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MAKE CURCOM
YOURS!**

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OPPORTUNITIES

Howdy from your Chairperson!

CurCom leadership has had a busy Spring and Summer organizing professional development opportunities, working on new scholarship, and launching plans for events and activities at the 2018 Annual Meeting in Phoenix (my hometown).

As we look forward to the Annual Meeting, we need your help ensuring a strong slate of curatorial sessions. If you have an idea for a session, but need some assistance developing the proposal, please contact me directly at wjamesburns@hotmail.com; I am serving on this year's National Program Committee.

Audience Engagement with Collections

At the 2016 annual meeting, CurCom leaders began a dialogue about the ways collections and archives are used to promote audience engagement, an aspect of the term little-discussed in the professional literature. We were interested in activities that went beyond placing objects in traditional exhibitions, asking instead what museums were doing to bring members of the public into direct physical contact with collections material.

In Spring 2017, CurCom partnered with eight other professional networks to survey our combined memberships seeking examples of interesting ideas and innovations in the area of audience engagement with collections. The seventeen-question survey was designed as a scoping exercise to identify broad patterns within the field. Over two hundred responses were received including nearly sixty examples that paint a vivid picture of the ways that museums are using their collection objects and archives to form deeper, more meaningful connections with the audiences they serve. Two thirds of the examples provided used collection items to spark a discussion or activity. Now it is time to share our preliminary findings with the field.

Elisa Phelps, Redmond Barnett, and I, have just completed an article that will be published in the Spring 2018 issue of *EXHIBITION* magazine, a publication of our sister professional network, NAME. Additional interest has been expressed by other peer-reviewed journals and publishers. Stay tuned for more publications about this timely subject.

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CurComVersations

This Fall, CurCom is launching a new professional development series, titled *CurComVersations*, modeled after EdCom's successful *EdComVersations* series. Watch for information about the first program in the series, launching this November, focusing on the expanding use and definition of the terms 'curate,' 'curator,' and 'curating,' as these words become ever-more popular in contemporary society. How can curators embrace the proliferation of these words in popular culture while reclaiming their core meaning?

Communications

Watch for several CurCom messages in your inbox in the next couple of months – the call for nominations for the Excellence in Label Writing Competition and the Excellence in Exhibitions Competition (celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2018), and an announcement about additional ways to engage with CurCom when AAM launches its new website.

CurCom (now nearly 2,100 members strong) is presently reviewing all of its communications platforms, including *Update*. I welcome your suggestions and feedback about how to reinvent/refresh *Update* to make it as relevant as possible for members. What are you looking for in *Update*; what is missing; what is helpful – or not?

Thank you for your continued support; together we make the curatorial field stronger!

James Burns

CurCom Chairperson

Museum Adviser, Independent Curator and Scholar, Public Historian

Editor's Note

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind CurCom members that this newsletter is your space.

While this installment is decidedly more parliamentary than the last, it is important to remember that our Professional Network is only as effective as we make it. Please take a moment to consider how your involvement in CurCom might benefit your career or **your institution** (page 7).

In addition to CurCom and **AAM-related news** (page 3), *Update* is a forum to **connect with colleagues**, and share **announcements** (page 5, 6) or opportunities (page 6). What's on your calendar? How can this newsletter better suit your interests or needs in the future? Email: curcomeditor@am-us.org.

Tessa Shultz

Four Newly Elected Members-At-Large

By Ann Rowson Love, Nominating Committee Chair and James Burns, CurCom Chair

Please join us in welcoming these colleagues, as introduced at the 2017 CurCom business lunch during the AAM Annual Meeting.

Elizabeth Chilton

Manager of Curatorial Affairs

Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, MI

Elizabeth Chilton has 20 years of experience in non-profit management and 11 years of experience as a leader in exhibit curation. Most recently, her passion for professional development drove her to start southeast Michigan's first Exhibit Professionals Group. Now in its third year, the group provides quarterly professional development opportunities for 100+ members from 40+ area museums, libraries, science centers, galleries, and historic houses. Elizabeth has also volunteered as a presenter at state-wide and national conferences and served on the organizing committee for the 2016 and 2017 Michigan Museum Association conferences. For the last six years, Elizabeth has led the curatorial department of the Arab American National Museum as its Manager of Curatorial Affairs. Prior to that, she was Director of Exhibit Content of the Detroit Science Center. In these positions, Elizabeth led the curation of more than a dozen temporary exhibitions, re-booted five exhibit galleries, and developed five new traveling exhibitions. In each position, she defined, developed, and enforced standards for text comprehension, label readability, and exhibit design to ensure higher levels of visitor engagement and increased learning. She also institutionalized the evaluation of all exhibitions and the incorporation of formative, remedial, and summative evaluation during the development of all new permanent exhibit galleries. Prior to her work in exhibitions and collections, Elizabeth was a fundraising professional and a middle school English teacher. She has a B.S. in English from Indiana University and a B.A. in Public Information and Communications from Albion College.

Kelly Lao

Executive Director

German American Heritage Center

Kelly Lao is the Executive Director at the German American Heritage Center and Museum in Davenport, Iowa. She joined the staff in 2011 and became assistant director in 2012. During her tenure, she organized more than 18 exhibitions including *Built to Last: Gustav Stickley's Legacy of Design* (2015) and *Berlin: Divided Past, United Future* (2014). She became Executive Director in 2016. Since then, Kelly has expanded the museum's role in the community through programming, educational outreach, and collaborative exhibitions. Her research interests include resistance efforts during WWII, German Expressionism, and women's immigration issues.

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Kelly earned a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of Iowa in 2008 and a Master's degree in Museum Studies from Western Illinois University in 2010. She lives in Rock Island, Illinois with her husband and two children.

Carlos Ortega

Curator of Collections
Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA)
Long Beach, CA

Carlos Ortega is an award winning curator and creator of meaningful educational experiences for the public. He has more than a decade of museum practice in Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, and the United States. His multidisciplinary career encompasses the administration and direction of educational projects and team management for multiple international institutions such as the Guggenheim Foundation, the Vatican, and NASA, to name a few. Carlos currently holds the Curator of Collections position at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, CA. His most recent project was the highly acclaimed community exhibition, *Transformations*. Carlos' professional experience transcends the parameters of the traditional museum model. He is an advocate of the visitor experience, proposing avant-garde concepts that bring innovation, inspiration and education to new levels of public accessibility. Carlos is currently Board Member of the Western Museums Association. He received his MA from the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom and his BA from the University of the Basque Country in Spain.

Bin Wu

International Independent Curator

Bin Wu is an international museum and arts program curator. He holds a Master's degree in Literary Linguistics from the University of Birmingham in Birmingham, U.K. and the Master's degree in Museum Communication from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Bin has extensive experience in developing interdisciplinary and international collaborative programs and curating exhibitions as community engagement and educative practices. In 2014 she received the CurCom Fellowship Award and in 2017 she was selected as a CurCom representative to review Fellowship Award applicants. As a curator, Bin has received various awards and grants to conduct arts and museum projects both in China and the United States, such as: *University of the Arts Professor Jeanne Jaffe's Paper Sculpture Workshop and Students Exhibition* at Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts, China; *Beyond the Ancient—Xi'an Beilin Museum Yang Bin's Calligraphy* exhibition at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia; *Home·Town*, a photography exhibition at Tianjin Art Museum, China; Hunan Museum Association's *Advancing the Ideal of Equality of Educational Opportunity: Museum Education in Regional Museums* at Chester County Historical Society in West Chester; *When We First Met*, a paper sculpture exhibition at the Village of Arts and Humanities in Philadelphia; and *A Photo-tale of Two Cities—Philadelphia and Tianjin Sister Cities Photography Exhibition* at the City Hall Gallery of Philadelphia.

***WWI America* Opens at the Minnesota History Center**

By Adam Scher, MHC Senior Curator

The Minnesota History Center opened the exhibition *WWI America* on April 8, 2017 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of America's entry into WW1. Through original artifacts, images, voices, interactives and multimedia presentations, *WWI America* tells the extraordinary stories of Americans—both the legendary and the unsung—during the turbulent period of 1914 to 1919.

After its opening run, the exhibition will begin a three-year tour to premier historical museums around the country. *WWI America* is produced in partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society, the National Constitution Center, the National World War I Museum and Memorial, the Oakland Museum of California and the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum. Additional support is provided by major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of Minnesota.

Call for Proposals: apexart's Franchise Exhibition Program

Elizabeth Larison, apexart Director of Programs

Founded in 1994, apexart is a non-profit arts organization in Lower Manhattan that offers opportunities to independent curators and emerging and established artists, and challenges ideas about art, its practice, and its curation. We realize this mission through our exhibitions, Fellowships, publications, and public programs.

For details, see: <https://apexart.org/franchise.php>

Vero Beach Museum of Art Announces New Curator: Danielle Johnson

By Sophie Bentham-Wood, VBMA Director of Marketing and Communications

After conducting a national search, the [Vero Beach Museum of Art](#) is pleased to announce that Danielle Johnson has been appointed Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art effective July 10, 2017. Dr. Johnson is currently teaching in New York University's Department of Art History.

From 2011-2015 she was Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. At MoMA, she worked on the landmark exhibition, *Magritte: The Mystery of the Ordinary, 1926-1938*. Anne Umland, The Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Curator of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA, stated, "Danielle Johnson was a stellar partner on MoMA's 2013 Magritte exhibition; her in-depth expertise, energy and enthusiasm made the project the best it could possibly be."

Johnson holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in the History of Art from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. Her dissertation, *Salvador Dalí and René Magritte, 1928-1938*, was supported by grants from New York University, the Getty Research Institute, and the Belgian American Educational Foundation. She earned a B.A. in the History of Art and French Language and Literature from Colgate University.

"Danielle brings a wealth of concepts for major traveling exhibitions and publications that will help propel the Vero Beach Museum of Art to the next level," stated Vero Beach's Executive Director and CEO, Brady Roberts. Johnson joins the institution at an opportune moment. The Museum has just completed a successful campaign bringing the endowment to \$30 million. The Museum's endowment has tripled in the past seven years. In 2012 the Museum completed a major capital campaign providing state of the art storage and receiving spaces along with added gallery space. The growth in facilities and endowment pave the way for more ambitious programming.

Johnson has also held teaching positions at the CUNY Graduate Center and Hunter College. She completed research for the Saint Louis Museum of Art on their publication *Max Beckman at the St. Louis Museum of Art: The Paintings* (2015) and was a consultant for MoMA on the exhibition *Dali: Painting and Film* (2008).

Museum programs are sponsored in part by the State of Florida through the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, as well as The Plansoen Foundation and Holmes Family Foundation. The Vero Beach Museum of Art is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Vero Beach Museum of Art is a membership-based not for profit 501 (C) 3 organization pursuant to chapter 212, Florida Statutes.

CurCom Opportunities!



Interested in getting more involved with the Curator's Committee of AAM? We've put together this list of opportunities and sorted it by level of engagement. Beneath each you will see a point of contact and a description of the position's *typical* duties, although we welcome your ideas as to how we can make our work even more impactful. Several already-filled positions could use a little extra help, which is a great way to learn more about CurCom with very little time commitment. If you're up for more, jump to the end of this list to see vacant positions. Taking on a role in CurCom is a great way to build your professional network and have a direct impact on the field at large.

See the last page of *Update* to get in touch with the contacts listed for each opportunity.

Occasional Assistance Needed (positions filled)

Excellence in Exhibitions Competition

Contact: Beth Chilton

- Collaborate with Chairs of EdCom, NAME and CARE in work concerning the Exhibition Competition.
- Arrange for proper advertising of the Competition.
- Revise Competition guidelines and requirements as necessary.
- Arrange for Exhibition Competition in the Marketplace of Ideas, if necessary.
- Assist the Exhibition Coordinator as needed

Excellence in Label Writing Competition

Contact: John Russick

- Collaborate with CurCom volunteers who oversee the Label Writing Competition.
- Arrange for proper advertising of the Competition.
- Revise Competition guidelines and requirements as necessary.
- Arrange for Label Writing Competition display in the Marketplace of Ideas, if necessary.
- Assist the competition coordinator as needed

Regional Representatives

Contact: James Burns

- Serve as their Region's liaison(s) to CurCom.
- Serve on subcommittees when appointed.
- Collect and submit articles and news for the CurCom newsletter, *Update*, three times per year.
- Welcome new members from their region to CurCom.

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Regional Representatives (continued)

Contact: James Burns

- Foster communications with CurCom members (and not-yet-members) in their region.
- Reach out to curators in their region who are not CurCom members and encourage them to join if they are an institutional or individual member of AAM already.
- Contact the members in their region on a regular basis to promote CurCom sessions at AAM, upcoming webinars, the exhibition competition, the label writing competition, or other CurCom activities.
- Pose interesting “big picture” questions to regional members and provide feedback to the Vice Chair.
- Encourage curators at their regional museum association annual meeting to get together for a social event to foster dialogue about critical issues facing curators.
- Serve on a CurCom subcommittee as requested.
- Participate in conference calls when possible.

Website Liaison to AAM

Contact: Allison Cywin

- Maintain domain name and site.
- Ensure that content is regularly updated on the CurCom page of the AAM website.
- Maintain and update content of Leadership Team list, What’s New feature, Exhibit Competition, Label Writing Competition, and Annual Conference material. These four topics only need to be edited yearly.
- Gather information for CurCom page on AAM’s website and send to the AAM website administrator.

Ongoing assistance needed (positions filled)

Administrative Duties of the Vice Chair

Contact: Cindy Olsen

- Keep in contact with the Regional Representatives
- Help the CurCom Update editor with generating articles from the regions

Administrative Duties of the Secretary

Contact: Stacey Swigart

- Record the Minutes of the CurCom Leadership Team meetings, distribute to the Leadership Team via e-mail, edit as necessary and redistribute.
- Publish in Update.
- Record the Minutes of the Annual Business Luncheon and publish in Update.
- Record Minutes of other meetings as specified by the Chair or a subcommittee chair.
- Assist Chair with accumulation of materials to be saved as archival records.
- Assist Chair with AAM requirements for Annual Meeting.

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Ethics Subcommittee (may need more members)

Contact: Sheila Hoffman

- Oversee regular review and revision (if necessary) of the CurCom Code of Ethics.
- Respond to inquiries from the field regarding ethical dilemmas
- Oversee development and dissemination of other ethics-related documents as necessary.
- Requirements
- Be familiar with current ethical museum practices.
- Be a clear communicator.

Newsletter Editor (need more contributors)

Contact: Tessa Shultz

- Coordinates with the Chair, and the Leadership, content for the thrice yearly newsletter.
- Writes articles, and solicits articles from the leadership team, members, and the field, for the newsletter.
- Confers with AAM staff regarding the timing and distribution of the newsletter.
- Sets deadlines for submission and publication.

Archivist

Contact: Cameron Wood

- Maintain inventory of CurCom records that document the processes of CurCom since its inception.
- Locate records when necessary and maintain good working relationship with repository.

Electronic Communications/Social Media Coordinator (need to expand social media platforms)

Contact: James Burns

- Work with AAM staff to send e-blasts to CurCom members about relevant curatorial topics that have an immediate deadline, including but not limited to solicitations for information and special announcements.
- Coordinate postings and responses on all CurCom social media platforms.

Vacant Positions

Nominating Subcommittee Chair (need chair and members)

- Prepare a slate of candidates. Include short biographies of candidates.
- Submit information to Update by the deadline for the March issue.
- Present the slate to the membership via email or mail through AAM platforms assisted by AAM staff; results must be completed 30 days before the annual CurCom business meeting at the Annual Meeting
- Appoint two (2) Subcommittee Members
- Report election results at CurCom Annual Business Meeting and publish in *Update* and on AAM website.

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Program Subcommittee Members

Contact: James Burns, committee chair

- This position is nominated by CurCom to AAM for consideration as a member of the National Program Committee.
- Pursue session possibilities during the summer.
- In Update, summarize past sessions (or encourage presenters to do so) and seek new ideas.
- Recruit and encourage session chairs who present sound ideas.
- Help locate additional session speakers if necessary.
- Search for session chairs to fulfill session suggestions from membership.
- Review sessions submitted to AAM online portal and provide comments and “likes.” Reinforce curatorial participation where appropriate.
- Confer with Program Subcommittee members obtain input for advocacy strategies, preferably before portal deadline.
- If able to attend the AAM annual meeting:
 - Attend initial meeting for planning the subsequent conference program if applicable.
 - Attend as many CurCom sponsored sessions as possible or designate attendees.
 - Attend CurCom Annual Business Meeting.
 - Network with colleagues regarding sessions for the subsequent year.
 - Thank session organizer and speakers again for their contributions to the field.
 - Attend National Program Committee meeting if CurCom is invited to send a representative.
 - Advocate for CurCom session proposals enthusiastically, clearly, and briefly.
 - Listen to other PN program proposals and offer CurCom endorsement when appropriate.
 - Suggest curatorial opportunities with any program session where it would be relevant.
 - Help session chairs prepare for the conference.
- When AAM issues program for subsequent year contact session chairs with thanks and encouragement.

Requirements:

1. Committee members should have attended at least one AAM Annual Meeting.
2. If selected for the NPC, members are responsible for all expenses to attend the required NPC meetings.
3. Strong advocacy and managerial skills.

Annual Meeting Event Coordinator(s) (for field trip, business lunch, board meeting, evening event, and Marketplace of Ideas) – Duties vary slightly for each person and procedures change a little from year-to-year but generally speaking it means corresponding with AAM staff. Contact James Burns.

- 2018 Field Trip (vacant)
- 2018 Business Lunch (vacant)
- 2018 Board Meeting (James Burns)
- 2018 Evening Event (James Burns – will need help)
- 2018 Marketplace of Idea (Stacey Swigart)

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Professional Development Coordinator (Beth Chilton has expressed interest)

- Develop webinars, workshops, and other types of training for curators or those interested in curatorial functions, at all levels of the profession from emerging professionals to mid-level professionals to seasoned professionals, in cooperation with the Staff of the American Alliance of Museums.
- Seek diversity in all aspects of programming.

Mentoring Program Coordinator

- Assist in publicizing fellowship opportunities for curators.
- Serve as needed on the AAM Fellowship Selection Committee.
- Ensure that fellowship recipients have a mentor to guide them at the annual meeting.
- Ensure that students and emerging museum professionals have access to curatorial resources.



Ellen Endslow, CurCom Immediate Past Chair, snapped this image of the outgoing and incoming student coordinators for the AAM CurCom Label Writing Competition.

Reminder: Submission Deadlines for *Update* 2017-2018

- October 1** (for November)
- February 1** (for March)
- June 1** (for July)
- October 1** (for November)



Please include your article text, all images, image credits, hyperlinks, and a brief byline for yourself. Email to: curcomeditor@aam-us.org

Curators professional network of AAM

Officers (2015-2016)

Chair

James Burns, Museum Adviser, Independent Scholar, Curator
wjamesburns@hotmail.com

Vice Chair

Cindy Olsen, Little Caesar Enterprises
cmolsen11@gmail.com

Immediate Past Chair

Ellen Endslo, Chester County Historical Society
eendslow@chesterhistorical.org

Secretary

Stacey Swigart, Independent Curator
s.a.swigart@gmail.com

Board Members-at-Large

Elizabeth Chilton, Arab American National Museum
echilton@accesscommunity.org

Kelly Lao, German American Heritage Center
kelly.lao@gahc.org

Carlos Ortega, Museum of Latin American Art
cortega@molaa.org

Bin Wu Yang, International Independent Curator
binwuyang@gmail.com

Regional representatives

Association of Midwest Museums (AMM)

Adam Scher, Minnesota Historical Society
adam.scher@mnhs.org

Cameron Wood, Independent Curator
camjwood@gmail.com

Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums (MAAM)

Debra Hughes, Hagley Museum and Library
dhughes@hagley.org

Elizabeth Varner, National Art Museum of Sport
elizabeth.c.varner@gmail.com

Mountain-Plains Museums Association (MPMA)

Elisa Phelps, History Colorado
elisa.phelps@state.co.us

Michelle Bahe, Fort Caspar Museum
mbahe@cityofcasperwy.com

New England Museums Association (NEMA)

Bonnie Stacy, Martha's Vineyard Museum
bstacy@mvmuseum.org

Sheila K. Hoffman, Université du Québec à Montréal
sheila.hoffman@gmail.com

Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC)

Denise Drury, Western Carolina University Fine Art Museum
ddrury@email.wcu.edu

Anne Rowson Love, Ph.D., Florida State University
ann.rowson@fsu.edu

Western Museums Association (WMA)

Redmond J. Barnett, Washington State Historical Society
redmond.barnett@wshs.wa.gov

Amy Scott, Autry National Center
ascott@theautry.org

Appointments and committee chairpersons

AIC Liaison

Shelia Hoffman (see NEMA rep)

AAM Liaison (open)

Archivist

Cameron Wood (see AMM rep)

Website Liaison

Allison Cywin, University of Massachusetts
allison.j.cywin@umassd.edu

Ethics Committee 2017

Sheila Hoffman (chair, see NEMA rep)

James Burns (see chair)

Nathan C. Jones, General Patton Museum of Leadership
Nathan.c.jones.civ@mail.mil

Brian Peterson

brianhpeterason88@icloud.com

Elizabeth Varner (see MAAM rep)

2018 Exhibition Competition Judge

TBD

2018 Label Writing Competition

John Russick (chair), Chicago History Museum
russick@chicagohistory.org

Mentoring Program Coordinator (open)

Professional Development Coordinator (open)

Newsletter Editor

Tessa Shultz, National Museum of the American Indian
curcomeditor@aam-us.org

2018 Nominating Committee (open)

2018 Annual Meeting Event Coordinator- Board Meeting

James Burns (see chair)

2018 Annual Meeting Event Coordinator- Lunch (open)

2018 Annual Meeting Event Coordinator- Field Trip (open)

2018 Annual Meeting Event Coordinator- Marketplace of Ideas

Stacey Swigart (see secretary)

2018 Annual Meeting Event Coordinator- Evening Event

James Burns (see chair)

Electronic Communications/Social Media Committee

Allison Cywin (see website liaison)

Stacey Swigart (see secretary)

Cindy Olson (see vice chair)

Excellence in Exhibition Coordinator

TBD

40th Anniversary Project

Stacey Swigart (see secretary)

David Kennedy (see board members-at-large)

Scott Neel, Fort Sill National Historic Landmark & Museum

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CurCom Update is a great place to share your recent or upcoming projects with colleagues across the country. Please contact curcomeditor@aam-us.org to share your story.
