

December 2019

Dear friend of the University of Michigan Museum Studies Program,

As we approach the holiday season, I would like to take this opportunity to give you an update on the Museum Studies Program (MSP) and ask for your support. I have had the opportunity during the past year and a half to engage fully with MSP in action. We have visited more than a dozen museums during site visits with the 2018 and 2019 MSP cohorts. Brad Taylor, our Associate Director, guided students through capstone projects with four museums for the proseminar. Students currently enrolled in the program held internships in places as far away as Brazil and Ukraine, and as close by as the Detroit Institute of Arts. We hosted a visiting scholar, two public lectures, and seven brown bag talks as part of our efforts in public scholarship and outreach. All told, eight students completed the graduate certificate program this year and 11 students joined in the 2019 cohort. I am proud to be associated with this outstanding program and its excellent graduate students.

Our alumni are successful and making an impact. Here are some of their recent achievements:

- ❖ Erica Lehrer (MSP04) is a Professor in the History and Sociology/Anthropology Departments at Concordia University, Montreal. She is the Founding Director of the university's [Curating and Public Scholarship Lab](#) and recently co-curated an exhibit, "[Terribly Close: Polish Vernacular Artists Face the Holocaust](#)," which was recently on display at the Ethnographic Museum in Krakow, Poland.
- ❖ Katherine Raff (MSP05) has been promoted to Associate Curator of Ancient Art at the Art Institute of Chicago.
- ❖ Leah Niederstadt (MSP05) was promoted to Associate Professor of Museum Studies/History of Art and Curator of the Permanent Collection at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts.
- ❖ John Low (MSP05) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University at Newark. John recently accepted the position of Director of the [Newark Earthworks Center](#) (NEC), an interdisciplinary center of OSU that develops projects and research about the American Indian cultures that produced monumental Midwestern earthen architecture.
- ❖ Ksenya Gurshtein (MSP06) started a new job as the Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art at Wichita State University in Wichita, KS.

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- ❖ Helen Dixon (MSP07) has a new position as Assistant Professor of History at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC and teaches courses related to Museum Studies.
- ❖ Christopher Berk (MSP07) was hired as a Lecturer at Auburn University's Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, after four years as a visiting faculty member. This summer, he was a Faculty Fellow at Smithsonian's Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology.
- ❖ Marc Levitt (MSP08), Archivist and Exhibits Committee member at the National Naval Aviation Museum, was awarded a German-American Fulbright award to attend the Transatlantic Seminar, "Museums as Spaces for Social Discourse and Learning."
- ❖ Kristine Ronan (MSP09) is a Visiting Assistant Professor of American Art History at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. She published her first exhibition catalog essay as part of "N.C. Wyeth: New Perspectives," an exhibition recently on display at the Brandywine Museum in Pennsylvania. Kristine spent the academic year of 2018-2019 as a Fellow at the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- ❖ Elizabeth Harmon (MSP10) began a new position as a Digital Curator at the Smithsonian Institution Archives. She produces digital resources and exhibitions about women in science, and her work will support the Smithsonian's [American Women's History Initiative](#).
- ❖ Shannon Schmoll (MSP11) is the co-Principal Investigator for a \$ 2.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation that will be used to create a hands-on planetarium show about astronomy in Chile, a web portal, and live social media events related to the show.
- ❖ Emily Kutil (MSP12) began a teaching fellowship at the University of Buffalo, School of Architecture and Planning. This past summer, Emily created an exhibition about Detroit's Black Bottom neighborhood that was recently on display at the Detroit Public Library. "[Black Bottom Street View](#)" was a photography show documenting entire streets and avenues in the African-American district that fell victim to urban "renewal" and the wrecking ball starting in the 1950s.
- ❖ Hannah Probsting [McMurray] (MSP15) who works at the Musee de l'Elysee in Lausanne, France was recently promoted to Travelling Exhibitions and External Projects Manager.
- ❖ Roxana Aras (MSP16) completed an internship at the Sursock Museum in Lebanon doing research for one of their main exhibitions, "[Baalbek, Archives of an Eternity](#)."

Maintaining excellence and serving as a model of interdisciplinary engaged learning requires a lot of support. We are grateful to the Horace A. Rackham School of Graduate Studies and the *Museum Studies Endowment* for the considerable financial assistance provided to MSP students. The MSP program also relies on contributions from the

museum community in the form of hosting and mentoring our students, facilitating site visits, and engaging with capstone projects. In addition, the *MSP Director's Strategic Fund* supports our public programming, visiting scholars, special projects, and other MSP needs.

I hope that you can make a gift this year to help us strengthen this multi-faceted program of teaching, research, learning, practice and public engagement. Your gift will go directly to supporting activities that provide an outstanding educational experience to our students, help to engage students with museums regionally, nationally and globally, and bridge the gaps between scholarship, professionalism, and public understanding of museums. To donate to the Museum Studies Program, please visit us online at <http://ummsp.rackham.umich.edu/about/support-msp/>. Also, I encourage you to keep in touch by visiting our [web site](#), friending us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/umichmsp](http://www.facebook.com/umichmsp)), and following us on Twitter (@umichmsp).

Thank you for your support and best wishes for a peaceful, restful, and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Hedstrom', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Margaret Hedstrom  
Interim Director, Museum Studies Program  
Robert M. Warner Collegiate Professor of Information