

# Registrar's Quarterly

Winter 2020



**RCWR**  
REGISTRARS COMMITTEE  
WESTERN REGION

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A Fool's Errand by Lonnie G. Bunch, III

Cover:

*Stained glass cupola at the Glen Foerd on the  
Delaware mansion, participant in the 2019  
Les Benevoles project during ARCS 2019.*



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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.





**Happy New Year  
RC-WR Members!**

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season filled with family and food! Things are looking great for RC-WR so far in 2020: we've already gained a lot of new members, have

reached our funding goal for the year, and we have some great workshops and stipends planned for our members to further their professional development.

But before we charge forward in 2020, this newsletter takes a look back at the Western Museum Association (WMA) and Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists (ARCS) conferences from last Fall through the sharp eyes of some of our members. This issue of the *Registrar's Quarterly* contains essays from three members who attended WMA and two who attended ARCS with the assistance of RC-WR stipends. Their takes on various aspects of these conferences are thought provoking and inspiring, so I encourage you all to take a close read.

Speaking of stipends, this year we're offering stipends for state conferences, AAM in May, and WMA in October! For more info, visit our website and if your preferred conference isn't up yet, stay tuned for announcements later this year.

I also attended WMA and ARCS last Fall, and the experiences and personal growth I pull from each never fails to surprise me. Personally, the highlight of my WMA experience was our CSI:Registrars event and our Annual Luncheon. It was such a

Below: Stipend recipients Jill Sommer, Andrew Walsh and Kathleen Daly at WMA 2019

Bottom: The Idaho State Capitol Building in Boise



pleasure to meet those of you who attended and put some faces to the names that we see on our member directory. I hope that those of your who attend this year's WMA meeting in Portland, Oregon will choose to attend our Annual Luncheon as well! Both conferences were very inspiring, with themes like DEAI and reducing/recycling/ climate awareness threaded throughout.

In other news, this month we are welcoming a new Newsletter Editor, Audra Indie O'Sidhe. We're also holding two California workshops (reports on those coming in the April issue), and we've just added the option of acquiring our t-shirts and aprons to the Donate a page on our website. Also in this issue are our state reports and a guest written New Reads article.

Finally, I'd like to extend a big THANK YOU to our sponsors



ARCS attendees network under a T. Rex skeleton at Philadelphia's Academy of Natural Sciences

T. Block. Hollinger Metal Edge has also renewed their sponsorship this year and will continue giving us an exclusive discount through 2020! I'd encourage you to take a closer look at their ads distributed throughout this newsletter —our sponsors are doing great things like opening new facilities, supporting sustainable crating, and purchasing carbon credits to offset their impact.

As always, my door is open to all our members. If you'd ever like to chat, please send me an email at [rcwrchair@gmail.com](mailto:rcwrchair@gmail.com).

so far this year, who make everything we do possible. The following sponsors have joined us at the Tier 1 level so far this year: Gander & White, Cooke's Crating, ArtWork FAS, Artech Seattle, Masterpiece Intl., Dietl Intl., ACLA, Ship/Art, U.S. Art, Atelier 4, Willis Towers Watson, Crozier Fine Arts, and Huntington

**Here's to a great 2020!**

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

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SAVE THE DATE



TOUR THE BENTON  
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Photographs by Richard Barnes

**Free for RC-WR Members**  
**April 16th, 2020**

Opening in September 2020, the brand new Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College, (formerly Pomona College Museum of Art), represents over 12 years of planning and design. The 33,331 square foot museum, designed by Machado/Silvetti and Gensler architects,

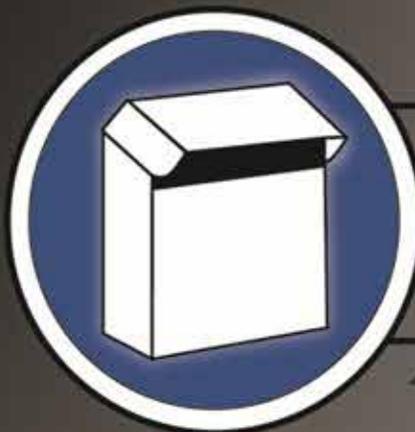
reflects the core mission of the challenges and opportunities of a teaching museum. Join Steve Comba, Associate Director/Registrar on a behind-the-scenes sneak peak of the galleries, collections storage, and access areas, as he shares stories of the triumphs and tribulations that come with a new building.

To attend, RSVP to RC-WR Vice Chair Beth Sanders at [rcwrvicechair@gmail.com](mailto:rcwrvicechair@gmail.com)!



Please join the RC-WR Board in welcoming our new Newsletter Editor, Audra Indie O'Sidhe! Audra Indie is an Archivist at the World of Speed in Wilsonville, Oregon.

*Welcome to the RC-WR Team!*



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# STIPEND RECIPIENTS 2019

## Serendipitous Risk Taker

Andrew Walsh | Registrar

Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA

As an emerging museum professional and Registrar, I find myself often straddling the line between old and new. This includes my actual work, but also my perception of the field and its future that I hope to be a part of. How does my daily practice compare to others? Finding a critical lens through which one can experience their work is important. That lens for me was serendipitous in nature—to take from Western Museums Association’s theme, ENGAGE. By receiving a stipend from RC-WR, I was able to attend, present, and reflect on my own craft through this lens at WMA 2019 in Boise, Idaho.

I’d never been to a mid-size conference like WMA. My expectations were minimal—that is to say, excited but unsure what to *really* expect. I thought—I’ll present my section of my session, and then go to a few others. Nothing too crazy, right? Well, spoiler—that’s exactly what happened. What I *couldn’t* have expected is the overall impact WMA 2019 would have on me. I came back to Washington with a refreshed, calmed attitude, with fresh eyes ready to take on the challenges that face all Registrars. I took away some very practical advice on approaching projects of all types, as well as some big-picture methods to handle the stressful, chaotic existence that can be the art world. WMA served me well, both as an emerging museum professional, but also as someone

who wouldn’t have had the means to attend without the gracious support of stipends like this one.

The mild anxiety of speaking in front of people and the reality that I would be presenting for the first time sunk in as soon as I landed in Boise. I had a mild moment of panic, which was quickly taken over by the exciting feeling that comes with being in a place you’ve never been to before. As I entered my (non-conference) hotel, the receptionist and I chatted briefly about the cafes in the area. Of course, within two minutes of being in Boise, I realize that I had stepped out of the Seattle coffee bubble. The receptionist recommended a few places, and then said something that inadvertently stuck with me. “There isn’t much culture in Boise!” I couldn’t help but laugh, and then took it as a personal challenge. I will find the culture that Boise has to offer, and I will do so with 400 other museum professionals.

Maybe finding culture in Boise through the lens of a museum professional was the perfect way to spend a few days. I signed up for events, and found them to be a fantastic networking opportunity with a cultural backdrop that is hard to find in the busy daytime hallways. The evening event at the Old Idaho Penitentiary was a favorite for sure, and speaks to the ability to be surprised, even among your own people. That first night I found myself roaming the hallways with the most enthusiastic docent I have encountered in a long time, exploring the dark and empty jail cells with nothing but a flashlight and the company of like-minded folks. That first day would serve as a pleasant surprise by guiding my conference experience—armed with a flashlight, looking for culture in the nooks and crannies of Boise.

The actual conference came and went rather quickly. As I eagerly marked up my book with which sessions to attend, I found myself in conflict rather quickly. The more people I met, the more sessions I wanted to attend. I felt like I was in college again, embarking with a plan, just to be steered by the creative voices I met. As a Registrar at a non-collecting mid-sized art museum in a big city, I found myself eager to engage with folks as much as possible about *their* experiences. On the one hand, I had my own expertise in the form of my session. Yet, each individual I met had perspectives which shaped my experience over the course of a few days. That was refreshing, knowing that other presenters (first timers or otherwise) were in the same boat as I.

I attended a lot of meaningful sessions, ready to absorb as much as I could. One in particular that stuck with me was about risk taking. My own session centered on taking risks and confronting challenges when working within the contemporary art world. So naturally I felt right at home in a session dedicated to “risky” business. The panelists discussed the importance of taking risks, and by the end of the session I didn’t see “risk” as a four-letter word anymore. If I can be convinced in an hour, so can others. (This is a major take-away that I had and hope to instill in others at my home institution.) The most refreshing element of WMA was seeing others who faced challenges head on and lived to tell about it. Honorable session mentions go to Idahorror Stories (which used flashlights and fake fire to discuss cautionary tales, with a hint of humor and a side of s’mores) and the recycling/reusing thread that permeated several sessions.

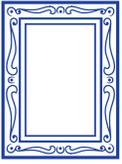


WMA attendees swap scary experiences at the Idahorror Stories session.

As the sessions ended and parties began, I found myself ready to explore Boise and all it had to offer, through the cultural lens that the hotel receptionist had inadvertently pushed upon me. The Basque community in the region satisfied that curiosity for me and was a pleasant surprise as I enjoyed more networking opportunities around (delicious) paella. This was mutually felt the next

night with the closing party at the Boise Art Museum. The sincerity of the staff and willingness to open their doors to others like themselves made all the difference. Boise, by way of their museums and regional centers, showed me full force the cultural impact a small city can have on its visitors.

As my time in Boise drew to a close, I found myself leaving with a wealth of knowledge and far more new contacts than I expected. Understanding that my day-to-day work doesn’t exist in a vacuum, and that my professional contacts are always there to help further the field, gave me a lot of hope which I plan to extend into my own practice. Often, at least in my experience, we can get tunnel vision working in this field. WMA was that boost of energy I needed to revitalize my Registrarial work in a way that I didn’t realize I needed. I am a better Registrar for attending, and found a small city with cultural offerings and an open community beyond what I could have imagined. ●



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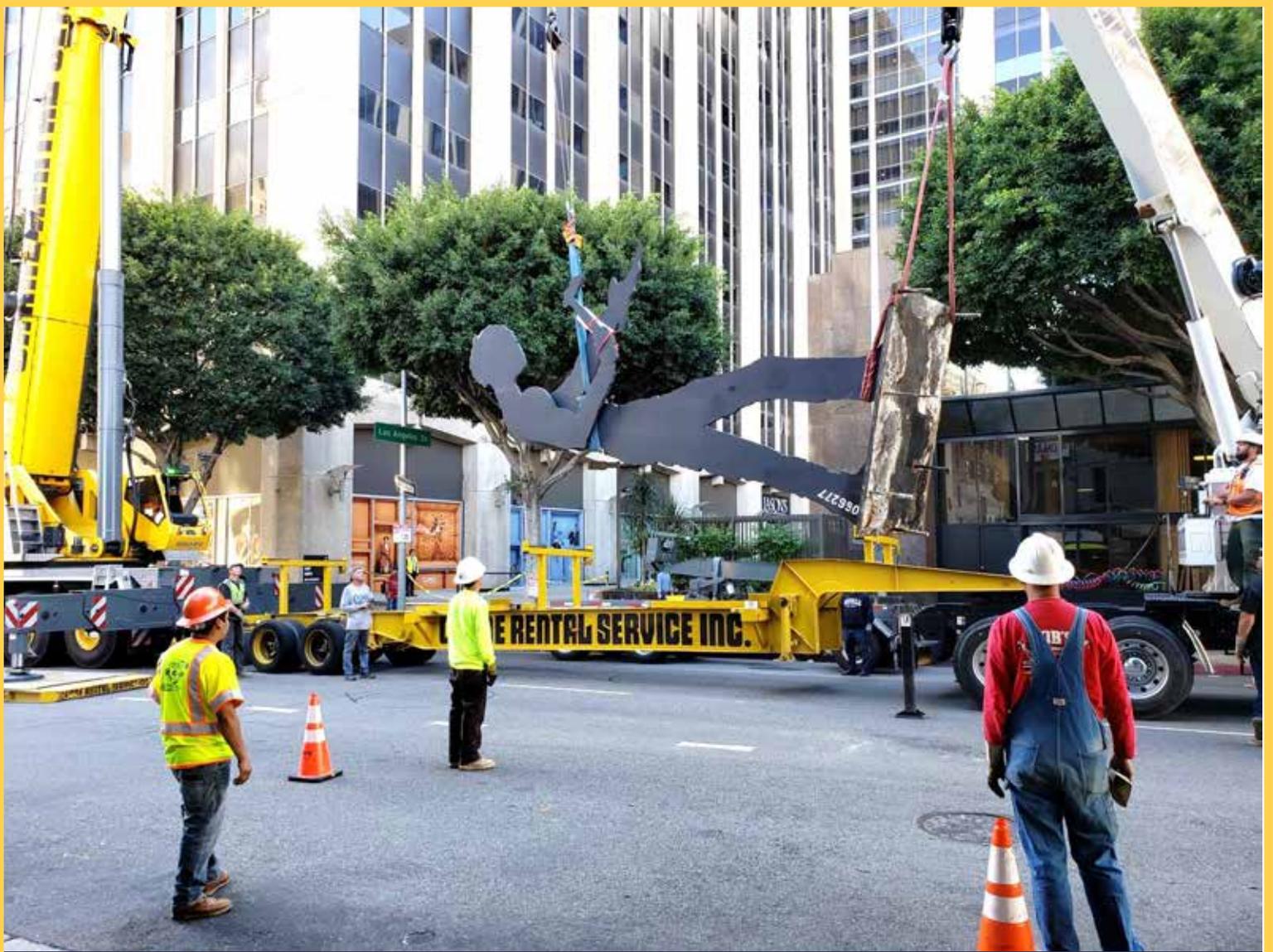
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# Breakfast & Breakout Sessions: Sharing Practical Solutions ARCS 2019 in Philadelphia

Jess Milhausen | *Associate Registrar*

Burke Museum of Natural History & Culture, Seattle, WA

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Through the generous stipend I received from RC-WR, I was able to attend my first ARCS conference which was held in Philadelphia in November 2019. It was an amazing opportunity to meet all sorts of Registrars and Collections Specialists from many types of institutions and galleries.

While the sessions were greatly informative, and sometimes very humorous, what I found most enjoyable about the conference was the 'breakout' special topic discussions during breakfasts and lunches. The ARCS conference provided all attendees both breakfast and lunch in the conference hotel. After hitting the buffet, you could bring your meal to a smaller side room where the meet ups were assigned. This was a chance for people with similar interests to meet, discuss and share ideas on specific topics. I was able to attend four of these, including: Collections with Hazardous Materials, Natural History Museums, Recently Renovated/Expanded Museums, and Museums with Archives and No Archivist. Other topics included Emerging Museum Professionals, Private Collections Turned Museums, Time-based Media, Private/Corporate Collections, Municipal/Government-Managed Collections, Art Museums, Science Museums, History Museums, and more. At each of the breakout sessions I attended we had between four and twelve people from various institutions, some similar and some very different from my own.

The first discussion I attended was Collections with Hazardous Materials, where we discussed the different types of hazardous materials in our collections and shared experiences and resources on how we handled those risks. We heard a fascinating story about how a historic site acquired old medicine and is now faced with having to care for substances that are both a health hazard and

stored in their original packaging. My institution is in a similar situation with materials excavated from a historic privy site. I was able to swap strategies with other attendees for both identification and long-term storage of these hazards.

At the Museums with Archives but No Archivist discussion the attendees and I were able to commiserate and share ideas for managing the situation. This lunchtime session was the best attended meet up I went to, with a full table of 12 people from 10 different institutions ranging from art museums and natural history museums to historic sites from around the country. Some individuals were challenged with how to accommodate research requests from the public with limited staff availability, while others had to tackle processing an overwhelming amount of archival material with no archivist support. We were able to swap ideas and solutions that we have each used to manage our respective challenges. While some of our stories were slightly different, it was cathartic to sit at the table with a group of people who could truly relate to the difficulty of a very specific situation that most other people would not fully understand.

At the Recently Renovated/Expanded Museums session about half of us at the table were from institutions that had gone through a recent renovation or expansion and the other half were those who were just starting this process. It turned into more of a mentoring session, sharing what strategies worked well for our institutions and giving words of advice on how to make the process run more smoothly. In everyone's case the physical moving of collections was the most daunting part of the process. Those of us who had just completed moving collections were able to share tricks that we learned during our experience. While we each had unique observations to share, we all agreed that it was best to plan on things taking more time than you had originally estimated.

While the ARCS conference is useful for Registrars and Collections Specialists from all types of museums, it did seem that most of my fellow conference-goers came from art museums or galleries. This made the Natural History Museums lunch discussion seem especially fun. While we were not really trying to solve a problem or discuss a specific situation, we were able to share stories about odd specimens in our collections, interesting donor situations, and the ramifications of when collections are split and sent to more than one institution. It was nice to share stories about the nuances of working in a Natural History museum.

I found myself exchanging more business cards during these sessions than any other time. It was a great way to network around a shared interest and make sure that time spent networking was relevant to my interests and career. It also helped eliminate those often-awkward moments that can occur with museum folk who identify as

introverts such as myself. I have never enjoyed just striking up conversations with strangers during networking coffee breaks or at opening receptions, but this format made it easy for me to meet colleagues with whom I probably would not have otherwise engaged in conversation. Additionally, these discussions were very interesting and helpful to my professional development. On several occasions we even had the problem that too many people had great ideas and stories to share—I think we could have talked for hours.

I would highly recommend that ARCS keep providing these breakout sessions during meals, and if you happen to go to one of their conferences, you should definitely check one out yourself. You can connect with colleagues who share the same trials and triumphs as you do, and while you may not solve all those problems over breakfast, it's great to know you are not alone. ●

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## Exploring the Boise Basque Block

### and Intersections of Diversity and Inclusion



Basque Block Party featuring traditional dance

Jill Sommer | Curator of Cultural Resources  
Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i

During the 2019 Western Museums Association (WMA) annual meeting, I took the opportunity to visit the “Basque Block,” located near the WMA headquarters hotel. This area in Boise, Idaho is the only place in the western hemisphere dedicated to preserving the

culture and history of Basque communities. In the Place Matters: Site-Specific Interpretation session, I learned that the Basque people are somewhat of a mystery. They are of unknown origin, language isolate, and have a unique blood type. But the Basque have a strong *Luku Zentzua* (Sense of Place) and consider everything as a communal experience; they don't believe in an individual effort on anything.

One of my favorite things about the Basque people was their welcoming attitude; outsiders are always welcome. While we often define culture as shared beliefs, customs, and characteristics common to the members of a particular group, we also often tend to extend that to the color of our skin. From my experience, the Basque do not, although they do appreciate anyone who learns their language.



Basque Museum & Cultural Center along the Basque Block



Sheep Camp—Children's Discovery Area

quandary over the effort of archiving scent when it can never truly be captured with all its associated context.

I was excited to explore the Basque Museum & Cultural Center (BMCC) during one of WMA's evening events, as it was an opportunity to learn more about a new place I was visiting and one that relates to immigration events and discussions which are relevant today. Being a very visual person, I was attracted to BMCC as an exhibition facility, which included a historic site, Boarding House, and an archive.

When I walked into the children's area at BMCC, I immediately drifted back to the power of the senses—sights, sounds, smells... Before reading Chen's 2016 paper on archiving olfactory knowledge, I had never given scent much consideration in a museum or archive. Chen's work was a thought-provoking article and left me in a personal

quandary over the effort of archiving scent when it can never truly be captured with all its associated context.

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quandary over the effort of archiving scent when it can never truly be captured with all its associated context.

quandary over the effort of archiving scent when it can never truly be captured with all its associated context.

## Our capacity to destroy one another is matched by our capacity to heal one another.

—Dr. Bessel Van der Kolk

what it means to be diverse and inclusive. The BMCC is representative of the Basque people in Idaho and of the predominantly Spanish Basque provinces from which they immigrated.

Are they amiss in not representing the story of the native people that were in the Boise area before them? Could diversity be shown in the representation of other types of voices, such as gender, LGBTQ, disabled, etc.? Or in the staff that are employed/volunteer that are not Basque? Is a tribal museum or archive that employs only indigenous members diverse? What if they're all from different tribes? My impression is that it depends on the narratives that need to be told that have not found their way into traditional museums and archives...the ignored, the omitted, the shamed, the forgotten, the silenced...but I do not know, because it is not my story to tell.

The Basque share their story as refugees, as immigrants, and of the human experience...we all should hold the power to share our own story. It is my feeling that we need to

consider the characteristics common to the human experience, to that which connects us as people and does not divide or minimize the experiences of others. Through my own healing journey, I've learned that everyone has a story. Oppression and violence escapes no one, it just appears in different forms. To ignore that ignores that beautiful opposition to oppression: the love and compassion that can heal. We are all in this together, and for that reason, I might assume that *inclusion* is more relevant than *diversity*. ●

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# Electronic Signatures Roundtable Session

Linda Waterfield | *Head of Registration*  
Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, Berkeley, CA

The 2019 Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists (ARCS) Biennial Conference held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from November 6-9, 2019 was packed with informative sessions showcasing a range of interests and specializations. I found the session Electronic Signatures Roundtable: Use on Legal Documents in Museums invaluable to my role as Registrar and applicable to our collective work, wherever we land as museum professionals. Presented by Linda Endersby, Registrar at the Museum of Art & Archaeology at the University of Missouri; Greta Russell, Senior Registrar at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West; and Anne M. Young, Director of Legal Affairs and Intellectual Property at Newfields, the Electronic Signatures Roundtable ARCS program description states that: "Electronic signatures are becoming more pervasive when it comes to signing

legal documents. How can museums and cultural organizations appropriately adjust...?"

In the United States, electronic signatures have the same legal status as handwritten signatures. The law stipulates that a "signature, contract, or other record may not be denied legal effect, validity, or enforcement solely because it is in electronic form." Since the passing of legislation in the last twenty years, digital signatures are broadly legally accepted and binding in the United States. The main statutes include: Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA), 1999; Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce (ESIGN) Act, 2000; and Digital Signature Standard (DSS), 2013. Additional and parallel international laws for electronic signatures include: electronic Identification, Authentication and trust Services (eIDAS) European Union, 2014; Advanced Electronic Signatures (AdES); and Qualified Electronic Signatures (QES).

The laws for electronic signatures are predicated on traditional contract law in that there is a contractual agreement, intention, and consideration to enter into a bargain by two or more parties. Digital signatures can be used widely, though there are some exceptions, for instance [Wills and Trusts](#) may not be sent electronically. For other agreements like Loan Agreements and Deeds of Gift, the two legally acceptable electronic forms are:

1. documents with either wet signatures or digitally encrypted signatures, also known as [certificate-based signatures](#), that are scanned and sent electronically; and
2. digitally-born documents with digitally encrypted signatures sent electronically.

There are many advantages to going digital with agreements. Namely, they remain legally binding while streamlining the process with minimal material output. Electronic documents promote sustainability by forgoing paper, ink, and the expense of physical delivery. Electronic documents allow for transactions to happen quickly which can be advantageous for projects with tight deadlines. And further, encoded and digital encrypted signatures are more secure than wet signatures. The chances that a hard copy document can be forged are far greater than an encrypted digital signature. The security of digital signatures resides in the feature that each signature is registered with unique identifiers to a specific person and are embedded within the application. Of importance to note, a digital signature is *not* binding when simply typed into a digital signature field regardless if a handwriting-like font is used. Conversely, electronic agreements can create complexities for those not comfortable with technology, and running backup servers or organizing digital asset management (DAM) systems can be costly and time consuming.

A practical consideration when implementing a digital signature program is to follow existing signatory authority that reflects institutional policy and procedure. Who signs the forms and in what order? In which case will your institution still accept wet signatures as you move towards electronic signatures? Will digital signatures be used widely across the institution or just a single department? What are the applicable U.S. and international laws that apply to your program? Will you use an elec-

tronic/digital signature software/commercial platform like DocuSign or Adobe? Which DAMS will be used to manage digital signatures and documents? Will redundant digital copies be retained or simply the digital originals? Are hardcopies printed out and archived?

In the transition to electronic signatures, the Buffalo Bill Center for the West included language stating "...this Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts through the exchange of electronic (eg. PDF) or facsimile signatures, each of which will be an original and, together, will constitute one and the same agreement. A signed copy of the Agreement delivered by email, facsimile, or other means of electronic transmission shall be deemed to have the same legal effect as delivery of an original signed copy of this Agreement." While not necessary, this language may be helpful for those uncomfortable with the platform or for those who question the legality or security of electronic agreements.

Both Registrars in the roundtable described the necessity of adopting electronic agreements in response to the need to create efficiency due to circumstance. One had to transition as the parent organization dictated the move to electronic agreements, while the other found convenience with electronic documents in a busy understaffed department. Both confessed that encrypted digital signatures are not yet replacing wet signatures but are another helpful option to have in their toolboxes.

N.B. The entire presentation is available on the [ARCS website](#) for ARCS members. The following website resources were shared by the presenters. Dead 404 links were subsequently removed or updated by the author.

Non-profit pricing: <https://www.docusign.com/solutions/industries/nonprofit>

<https://helpx.adobe.com/enterprise/using/non-profit.html>

What are digital signatures? <https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/sign/capabilities/digital-signatures-faq.html>

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DocuSign, eSignature Legality Guide: <https://www.docusign.com/how-it-works/legality/global> ●

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# Seeing the Bigger Picture

## WMA Boise

Kathleen Daly | *Museum Cataloger*  
Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR

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First and foremost, thank you RC-WR, for providing me with the opportunity to attend the 2019 WMA Annual Meeting. Without your assistance, funding would have been 100% out of pocket. Stipends like these are so important for our field. Thank you for continuing this commitment. In true form, after four days of conference activities, I came away inspired and reinvigorated. Not only from the content and networking, but for what is to come when WMA is in my neck of the woods next year, and for things to come in the field.

The Annual Meeting gave me ample time to make new connections and catch up with old colleagues. News was shared and several interesting conversations took place. A value really can't be placed on stepping out of our own storage spaces and engaging with others in our field, even if it is into someone else's storage space for RC-WR's annual CSI:Registrars program! (I now know exactly who to contact if I ever have questions about cleaning a historic piece of stained glass.)

This year's sessions focused primarily on project sharing and left me thinking about the bigger picture. Some of the most thought-provoking sessions focused on Idaho's Minidoka National Historical Site, which was discussed in depth. The accomplishments made by the organization provided valuable insight on the importance of accurate nomenclature and community sharing and feedback. A prime example of this is reflected in the Historic Site's decision to use the same vocabulary as former incarcerated

when referring to the site. Rather than using the more common term of "internment camp", the Historic Site chose to call Minidoka what it was, a concentration camp.

Engaging with others outside of our institutions seems like a no-brainer, but we seem to continue to make assumptions (at some level) about what we believe is the truth. Even when we regularly engage others, how often do we go right to the source? No, I am not talking about contacting an "expert," but rather the actual creator or some other level of provenance. This is something we should all strive to do. Take advantage of the communities to which you belong. Reach out, ask questions and most importantly, share. Seeing this through the lens of Minidoka's interpretive design really helped me to solidify that importance. It also made me excited for the future of our field, as we continue to expand into more transparent, community-based entities, rather than continue as insular cabinets of curiosity.

As we look forward to 2020's Annual Meeting in Portland and forward within our own professional lives, it is important to remind ourselves to continue to engage with others within the museum world and our own communities, past and present. Ask for help, strike up challenging conversations, and get on the same page. As keepers and narrators of our histories, we must stay focused and open to be able to continue to develop these more transparent and inclusive truths. We must not lose sight of why we get up and go to work every morning. As we continue to navigate our way through this time of change, this becomes even more important. Thank you WMA, for not only reminding me of this, but for reminding me that none of us is alone. ●

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# STATE UPDATES

## ALASKA

—Savanna Bradley

Winter has finally arrived in Alaska, with cold temperatures, snowstorms, and weather advisories galore. Speaking from Southcentral Alaska, I am happy that my collections job is keeping me busy indoors! While the elements might postpone some activities and programs for our various museums around the state, online opportunities should still be on our radar, including upcoming Museums Alaska grant deadlines on February 15, 2020. Thanks to the support of the Rasmuson Founda-



Pratt Museum in 2019, 2018, and 1968

tion, Museums Alaska manages the Art Acquisition Fund and Collections Management Fund, two great opportunities for Alaska museums to

build our collections' capacities and capabilities and get them ready for the inevitable influx of spring visitors and projects!



Current State exhibition at the Arizona Historical Society

Thomas “Breeze” Marcus opened to rave reviews at the **Arizona Heritage Center** at Papago Park. The exhibit includes a collection of works that explore Breeze’s personal experiences and identity as a part

of the Akimel and Tohono O’odham communities. Displayed in conjunction with cultural artifacts and stories, the exhibition showcases how history, cultural heritage, and identity influence contemporary works.

The **Pima County Southern Arizona Heritage and Visitor Center** is slated to open in January 2020. The Arizona Historical Society (AHS) has loaned the majority of the objects for the “Tucson: the Old Pueblo” case in the center. Objects help tell the story of Tucson from the earliest settlements 4,000 years ago to the current day. AHS loaned John C. Fremont’s sword and revolver to the College of Charleston for their 250th Anniversary. Fremont was a notable alumnus and these objects will be on display until January 2021.

## ARIZONA

—Lindsey Vogel-Teeter

In November, the exhibition *Current State* featuring local artist

# 25

In February, the **Arizona Heritage Center** will open a new exhibit titled *Still Marching: From Suffrage to #MeToo*. This exhibit illustrates how protests enact change through the lens of women's movements in Arizona.

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**Museum of Northern Arizona** is reopening access to its paleontology collections. New storage cabinets, purchased under the auspices of an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Museums for America grant, have been installed and the collections are again available for on-site research and loans. For further information contact Janet Whitmore Gillette at [jgillette@musnaz.org](mailto:jgillette@musnaz.org)

MNA is in the final stages of completing a pilot rehousing project on 171 works of art on paper (watercolors, block prints, lithographs, etchings, sketches, etc.) in its fine arts collection. Funded by the Southwestern Foundation for Education and Historical Preservation, the purpose of this project is to determine time needed to re-mat works, estimate the number of works that can be stored in three sizes of Solander boxes, and assess methods and materials with Consultant Paper Conservator Dana Mossman Tepper. Ms. Tepper trained Contract staff Rachel Freer Waters (Conservator) and Jake Fischer (Technician) in the removal of tapes from works on paper and provided matting and hinging guidance. The time and space metrics generated by the project will be used to plan for a larger rehousing initiative. The fine arts collection includes 2,567 works of art, of which 2,044 are works on paper.

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Finished mat on a work by Baje Whitethorne, Sr. at the Museum of Northern Arizona

Technician Jake Fischer creating a double mat for a work by Baje Whitethorne, Sr.



From February 29 through June 21, 2020, **Phoenix Art Museum** will present *India: Fashion's Muse*, an exhibition examining the ways in which Indian dress, aesthetic, and artwork have inspired Western fashion designs from streetwear to couture. Spanning the 19th to the 21st Centuries, the exhibition showcases nearly 40 garments and more than 20 accessories drawn from the collection of Phoenix Art Museum and on loan from private collectors and museums.

From January 11 through June 7, 2020, Phoenix Art Museum will present *Ansel Adams: Performing the Print*, an exhibition of works by one of the 20th Century's foremost photographers, in the Doris and John Norton Family Photography Gallery.

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In December, **Pueblo Grande Museum** installed new outdoor interpretive signs featuring the O'Odham world view. This project was made possible

with funding from the National Historic Landmarks Program and through Tribal consultation and partnerships with the Gila River Indian Community and Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.



New interpretive signage being installed at Pueblo Grande Museum featuring the O'Odham world view

On January 4, the **Smoki Museum** opened their special exhibition *The Daughters of Turtle Island: A Tribute to Native Women*. This exhibition highlights the extraordinary contributions of Native women on “Turtle Island” (North America). Both historic figures and contemporary trailblazers are featured for their past accomplishments and current, amazing work. Honored as well are those lost to us, as we raise awareness for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women movement and raise support for the Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition.

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## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

—Linda Waterfield

In association with RC-WR, State Rep. Linda Waterfield hosted a panel discussion on Time-Based Media (TBM) on January 15, 2020. This panel examining the acquisition, cataloging and tracking, exhibition, loan, and storage of these works was held at the **Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology** at the University of California, Berkeley. Panelists included Grace Weiss, Assistant Registrar of Media Arts, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Jadeen Young, Associate Registrar, Oakland Museum of California; Michael Campos-Quinn, Interim Director of BAMPFA Film Library and Study Center & Digital Asset Manager; and Mark Hellar, IT Contractor - Linux Dev/Ops Engineer, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Stay tuned for a full report on this panel in the Spring edition of the *Registrar’s Quarterly*.

Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology has a new exhibition titled *Cloth that Stretches: Weaving Community Across Time and Space* on view from February 13 through June 21, 2020. The exhibition features newly acquired weavings and textiles from Saudi Arabia, Peru, Laos, China, Panama, Guatemala, and Japan.

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It’s an exciting time at **The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life** at UC Berkeley. The Magnes is amid some truly wonderful collections minded enterprises that include works traveling locally and abroad, cataloging new collections, and exhibiting the results of staff’s research and collecting efforts. The Magnes also has a small yet significant exhibition of historic California Judaica items on display at the **Contemporary Jewish Museum** in an exhibition titled *Threads of Jewish Life: Ritual and Other Textiles from the San Francisco Bay Area*, on view from February 13–August 9, 2020, which includes a never seen before, albeit deconstructed, old-growth redwood, turn of the century, Torah Ark! Additionally, the Magnes is honored to be included in the Jewish Museum Berlin’s Spring 2020 opening of its newly renovated permanent exhibition featuring the widely admired and seminal painting *Lavater and Lessing Visit Moses Mendelssohn* by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim, along with the *Hanukkah Lamp of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee*. These artworks will be on loan for two years.

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## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

—Elizabeth Hanson



*Madonna and Child with Book*  
by Raphael, 1502–1503

This winter and spring, the **Norton Simon Museum** joins institutions around the world in observing the 500th anniversary of Raphael’s death. A special display and a series of programs focus on the artist’s *Madonna and Child with Book*, from around 1502–1503. One of the treasures of the Museum’s early Renaissance galleries, *Madonna and Child with Book* also has the distinction of being the only painting by Raphael in a public collection west of the Mississippi.

The Museum celebrates *Raphael 2020* from January 15 through May 18, 2020. The painting then travels to Dresden, Germany, for an exhibition at the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister as part of a masterpiece

exchange program between the two institutions.

The Museum is organizing a series of events in celebration of *Raphael 2020*. All events listed are included with Museum admission. Details can be found at [nortonsimon.org](http://nortonsimon.org).

The **Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising Museum's** (FIDM) costume exhibition grows every year to showcase the very best of film design. Join us as we explore the craft of costume design and celebrate the talented artisans who bring movie characters to life. Expect fan favorites alongside Academy Award® nominees from a variety of genres, as well as the return of Ruth Carter's groundbreaking and Oscar-winning Black Panther costumes. February 4–March 21, 2020.



Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising Museum's annual costume exhibition

**Craft Contemporary**, Los Angeles, announced today its second clay biennial, titled *The Body, The Object, The Other*, which will take place January 25–May 10, 2020. This group exhibition features twenty-one artists whose practices reflect the expanding notion of figuration within ceramics.



*Metal Goddess*, by Roxanne Jackson, 2017. Ceramic, faux fur, glaze, lace, and shell  
Courtesy of the artist.  
Photograph: JSP Photography

On exhibit at the **Japanese American National Museum**, *Transcendents: Heroes at Borders* honors individuals who advocate and fight for those who face discrimination, prejudice, and inequality at borders both real and imagined. Through video projections on mist, photographic weavings, and audience participation, visitors to this multimedia exhibition are invited to learn about, reflect on, and celebrate heroes in Los Angeles, across the nation, and within their own lives. February 1–March 29, 2020

On exhibit at the **Angel's Gate** (AGCC) **Cultural Center**, *Bridging San Pedro: Visual Literacy as Community Practice* is a contemporary art exhibition that highlights the San Pedro community's relationships

to the land and sea. This exhibition extends visual literacy and action to empower community and place. Artists and community members come together to honor the past, articulate the complexities of the present, and forge a visually robust path toward the future by engaging in communal, participatory language and making that bridges San Pedro. *Bridging San Pedro* will be on view and free to the public in the AGCC gallery from 10am–4pm Monday through Saturday, beginning January 18 through April 4, 2020.



## HAWAII

—Charmaine Wong

In September 2019, RC-WR member Tory Laitila became the new Curator of Textiles and Fashion at the **Honolulu Museum of Art**. Previously the Registrar for the City and County of Honolulu Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts, Tory brings a wealth of knowledge spanning registration, conservation, collections management, and curation to his new position.

*Immersive Spaces*, open from November 26, 2019 through February 23, 2020 at the Honolulu Museum of Art, brings together eight large-scale contemporary photographic works that reference interior or exterior environments, including landscape, architecture, and the figure in relation to space. Artists Gregory Crewdson, Barbara Ess, and Sandy Skoglund use photography to pose questions about the nature of reality

and memory. Candida Hofer's and Hotaro Koyama's images of interior spaces transform architectural elements into graphic formal compositions. Franco Salmoiraghi's and Andres Serrano's portraits capture the strength and individuality of their subjects, while Thomas Struth's detailed focus on a section of lush forest brings the wildness of nature into the gallery.

*Mai Kinohi Mai: Surfing in Hawai'i* is an original exhibit featuring unique treasures from Bishop Museum's collection of surfing materials and archival surfing photographs. *Mai Kinohi Mai* ("from the beginning") offers the greatest assemblage of storied surfboards ever, both from our collection and on loan, spanning surfing's early history to the present day. The exhibit is on display through May 3, 2020.

## IDAHO

—Nicole Inghilterra

## Registration for the 4th Biennial Idaho Heritage Conference is now open!

Events are scheduled for September 15-17, 2020, in Pocatello, Idaho.

The conference is a multi-disciplinary meeting engaging statewide partners in history, preservation, archaeology, and museums.



The new Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at PSU, Oregon, occupies 7,500 square feet over two floors featuring art by North West artists, faculty and students, and exhibitions by national and international artists.

**Idaho Women 100** kicks off this spring! The initiative is led by the Idaho State Historical Society and Idaho Women in Leadership. Idaho Women 100 commemorates the 19th amendment's centennial year by inspiring legacy projects that honor the Gem State's contribution to the fight for women's suffrage.



## OREGON

—Meg Glazier-Anderson

In November, Portland State University (PSU) hosted the grand opening of a new art museum on campus, **Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at PSU**. This is the first of its kind at the University and offers free admission to all. As a non-collecting institution, this museum differs from Jordan Schnitzer's two other campus art museums, Washington State University and University of Oregon, which are free-standing museums with permanent collections.

With expansion on the mind of every museum, board members of the **Rainier Oregon Historical Museum** were able to come to an agreement with the Mayor and Rainier School Superintendent to proceed with a long-term ground lease on the

Rainier School District campus. This mutual agreement will not only benefit the museum, but the school kids of the area for years to come.

Continuing with tradition, volunteers of the **Pittock Mansion** transformed rooms for *Pittock Mansion Christmas* to explore the wonderful world of books. Each room was decorated to represent magical storybook settings, from children's classics to modern day mysteries.

In September of 2017, a seed was planted—the idea of a bigfoot-themed museum on the West Coast. In October of 2019, that idea became a full-fledged reality, the **North American Bigfoot Center**. Located in Boring, Oregon, the museum sits on Highway 26, the main artery that connects the city of Portland with Mt. Hood. With a gift store, information center, and educational displays featuring evidence and artifacts, the museum is just getting started. The vision is large and there are hopes to expand display areas, formulate community partnerships and offer special events to customers and members for decades to come.



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# WASHINGTON

—Nives Mestrovic



*Who Left The Kettle On?*  
Nicole Gordon, 2016  
Oil on Canvas, 60" x 60"  
At the Bellevue Arts Museum  
Courtesy of Jeffrey Hammes & Linda Warren

**Bellevue Arts Museum** is delighted to present—for the first time in the Northwest—the art of the Chicago-based painter Nicole Gordon (b.1976). A painter of hallucinatory lucidity and skill, Gordon's large-scale canvases meticulously depict a liquid dreamscape world of all-too-solid fantasy. The exhibition will be on view from January 24 to June 14, 2020.

Since 1986, the Burning Man event has drawn tens of thousands of makers to Nevada's Black Rock Desert for a week of artmaking, community building, and radical self-expression. Artists create large-scale and interactive works, as well as portable and



Cast aluminum pendants by Ronnie Nelson, 2007  
At the Bellevue Arts Museum  
Courtesy of Christine "Ladybee" Kristen  
Photograph: George Post

personal works of art for gifting and exchange.

*Playa Made: The Jewelry of Burning Man* offers an up-close look at the jewelry created for and during the festival. The exhibition will also be on view from January 24 to June 14, 2020.

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**Frye Art Museum** is pleased to announce three exhibitions opening this winter:

*Subspontaneous: Francesca Lohmann and Rob Rhee*, opening January 25, brings together the work of two Seattle-based artists who collaborate with gravity, time, and the forces of nature in their sculptural practices. In form and content, the exhibition proposes a mutualistic model of co-creation, celebrating contingency, entanglement, and interdependence.

Also opening on January 25 is *Rebecca Brewer: Natural Horror*. Rebecca Brewer's work straddles the boundary between abstraction and representation to evoke fragmented memories and flowing organic forms.

*The Agnieszka Polska: Love Bite* will open for Valentine's Day. Polska creates hallucinatory computer-generated media works that operate at the intersection of language, history, and scientific theory to illuminate issues of individual and social responsibility. Polska's exhibition at the Frye presents the US debut of two video installations that address, in deeply affecting audio-visual essays, the urgent global issue of climate change and the specter of mass extinction.

The **Museum of History & Industry** (MOHAI) is happy to report that they have finally completed their NEH Implementation Grant (Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections) to improve artifact storage conditions at their Resource Center. This was a six-year quest to gain better understanding and control over the interior climate of the library and textile storage rooms. Lessons learned can be found in the white papers published on the NEH website but in short, they replaced one HVAC unit with three smaller dedicated units, built a wall within the library to separate the research area from storage, and installed a Building Management System to enable more efficient control of the interior environment. They are still monitoring the results but believe they have arrived at a less costly and more appropriate and sustainable preservation environment.

Opening April 25th is the West Coast premiere of *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith*. This collaboration between the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit Service and MOHAI will explore the history and future of our democratic system.

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Closed for renovations since February 2017, the reimaged and reinstalled **Seattle Asian Art Museum** reopens with a community celebration on February 8. The newly renovated and expanded Asian Art Museum breaks boundaries to offer a thematic, rather than geographic or chronological, exploration of art from the world's largest continent.

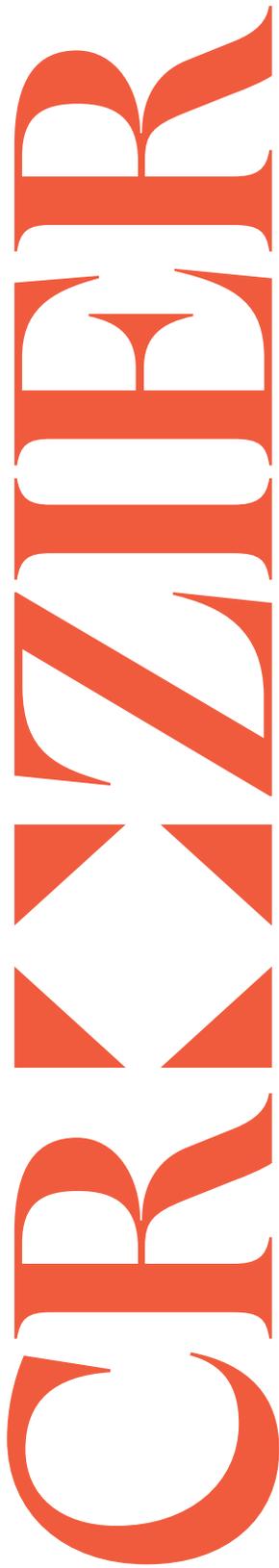


Seattle Asian Art Museum  
Photograph: © Tim Griffith

The restoration of the historic Art Deco building, improvements to critical systems, expanded gallery and education spaces, and a new park lobby that connects the museum to the surrounding Volunteer Park are just some of the ways the Asian Art Museum has been transformed and preserved as a cultural and community resource for future generations.

When the Seattle Asian Art Museum reopens, galleries will no longer be labeled China, Japan, or India. Instead, vibrant artworks from Vietnam to Iran, and everywhere in between, come together to tell stories

of human experiences across time and place. From themes of worship and celebration to clothing and identity, nature and power to birth and death, the new collection installation reveals the complexity and diversity of Asia—a place of distinct cultures, histories, and belief systems that help shape our world today. ●



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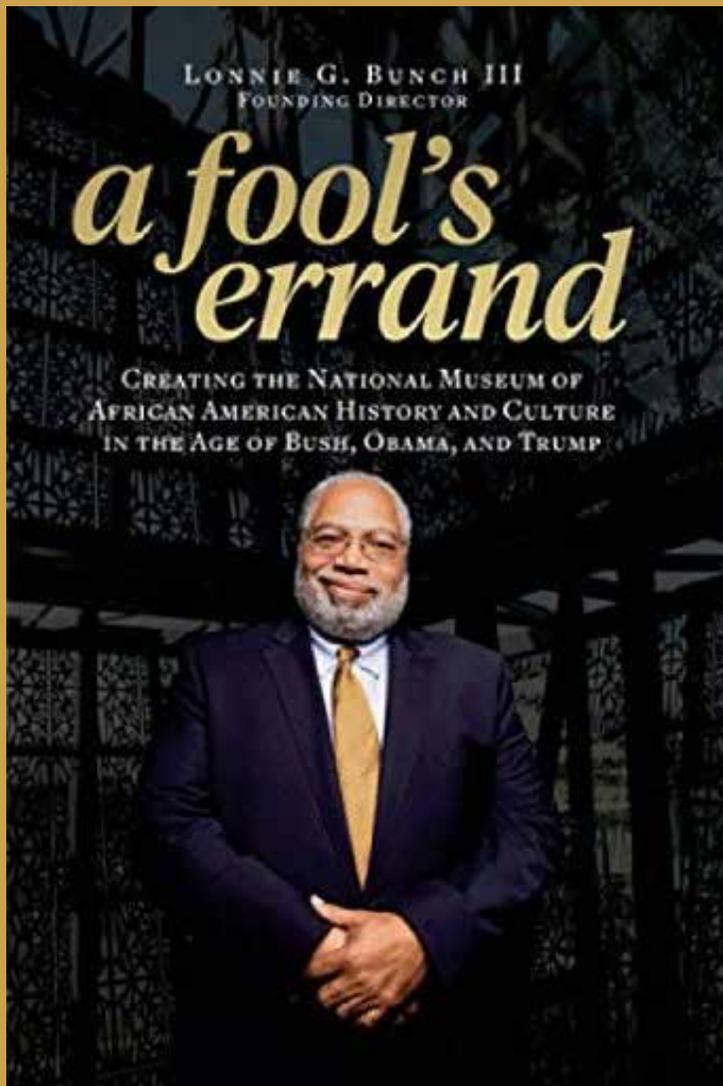
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## New Reads

Guest written by Adam Mikos  
Gallery & Facilities Manager, The Arts Club of Chicago

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### ***A Fool's Errand: Creating the National Museum of African American History and Culture in the Age of Bush, Obama, and Trump***

**By Lonnie G. Bunch, III**

Let me start by saying I recognize that *A Fool's Errand* was written by a museum director. It is also not lost on me, generally speaking, that museum Directors don't typically find their ways to the Registrars' offices for advice on how things should be done. Unfortunately, however, in the grand scheme of museum things experiences such as these from our compatriots in upper management can be very revealing, possibly even enlightening. And in this case, kind of endearing. I should mention that I'm now a big fan of Lonnie's.

The NMAAHC was a truly massive undertaking. A tightrope suspended above a pit of notoriously difficult government bodies, political adversaries within the Smithsonian, an American public still unable to face the continued influence of racism in our society and encumbered with a history of numerous false starts. Despite the absolute necessity of such a museum on our National Mall, the day-to-day operation of bringing it into reality was a mammoth task. In this book, Lonnie G. Bunch takes us for a ride that spans eleven years, beginning with his appointment as Director in 2005 to opening day in 2016.

I should also be up front by saying *A Fool's Errand* isn't about museum registration at all. It only slightly dabbles in collections management topics. But what we can do is read

**34**

between the lines to get an understanding of how a Director's vision plays out for the staff that makes everything run. It's funny as well when Lonnie is open about times when he really didn't know how things worked, from the moment of his decision to acquire the collections up to actually making it to the museum. For example, when writing about two pieces he describes his surprise in how the process works. The pieces in question were an eighty-ton train car and a concrete guard tower from Angola prison (Louisiana). Mr. Bunch writes, "A Director's wish (or whim) seemed so simple to accomplish. In actuality, it took several years and hundreds of phone calls and emails by a gifted team to fulfill my directive. [...] Who knew transporting these artifacts would be so difficult?" Of course, this kind of surprise coming from a Director (or Curator) is nothing new to readers of the *Registrar's Quarterly*.

Perhaps one of the more intriguing ideas presented in the book comments on the conventional knowledge surrounding availability of African American cultural materials, held as recently as 2003. The prevailing thought has been that significant historical cultural objects simply did not exist for African American museums to collect. "When I became the Director of the museum, I had many concerns, many issues that caused me to worry. Nothing, not raising money, hiring staff, managing the bureaucracy of the Institution, or dealing with the museum's Council caused me greater concern than the challenge of building a national collection." This personal emphasis

led to Bunch creating a new, community level engagement program in 2007 that was inspired by the television show *Antiques Roadshow*, called *Save Our African American Treasures*. The program took place in 13 different cities and followed the original *Roadshow* format almost exactly while also including associated trainings for the public to preserve their own objects and record family histories. The NMAAHC provided curators and conservation specialists to talk with the people who brought their objects to these events, then the conservators would make archival boxes for the objects as a gift to the participant. While the initial intention was to discover possible objects to acquire, the Save program ultimately served best as a community building effort that also increased the NMAAHC's visibility on a national scene. "This visibility then stimulated other contacts that led to donations that enlarged the collections and made the museum real in the eyes of many. By the end of a decade, the museum went from not having a single artifact to having more than 35,000. Thanks to the work of a tireless curatorial and collections staff, 70 percent of the museum's holdings came from the basements, garages, and attics, from the homes of a diverse array of Americans who trusted the Smithsonian brand and soon came to trust the National Museum of African American History and Culture."

This brings me to the between-the-lines conversation. The NMAAHC website has a terrific portal for exploring their collection. Currently, at the bottom of the intro page they

have this notice posted, "Beginning August 1st the museum will initiate a six-month hiatus on accepting new collections. We will use this period to update our collections processing, ensuring the highest standards of collections care and management. The museum will relaunch its collecting efforts in February 2020." It may be that they have suffered a little from their amazing success in collecting objects. While considering this, I started to understand what this "from the ground up" process really must have been like for the registration staff.

The collections assembled in the years preceding the opening in 2016 must have started as a trickle then slowly turned into a flood. If you recall, they started in 2005 with absolutely nothing and hadn't begun the African American Treasures program until 2007. Those nine years of hustle until opening in 2016 must have been crazy. Additionally, they had a very sparse staff in 2007 and had to scale up temporary storage, staffing for registration and collections, equipment, and materials while planning for the next temporary space they would eventually need as the museum itself was still in the design stages. As of 2019, the NMAAHC housed "nearly 40,000" objects. Mathematically that comes out to approximately 3,636 new acquisitions per year, every year. Of course, it was most likely never a predictable increase from year to year. As the NMAAHC gained momentum, the early days of a few hundred objects probably became thousands and thousands more as time went on.

Compounding that crush of work, actually processing the objects—every form, database, spreadsheet, collections record, provenance, policy, etc.—had to be created from scratch, run through the Director’s office, then the legal department, then probably through some Byzantine Smithsonian approval process. Finally, it would have been put into use by a threadbare staff that was growing piecemeal as the acquisitions were pouring in.

The objects collected during that time were as varied and diverse as one can imagine. Examples include a recently discovered slave ship that

had sunk in 1794 (and had been on the ocean floor since), Emmitt Till’s casket, paintings by Sam Gilliam, pulp paper handbills, posters, medals, clothing made with every imaginable material and ornamentation, and the aforementioned train car and guard tower. Their storage options were arranged as the objects were acquired.

The task completed by Mr. Lonnie Bunch III in creating, building, and opening the NMAAHC was immense. His efforts on this accomplishment shouldn’t be denied or questioned. One point that he makes throughout his entire book, however,

is that his job was only a small part of a massive effort by hundreds of incredible people. That might be the most important takeaway for me. Lonnie name checks numerous members of the staff constantly in his book. He uses self-deprecating humor to demonstrate the things he didn’t know and shows his reliance on museum professionals who did. Occasionally, this 30,000-foot view of the Big Picture can be very interesting to take in. Still, I’d love to read a book written by the Registrars and Collections Specialists on staff during those founding years. ●

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