



*Newsletter*  
**WINTER** Issue 2005

**COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE**

## ***Private Collectors and Collaborations***

*By Andrea Guidry*

Registrar and Collection Manager, Crow Collection of Asian Art

Imagine you are on a bustling street of gas stations, small used car lots, and a few strip malls on the outskirts of San Antonio. Amid this very mundane setting, you come across a castle. Upon entering the castle, you are surrounded by hundreds of fascinating objects. They look like the first cameras or maybe the first film projectors. You are not sure, but with the help of Jack Judson, their dedicated collector and your trusty gallery guide, you will learn a great deal about the *Magic Lantern*.

I had the pleasure of visiting the *Magic Lantern Museum* for the workshop *Private Collectors and Collaborations*. As a new registrar, I found the workshop to be very helpful. The group was small (about ten people) and we had a very candid discussion about interaction and relationships between collectors and museums. Some guiding questions were:

- How do loans and/or gifts from private collectors enhance the museum?
- What are appropriate conditions for accepting loans and gifts?
- How does a museum professional find private collectors?
- How can museum professionals strengthen trust among private collectors?

Loans and gifts are a fundamental part of the entire museum. Donors are integral for non-collecting museums, and museums that cannot afford to purchase new acquisitions. It is important to use discernment when accepting loans and gifts. The museum mission is a great starting point for considering what loans and gifts will be appropriate for your institution. Close association with loans or gifts can sometimes lead to misconceptions about your mission and funding. Do not endorse any authentication in your loan agreement. Also, scrutinize closely what is required with a loan or gift. Conservation and other museum demands can change the ability to adhere to certain guidelines. Storage restraints can also limit the ability to accept donations.

As a collector, Jack Judson wants his collection available for study and view. His number one hope for the collection is for it to be a body of knowledge. This is most likely a main concern for many collectors. Donors are hard to come by for museums. Holding local collection exhibitions and establishing a good rapport with previous collectors are ways to build up a base of collectors.

A collection is about the collector's eye as much as it is about the specific artifacts or works of art. Cultivating the relationships between private collectors and museums can only be beneficial, especially in these times of increasing national individualism or sovereignty and shrinking museum budgets. Anytime we can bring collectors and museum professionals together like we did with this workshop, we should definitely take the opportunity.



## From the Chair

It's a new year! Have you renewed your CMC membership yet? Please don't forget to send in your dues and renewal forms as soon as possible!

It was really fantastic to see so many of you at the recent CMC workshop here in Dallas. I'm currently conducting a decidedly unscientific study to determine why some workshops draw upwards of 25 attendees and others barely 10. If you have any thoughts on this – Is location a factor? What are the topics we all want to see covered? Is there a particular time of year that is just plain BAD (or good) to hold a workshop? – e-mail me at [meganb@jfk.org](mailto:meganb@jfk.org).

Seriously, we want these workshops to serve our membership as best as possible, so let me know what works and what doesn't!

As you know, the TAM Annual Meeting in Dallas is fast approaching, and I'm looking forward to seeing many of you here. Following our new tradition, CMC will again have a resource table at the Annual Meeting (though we're not sure yet if we'll be in the actual exhibit hall). If you'd like to take a shift or two "staffing" the table, give me a call at (214) 747-6660, ext. 6619, so I can add you to the schedule.

There are some great collection-related sessions on tap at

TAM this year, including the CMC co-sponsored pre-conference workshop on Legal Issues for Museum Collections. Be sure to check your TAM program (also available on the TAM webpage – [www.texasmuseums.org](http://www.texasmuseums.org)) for full details.

Don't forget that 2004-2005 is CMC's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary year – we'll be marking this milestone at the Annual Meeting.

So, I'll see you ALL at the CMC Affinity Group Meeting on Wednesday, March 30, at 5:15 p.m. in the Oak Room at the Fairmont Hotel!

Megan Bryant, Chair

## CMC Affinity Group Meeting

Please plan to attend – everyone is welcome, but we especially hope to see all current and new CMC members there!

Time and Place:

**Wednesday, March 30, at 5:15 p.m.**

during the TAM Annual Meeting

in Dallas.

**Fairmont Hotel, Oak Room.**

As usual, refreshments will be provided – and we'll be sure to wrap up in plenty of time for everyone to catch the buses for the evening event.

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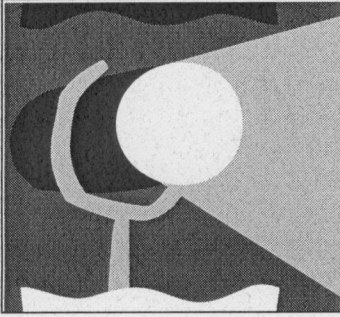
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## Spotlight on Nancy Hixon

Assistant Director and Registrar  
Blaffer Gallery  
The Art Museum of the University of Houston  
& Coordinator of University Collections  
University of Houston

Multi-tasking is the name of the game. It is what has kept me in the field for the past 25 years and it is what I love. How did this all start – my first major remembrance of a museum was going to the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC and walking up those steps into the rotunda. For three summers in a row my mother and I scoured the Smithsonian museums and the antique haunts in Georgetown. This was after WWII and my father was stationed for a month each summer at the Pentagon. This was heady stuff for a kid from San Antonio. My family soon headed to Boston, MA, where we thrived on the many cultural and historical riches that the Northeast had to offer.

Museums as a career option did not dawn upon me until the 70's when I decided to return to school to obtain an art history degree. While attending the University of Houston and taking a course in museum studies I learned about the registrar's office and I was hooked. A fellow classmate and I talked our way into internships that semester where I worked with the Blaffer Gallery registrar.

As the saying goes, the rest is history: Blaffer Gallery offered me a position of administrative secretary that summer as I was finishing school. Reluctant to accept, the registrar said she would be happy to teach me the ropes until I was ready to move on. Instead a year later she moved on and I became the registrar.

I must admit I love the behind scenes work that goes on in putting together exhibitions, whether it is a Blaffer originated exhibition or one from another venue. I always get a thrill from opening the crates to see what's inside. (This must be leftover from the joy of opening presents at Christmas and birthdays.)

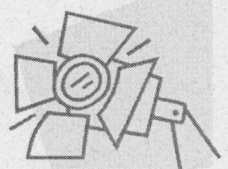
In the ensuing years I have completed a graduate degree, MLSme (Master of Liberal Studies with Museum Emphasis) from the University of Oklahoma and become the coordinator for the University of Houston Public Art Collection and program. UH established the 1st Percent for Art Program in Texas and the collection has grown to over 300 works located on 5-campuses (UH, UH Clear Lake, UH Downtown, UH Victoria and UH Sugar Land).

The Blaffer staff through the years has been one of our strongest assets. Teamwork is what makes it possible for us to produce the high caliber of exhibitions and publications. Interaction with artists and interns add an extra dimension to our creative processes. We believe that our small size has given many of our students the opportunity to see how a museum operates and what career options are available within the museum field.

Many memorable moments have occurred over the past 25 years, many good and ones that we wish never to repeat. A remodeling of our Fine Arts Building and the serious repercussions of Tropical Storm Allison are ordeals I hope not to partake of again. Becoming acting director of the museum on two occasions has certainly more than fulfilled my desire to lead the team. The accreditation process continues to keep our staff focused on both short and long term goals.

My colleagues at TAM and the Collections Manager's Committee have been a place I could always find answers. We registrars are a great group, generous with time, help and problem solving. We should rule the world, but we are all much too busy keeping our various institutions on track. I personally could not survive without the Blaffer Assistant Registrar (& fellow CMC member), Youngmin Chung. She makes it possible for me to accomplish all the UH art projects and other Blaffer administrative duties.

My husband Carter has now been granted spouse emeritus status after surviving 25 years of opening activities. We love traveling to Germany to visit our son and his family whenever the opportunity arises. During the week I try to manage several yoga and exercise classes. Gardening, family and friends keep our free time pretty busy. Houston has fantastic cultural riches to offer and we could stay busy every night of the week with live music, theatre, dance and art. I love it all.



## Mark Your Calendars

By Gabriela Truly

Director of Collections Management, Dallas Museum of Art

In March we will meet again for the Texas Association of Museums annual conference. This year we have a strong program with pre-conference workshops and sessions that members of CMC will find of great interest. Here are some of them:

### **Tuesday, March 29**

#### ***Do We Need a Lawyer? Legal Issues for Museum Collections***

This pre-conference workshop will discuss restricted gifts, gift-over provisions, fractional gifts, deaccession of gifts, abandoned property law, etc. Both speakers are very knowledgeable and ready to help us solve our problems in this area.

**Send me your forms NOW,  
so we can use them during  
the workshop, to analyze  
what works and what  
doesn't.**

### **Wednesday, March 30**

#### ***State of Texas Alliance for Response Task Force (START)***

This session of emergency managers, first responders (i.e. fire fighters, police, etc.) and cultural institutions continues a dialogue on how to be better prepared for a disaster and work toward an agency in Texas to bring together the various agencies and organizations when disaster hits in your town.



#### ***Loan Agreements: I Don't Like this Part, Can I Delete It?***

The battle over language on loan agreements continues! Find out little things here and there that you can "let fly", and the ones you need to fight to have changed *before you sign*. This is one of your most important documents. Do not miss this opportunity to refine the language in your form.

### **Thursday, March 31**

#### ***Rolled, Flat, Boxed Textiles: Designed for Challenge***

Most of us have gobs of textiles in our collections and can use a few hints on how to care for them better. And most of all, how to make it a bit easier on ourselves with rotation schedules and easy techniques for storage and handling – even when you have very little time.

Don't miss the many other sessions prepared for us:

- *Conservation Roadshow*
- *When It's Gone It's Gone: But Was It Insured?*
- *Applying Sound Conservation Principles in Small Museums*
- *Courting the Collector*
- *Collections by Design: Mission Statements and Collections Planning*

And don't forget to join us for the CMC business meeting at 5:15 on Wednesday, March 30. Check your program for times and locations.

See you there!

# Collection Managers Committee Before the Glitz and Glamour: Getting your Stuff Ready for Display

By Andrea Guidry

Registrar and Collection Manager, Crow Collection of Asian Art

Would you take your favorite black article of clothing, which reads dry clean only, and wash it in hot water with bleach? No, because this would lead to a major loss in color and/or deterioration. Essentially, this is the situation being created for works of art exposed to extreme light, temperature and humidity levels. This point was driven home in the workshop *Before the Glitz and Glamour: Getting your Stuff Ready for Display*. Three very capable conservators—John Dennis (Objects Conservator), Helen Houp (Painting Conservator), and Beatrice Dodge (Textiles Conservator)—took the attendees through the perils of being a work of art in undesirable conditions and provided hands on opportunities to see and repair certain types of damage.

It is all about prevention, starting with light levels and relative humidity. Materials are categorized into two groups: inorganic (including such materials as metal and stone), and organic materials (including materials such as paper, silk, and ivory). Relative humidity (RH) is the amount of water in a given volume of air. RH should be approximately 50 percent, but can be maintained at a slightly higher level for organic materials. Temperature can be used to adjust humidity levels. Raise the temperature in order to bring the relative humidity down, and lower it to raise the RH. Silica gel may also be used to lower humidity levels. Maintaining a humidity level at 65 percent and above creates conditions for mold growth and attracts pests. Once mold is present it is close to impossible to eliminate. A steady relative humidity level can be hard to maintain, however,

every effort must be made to control extreme levels through timely monitoring.

Extreme light levels can drain the life out of a work of art and alter the original meaning the artist intended. Light damage is cumulative and permanent. Controlling light level is relatively easy when compared to controlling humidity. The intensity of light and UV components must be closely monitored. UV filters, screens, and dimmer switches are some ways to control lighting. Foot-candles are used as a unit of measure in the United States versus the lux used by other countries (1 foot-candle = 10 lux). In general, a light level of five foot-candles should be used for paper, fifteen foot-candles for fabric and paintings, and fifty foot-candles for ceramics, metal, and glass. It is also important to know how much time is ideal for certain art objects.

Attendees of this workshop were exposed to objects ranging from extremely to barely damaged. In viewing damaged objects and having the chance to perform some conservation, one is really able to experience first hand why prevention is so important. For instance, by taking the time to view damage through magnified lenses was a real "eye opener." Attendees were able to see damage that appeared minute to the naked eye. Using the proper tools such as this can aid in the prevention of more serious issues with an object.



# MEMBERSHIP FORM

\$15.00 yearly dues

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code + 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the Collection Managers Committee.  
Send check and form to Rebecca Huffstutler, The Witte Museum,  
3801 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209



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