

ROM 2013 Colloquium: World Discoveries

Friday, February 08, 2013
Signy & Cléopée Eaton Theatre



Wari tapestry weave fragment, Middle Horizon (600-1000 CE), La Real, Peru - Photography by Justin Jennings

SPONSORED BY:



ROM 2013 Colloquium: World Discoveries

Friday, February 08, 2013
Signy & Cléopée Eaton Theatre

PROGRAM

09:15 - 09:30 a.m. Welcome - Dr. Mark Engstrom, Deputy Director - Collections & Research

MORNING PROGRAM

09:30 - 09:45 (1) The Mystery of the Hidden *Bateaux*: Paul Kane at the *Dalles des Morts*

Kenneth Lister, Department of World Cultures, ROM

“He made no attempt to idealize” and “truthfulness to life” were the familiar 19th and early 20th century overtures in reference to the paintings of Paul Kane. Kane’s views of bison hunts on the Plains and camp scenes on the Great Lakes have instructed generations of exhibition viewers about the lifeways of Canada’s First Peoples. Likewise, Kane depicted the routes and travel methods of the Hudson’s Bay Company voyageurs and one of his most awe-inspiring paintings, titled *Dalle des Morts*, shows two Company canoes in the stages of penetrating the dreaded “Death Rapids” on the upper stretch of the Columbia River.

But what are we to think of the canoes? Did not the Hudson’s Bay Company build and use *bateaux* on the Columbia River? But Kane was there! He travelled the river and his painting is viewed as a faithful rendering of his personal narrative. Looking deep into the painting though—using infrared reflectography—the boats transform and the transformation reveals what Kane knew, but at the expense of historical representation, chose to hide.

09:45 -10:00 (2) Rare minerals from northeastern Yukon

Kim Tait, Department of Natural History, ROM

The Big Fish River and Rapid Creek areas in the Richardson Mountains of the Yukon expose iron-formation and related sedimentary rocks which host over dozens of rare phosphate minerals. This region is like no other in the world and the mechanisms governing these minerals presence here are not well understood.

Prospectors in this region discovered these unique minerals in the 1970s and turned to the University of Toronto and the Royal Ontario Museum for help in identifying these samples, many which has never been described

before, such as wicksite (which was characterized at the ROM and named after ROM Emeritus Curator Fred Wicks). We carried out an extensive mapping, geochemical sampling and collection program from this region over a three week field program in the summer of 2012. I will be presenting some of these new results, which have been conducted in our new mineralogical laboratory facilities.

10:00 - 10:15 (3) Using Gecko Adhesive Surfaces for Exhibition and Conservation

Julia Fenn, Conservation Department, ROM

Biomimetic research on gecko feet has shown that the nanohairs on their toe pads are one source of their amazing ability to adhere to vertical or inverted surfaces which has aroused international interest in the possibility of making commercial synthetic gecko adhesives (GSA's).

However, despite funding from the military, the space program, and the sports industry as well as a plethora of international patents during the last decade, synthetic gecko adhesives are not yet available on the market

In the Ethnology Conservation laboratory, it has proved possible to produce crude but usable gecko surfaces by nanomoulding. This paper is an update on experiments exploring the possibilities for making gecko surfaces in artifact-friendly polymers and using them to solve some ROM exhibition and conservation problems.

10:15 - 10:45 BREAK

10:45 - 11:00 (4) Hybridization in hawthorns: not just diploids!

Tim Dickinson*, Department of Natural History, ROM

Shery Han, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto

Mehdi Zarrei, ROM Green Plant Herbarium, Department of Natural History

Hybridization has been the main explanation of the complicated taxonomy of North American hawthorns. Until now, however, evidence of hybridization has so far only been obtained in cases involving diploid hawthorns native to North America and diploid *Crataegus monogyna*, introduced from Europe. Thanks to an NSERC-funded Strategic Project on hawthorns as a source of natural health products, the ROM's acquisition of the J. B. Phipps Hawthorn Research Collection, and recent progress with flow cytometry, we have obtained both molecular and morphometric data demonstrating how hybridization is responsible for the origin of several entities described as new species from the Pacific Northwest. These results build on what is already known about hawthorn phylogeny, and suggest how taxonomic revision of the genus should proceed. Changes in land use, together with the way in which hawthorns

reproduce asexually, provide a better explanation of hawthorn diversification than do other modes of speciation.

11:00 - 11:15 (5)

Online Botanical Outreach - Species

Deborah Metsger*, Jenny Bull, John Barker, Botany section, Department of Natural History

Trees for Toronto is a ROM initiative to promote tree identification and awareness in Toronto. Tree plaques and interpretive signs erected in Queen's Park in 2009 and on the Toronto Islands in 2010 were the first step to providing onsite tree information to park visitors. New online resources accessible from a computer or smart-phone are an additional authoritative aid for identifying and learning about Toronto trees. To date, "Tree Species Pages" have been developed for the 78 species or varieties of trees that received plaques. These pages provide common and scientific names; descriptions and images of the major features of each species – bark, twigs, leaves, fruit and flowers; fascinating facts about the tree; information on this tree in Toronto; and links to where the species can be found in featured parks.

11:15 - 11:30 (6)

Why is Photography Important?

Deepali Dewan, Department of World Cultures, ROM

They say that photo-based imagery is around us everywhere and at all times, like water to our fishbowl. But from a historical perspective, photography is only about 150 year old. How could something so relatively recent in our history have such ubiquity and thus, by extension, such impact? Can we assume impact follows from ubiquity or can something so pervasive have little impact as well? What is the nature of this impact and to what extent has it changed over time and across different locations? How can we be shaped by photographs at the same time we engage in their production? This paper is more of a conceptual exploration yet approaches these larger questions from the perspective of 15 years of collection-based research on the photographic image and two upcoming ROM exhibits, one on Indian photographer Raja Deen Dayal (b. 1844) and the other on Brazilian photographer Sebastiao Salgado (b. 1944), opening in April and May 2013, respectively.

11:30 - 11:50 (7)

Who Painted John Brant?

Trudy Nicks, Department of World Cultures, Heidi Sobol, Conservation Department, ROM

In 1921 the ROM acquired a portrait of John Brant (1794 – 1832), youngest son of Mohawk war chief Joseph Brant, from a family descendant living in Morden, Manitoba. The portrait had been with the Brant family for a long time. William L. Stone, author of *Life of Joseph Brant—Thayendanegea*, reported seeing the portrait in the Brant home at Burlington, Ontario in 1836. Family members stated that it was a very good likeness of the recently deceased young chief. For his part, Stone observed in the introduction to his book that the portrait of John Brant was

“painted by a country artist, and, as a whole, a very bad picture...”

Presently on view in the Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples, this painting arrived in the conservation lab for treatment in 2011. After the completion of the conservation campaign, an article was published on the treatment in the Fall 2012 ROM Magazine. The profile in the magazine invited contact with a collector of related material, who was able to posit new theories on the creation of our painting. Though the identity of the artist remains a mystery, additional diagnostic work has recently resulted in new research directions.

Noon - 1:00 BREAK

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

- 1:00 - 1:15 (8) The Oregon caves fossil jaguar, and the puzzle of the paucity of fossil jaguars from the western USA.**
Kevin Seymour, Department of Natural History

Recent records of the jaguar (*Panthera onca*), the largest living new world cat, demonstrate that this species still has a tenuous foothold in the southwest USA. Pleistocene records of this species, however, demonstrate that it ranged much more widely in the past, from West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Florida in the east, through Nebraska, Nevada and California in the west. The most northerly records are from Oregon. This new partial skeleton from Oregon Caves National Monument is the most complete record of this species from the state, and one of only about six partial skeletons known from the USA. It is also the oldest known, carbon dating to 38,620 +/- 440 yrs BP. This species is much more common in the fossil record of the eastern USA, with a strange paucity of records from the western USA, its present-day holdout. Although there are good cave faunas and plenty of Pleistocene sites from the western-most states recording other fossil cat species, I have been able to locate only 8 valid records of Pleistocene jaguars from the western USA. Either it was a rare member of the western faunas, perhaps for ecological reasons, or we have more jaguars still to find in the western USA.

- 1:15 - 1:30 (9) European Influence in the Mandan and Hidatsa Paintings and Drawings Collected by Prince Maximilian**
Arni Brownstone, Department of World Cultures, ROM

Scenes of war were painted by all 32 tribes of the Great Plains of North America and comprise a significant genre of art. More than 500 works, dating from late eighteenth to mid twentieth centuries, have survived to the present day. Some once served to define social hierarchy within traditional Native communities, while a greater number were undoubtedly made for sale to non-Natives. The dynamics that shaped this multi-faceted, multi-cultural art form are complex. Our understanding of the how stylistic influences were transmitted between tribes, for example, is

impeded by the absence of some tribes in the corpus of extant work, the imbalance between tribes that are represented, and the highly uneven quality of collection documentation. To better understand the dynamic of the whole, it is constructive to examine discrete sets of well-documented paintings. This paper focuses on European influence as reflected in the Indian paintings and drawings collected by Prince Maximilian along the Missouri River area in 1833-34.

1:30 - 1:45 (10) Hostage to Cloth: European explorers in East Africa, 1850-1890
Sarah Fee, Department of World Cultures, ROM

Western audiences have been socialized to think of 19th century European explorers of East Africa as solitary white knights, leading a few trusty natives into unknown terrain. The reality was quite different. European explorers were to a great degree dependent on Africans (Swahili and other) and Omani Arabs, especially once they had left the safety of the coast.

A re-reading of explorer narratives highlights the vital importance of cloth in these encounters, and the power of local chiefs (and others) to steer them before 1890.

This talk explores the mostly Asian trade cloths that explorers were compelled to carry, how it served them, and how they ultimately had to serve it.

1:45 - 2:00 (11) Six Months of Social Media
Ryan Dodge, Communications Department, ROM

Since July 2012, Ryan has been working exclusively on social media at the museum with the aim of fostering dialogue and building communities. In that time he has had successes and failures but has learned a great deal about how audiences visit, converse and interact with the museum in the age of social media. Ryan will discuss some of the initiatives he has deployed since he spoke about mobile interpretation at the 2012 colloquium. The presentation will include a look at the SCVNGR pilot, #instaROM and the real time crowd-sourced photo wall during the popular Friday Night Live fall series. Ryan will also discuss how he measures all the tweets, posts and interaction with the public online to ensure the museum's platforms are consistent, focussed and engaging.

2:00 - 2:30 BREAK

2:30 - 2:45 (12) A Centerpiece by Froment Meurice: Luxury Objects at the World's Fairs
Peter Kaellgren, Department of World Cultures, ROM

In 2009, grants from the Stone Foundation and the Minister of Canadian Heritage enabled the Royal Ontario Museum to acquire an imposing French centrepiece made of Italian marble with a sculptural bronze base. Its design follows one made for Emperor Napoleon III, which was shown

at the Paris Exposition of 1867. Between 1851 and 1939, international expositions were important for promoting the latest technology and artistic and stylistic developments. Examining this centrepiece along with other exhibition pieces in the ROM collection helps to explain its significance historically and artistically.

2:45 - 3:00 (13) Some assembly required - enigmatic Late Ordovician eurypterids from central Manitoba

David Rudkin, Department of Natural History, ROM

Recent excavations by The Manitoba Museum and the ROM in the William Lake *Konservat-Lagerstätte* in central Manitoba have yielded exceptionally well preserved Late Ordovician eurypterid remains. Eurypterids comprise an extinct group of aquatic (primarily marine) chelicerate arthropods that lived from the Early Late Ordovician (about 455 million years ago) to the Late Permian (around 252 million years ago). As a consequence of their unmineralized cuticular exoskeleton, eurypterid fossils are generally quite rare, even in the handful of Late Silurian to Early Devonian *Konservat-Lagerstätten* where they are known to reach peak diversity. Only a few even rarer (often poorly preserved) Ordovician species have so far been described, and additional Ordovician discoveries, such as those at William Lake, should theoretically help to clarify the obscure early evolutionary history of the eurypterids. But there are problems in interpreting the Manitoba material. Although we currently recognize only a single new taxon, it shows a puzzling combination of features that appear only in separate lineages of younger age, along with several unique characters. Assembling the William Lake eurypterids and making sense of their evolutionary implications is an ongoing challenge.

3:00 - 3:15 (14) A Tale of the Caesar's Mushroom

Santiago Sanchez-Ramirez, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto, Department of Natural History, ROM

What does the Roman emperor Julius Caesar, the Mayas, Central African tribes and Himalayan sherpas have in common? They all appreciate the delicate taste of an *Amanita* mushroom! *Amanita* mushrooms are widespread in forest ecosystems worldwide, establishing symbiotic relationships with a broad range of trees, and consist of edible as well as hallucinogenic and deadly poisonous species. The mycology lab at the ROM studies the evolutionary history of *Amanita* mushrooms, in particular that of the edible species, which include the European species *Amanita caesarea* and the North.

3:15 - 3:30 (15) *Sertularella mutsuensis* Stechow, 1931 (Cnidaria: Hydrozoa: Sertulariidae) from Japanese tsunami debris: Systematics and evidence for transoceanic dispersal

Henry Choong, Department of Natural History, ROM

The catastrophic Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011 resulted in floating debris extending thousands of kilometers to the north

of Hawai'i in the Pacific Ocean, part of which has appeared on the west coast of the United States. A 188-ton dock originating from Misawa, Honshu, Japan, came ashore on June 5, 2012 at Agate Beach, 4.7 kilometers north of Newport, Lincoln County, Oregon. The derelict dock carried with it a substantial fouling assemblage, including over 100 non-native species. The discovery of the leptothecate hydroid *Sertularella mutsuensis* Stechow, 1931 on a barnacle (*Semibalanus cariosus*) confirms the capability of successful transoceanic dispersal for this species.

3:30 - 4:00

BREAK

4:00 - 4:15 (16)

Flags of defiance. Military prowess and artistry in southern Ghana
Silvia Forni, Department of World Cultures, ROM

A boat capturing a school of colourful fish, a tree with huge snake coiled on top, a large eagle hidden in the fronds of a tree are just some of the graphic images on the applique' flags of the Asafo military companies of the Fante peoples of coastal Ghana. Unlike their European models, Asafo flags tell stories and challenge the adversary through their bold visual statements based on proverbial knowledge.

This talk analyzes some of the social, aesthetic and narrative components of the insignia of Fante military companies, where competition is displayed not just through valour and force, but also in the artistry and proverbial knowledge displayed on the companies' flags.

4:15 - 4:30 (17)

The Art of Pochoir in the Collections of the Royal Ontario Museum
Arthur Smith, Library & Archives, ROM

The technique of colouring prints using stencils can be traced to 1767 in Japan with an album by Kitao Sekkosai. It was also used in Europe as early as the late 15th century for colouring the first playing cards. In the first quarter of the 20th century the French, led by Jean Saude, adopted the stenciling technique known as 'pochoir', to illuminate deluxe editions of Art Deco books and fashion journals. At the height of its popularity during the 1920s over thirty graphic design studios in France employed upwards of six hundred workers to colour pochoir prints. This presentation will reveal some of the ROM's extensive holdings of pochoir prints by leading French illustrators as George Barbier, E.-A. Seguy, Eduardo Benito, Georges Lepape and others.

4:30 - 4:45 (18)

The ROM's Late Archaic Greek *Kore*
Paul Denis, Department of World Cultures, ROM

The ROM recently acquired a rare and important marble statuette of a late Archaic Greek *kore* (Greek for maiden or young girl) through the generosity of Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust. The *kore*'s simple *chiton* (tunic) and fluent form link her to earlier archaic *kore* that were produced in east Greece (present day west coast of Turkey) and the

Aegean islands. The slight movement of her upper torso, the original viewing angle and other features suggest a date of about 500-490 BC.

4:45 - 5:00 **(19)**

CHANEL: The American Look

Alexandra Palmer, Department of World Cultures, ROM

Chanel fashions in the postwar era were considered timeless and wearable; design traits that are frequently considered unfashionable and unmarketable today. Yet it was because of this that North American women embraced them. The Chanel style dominated a large sector of the North American suit industry spawning thousands of mass-produced copies and knock-offs at all price points in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. An examination and comparison of the haute couture Chanel originals in the ROM (that are currently on loan for an exhibition in Germany), with the Chanel copies unpacks the details of style and construction in order to explain the long lasting allure of the Chanel suit in the US and Canada.

5:00 - 5:30

BREAK

5:30 - 6:30

VAUGHAN LECTURE:

Justin Jennings, Department of World Cultures, Royal Ontario Museum

Death and Destruction at La Real: Mortuary Rituals and Social Change in Pre-Columbian Peru

Dating back to as early as 5000 BC, the people of the south-central Andes wrapped their dead in mummy bundles and left them to slowly decompose. This tradition was disrupted during the Middle Horizon (600-1000 CE) at a few sites where mummy bundles were slashed open, broken apart, and often burned. Though this destruction could be seen as a desecration of the dead, this talk suggests instead that these acts were part of a secondary mortuary ritual designed to cope with a period of drastic social change.