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SPURLOCK

MUSEUM

THE ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE WILLIAM R. AND CLARICE V. SPURLOCK MUSEUM
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



SPURLOCK MUSEUM MAGAZINE

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On the front cover:
Barbershop Sign.
Burkina Faso or Togo, late 20th c.
Gift of Robert C. and Donna M. Spina Helmholtz.
2012.10.0349.

SPURLOCK MUSEUM

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Elizabeth Sutton, Director

DEAR FRIENDS,

As this new academic year gets underway, I would like to stop for a moment to reflect on everything new at Spurlock Museum. There has been a lot of “new” happening at the Spurlock over the last few years. We developed a new strategic plan with a new mission and vision for our Museum. We have been busy enacting the plan and making the shift from being a museum that focused on objects to one that now focuses on people, sharing stories, and building community.

Internally, we’ve been changing policies, procedures, job duties and titles, and the scope of our advisory board. Externally, you can see these changes in the community- and faculty-curated exhibitions we have been producing and the collaborative programs we have been hosting. We are excited that visitation is increasing, as that means there is interest in our work and we get to share these experiences, exhibits, and programs with more people.

While we are always enthusiastic to share the changes we have been making, it is also important to note that when you come to the Museum, you will also continue to see some familiar favorites. We have so many new additions and changes coming this year including some gallery renovations and new collaborations, exhibitions, and programs. But you can count on the Spurlock to continue to be your gateway to thoughtful world arts and culture programming, and you will always be welcome here.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

With appreciation,

Elizabeth A. Sutton, PhD
Director

Pictures of HOPE

By Elizabeth Sutton



Kevork working with students in April.

On April 24, 2023, we finally welcomed Armenian-Syrian artist Kevork Mourad to the Spurlock Museum. His visit was originally planned for April of 2020, but when COVID shut down campus, we were forced to cancel the scheduled events. However, even though we needed to cancel the in-person events that were scheduled, we were able to commission a new piece, *A World Through Windows*, which now hangs in the Leavitt Gallery of Middle Eastern Cultures and serves as a reminder of those difficult journeys through lockdown.

We were pleased to welcome Kevork to campus for a program marking Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day. Students from across campus participated in a meaningful workshop, assisting him in creating a new artistic work, “Paintings of Hope,” which is now part of the museum’s permanent collection. Artist and students put ink to three layers of canvas and cut away sections to create three-dimensional windows into our own lives, thinking about connections to home, diaspora, and our community.

After the workshop, we moved to the auditorium to participate in a conversation between Kevork and Helen Makhdounian, Promise Armenian Institute Postdoctoral Scholar at UCLA and University of Illinois alum. Helen, along with Professor Brett Ashley Kaplan, were instrumental in building connections with Kevork and inviting him to campus. The conversation was a thoughtful way to mark Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day and centered on the role of art in expressing the depth of trauma and rebuilding lives and community in diaspora.

We invite you to visit **Paintings of Hope**, on display on our second floor balcony through September 24, 2023.

opening
FEBRUARY 2024

By Elizabeth Sutton

BLACK JOY

We are excited to announce the opening of our next community curated exhibit, *Black Joy*, which will open in the Campbell Gallery in February 2024. This exhibit explores and expands upon the work of the exhibit's curators Ruby Mendenhall and Florence Abidu. Mendenhall and Abidu have worked with Black mothers who have lost children to gun violence to explore resilience, wellness, and joy. This exhibit centers the humanity of Black women through photos, art, and experience.

Joy does not negate trauma, systemic racism, and historic inequality. But joy brings balance and healing. The exhibit will encourage, coach, and provide viewers with resources to begin their own journey towards balance and health. With space for practice and reflection we can all be architects of our wellness path. The exhibition will be on display through the 2024 fall semester, and programming and experiences related to the exhibit's themes will occur throughout the year.

Ruby Mendenhall is a Kathryn Lee Baynes Dallenbach Professor in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Sociology, African American Studies, Urban and Regional Planning and Social Work; Associate Dean, Carle College of Medicine; and Faculty Affiliate, Carle R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, and Cline Center for Democracy.

Florence Abidu is a Research Scientist at Carle Illinois College of Medicine.

Shown here: Photographs by Black women are featured in the exhibit.



opening
FEBRUARY 1, 2025

Caribbean Indigenous Resistance ¡Taíno Vive!

The Spurlock is pleased to announce that we will host the Smithsonian traveling exhibition *Caribbean Indigenous Resistance / Resistencia indígena del Caribe ¡Taíno Vive!* This bilingual exhibition explores the Taíno heritage of today and how Taíno descendants are participating in a growing movement to reaffirm their Caribbean Indigenous identity and culture. Visitors will learn about the Taíno survival journey through stories, contemporary crafts, musical instruments, and utilitarian objects associated with aspects of Native day-to-day life. The exhibition also includes a short video that showcases the impacts of colonial encounters in the Caribbean and the nexus of the first interactions between the new and the old world.

Caribbean Indigenous Resistance / Resistencia indígena del Caribe ¡Taíno Vive! is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of the American Latino. This exhibition received federal support from the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the National Museum of the American Latino. This text has been adapted from the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

Caribbean Indigenous Resistance will be at Spurlock February 1 – April 27, 2025.



Above: Boynayel Mota, of the music and cultural group Taiguabo Yukayeke Kiskeya, overlooks the mountains in Maguana Arriba, Dominican Republic. Photo by Delvin Ortega.

Below: A painting from contemporary Taíno artist Albert Areizaga showcases the destruction that European colonization brought to the Caribbean. *The Beginning of the End*. Courtesy of Albert Areizaga.

Images courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

opening
FALL 2025

Farm Aid '85

Harvesting History with Professor Dan Gilbert and Champaign County History Museum

By Beth Watkins

When you think of major concerts in the history of rock and country music, Champaign probably doesn't spring to mind. But in September 1985, Memorial Stadium at the University of Illinois was the site of the first Farm Aid relief concert for American farm families, featuring a lineup of legends like Willie Nelson, Neil Young, B. B. King, Loretta Lynn, and Bob Dylan. In the 40 years since, Farm Aid has raised over \$70 million to build a vibrant, family farm-centered system of agriculture in America.

History Harvest

Inspired by this local event with ties to American music, labor, and agricultural histories, Professor Dan Gilbert (History; Labor and Employment Relations) made Farm Aid the focus of study for the spring 2023 class called History Harvest. History Harvest is a collaborative public history project in which students engage with members of the public to collect and digitize documents and artifacts of historical interest for scholarly and community research.

"Since moving to Champaign-Urbana twelve years ago," says Dan, "I have grown more and more interested in learning about the inaugural Farm Aid concert. As someone interested in the history of both popular music and social movements, I think Farm Aid '85 was a hugely important event. The fact that it happened here in our community makes it even more exciting to explore. I was inspired by the work that my colleague Professor Kathy Oberdeck did with her students in the History Harvest classes that she taught focusing on local queer histories, which culminated in the extraordinary *Sewn in Memory* exhibit at the Spurlock. Having started to conduct some of my own research on Farm Aid '85 as a pivotal historical event, I was struck that the History Harvest framework might work well for this subject."

Sewn in Memory (on display in 2021–22) proved to be a meaningful exhibit for community visitors and incredible learning experiences for students. It also initiated a relationship between Spurlock and the Greater Community AIDS Project of East Central Illinois that has continued in collaborative programming. Spurlock was so happy that Dan wanted to continue the History-Spurlock partnership by using the 2023 class's work on Farm Aid as the basis for a large exhibit to mark the 40th anniversary of Farm Aid in 2025.

Originally developed at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, **History Harvests** engage with individuals, communities, and institutions to digitize important historical documents and facilitate deeper scholarly and community research into topics that sometimes only these materials can illuminate.

Partnering with Champaign County History Museum

Because of the local history focus of this class, the Champaign County History Museum was also a logical partner. CCHM already has a collection of material from Farm Aid and has been wanting to expand the collection and resources related to it by talking to people who attended and organized the event in 1985.

Dan, his students, and CCHM staff ran a History Harvest event in April that invited community members to record oral histories and digitize photos and records related to Farm Aid. Memorial Stadium, site of the original concert, hosted the activities in the 77 Club. Some generous participants also donated objects or digital copies to CCHM.

"The students had worked very hard on the event: planning every aspect, staffing the registration table, operating the digital scanning stations, conducting the interviews, and cleaning up at the end," says Dan. "They came away from the experience really fired up about the whole thing. Many of them expressed excitement about having been able to connect their academic interests and training in history to a real-life project with community partners. Several students described being moved by the passionate and emotional responses of interviewees as they recounted their experiences attending or working at the concert."

Connor Monson, Manager of the Champaign County History Museum, was also enthusiastic about the Harvest. "It was terrific. The event became a reunion of sorts for dozens of individuals: sharing memories of their favorite performances, the people they were with, or the rain that poured down for most of the day. The stories were fascinating. In all, the event helped us take in over 20 oral histories, and the students and museum staff received over 800 photos and documents." These materials, plus others already in CCHM's collections, will form the basis of the exhibit at Spurlock.

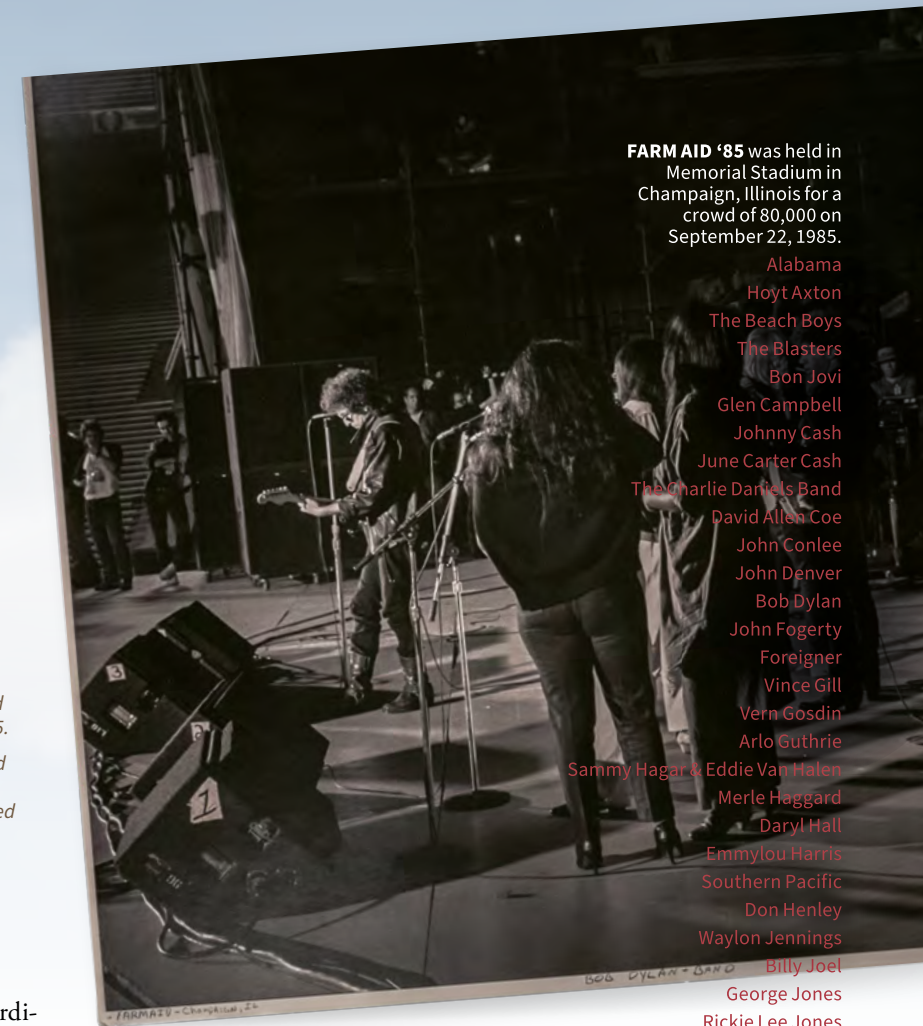
Building Meaningful Exhibits

As part of their final class projects, Dan's students also submitted ideas for what they'd like to see in the exhibit. "The students created some exciting preliminary proposals for the exhibit. These ideas include sections featuring concert memorabilia, official planning documents and correspondence, materials from some of the organizations that received funding



Above: Farm Aid '85 attendee Marci Shoemaker; History Harvest students carefully digitize a panoramic image of the concert. Images courtesy of Champaign County History Museum.

Right: Bob Dylan and band performing at Farm Aid '85. Below: Harvested Farm Aid memorabilia: photo of Willie Nelson and hat signed by Nelson.



FARM AID '85 was held in Memorial Stadium in Champaign, Illinois for a crowd of 80,000 on September 22, 1985.

- Alabama
- Hoyt Axton
- The Beach Boys
- The Blasters
- Bon Jovi
- Glen Campbell
- Johnny Cash
- June Carter Cash
- The Charlie Daniels Band
- David Allen Coe
- John Conlee
- John Denver
- Bob Dylan
- John Fogerty
- Foreigner
- Vince Gill
- Vern Gosdin
- Arlo Guthrie
- Sammy Hagar & Eddie Van Halen
- Merle Haggard
- Daryl Hall
- Emmylou Harris
- Southern Pacific
- Don Henley
- Waylon Jennings
- Billy Joel
- George Jones
- Rickie Lee Jones
- B.B. King
- Carole King
- Kris Kristofferson
- Lone Justice
- Loretta Lynn
- Delbert McClinton
- Roger McGuinn
- John Cougar Mellencamp
- Roger Miller
- Joni Mitchell
- Willie Nelson
- Randy Newman
- The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band
- Roy Orbison
- Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers
- Charley Pride
- Bonnie Raitt
- Lou Reed
- Judy Rodman
- Johnny Rodriguez
- Kenny Rogers
- John Schneider
- Brian Setzer
- Tanya Tucker
- Dottie West
- X



The exhibit will open in fall 2025. Read more about Farm Aid and see some of CCHM's photos at their website champaigncountyhistory.org/single-post/farm_aid

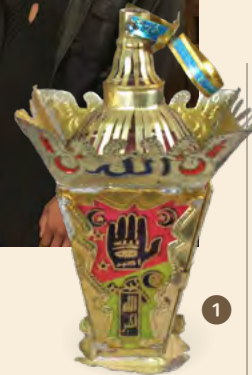


EXHIBIT PROJECT Reinterpreting Africa

By Staff from Our Upcoming Revolution's Technology

Museums, in their role as time capsules of human history, have often been critiqued as colonial structures that prioritize Western academic knowledge and conquest while sidelining the traditional and lived experiences of the cultures they exhibit. Yet, as we step into the 21st century, these institutions are evolving and power dynamics are shifting.

At the forefront of this transformation is the Spurlock Museum's ambitious project, *Reinterpreting Africa: Centering Diverse and Authentic Cultural Voices in a Museum Gallery*. Monica Scott, Spurlock's Manager of Community Engagement and Programs, leads this mission, inviting visitors to question their understanding of museums and support the reinterpretation of the Gallery of African Cultures.

The project aims to redefine traditional approaches to museum curation by centering diverse and authentic voices. The team acknowledges the harms of the past and strives to empower the cultures on display, rather than speaking over them. This initiative is essential because museums hold a unique power and responsibility: they are ranked as the second most trustworthy sources of information behind friends and family, according to a survey commissioned by the American Alliance of Museums (2021).

Partnering with OUR Tech

But the team is not alone in this endeavor. Scott partnered with Our Upcoming Revolution's Technology

Left: The OUR Tech team.

1. **Ramadan Lamp.** Cairo, Egypt, 1990. Gift of Robert C. and Donna M. Spina Helmholz. 2012.10.0035.
2. **Hair Comb.** Congo, 1880–1930. Gift of Hazel Murphy Jackson. 2006.06.0010.
3. **Fertility Pendant Necklace.** Ethiopia. Lynn and Michael Noel Collection. 2012.03.2957.

(OUR Tech), an innovative local empowerment firm known for its social impact work and support of policies, organizations, and initiatives that wish to leave their mark on disenfranchised communities across many sectors. OUR Tech is forged from the histories and principles of minority economic and cultural sovereignty and infuses the teachings of Black and African activists into everything they touch.

Founded by Black UIUC alums Jordari Rene and Oscar "Tre" Irving-Thomas, OUR Tech promotes digital neo-activism and the creation of Afrocentric platforms and spaces where the voices of underrepresented communities can resonate. This partnership with Spurlock is an opportunity for OUR Tech to contribute significantly to the reinterpretation of the African exhibit, ensuring that the gallery accurately and respectfully represents the diverse cultures of the African continent and diaspora. They offer a fresh perspective, deeply rooted in Afrocentric ideologies and a commitment to fostering inclusivity in the digital sphere.

Voices from the Community

The collaboration has already yielded exciting results. Focus groups of faculty, students, and community members with ties to Africa have provided invaluable insights. Their firsthand knowledge has guided the reinterpretation process and will continue to influence the gallery's evolution. The team encouraged visitors to participate by completing surveys and contributing their perspectives. This community-led approach has been integral to the project and promises to shape a revitalized Gallery of African Cultures.

Voices that have historically been silenced or misrepresented are crucial to the evolution of museums. This reinterpretation project aims to shift the narrative focus from a simple spectacle to authenticity, from power to people. This initiative seeks to raise voices of the everyday stories and expertise of the people behind the artifacts and their descendants, taking critical steps towards inclusive representation.



4. **Kudu (Container for Shea Butter or Gold Dust).** Ghana. Lynn and Michael Noel Collection. 2012.03.2593.
5. **Barber Shop Sign.** Ghana. Lynn and Michael Noel Collection. 2013.05.1932.

Below: Focus group participants examine potential objects for exhibit prototypes.



The Spurlock Museum's initiative goes beyond simply changing the way we perceive museums; it speaks volumes about the importance of representation and diversity. By choosing to reinterpret the Gallery of African Cultures and partnering with OUR Tech, Spurlock is taking a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and authentic narrative of African cultures.

So, Why Should You Get Involved?

Because this project isn't just about a single exhibit or museum: it's about changing the narrative and creating spaces that value and respect all cultures. By supporting this initiative, you contribute to a broader movement for change that extends beyond the gallery walls. And that's something worth getting excited about.

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Currently Funded Projects — Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. (n.d.) diversity.illinois.edu/antiracism-initiatives/research-program/funded-project-2022

Reinterpreting Africa: Centering Diverse and Authentic Cultural Voices. (n.d.). www.spurlock.illinois.edu/blog/p/reinterpreting-africa-centering/436

The artifacts pictured here are part of the *Reinterpreting Africa* focus group conversations.



6. **Jocolo (Wedding Apron).** South Africa. Lynn and Michael Noel Collection. 2013.05.0070.

7. **Warrior Shoes.** Ngara Sero, Tanzania. Kieffer-Lopez Collection. 2013.04.0027.



COLLECTION HIGHLIGHT



All objects are from Peru and were transferred from the Department of Anthropology at UIUC. Objects left to right:

Huashpa (Cooking Pot).
2000.01.0619.

Teu Pong (Cooking Pot).
2000.01.0477.

Kuti (Cooking Pot).
2000.01.0620.

Kuti Jiko (Vessel).
2000.01.0525.

Toró Joko (All-Purpose Vessel).
2000.01.0524.

Nami Mapu (Cooking Pot).
2000.01.0575.

ISKONAWA CERAMIC COLLECTION IN CONTEXT

Connections Between the Iskonawa and Donald Lathrap in the Ucayali

By Carolina Rodriguez Alzza
PhD Student, University of Texas at Austin

In May of 2023, I visited the Spurlock Museum to study the Iskonawa collection of ceramics, tools, weapons, textiles, and ornaments. The Iskonawa are an Indigenous group of roughly 100 people, currently settled in Amazonian Peru near the Callería River. These items were collected by UIUC professor of anthropology Donald Lathrap as part of his research in the 1960s. Lathrap's studies on modern ceramics from the larger Shipibo-Konibo community are well known to scholars, but his Iskonawa ceramic collection and his connection with the Indigenous people are less known. Building on my field research with the Iskonawa in the Ucayali region and in Lathrap's archives,¹ the objective of my visit was to put this unique collection in context.

Lathrap arrived in the Peruvian Montaña in 1956 to study the 4,000-year history of ceramic production in the Upper Amazon. His excavations at San Francisco de Yarinacocha inspired his interest in the extensive study of modern ceramics from the Shipibo people. In 1967–68, Lathrap dedicated himself to the study of Shipibo pottery production for households. He visited villages in Ucayali to survey the pottery makers, collect ceramic measurements, and sketch out decorations and forms. His goal was to analyze the relationship between stylistic variations and social/cultural factors such as residence patterns and kinship.

In November 1967, Lathrap navigated the Callería River with Catalino Cumapa and Manuel Rengifo, both Shipibo guides who later became his compadres. They stopped in a small settlement on the bank of the river inhabited by the Iskonawa. This Indigenous group survived a violent contact with loggers and a missionary group in 1959. Far from the Callería River basin, the Iskonawa traditional territory was located at the foot of El Cono Mountain near the border between Peru and Brazil. However, the Iskonawa were moved downriver to a nearby Shipibo-Konibo village in Callería basin and founded their own village. By the time Lathrap arrived, there were 15 Iskonawa adults and a few children living in 4 houses.

Lathrap became interested in the Iskonawa pottery that was still being made by a few women in that small settlement. A total of 8 vessels were collected, and all of them are for household use, such as cooking or storing food and beverages. One cooking pot especially caught my attention due to the use of a metal handle; the others are almost exclusively made of clay.

Lathrap was attracted to these ceramic artifacts produced by the Iskonawa women, and his observations grew out of his knowledge of Shipibo pottery. He conducted a survey to learn more about the Iskonawa ceramic makers, such as their personal names and kinship relations. His descriptions primarily drew on the differences between Shipibo and Iskonawa production, including additives used in the clay, the use of a coiling process to build up the pots, and the use of seeds as molding instruments to finish the pieces. He also described painted designs that can be seen on some Iskonawa ceramics, though he concluded that the Iskonawa technique and motifs are simpler than those used by the Shipibo-Konibo.

Iskonawa ceramics are culturally relevant on their own merits: the types of ceramics, their production methods, and their household uses. This collection provides insight into a pottery tradition that is especially relevant now as the Iskonawa are working not only to maintain this knowledge but also to pass it along to new generations.



Kuti (Brewing Urn).
2000.01.0640.

Editor's note: We've chosen to use "Iskonawa" in this article as it is the primary spelling used today by the indigenous members of this culture.

¹This article includes references to Donald Lathrap's publications *The Upper Amazon* (1970), *Shipibo Tourist Art* (1976), his notebooks stored in the University of Nebraska State Museum, and the Iskonawa collection records in the Spurlock Museum.



The silk on this woman's **bridal jacket** in Spurlock's collection has shattered due to UV exposure.

Hungary, ca. 1900.
1913.15.0001A.



Christa (left) and Gloria checking results of light readings.
Gloria measuring light levels.



Senior Collections Manager Christa Deacy-Quinn and collaborator Dr. Gloria See were awarded a grant by the Institute of Museum and Library Services for the development of equipment that will enable museums and cultural institutions of all sizes to take better care of their collections. Light can damage many kinds of materials but is crucial to visitor experiences, as well as to staff working conditions, so museums need to measure light exposure carefully. When humans go out in the sun unprotected, many of us get sunburns — and the same processes of damage and deterioration affect artifacts. We have to consider what risk the light will pose to artifacts when we design displays, borrow or lend objects with other institutions, and plan spaces and buildings.

However, most UV meters are difficult and expensive to calibrate, leaving many institutions with equipment that does not provide accurate data. Christa and Gloria's work focuses on creating light meters that are much easier to calibrate, which will eventually lead to museums getting more reliable information about this hazard to their collections and ultimately better able to plan and care for irreplaceable objects of human history and culture.

Christa has worked in collections care at Spurlock for over 30 years, and when she met Gloria, the two recognized like minds and some rich potential for collaboration. Gloria completed her PhD in electrical and computer engineering at UIUC in the 2010s, focusing on monitoring hardware. While visiting museum exhibits on campus, she became interested in the aspects of light exposure and measurement in museum settings. She wanted to figure out what improvements could be made to the hardware that would be easy and inexpensive to implement but still yield better data that can support informed decisions and action steps.

Christa and Gloria were soon looking at available options for this equipment, starting with what Spurlock already had.

Gloria brought over some engineering equipment to test out whether Spurlock's could give similar results. They couldn't. We, like many museums, were making decisions about displays, light fixtures, and windows and shades using equipment that wasn't calibrated correctly, even though basic equipment can cost at least \$1,000. That equipment can't even be calibrated in this country — it has to be sent to the UK! The process of obtaining and maintaining this equipment is beyond the reach of most smaller museums and institutions, even if they have staff time or budget to put towards this aspect of preservation. Spurlock staff believes deeply that useful professional best practices should be widely accessible to people in the field, regardless of budget and staffing.

When an IMLS grant for prototyping was announced, Christa and Gloria knew that it was a great opportunity to address these problems. They spent months gathering information and writing their proposal, including lining up potential partners to help with testing. They were awarded the grant on their first try. Due to the types of supply chain issues that became so common during the pandemic, they've been able to extend the time period for the grant and will be working on it into 2024.

As of summer 2023, Christa and Gloria have been looking at off-the-shelf products and components already available in the industry and assessing how well they do at reading UV in different kinds of lighting conditions that approximate typical museum scenarios. They've compiled all their tests into spreadsheets so they can compare the usefulness of different products. They then created their own version of a more useful instrument, and eventually an iteration of it will be given to partner institutions to test out in their museum buildings and among their collections. Once the first prototype has been tested, they will take the feedback from the partners and revise their model to create a second version

that can be announced across our field. The ultimate goal is to create an open-source recipe of sorts, using readily available ingredients like a light sensor, circuit boards, connectors, and microcontrollers — meaning institutions can build these new, more useful UV instruments themselves for under a few hundred dollars.

The grant team also wants to be able to build many of these devices to give away to organizations and then offer training on how to use them and how to make preservation plans and decisions based on the data the devices provide. Everyone in the museum field knows that light fades certain kinds of materials, but not all of us have detailed knowledge about the chemical and mechanical changes that happen with light damage. UV is high energy, so it can cause many complicated changes at microscopic levels within materials, breaking bonds in molecules in both organic materials (like silk, wood, leather, and paper) and inorganic materials (such as certain plastics and glass). Some of these changes happen quite quickly, like fading that we see with our naked eye on the surface of materials, and others compound over time and are much harder to notice, eventually causing materials to shatter and fall apart. Any objects on display in a museum automatically spend more time in lighter conditions than most objects do in storage, so they are more susceptible to these kinds of damage. But because staff and visitors see them every day, the changes may not be noticeable. That's why measuring with accurate equipment is so important: the data tells staff about problems that their everyday observation cannot.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Grant number MG-251397-OMS-22.

LIGHT SAVERS

Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant

By Beth Watkins

Ever wonder how a museum handles an influx of over 500 items all at once?

This past year, staff at the Spurlock Museum had to find out.

A Major Unboxing

By Mary Lawrence, Graduate Assistant



Last fall, Interim Registrar Dery Martínez-Bonilla received word from the Illinois State Archaeological Survey (ISAS) that several boxes belonging to Spurlock had been found during ISAS's move to a new storage location. ISAS staff estimated that the boxes contained around 300 items and had been sitting in storage since the 1960s. After some investigation, Dery and other staff realized that the items were part of a larger collection the museum had acquired in 1924. The Baudon Collection contains an assortment of Merovingian metal tools, jewelry, and pottery, as well as Neolithic and Paleolithic-era stone tools. However, our records did not show that the items found at ISAS had ever been fully accessioned into our collection, meaning that the items coming from ISAS would need to be processed as if they were newly acquired artifacts.

After a few months of working out logistics, 9 neat cardboard boxes arrived at the Spurlock in early December, just a couple weeks before the end of the semester. Since student workers from the Registration section, who often do this kind of processing work, would be away for nearly a month, our first task in the Registration team was to ensure that each individual item received a temporary number and record. This temporary information helps us track items that are in the building, even if they are not yet part of the permanent collection.

Registration Assistants Gabi Kaminski, Haley Collins, Illakkia Ranjani, and I unpacked each box in the two weeks leading up to the semester break. For each item, we created a record with basic information such as the name of the item, where it was found, and who brought it to the University's collections. As we created records and physical tags for each tool, we quickly realized that the estimated number of items fell far short of the reality. Rather than around 300 items, we had received well over 500.

As the project lead, I returned to Spurlock a week earlier than my undergraduate colleagues. With Dery's guidance, I created a plan and timeline to integrate every tool into the collection by the end of the spring semester. The plan was broken down into 3 parts:

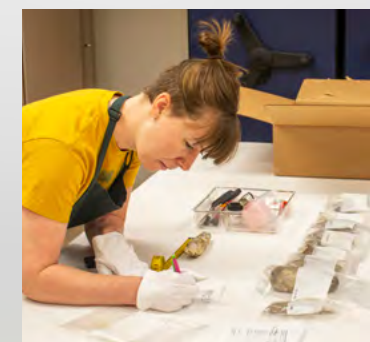
- 1 The first step had been assigning a number and record to each item.
- 2 The second — and largest — step was to complete the temporary records for each object. This meant unpacking the boxes a second time to take a closer look at each item.
- 3 The third was assigning each item a permanent number and transferring the related information into the permanent collection database.

Completing the temporary records involved closely examining each individual stone tool. We unpacked each of the 9 boxes one by one and laid out every tool in the box on our artifact table. The artifacts had been given numbers by previous staff members or researchers (although we don't know who or when!), so we kept them in that same order in case they might be useful for some later investigation. For our records and storage information, we measured and weighed each piece and then wrote a visual description. This way, even if photos were lost, a visitor or future staff member could confirm that the object matches the record. We had some surprises during this step: while at first glance many of the tools looked very similar laid out on the table, there was great variation in colors, patterns, and distinguishing marks. Some had interesting cavities, while others glittered under light. We deciphered tags from excavations in the 19th century, which noted in delicate French cursive the locations specific stones had been uncovered.

A system of shared spreadsheets helped us work efficiently even across our different schedules. Throughout this process, we also welcomed and trained new staff members and interns, including Santiago Zapata Zuluaga and Dawn Pagel, who jumped in with enthusiasm. Francesca Dumitrescu and Cameron Scharff diligently photographed each item.

Our first big celebration occurred on March 9, when the final tool was completely processed into our temporary database. We had met our goal of completing preliminary processing before spring break!

In late March, we turned our attention to the final phase of the process, which was to transfer all the information from our database for temporary records into the system for permanent records. This final step enables visitors to access the information and view images through the Spurlock's website. It also gave our team the opportunity to review the preliminary records and make adjustments or corrections as needed and to enter each item into the museum ledger, a paper record of every item held in the collection. In Registration, we like to be thorough! The extra hands we'd gained throughout the semester helped this process to move efficiently, and we transferred the final record to our permanent database on May 9, exactly two months after we'd completed the temporary process.



All objects are from the Baudon Collection. Clockwise from left:

Hammerstone. Catenoy, France. 1924.02.0768.

Axe Blank. Auneau, France. 1924.02.0842.

Axe Blank. Morley, France. 1924.02.0856.

Axe Blank. Orphin, France. 1924.02.0783.

Hammerstone. Campignian, France. 1924.02.0894.

Hammerstone. France. 1924.02.0877.

Above: Graduate Assistant Mary Lawrence examining some of the tools.



Behind the Scenes: Museum Photography

By Travis Stansel

Search online for “museum photography” and you’ll see numerous collections and exhibitions. But photography is an important part of a museum’s core missions of conservation, preservation, and sharing information with the public.

Until recently, the number of museum photos available to the public was limited and most in-house photography was used for the institution’s information and documentation. However, especially since COVID-19 struck, sharing collections online has become more important than ever. A museum’s potential audience is exponentially larger than before, and photographs of a collection are now available anywhere to scholars and researchers as well as the general public.

The Spurlock has thousands of slides and prints of all sizes. These are important documents of our history, but the cost of printing photos was high. We had to buy film, take photos, hope they turned out, wait for a contact sheet of thumbnail images, choose the best images, and order the processed photos. It’s much simpler now: take

a photo, check it on the camera, use Photoshop to make adjustments, and save. Put it online and anyone with internet access can see it.

Working with Students

As the Assistant Registrar for Photography, I take photos of artifacts with the help of student photography assistants. This past year I had two students working with me, Francesca Dumitrescu, a sophomore in the College of Media, and Cameron Scharff, a junior in Psychology. Both came to the position with photography experience and, importantly, a desire to learn more. While smartphone images are everywhere, a photographer documenting artifacts and museum exhibits needs to understand the difference between using a phone and a full-size camera. Phone cameras make many decisions for the user. With a manual

digital camera, a photographer must know how to get the shot they want, to understand how to get the desired message or information across.

Artifact images, images of details, images of moving people all require different settings. We go from taking pictures on a tripod of a still object to pictures of a pow-wow dancer moving so fast that 1/100th of a second may not be fast enough to still a whirling fringe or the shake of an eagle feather. We can’t ask the dancer to slow down. We won’t be able to get the same kind of image that we can get in the studio. But we need to know how to still those feathers, to capture a millisecond in time — if that’s what we want. We can also use a blur of motion to show just how fast that dance really was.

We get requests from all over the world to publish our images, so our students’ photos can be seen in, for instance, a digital class in South Korea, on a Japanese public television show, or in a book about the history of the transistor.

Drums, Dancing, and Drag

We also take photos of museum exhibits and events such as a performance by the tabla and cello duo Sandeep Das and Mike Block, a set of workshops and pow-wow dance recitals by the Bizhiki Culture and Dance Company, and exhibit openings such as *Quinceañeras: Celebration, Joy, and Ethnic Pride and Nikkeijin Illinois*. One of our most photogenic recent exhibits was *In Her Closet — How to Make a Drag Queen*, which featured outfits worn by drag queens from across Illinois, as well as from the Urbana native and winner of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, Sasha Velour. These clothes and accessories were made to stand out and be seen, which made for some very vivid pictures.

But it’s not all glitter and sequins: sometimes it’s a lot of rocks. In late 2022 more than 500 lithics, stone tools carved or shaped by people in the Neolithic era, came to the Spurlock from the Illinois State Archaeological Survey. (Read more about this in an article by Mary Lawrence on the pre-

ceding pages.) This was a large number to acquire at one time, and unlike photos of a Peruvian sword and an 800 year-old Pueblo ceramic jar, they were not always easily distinguishable. If two of a similar size and color were mixed up, a visual description might not easily tell them apart.

The Role of Photography

The role of photography at every museum has changed a great deal since the millennium. As our potential audience expands, we’ve had to rethink what photography means. Our collections may now be seen by families looking for fun things to do in town or by someone on another continent who knows more about an artifact than we do. They can offer new insight to those with a passing interest, as well as be a source of information for those who work to expand our knowledge of history. An image of a seemingly minute detail, the meaning of which is understood by very few, may fill in a gap in history and rewrite a bit of what we had thought we had known.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Kim Sheahan Sanford Retires

By Beth Watkins

It's impossible to name anyone who has had more impact on our visitors than Assistant Director of Education Kim Sheahan Sanford, who retires this fall after more than 30 years at Spurlock and its predecessor, the World Heritage Museum. Whether you've heard her introducing artists and scholars at events, watched her storytelling performances, chaperoned your child's school tour of the galleries, collaborated with her on an exhibit, or simply said hello at a community outreach event in central Illinois, chances are you've had an enthusiastic and informative interaction with Kim.

Kim is a Champaign-Urbana native, attending local schools — whose field trips to the World Heritage Museum inspired her career! — and earning a double BA from UIUC in history and classics and then an MA in history. She also completed an MA in an interdisciplinary combination of museum studies, education, and special education at the University of Idaho, then returned to east central Illinois to work at WHM and the public schools in Clinton. She joined WHM full time in 1991.

Below are a few highlights from her many, many accomplishments in our museum.

Memorable Projects

Kim named 3 projects as especially meaningful. First, back in the 1990s, she was part of the WHM team that created the Spurlock, rethinking the existing collections into new galleries with new services in a purpose-built home. "I had never worked on the creation of a new museum before," she says. "A million adjectives could be used to describe the experience, but I think the top 3 would be exciting, overwhelming, and exhausting. We all worked very long hours, but we also learned so many new things from our curators about the cultures of the world and the artifacts in our collections. I couldn't wait to share what I learned with our visitors, and new, engaging programs and tours were developed to do just that." This enthusiasm spilled over to all of the educators that Kim continued to do outreach with while the museum was closed

during the move across campus. In fact, an area teacher was in communication with Kim for months to make sure his class would be the first official field trip through the doors.

Kim was also an important part of the team that initially applied for accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, a recognition of best practices by the country's biggest professional organization. "The accreditation process requires that the museum staff perform an in-depth study of every aspect of our operations. What do we do? How do we do it? Why do we do it that way? Are we following professional guidelines and serving as a model to others in our field? Receiving that recognition meant so much to all of us."

And of course, there are deep relationships with dozens of local teachers and their students, particularly in sixth-grade, when Illinois curriculum focus on world history and cultures. Programs Kim developed and delivered have supported classrooms throughout east central Illinois. "As of 2023, I will have collaborated for 19 years with the sixth-grade social studies teachers at Champaign's Edison, Franklin, and Jefferson middle schools on the creation, presentation, and improvement of two sets of artifact-based, interactive outreach programs. The series called An Artifact Speaks has individual programs on the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, and Greece/Rome, as well as an introduction and assessment program. Then in 2014, I received a 3-year grant from UI Extension to expand this program by supplying sets of the physical materials through the state's Extension offices and supplying content information through a dedicated website. The second series was created when the Champaign schools switched from a sixth-grade ancient history curriculum to a new curriculum based on the Big History Project. The school year content now starts at the Big Bang and ends with a look at the future. Though still artifact-based and interactive, the programs now have a multicultural focus on highlighted topics: gold and salt, water, writing, money, medicine and beauty, the Silk Road and trade, and climate." Big History has been generously supported by the UIUC Title VI Centers, who receive federal funds to teach international studies and languages.

Favorite Moments at Spurlock

Asked to name some of her favorite moments, Kim clearly cares for her colleagues and for the people she serves. "I love when my former UIUC student assistants visit when they are in town or when I see them as museum professionals at conferences. I am so proud when I see our students being so successful." She also values the moments when we all take a break together and play a board



game or just enjoy some snacks around the lunch table. And she knows she has made an impact when she's out and about in town and children come up to her and say "Aren't you the lady from the Spurlock who told us the stories (or brought all those cool artifacts to my class that one time, or talked to us about where the Nike company got its name)? I remember you!"

Lessons Learned

Spending a career in service of learning has taught Kim a lot, she says, and age is no barrier to that mindset. "You are never too old to learn new things." Our youngest visitors are often the most inspiring: "Kids ask the best questions!" Working in a museum of our size — big enough that there is a never-ending flow of projects that challenge her, but not so big that staff can only focus on one specialized area — has enabled Kim to work with fascinating people. She has worked with experts from schools, colleges, and service and cultural organizations who serve many different community needs.

"I have a passion for people who say 'Let's give it a try,' and the results of these collaborative projects have been creative and fulfilling."

When someone calls up the museum to ask if we're interested in trying something new, Kim loves to say yes, and this mindset has led to exciting new tours, inspiring events, and fascinating exhibits.

Plans for the Future

Anyone who has spent much time with Kim will not be surprised that she has plans to stay very busy in retirement. "I'm too much of a workaholic to not have a job after I leave Spurlock. My plan is to substitute teach and continue storytelling around Illinois. I also hope to spend more time with my husband Randy, more time with my grandchildren, who are growing up so very quickly, and more time in my garden, for which there have never been enough hours in a weekend."

It is with great love that we say goodbye to Kim. The complex, thoughtful work she has done in education and engagement across east central Illinois leaves a legacy of thousands of children who were invited to explore history, audience members dazzled by international performances, and learners of all ages who want to experience cultures other than their own. "Museum people are incredible," she says, and the traits she admires of others in our profession apply perfectly to her: generous, hard-working, and fun to be around.

Left: Speaking of having fun at work: Kim testing out exhibit Kim testing out exhibit interactives at the Indianapolis Children's Museum.

Top: Kim visits Sydney Grade School while our exhibits in the new Spurlock building were in development.

Middle: Kim in what is probably her most natural habitat: in the Ancient Mediterranean Gallery surrounded by fascinated school visitors.

Bottom: Kim tries her hand at making bobbin lace as part of the Why Knot? exhibit that she coordinated.

Marimba Music

From Ecuador & Colombia

By Norman E Whitten Jr

This year's installation of the iPad interactive in the South America Gallery by Director of Information Technology Jack Thomas builds on 6 decades of work that began in the hot, rain forest/mangrove swamp port town of San Lorenzo in Northwest Ecuador. San Lorenzo is part of the Afro-Hispanic cultural system that ranges from Muisne in Western Ecuador to the San Juan River in Colombia. It is part of the larger Pacific Lowlands region from Darién Province in Southeastern Panama through Western Colombia and Northwest Ecuador.

I first traveled there in 1961 as a second-year graduate student in anthropology at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, to explore the possibilities of a study of social structure and cultural change among African American peoples far from the areas where such cultural systems had previously been studied. One Saturday night during my third week there, I heard rhythms and melodies coming from a house I had never been in. I was familiar with saloons and cantinas where music was nearly ubiquitous, but this was clearly different. I went there and was told by a woman to "sit down," and remained through most of the night. Later I made some crude recordings. This was my first exposure to the marimba dance.

In January of 1963, having passed my preliminary examinations to qualify for PhD status, I returned to San Lorenzo to undertake an extended ethnography focusing on social structure that became the basis for my doctoral dissertation. While I worked on my thesis, I also worked through my understanding of the marimba dance, sometimes called *el currulao*, transcribing texts and comparing the music to similar genres in other regions of Africa and the Americas, and most significantly from my perspective, understanding the relationship of marimba music to other aspects of social relations and social structure. By December of 1963, I had culled my data to the point of making my first public presentation at the American Folklore Society on Marimba folk music in Ecuador.

Later that year my late spouse Sibby (Dorothea Scott Whitten) and I returned to the Pacific Lowlands of Colombia with funds from the International Center for Medical Research and Training of Tulane University. During our 13-month stay there I mapped out the marimba regions, and with superior recording equipment did fairly extensive recording. Focusing on the port city of Buenaventura, I let people know that I would like to purchase a marimba. I already had instruments like the cununo and bombo, and eventually I got permission to not only make the purchase but to record a marimba dance. This is the marimba that is now in the Spurlock Museum, and the music you hear comes from that particular night of recording.

In 1965 I joined the faculty of sociology and anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis and continued my work on marimba music. I was on a roll, writing and publishing papers about the relationship of music to social relations, communicating with Moses Asch of Folkways Records and preparing for him a master tape that became the LP record *Afro-Hispanic Music from Western Colombia and Ecuador*. I considered the integration of music and social relations to be one of the most important projects I have ever undertaken. So I was completely taken aback when, sometime in 1966, I was approached by the Chair of the Department, a sociologist, and told that I should "stop fooling around with this music stuff and get to work on serious analysis if you ever expect to earn tenure." I ignored him and his gratuitous and poorly informed "advice."

The record came out in 1967 and was later picked up by the Smithsonian Institution for its Folkways Library. The music playing in the exhibit comes from that record, and the marimba itself is the one from Buenaventura, Colombia, with the music played the night it was acquired.

Norman Whitten joined the University of Illinois Department of Anthropology as Associate Professor in 1970 and became Professor in 1972. He is now professor emeritus of anthropology and Latin American Studies, and Curator of the Spurlock Museum.

Marimba. Colombia. Gift of Norman E. and Dorothea Scott Whitten. 2001.05.0110.

Ethnic Folkways Library

FROM WESTERN COLOMBIA AND ECUADOR

Recorded, Edited, and with Notes by Norman E. Whitten



Album Cover. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

Cununo. San Lorenzo, Ecuador, 1964. Gift of Norman E. and Dorothea Scott Whitten. 2001.05.0062.

Bombo. Munbarado, Colombia, 1965. Gift of Norman E. and Dorothea Scott Whitten. 2001.05.0061.

PROGRAMMING SURVEY

We want your ideas!

By Education Staff

As we look ahead to the 2023-24 school year, the Spurlock Education staff would love your input! Please go online and tell us what kind of programming you're most interested in. We have some options for you to choose, and we also hope you'll write in your ideas.

We have some events already in the works, such as a fall event with *Nikkeijin Illinois* contributor Rob Buscher, whose collection of anti-Asian propaganda material is featured in the exhibit. In November, we'll be partnering with the Krannert Art Museum, Japan House, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Museum of the Grand Prairie, and more to host a "Wellness Wave" to promote creative approaches to wellness. Campus units and community organizations are invited to facilitate their own unique programs around wellness. The *Black Joy* exhibit opening in February will have a range of associated programming, including an opening celebration.

Our public-facing staff is also changing: with Kim Sanford's retirement (see the story in this magazine), we'll be welcoming new family and school program staff over the course of this year. There will be room on the calendar for exciting new initiatives, but having some input ready for them from current visitors will be very helpful.

Scan the QR code or go to:
surveys.illinois.edu/sec/1547047251



Academic Programming

Expanding Our Reach

By Abigail Padfield Narayan

After working with the Spurlock for several semesters part-time, I joined the staff as the full-time Manager of Academic Programs in March 2023. In this new position, I continue to collaborate with faculty and instructors to design experiences that engage students with collections and exhibits to enhance curriculum and learning opportunities. Now I will also have more time to develop resources, materials, and exhibits for University audiences.

The spring 2023 semester was our biggest ever for serving University classes, with over 70 working with us in different ways. Some new classes visited and interacted with our collections, including Anthropology 101. These students got hands-on work with pottery sherds, discussing typology with me and using different criteria to categorize them: size, shape, part of pottery vessel, and color. Some groups creatively categorized sherds by smell and texture too.

In 2023–24, our academic offerings will include a focus on partnering with other units on campus, including the Global Diasporas Program, the LEAD Program in Anthropology, and Liberal Arts and Sciences Career Services. LAS Career Services has brought students to the museum several times for panel discussions on careers in museums and other nonprofits, where students hear from our staff about the work we do at Spurlock, as well as from colleagues at other area organizations. One of my new partnerships this year has been with the Department of Religion, and I hope to expand opportunities for some of the University's many foreign language classes. I plan to work more with STEM-focused classes and to create academic programming for our upcoming exhibits. I'm also developing workshops for faculty on using artifacts in teaching.



University students have fun practicing preservation techniques by packing and dropping "artifacts" from our staircase in the Preservation of Museum Artifacts course.

A new goal is to use the teaching collection more often in class visits. While this group of over 5,000 objects designated for handling by and loaning to schools and other educational groups has long been popular in our K–12 school programming, we haven't yet found good ways to integrate it into higher ed programming. Learners of all ages, including university students, find objects very engaging and usually ask more questions when they're doing hands-on work.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE

When you give to the Spurlock, you make a lasting impact. We are grateful to so many of you who continue to generously invest in us and ensure our excellence in showcasing cutting-edge exhibits, providing opportunities for student workers, and preserving cultural materials.

Gifts can be made outright or through options such as a gift from your will/estate, appreciated stock, and home/farmland donations.

If you are interested in giving opportunities, please contact: **Joseph Baldwin**, Associate Director of Development
jbbaldw2@illinois.edu or (217) 300-5967

Visit spurlock.illinois.edu and click on the **Giving** link at the top of the page for more information.



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 June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023

Divination Tool. Democratic Republic of Congo. Kieffer-Lopez Collection. 2021.04.0001.



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