

It has been a busy and eventful year in Museum Studies (and far beyond) and as the holiday season draws near, I am pleased to take this opportunity to touch base with our alumni, friends, and supporters. Since we admitted our first cohort in 2003, MSP has striven to create a unique interdisciplinary community of graduate students, faculty, and campus and regional museum professionals who share an interest in museums: as sites of study and as sites of practice. Each year we admit approximately a dozen Masters or Doctoral Students into the Graduate Certificate Program. To date more than 150 students from nine colleges and more than 30 academic departments have pursued the certificate. They come from disciplines as diverse as astronomy, anthropology, biology, classical archaeology, education, information sciences, law, art history, art and design, urban planning, and public policy, among others. This year, we have added a choreographer, sculptor, and Slavic Studies doctoral student to our disciplinary mix! We have also been joined by African Presidential Scholar Hiruy Tefera this fall, a museum professional from Ethiopia who has joined us to enhance his knowledge of museums theory and practice. The diversity of the program and of the community we create sometimes challenges and always reshapes students' understandings of their own disciplines and careers. Even in a University as committed to interdisciplinarity as the University of Michigan, the transformative experiences provided by MSP are truly special.

We had a special treat this fall when our entire MSP16 cohort (plus Hiruy) travelled with Brad Taylor and me to Chicago. We visited and met with staff of three museums: the Chicago History Museum; Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art; and the Field Museum of Natural History. While the trip was wonderful overall, it was especially rewarding to be hosted by MSP12 graduate Naomi Priddy in the Education Department of the Field Museum.

Our MSP alumni continue to rack up impressive successes. For a small taste of our alumni's recent accomplishments: MSP05 Graduate Kelly Kirby (Associate Professor at Moore College of Art and Design) is working with members of a local non-profit to curate an exhibition on "care, compassion and comfort" at Philadelphia's Seaport Independence Museum; Kristine Ronan (MSP09) will soon begin a postdoctoral fellowship at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, NM; and MSP10 graduate Katherine Larson is working as a curatorial assistant at the Corning Museum of Glass. We regularly post about our alumni at <http://www.ummsp.rackham.umich.edu/content/kudos>. Please visit to learn more about our alumni and let us know if you have news we can share.

In addition to our graduate program, MSP continues to host an ambitious array of public programming that serves graduate and undergraduate students and faculty, regional museum professionals, and the public. This semester, we are hosting a lecture series on *Museums and Social Justice*, featuring four distinguished speakers addressing some of the work underway in today's museums to become more inclusive and impactful. We are now finalizing our events and visiting scholar for next semester: these will include a day-long conference on "Endangered Heritage" that we are co-sponsoring with the UM Centers for South Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East and North Africa, and African Studies, as well as a workshop on "Museums and Censorship." Throughout the academic year, our Brown Bag Lecture series provides a context for our graduate students to present and critically examine their practicum experiences and for visiting museum scholars and professionals to present on their scholarship. And we continue to work with our 60-plus local and regional museum partners on Capstone Projects, site visits, and other ongoing collaborations.

We continue to face some budgetary challenges. This year, we are learning to adapt to a significant reduction in our MSP staffing, as Amy Smola's (our extraordinary administrator) hours have been reduced from 32 hours per week to 20 hours (fortunately for her, she was also offered a half-time position in another program, so did not have to seek work elsewhere). I expect more administrative cuts are on the way for next academic year, and have no doubt that we will continue to adapt and flourish.

MSP greatly benefits from generous support to our graduate students from the Rackham Graduate School and from the *Museum Studies Endowment*. Earnings from the endowment assist our graduate students in a variety of ways, allowing us to supplement internship costs, address emergency needs, and support faculty-student collaborative exhibition and research projects, as well as supporting student expenses for our Chicago trip. .

In addition, the *MSP Director's Strategic Fund* supports our public programming, visiting scholar, special projects, and other MSP needs. Your gift will go directly to supporting MSP activities that enable us to maintain our commitment to bringing together museum theory with museum practice and our University community with the larger museum community of Michigan, Ohio, and the world.

To donate to MSP, please complete and return the attached card or go online to <http://ummsp.rackham.umich.edu/about/support-msp/> . If you can consider a multi-year pledge to MSP, that would help us be able to plan our activities more effectively.

Finally, I encourage you to keep in touch. Please visit our web site, friend us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/umichmsp), or follow us on Twitter (@umichmsp). Brad, Amy and I love to hear from you!

Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you soon at one of our MSP events!

Warm regards,

Carla M. Sinopoli
Director, Museum Studies Program