



MUSEUM OF EARLY TRADES & CRAFTS

Fall Newsletter 2021

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A Magical Evening for METC



On Thursday, October 14, METC hosted its fundraising benefit dinner, “Make Magic Happen” which was our first in-person benefit event since 2019! Hosted at the Park Avenue Club in Florham Park, the event successfully raised over \$50,000 to provide free

access to museum education programming for schools, children and adults living with disabilities, and adult care facilities throughout New Jersey.

Actor and funny man, Jim Conroy returned to host the event and kept guests laughing throughout the night, while magician, Simon Mandal treated guests to a spectacular magic show! METC’s evening was made more magical by special attendee and honoree Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, who was recognized by the museum for her advocacy work in historic preservation and education throughout the state of New Jersey.

As a part of the evening, METC announced the creation of The Stan and Leanna Brown Scholarship fund to establish a sustainable funding endowment for education. The gift of \$9,000 was bequeathed to the museum from the Brown Family Fund Trust. W. Stanley Brown served as Chair of the museum’s Board of Trustees during a critical period in METC’s history. During his tenure, Stan led the successful capital campaign, Work, Wealth & Wisdom, which raised funds to support the building’s 1997 restoration. Leanna was a former state senator and legislator in New Jersey. Both Stan and Leanna Brown were longtime supporters of the museum. At the same time an anonymous donor added to this new Scholarship Fund with a donation of \$5,000.



From the Director



As we near the close of another year, the tendency is to reflect on all we have accomplished. But 2021 was not a typical year. For many small and midsize museums, the events of the last year and a half have been a time of reflection and re-examination, focused on making their collections and programming relevant and accessible to a generation raised on social media, and highly attuned to social justice, inclusivity, and equality. Recently *The New York Times* ran a special report presenting the notion that “...this is an existential moment for museums across America, with many facing yawning budget deficits alongside calls for deep structural change...”

So, what do we do with this moment? Aside from developing new streams of financial support, this is a time when museums should be building new relationships, questioning the status quo, listening to different voices, and embracing the shared authority that we have as educational, and humanities centered institutions.

Developing substantive and mutually beneficial relationships means we need to do a better job understanding what our communities need and determining how we can use the tools at our disposal to meet these needs. Building partnerships with community and grassroots organizations is one way we can accomplish this; but we need to be deeply collaborative in the process so that both parties come away enriched and better off from the relationship. This may mean pushing the boundaries of what is “traditional” and asking harder questions of ourselves; re-thinking the narrative we present through our exhibits and educational programming and being willing to listen and accept that others may have a different perspective on a subject.

There is a strong case to be made that museums are more important today than ever before, especially at this intersection of social awareness, technology, and accessibility. Of course, we will continue to be places where we learn from the past, but our stories will be more complete because they are showing a fuller picture of the reality of our communities. And the rise in technology also means that many more people than ever before can have access to research, programs, and collections.

There is no doubt that this is an exciting time for museums, filled with so many possibilities; and we welcome your participation, your support, your ideas, and your partnerships. Museums belong to everyone, and we invite you to join us in any way you can to make METC your museum. Reach out to us and have a conversation. We are eager to hear your voice.

- Deborah Farrar Starker

We are grateful to Investors Bank for
supporting *Make Magic Happen*



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Thank You to Nisivoccia LLP for their
support of our annual event

Calendar of Events

For more information on these events or to register please visit www.metc.org.

Kid Friendly Holiday Drop In Crafts with the Book Arts Roundtable

December 11, 11am –1pm,
\$10 per child

Participants with the help of the artists of BAR, will cycle through three stations creating a variety of giftable paper crafts such as small accordion books with pockets, origami envelopes, and gift & gratitude tags to take home and share with their families during the holiday season!

Holiday Craft Workshop with the Book Arts Roundtable

December 11, 1:30pm & 2:30pm
\$35 per person, \$30 for METC Members
Ages 15 and up

Create a personalized wrap-around cover for a 3"x3" post-it note pad as a gift for yourself or for someone special! Your beautifully decorated post-it cover will make a lovely addition to your work from home space or protect your notepad if you're on the go!

Sidewalk Art Show -Now Open

View banner artwork by New Jersey artists from the sidewalks of the METC Education Annex. Each banner will be a one-of-a-kind work of art using any medium of the artist's choice reflecting the theme of "Hope."

Art Show Silent Auction & Reception

February 24, 2022, 6—8pm

During the reception, the banners featured in these windows will be auctioned off, with proceeds from the auction supporting the museum as well as the artists.

Uncovered: Hidden Treasures from METC's Permanent Collection—Now Open

This exhibit highlights objects and archival material discovered during METC's recent inventory project. With only 15% of the collection on view, this exhibit will reveal the depth and breadth of METC's permanent collection of historic objects and historical records .

Meet Danielle Crigler



Danielle Crigler joined METC as the Curator of Education in October 2021. A graduate of Marist College, Danielle received a B.A. in History and Secondary Education. In 2018, she returned to school for an M.Ed. in Curriculum Development and Learning from UMASS Lowell. For seven years she taught secondary education in Springfield, NJ, then

Newark, NJ and finally Cross River, NY. Danielle is heavily involved in Facing History, Learning for Justice, and Gilder Lehrman Institutes. She has a passion for curriculum development and student inquiry. "I love everything METC's education department offers and am so excited to expand the programing and reach new audiences."



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METC's First Sidewalk Art Show Opens



In March 2021, METC invited artists around New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania to participate in our first Sidewalk Art Show installed in the Education Annex windows. After many submissions, METC handpicked 15 artists who submitted works reflecting the theme of hope. METC selected this theme as the world continues to manage the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Historically, artists have used their work to depict and communicate societal issues. The 15 works featured in the Annex Windows are unique, powerful, and insightful pieces that showcase the emotions and influence of the past several years on the artists. The participating artists are: Marylou DeMarino Kessel, Karen Waller, Wayne Freitag, Spriha Gupta, Patricia Dahlman, Jennifer Ponds, Jennifer Cofone, Leslie Nobler, Daniel Alan Gordon, Kathleen McCullough, Melanie Bump, Mary Dierson Galantich, Rommel Borrás, G.R. Lear, Dani Pietrowski. To learn more about the artists, visit METC's website! This exhibit is free to all, so be sure to visit this exhibit before February to view these works of art.

Join METC for a cocktail party and silent auction on Thursday, February 24th from 6-8p as the works of art showcased in the Annex Windows will be auctioned off. Proceeds from the auction will support the museum as well as the artists.

METC thanks Board Trustee Tyler Merson and Curatorial Assistant Clare Holmes for their assistance installing this show.

Inventory Update

In September 2021, Curator of Collections Shelley Cathcart, along with Curatorial Assistant Clare Holmes and Intern Mike DiBartolo, began METC's first comprehensive collections inventory. This project is funded in part by the New Jersey Historic Commission Project Grant. METC's collection consists of approximately 8,900 historic objects, archival material, and library holdings stored in three separate locations. Inventories are excellent opportunities for curators and museum staff to assess their collection. During METC's inventory, the team will confirm an object's physical location and capture reference photographs, but also verify information such as the object's condition, dimensions, and rectify any issues related to storage or data inconsistencies.



Working three days a week, the inventory team has completed two offsite storage units and inventoried approximately 1000 objects! The inventory will continue for the next 10 months in the other locations to inventory the rest of the collection. The team, with the assistance of Museum Assistant Alexandra Lebovitz, will take their findings from the inventory and input this information to the museum's collections management system, PastPerfect.

By the end of this inventory, METC will have a better assessment of the holdings within its collection. This will greatly assist the museum in exhibition development, digitization, and research in addition to creating content for social media and new opportunities for education programs.

Meet Our Collections Team

Clare Holmes, Curatorial Assistant



My name is Clare Holmes and I am the Curatorial Assistant here at METC. I hail from Glasgow, Scotland having gained my undergraduate degree in Historical Studies at the University of Glasgow. It was there I found a love for the museum field and interned both in Scotland and while living in the U.S. I moved to New Jersey in 2018 to pursue a master's in Museum Professions which I graduated from this past May and am now loving putting my education to good use here at METC. The inventory project we are currently undertaking here at METC has given the opportunity for such unique encounters with the wonderful objects in the museum's collection. One of my favorite objects might seem like a strange one but it is a wooden crutch. What makes this object so unique is the three sets of names carved in beautiful cursive writing under the crest of the crutch in the wood. The three names share the same last name indicating they could be members of the same family, and potentially from a set of siblings. I love to see the intricate detail for a very practical object. There is so much lived history to be explored and we are discovering it further right here in our own collection.



Mike DiBartolo, Collections Intern

Born and raised in New Jersey, I graduated from Monmouth University in 2016 with a B.A. in Art and Education. While completing my undergraduate degree I knew at some point I would make the switch to the museum field. After teaching K-12 art including special needs, in the spring of 2020 I decided to go back to school for my Graduate degree in Art History with a concentration in Museum Studies. Currently enrolled at the City College of New York my interests include collections management and registrar work. I am on track to graduate in the fall of 2022. As someone who enjoys working with their hands, I would say my favorite objects are those associated with woodworking as well as certain agricultural tools. Every object in the museum's collection tells a story and I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Ms. Cathcart and Ms. Holmes in helping preserve these objects



Return to In Person Field Trips



This fall marked the return of in-person field trips to METC! In October, a group of fifty 7th grade students from the Park Avenue School came to METC to participate in our Exploring Architecture program. During their trip the students learned about the architectural details of the James Library Building including our stained glass windows, intricate woodwork, and masonry.

The students took all of their new knowledge and created a hands-on activity in the Education Annex before enjoying their lunch.

After nearly a year and a half, it was great to hear the group of students engaging with our museum educators and our exhibits. While we're still offering a wide variety of virtual educational experiences, we cannot wait for more schools to return to us in person!

Restoration Updates



Over the past few months, METC has moved into the monitoring phase of the restoration project. EverGreene Architectural Arts performed monthly site visits that closely monitor the North and South galleries determining progress before moving into the next phase of the project. Regular poulitice and wet cleaning was performed on the brick and stone as well as salt testing and moisture meter readings to document environmental variables in each location. Poulitice applications aid in the cleaning of stone and brick as well as paint layer removal, and as pictured here resembles marshmallow fluff! The poulitice is applied, then left for several hours with a plastic sheeting to dry and harden. This process is one among many restoration techniques EverGreene Architectural Arts used during the monitoring phase. The monitoring phase of the James Library



Building continues as the museum prepares to move into the final phase this winter to restore stone and painted stencils.



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Museum of Early Trades & Crafts
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Our Mission

To inspire a connection with New Jersey's history, culture, trades, and crafts.

Acknowledgements

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