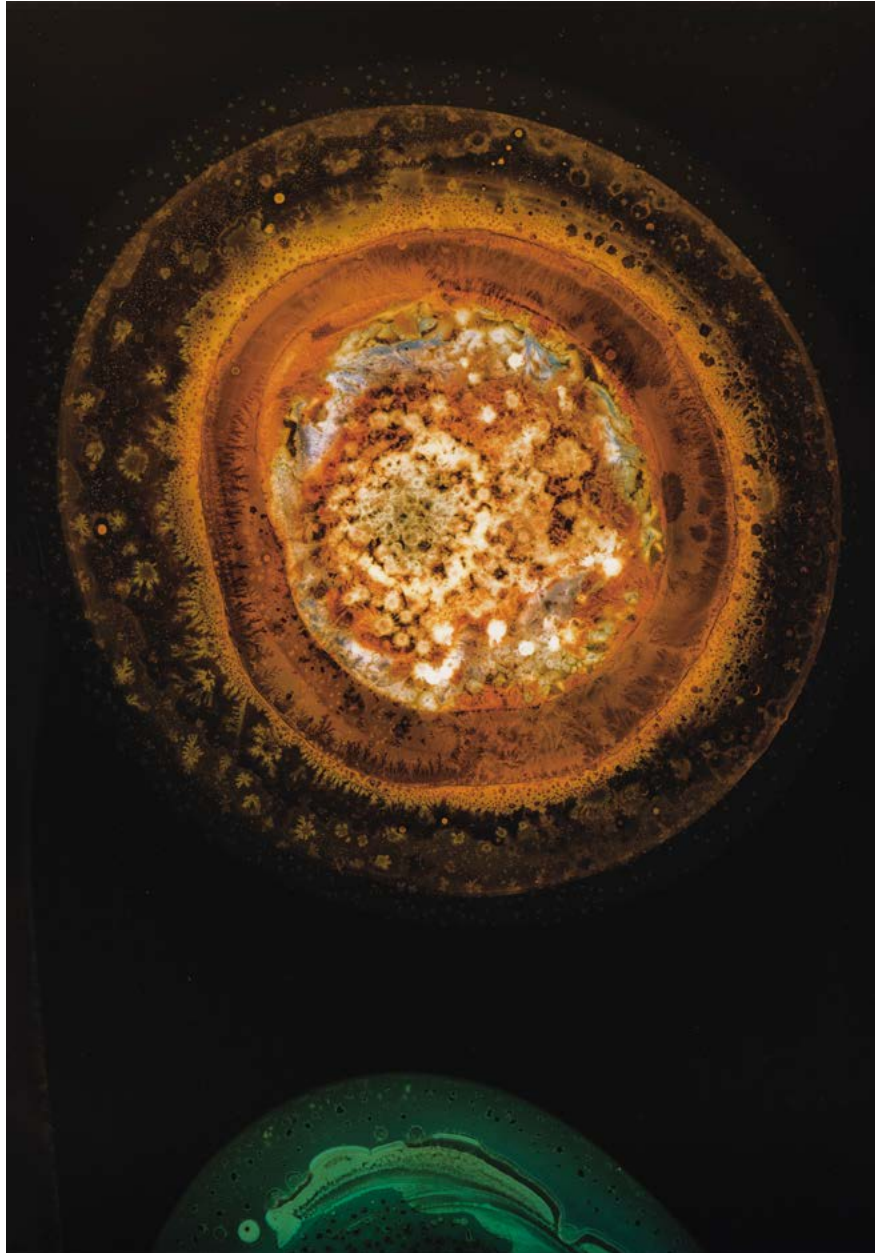


Registrar's Quarterly

Summer 2023



Considering our
collective future.

RCWR
REGISTRARS COMMITTEE
WESTERN REGION

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CSI:Registrars 2023 / Santa Ana, California

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.



Linked in



pages 14–16

State Updates

COVER CREDIT:

Formation, 2021, by Kelly Akashi.

Chromogenic crystallograph
in aluminum artist's frame.

31¼ x 22½ x 1¼ inch

Frye Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 2022.002

Photograph by Jueqian Fang

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



HAPPY SUMMER, MEMBERS,

In May, RC-WR received word that the American Alliance of Museums was ending the Professional Networks. RC-WR's bylaws make it clear we are a regional entity of the Collections Stewardship Professional Network. With no parent network, RC-WR is unclear on what we are. RC-WR leadership is meeting with legal council this month to better understand our options. RC-WR sent out a survey in May; please take a look at the responses and share your thoughts! CSAAM leadership provided a few words to share which is printed in the newsletter as well.

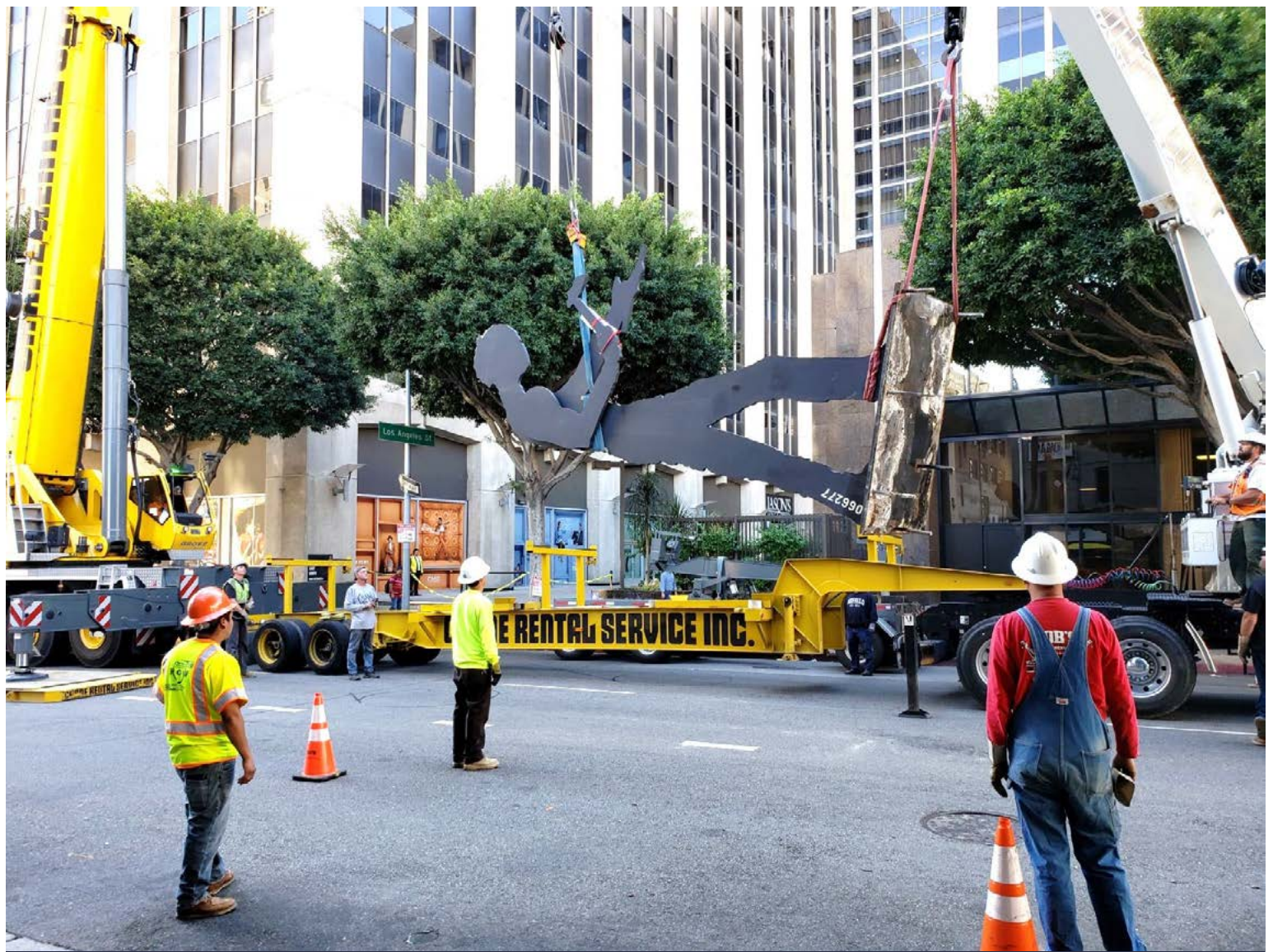
We are headed to Pasadena, California, this fall for the Western Museums Associations annual conference. Be sure to sign up for RC-WR's Collections Services Initiative at the Bowers Museum. Check out the project details in the newsletter.

And enjoy a wonderful recap of Wait, You Collect What?!? Things that go BOOM! It is a bomb read.

Thank you to our sponsors who keep our newsletter published!

Warmly,
Lindsay Palaima Hazen

RC-WR Chair
rcwrchair@gmail.com
Research Collections Registrar,
California Academy of Sciences,
San Francisco, California



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American
Alliance of
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Changes to Collections Stewardship Professional Network

—By *Linda Endersby*

Former Chair, Collections Stewardship Professional Network of the American Alliance of Museums

It is with a heavy heart that the leadership team of Collections Stewardship announces the professional network structure of AAM has been dismantled as of the end of the AAM Annual Meeting on May 22, 2023. As part of their 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, AAM has made the decision to implement several changes to the structure of its volunteer program, and how it will engage with its members moving forward. These changes include the end of the professional networks leadership and volunteer positions as they currently exist. For more information on how these changes will impact collections stewardship professionals and future volunteer opportunities with AAM, please see AAM's [Q&A page](#).

We would like to thank AAM and the collections stewardship community for the opportunity to serve on CSAAM's final leadership team, and we look forward to continuing to serve the museum community in other capacities in the future.

Final Collections Stewardship Chair Report (from Annual Report of the Collections Stewardship Professional Network of AAM)

This past year, 2022-2023, has not been as planned for Collections Stewardship in some ways. We did not plan for it to be the last year for CSAAM. It has been a difficult year. As Chair, I want to recognize Anne Young, Caitlin Podas and Lesley

Golding. The commitment they made to CSAAM when they were elected did not include what they have gone through this past year. There have been many more meetings and discussions than anticipated as we tried to work with AAM on changes. I can never say enough to thank the three of them.

Collections Stewardship has been about helping all of us in this field who want to do the right thing but don't always have enough time, resources or knowledge. With the listserv, there was a place to ask a question and get a useful answer from amazing experts with wide-ranging experience. With in-person and virtual events, there was a way to build a network to reach out to. In addition, Collections Stewardship was about making sure those in this field had a voice in what was going on for museums. My sincere hope is that those two things find new ways to happen. We still need the help, the camaraderie, and the voice.

There will never be a way to thank all of the volunteers who helped CS (and its predecessors) over the years; they gave of their time and expertise. There was no way to reach all of them. So, if you are reading this and you are one of them, thank you. If you are reading this and you know some of them, please make sure to extend our thanks. It's been a great run.

Linda Endersby, CS-AAM Chair
Anne Young, CS-AAM Chair-Elect
Caitlin Podas, CS-AAM Secretary
Lesley Golding, CS-AAM Secretary-Elect



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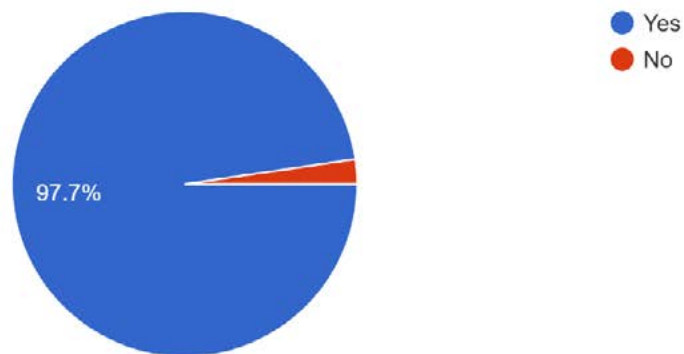
Hi Membership,

In May, with the dissolution of the professional networks by our parent organization, RC-WR sent out a survey to help guide our future. Here are your responses. Please reach out to RC-WR leadership with any additional thoughts or comments.

Survey Results

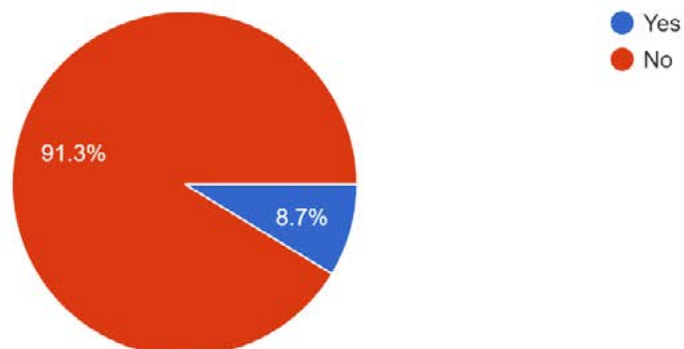
RC-WR has functioned as a mostly autonomous organization, reporting back to CS-AAM. Would you like to see us continue as a fully autonomous organization?

43 responses



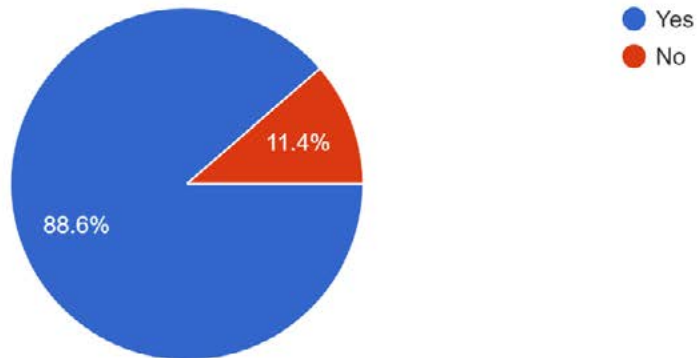
As an affiliate of CS-AAM, should we follow the direction that AAM is setting in restructuring professional networks, and thus cease RC-WR operations as well?

46 responses



Should RC–WR consider other organizations to affiliate ourselves with ?

44 responses



We received 39 responses to the question

What type of organizational structure would you prefer for RC-WR's future?

with many unique responses. RC-WR Leadership appreciates everyone's thoughtful replies and will report soon with next steps. ●



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WAIT, YOU COLLECT WHAT?!?

THINGS THAT GO BOOM

—By *Beth Sanders*
Collections Manager,
U.S. Naval Undersea Museum

Do you have weapons in your collection?

Sometimes we don't even think about our artifacts as potential hazards—but they can be! Whether it is a torpedo, a firearm, a radioactive object, an old medical kit, or even a bullet that was fashioned into an ashtray, our collections can contain historically significant items that need to be handled and managed differently for safety reasons. The 'why' is easy to see: things that go boom need to be rendered safe so that they don't actually do so—causing irreversible damage to the object itself, other collections, and possibly your facility or human lives.

This past month, RC-WR hosted a presentation about collecting 'Things that go BOOM' with Beth Sanders of the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum and Kathleen Sligar of the Oregon Military Museum. Between our two collections, we store firearms, small explosive devices, ammunition, mines, torpedoes,



▲ Kathleen Daly asking if you know what to do with weapons in your collection

and even nuclear weapon shapes; we are familiar with collecting hazardous artifacts! In contrast-ing our standards (Team Navy vs. Team Army/the state of Oregon), we discussed the ways our organizations handle the hazards of these collections, and suggested some standards other museums can pursue. To listen to the whole conversation, visit our RC-WR YouTube page (<https://youtu.be/CEI9jtf9nJM>). But in the meantime, a few simple steps to not wind up with someone walking into your museum with a live grenade...again!

1 Set up a collections acquisition procedure that seeks to limit walk-in donations, particularly if your collection focus makes you prone to hazardous donations. This can give you more time to investigate the potential donation, including the safety aspects. Requiring inert/safety documentation before shipment (and accompanying the object in shipment) will help you know the object is safe to be in your museum.

2 Unless you have documentation from an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technician, treat potential ordnance (guns/artillery) as though it's live. That means that either the object or the building needs to be evacuated.

3 In handling any potential firearm donations, always treat the firearm as though it were loaded, and have someone on hand who knows how to inspect it.

4 Call the experts! EOD technicians are trained to handle potential explosives and can inspect them to determine if an object is safe for your museum. They can also provide documentation of this for your accession files so future staff don't need to wonder. If considering firearm acquisitions, call local Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) agents to better understand your state's laws.

5 Be prepared to advocate for your artifact. EOD's training is to eliminate the hazard, and the easiest way to do this is to destroy it. Some EOD units have more experience working with museums; if your local unit is uncertain about this, do not hesitate to get in touch with one of us and we can help steer them towards EOD units who have worked with us.

6 Not every object can be rendered safe. If it is not safe, you should not keep it—end of discussion.

7 Think about if the value is really worth the risk



▲ This swimmer launched charge was x-rayed and visually inspected by EOD before it could be put back together and shipped to the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum. It is critical to have these inspections done before objects come on site.

for your organization. Not all museums need to collect former ordnance or firearms, or have the capacity to do so. If your staffing level cannot manage incorporating weapons safety and inventory programs, you are probably not the best home for this object. Remember, if

you choose to deaccession hazardous artifacts later, this can be more difficult due to varying state and Federal laws.

8 Take the time to write a policy for collecting these types of materials. Find the people to reach out to if you have an emergency. Think about what your criteria will be for documenting, storing, inventorying, displaying and even deaccessioning these types of objects.

9 Safety first—Make sure any object you are putting on display cannot be used to harm or intimidate someone; raise the level of security for these exhibits and inventory them more frequently.

Different types of hazardous artifacts bring different standards of required safety. Every organization will set the standards that are right for them, but you should aspire to set the highest standards which you can uphold when it comes to explosive safety—because it's not only good collections care, it is human safety!

Questions? Did someone walk into your museum with a live grenade? Don't hesitate to reach out:

Beth Sanders, Collections Manager,
U.S. Naval Undersea Museum
beth.a.sanders5.civ@us.navy.mil

Kathleen Sligar, Museum Director and
Curator, Oregon Military Museum,
Kathleen.m.sligar.civ@army.mil ●

Each year, in conjunction with the **Western Museums Association** annual meeting, RC-WR organizes its members to volunteer their professional skills at a museum near where the meeting is held. In 2023, RC-WR is taking its **CSI** (short for Collections Services Initiative) to the **Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, California!**

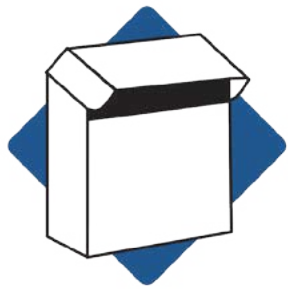
In the 1990s, the Bowers Museum employed an enthusiastic Collections Manager whose goal it was to encase every object in a plastic bag. With the plastic bags now degrading, and causing more damage than good to the collection,



2023 CSI: Registrars

our combined efforts will help make a major dent in their efforts to re-house these objects in their Native American collection, bringing them up to modern conservation standards.

An exciting day of collections care is coming our way, so be sure to show your support for the greater museum community and register today by sending an email to RC-WR's Vice Chair at rcwrvic-chair@gmail.com. Carpool transportation will be arranged to the museum from the conference hotel, and lunch will be included. ●



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ARIZONA

—Lindsey Vogel-Teeter



▲ Rebecca Hagen, Director of Collections at Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

In May, Rebecca Hagen joined the **Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation** as director of collections. She previously served as registrar and collections manager at Wright-designed Fallingwater and director of collections at James Madison's Montpelier. Margo Stipe, who has worked at the Foundation as registrar and more recently as director of collections will retire in July after 33 years.



▲ Jay Blakesberg, Beck, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, September 24, 2000. ©Jay Blakesberg

Sending Their Ancestors Home



Exploring the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, thirty years later and still striving for healing.

Exhibit Opens June 22, 2023 through May 2024

S'edav Va'aki Museum's (formerly Pueblo Grande Museum) newest exhibit *Sending Their Ancestors Home* opens on June 22nd, 2023. The exhibit explores the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Where do museums and cultural institutions stand 30 years later? What work is still left to do? How has this Museum grown

and taken accountability for acts of injustice? *Sending Their Ancestors Home*, created in close consultation with the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Gila River Indian Community, attempts to answer these questions.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

—Carrie Cohen

The **Contemporary Jewish Museum** is opening a new exhibit, *RetroBlakesberg: The Music Never Stopped*. Opening August 31,

2023, this exhibit invites you to “experience an electrifying visual history of the sounds and stores that have shaped the Bay Area and Beyond” through a review of San Francisco’s cultural impact through music. See more at www.thecjm.org/upcoming_exhibitions

The **59th Annual Salmon Festival** in Klamath, California is August 19, 2023. This family-friendly festival hosted by the Yurok Tribe invites you to learn more about the Tribe’s cul-

ture and the Klamath River by watching the Stick Game Tournament, cultural demonstrations, and of course, enjoy feasting on plenty of freshly caught salmon. More details at <https://visitdelnortecounty.com/event/klamath-salmon-festival/>

The **California Museum**'s current exhibit, *Uprooted: An American Story* tells the story of the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. Through oral histories and never-before-exhibited artifacts, this exhibit focuses on how Japanese Americans "responded to their forced removal and incarceration, ranging from quiet endurance to heroic valor to conscientious resistance." Visit <https://www.californiamuseum.org/uprooted> for more information.

OREGON

—Meg Glazier-Anderson

After shutting their doors due to COVID, the **Five Oaks Museum** is excited to finally reopen on Saturday, June 24th, coinciding with a new exhibition, *Replenish the Root: Six Centuries of Gathering Under the Oaks*. The exhibition tells the story of the Five Oaks Historic Site, a grove of Oregon white oaks with six hundred years of known human history. The exhibition will explore the importance of oak savanna habitat and ecology in our region, Tualatin Kalapuya lifeways and connections to oaks, the impact of Euro-American settlement on the landscape through agriculture and industry, and what efforts are being done today to conserve oak savannas.

The **Columbia River Maritime Museum** hosted the 2023 Annual Conference of the Council of American Maritime Museums (CAMM) in April. Almost 100 registrants from across the country, including Hawaii, gathered at the museum. The Curatorial Department presented their involvement with collections focused offsite. Senior Enrichment Programs gave a workshop on mount making, and took multiple groups on various behind the scenes tours of their off site collection's storage facilities.

Celebrating their 30th anniversary, the **Museum at Warm Springs** is Oregon's first tribal museum, honoring the culture and history of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The museum became a national model for how tribes control their own treasures and share their own histories. Throughout the year, they are offering public events, programs and exhibits to help celebrate.



▲ Visitors spend time touring the Historic Park during Living History Day, at the Oregon Military Museum at Camp Withycombe, on May 20, 2023. Photograph by John Hughel

Reopening in May after its winter closure, the **Oregon Military Museum** had veterans, visitors, and history buffs in attendance for the museum's Living History Day which was partnered with Armed Forces Day. They were able to experience firsthand a collection of historical reenactments, dynamic displays, and interactive engagements.

UTAH

—Hannah Barrett

In March, the **Church History Museum** closed the 12th International Art Competition and returned all 153 loans. They then moved on to deinstalling two historic homes—the Lion and Beehive Houses. It was a removal of over 10,000 items to prepare the way for a seismic upgrade and new interpretation plan for the building. Begin-

ning in early June they will install *With This Covenant In My Heart: the Art and Faith of Minerva Teichert*. This exhibit was originally planned for 2020, but the pandemic meant that it had to be postponed.

The **Utah Museum of Fine Arts** (UMFA) saw growth in their collections staff in April. Assistant Registrar Lorraine Jackson moved into a full-time position after a year of part-time registration work, taking on greater responsibility in accessions, loans, and database management. Catherine Nalder, formerly a contracted Assistant Preparator, moved into a newly created permanent position as Collections Assistant; this position oversees all collections visits and performs a variety of support tasks. Also in April, the UMFA received a Bank of America Art Conservation Project Grant for the second year in a row, unprecedented in the program. This year's grant supplies funds to preserve under-drawings found during the conservation of *Two Running Horses*, a folding screen by Chiura Obata, which was the subject of UMFA's 2022 Bank of America Grant.

The **Utah Division of Arts & Museums** acquired 10 new artworks in May from Utah artists for the Alice Merrill Horne Art Collection. The collection (Utah's state-owned art collection) began in 1899. Alice Merrill Horne was a candidate for the state legislature on a platform of support for the arts. Once she was elected to the House of Representatives, she sponsored a bill to create a state arts organization and to establish a state collection of artwork. The ongoing acquisition of artwork by Utah artists comes from purchases selected by the Art Acquisition Committee.

WASHINGTON

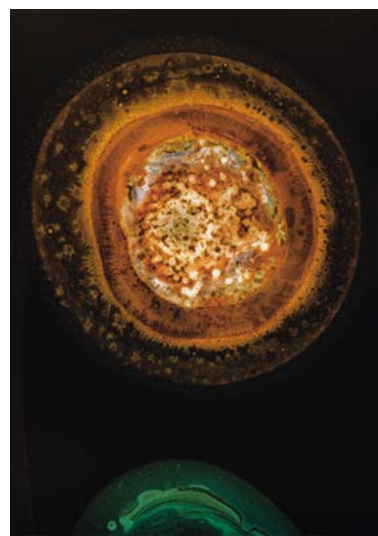
—Nives Mestrovic

This summer, staff at the **Jundt Art Museum** at Gonzaga University, Spokane, will wrap up a six-month project of switching to a new collections management system (CMS). Approximately 6,000 object records have successfully been migrated to the new CMS, and implementation is underway. The goal is to share a portion of the museum's collection online within the next year. Museum Registrar, Britta Keller Arendt,

will be presenting at the annual WaMA conference on this topic, along with Brooke Shelman Wagner of the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture and Jessica Long of Providence Archives—"One Size Does Not Fit All: Demystifying the Search for a New Collections Management System."

At the Frye Art Museum, Cory Gooch has left her long-time position as registrar/collections manager and is now working as a part-time freelancer, still based in Seattle.

Opening in June at the **Frye Art Museum** is the *Kelly Akashi: Formations* exhibition. It is the largest exhibition of the artist's work to date, as it spans nearly ten years of practice, from graduate school to recent research into the inherited impact of Japanese Americans' incarceration during World War II. There is no chronology to the exhibition's organization. Each artwork suggests an intimate encounter, and these encounters expand and reshape meaning as they accumulate. Together, Akashi's works reveal that we are tethered to the lifeforms around us and are ourselves aggregate beings formed of ancestral experiences and histories. The exhibition will be on view through September 3, 2023.



▲ *Formation*, 2021, by Kelly Akashi (See larger image on cover.) Chromogenic crystallograph in aluminum artist's frame. 31¾ x 22½ x 1¾ inch Frye Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 2022.002. Photograph by Jueqian Fang

In May, collections care professionals met in Redmond, Washington, to visit the collections storage spaces of the **Microsoft Art Collection**. Special thanks to our members, Collections Manager Lily Rola and Registrar Jessica Bellingham from **The Lumiere Group**, for hosting us.

The next collection tour will be in August, and we will be heading to Tacoma.