

HUMANS OF MOUNTMAKING

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INTERNATIONAL
MOUNTMAKERS
FORUM

KIM MCPARLAND

Kim McParland started her museum career on a conservation track, but her spatial sensibility, sculpture background and problem-solving ultimately led her to mountmaking. In the over twenty years she has been at the MFA, Kim has continued to explore ways to hone her skills and make ever more elegant and effective mounts.

Shelly: How did you find your way to the mountmaking profession, Kim?

Kim: Well, I sort of fell into it, I think, as many people do. It was never something that I even knew was an option. I was always interested in the arts. I went to art school. After high school and throughout college I worked with a conservator in private practice. We did a lot of work in the *MFA* and surrounding museums in addition to all kinds of work throughout the Boston area and New England.

At a certain point, I thought I really wanted to do object conservation as a career, so I started that process, and through some of the jobs that we were doing at the MFA, I got to know people. Pam Hatchfield, the Head of Objects Conservation at the time, told me that they had a pre-program lab assistant position available so applied and I ended up in that position for several years. I did all the chemistry and all the side classes that I had to do and through that process, and being in the position that I was, I was able to see the realistic aspects of being a conservator as a profession. And I kind of realized it wasn't quite the direction I wanted to go in. Instead, Objects Conservation kept me on in the lab as their collections care person. I sort of ran the lab and stocked things, and helped out however I could.

I also became the collections care person for our Art of the Ancient World department, which is Greek and Roman and Egyptian material. During that time, our collections care people were divided by curatorial departments. I did that for several years, and eventually just ended up more of a general collections care person. I did all kinds of stuff in that job, like going to off-site storage and driving a forklift, and packing, lots of different things.

When we built the new American Wing at the MFA, which was about 52 new galleries, they had 3 mountmakers at the time, and they were totally maxed out. Towards the end of the project all these connector galleries were added that joined the buildings together. That work wasn't originally in the scope of the project, and they just couldn't take that work on. I had expressed interest in what they were doing before and they asked "Do you want to give it a shot?" And I said, "sure."

That's how I got my feet wet. I got some projects. I did some work for those galleries, and over time, their third Mount Maker left the museum, and I jumped right in. So that was how I got there.

Shelly: So, in terms of building mountmaking skills, you were training as you went?

Kim: Yes. I had been a sculpture major in college, with a minor in photography. I had done a little bit of welding in school, so it was essentially on the job learning. I'm mechanically inclined, and I have pretty good hand skills, but beyond that, it was just lots and lots of practice. It was trial by fire.

Shelly: Literally.

Kim: The early mounts were not always beautiful, but I'd like to think that we all get better with time.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

LEFT: Brazing action shot
(COVER IMAGE: Two-handled jar (amphora), Greek, painted by Painter of the Vatican Mourner, Archaic period, about 530 BC)

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Shelly: So true! Well, this merges really well into the next question, which is about sharing any of your education or professional experience that helped you to start your mountmaking career? You have already mentioned the sculpture study in school. But was there anything else that you wanted to add to that?

Kim: I think something that has particularly helped me is just being a very 3-dimensional person and having that sensibility of space. I wouldn't say I have engineering experience, but my dad was an engineer, and I think my brain kind of works that way too. So, I could understand the physics aspects of mountmaking, of finding how to support things and counterbalance. I think that for me those things are a little intuitive, which was really helpful. So, it wasn't necessarily my formal education, but I would say, the conservation and the general collections care work gave me a lot of experience with handling objects and understanding the concerns of the conservators. A lot of their work influences what we do and how we handle objects and understand the surfaces, etc.

When we are dealing with objects as we do, I think we have to have a fine balance of confidence and humility. We've had a lot of people cycle through the museum in my twenty plus years of being there, and some people get it, and some people don't. They either come in overconfident, and it makes you nervous, or they are too afraid to touch anything, or to get in there and do what needs to be done. Being able to find that balance is important. I think that yes, it's partially personality, but I think it's also a skill that is acquired over time, and that could be a huge hump for some people to get over.

Our most recent installation experience was the Kaplan Jewelry Gallery, which is one of the smallest galleries in our museum, and we had a lot of hiccups. Brett and I work very intimately together, and often people are observing us. I kind of equate it to a surgical team. We know what the other person needs before they need it, and we have that tool ready, or we have our hands where they need to be. We don't need to talk about it. People commend us on that sort of intuitive camaraderie, and the ability to think the other person's thoughts before they even need to do it themselves. In that particular gallery, it was really tight. There were a lot

of people, which was a little nerve-wracking in and of itself, but having highly valuable and fragile objects in the mix, made it much more so. You need to have an awareness of personal space; to be aware of where you are in relation to everything else. You don't want someone bumping into somebody who's got an object in their hands. That need for spatial awareness was very apparent in our most recent install. Brett and I have worked together for a long time, so I think some of that helps too. It's good when you both know what you're doing and what you need. We make a pretty good team.

Shelly: I hadn't really thought of it that way - of the balance of confidence and humility. But you really do have to have that. Can you share a little bit more about what your day-to-day work looks like? Understanding that no day is the same.

Kim: Our day-to-day work is really dependent on the exhibition schedule, and we have a very heavy one. For example, we just finished up six weeks of straight installation, which is just mind boggling. If we have installs, we go into the galleries and do as much of the work there as we can before the museum opens to the public, which is at 10 o'clock. Tuesdays, when we are closed, it can be a lot more heavy with exhibition work. Otherwise, a lot of our time is just working in the shop and is dictated by what projects we have coming up. Some days have a lot of meetings, actually, there are always lots of meetings. I have some responsibilities that have become more mine, like ordering supplies, checking into new materials, gathering objects, moving things in our TMS system. And I have, as you know, taken over our storage project in my "downtime."

Our time is really very project driven and very independent. That jewelry gallery we just did had about 150 objects in there. We divide and conquer. We have these big binders of all the stuff that is needed and all the notes from our mockup meetings. Whatever we can get our hands on, we put in our cabinets, and we work from there. We typically choose whatever we are most interested in working on, or maybe one of us has more information about something. We try to leave notes in the cabinets to identify what each of us are working on, but occasionally we slip on that and every now and then, an object has a new mount from each of us.

“THE MAJORITY OF LEARNING HAPPENS BY DOING. IT'S NOT THE EASIEST SKILL. IT'S NOT FOR EVERYBODY. YOU HAVE TO DO IT A LOT IN ORDER TO GET BETTER AND FASTER.”

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Shelly: That would be fun to see.

Kim: Yeah. That is fun to see! They can be very different, which is really interesting sometimes. But in general, we have our own mounts to work on, and we'll play music, put on a podcast, and just zone out and work away.

Shelly: You said that one of your roles is to keep track of the mounts that you save for reuse. I know it can be time consuming to essentially be the collections manager of your mount collection. What's the reasoning for saving mounts at the MFA? And how often do you reuse the mounts?

Kim: For us, it's absolutely critical because we don't always have time to make something new. Sometimes curators and borrowers are told that there is an existing mount for this object. This is the orientation you have to use it the way it is, or maybe we can make a minor alteration. Brett and I have adapted a lot of mechanical attachments for things so that they can be easily converted from a wall mount to a deck mount without a whole lot of trouble, just by switching out a stem. That alleviates some of those kinds of issues. We will often tell people when we're really busy, that if you want to make a rotation, you have to choose an object that has an existing mount. A lot of things have multiple mounts, and as that collection develops over time, that will be even more helpful.

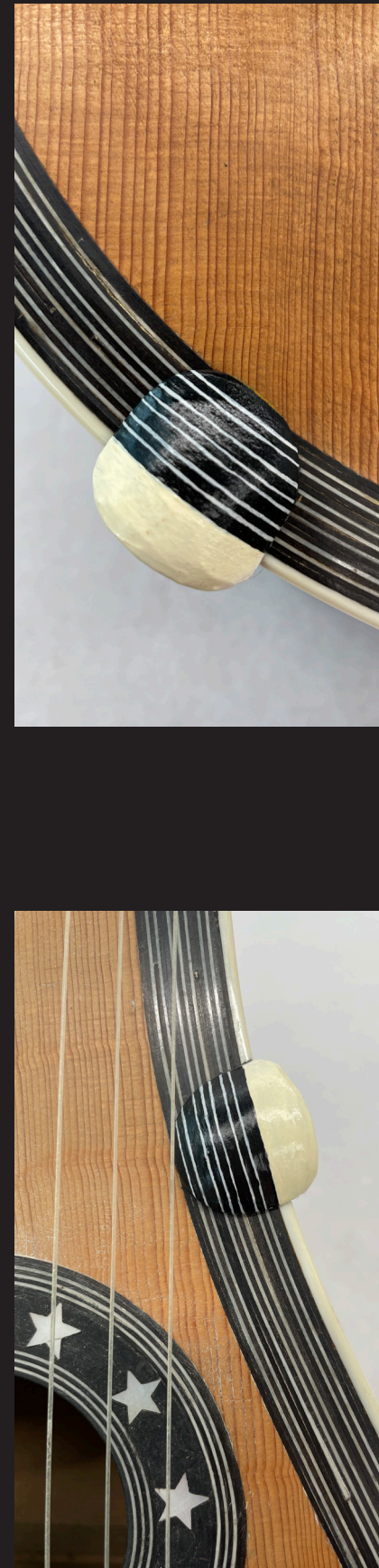
Previously, the mounts were stored with objects, and we had trouble not only with space issues, but also with things getting lost or damaged, so we decided we wanted to take control of all of our work, so that we knew where things were, and if we lost anything, it was our fault. Or if it got damaged, it was probably our fault. I think we just wanted to own that a little bit more, too.

Shelly: Are you and Brett the only staff mountmakers at the MFA?

Kim: Yes. When I started there were three of us, but our third person left right before the pandemic. After he left, they froze the position for a while, and then they eliminated it. It is ridiculous because the work volume has only increased. But, somehow, we've managed to keep up. Honestly, I hope they understand what they have in Brett Angell as a mountmaker. He is an anomaly. The speed at which he works is incredible. Whenever he leaves, if I'm still there, I'm going to have to have a sit down and explain that things are really going to have to change here because I cannot do that. His skill is pretty amazing.

2015 : PATINA

TOP & BOTTOM: "Growth" by Claire Sanford, 1985, in-painting detail



Shelly: That is happening at so many places. If we are pulling it off, if we're getting the work done, then they see no need to change, despite people getting burned out or otherwise hurting their health.

Kim: Enablers.

Shelly: Yep. I also wanted to ask about aesthetics. The MFA has a certain aesthetic, right? But does that mountmaking look ever change from exhibit to exhibit?

Kim: Yes, from an aesthetic standpoint, things will change sometimes based on what curators want or due to a design change. For example, when we did our Greek and Roman galleries, we used to always do three clips for big pots that were footed, and they didn't like all the tabs around the pedestals. So, we came up with a new idea where we made an epoxy insert if there was space underneath, and then we just added one clip to keep it from jumping in the event of a seismic issue or a stroller running into the pedestal or something. We made that change because of an aesthetic choice.

Or sometimes, we might run into an instance where all of a sudden glass shelving was a really cool thing for design, and they failed to realize that you can't drill into glass. So, we had to adapt our designs - we either mounted things to the wall to make it look like it was sitting on a shelf, or we had them cut a piece of plexi the same size as the shelf so we could drill and tap into that. Dumb, but that's what happens sometimes.

Other than the designers' and the curators' wishes, we will change things sometimes because of the amount of time that we have. Time will affect how much detail we can put in. We do hit points where we have to compromise. Our quality of work won't change in terms of how we work with the objects, but I might not do as nice a paint job, or I may not fixate so much on getting the fit perfect. It is a "better is the enemy of good" sort of thing when you're in a time crunch and so we can be forced to lower our standards at times, which is really frustrating. I find it really hard to do that. If I have to let too many little details go, it makes it hard to see them in the gallery. I won't be happy looking at them.

Shelly: The satisfaction of the work is in those details. I'm glad you don't have to do that too much.

Kim: I took my daughter to visit the galleries yesterday, and I was pointing out all these tiny little things that nobody's

IN-PAINTING : EXPERT LEVEL

TOP & BOTTOM: Harpo-Lyre, French, 1786-1831, in-painting detail

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ever going to notice but me. But I see them, and it drives me crazy. I have to just walk away sometimes.

Shelly: I love it. This is part of what makes you a good mountmaker right? If you were like, “yeah, whatever”, then your quality of work would be “whatever” all the time.

Kim: It's a blessing and a curse.

Shelly: Could you elaborate more on how independent or team-based your work is?

Kim: It is obviously team based when we're in the galleries and installing. In general, exhibition and gallery work is very much team oriented. Most of the work we do in the museum involves other departments and other people. Everything from labels and design and the carpenters and curators and conservators and collections, people moving stuff around, all that is absolutely a very large team effort to pull off. But when we're actually fabricating and making mounts, that's very individual work. So, it's a little bit of both.

Shelly: And what kinds of objects are you working with?

Kim: One of the great things about working in the institution that I do is that we have just a massive array of materials, ethnographic, fine art, contemporary, ancient, all cultures from all around the world. Different time periods. If you come up to our workspace at any given time, and look in our cabinets, you'll see that we have this huge variety of things to work on. It keeps it really interesting because it's always new. I think, for me, if I was always working on only Greek pots or something, I think it would get pretty boring. I'd probably start doing really weird, funky mounts to keep it spicy. With our collection, there are always new problems and new materials that you're working with and living artists which can be challenging or completely wonderful. The variety is the real benefit of being where we are.

Shelly: This brings to mind another question, which is, in your exhibition planning process, how early are mountmakers generally asked to be part of the conversation?

Kim: That really varies. The sooner the better, just because we're very busy. We have a couple of curators in particular, who we've also worked with for many years that know us, and we know them, and that relationship really is beneficial because they are on their game, and they have their object lists early. They will come to us early, even before design

meetings sometimes, because they know what they want. For us, the benefit of making a few mounts that don't get used, or having a few things change later in the process is worth the extra time that we have to chip away at some of these things earlier on.

We're very fortunate to have some curators that work that way and trust us to do things, but sometimes things need to be done in a couple of days if we get very last-minute additions, whether it be due to loaned materials or just sudden changes from higher up, and they require a lot of scrambling.

Shelly: Obviously, the MFA Boston is a standard and leader in the museum world for use and testing of exhibition materials. So, you are making me wonder about when you have to make a mount in a couple of days, do you change your process or finishing materials? If so, how does that shift?

Kim: The main thing that would change would be the final coating. Normally, if we have enough time, we will prime our mounts with an acrylic spray primer, and then we clear coat them with an acrylic clear coat, to seal everything in and protect it. If we are doing things at the last minute, we won't use that, so we'll often just sandblast the mount to prep the surface enough that it will just take acrylic paint without being primed. And we might not go as far in terms of color matching and detail painting. There's a Golden acrylic gel coat that the conservators use, so we'll either do nothing to protect the acrylic, or we'll use that. That's probably the biggest difference for a time crunch.

Shelly: So, what's your favorite thing about mountmaking?

Kim: Well, the first thing that comes to mind is that moment when you just pulled off a really complicated braise that you thought there was no way you could do it. Your only hope was to get it close, and then you do it, and it fits, and you're like, “I am amazing.”

Or those times when you do a really good job on a mount or a project that's really meaningful to you. When you see the joy on the faces of the curators who love their things, or the donors who are sponsoring a project. I think those things really make you feel good. I think that sense of accomplishment at all different levels and when things look really good and you're proud of what you've done - that's absolutely the best.



INSTALL IT ALL

TOP LEFT: 2019, Touching up mounts
TOP RIGHT: 2024, Laying out objects in Kaplan Jewelry Gallery
BOTTOM LEFT: 2019, Installing Nubian jewelry
BOTTOM RIGHT: 2023, Way up high! Jazz guitar install

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I also love those moments in the museum where you're literally the only person there, and you are walking through these amazing spaces that people spend tons of money to come and visit for one day. I was walking through the galleries the other morning. We are there pretty early, and things are generally a little dark in the galleries. Maybe you are on your way to a meeting, or the bathroom and you get this wonderful feeling that this is amazing! You get your feet back on the ground for a second, and you have those quiet moments where you can see something with nobody else around. How lucky that is, and how cool it can be!

Because we work so much in the galleries, I also really like it when I make a discovery of something that I've never noticed before. Like an object that I might have walked by a million times and never stopped to notice. I get a lot of pleasure from that, because you become so familiar with things that you can become desensitized and walk through the galleries without looking at anything. But when you stop and see something that you've never noticed before, that's really cool. I like that, too.

Shelly: That's beautiful. Thank you. Now, on the other end of the scale, what is one or some of your least favorite things about the work?

Kim: Some of it might be very unique to our institution or just more specific to the type of institution that I work in. That is the pressure of the high pace of exhibition work which just seems to get more and more, year after year and they don't hire more people.

Or sometimes, they've been fighting you the whole way, and at the very last minute they're like, we'll just throw money at it to try to get the work done. But usually at that point, we don't have the time anymore. This goes back to our earlier conversation about having to make compromises. You know what we do. We're not millionaires. We're not out there because we want to make a ton of money. We're there because we love what we do, and we take pride in our mission, so to be forced to make compromises on the quality of work is incredibly frustrating. To be clear, that's not always the case, but it does feel like we're on a steady incline, with even fewer people now. That's probably the hardest part.

Shelly: Do you have a favorite object or exhibition that you've worked on, and if so, what made it stand out for you?

Kim: That's definitely a hard one, because of the volume of work that we do, but I certainly have specific objects that I will gravitate to either because I like them aesthetically, or I find them really intriguing or interesting. Or maybe it's something I've never worked on before like a new kind of mount or material or scale that I haven't worked in. I kind of



2019 : ULTIMATE COLLECTIONS CARE

Dusting "Lime Green Icicle Tower" by Dale Chihuly, 2011.

like the challenge of new things, but sometimes it's just, "Oh, that's really pretty. I want to work on that one!" But there's always an ugly duckling in the cabinet that nobody wants to deal with. Maybe it's too much of a challenge, or I'm just not interested in doing it, you know. So those are the ones that always end up being the last pieces. The kind of hot potato.

I truly enjoy mounting the jewelry. It can be really challenging; it's small scale, and it can be very frustrating at times. It's a lot of work. Post mount fabrication, I also like tying the jewelry onto the mounts. I can sort of zone out and do that. I don't make much of my own art anymore, but it's a very similar sort of self-torture that I put myself through in my own artwork, so I think that there's a weird part of me that likes that. There's a certain amount of torture that I enjoy. Maybe not while I'm going through it, but I gravitate to it, and then I like it afterwards, and I want to do it again.

Shelly: Do you have any lessons learned stories that you'd like to tell?

Kim: Well, going back to the thing that I don't like so much about mountmaking, it's not just the time pressure, but the responsibility that I feel to objects. The care that we take to strike that balance between confidence and humility. When someone tells me how much something is worth, or you're putting a bracelet on the mount, and someone comes up and says, "That's 3,000 years old," and you're like, "Oh, awesome thanks." Your hands start shaking. I had an experience where I damaged an object while I was installing it in a gallery and the thought of it still nearly brings me to tears. I actually keep a picture of it by my desk as a reminder to take my time. Even when you feel rushed, take your time. You know it's worth it, because when bad things happen, it's really awful, and it never leaves you. It was an ancient piece, and I think, Wow! This thing has existed for all this time and it survived, and I come along, and I do something to mess it up and it's really humbling and upsetting. I think about it probably every day. It just kind of brings you back down to earth and makes you just take a pause when you need to.

Shelly: That's a great idea, to have that kind of refocusing device, because nobody's perfect. There's not one mountmaker who hasn't had a close call in some way. What's important is to not just brush it off like it will never happen. Rather, it could happen every day if you're not remaining thoughtful and focused. So, I think you've found a really nice way to turn a negative into a positive, thank you. You mentioned early in this interview that you started in conservation and collections, but have you ever done museum work in any other department or as a contractor?

Kim: I've strictly been an MFA mountmaker for my whole mountmaking career. I don't do any private work. When I worked with that private conservator I got a little taste of how it is to be a contractor and having to source work and go to different jobs and show up at an unfamiliar place and meet new people and bring all your things with you, and that lifestyle. I commend those who do it because it's definitely challenging.

Shelly: Now we shift to your role in the IMF. Why do you volunteer to be part of the IMF?

Kim: My role basically started because of the prospect of us becoming a host of the Forum. Brett was already working with you all a bit, and he pulled me in through that, so it wasn't entirely voluntary.

Shelly: A little arm twisting.

Kim: The hosting remains my role right now as we get ready for the 2024 conference. I would like to continue with the steering committee after we host the conference though. But the reason I do it is because there isn't anything else like it. There is no professional camaraderie outside of it really. Mountmakers are this unique species of animal out there in the world. We're all in different places and we come from different backgrounds. If you're lucky to have mountmakers on staff, there might be a couple of you. But other than that, there's not a lot of places to get together and support one another, and talk shop and nerd out on materials, or to do live tours of your studio, and look at *Obomodulan*. Just to be able to bounce ideas off of people or get advice. Or if you're working as a contractor, finding work and things like that. The IMF provides a network and a community and there literally isn't anything else like it, so to help out and make it work and to be part of it is well worth the time.

Shelly: Do you have any advice for people just starting out in mountmaking?

Kim: The majority of learning happens by doing. It's not the easiest skill. It's not for everybody. You have to do it a lot in order to get better and faster. Try to learn to maximize your efficiency and keep working at getting better. That's something that will continue. It's kind of like yoga. It's a practice. You never become an expert. You can become good, and you can become better, but there's always something else to learn. There are always ways that you can improve.

I think I would also say that people just starting out should try to have patience with themselves. Understand that it takes time and perseverance. Don't give up. Sometimes you need to walk away from a mount. We all have days where the mount gods are not in our favor, and more often than not, you find that if you walk away and come back the next

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morning, you will nail it on the first try. Knowing when to pause and try again later is an important skill to learn. Sometimes, you're just in a funk; you're not having a good day. Walk away. Also be willing to completely blow up your idea. Sometimes you don't have the luxury of time to do that, but to recognize when something just isn't working, and to give it up and try a different approach. Don't be too stubborn when it comes to your design. Leave space for a better idea to come in.

One other thing which I have a hard time with is to start with the simplest solution. I have a tendency to over-complicate designs. It's just kind of the way my mind works. Try the simplest first and be very thoughtful about how things will be installed. I have a funny picture of me installing where I'm literally bending over backwards in a case trying to attach a screw to a mount that I had made, where I clearly was not thinking about who and how it would be installed. If I know I have made an annoying mount, I always own it and I will install it. I don't force that on other people.

Shelly: It can be a process to get to the simplest effective solution, right? When I'm training people, sometimes they need to start out with a million tabs, so I ask them to bend a few away and see what happens. See how simple you can get. But it's great when you can start with the simple solution.

Kim: Actually, that's often how I will approach jewelry mounts. I'll add extra parts, knowing that there's more there than I need, but I don't know which ones I need yet. I will start cutting them away, and it becomes a lot simpler.

Shelly: Different objects offer different challenges. So, where do you see the future of mount making heading?

Kim: I can definitely see technology playing a role. There's a lot of interesting things happening with 3D printing and the opportunities that presents. Having the ability to 3D scan an incoming loan and print the portions that you need to make a mount would be really fantastic. Or if you have something that is just incredibly fragile, where you really need to limit the handling, a duplicate of that would be really fantastic to work with.

We (the MFA) partnered with *North Bennet Street School* this year to have them do a couple of jewelry repairs. I went along to check out the process and the laser. It allows you to make teeny tiny welds while working under a microscope and because it is so accurate and it doesn't heat up the surrounding area, you can do welds very close together and right next to things like precious stones without damaging them. They gave me a chance to try it out. I got a penny and had to hit the circles in the date with the laser. So, for example, if the date on the penny was 1960, I would hit the circles of the 9, 6, and 0. I did pretty well, and it was really fun. We may try to get one for our shop someday.

Materials are always changing and evolving, and people are coming

DIFFERENT CHALLENGES

TOP: 2013, Mounty Yoga: Mask (geh naw), Bassa peoples, Ivory Coast or Liberia, 19th-20th century
BOTTOM: 2023, Trying out the laser welder at NBSS: PEW PEW!!



2023 : FAMILY MATTERS

Kim sharing her work with her kiddo.

up with new ideas or new things are being developed that could help us. Obviously, I can't predict those things, but there is a part of me that worries a little bit about us being a dying breed. I don't see a lot of young people coming into the field. Brett and I talk about this a lot. Who are we going to pass the torch to? This is essentially a trade, and you do need to apprentice to get your skill set.

One thing I think might be part of the problem is the invisibility of our work. If we do a good job, you don't notice what we do. That could be problematic, because people have not, myself included, had any idea that mountmaking was a thing. Even though I had been to museums a million times, I never thought about how things were displayed. So, creating a larger awareness of our profession could be a goal for the future. I know we've talked a little bit about this in the IMF. It might help if we could figure out some sort of a formal training program that could help people develop the skills and the knowledge needed to pursue it as a career.

Shelly: Is there anything else you would like to share about your job or the field in general?

Kim: I think I've mostly covered it, but there is one thing I'd like to mention. We've all been really busy lately, and there was Covid, and the economy. A lot of institutions are in a bit of a crunch, and we've had a pretty big morale issue. So, there's plenty to complain about, and I find that when I talk with other museum workers that it often sort of devolves into commiserating about our woes and our struggles. That isn't always a bad thing, because we need to support one another, and it's nice to feel like we are not the only ones going through whatever troubles. But I also think that it's really important to spend some time on how amazing our work is too. When somebody who's never seen what I do before, comes to visit me at work, and they say things like, "This is so cool, I can't believe you do this every day", or "I can't believe you get to

be this this close to these objects", it can remind us of how great this work is.

One of my favorite things about mountmaking is how intimate a relationship you can develop with each object. You get to look at things so closely and for a duration that very few other people do. That's really such a pleasure and a privilege, and it's important to take a moment and reflect on what it is that we do, how unique a job it is, how cool and fun it can be and how important it is. When you think about cultural preservation and the importance of the history of things and sharing those things with people the way that we do, I consider it to be a huge value to society. We are part of the group that helps things to be around as long as possible, so as many people as possible are able to experience and see them. Some say that a smile is a universal language, but I think art is as well. It's one of the things that really makes us human and connects people and can teach us so much about one another, and to learn to respect and appreciate one another from all around the world.

So, I try, as often as possible, to take a beat and just remember, in those quiet moments when I can walk through the galleries in the mornings and just realize how special it is. To me, it's worth the low pay, and the under-appreciation and all the things that we are aggrieved about. It's not something I ever thought I would ever do. I'm just so happy to be a part of it, to be a mountmaker, and to be in our unique little nerdy world of materials and stuff that nobody else thinks about. So, I try to remember that and keep asking myself: What are the amazing and fun things that we get to do? What are the best parts of what we do? Why do we do what we do, and why do we love it so much? It's important to recognize and remind ourselves of all those really good things about the work.

This series was inspired by the AIC-ECPN's @humans_of_conservation Instagram series. We are grateful to them and expand on their idea with their permission.