

Registrar's Quarterly

Winter 2021





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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:
Conservator Kathleen Daly demonstrated conservation stitches for textile supports in January's Hands On! Practical Conservation for the Collections Professional webinar.

See *Webinar Series* article on page 6.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



**WELL EVERYONE,
2020 IS OVER!**

We made it! Well, sort of. Even though we're still working through the year that threw us every curve possible, a new year always feels like at least somewhat of a fresh start, and I hope for all of our sake that better times are on the horizon in 2021.

I'm sure we can all agree that the silver lining to 2020 was how it forced us all to adapt in ways we never expected, leading to growth and creativity in areas like visitor engagement, project management, & digital communication. It's what led us as a board to starting our webinar series, and I'm so glad we did because "Hands On! Practical Conservation for the Collections Professional" has already turned out three extremely useful tutorials, with more to come every month this year. Keep an eye on your weekly emails for new webinar announcements & [check out our YouTube page](#) for recordings of the ones that have already happened.

This issue is slightly abbreviated because we have great things related to current events in the works for our next two issues! Nevertheless, the following pages have great things in store like a webinar review, some new state reps to announce, our usual state reports, and a very interesting New Reads. In this issue's member survey, we reminisce about what it was like to go outside by asking you all to describe the most memorable exhibition you've ever visited, and the answers are really inspiring.

As a reminder, this year is an ELECTION YEAR for RC-WR! Elections will be held in October, but it's never too early to start considering whether a Board position could be the next step in your professional development. We are seeking nominations and self-nominations for all four board positions, including Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. More info on the individual duties of each position can be found in our Bylaws at this link rcwr.org/about/bylaws.

We've put together a stellar Nominating Committee, so if you would like to nominate a colleague or submit a self-nomination, please contact any of our three committee members:

Cory Gooch | WA | cgooch@fryemuseum.org

Kathleen Daly | OR | dalyka@yahoo.com

Alli DeFrancesco | CA | allidefran@me.com

Finally, this is **LAST CALL FOR RENEWALS!** Our Secretary Helen Fedchak has been sending you weekly reminders, and if you have not renewed by February 1st, your membership will be officially lapsed and you will lose access to our website, directory, job postings, emails, and events. So please consider renewing for the low price of \$15/year so we can continue to provide you all with the newsletter, webinars, and more!

Thank you all for your support and stay tuned for our next issue in April!

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

Please join us in welcoming our New State Representatives!



NEVADA

Cynthia
Sanford

Registrar,
Clark
County
Museum



UTAH

Hannah
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Assistant
Curator &
Registrar,
Springville
Museum
of Art



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HANDS ON! PRACTICAL CONSERVATION FOR THE COLLECTIONS PROFESSIONAL

RC-WR 2021 Webinar Series

Have you been tuning in for our new webinar series, Hands On! Practical Conservation for the Collections Professional? These webinars have been allowing us to delve deeper into the basic conservation skills that can make

a huge difference in how we handle our collections. Focusing on practical skills, we have had three amazing webinars so far! First, Samantha Springer of Art Solutions Lab, shared with us the ins and outs of collections and

condition surveys. Then Carolina Veenstra demonstrated how to make custom book mounts. And, most recently, Kathleen Daly Sligar demonstrated conservation stitches for textile supports.



Samantha Springer



Carolina Veenstra



Kathleen Daly Sligar



Madison Brockman

We're not done yet though! Next up on February 18th we will have Madison Brockman, an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in paper conservation at LACMA, discussing the stabilization and storage best practices for torn and fragile documents.

You can register for this webinar now at this link!

Then, in March, we will have Rosa Lowinger of RLA Conservation demonstrating how to properly clean soot off artifacts, a good skill for anyone's emergency planning, but especially those of us in the western region!

If there are particular subjects you would like to see covered or you know a conservator that you think should share their extensive knowledge, don't hesitate to reach out to Beth Sanders at RCWRViceChair@gmail.com. All participating conservators are compensated for their time.

If you missed any of our webinars live, they are available on [our YouTube page](#) and don't forget to subscribe! **More information about all of our events is available at** rcwr.org/learn/workshops. ●





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HANDS ON! THE INS AND OUTS OF CONDITION SURVEYS

RC-WR WEBINAR REVIEW

—By *Nicole Sandberg*,
Assistant Registrar, Utah Museum of Fine Arts

What are the most urgent condition needs of your collection? What kind of housing improvements should you work on? How do you get funding or administrative support for collections care? Condition surveys are a great way to get started

when such questions seem a little overwhelming, as explained in the RC-WR webinar *The Ins and Outs of Condition Surveys* taught by conservator Samantha Springer in November. Over a hundred collections professionals from across the country (and even a few other countries!) tuned in, and the recording can still be viewed from the [RC-WR website](#) and [YouTube page](#).

As the principal conservator at Art Solutions Lab, LLC and a Professional Associate of the American Institute for Conservation, Springer has experience with a wide range of objects and materials. Her explanation of condition surveys and their uses gave me a better understanding of the value of such projects: a big-picture perspective that I was lacking even though I participated in a similar project as an intern. The purpose of any condition survey is to systematically collect information, which is a powerful tool to have on hand to address preventive care, preservation plans, or treatment needs. Don't we all hope for progress in those areas?

While a survey can be item-level, it doesn't have to be. Instead it could cover a percentage sampling (such as every tenth object) to give you a cross-section of the collection, or it could focus on a set category or portion of the whole. This webinar will get you thinking about what kind of information will be useful for you, who to include in the planning, logistical concerns, and how to get started.

Perhaps the highlight of Springer's presentation was the idea of using a Google form to conduct a survey. Much of the audience interest centered around this topic! Creating a Google form provides you with set questions and checklists (tailored to your needs) to make information-gathering quick and consistent. Besides recording information about the state of an object or its housing, you could also include treatment recommendations or rankings (such as the object's significance or exhibition priority) dependent on the goals of your survey. When the survey is complete, the magic of Google can automatically convert responses to the hard data needed to move forward: What percentage of your objects need new housing? How many are showing structural damage? What preventive action should be your first priority?

An example of this valuable tool is available since Springer shares a link to her sample Google form. I also used a Google form for the survey

I participated in and can vouch for its usefulness. The form my supervisor created was much less involved, proving this format can be adapted to a range of needs; don't let the length or technical details of the example deter you. Besides helping you know what to work on, survey results can be used to apply for grants or get budget approval from administrators.

Though I am no longer an intern, I will be summarizing the data collected in our survey which I am better equipped to do thanks to this webinar. I had previously only understood my portion of the survey process; learning about the wider purpose will surely assist me in my future career journey.

This presentation took place in the Zoom webinar format which includes a Q&A feature and makes only presenters visible (not audience members). It is part of the RC-WR series Hands On! Practical Conservation for the Collections Professional which will continue monthly through 2021. These webinars are great opportunities to glean knowledge from conservation experts that can be directly applicable to collections stewardship. ●



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RC-WR Merch

Now Available on Our Website!

RC-WR T-shirts and half aprons are now available to all our members through the **DONATE** page on our website.

Each item is available in exchange for a donation to RC-WR in the amount of \$30 or greater. Head on over to our website to show your support and represent RC-WR! All proceeds go right back into our general budget to help provide our members with workshops, stipends, webinars and more.



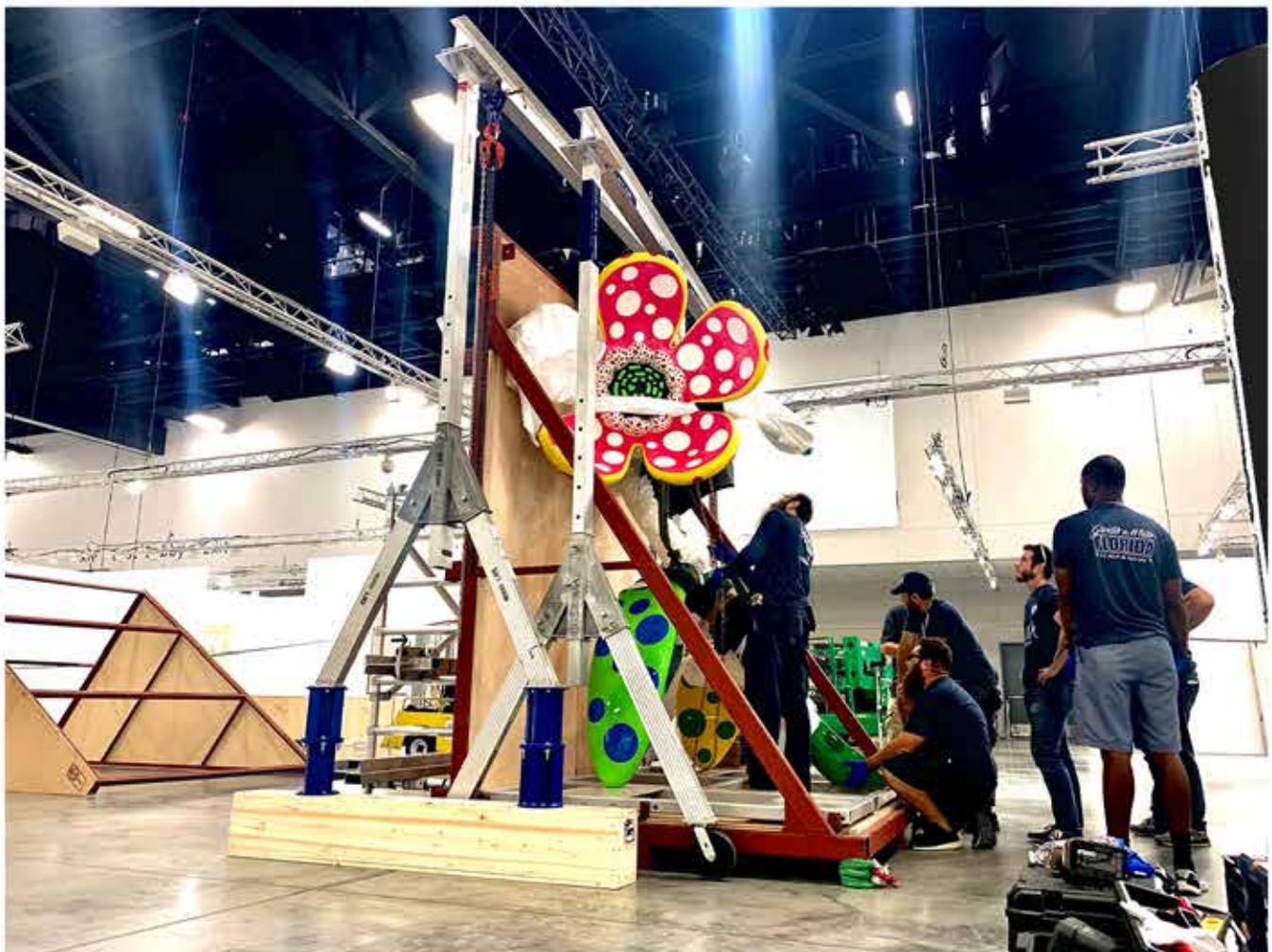
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Winter 2021 MEMBER SURVEY

WHAT IS THE MOST MEMORABLE EXHIBITION
YOU'VE EVER VISITED? DESCRIBE IT!

In a visit to the National Museum of Natural History in 2010, I viewed a truly unique artifact in the most memorable exhibition I'd ever seen. My former Physical Anthropology professor from Washington State University, Dr. Grover Krantz, willed his body to science upon his death in 2002. His skeleton was on display in the exhibit *Written in Bone*, along

with his beloved Irish Wolfhound Clyde. I can state with full confidence that standing next to the skeleton of someone I had listened to, talked with, and learned from is a truly remarkable experience!

—Lorraine Scott, U.S. Naval Undersea Museum, WA

Treasures of Tutankhamun at LACMA in 1978—the original blockbuster exhibition that completely captivated me at a tender age. This singular exhibition along with the Connections TV series sealed my fate for a career in museums.

—Linda Waterfield,
Hearst Museum of
Anthropology,
UC Berkeley, CA

Linda's original ticket!



The Santa Monica Museum of Art (now the ICA, LA) had an exhibition over 20 years ago, where it highlighted artwork from Eli Broad, the collector. What made this exhibition unique was it displayed the art in their storage crates and highlighted the role of art handler, registrar, and curator. The art was still quite visible, and it gave the public a

chance to see how artwork is packed. Through a series of art talks the public also got to hear from the art handler and registrar. A unique idea.

—Jacqueline Cabrera,
CABRERA+ART+MANAGEMENT, CA

Impressionists in Winter at the Phillips Collection in Washington DC. Who knew the Impressionists painted outside in the freezing cold?! Summer and fall Impressionist paintings are so well known but this exhibit was a beautiful collection of the neutral colors of winter. And the Phillips' exhibits are the

perfect size. There is plenty of high-quality art to see but I never feel overwhelmed by the space or the number of works displayed. It's just right.

—Betsy Bruemmer, *Museum of History & Industry, WA*

Growing up, I was obsessed with Egyptology. When I was in high school, the Portland Art Museum showcased *Splendors of Ancient Egypt*. My best friend's mom arranged a surprise trip for us to see it (including a 5-hour drive from the other side of the state). I remember nothing about the trip,

except for all the beautiful scarabs expertly lit. That was my first visit to a large museum and will always be etched in my mind.

—Kathleen Daly Sligar, Registrar/Fashion & Textiles Consultant, OR

When I visited Wolarock in Bartlesville, OK and they had a case of artifacts found on the property. That's when it really hit me that archaeology is all over.

—Melanie Deer, Arizona Museum of Natural History, AZ

#1 The Muhammed Ali Museum in Louisville, Kentucky has a setup of a late '50s/early '60s diner. When you walk through the door, there's a motion sensor that turns on the lights and an authoritative man's voice says, "Hey, we don't serve your kind." It's like a gut punch, you literally feel yourself wanting to quickly retreat.

#2 would be Hilma af Klint at the Guggenheim. I didn't know anything about her before I went—my travelling companion suggested it. So the impression it made on me went from 0 to 60 in a heartbeat. Everything about it blew my mind.

—Nancy Arms Simon, SFMOMA, CA

I spent Christmas 2017 in Paris and visited the *Christian Dior: Couturier du Rêve* exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. It was a fantasy world of all my favorite things coming together. The most memorable part of the exhibition was the finale in a grand beaux arts hall with projections lighting up the space that made the ceiling, walls, and floor look like they were sparkling with glitter. I got to

see gowns worn by some of my favorite celebrities, and I learned so much about the history of fashion. Each gallery was designed to transport you to a new dreamland. I was also fascinated to learn that Christian Dior started out as a gallerist representing the likes of Picasso before switching over to fashion.

—Maggie Leak, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, UT

Americans at the National Museum of the American Indian. It examines the many ways Native People have been used as symbols and icons in the United States, everything from the First Thanksgiving to products and sports mascots. As a white American, it really turned the lens and made me examine my own experiences and ideas

about Native American people. I feel like I can't summarize all the ideas and nuances it contained, but I can definitely say that I still think about that exhibit all the time.

—Clara Berg, Museum of History & Industry, WA

One of the most eye-opening exhibits I experienced was at the Chateau de Chenonceau in France where they recreated a medieval room with all its textiles and it really showed bold colors,

reversing the myth that rooms in castles were dark.

—Tory Laitila, Honolulu Museum of Art, HI

The Ishtar Gate [Ancient Near Eastern Cultures exhibition] at the Pergamonmuseum in Berlin.

—Nives Mestrovic, Frye Art Museum, WA

The most memorable exhibition I've ever visited was the permanent gallery at the Topography of Terrors in Berlin, Germany. The content was so powerful and upsetting that it is probably the only exhibit I have gone through in the last decade

where I don't remember anything about the layout, the lighting, or display choices, but only the emotions it evoked.

—Beth Sanders, U.S. Naval Undersea Museum, WA

The Vermeer exhibition at the Mauritshuis in The Hague, 1996. It was the first comprehensive exhibition of Vermeer's works, and included 23 of the 34 known paintings which scholars agree are by his hand. (The only U.S. venue for this exhibition was at the National Gallery in DC, which showed 21 paintings.) Hiskia van Kralingen transported and installed the works, and they were kind enough to

get me access to the exhibition so I made a stop-over in The Hague on my way back to Los Angeles from a courier trip in Madrid. It was an unforgettable, intimate look at so many of Vermeer's paintings, and it was especially beautiful to see them in the galleries of the Mauritshuis!

—Cory Gooch, Frye Art Museum, WA ●

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ARIZONA

Many state and local government museums in Arizona remain closed. Some privately run museums and those with an outdoor component remain open with mitigation measures in place.

Barry Goldwater's ham radio desk is now on display at the **Arizona History Museum** in Tucson as part of the exhibit *Barry Goldwater, K7UGA, On the Air, In the Sky, Behind the Lens*.



- ▲ Barry Goldwater's ham radio desk on display at the Arizona History Museum
- ▶ Close up, Barry Goldwater's mug and ham radio microphone

working to collect digital stories about how the pandemic has impacted Arizonans. If you are interested in submitting images, videos, documents or audio files to the digital archive, go to covid-19archive.org [covid-19archive.org] and follow the instructions. Tag your submission with #AZHistory to catalog it with other Arizona stories.

This past fall, AHS was honored to receive the donation of The Migrant Quilt Project, which will be preserved in the Arizona History Museum collections. The quilts are available to loan to other museums and be made accessible for the public to view.



The **Arizona Historical Society** is also participating in the Journal of the Plague Year project,

The **Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting** is working hard to create digital content. In the past nine months, they've created 76 videos

including tours of collections objects, children's story times, and "firehouse fido" videos in partnership with the Arizona Humane Society. Check out their channel <https://www.youtube.com/c/HallofFlameFireMuseum/videos>

The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA) is currently closed to the public and anticipates de-installation/installation to re-open on February 20th with three new exhibitions. Two are highlighted here and the other will be a collection exhibition called *Division of Labor: Women Shifting a Transnational Gaze*.

Diedrick Brackens: Ark of Bulrushes anticipated run through August 22, 2021, presents a new body of work by artist Diedrick Brackens that includes handwoven tapestries and sculptural weavings.

In her solo-exhibition, *Voice Over: Zineb Sedira*, anticipated run through September 5, 2021, artist Zineb Sedira will create a new iteration for SMoCA of *Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go*, an installation first shown at the Jeu de Paume in Paris in 2019. Zineb Sedira will be the first artist of African descent to represent France at the 2022 Venice Biennale.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

After being reopened for 32 days, the **California Academy of Sciences** re-closed in compliance with San Francisco City and County guidance. Despite a tumultuous 2020, staff have focused on policy and procedures and look forward to rolling out a new strategic plan in 2021. In the meantime, check out [Academy @ Home](#) for online content.

As we all buckle down to stop the spread of COVID-19, outdoor exploration offers opportunities to reset and connect with the natural world. While many are enjoying national, state, and regional parks, consider supporting these institutions to enjoy winter flora and fauna. Of course, plan ahead by checking websites for hours of operation and making a reservation if required.

Filoli, also known as the Bourn-Roth Estate, is a country house set in 16 acres of formal gardens surrounded by a 654-acre estate, located in Woodside, California, about 25 miles south of San Francisco. [filoli.org/explore/the-garden](#)

Hakone Estate and Garden is an 18-acre traditional Japanese garden in Saratoga, California. A recipient of the Save America's Treasures Award by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, it is recognized as one of the oldest Japanese-style residential gardens in the Western Hemisphere. Notable features include a bamboo garden, a Zen garden, and pond garden. [hakone.com/](#)

The Hayward Japanese Gardens, located near downtown Hayward, California, the three acre garden designed along traditional lines are maintained by the [Hayward Area Recreation and Park District](#).

The **Japanese Friendship Garden** is a walled section of Kelley Park in San Jose, California. Dedicated in October 1965, it is patterned after Japan's famous Korakuen Garden in Okayama and spans six acres and contains three ponds originally stocked with koi sent from Okayama in 1966. [sanjose.org/listings/japanese-friendship-garden](#)

Japanese Tea Garden located in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park was originally created as a "Japanese Village" exhibit for the 1894 California Midwinter International Exposition. The site originally spanned about one acre and showcased a Japanese style garden. When the fair closed, Japanese landscape architect Makoto Hagiwara and superintendent John McLaren reached a gentleman's agreement, allowing Mr. Hagiwara to create and maintain a permanent Japanese-style garden as a gift for posterity. [japaneseteagardensf.com/](#)

The **Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens** is located on 47 acres in Fort Bragg, California between Highway One and the Pacific Ocean and includes canyons, wetlands, coastal bluffs, and a closed-cone pine forest. [gardenbythesea.org/](#)

Quarryhill Botanical Garden is a 61-acre botanical garden located in Glen Ellen, Sonoma County, California and is home to one of

the largest collections of scientifically documented, wild-source Asian plants in North America and Europe, many of which represent ancestors of horticultural favorites found throughout the western world. [quarryhillbg.org/](#)

The **San Francisco Botanical Garden** at Strybing Arboretum is located in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. Its 55 acres represents nearly 9,000 different kinds of plants from around the world, with particular focus on Magnolia species, high elevation palms, conifers, and cloud forest species from Central America, South America, and Southeast Asia. [sfbg.org/](#)

The **University of California Botanical Garden** is a 34-acre botanical garden located in Berkeley Hills, on the University of California, Berkeley campus in Strawberry Canyon and has incredible views overlooking the San Francisco Bay. [botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu](#)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

USC Pacific Asia Museum Announces a New Plan of Action to Deconstruct Orientalism Through Collections Management, New Exhibitions and Programming

USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, announced today (September 22, 2020) a new plan of action to

decolonize its collections and challenge notions of the Orient in its exhibitions and programming.

As an integral part of the University of Southern California, this plan will advance USC PAM's mission: "to create inspiring encounters with the art, history and culture of Pacific Asia that promotes intercultural understanding in the service of elevating our shared sense of humanity." In recognition of the role arts institutions must play to advance change, USC PAM acknowledges the following: The Orient is a problematic historical framework used to collapse the diverse identities of peoples and cultures across Asia and the Pacific Islands into socially and culturally constructed others. If we are to grapple with the legacies of colonialism that exist within our museum, the Orient has to be a focus. As the leading university art museum dedicated to the arts and cultures of Asia and the Pacific Islands (API), USC PAM is aware that historically museums played a key role in constructing Orientalism and we must play an equally key role in deconstructing it. USC PAM is proud to announce a robust suite of calendared exhibitions, programs and initiatives that illuminate how we will execute on this plan over the course of the next year. pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu/files/2020/09/Release_NewERA_NewPAM-DRAFT-2.pdf



has been highly awaited in the film community. Ted Saransos, chairman of the board

▲ The much-heralded opening of the opening of the **Academy Museum of Motion Pictures** in Los Angeles has been rescheduled from 30 April until 30 September of next year.

Los Angeles is in the grip of restrictions imposed by the state as coronavirus cases soar, making it difficult to envision greeting visitors as museums currently are closed due to pandemic concerns. Still, the museum had suffered setbacks before the pandemic, repeatedly deferring its original planned opening in 2017.

"We are putting the final touches on our stunning exhibitions and public spaces, and while we were ready and eager to welcome visitors in the spring, with the current surge of Covid-19, it would be irresponsible to maintain an April opening," says Bill Kramer, director and president of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, in a statement. "We know a new day is coming for us all, and when it does, the Academy Museum will be ready to offer our visitors the remarkable experience we have all been wanting."

The opening of the \$482M museum project, with a debut exhibition of the animated films of Hayao Miyazaki,

of trustees of the institution, says, "Now it's just a matter of patience."

The museum will offer immersive and dynamic displays that explore the art, technology, artists, history, and social impact of films through a variety of diverse exhibits."

From The Art Newspaper: theartnewspaper.com/news/amid-covid-19-adjustments-academy-museum-of-motion-pictures-in-los-angeles-delays-opening-by-five-months

On Thursday, January 21, Virtual **Museum of Contemporary Art** (MOCA), Los Angeles, hosted a reading of poems from the volume "In Absentia: Reflections on the Pandemic," edited by Nkosi Nkululeko, Emily O'Neill, and April Ranger, and released by Bicycle Comics. The editors chose a selection of poets who read their contributions from the volume.

Written during the early weeks of the Covid-19 virus outbreak in North America, the poems of "In Absentia" document cultures on the cusp of devastation. The poems capture the fear, the grief, the defiance, and the hope of that first wave.

Poems and readings selected and edited by Nkosi Nkululeko, Emily O’Neill, and April Ranger.”
moca.org/program/moca-x-in-absentia



▲ **The Hammer Museum & The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens**

Made in L.A. 2020

“Works by 30 Los Angeles–based artists are presented at both institutions—two versions that make up the whole. The exhibition features new installations, videos, films, sculptures, performances, and paintings, many commissioned specifically for the exhibition.

Funded through the generosity of Los Angeles philanthropists and art collectors Jarl and Pamela Mohn, three awards totaling \$150,000 will be given to artists in the exhibition: the Mohn Award, the Career Achievement Award—both of which are selected by a professional jury—and the Public Recognition Award, which is determined through votes cast by visitors to the exhibition. Visitors will be able to vote at both exhibition locations.

During the run of *Made in L.A. 2020*, members and visitors to the

Hammer will receive passes granting free admission to The Huntington to view *Made in L.A. 2020* in full.

Made in L.A. 2020 is organized by independent curators Myriam Ben Salah and Lauren Mackler, with the Hammer’s Ikechukwu Onyewuenyi, Assistant Curator of Performance.

The opening date of this exhibition is dependent on L.A. County guidelines for museums to reopen.”
hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/2020/made-la-2020-version



HAWAII



▲ **Steven Gardner and assistant installing the mural at the Hau’ula Fire Station.**
Photograph by Tory Laitila, 2020.

The **Honolulu Mayor’s Office of Culture and the Arts** installed a public art project managed by Curator of Collections Marion Cadora. The work is an exterior metal and glass mural for the Hau’ula Fire Station titled *Ka Leo O Ke Kai*.

The project began in 2019 and was completed in December 2020 at a cost of \$72,000. The glass and metal mural is by State of Washington artist Steven Gardner. Following best practices, the pre-fabrication of the mural was reviewed by conservator Christina Varvi of RLA Conservation.

The **USS Bowfin Submarine Museum & Park** has been slowly moving forward with their new museum, the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum. Curator Sara Bellian has been working on preparing objects for exhibit; a few of their historic submarine battle flags have been reproduced for display, including

a reproduction of the USS Wahoo battle flag by RC-WR member Tory Laitila.

Have a sneak peek (following page) at some of the submarine battle flags on exhibit at the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum.

► Submarine battle flags, Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum. Photograph by Tory Laitila, 2020



The Honolulu Museum of Art

in preparing for an upcoming exhibit is doing some work on a sculpture by Duane Hanson. The hyper-realistic polyester and fiberglass with found clothing and accessories, *Secretary*, was completed in 1972. Textiles staff at the museum



▲ Duane Hanson, *Secretary*, 1972. Collection of the Honolulu Museum of Art.

Gift of Dawn and Duncan MacNaughton in honor of Thurston Twigg-Smith, 2011 (14419.1)

disrobed the figure and prepared some of the clothing items for treatment by textile conservator Linda Hee. HoMA Assistant Registrar Kyle Swartzlender is working with the artist's estate to replace some of the aged found objects. The figure holds a steno pad and the staff had an entertaining time deciphering the notes left behind by previous owners of the sculpture in both cursive and shorthand, adding to the provenance.

NEVADA

Many of Nevada's museums have reopened (with restrictions) over the last six months, including all of those represented by RC-WR members. Nevada's museums have also been busy creating new ways to reach their communities despite the challenges we all face.

The **Clark County Museum's** temporary exhibit, *Lines Across the Land—Historic Maps of Southern Nevada*, closed on January 15th, and a new exhibit, *Soft Focus*, featuring art quilts inspired by photographs in the museum's collection will open on March 19th. Also, Museum Admin-

istrator Mark Hall-Patton has been answering questions on Facebook Live every Wednesday at noon from a different location at the museum. Behind the scenes, staff has been preparing for a new storage building by attempting to conquer the collections backlog and reevaluating housing and storage techniques.

The **John and Geraldine Lilley Museum of Art** re-opened in July, and has created several community outreach programs, including the hashtag #TheLilleyFromHome, used to interact with their audience in a meaningful and educative way. The hashtag featured pieces from the museum's collection with descriptions from different members of the local community. The museum also created a coloring book inspired by pieces in their permanent collection, which is available to download from the [museum's website](#), and *The Lilley's Art at Home*, a series of activities for children, providing parents with resources to keep their kids busy while teaching them art. The museum also shared interviews with contemporary artists conducted by Vivian Zavataro, Director of The Lilley Museum of Art, and poetry from University of Nevada, Reno faculty members. During The Lilley's 30 days of art, The Lilley presented a glossary of art terminology represented by works from the museum's collection. Finally, The Lilley Museum and the Barrick Museum of Art shared collaborative pairings of works from their respective collections on Instagram and Facebook, using the hashtag #SisterMuseumNV.

The Neon Museum is open, but if you can't visit in person, you can visit their 360 Virtual Tour, web app, or blog.

The **Nevada Museum of Art** has created virtual programs, providing ways to connect with the museum through artist talks, art discussions, and online performances.

The **Wilbur D. May Museum** just closed its exhibit *Cloth as Community: Among Textiles in America*.

The **Nevada State Museum**, Carson City is currently open to the public at 25% capacity Wednesday through Saturday from 8:30am until 4:30 pm. All staff and public are required to wear masks, have their temperature taken upon entry, and follow CDC recommended guidelines. From the initial stage last March of 40% pay cuts and 100% museum closure, they have gradually returned to partial capacity and limited open days. Through steady leadership and staff patience, staff now have one day a month of furlough. Curatorial staff has been occupied with expanding outreach through social media posts, creation of digital content, and the development of the Curator's Corner Series, which takes place live and is also filmed to share later. The museum has altered some of their programming, such as the Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, Coin Press No. 1 demonstrations, and minting of commemorative medallions to a zoom format, but still offer these experiences in person with social distancing. The museum raised \$4,625 for the Covid-19 Relief Fund during the summer and late fall with

the Nevada Health Care Heroes Medallion. Behind the scenes, each department has been using this relatively quiet time to re-organize and assess collections, determine future projects and re-tool spaces to enhance our ability to share collections and stories. Looking ahead, many of the adjustments made during the pandemic will likely remain in place and have added to the museum's toolbox for serving the citizens of Nevada. Sometimes positive things come from getting out of our comfort zone and being forced to explore new creative ideas. Museum staff are feeling positive for 2021 and energized by the staff's ability to "pivot" and "re-tool", and of course to integrate fresh buzzwords into their vocabulary.



OREGON

Oregon Museums Association hosted two online workshops and a virtual happy hour meet up on Zoom. The first workshop focused on NAGPRA. Five panelists with specialized NAGPRA knowledge shared specific information on compliance requirements, collection evaluation, outreach to Native tribes and tools and resources to navigate the intricacies of the repatriation process. The second workshop, presented in partnership with Oregon Heritage, focused on disaster preparedness for collecting institutions.

With more long-term closures in the Portland Metro area, the **Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education** ((OJMCHE) continued their innovative programming with a new exhibit, *Shelter in Place*. This exhibit is entirely viewable from the sidewalk surrounding the museum. It includes film, photography, and dance. *Shelter in Place* is an inquiry into social isolation and the physical and emotional effects of anti-black racial violence.



▲ *Shelter in Place*, by Adam McKinney at OJMCHE in Portland

After locals found the need to preserve the history of the city of Rainier, the **Rainier Oregon Historical Museum**



▲ Ground breaking for a ROHM building October 28, 2020 on property donated by Steve and Jan Oliva. Photograph by Joanne Bernard

was founded in 2015. The non-profit started using a newly remodeled space on the third floor of City Hall to do so, but with the overwhelming support and success of the museum, they started to quickly outgrow that space. With a recent donation of property within the city, a ground breaking for a new museum building was held on October 28, 2020.

Although closed to the public again, the **Oregon Historical Society** opened a new exhibit and took extra photos of the space and some of the objects in situ to create an expanded exhibit page for people to view online. *The Carvings of Hallie Heacock* displays a variety of ivory and wood carvings done by Heacock which reflect life in the mid-20th Century and memories from his time spent in Alaska and Oregon. The OHS owns

over 160 items that Heacock carved, etched, and sketched between 1904 and 1966.



◀ Heacock carved this from an illustration called *A Glob's Life* by Walt Kelly, which appeared in *LIFE Magazine* in 1952.

OHS Museum
71-56.118

UTAH

After a difficult year, many of Utah's museums have reopened to the public, adapting to shifting policies and restricted hours and attendance. We've all been closely following Utah's vaccination schedule to determine what to expect from the cultural sector in 2021.

The **Utah Museum of Fine Arts** is open Wednesday to Saturday. Like other institutions, they've experienced all kinds of changes and edits to their exhibition calendar. After a 5-month delay, they are opening an exciting new traveling exhibition organized by the American Federation of Arts and The Studio Museum in Harlem. *Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem* opens in January. Their Collections and Exhibitions staff is learning the ropes of working with virtual couriers and making safe and smart decisions about teamwork in the time of Covid.

The **Springville Museum of Art** is opening an exhibition about Utah's environmental issues, working with 14 local artists in various media. *In Sight, Out of Mind* opens in January and will be on display until August 7th. Additionally, SMA's Registrar was delighted to bring a total of 13 artworks by female artists into their permanent collection in 2020, a significant improvement on 2019's total of one!

WASHINGTON

After initially closing to the public in March, the **Museum of Flight**, Seattle, was able to reopen to the public in early September before closing again in mid-November. In September, MoF opened a refreshed version of the WWII gallery, “Untold Stories: World War II at 75”. This was the first major update to this gallery since it opened in the early 2000s. Even while the museum was open to the public, most collections staff continued working from home, performing database cleanup tasks, adding to online collections, and supporting other departments’ digital initiatives. Over the summer, the museum began offering Premium Experiences, most of which are behind the scenes tours. Several of these tours focus on the collections department. Participants are allowed into aircraft interiors and collections storage areas usually not accessible to the public. Collections staff pull and present themed artifact selections at the end of the tour. The tours proved to be an extremely popular source of earned revenue, and a great opportunity to educate visitors (and other museum staff) about what collections professionals do. Programming is expected to continue into 2021, with several new tours being added.

In early November, **Bellevue Arts Museum**, Bellevue, opened an exhibition *Yellow No. 5*, guest curated by Tariqa Waters of Martyr Sauce. Additionally, they have also developed a 3D virtual tour of the entire museum for the first time, available here: bellevuearts.org/visit/3d-tours



Furthermore, Lane Eagles has joined the Bellevue Arts Museum curatorial team as Associate Curator on December 7. Eagles has previously served in curatorial and collections roles for several Seattle area art institutions, including Henry Art Gallery, Museum of Pop Culture, and Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture. She has also taught Art History and Fashion History courses at the University of Washington, Seattle Pacific University, and Cornish College of the Arts. Eagles earned her BA in Art History from the University of Oklahoma and her MA and PhD in Art History from the University of Washington. In her new position at BAM, she will play an essential role in furthering the Museum’s unique mission focused on art, craft, and design.

The **Frye Art Museum** in Seattle is thrilled to announce a new and expanded way to experience its

▲ *Ronnie and Cleveland*,
by Marilyn Montufar, 2006.
Gelatin silver print. 20 x 20 in.

Photograph by Jueqian Fang

collection online. Launched in October 2020 and using Gallery Systems’ EmbARK collections database and Web Kiosk software, the project was the result of years of planning and preparation by the dedicated collections staff: Chief Registrar/Head of Collections Cory Gooch, Assistant Registrar Nives Meštrović, former Collections and Exhibitions Assistant Kayla Trail, and devoted volunteer Luanna S Gomez.

collection.fryemuseum.org

The Boren Banner Series is a new public art initiative that reflects the Frye’s commitment to showcasing Pacific Northwest artists (see image above). Presented biannually, the series allows local and regional artists to create a new site-



▲ Frye staff Zooming Salon-style

specific work or show a previously unexhibited piece at monumental scale in the form of a 16 x 20 ft. vinyl banner. The billboard-size work is prominently sited on the Museum's most visible façade. The first work in the series is *Ronnie and Cleveland* (2006), a black-and-white double portrait by Seattle-based photographer, activist, and educator Marilyn Montufar.

A new exhibition was installed at the Frye mid-November to celebrate the 10th anniversary of its Creative Aging programs. Since 2010, the Frye has been at the forefront of museum programming for people living with dementia and their care partners. Featuring artwork from program participants, *Art on the Mind: Ten Years of Creative Aging* illustrates the success of arts engagement in

bringing joy, respect, and dignity to people living with dementia while destigmatizing the disease. Since the Museum has been closed as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, a virtual opening took place and all are invited to take [a virtual tour](#).

Frye Salon Zoom Backgrounds

The [Frye Salon](#) exhibition was a re-staging of the Museum's Founding Collection as it was installed in the home gallery of the museum founders, Charles and Emma Frye. The collection was hung in 'salon-style,' filling the walls floor-to-ceiling with paintings. To impress friends and colleagues at your next virtual meeting, you can download the high-resolution image files [here](#).

Happy Zooming!



New Reads

by Nancy Arms Simon



*Museum Collection Ethics:
Acquisition, Stewardship,
and Interpretation*

By Steven Miller

Published by Rowan and
Littlefield, 2020

When the world and, by extension, the museum field, change rapidly, it presents an interesting conundrum for reviewing new reads. This editor views the information presented in the text (at best) in a different light, scrutinizes it in a new context, with new vocabulary, and places new importance onto formerly insignificant issues (or at worst, they view the information as irrelevant).

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STEVEN MILLER

MUSEUM COLLECTION ETHICS

Acquisition, Stewardship, and Interpretation



Museum Collections Ethics: Acquisition, Stewardship, and Interpretation by Steven Miller was published in 2020. Which means that Miller probably worked on the book through 2018 and/or 2019 and conceptualized it earlier than that. While by no means outdated or irrelevant, I read *Museum Collections Ethics* through a lens shaped by the numerous events of 2020, which led me to question things I might not have in the past.

Miller smartly launches the book with the basics. He chooses a working definition for “museum” based on usage by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). He points out the difference between museum collections *ethics* vs. *law* and explains how museums exist legally in the world and who is responsible for them. He points out that one must understand the purpose and evolution of museums to understand from where their ethics spring. His purpose in writing the book, he says, is to fill a void: no other recent publication has dealt comprehensively with collection ethics. Miller draws together prior research (his bibliography is solid and includes amongst its titles the classic *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections* by Marie C. Malaro) and relevant, contemporary examples from his professional experience. I admired and chuckled at Miller’s diplomacy when describing these experiences.

I appreciated Miller’s brief historical description of museums as “places of explanation”. I liked the way he outlined why people trust museums as places of authority not only because museums hold tangible objects, but also because museums define those original objects and use them as evidence. He frequently acknowledges mission clarity as the root of good museum ethics and returns to it as a common point of origin to make ethical decisions in the museum workplace. I applaud the arguments Miller makes about how it is not ethical to try to have a museum while failing to be a viable organization.

After the introduction on the role of museums, the

chapters are broken up into areas that intersect when it comes to collections ethics: governance and trusteeship, authority (curators, specialists, and the intrinsic authority of collection objects), collecting methods, acquisition, authentication, stewardship and access, conservation as a highly specialized academic and manual discipline, exhibitions as a form of public communication and exhibition funding, collection loss, and industry standard protocols. Miller explains these areas of museum collection ethics in clear, concise writing. Each chapter ends with questions for discussion relating to the chapter topic, ideal for introductory classes and group understanding. In the next edition, I hope Miller will add in a paragraph or two about how the necessary protocols of Covid-19 affect the accession process.

Miller also includes eight useful appendices that contain the fine-tuned kind of documents museum professionals look for when trying to establish museum-wide policy. The appendices include staff responsibilities in relationship to collections, international agreements defining illegal trafficking, AAM curator and conservation codes of ethics, current scholarship around the respectful treatment of human remains and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), a statement signed by multiple institutions on open access and lastly, case study documents on museum transfers.

But there are moments in the book that are problematic when viewed through the aforementioned lens of 2020. He claims, for example, that “Cumulatively, *I have* acquired 1000s of objects” (italics mine) (Preface, p. xiii). It sounds to me like one person taking ownership of the work of many. I admit that this small choice of words colored my reading of the book, but these are the subtle uses of language that make labor invisible. Later he mentions “hands-on” staff like preparators and art handlers, but from the perspective of management of them, not as an indication of the trust these professionals deserve or the owner-

ship they hold over their work. With the term “essential work and essential workers” embedded in our collective conscience now, any book written with 2020 in mind must acknowledge the work for which “hands-on” staff are responsible as well as the arguments for equity in wages, benefit, and gratitude for which workers struggle. He attempts some modesty (“I’m sure I have either neglected aspects of importance or given them short shrift. I apologize for these failures,”) but also claims that he has “started a focused conversation that will permeate the field...” (p. xiii), as if this conversation didn’t exist before his book.

Besides being a great resource for people just beginning to learn about the museum field, *Museum Collection Ethics* is a huge asset for long established museums in creating a Code of Ethics and reviewing their activities for ethics. Miller provides “ethics checklists” for procedures of provenance, acquisitions, and deaccessions. The checklists literally have sentences you may find yourself saying. For example, if you find yourself in an acquisition discussion and someone says, “We have been looking for such an object for years,” that falls under an “ethical” reason to acquire the work. If, however, someone says “We can sell it later for something we really want,” that falls under the “questionable” arguments. (p. 58) Since museums claim to be places of truth, authenticity of objects is vital and sticking to your mission keeps you out of unethical waters.

Overall, *Museum Collection Ethics* is a strong, comprehensive, affordable guide on the ethics around museum collections. It would be excellent as a required reading for Museum Studies programs, as well as museum board members and trustees, or museum employees who don’t have a formal background in Museum Studies. The manual is not too academic for people new to the field, but interesting and valuable enough for the seasoned museum professional.

Online

The quarterly New Read doesn’t always spark a tie-in with recent online articles. However, *Museum Collection Ethics* presented two chapters that reminded me of recent articles I had read on museum board ties to Jeffrey Epstein and price gouging of Prison Industrial Complex victims. Chapter two (Museum Governance) starts by describing the fiduciary responsibilities of board members and the need for transparency around personal collecting habits and the museum collections that the board members influence. There is a good discussion of conflict-of-interest disclosure forms and what they really provide. The section on trustee members’ behavior in civic capacity truly grabbed my attention. Miller points out that “too often the good ethical behavior expected of board members is assumed rather than stated or required in any official way” (p. 13) It made me ask myself, “What do we require of our board members’ reputation within our organization and in the world at large?” Museums’ Codes of Ethics generally target employees, but not board members. Why do we inherently trust people in positions of power, or people with wealth?

Chapter twelve (Museum Collections Ethics Standards) also deals with museums’ reputations as assets not only for the museum in question but also for museums in general. When one museum falls from grace, other museums must go out of their way to prove they are not one of the bad guys.

I have listed a few of the articles I’ve read in the past year about the personal dealings of high-profile museum board members. Museum staff have long questioned (and the public is now clamoring for) accountability when it comes to personal ethics for board members, trustees, and donors of objects as well as funds. In particular, some of the best known museums are dealing with the old adage that “behind

every great fortune is a crime” and there is a call for divestment or removal of these people from positions of power in our museums.

As class division has increased, museums have come to rely more heavily on the 1% to support their efforts and we’ve rewarded them with decision-making positions and trusteeships. The elite holds more of the collective wealth than ever before and they decide to whom they will dole it out. Sometimes they give it to museums (with a tidy tax deduction for their trouble) and we are grateful. But there is a question brewing now about whether those dollars should be distributed more equitably in the first place, and the average person should be allowed to decide where to spend them. Questions also arise around whether we want people governing our museums who don’t understand the lives of the general public and especially people who run with a morally bankrupt crowd. What should be the penalties and legal ramifications of unethical behavior when a person can’t be fired like a regular employee? Can we trust others on the board to hold them accountable when they’re all benefitting from the same games?

It is a quandary to be sure, and I don’t claim to know the answer. If we complain too much about how the rich kids are playing the game, they may very well take their toys and leave the playground. Who then will pay for the enormous costs of sustaining a museum when there hasn’t yet been a dramatic re-distribution of wealth? ●

- *Leon Black Paid at Least \$50 Million to Jeffrey Epstein*
Artnet News, October 13, 2020
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/art-industry-news-october-13-2020-1914931>
- *The Billionaire Who Stood by Jeffrey Epstein*
By Matthew Goldstein, Steve Eder and David Enrich, Published Oct. 12, 2020 and updated Oct. 13, 2020
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/business/leon-black-jeffrey-epstein.html>
- *Guerrilla Girls Target MoMA Trustees With Ties to Jeffrey Epstein in an Ad Takeover*
by Hakim Bishara, November 12, 2019
<https://hyperallergic.com/527973/guerrilla-girls-target-moma-trustees-with-ties-to-jeffrey-epstein-in-an-ad-takeover/>
- *Tom Gores, Owner of Prison Telecom Company, Resigns From LACMA Board*
by Matt Stromberg, Hyperallergic, October 9, 2020
<https://hyperallergic.com/593822/tom-gores-resigns-from-lacma-board/>
- *Ranking New York’s Most Toxic Museum Boards*
by Whitney Mallett and Katy Schneider
Vulture, AUG. 7, 2019
<https://www.vulture.com/2019/08/new-york-most-toxic-museum-boards.html>