

Registrar's Quarterly

Spring 2026



Our Work Goes On



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Since 1979, the RC-WR has advocated for the profession of Registrars and Collections Managers across the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington, and promoted high standards and best practices in registration.



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COVER:
E. Merrill Van Frank 320-inch-long mural
installed in the future home of the
Museum of Utah.

See details in Utah state news, page 17



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TROPHY HOME**



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



HELLO RC-WR,

We are starting to wrap up the semester and getting ready to say goodbye to some great students as we pray we've prepped them to fly.

I'm also getting ready to teach my first class next semester, alongside our wonderful RC-WR Arizona Representative Lindsey Vogel-Teeter.

For those of you who know about my 11th Agent of Deterioration project, it is moving along WONDERFULLY, and giving me a LOT of hope for the future of Collections Management and Conservation.

There is worrisome turmoil in the world, but just know, we're still out there doing great things. No matter your feelings about the world situation, look at what you're doing and the difference you're making.

Stay strong,
Melanie Deer

RC-WR Chair | chair@rcwr.org

Collections Manager and Assistant NAGPRA Coordinator
for Cultural Items at the Center for Archaeology and
Society Repository, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona

HAWAII STATE

RC-WR is still in need of a state representative from Hawaii. If you're willing to step in to report the news from your state, please e-mail Melanie Deer to discuss. chair@rcwr.org.

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SAVE THE DATE

WMA

2026

SEPT 23–26

SALT LAKE CITY



Produced in partnership with the Utah Museums Association, the Western Museums Association’s (WMA) Annual Meeting is a distinct opportunity for museum people to exchange ideas, learn from peers in unique sessions, and cultivate skills to best serve their communities through museums. With the theme of ASPIRE, WMA 2026 invites museum professionals to imagine boldly, reaching beyond inherited boundaries to shape futures not yet written. To ASPIRE is not simply to dream; it is to take intentional steps toward transformation. Whether expanding community engagement, rethinking stewardship, or exploring new interpretive strategies, to ASPIRE requires us to hold space for possibility—and to take action!

**Scholarships Open May 4
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On exhibit at the Kodiak History Museum, Weather Permitting. Photograph courtesy of Amanda Lancaster

ALASKA

—Amanda Lancaster

The **Kodiak History Museum** has a new temporary exhibit up in 2026. *Weather Permitting*, an exhibit featuring Kodiak artist Lena Snow Amason, will be up from March 6–April 25, 2026. Amason’s current series combines plexiglass (from the flying bridge) and reclaimed wood panels and buoys from the beach with a color palette based on wind-swept bays, and glimpses of bright colors that stand out against the gray of the rain and fog, and passing subtle reminders of marine life and the moments in our lives that we want to remember. *Weather Permitting* is a reminder that we shouldn’t hold on too hard to our plans, that when the wind blows up and we have to duck into a quiet bay to drop anchor, that we should be ready for whatever the day brings.

Learn more: <https://kodiakhistormuseum.org/khm-exhibits/>

Two cultural heritage items from the collection of the **Sheldon Jackson Museum** in Sitka, Alaska have been returned to Alaska Native tribes under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

(NAGPRA). An Iñupiat carved wooden head with teeth was removed from Walakpa, an ancient village site close to Utqiagvik, and entered the Sheldon

Jackson Museum in 1892. This cultural heritage item has been repatriated to the Native Village of Barrow. A Tlingit carved wooden helmet in the shape of a raven, known as the K’alyáan Helmet, was worn by the Kiks.ádi leader K’alyáan in the 1804 battle between the Kiks.ádi clan of Sitka and the Russians. The raven helmet had entered the Sheldon Jackson Museum by 1905 through members of the Kiks.ádi clan. This cultural heritage item has been repatriated to the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. **The Alaska State Libraries, Archives and Museums** expresses sincere appreciation to the Native Village of Barrow, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and Tlingit & Haida for their strong partnership during the repatriation process for these two items of significant cultural patrimony.

Learn more: <https://lam.alaska.gov/press/releases/Repatriation-of-Two-Alaska-Native-Cultural-Items>

What Does Independence Mean to You?

The Spirit of Independence: Kent Bicentennial Portfolio, part of the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial celebration, features work from 12 artists who were asked to create pieces that answered one

question: "What does independence mean to you?"

Artists in the portfolio include Alex Katz, Audrey Flack, Colleen Browning, Edward Ruscha, Fritz Scholder, Jacob Lawrence, Joseph Hirsch, Larry Rivers, Marisol Escobar, Red Grooms, Robert Indiana and Will Barnet.

As we near the 250th anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence, another look at this portfolio from 1976 invites us to re-engage with the central questions and founding ideology of American democracy. Works in the exhibition ask us to reflect on social issues of the 1970s that, in many ways, continue to challenge us fifty years later. What does freedom look like? Who is it for? Who has it? Who doesn't? How does it function in your daily life?

This exhibition will be on display at the **Alaska State Museum** in Juneau through 2026.

Learn more: <https://lam.alaska.gov/independence>

Following Their Roots —Traditional Native American Farming in Arizona, Past and Present, explores and celebrates the deep connections between Arizona's Indigenous communities and their agricultural traditions. It offers a rich historical perspective and a glimpse into the contemporary practices that sustain these cultural lifeways today.

This exhibition runs through March 2027.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

—*Carrie Cohen*

The **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art** is hosting *Matissé's Femme au chapeau: A Modern Scandal*. This exhibition explores how the 1905 portrait of his wife marked a revolutionary shift in art history. The exhibit explores the historical context of this work as well as the paintings of André Derain, Albert Marquet, and Maurice de Vlaminck to better understand the enduring impact of *Femme au chapeau*. The exhibition is on view from May 16 through September 13, 2026.

The **de Young Museum** exhibit, *Boom and Bust: Photographing Northern California*, Features iconic photography of San Francisco before and after the 1906 earthquake, the construction of the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges, and the development of the South of Market neighborhood. This exhibition runs through June 7, 2026.

The **Oakland Museum of California** features *Good Fire: Tending Native Lands*, which explores how Native communities in Northern California have used controlled burns to care for the land for millennia. Organized in collaboration with Indigenous fire practitioners and artists, the exhibition reframes fire as an essential tool for healthy ecosystems rather than just a destructive force. This immersive look at environmental stewardship runs through May 31, 2026.



ARIZONA

—*Lindsey Vogel-Teeter and Pat Evans*

S'edav Va'aki Museum installed a condensed version of an exhibit, photographed above, at the City of Phoenix's South Mountain Visitor's Center. The exhibition,

The **Crocker Art Museum** in Sacramento is hosting *The Sense of Beauty: Six Centuries of Painting*. This traveling exhibition from the Museo de Arte de Ponce in Puerto Rico features European masterpieces from Rubens, van Dyck, as well as rarely seen paintings by El Greco and Goya. It is on view from February 1 through May 24, 2026.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

—*Brooke Garcia*

Following its 50th anniversary and major exterior improvement project in 2025, the **Norton Simon Museum** is now fully reopened and ready to reintroduce itself to the community. The scope of the project included: Sculpture Garden repairs and improvements, exterior tile restoration and cleaning, new signage, and improved entries. The Museum stewards a collection of 12,000 objects that spans over 2,500 years and is a combination of the industrialist Norton Simon's private collection and the former Pasadena Art Museum. Highlights include the only painting by Raphael on the west coast, three portraits by Rembrandt, six paintings by Van Gogh, over one-hundred works by Degas, and an important collection of Indian and Southeast Asian sculpture.

On February 22nd, nearly 30 institutions from Santa Barbara to Palm Springs welcomed visitors for **SoCal Museums** annual Free-For-All day. "For more than twenty years, SoCal Museums members have come together annually to collectively open our doors and welcome the public," says Cristian Hamilton, President of SoCal Museums and Vice President of Advancement, **Autry Museum of the American West**. "We believe arts and culture should be accessible to everyone, and Museums Free-For-All has become a community touchstone. The day encourages visitors to try something new, return to an old favorite, and experience the extraordinary diversity of free cultural experiences unique to Southern California."



Top: Norton Simon Museum, updated signage on Museum's facade. Photograph by Elon Schoenholz

Below, left: Heath Ceramics tile creation for Norton Simon Museum improvement project. Photograph by Alana Hale

Below, right: tile conservation by KC Restoration. Photograph by Elon Schoenholz

The **Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum** at California State University, Long Beach opened *Up Close: New Acquisitions* on February 10th. This new exhibition presents a selection of over one hundred works added to the Museum's permanent collection since 2023. Featuring artwork by more than sixty artists spanning painting, photography, printmaking, assemblage, sculpture, fiber, and new media, the exhibition celebrates Kleefeld Contemporary's ongoing commitment to expand and share a permanent collection that reflects the complexity and diversity of the contemporary art world.



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IDAHO

—*Olivia Terry*



Two brand new exhibits are headlines at the **Idaho State Museum** this spring! *Four Score: And Seven Years Before* and *United We Celebrate*—see photograph above, courtesy of Idaho State Historical Society—mark the momentous 250th birthday celebration of our nation. Collections and Exhibitions staff spent the first three months of 2026 installing the two new exhibits. *Four Score* explores the key players behind Idaho's and the Nation's foundational philosophy. *United We Celebrate* showcases Idaho connections to its statehood and national heritage through community celebrations. The two exhibits will be open to the public until August 2027.



In Moscow, the **Latah County Historical Society** is entering their third phase of the McConnell Mansion Window Restoration Project. They are also the lead organization for Moscow's America 250th Commission. In this role, they are collaborating with local partners to table at the Moscow Farmer's Market, Tuesday Market, and host a variety of events. In addition, two exhibits are in development, a traveling exhibit about dryland agriculture, and another on the 120th anniversary of their Carnegie Library.

The **Community Library's Center for Regional History** and **Wood River Museum** embarked on a public sculpture project honoring George Blackmon, an African American miner who lived in the White Cloud Mountains of Custer County in the late 19th and early 20th century. Born into slavery in Kentucky, Blackmon was emancipated at age ten when the Civil War ended, and went on to learn to read, write, and teach himself about prospecting as he made his way west—his story is one of remarkable resilience emerging from central Idaho's mining era.

The Library has commissioned artist Dana King to design the sculpture, set to be installed in spring 2027. To mark the project, research fellow Erik Freeman, assistant professor of History at Idaho State University, will give a public talk this May on his research into Blackmon's life and how it connects to a broader national story.

NEVADA

—*Cynthia Sanford*

This Nevada update is all about fundraising. Love it or hate it, we all have to do it, so here are some innovative ways Nevada museums are raising money.

The **Nevada State Museum**, Carson City is hosting the inaugural Mint Gala on May 2nd. The event is held in the historic Carson City Mint building, and attendees have the chance to join tours of the museum's exhibits, watch the first strike of the museum's 85th anniversary commemorative coins, and take part in other events.

The **Clark County Museum** is hosting Trick or Treat Fest: Halfway to Halloween on the evenings of May 16 and 17. Visitors can tour the museum, shop at vendors, enjoy music and entertainment, and, most importantly, fill their bags with sweet, sweet candy.

The **Northeastern Nevada Museum** is currently selling rubber ducks for their annual fundraiser, The Great Humbolt Duck Race. In late July, the museum partners with the City of Elko Fire

Department to flush the ducks down Angel Park Hill with prizes for the first and last duck over the finish line.

The **Mob Museum** has opened a store at Harry Reid International Airport that will allow travelers to buy branded merchandise and preview the museum's exhibits. Select artifacts will be on display and guests can get their mugshot taken in this introduction to the museum for the millions of people coming to Las Vegas through the airport.



Hacker Architects, based in Portland, render image of what the High Desert Museum east-facing terrace and entrance to the gathering hall will look like. Image courtesy of the High Desert Museum

OREGON

—Meg Glazier-Anderson

The **Gresham Historical Society** is celebrating its 50th anniversary with an exhibit titled *History and Memory* that looks behind the curtain of its museum and others. This exhibit takes on the significance of objects—what we keep, why we keep it, and how those choices impact the stories that museums tell about us. The exhibit is a retrospective of 50 years of shifting collections practice as well as an invitation for visitors to consider their own belongings and the stories they tell about themselves.

The **High Desert Museum** in Bend broke ground on a \$40 million expansion. New classrooms, community gathering spaces, a 3,225 square-foot art gallery and a reinstallation of indigenous plateau cultural material are expected. The project is slated for a December 2027 completion date.

Tillamook County Pioneer Museum received funding from Oregon Heritage Grant for Indigenous collection assessment. The grant will fund a project to evaluate the museums Indigenous Collections to better preserve them and determine tribal origin in preparation of future repatriation and/or exhibition.



After more than 50 years in the making, **Crown Point Country Museum** held its grand opening on March 21, see photograph of opening day above. Located along the historic Columbia River Highway in Corbett, the museum's mission is to share the history of the Columbia River Gorge.

A new exhibition, *Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition* at **Oregon Museum of Science and Industry** features more than 130 recovered Titanic artifacts, immersive recreations, and a chance for visitors to follow the story of a real passenger.

UTAH

—Hannah Barrett

The **Utah Historical Society** is happy to announce that the building that will house the new **Museum of Utah** is now open, as are the Guest Experience desk and the Museum Store inside the building. Collection objects that will be on display have been relocated, and installation of objects in the galleries is underway. Field trip reservations for the 2026–2027 school year are now open, and hiring is un-

derway for part-time museum educators to help facilitate field trips. All of this exciting activity is launching UHS towards the museum opening which will take place in June.

The **Utah Division of Arts & Museums** is also celebrating the opening of the North Capitol Building, future home of the **Museum of Utah**. In partnership with the Capitol Preservation Board, a beautiful E. Merrill Van Frank mural was installed in the 2nd floor lobby. The 320-inch-long mural had to be carried flat up a spiral staircase by 12 movers. The mural was painted onsite at Auerbach's Department Store in 1947 to commemorate the Utah Centennial. Merrill, as she liked to be known, was a fashion illustrator at the store and was asked to take on the immense task of creating large historic murals for the celebration. When the building was demolished, the murals made their way back to the Van Frank family, who generously donated the paintings to the Division in 2018.



Upper photograph shows a large mural depicting a lively gathering, rich with vibrant, historical costumes. On top of the mural are the words "Conference Center." The photograph below shows a group of people examining that same large mural.

The **Utah Museum of Fine Arts** (UMFA) recently opened *Storywork: The Prints of Marie Watt* from the Collections of Jordan B. Schnitzer and his Family Foundation, on view now through June 21, 2026. Marie Watt is a member of the Seneca Nation with German-Scots ancestry, she weaves together ideas of kinship, community, stewardship, tradition, and memory through her practice of "storywork". In other exciting news, the museum has also completed installation of Robert Indiana's iconic *LOVE*

(Red Outside Blue Inside) sculpture on the south lawn; this was made possible through the generous support of the University of Utah and several Utah-based donors.

Alongside these exhibition and installation updates, the Collections team is also celebrating some changes: the team's very own Catherine Nalder has been promoted from Collections Assistant to Assistant Registrar. The UMFA is incredibly fortunate to have her dedication and contribution.



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WASHINGTON

—Sarah Frederick and Katherine Browne

The **Washington State Arts Commission's Public Art Collections Care** team is holding steady amidst a tight state budget. Technicians Gabriel Brown, Alcamy Henriksen, Jonathan Hickerson, and Jared Moore continue to perform artwork maintenance on Washington's public art. Thanks to a grant from RC-WR and another from the Winterthur/UD Program in Art Conservation's Alumni Professional Venture Fund, Janae Huber (Collections Manager) and Jonah Barnett (Collections Coordinator) are restarting work on an emergency planning project for public art collections. The work was originally funded by a now rescinded NEH grant. We are partnering with the Midwest Art Conservation Center and MC Conservation of Philadelphia.

The **Museum of Flight's** new exhibition, *Runway to Runway*, is a delightful and insightful trip through the styles and stories of flight attendant uniforms and fashion. *Runway to Runway* features 100 artifacts (see photographs to the right) ranging from classic suits and skirts to capes and go-go boots and onward to today's thoughtful neoclassic styles. Each uniform reflects the person who wore it, the purpose behind its design and the responsibilities carried out while it was worn. The interactives in the exhibit allow visitors to enhance their fashion sense with touchable fabrics, hands-on activities, like the proper way to tie a scarf, and much more.

Runway to Runway opens April 25, 2026, and runs through January 18, 2027. ●





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