

In Focus

A Newsletter by and for Collection in Focus Guides
October 2010



Fall Greetings

As summer fades into fall and people return to school and work, the museum comes alive with activity. Weekday mornings the lobby is abuzz with school groups here for tours. Many Thursday afternoons and evenings are filled with interesting continuing education sessions for Museum Guide Programs volunteers. Plus, free monthly events like Third Thursday and Target Family Day (held on the second Sunday of each month) feature live performances, art activities, tours, Art Carts, and much more.

FALL 2010 HIGHLIGHTS

- Museum Guide Programs continuing education: calendar posted on www.mgpvolunteers.org.
- “Young People’s Ofrenda,” October 16–November 14, Gallery 110, www.artsmia.org/ofrenda. Now in its third year, this partnership with students and teachers at El Colegio High School in South Minneapolis culminates with an exhibition of the students’ highly personal and expressive *ofrendas* or *altares* made to honor the dead in the tradition of El Día de los Muertos.
- Educators’ Evening, October 21, 4–8 p.m. Co-hosted by the MIA and Walker, this open house is held this year at the MIA and will coincide with Third Thursday and Members’ Preview Days for “Art of the Native Americans: The Thaw Collection.”

- “Art of the Native Americans: The Thaw Collection,” October 24, 2010–January 9, 2011, Target Gallery, www.artsmia.org/thaw-collection.

In addition to MGP continuing education, don’t miss the public lectures by noted scholars in Native

American art during

October, November, and December. Enjoy the excitement of fall at the MIA. Thank you for all you do to bring the collection to life for visitors and to help make their experiences meaningful and memorable.

Fondly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Amanda'.

P.S. Please join me in welcoming Shawn Gilliam (Class of 2010) aboard as the new *In Focus* editor. Shawn has written for *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Mpls.St.Paul*, and Target’s employee magazine *Red*. Thanks, Shawn!



Nimi’ipuu (Nez Perce), Plateau region, Horse Mask (detail), c. 1875–1900, Thaw Collection, Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y., T0097, Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor

News Bites



Jennifer Curry, MIA tour coordinator, welcomed Rebecca Catherine Curry on June 7. She weighed in at 7 lbs., 3 oz., and was 21 inches long. “It’s been a busy, sleep-deprived summer, but we’ve settled into a family of four very easily,” Jennifer says. “Life with a 3-year-old and a newborn means there’s never a dull moment in the Curry household. And I wouldn’t have it any other way.”



Kerstin Lajuzan, CIF guide, is the proud new mom of Nils Oscar Lajuzan, born on July 24. He’s a perfect 7 lbs, 20.5 inches. Says Kerstin: “He has his dad’s curly black hair and his mom’s blue eyes. We’re loving every squeak and wiggle he makes.”



Amanda Norman, CIF guide, gave birth to Saylah Joy Burnett Norman on July 2. She weighed 7 lbs., 14 oz. “It’s fun waking up to her beautiful smile every day,” Amanda says.

Gail Threinen, CIF guide, and husband Mike welcomed their first grandchild, Reagan Elizabeth Threinen, on July 23. “We are crazy in love with Miss Cuteness,” she says. In other news, Gail had a piece of Chinese calligraphy accepted into the Sumi-e Society of America’s 47th Annual Juried Exhibition. She’ll be attending the exhibition opening at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia, in October. Congratulations, Gail!

Sunshine Funds were used to send get-well wishes to CIF guides **Jean Ann Durades** in April; **Andrew Hong** and **Doug Limon** in July; and **Shirley Kaiser** in September. Sunshine Funds were also used for baby gifts for the moms and babies noted above.

An Insider's Look at the Thaw Exhibition

BY AMANDA NORMAN, CIF GUIDE

As a summer intern with the MIA Museum Guide Programs, Teacher Resources, and Art of Africa and the Americas departments, CIF guide Amanda Norman (Americas 2010) helped create educational materials for the exhibition "Art of the Native Americans: The Thaw Collection," which runs October 24, 2010, to January 9, 2011. Amanda, an Anishinabe enrolled at the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota, is pursuing her master's degree in education with a concentration in social studies at Augsburg College. She recently shared her insights with In Focus.

The goal for me this summer was to create educational materials that paired 16 objects from the Thaw Collection with objects from the MIA that are currently on view. For example, there's a Yup'ik nepcetaq mask that is paired with the MIA's Yup'ik mask, and the materials speak to the landscape from which these objects are created, the artists who made them, and so on. Educators can take cues from our materials and incorporate them into lesson plans that meet state standards for various core subject areas like social studies, art, history, and the humanities.

Our pairings follow a theme. For example, we paired a Labradorian sculpture grouping from the Thaw Collection with a Dakota cradle cover and our own Inuit sculptural group. The elements in those regions lend themselves to a theme of transportation and movement, because these peoples were so well traveled.

We decided to identify specifics to help people understand the bigger picture. It was really important for me as an educator and as a Native person that we bring this out in the materials, because as things get oversimplified in many areas of our lives—including

educational purposes that tend to look for the most efficient deliveries—we can get this glazed-over view. But specifics provide a richness that is so important. In each of the highlighted works, you can find real, tangible, strong characters as well as a diversity in approaches to living circumstances. And those stories give you an appreciation for how Native peoples interacted across the continent and how sad it is that we don't teach our children about our continent's rich ancient history. To delve into the nature of these amazing masterpieces and what they represent makes you proud of this history that has otherwise been undervalued.

For example, I was a bit devastated to learn, through this process, that a lot of our history as Native people was written by zoologists and ethnologists, who really had a scientifically abrasive view of the world. There's a story I came upon related to the Labradorian sculpture group that demonstrated how people from this region were looked upon like exotic animals by their visitors—and that, in fact, a man and his family were enslaved by a zoologist ... and brought to Germany to be on display. This man who was enslaved was literate, and he wrote a journal. It was a very poignant point for me. We're so fortunate to be connected to one another these days and to have access to so much information. We can look at each other as human beings.

I had such a great time working with Amanda Thompson Rundahl, Joe Horse Capture, and Christine McKigney. It was really telling to see how their amazing work is helping create these opportunities for our area and really for the world stage so that visitors can come in and see objects and pieces of history and the people they represent.

Three objects Amanda says not to miss:



The Ferns, c. 1904, Thaw Collection, Fenimore Art Museum Cooperstown, N.Y., T0752, Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor



Central Yu'p'ik, Arctic region, Women's Dance Fans (Finger Masks) (detail), c. 1875-1900, Thaw Collection Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y., T228 Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor



Wendat (Huron), Quebec, Moccasins (detail), 1847-53, Black-dyed skin, moosehair, cotton thread, silk lining, binding and ribbon, The Thaw Collection, Cooperstown, N.Y., T0038 Photograph by John Bigelow Taylor

1. *The Ferns*, a basket by Scees Bryant Possock, Wa she shu (Washoe), Great Basin region. "It's in impeccable condition and is symmetrical to a fault."

2. A pair of Tegumiak finger masks, Yup'ik, Alaska. "It's the most charming pair of masks, with spirit faces in each. They're meticulously made, right down to the white caribou fur and snowy white owl feathers."

3. Huron moccasins, Woodland region. "They were a gift from the United States to Lord Elgin, the governor general of Canada at the time. They're embroidered with natural-dyed moose hair, embroidered in a French Ursuline method. Their lining of red silk shows that they employed a worldwide trade network."

This exhibition is organized by the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., and made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of "American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius."

Generous support for this exhibition is provided by Bob and Carolyn Nelson and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community.

Twin Cities Art Museum Guide Collaborative (TCAMGC) Outreach Update

BY SUSAN SPRAY

The group meets on a quarterly basis on Tuesday mornings. It includes representatives from the MIA, Walker, Weisman, and Russian art museums.

Members of the committee include:

MIA:

Ann Isaacson, Amanda Thompson Rundahl, Debra Hegstrom, Mary Merrick, Kris Bjorklund, Sheila McGuire, Susan Spray (also Walker)

Weisman Art Museum:

Judi Petkau, Jamee Yung, Susan Kafka, Martha Allen

Walker Art Center:

Courtney Gerber, Sunny Floum

The Museum of Russian Art:

Carol Rudie, Marie Grubisich, Linda Holker

There have been several outreach activities since our last report focusing as much on current exhibitions as on museum exhibition design and process. Beginning in late 2009, the MIA hosted a gallery discussion on the interactive exhibition “iAfrica: Connecting with Sub-Saharan Art.” The exhibition was designed to engage visitors from a number of perspectives, asking: What makes the object beautiful? How was it used? How does it feel? Sound? Smell? How did it get here? How old is it?

In November, the Weisman hosted “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” in conjunction with its WAM CHATTER, which uses a pecha kucha format to engage panelists in rapid-fire presentations based on 20 slides as a prelude to interact with the audience.

In December, the MIA’s “The Louvre and the Masterpiece” provided insights into what makes a masterpiece, also incorporating some very good forgeries in the galleries.

In January, the Walker hosted a viewing of its “Event Horizon” and “Benches and Binoculars” reinstallation of objects from its permanent collection. The evening included tickets to The Inquisition, an interactive activity of audience and panelists based on discussions of art, Walker history, and a wide range of contemporary cultural topics. The format is similar to the public radio show “Wait, Wait—Don’t Tell Me.”

In August, the Walker hosted a tour of “Guillermo Kuitca: Everything—Paintings and Works on Paper, 1980–2008.” This was followed by discussion in its Open Field.

Most recently, the Walker hosted an open forum to examine the often-heard question—“So, why is this art?”—when working with contemporary art. A blog is now on the Walker Web site for others to continue the conversation.

These changes in activity formats reflect suggestions made by fellow guides, which include periodic evening forums on topical ideas that might be scheduled during the MIA’s Third Thursday events.

Other outreach tours included:

“Photographer to the Tsar, Revealing the Silk Road”: The Museum of Russian Art (November)

“To Have It About You: The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection,” followed by WAM Chatter, What’s Love Got to Do with It?: Weisman (November)

“From Our Ancestors: Art of the White Clay People”:
MIA (February)

“Common Sense”: Weisman (March)

Weekend with the Weisguides:
Georgia O’Keeffe, Nature Up Close!: Weisman (May)

“Until Now: Collecting the New” and “Art ReMix”:
MIA (July)

“Ordinarily Here”: Weisman (July)

Worth noting: The Weisman will close October 11 for the construction of its expansion. It is scheduled to reopen in September/October 2011. The Weisman will host the next citywide docent symposium during spring 2012.

Please watch your e-mail for new outreach opportunities, and remember that by signing up for the outreach tours you are making a commitment to your colleagues. If for some reason you are unable to attend a tour, please let the appropriate person (issuing the invitation) know.

CIF Winter Party

Salsa lessons warmed up the January night at our winter party, which also featured a fun re-gift exchange. Thank you, CIF guide **Manju Parikh**, for hosting.



CIF Summer Party

What better way to spend a beautiful summer evening than to celebrate the tenth anniversary of our first CIF guide class and to welcome new guides to the program. The Class of 2010 also expressed gratitude to Amanda Rundahl Thompson and Ann Isaacson for their hard work as instructors this past winter and spring. A special thanks to CIF guide **Yin Simpson** for arranging for us to use the clubroom at the Cliffs of Minnetonka as well as a lesson by her Tai Chi instructor, Heather Reade.

Guides celebrating 10 years: Mingjen Chen, Zhining Chin, Jacque Frazzini, Harley Gee, Hwai-Chyi Kuei, Scott Simpson, Yin Simpson, Su Ye, Haihua Wei

Welcoming new guides: Savito Bettaglio, Shawn Gilliam, Catherine Gillis, Carmen Gwazdacz, Louise Hertsgaard, Mark Hvizdak, Dinesh Krishnajois, Doug Limón, Rachel Limón, Bor-Jin Mao, Judith McKenzie, Amanda Norman, Suzanne Silverman, Marcelo Valdes, Sandra Wethers, Maryam Marne Zafar



Carrot-Ginger Soup

ADAPTED FROM *HEALTH*, JAN/FEB 2009

Amanda T.R. says, “Carrots, apples and winter squash are in abundant supply in home gardens and farmer’s markets this time of year. Here’s a quick, easy, healthy—and beautifully colored—soup to warm up cool fall days. Bon appétit!”

Serves 6

2 tsp. olive oil

4 carrots, peeled and chopped

1 small white onion, peeled and chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

3 Tbsp. fresh ginger, peeled and minced

1 cup butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cubed

1 apple, peeled and diced

4 ½ cups vegetable broth

1 12 tsp. salt, or more to taste

1 (12 oz.) can light coconut milk

Heat oil in a 2-quart pan over medium heat. Sauté carrots and onions until softened. Add next 4 ingredients (through apple); sauté until fragrant.

Add broth and salt. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, covered, 45-minutes or until vegetables are very tender.

Pulse mixture in blender or food processor until smooth. (You may need to do so in two batches, depending on the size of your blender or processor.) Add coconut milk and additional salt to taste.

CIF Guide Council 2010–11

Class of 1999: Connie Falvey

Class of 2000: Mingjen Chen (Chair)

Class of 2001: Lucille Forcelle, Beverly Cottman

Class of 2002: Margie Crone, Keiko Farrar

Class of 2004: Rhonda Fox, Susan Spray

Class of 2006: Maya Beecham

Class of 2007: Jie Sun

Class of 2010: Shawn Gilliam (newsletter editor)