Year End Report
2008-2009

Art Collection and Art Galleries
Sweet Briar College

Submitted to
Dean Jonathan Green
by
Karol A. Lawson, Director

July 3, 2009
Personnel

With the departure of long-time director Rebecca Massie Lane, the administration of the Art Collection and Galleries split from the administration of the Sweet Briar History Museum. In addition, Ms. Lane’s leadership of the Arts Management Program passed to Sweet Briar History Museum director Christian Carr.

On July 15, 2009 Karol Lawson began work as interim director of the Art Collection and Galleries, working half time (20 hours/week). In addition to her Collection and Gallery duties, during the year she also taught two courses (ARMG 209 The Museum: Theory and Practice, in the autumn; ARMG 306 The Art Market, in the spring) as Adjunct Assistant Professor of Arts Management. She also supervised three students’ Arts Management practicum projects in the fall. In the spring Dr. Lawson accepted a two-year appointment as full time director, effective July 2009.

Registrarial assistant Nancy McDearmon continued her usual duties—she observed 10 years of service to Sweet Briar this spring—caring for the permanent collection, facilitating access to the collection for professors and students, and managing the installation of exhibitions. She also supervised one Arts Management practicum student in the fall. Her position remained part time (600 hours/year from late August to early June), though because of the transitional period Dean Green authorized additional hours as needed. Her total for the year reached approximately 670; of these, Ms. McDearmon estimated that 40 were spent scheduling, planning, and supervising school tours in the spring. Ms. McDearmon attended a Virginia Association of Museums professional development workshop on collections care, specifically dealing with mold abatement in a historic house, in Richmond in the fall. A professional painter, Ms. McDearmon also organized and showed her work in the exhibition 100 Views of High Peak, Part 2, on view in Babcock Gallery in June 2009.

Several student employees assisted Dr. Lawson and Ms. McDearmon during the year: Carolanne Bonanno ’09; Sandra Prentice ’10; and Sarah Strapp ’10. Alyson Napier ’08 (a graduate student in the education program this year) worked in the fall as web manager for the Galleries. In addition, Ms. Strapp worked as head Gallery guard, coordinating the guards’ training and schedules. A cadre of about 12 guards provided security in Pannell and Babcock during public hours throughout the year.

Volunteers also assisted the staff. The Pannell Docents student group (led by Sarah Hall ’09) provided tours for third-grade tours in the spring and the Friends of Art Junior club (led by Caroline Chappell ’09 and Sarah Strapp ’10) assisted with high school tours of the African art exhibition and special events. Art history students enrolled in the African art class taught by Professor Kimberly Morse Jones developed and led tours of the exhibition Telling Objects.

* Also see Dr. Lawson’s separate faculty activity report.
Budget

The Collection and Gallery operating budget (GALLRY) for 2008-2009 was $25,515.00. As of July 2, 2009 the budget recorded an unspent balance of $8,957.48. This will change slightly as the Business Office reconciles accounts and end-of-year bills. The savings are largely due to Ms. McDearmon’s thriftiness and Dr. Lawson’s reluctance, as interim director, to make large purchases and her control of printing, postage, shipping, and entertainment costs associated with exhibitions.

Development

The Collection and Galleries benefitted this year from two grants secured by Ms. Lane in 2007-2008. These were a special project grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) to support the exhibition Telling Objects and support from Heritage Preservation (through agreements with the Institute for Museum and Library Services and the National Park Service/Department of the Interior) for a Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) survey.

The VCA approved support in the amount of $2,000.00 and sent an initial payment of $1,700.00. The VCA then announced 82% cuts to all grants. The Gallery staff used the $1,700.00 to underwrite the exhibition participation loan fee and the honorarium for a gallery talk by the exhibition’s curator. In consultation with grants officer Kathleen Placidi, Dr. Lawson decided to forgo the second VCA payment, traditionally paid at the project’s end, which would have amounted to only $54.00.

The CAP grant provided an allotment of $6,540.00 to pay for the professional services of conservators to assess the climate control situation in Pannell and related collection care issues, such as the 2007-2008 mold bloom in the print storage room. Heritage Preservation paid the fees directly to the surveyors. The Dean’s Office paid for the surveyors’ travel and accommodation costs.

Friends of Art (FOA), led by President Mary Jane Oliver Hubbard, continued to support the Art Collection. FOA published one issue of its members’ newsletter, Visions, in the fall. With the aid of the College’s Development Office, FOA mailed solicitations for new and renewed memberships to alumnae and other members of the Sweet Briar community deemed to have an interest in art. Total memberships and gifts this year were $22,924.00, a slight decline (probably due to the national economy) from 2007-2008. As of February 28, current memberships numbered 87, the bulk in the “individual” ($25.00/year) and “contributing” ($100.00/year) categories. Six “patron” level memberships contributed the majority of the funds ($8,500.00). Reporting to the FOA board at its March 29 meeting on campus, Terry Nash of the Development Office and FOA treasurer Elizabeth Aycock reported a cash balance as of February 28 of $91,860.00 and a current reserve fund of $73,605.00.

* For details of the FOA board meetings, see the group’s official minutes.
At its fall board meeting in New York, October 30-November 1, the group was asked by Dean Green and Dr. Lawson to suspend purchasing art for the permanent collection until climate control issues in Pannell can be resolved. The board agreed. Dean Green, Dr. Lawson, and Ms. Nash urged the board members to work closely with College staff and trustees to help raise the money that will be needed for renovations in Pannell. This was reiterated at the spring meeting.

Acquisitions

Despite the hiatus in FOA’s art purchases, several gifts were received:

Catherine Redmond
*Manhattan Evening*, 1993
acrylic on board
6 5/8 x 9 5/8 inches (sight)
signed “CR 93” LR
Gift of Louis Newman, 2008
2008.005

Judy Pfaff
*For Andre*, 2002
letterpress on paper
8 ½ x 11 3/4 inches (sight)
signed “J. Pfaff 2002” LR
Gift of Louis Newman, 2008
2008.006

Cecily Kahn
*Untitled (101)*, 2002
acrylic on paper
11 x 7 ½ inches (sight)
signed “Cecily Kahn 2002” LL
Gift of Louis Newman, 2008
2008.007

Virginia McLaws (1872-1967)
*Portrait of Meta Glass*, 1939
oil on canvas board
23 ¼ x 19 ¼ inches (framed)
Gift of the family of Kay Norris Kelley
Class of 1926
2008.008

Exhibitions and Programs

Pannell Gallery was open during the academic year on its traditional schedule: Sunday, Monday, Friday 1-5 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 1-9:30 p.m. (37 ½ hours/week). Babcock and Benedict Galleries were open when the buildings were open. All Galleries were also open for various special events and receptions throughout the year.

Pannell Gallery

*Works of Art from the Sweet Briar College Art Collection*
September 1-December 5, 2008
Reception October 10.

*Telling Objects: African Art from the Permanent Collection of the Longwood Center for the Visual Arts*
January 29-April 5, 2009
Gallery talk by LCVA director K. Johnson Bowles January 29.
Lectures sponsored by the SBC Lectures and Events Committee, organized by the Anthropology Department (Prof. Debbie Durham)
February 3 Suzanne Blier, Harvard University
February 18 Mary Jo Arnoldi, Smithsonian Institution
March 3 Misty Bastian, Franklin and Marshall College

The Magnificent Seven: Senior Show 2009
April 17-May 16, 2009
Reception April 17.

Coming Home: Alumnae Art Exhibition 2009
May 22-24, 2009
Reception (sponsored by FOA) May 22.

Babcock Gallery

Regula Franz: Photographs
September 18-December 5, 2008
Gallery talk by the artist and reception September 18.

Pamela W. Wallace: Encaustics, Mixed Media and Prints
January 22-March 13, 2009
Gallery talk by the artist and reception January 22.

Megan Marlatt: Paintings and Works on Paper
March 26-May 24, 2009
Gallery talk by the artist and reception March 26.

Benedict Gallery

Ivar Strand: Paintings
September 25, 2008-February 8, 2009
Gallery talk by the artist and reception September 25.

It’s Not ElementaryXIX
February 12-May 24, 2009
Reception February 12.

Tours and Classes

Professor Hamilton held Introduction to Art History classes in Pannell in the fall and spring and Ms. Carr also held Arts Management 105 there in the fall. Professor Morse Jones held an African art class in Pannell during the run of Telling Objects. During that show, anthropology classes led by Professor Debbie Durham and Studio Art classes led by Professor John Morgan also made frequent visits. In the spring Studio Art seniors met
in Pannell several times as part of their Senior Seminar course and the Art History majors met there to present their final projects.

The exhibition *Telling Objects* was supported by a host of tours for the Amherst County community. In March several hundred ninth-graders from Amherst visited the exhibition, as did Nelson County middle-school art students and Amherst third-graders. In March and April Amherst third-graders also visited the Greek and Roman artifacts installation and toured campus looking at architecture, taking part in their annual visit hosted by the Pannell Docents student group.

In February, Pannell Gallery served as a venue for a Girl Scout arts workshop on Japanese woodblock prints led by Professor Hamilton and student volunteers. Authentic examples from the print collection were featured.

The Galleries participated in Arts Day, for Amherst County fifth-graders, by providing an activity in the Megan Marlatt painting exhibition in Babcock. In the absence of regular staff, the Gallery provided the services of Ms. Amanda Sandos, a local artist and writer, who led the children in an exploration and discussion of Marlatt’s images.

About 55 works from the print collection were used by seven classes comprising about 50 students and five professors—from Art History, Studio Art, and Arts Management—for instruction and research projects throughout the year.

**Attendance and Publicity**

**Attendance**

Attendance in Pannell was approximately 4,700, about evenly divided between fall and spring semesters. Artists’ gallery talks and receptions in Babcock and Benedict averaged 60 attendees. Conservatively, the Galleries together hosted 5,000 visits. This might be estimated to be as high as 5,500 if accounting for unrecorded class visits (for example Studio Art classes to Babcock exhibitions), unrecorded visits by the general public (for example to see the first installment of *100 Views of High Peak* in July 2008), and campus events such as Arts Day and Babcock theater performances.

**Publicity**

Postcards were mailed to approximately 400 addresses (FOA and regional arts organizations, members of the sweet Briar community, and College’s friends) for each exhibition in Babcock and the Ivar Strand exhibition in Benedict. The Senior Show mailing was sent to the same addresses as well as to friends and family of the students.

* Figures are compiled by counting and by estimate. This includes special events, classes and tours. Attendance in Babcock and Benedict Galleries is difficult to calculate since guards are not on duty when the exhibitions are open and both areas also serve as general purpose areas.
The alumnae exhibition was advertised via Alumnae Office mailings and announcements for Reunion. *It's Not Elementary* was advertised to families and the Sweet Briar community. All exhibitions and related programs were included in the College-wide arts calendar produced by the College Relations Office and in the FOA newsletter, *Visions*. Exhibitions and related programs were featured on the College’s electronic events calendar and general announcements were distributed via campus e-mail.

News releases on all exhibitions were written and distributed by the staff of the College Relations Office to its standard roster of local and regional news outlets. The Lynchburg *News and Advance* ran a feature story on the fall installation of the permanent collection.

The Galleries web page (www.artgallery.sbc.edu) was maintained in the fall by Alyson Napier. In addition to sections devoted to the permanent collection and the Galleries’ history, the web page features exhibition and related event schedules.

**Facility and Collections Care**

In early September the staff hosted peer reviewers Michael Henry and Wendy Jessup under the auspices of the Conservation assessment program. * Spending two days on campus, Mr. Henry and Ms. Jessup met with Galleries staff, Dean Green, John Jaffe and Lisa Johnston of Cochran Library, and Steve Bailey from the Physical Plant Department. The purpose of the survey was to observe and advise on climate control issues in Pannell affecting the art collection as well as the rare book collection.

Dr. Lawson met with Rich Meyer (Physical Plant) and representatives of Campbell Insurance to review in a very general fashion the art collection coverage. No changes were made. The Galleries staff recorded no damages to works of art during the year and made no insurance claims.

Ms. McDearmon and her student assistants inventoried the Garth collection of Virginia archeological materials and relocated it from the painting storage vault to the archeology lab/office in Pannell. This frees up much-needed space in painting storage room bins and makes the material more readily available to professors.

In the fall, two Arts Management practicum students worked with Dr. Lawson to begin a long-overdue inventory of the “decorative collection”* stored in Babcock.

In the early summer, staff removed scores of paintings and prints from Sweet Briar House in advance of the change in College leadership and planned renovations.

Equipment failure in June necessitated the replacement of the stand-alone HVAC system in Pannell 09 (painting storage).

---

* For full information refer to the CAP final report.
* Paintings, prints, and photographs of moderate significance available for display in offices and other public areas on campus.