

ABSTRACT

Remote Mountmaking and Virtual Couriering: A Case Study

Presenters:

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The Covid-19 pandemic has forced museums to invent new ways to collaborate and facilitate loans when couriers are not able to accompany those loans as has historically been the practice. This presentation will detail one such complex collaboration.

The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) requested to borrow a Hunter's Shirt (Donson Dlaklw) from the Michael C. Carlos Musuem at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. The object is included in the Cleveland-organized exhibition *Second Careers: Two Tributaries in African Art*, on view at CMA from the end of October 2020. The Hunter's Shirt, made by Malinke peoples In Mali, West Africa in the late 19th or early 20th century, is a tunic-shaped garment with many fragile leather ties hanging from both the front and the back, as well as various amulets made from leather, mirrored glass, or animal claws, teeth, and horns,. This complex composite object has significant weight and substantial three-dimensionality.

As part of the loan agreement, the CMA committed to fabricate the mount in advance. The decision was made to ship the shirt on the mount, requiring the mount to be sent to Atlanta in a custom box that could accommodate the mounted object for return to Cleveland. With the shirt in Atlanta, the mount and box had to be fabricated in Cleveland without benefit of directly measuring or examining the object. Carlos conservators inserted the mount into the object and had a crate built around the box for shipment back to Cleveland. Mountmakers and conservators collaborated remotely, creating a mock-up of the shirt, exchanging sketches and images of the mount, discussing materials for padding and support. Carlos staff were "present" virtually, using live video during installation of the shirt at the CMA.

Details of this project will be presented, offering a model of remote collaboration that is especially relevant to our present circumstance.

BIO



Philip Brutz is the mountmaker at The Cleveland Museum of Art.



Robin Hanson has managed the textile conservation lab at the Cleveland Museum of Art for the past 21 years. In 1997, after having undertaken internships at the National Park Service, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; Peebles Island, Waterford, New York; the Canadian Conservation Institute, Ottawa, Ontario; and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts, she completed graduate training in conservation, with a specialization in textiles, at the Winterthur / University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. She is a Fellow of AIC and serves as associate editor for textiles for the Journal of the American Institute for Conservation and as field editor for textiles for AATA Online: Abstracts of International Conservation Literature.



Elizabeth Saluk is the Registrar for Exhibitions and Rights & Reproductions at the Cleveland Museum of Art, where she has worked in Collections Management since 2009. Coordinating and managing loans for the CMA's robust exhibition schedule, both in-house and traveling, is her primary focus. In addition to exhibition logistics, Elizabeth also manages the intellectual property records for all works under copyright in the CMA's permanent collection. She received a Master's Degree in Art History and Museum Studies from Case Western Reserve University.



Art historian and curator Kristen Windmuller-Luna is the Curator of African Arts at the Cleveland Museum of Art. She holds a BA in art history from Yale University, and an MA and PhD in African art and architectural history from Princeton University. Before her appointment at the CMA, Windmuller-Luna worked at the Brooklyn Museum as the Sills Family Consulting Curator of African Arts and as a Mellon Research Specialist in African Arts at the Princeton University Art Museum. Recent exhibitions include African Arts--Global Conversations (2020) and One: Egúngún (2019). A first-generation college student who focuses on mentoring the next generation of museum professionals, her curatorial work centers on collaboration, community-building, and thinking critically about the past and present of museums.