through Friday) and we did not charge admission. One staff member stayed at the gift shop/admissions desk during our open hours. We cleaned and disinfected all surfaces that were likely to be touched, including the Plexiglas barriers, once during open hours and once after we closed. The restrooms were also cleaned once during open hours. We strongly suggested that visitors wear face masks but did not force the issue until wearing masks was mandated on a state level. We kept disposable masks on hand to share with anyone who wanted them. These were relocated behind a counter after we watched visitors (who were already wearing masks) take all the masks that were left out in a convenient area. We found that most visitors had masks with them when they came to the museum but did not always wear them. Our policy has been to politely ask visitors to put on their masks, when necessary. By June 22nd, some of the part-time staff were back at work, so we were able to staff the gift shop and charge admission. Unfortunately, not all the part-time staff were available to come back. We have therefore kept the limited hours but began the process of hiring replacement staff and hope to extend our hours as soon as possible.

## CONCLUSIONS

The wood and Plexiglas barriers and exhibit cases used as barriers work very well. While there was some concern that they

could be easily moved, we haven't had any problems. To safeguard the exhibits, we did make sure that all artifacts would still be protected even without the new barriers. We did have to add lighting to one of the structures that was blocked off completely to make it easier to see inside the building.

The closed-off gift shop, while inconvenient, appears to be working. Our gift shop staff have to talk a lot louder to be heard through their masks and the Plexiglas barrier, which was something we didn't consider. Also, the barrier blocks air flow, causing the gift shop to be colder than the rest of the entryway. As for entering the exhibit center, our original intention was to usher people through the exhibit galleries and have them pay on their way out of the building to see the rest of the grounds. This has not worked, as people tend to go around the stanchions and walk up to the gift shop. We have not been busy enough to make this an issue, but if it does, the arrows and stanchions are in place to enforce the desired traffic flow.

Our attendance has been less than half of what it usually is for this time of year. This is not surprising, since we are not open on the weekends, which are usually our busiest days. We do not plan to have any field trips this school year, which will also severely cut our attendance numbers.



Obviously, we do not know what long-term effects the COVID-19 pandemic will have on the museum, so we plan to re-evaluate everything every few months. Meanwhile, the changes we have put in place have allowed us to open to the public in a safe manner without taking away too much of the experience for visitors. By finding creative solutions and working as a team, we have successfully adjusted to strange and difficult changes and managed to fulfill our mission for the community. ●

# DIETL

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# HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS IMPROVED ME AS A MUSEUM PROFESSIONAL

We polled our members | The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many challenges that have forced us to grow and adapt in ways we had not anticipated. How do you feel that the pandemic has improved you as a Registrar or Collections Manager?

When we started talking about closing the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum back in March, there was so much unknown but collections staff immediately pushed to be classified as 'Mission Essential', so that we could access the building during the closure. Since then, I have gone into the museum twice a week to walk through all collections and general spaces, ensuring that nothing had occurred which would negatively affect objects on display or in storage. Fortunately, we have not had to respond to any collections disasters during this time, but as the on-site staff, I have been able to assist with fire and safety inspections, working with custodial staff on developing new procedures, replacing door seals, and weeding around the building's perimeter. These items

may not seem collections-related up front, but they have given me a better understanding of our overall institution which empowers me in protecting our artifacts. Through these facility-related tasks, I initiated conversations on emergency planning with our local fire department, pushed for replacing an aspect of our HVAC system to better control RH, represented collections when discussing safe cleaning and disinfecting policies, and ensured less access for pests to our building. While typically I am happiest hiding out in collections storage, the pandemic has improved me as both an overall museum professional, and specifically as a Collections Manager.

—Beth Sanders, U.S. Naval Undersea Museum

I feel more connected than ever to the greater registrar community through all of the terrific webinars that have come about during the pandemic.

—Linda Leckart, Los Angeles County  
Museum of Art

Leading up to the outbreak of this pandemic, I was working in my first year as a true-blue registrar. I imagine I'm not alone in experiencing a profound learning curve and imposter syndrome in that first year. Every day seemed too much to handle! On top of all of this, I had three colleagues in my department—conservator, collections manager, and objects preparator—all leave for new opportunities. I felt like I was drowning. On the first day of “work from home” we were able to finalize the hire of an assistant

registrar (whoop hoo!) and objects preparator, which reduced the pressure. For the past four months, I've been able to work from home catching up on workflow trainings, revising policies and procedures, and deep diving into backlogged projects. There is still much to tackle but being forced to slow down and work more deliberately has definitely made me a better registrar.

—Maggie Leak, *Utah Museum of Fine Arts*

It has given my staff and I time to do more online training. There are also a lot of museum and related social media things that are going on during the shutdown that have been

interesting to participate in providing learning and ideas for our own public outreach.

—Angela Neller, *Wanapum Heritage Center*

Being at home, without access to the collections, has afforded me the time to work on policies and procedures long overdue for an upgrade. With many organizations switching to online

engagement, I have been able to attend multiple conferences and webinars.

—Lindsay Palaima, *California Academy of Sciences*

Working from home has really pushed me to build better time management skills and get creative when it comes to managing projects from afar. I am normally organized, but with so many distractions present at home, I've been keeping to a more detailed schedule

that I can bring back to the office with me when all this is over. I am also very grateful for all of the informative webinars and discussions taking place virtually during this time.

—Katy Hess, *Bowers Museum*

Though I am well connected, the pandemic forced me to connect and reconnect with many colleagues from around the world. Zoom made this possible. As a result, my colleague Monique Abadilla (from the deYoung Museum) created a website based on the

weekly zoom call I organized. It has become a great resource for our profession world-wide. [www.theregistrarhour.info](http://www.theregistrarhour.info)

—*Jacqueline Cabrera, Cabrera + Art + Management*

The break from our usual duties because of not having physical access to our collections gave me the time to complete a project that had been waiting 30 years! I was able to match up photos and reminiscences about the Yasui family collection, which had been recorded in 1990, with the objects in the database, creating much richer records with

great provenance information and learning a lot about the collection as I did so. It was incredibly satisfying to do justice to all the work that the family put into recording their own history.

—*Helen Fedchak, Oregon Historical Society*

The pandemic and all of its fallout has forced me to remind myself constantly of the famous “Strength Prayer”: *Lord, grant me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and*

*the wisdom to know the difference.* This has (hopefully) made me a wiser Registrar/Collections Manager.

—*Cory Gooch, Frye Art Museum*

Working from home during the pandemic has allowed me to prioritize projects that I may not have made time for otherwise. One has been working on our plan for more proactive collecting. This has come to the forefront because the pandemic and the protests and actions for racial justice have made it abundantly clear that we are living through historic

times. I’ve also been researching artifacts for potential deaccession and have been able to improve and streamline my workflow on that important (but often back-burner) task.

—*Clara Berg, Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI)*



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# WESTERN REGION

## MUSEUM CLOSURES

In July, the American Association of Museums warned that [one out of every three museums in the country may be forced to permanently close](#) due to financial hardship caused by the pandemic. A survey of museum directors conducted in June found that “the vast majority (87%) of museums have only 12 months or less of financial operating reserves remaining, with 56% having less than six months left to cover operations.” As we all know, many museums have implemented temporary staff furloughs and other cuts to programming and education in an attempt to extend their financial viability. During this difficult time, RC-WR regrets to report on several museums from our region that have already announced permanent closure.

### World of Speed, Oregon

“It is with heavy hearts we announce the permanent closure of World of Speed Motorsport Museum. The museum has been temporarily closed to the public since March 16, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the Oregon Health Authority’s current guidelines, the museum would fall into Phase Two or Phase Three of the state’s reopening plan, potentially pushing reopening into 2021.

Many of our guests, volunteers, students and do-

cents fall into the category of most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus, which means efforts to keep everyone safe

could push reopening further, even after OHA restrictions are lifted. After much deliberation, our board determined it would be unable to maintain the facility during such an extended closure.

World of Speed’s assets and funds will be distributed to 501(c)(3) museums and schools throughout the next three to eight months, as required by Oregon law. This will allow the museum’s collection of historic race cars, boats and motorcycles to live on for future generations to enjoy.”



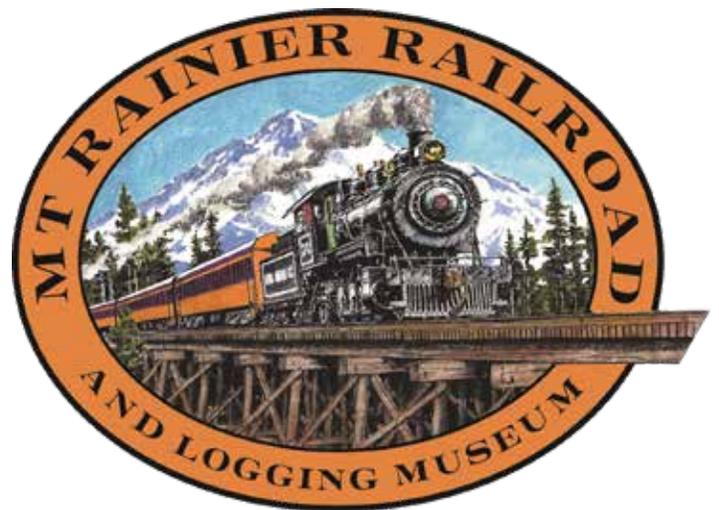


death of our co-founder. We have made the extremely hard decision to close two divisions over the next several months as we move to a future that will be changed in untold ways by the pandemic. This means we are winding down both Vulcan Arts + Entertainment and Vulcan Productions by the end of the year. The current global situation is making it difficult for us to serve our mission and we will spend the months ahead reassessing if, how, and when to reopen.”

**Annenberg Space for Photography, California**

“After closing its doors to the public in March due to a world-wide pandemic, Annenberg Space for Photography will not be re-opening. It has been our greatest pleasure to share the art of photography with our community for the past 10+ years. We have showcased thousands of images of local and international award-winning photographers through 28 unique thought-provoking exhibitions seen by nearly a million visitors.

To preserve the legacy, Annenberg Space for Photography intends to donate the collection of its photographic prints from previous exhibitions to a highly reputable public archival institution to be used for research and preservation of our cultural heritage.”



**Mt. Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum, Washington**

“American Heritage Railways Inc. has decided to permanently cease operations and close Mt. Rainier Railroad for the foreseeable future. Due to the pandemic COVID-19 and the complications with the WFIM not-for profit, American Heritage Railways Inc. can no longer continue to fund MRRR. MRR and AHR management teams will immediately implement a plan to close the railroad in as orderly manner as possible. As such, we will be closing the doors and canceling all future events and train excursions for the foreseeable future, expected to remain through and beyond the end of the year.



**Living Computer Museum and Flying Heritage & Combat Armor Museum, Washington**

“Like so many businesses world-wide, the economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis require Vulcan to assess its size and structure to maximize effectiveness and impact and continue to evolve as an organization following the

On behalf of Mt. Rainier Railroad, we wish you well and hope that our paths will meet again in the future.”



### **Bellingham Railway Museum, Washington**

“It is with deep sadness that I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors to inform you of our difficult decision to close the Bellingham Railway Museum permanently. This decision was not made lightly and there was much deliberation on the part of our board and staff.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible for us to continue to operate. To protect the health of our staff and of the community, we closed the museum since March 17, 2020, which has resulted in a huge loss of revenue. Despite the three-month rent waiver from the City of Bellingham as well as tireless efforts of our staff in applying for grants, donations from our members and friends, and cutting our operating costs, we are still short of funds to keep the museum running. Along with the financial situation, our space constraints pose even more challenges for us to make the necessary adaptations to the museum to allow for our staff and visitors to follow the guidelines set by local and state authorities with regards to COVID-19 distancing and safety.

Thinking about all the joy and experiences we have brought to the train enthusiasts, our volunteers, visitors and the community, we are all deeply saddened by this upcoming permanent closure and feel this loss strongly. We have begun the process of closing the museum and are making the transfer of our collections to our beneficiary, the Northwest Railway Museum. I am happy that they are able to preserve and protect the items that we have cared for over the years and that our museum will live on in their care.”

### **Home of the Brave Hawaii Museum, Hawaii**

“After 30 years of honoring the United States Military and preserving the legacy of our Greatest Generation, the Tomlinson Family sadly announces the permanent closure of the Home of the Brave Museum and Brewseum in Honolulu, Hawaii.



We are excited to relocate to Durango, Colorado, where we hope to continue our Remember, Honor, Salute’s mission of preserving American History.” ●

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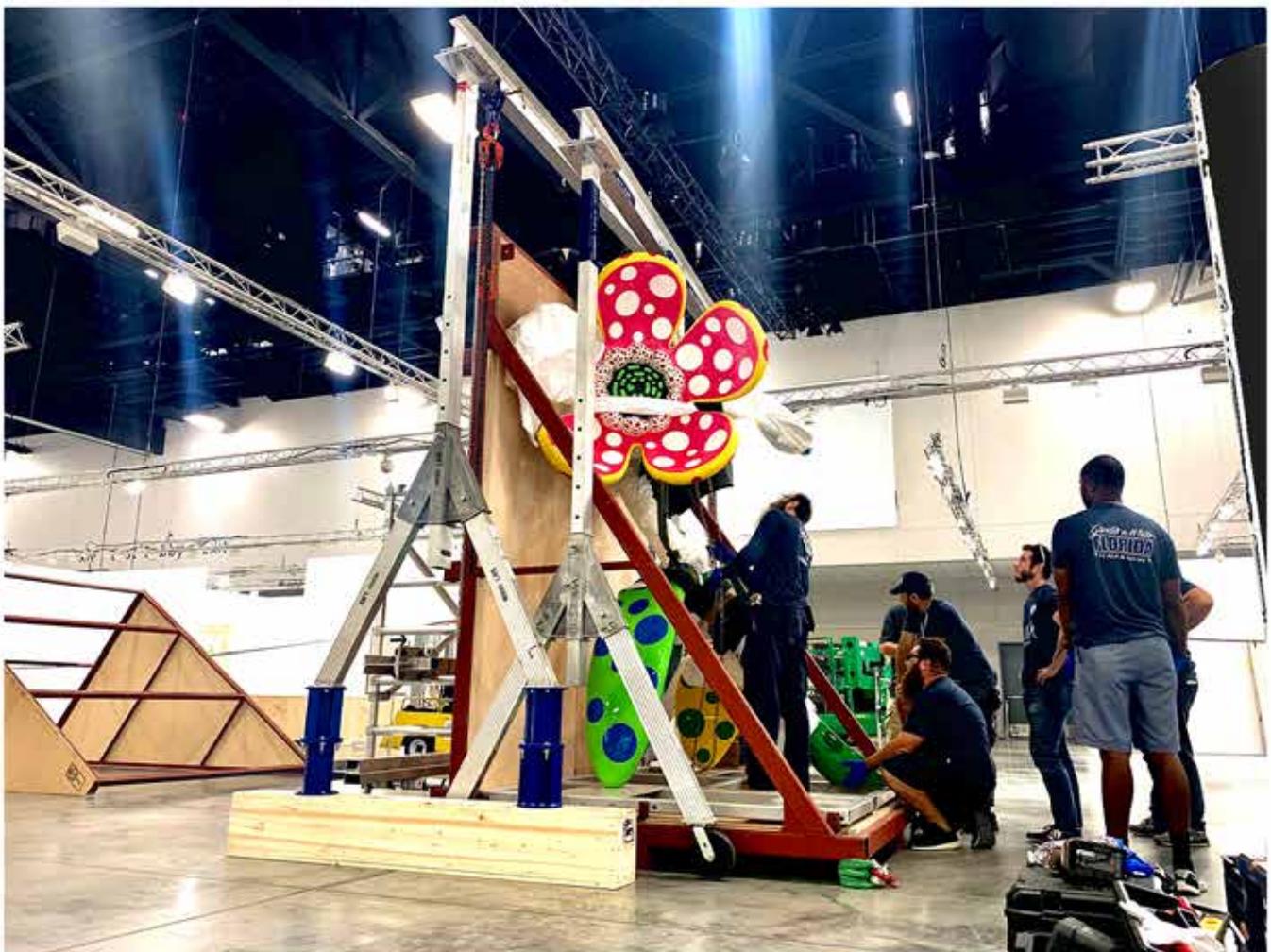


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# California Academy of Sciences



## Ready for Reopening



—By Lindsay Palaima,  
Research Collections  
Registrar

The California Academy of Sciences is a natural history museum, planetarium, and aquarium in San Francisco, California.

The public floor is an open floor plan and encompasses a range of experiences, from an IMAX theater to traditional dioramas to animal touch tanks, as well as two cafes. The back-of-house space for staff, volunteers, and visiting researchers covers five floors with a mix of lab space, collection storage, and office area on each floor. The approach for reopening both to staff and the

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public has continued to shift as more information about Covid-19 becomes available and as the City and County of San Francisco moves between phases.

Indoor museums can reopen as a part of Phase 3 in City and County of San Francisco plans. As of this writing (end of July 2020), City/County is in Phase 2b. The date for potential re-opening has shifted multiple times since mid-May. Despite the unknowns, the Academy has developed a multi-department reopening task force. Ongoing efforts include a comprehensive risk assessment, a Covid-19 prevention plan, and changes to the Academy facility (such as door handles, restroom equipment, and cubicle access). As the City/County phase currently only permits essential employees on-site, the Collection Manager and Registrar group has developed a protocol for essential collections staff approved to go into the Academy. Other essential staff includes animal care, facilities and janitorial, and security. Monday through Friday, either a Collection Manager or Registrar is on-site to complete collection rounds, check the mail (loan returns are creeping in), and ensure research specimens on the public floor are in good shape.

A few Registrar observations: (a) the specimens on the public floor have never looked so dark and clean. With no visitors, there is no need to have the lights on or shades up (the Academy has windows everywhere). Also, with no visitors, IPM efforts have ramped up and there are visible traps set in the galleries and we have noted a decrease in rodent activity. Yeah! (b) the collaboration and teamwork between divisions has improved. The Academy experienced a 40% reduction in staff through layoffs and furloughs. The team that remains is lean, earnest, and eager to develop solutions to our challenges. Academy-wide, there has been a recognition of collections care: despite the institution's shrinking budget, collections and research have remained supported by leadership.

Looking forward, the reopening task force is attempting to balance the needs of staff with the real institutional financial needs of safely reopening the public floor. It has yet to be determined how the ramp up to reopening will be internally phased, but top of mind is safety and good practices. The Collection Manager and Registrar group are grappling with collection and lab use, how to balance social distancing with collections work, loan policy for the foreseeable future, off-site database access, possible digitization projects, and morale. As a group, we are united in our hopes and frustrations. I hope as the Academy continues to navigate this unprecedented upheaval, that we all remain patient, gracious, and generous while balancing collections safety with staff safety. ●

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We know that your profession is important to you, but foremost, we hope that you are staying safe. This historic event is not lost on us. This is a moment for assessing priorities and gaining perspective to get through the hard times. A4 greatly appreciates everyone's patience and looks forward to serving you now and in the future. More than ever, we are indeed, all in this together!



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# The Registrar Hour

## Guidelines for the Museum Courier during the Pandemic

These guidelines are for loans that would normally require a courier per their loan agreement. By publishing these guidelines, we are not encouraging or discouraging couriers for other loans.

*These guidelines were compiled from discussions with registrars and collection managers from around the world via a weekly Zoom call. These guidelines are posted on various websites. For more information please contact us at [registrarhour@gmail.com](mailto:registrarhour@gmail.com).*

### What is a Book End Shipment Courier?

**A.** A courier may perform some elements of traditional courier duties in person, as long as museum/transport/cargo terminal personnel allow their presence alongside the crew or airport supervisor. They may be a member of the lending or borrowing museum's staff, or a contracted freelance registrar, conservator or art handler, but it is likely they would need to travel independently to the warehouse or museum. They would be

present for the unloading or loading of the crates from the truck and they would oversee palletization/depalletization of the crates or loading/unloading of containers. Should a qualified contractor be appointed, then recording or live streaming may not be needed. The agent and the courier would be in constant communication until the plane departs or the truck is loaded and en route.

**B.** Should it be impossible for a human courier to be present at the museum or warehouse, then an alternative would be to work through the transport company airport supervisor or the local crew to provide a photograph: before a crate is in its final palletization stage at the airport, for example. By collaborating this way, questions for how crates are secured and palletized can be communicated and approval can be given before the final netting and shrink-wrap are applied. Each port will have different security policies in place (filming may be prohibited) so it is important that the registrar works closely with their agent in this scenario, by pre-briefing and telephone calls (with still images if at all possible). This scenario will change constantly.

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## What is an Installation Courier?

**A.** As with the shipping courier, if a museum cannot send their staff, and a courier is allowed to be in the gallery space with borrowing museum staff, then hiring a contract registrar, conservator or art handler acting on behalf of the lender would be an option. The contract courier's duties could include overseeing the unpacking/packing, the condition check, and the installation/deinstallation of the objects. A digital condition report is essential in this scenario as it can be emailed to the lender immediately upon completion, even before the courier leaves the museum setting, allowing the lender to ask any questions as needed at that time.

**B.** If a human courier cannot be present in the gallery space, then the lender should work with the borrower to conduct a "live stream" of the unpacking/packing, the condition check, and the installation/deinstallation of the objects as needed. Note that these tasks might take place at different times of the day, so issues with time zones and technology should be discussed prior to confirming the appointment times. In this scenario, the

digital condition report can be edited and electronically signed by both the lender and borrower upon completion of the tasks. However, this will only be possible if the report (usually a PDF) is accessible to both registrars, potentially using a shared file application such as Box.com, Dropbox, or Google docs, for example. ●



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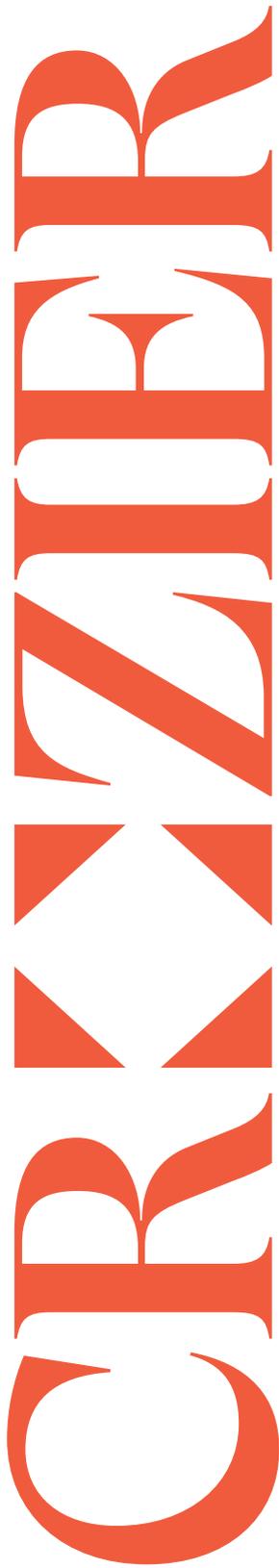
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## ARIZONA

Many Arizona museums reopened in late May, but the majority closed again in late June due to a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases throughout the state.

**Arizona Capitol Museum** has remained closed. Staff are developing educator resources and a virtual field trip experience, inventorying collections, updating metadata, and expanding online tours.

A variety of exhibits are in the development process, including one featuring the museum's bola tie collection and another on the history of Buffalo Soldiers. Staff are also expanding collections featured online through the Arizona Memory Project.



▲ Nathan Samoriski, Registrar at the **Arizona Heritage Center** took over the Instagram account for a day in the life of a Registrar.

In mid-June, the **Arizona Historical Society** (AHS) briefly reopened the **Arizona History Museum** in Tucson and the **Arizona Heritage Center** at Papago Park in Tempe, and then re-closed on June 30.

AHS continues to share content through social media, email campaigns, and the website at the Arizona History Digital Hub. Upcoming virtual programs include an Oral History Workshop, a Women's Suffrage Roundtable, and more.

Historian takeovers are happening on the AHS Twitter account [@AZHistSociety](#) and behind-the-scenes staff takeovers on Instagram [@arizonahistoricalsociety](#).

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Through community and the natural environment, artist Paz de la Calzada's project **Yerbabuena Healing Remedy** provided a much-needed relief from the stressors of shelter in place orders. Along with Paz, friends and acquaintances harvested a variety of plants around the San Francisco Bay Area to create a salve from twenty-two plant samples, including the legendary Mary Ellen Pleasant's six eucalyptus trees, the ancient tree from the Oak Woodlands in Golden Gate Park, the

**INGREDIENTS:** An effort is made to include a representation of the most varied plants from our city, including native, invasive, naturalized, adapted, domesticated, and wild.

Featuring the legendary Mary Ellen Pleasant's six eucalyptus trees, the ancient tree from the Oak Woodlands in Golden Gate Park, Janis Joplin Love and Peace icon tree in Hippy Hill, the elderberry remnant of original Bernal Forest, first Presidio resident Juana Briones yerbabuena that gave the early name to San Francisco, and much more!

(yerba santa, mullein, grindelia, california poppy, cleavers, california sagebrush, yerbabuena, mint, nettles, hyssop, rose, willow bark, thyme, hawthorn, sage, lavender, lilac, redwood sorrel, california bay, lemon balm, rosemary, and quaresma)

**DIRECTIONS:** This medicine is a gift from Mother Earth. Massage your chest for comfort, your forehead for inspiration and your feet for courage.

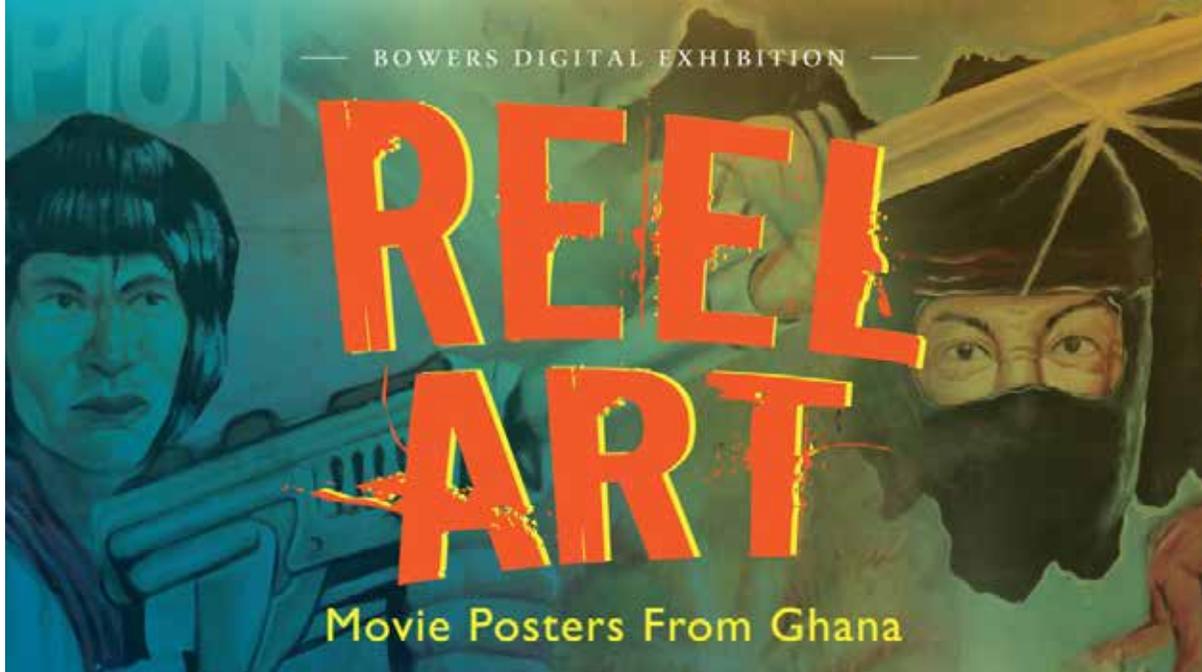
**SIDE EFFECTS:** It may promote altruistic and pro-social behaviors, kindness, awe of nature and environmental awareness, empathy and other wholesome feelings.

**OVERDOSE:** Overdosing may result in an awakening from the matrix with no return.

Janis Joplin Love and Peace icon tree in Hippy Hill, the elderberry remnant of original Bernal Forest, first Presidio resident Juana Briones' yerbabuena that gave the early name to San Francisco, and many more!

Paz finalized the project on the summer solstice and wrote that: *Since the current pandemic started... I've taken this time to think about my relationship to Mother Earth and to my community... I hope we won't come back to 'normal.' What we called 'normal' was a series of behaviors that we've been adopting for too long, and that were based in abuse, inequity and exploitation both with the land and with each other. During this quarantine I've felt inspired to create a potion that based on the principles of plant magic and ancient knowledge can help heal ourselves and give us hope about the future.*





its one of the most beloved Bowers permanent collection exhibitions, bringing together a group of rugged, campy, and visually astonishing posters. These colorful advertisements were originally created to promote movies made available for rent throughout Ghana by an industrious group of traveling entrepreneurs. To access this virtual exhibition and all of the Bowers at Home offerings, visit [bowers.org/index.php/education/bowers-at-home/](https://bowers.org/index.php/education/bowers-at-home/)! —*Katy Hess*

Stephanie Cranage, Assistant Registrar at **The Broad**, gave birth to a beautiful baby boy in February. The Broad wishes to welcome Theodore Manley to the museum world and congratulate Stephanie and her husband Nick on the new addition to their family. Welcome Teddy!  
—*Elizabeth Hanson*

## WASHINGTON

**The Frye Art Museum** in Seattle has been closed since shelter-in-place orders began in mid-March. Within a month, all part-time/hourly employees

were laid off, unfortunately including Collections & Exhibitions Assistant, Kayla Trail, who was an excellent member of both the Collections and the Security departments for the last seven years. Almost all remaining staff worked remotely through the end of June, and then experienced a work furlough period from July 6th-September 5th. Assistant Registrar Nives Mestrovic was 100% furloughed for the summer, and Chief Registrar/Head of Collections Cory Gooch is working only two of the nine weeks of the furlough period.

Three exhibitions were extended until the end of this year or later, and one exhibition was deinstalled in June so that loans could be returned to Canadian lenders once the cross-border shuttles were operating again in July. The receipt of two traveling exhibitions was postponed until 2021 and 2022. The Frye has 10 artworks in China which have been stuck there since March, first due to delays on the Chinese side due to COVID-19, then on the U.S. side. Hopefully, freight space will open up during the summer so that the works can

be returned to the U.S.

Hopefully, the museum can re-open to the public in October, if Phase 3 begins by then for King County. Discussions have been underway for months about what that will look like for the Frye. Although it is a free museum, timed ticket entry will be introduced, and designated pathways through exhibition galleries will allow for appropriate social distancing. Staff will work remotely as much as possible, and alternate working in shared office spaces.

A “Frye At Home” online platform was created in the Spring in order to offer some public educational programming, but unfortunately the launch of Web Kiosk—which the collections team has been working diligently toward for years—had to be postponed until later this year. As a result, the museum’s collection is still not browsable by the public during the time when it is most crucially needed. But living with delayed or cancelled plans is something we have all learned to roll with!

# DRAB BUILDINGS GREAT ART



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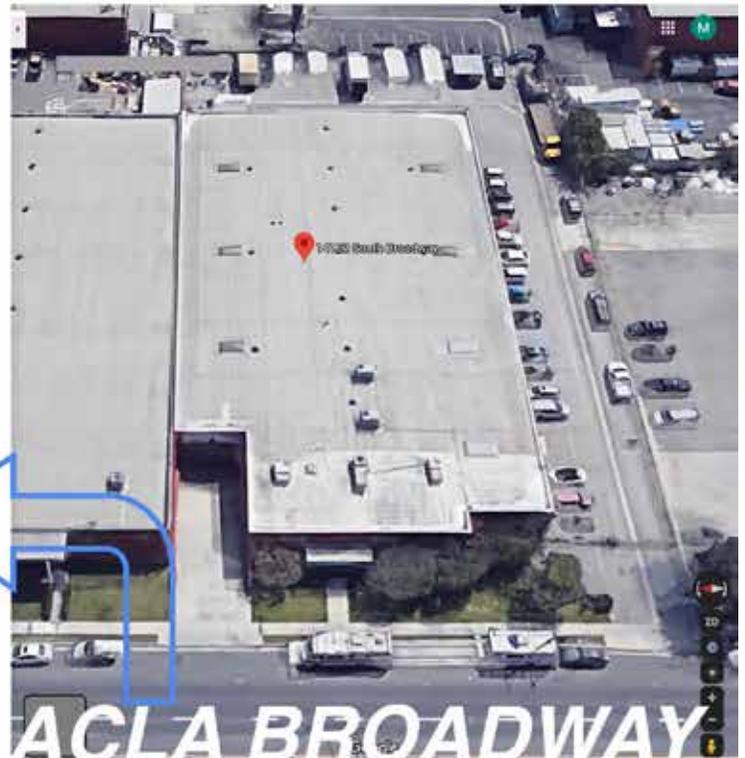
- 25,000 sq. ft. facility
- quick access to the 5 and 101
- nestled between malibu and santa barbara
- more convenient storage for our northerly friends
- climate controlled bays
- photo wall designed by LA photographer
- well policed and distanced from flood+fire zones
- secure, alarmed, and monitored remotely 24/7

- 25,000 sq. ft. (again....) discrete building
- includes 5,200 sq. ft. climate storage
- 25' photo wall designed by LA photographer
- standard loading dock to support up to two tractor trailers simultaneously
- 10 minutes from LAX
- CCSF (TSA certified cargo screening facility)
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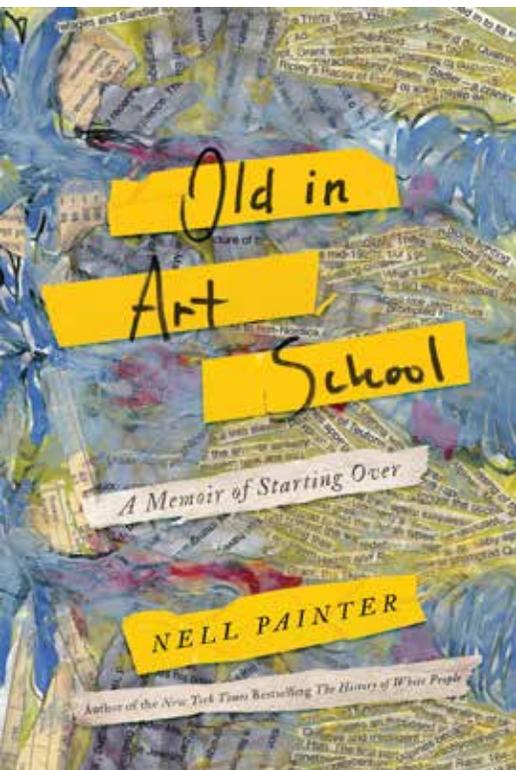
# New Reads

by Nancy Arms Simon

# Relevant Media for Uncertain Times

This quarter, we are taking a different approach to the New Reads section of the newsletter. I have a book about rights and reproductions on my shelf, and had every intention of reading it and reviewing it for you. But do you perhaps feel that there are other issues going on right now that feel more pressing? Job security? Health and safety? Racial inequity? Just to name a few?

These things were never separate from our lives as Collections caretakers, but the current climate of medical and social pandemics have thrown a glaring light on these issues and the cracks in the structure are really showing.

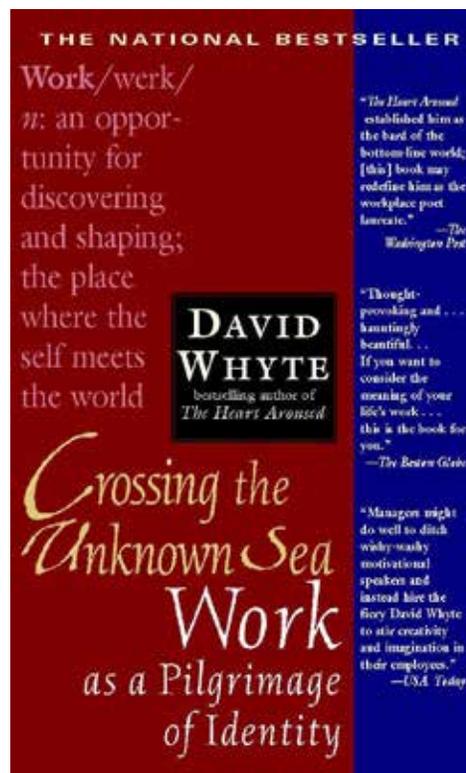


In early February, I stopped by my public library and picked up a stack of books on CD that I listen to while I'm working on projects. When I got home, I pulled Nell Painter's *Old in Art School*, (Counterpoint Press, 2018) out of the pile first, simply because I thought the title was funny. It's a self-narrated autobiography about a

famous historian who decides to go back to school later in life to study studio art. I'm embarrassed to admit, I didn't know who Nell Painter was until

I started listening to it. I had no idea that she authored many books, including *The History of White People* (W.W. Norton and Co., 2010). Needless to say, the book is incredibly well written, and weaves its way through the inequities of the art world from the perspective of one very brilliant, older (than your average art school undergrad) Black woman, while schooling us on racial injustice in America through a lens of art and her own family's histories.

March saw us sent home to shelter in place due to the pandemic Covid-19. If you are like me, you immediately started worrying about your job and prospects of furloughs and/or unemployment. That feeling pretty much spanned all of April and into May. I had been tragically underemployed, and eventually unemployed, during the economic crisis that began in 2008—but was still deeply impacting museums in 2010 when I graduated with a Museum Studies degree. While terrified of the prospect of putting on that familiar coat, I did have a few aces up my sleeve for how to cope with the wild array of emotions that run rampant when you are unemployed in a capitalist culture. If you find yourself in that place, I recommend a good night's



sleep, exercise, healthy eating, and David Whyte's, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity*, Riverhead Books, 2001.

This philosophical yet practical series of essays was recommended to me by a particularly excellent therapist when I was losing my mind searching for employment. It won't tell you how to pay the rent when there are no paychecks on the horizon, but it will help you do the soul-searching to find your truest and most meaningful work while you've got the time to think about life's bigger questions.

By April I was acutely aware of how the pandemic brought the inequities of our society into focus. I became concerned about how people around me would cope with the realities of job loss, school closures, lack of adequate health care, as well as food and housing insecurities. Selfishly, I continued to fret over my own place in our system. I was fortunate to have a dear friend suggest the panel discussion: [How to Beat Coronavirus Capitalism](#).

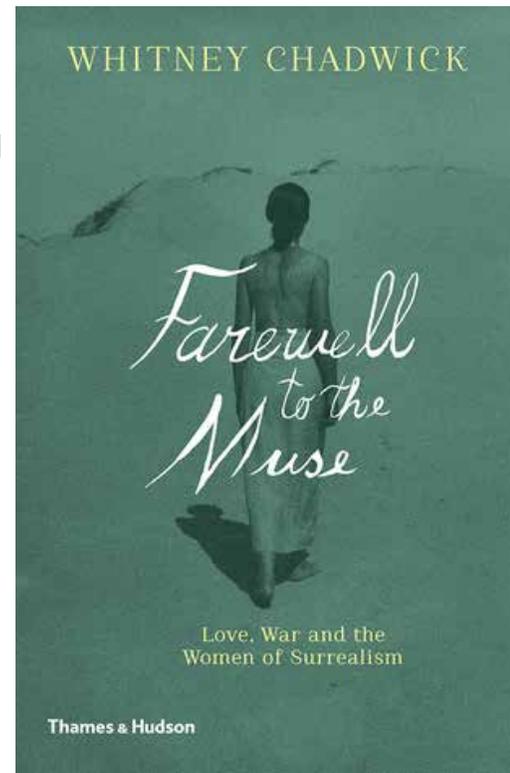
Naomi Klein, Astra Taylor, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor discuss who is benefitting from the Coronavirus pandemic and how unfair it is for average people to carry the burden of moving on as if everything is normal.

This is useful if you need to be reminded why this all feels overwhelming and especially if you can't pull it together to read a book right now. (Note: at the beginning of the Zoom meeting, the connection is a little rough, but stick with it. They iron out the technical glitches and the discussion is nothing short of empowering.)

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Around the end of May, I pulled Whitney Chadwick's *Farewell to The Muse*, Thames and Hudson, 2017 from my shelf of "haven't read yet books". Interestingly, I found the book relevant and inspiring. Many of these surrealist artists supported each other's work in spite of the fact that fate frequently kept them separated by continents. Like

Covid-19—a phenomenon outside of our control—war physically separated these artists. They figured out how to support each other primarily through letter writing. It reminded me of just how important it is to stay in touch with your people, and how in a time when so much of what is available to us is virtual, a tactile letter in the mailbox feels like a gift from another world.



**May 25th: George Floyd.** His murder was the spark that ignited a conflagration of demonstrations, protests, and a demand for racial justice. Every institution, from the largest museums in the country, to my veterinarian, to Babynames.com, was stumbling over themselves to make a statement about how they support equity and justice, abhor violence, and stand behind people of color. Meanwhile, a deeper conversation was starting: boilerplate statements of solidarity weren't enough anymore, and people started discussing what it would really mean to finally undo the legacy that a country built on slavery has left us.

Originally scheduled for San Francisco, the AAM conference took to the virtual world and included an excellent panel discussion with Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole (anthropologist, educator, Director of the Smithsonian Museum of African Art and all around Superhero), Lori Fogarty (Director of the Oakland Museum of California), and Lonnie Bunch (Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and author of *A Fool's Errand*—reviewed in last quarter's newsletter by Adam Mikos).



**AAM Panel Discussion: Racism, Unrest and the Role of the Museum Field.** Their discussion was focused primarily on upper management but I think it provided an elegantly stated framework for our museum leaders right now and moving forward. Furthermore, the words of Lonnie Bunch refuse to excuse anyone from the work ahead: he implores everyone to “get your own house in order”. I implore everyone to take his words seriously. There is no time left for excuses or diversions.

By June, it was clear that diversity and inclusion discussions were moving to the front burner of the institution where I work. In preparation, I re-watched two TED talks.

**You can help stop the violence against young black men, Vernā Myers, TEDxBeaconStreet, Dec. 4, 2014.**

Vernā Myers who runs diversity and inclusion training courses, clearly illustrates how we all fall prey to implicit bias, and she encourages us to accept that fact and move on to actions that can help undo it. I won't spoil it for you, but the first step is a lot less uncomfortable than you might imagine.

The other Ted talk I turned to in order to get a running start is:

**How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race, Jay Smooth, TEDxHampshireCollege**

It's smart, funny, and gives people who know the uncomfortable conversation about race can wait no longer ways to keep from throwing out the baby with the bath water.

In closing, there are dozens of lists circulating right now containing resources for educating yourself on the concept of race and the history of violence and injustice towards people of color. This is material that I feel like I need to look at, understand, and digest as the real narrative of American history. I have watched or re-watched a number of them recently, but one resource I can't recommend highly enough is the podcast **Seeing White, Season 2 from Scene on Radio.**

Launching with the perspective that racism is white people's problem to solve, not black people's, it delves deep into why, although race is a social construct, we cling to it so vehemently. It unpacks the history of race with commentary by scholars like Nell Painter (see above) and Ibram X. Kendi.



John Biewen (a white Audio Program Director at the Center for Documentary Studies at Rutgers) researches and narrates each episode and then meets with his friend, Chenjerai Kumanyika (a Black scholar, journalist and activist who works as an assistant professor in Journalism and Media at Rutgers) to unpack what he has learned and get a broader perspective. It is brilliant, it is beautiful, and when I finished, I felt like I had gotten a university course for free. Because race and economics are so intimately intertwined, it also shows how the upper class has always divided and conquered the lower class, giving people just enough so they do not unite and overthrow the hierarchy. ●