People, Places, Projects

PENN MUSEUM HOSTS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWS

On August 3, 2009, the Museum hosted a tour and reception for Penn’s Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF). The group received an enthusiastic welcome by Williams Director Richard Hodges and toured behind the scenes to learn more about summer research projects underway in the Museum’s Oceanian, Mediterranean, Asian, American, and Archival collections. CURF research projects included the inventory and re-housing of Minoan and Etruscan objects excavated in Crete and pre-Roman Italy; the scanning and cataloguing of Oceanian Section images (glass plates, negatives, and slides) in the Museum’s Archives in preparation for migration to KE EMu (our new collections management software); the study and care of archival documents related to the Museum’s anthropological research around the world; the creation of North American and Asian collections’ indices; and research on traditional Chinese embroidered Mandarin squares worn by civil and military officials in the late 19th century. The tour culminated with a reception in the Warden Garden. With thanks to Wallace Genser and Eric Schneider of CURF, the Museum looks forward to hosting more Fellows in the summers ahead.

IRAQ’S ANCIENT PAST AT THE PENN MUSEUM

On October 25, 2009, the Penn Museum opened Iraq’s Ancient Past: Rediscovering Ur’s Royal Cemetery. This new long-term exhibition opens a window onto many of the details of the Museum’s famous expedition to the site of Ur in southern Iraq from 1922 to 1934. Using field notes, photographs, archival documents, and more than 220 extraordinary artifacts, the exhibition presents the story of Sir Leonard Woolley’s excavations. Particular attention is focused upon Ur’s Royal Cemetery—its royal tombs and “Great Death Pit”—and what it tells us about early Mesopotamia—the cradle of civilization—during the 3rd millennium BCE. The exhibition highlights the involvement of Gertrude Bell, Lawrence of Arabia, and Agatha Christie among others, and culminates in an interesting presentation of ongoing research as the materials from Woolley’s excavations continue to be analyzed and reassessed in light of new theories, techniques, and interpretations.
PHILAGRAFIKA 2010 PRESENTS WHAT IN THE WORLD AT THE PENN MUSEUM

Penn Museum will participate in *Out of Print*, a program of Philagrafika 2010, with New York artist Pablo Helguera. Philagrafika 2010, Philadelphia’s international festival celebrating print in contemporary art, will take place from January 29 to April 11, 2010.

Helguera has proposed an “unauthorized biography” of the Penn Museum through an artist project called *What in the World*. This biography takes its cue from the 1950s television program of the same name, which was created by Froelich Rainey, former Director of the Museum. In an early effort to bring academic knowledge to the masses, Rainey invited scholars to discuss objects from the collection live on television. According to Helguera, “the Philagrafika project seeks to offer a new reading of the collection, not through the traditional reading of an artifact as representative of the ideas and customs of an ancient culture, but instead as representative of the ideas and customs of those who collected it in the first place, bringing to the fore the singularities of historical curatorial visions.” The artist will recreate the *What in the World* set where the public can view a series of programs tracing the history of a particular object. The programs will also be aired as a “season” on YouTube. Helguera’s project “attempts to provide a glimpse of the institutional unconscious of a museum and the complex social and cultural fabric of its history.”

Program support for *Out of Print* is provided by The Barra Foundation, Inc. *Out of Print* is a collaboration between Philagrafika and five historic collections in Philadelphia: the American Philosophical Society Museum, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Independence Seaport Museum, the Rosenbach Museum & Library, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. For further information, visit www.philagrafika2010.org. For more on the artist, visit pablohelguera.net.

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The artist Pablo Helguera researches *What in the World* in the Penn Museum Archives.

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### springevents

- **20–23 January** MEDICINE IN FILM: A Symposium. Explore the history of medicine in film from early documentaries to contemporary digital imaging.
- **27 January** VICTOR MAIR: The East Asian Heartland and its Bronze Age Connections. Penn Sinologist Victor Mair maps the network of cultural connections linking China to its neighbors since the Bronze Age.
- **10 February** PETER CONN: Best Sellers—Communities of Readers Past and Present. Penn English Professor Peter Conn discusses the social history of the American best seller, from its emergence in the 19th Century to the communities of readers it creates today.
- **19 February** LAURA OTIS: Reconnecting Visual and Verbal Thinking. Emory English Professor Laura Otis reviews recent findings in cognitive science, philosophy, and literary studies to explain connections between visual and verbal forms of thought.
- **24 February** LEWIS HYDE: Benjamin Franklin and the Liberty to Communicate. Harvard Historian Lewis Hyde explores Franklin’s belief—modern intellectual property law notwithstanding—that lively creative communities emerge when barriers to the exchange of ideas are low.
- **3 March** JOAN ACOCELLA: Vaslav Nijinsky and the Mad Genius Formula. *New Yorker* Dance Critic Joan Acocella examines the history of the “mad genius” formula as it relates to the great dancer/choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky.
- **24 March** JENNY SABIN & PETER LLOYD JONES: Design and Nonlinear Systems Biology—Labstudio. Penn Architect Jenny Sabin and Molecular Biologist Peter Lloyd Jones, cofounders of LabStudio, describe the buildings of tomorrow as having intelligent skins and architects creating the next generation of cancer treatments.
- **14 April** KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH: Cosmopolitanism. Princeton Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah considers whether the worldwide homogenization of products and values encouraged by globalization is necessarily a bad thing. *Dr. S. T. Lee Distinguished Lecture.*
- **22 April** WHEN MUSIC & SWEET POETRY AGREE. In honor of Shakespeare’s birthday, mezzo-soprano Jacqueline Horner-Kwiatek, Actor Paul Hecht, and the Viol Consort, Parthenia, celebrate the joyous links between English Renaissance poetry and music. (Tickets $15)

All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted. To obtain further information, including times and locations, and to pre-register (required), please visit us online at www.phf.upenn.edu or call 215.573.8280 for an event brochure.