



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Preservation and Access application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/preservation-assistance-grants-smaller-institutions> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Preservation and Access Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Art Museum Workshop on Sustaining Digital Collections

Institution: Mills College Art Museum

Project Director: Stephanie Hanor

Grant Program: Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS FOR SMALLER INSTITUTIONS**

**MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM
APPLICATION NARRATIVE**

A. What activity (or activities) would the grant support?

The Mills College Art Museum is seeking support to organize an on-site two-part workshop for Museum staff on best practices and standards for building and sustaining digital collections as well as care and handling of collections during digitization. With over 8,000 objects, the Mills College Art Museum has the largest permanent collection of any liberal arts college in the western United States. Visibility and accessibility of the collection are a key priority for the Museum, yet less than 1% of the works in the collection are digitally documented. This workshop will provide important information as the Museum's staff plans a collection digitization program from the ground up, so best practices are set from the beginning and sustained into the future.

For this program, the Museum will invite two local experts with extensive experience in collection digitization planning and execution. Dr. Michael Black, Head of Research and Information Systems at the Pheobe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley will give a one-day seminar to the Museum's staff on proper digital archiving, metadata storage, and the development of a digital collection policy. Bob Futernick, Associate Director at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco will give a one-day seminar discussing systems for efficient care and handling of the collection during digitization and issues to consider when linking digital collection preservation with collection use and access. The workshops would be open to staff from Visual Resources in the Department of Art and Art History and Special Collections at the F. W. Olin Library.

Through this training, Museum staff will be able to develop realistic and appropriate systems for both physical documentation of works in the collection and for digital archiving. The ultimate goal of the project is to gain the knowledge to develop a digital collection plan and policy that addresses issues of collection description and cataloguing, terms and conditions of use, restrictions on access, software and hardware requirements, intellectual property, data management, archiving, object handling, digital processes, allocation of resources, and sustainability.

B. What are the content and size of the humanities collections that are the focus of the project?

The permanent collection at the Mills College Art Museum spans a diverse range of cultures and time periods, with significant strengths in works on paper, photography, ceramics, textiles, Native American basketry, and California painting. The digitization planning workshops would cover issues that span the entire spectrum of the collection.

Works on Paper: The Museum has a large collection of over 4,000 prints and drawings dating from the 16th-century to the present, including a complete set of Albrecht Dürer's small woodcut portfolio *Passion*. The collection houses an impressive group of modern European works with an emphasis on German Expressionists and Bauhaus faculty members, including Emil Nolde, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and Josef Albers. In

addition, there are strong holdings of American prints and drawings, including works by James Abbott McNeill Whistler, Winslow Homer, George Bellows, and Reginald Marsh, and the largest museum collection of etchings by Northern California printmaker Roi Partridge.

Ceramics: The Museum has a significant collection of early 20th-century ceramics. The Mills College Ceramics Guild, which became an important experimental base for artists like Peter Voulkos and Robert Arneson, was founded in 1940. Since then, notable instructors have included F. Carlton Ball, Antonio Prieto, and Ron Nagle. During Prieto's tenure (1950-1967) the San Francisco Bay Area played an important role in the evolution of ceramics. Prieto amassed a personal collection of extraordinary breadth, including works by Henry Varnum Poor, Marguerite Wildenhain, Voulkos, Arneson, and Viola Frey. After his death, artists further contributed to a memorial collection, bringing the total to over 400 works, primarily from Northern California, but also from England, Japan and elsewhere in the United States. In 1970 the collection was donated to the Museum. In addition to the artists noted above, the collection now contains works by Pablo Picasso, Bernard Leach, Beatrice Wood, and Clayton Bailey.

The Museum also owns a fine collection of Japanese ceramics, including some that date from the Momoyama era (1568-1615). The collection's primary emphasis however, is on the 20th-century. Works by such modern Japanese masters as Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai (co-founders of the Japan Folk Art Association), Kitaoji Rosanjin, Morikazu Kimura, Toyo Kaneshige, Tatsuzo Shimaoka, and Ueda Tsuneji are particularly noteworthy.

Ceramics from the ancient Americas also form part of the Museum's collections, including important examples of Papagayo Polychrome pieces from Omotepe Island, Nicaragua, that date between 950-1000 A.D. The Mills College Art Museum is the only museum on the West Coast to own such a collection. The Museum also owns an outstanding collection of approximately 125 ancient Southwestern ceramics from the Anasazi, Hohokam and Mogollon cultures, which date from ca. 500-1000 A.D. Examples include works from the Casas Grandes, Gila, Mesa Verde, Tularosa, and Chaco pueblos.

Paintings: The painting collection at the Mills College Art Museum spans from the 17th-century to the present, with a significant collection of California paintings from the early 20th-centuries. Works by such major Northern California painters as Anne Bremer, Maynard Dixon, Joseph Raphael, and William Wendt formed the core of the Museum's collection when it opened in 1925. The collection has grown and diversified to include a selection of 18th and 19th-century French works, Asian scrolls, and Indian miniatures. The collection also includes pieces by important modernists such as László Moholy-Nagy, Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, and Vanessa Bell, as well as contemporary paintings by Jay DeFeo, Jennifer Bartlett, and Shahzia Sikander.

Photography: The Mills College Art Museum has been an important center for photography since the early 1930s, a particularly rich period of photographic development in the Bay Area. The Museum's collection contains works by many of the preeminent San Francisco-based photographers of the time, such as John Gutmann, Ansel Adams, and in particular, Imogen Cunningham, whose images capture the campus and student life at Mills College. The Museum has significant collection of vintage prints, including important works by Edward Weston, Tina Modotti, Arthur Wesley Dow, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Wilbur Porterfield, Man Ray, and Eadweard Muybridge, as well as strong holdings of contemporary

photography including works by Barbara Crane, Olafur Eliasson, Catherine Opie, Joel Sternfeld, and Catherine Wagner.

Textiles: The Museum has a diverse collection of textiles, including South American textiles from 100 to 1400 AD. Most significant is the Museum's collection of embroidered silk *Fukusa*, ceremonial gift covers popular among the aristocracy of Japan and dating to the Edo period (1615-1867). Recognized for its superior quality, the Museum has the largest collection of *Fukusa* outside of Japan.

Native American Basketry: The Museum's collection of approximately 150 Native American baskets is rich in works by California's native peoples, particularly the Pomo, Yurok, and Hupa tribes, and date from the early 19th-century to the early 20th-century. Many of the baskets in the Museum's collection were donated by Mills College founders Cyrus and Susan Mills, and early College President Aurelia Henry Reinhardt.

C. How are these humanities collections used?

The permanent collection at the Mills College Art Museum is used primarily in two ways: as a teaching tool in a range of art history and interdisciplinary courses at the College, as well as in thematic exhibitions organized by the Museum. In the current academic year, anthropology students researched and catalogued examples of Native American basketry as well as ancient Egyptian and Greek works in the collection; students in the book arts department created new works inspired by designs from the *Fukusa* collection; the advanced painting class used an 18th-century portrait by Ozia Humphrey for an exercise in copying oil techniques; and art history faculty used 19th-century Indian miniatures for research in a class tracing the development of modern Asian art.

Students also have opportunities for training in collection stewardship through the Museum's gallery assistant program. Through a paid work-study/internship program, participants are trained in proper object handling, accessioning and cataloguing, and object storage. Recently, students have worked with the Museum's California ceramics collection to update and correct object data, complete basic documentation, and organize storage in new archival boxes and packaging.

Since the Museum does not have dedicated permanent collection galleries, the primary public access to the collection is through temporary exhibitions that draw from different areas of the collection. Recent exhibitions of the collection have included a large selection of California ceramics as part of the exhibition *Pae White: In Between the Inside-Out* (Fall 2009); a focused examination of a Japanese print portfolio in *Reverberations: Japanese Prints of the 1923 Kanto Earthquake* (Summer 2009); and a small survey show of photography from the 19th-century to the present entitled *In Focus* (Winter 2010). In Summer 2011, the Museum will be organizing a collection exhibition entitled *The Summer Sessions: Émigré Artists at Mills College*. The exhibition will examine the Museum's significant role in the introduction of European modernist artists and their practices to the Bay Area during the period surrounding World War II. From 1934 to 1962, under the direction of the noted German art historian Alfred Neumeier, the Mills College Art Museum established the "Summer Sessions," a series of classes and workshops in which distinguished contemporary émigré artists were invited to Mills College to teach and exhibit work. The Museum was a pioneer in its choice of avant-garde artists for this program, which included Alexander Archipenko, Lyonel Feininger, Fernand Léger, Richard Neutra, and Max Beckmann. In the summer of 1940, faculty members from the School of Design in Chicago, the newly reformed Bauhaus

directed by László Moholy-Nagy, designed and taught that year's Summer Session. As a direct result of the program, the Museum organized the first exhibition of Feininger's work in the United States (1936) and major exhibitions by Léger (1941), Moholy-Nagy and the Bauhaus (1940), and Beckmann (1950). Using approximately 40 paintings, sculptures, photographs, prints, and drawings from the Museum's collections and archives, the exhibition will provide new scholarship on the role these artists played in Northern California, describe a vital chapter in the history of the Mills College Art Museum, and expose new audiences to an important group of works in the Museum's permanent collection.

D. What is the nature and mission of your institution?

The Mills College Art Museum, founded in 1925, is a dynamic center for the arts that focuses on the creative work of women as artists and curators. The Museum strives to engage and inspire the diverse populations of the Bay Area, presenting innovative exhibitions by emerging and established national and international artists from a range of disciplines, challenging and inviting reflection upon the complexities of contemporary culture.

The Museum is a vital institution at Mills College, an independent liberal arts college for women with graduate programs for both women and men. Founded in 1852, the College encourages intellectual exploration and educates students to think critically and communicate responsibly and effectively, as well as to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to effect thoughtful changes in a global, multicultural society. The Museum has an annual operating budget of approximately \$475,000 with three full-time paid staff members, ten to twelve part-time paid student workers, and a ten person volunteer Advisory Board. All exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public, and the gallery is open 250 days per year.

E. Has your institution ever had a preservation or conservation assessment of consultation?

The Mills College Art Museum received a Conservation Assessment Program grant in 1992, which was completed by conservator William Shank. This assessment led to the successful resolution of excess visible light and ultraviolet radiation in the Museum's galleries. The Museum recently received a ReCAP grant to support a two-day site visit with a collection conservator and historic preservationist. The site visits will take place in early July 2010, and the Museum will work with architectural preservationist Ruth Todd of Page & Turnbull, San Francisco and works on paper conservator Kathleen Orlenko, Santa Clara.

F. What is the importance of this project to the institution?

Chief among the Museum's goals are to create better accessibility and visibility for its collection. Mills College Art Museum's permanent collection is a tremendous campus and community resource that is under-utilized due to a lack of collection gallery space, limited physical accessibility to the collection spaces, and little published material on the collection. Since there is relatively limited access to the collection, digitizing the collection will allow the Museum to make collection works widely accessible through the Museum's new website (due to launch in August 2010), aiding in teaching, research, audience building, and new scholarship. Digitizing the collection has been identified as one of the primary goals by the Museum's Board in the institution's recently adopted Strategic Plan, and the development of a digitization plan is key to implementing a successful digital archive and library of the works in the collection that is tailored to the needs of the Museum.

G. What are the names and qualifications of the consultant(s) and staff involved in the project?

Dr. Michael Black, Head, Research and Information Systems, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley. Black has extensive experience in digital information conservation, management of digital collections, and a particular interest in creating digital environments that easily support research, teaching, and public service. He designed the Hearst Museum's Delphi system, which supports an intuitive user interface for searching the Museum's digital collection.

Bob Futernick, Associate Director, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. With over 30 years of conservation experience, Futernick oversaw the plan and execution of the FAMSF's art imagebase of over 80,000 digital reproductions of works from the collection. He has taught workshops on building and managing digital collections, with an emphasis on the ways institutions can help invent or direct systems and technologies so that they best meet the needs of various collection situations. The former Chairman of the Conservation Departments at the FAMSF, Futernick has an extensive knowledge of works on paper in the Mills College Art Museum's collection.

Dr. Stephanie Hanor, Assistant Dean and Director, Mills College Art Museum. Hanor received her Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Texas at Austin and has 15 years of curatorial and arts administration experience. Prior to joining the Mills College Art Museum in 2009, she was the Senior Curator and Curatorial Department Head at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego.

Stacie Daniels, Manager of Collections and Exhibitions, Mills College Art Museum. Daniels has overseen the installation and stewardship of the Museum's collection for over 9 years. She holds an MFA in Visual Arts and has extensive experience in art handling, registration methods, and collection maintenance.

H. What is the plan of work for the project?

February 2011: One-day workshop with Dr. Michael Black addressing software/hardware needs, digital cataloguing and archiving, metadata storage and provenance, formatting, and access.

March 2011: One-day workshop with Bob Futernick addressing care and handling of the collection during digitizing, physical set up of digitizing system, and developing systems that best meet the needs of the collection.

April 2011: Museum staff develops written digital collection plan and policies

May 2011: Draft plan and policies reviewed by consultants

June 2011: Digital collection plan and policies finalized by Museum staff and approved by Museum Board