



Stucco Maya relief panel, a replica of which is featured in *Maya: Lords of Time*, carved around 450 CE in Copan. Photo courtesy of the Penn Museum.

McCLUNG MUSEUM
of Natural History and Culture

QUARTERLY

Issue No. 01

Letter from the Director



In November 1990, we began a monthly, two-page newsletter for members and other friends of the museum. With this issue we debut a quarterly newsletter, which delivers a fresh perspective on museum activities and highlights the exciting outreach enabled by your support. I hope you like our new format and I welcome your comments.

We will continue to keep our members up to date on our many events and programs with our monthly e-newsletter. If you don't already receive our e-newsletter, we invite you to update your e-mail address (more information on the back).

Based on the numbers we've seen in the last six months of 2015, we believe next year will be a banner one for attendance, programming, and research. Our success, of course, is made possible by the financial support you—our members and friends—provide each year. The museum staff, students, and volunteers thank you.

Jefferson Chapman, Director

Special Exhibition

The new special exhibition, *Maya: Lords of Time*, is on view through May 22, 2016.

Using touchscreen interactives, full-sized replicas of Maya monuments, and Central American artifacts, the exhibition tells the story of how kings used calendars to assert their royal power and to construct histories touting their conquests.

From colorful pots depicting warriors and gods to intricate jade jewelry, the objects in the exhibition explain archaeological discoveries about kings as well as Mayan writing and the calendar. This time-ordered universe continues to be important to the Maya people today.

A variety of public programs are planned in conjunction with *Maya: Lords of Time*. In addition to a lecture about the Maya collapse on April 5 by archaeologist James J. Aimers of State University of New York at Geneseo, anthropologist Edward Fischer of Vanderbilt University will give a talk on the contemporary Maya on February 25. A Maya Festival on April 9 will feature local Maya craftspeople and musicians, and the March 7 and April 18 Stroller Tours will focus on the Mayan calendar and folktales.

The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology organized this exhibition. More information on programming is available online at tiny.utk.edu/lordsoftime.



The museum serves more than 2,000 community members each year with free monthly family programming, providing fun educational activities that many area families might not otherwise be able to afford.



Support Our Family Program

With just \$240, you can help fund one free Family Fun Day—a core part of the museum's community outreach. Learn more about how you can support the museum at tiny.utk.edu/mcclunggiving.

Current Research

Kristin Irwin is a senior environmental studies major at UT who has been working with Natural History Curator Gerry Dinkins for one year as a collections assistant in the malacology lab. Prior to being hired, she was a volunteer in the malacology lab and helped do some of the preliminary work accessioning aquatic and land snails.

The current catalogued collection is an incredibly valuable resource consisting of more than 100,000 specimens, including every species of freshwater mussel known to occur in the state of Tennessee as well as many extinct and federally threatened and endangered species. The collection's overall number of freshwater mussel specimens and species rivals the Smithsonian's collection.

Over the past year, Irwin has been cataloguing the museum's vast backlog of collections of freshwater mussels and snails and terrestrial snails, resulting in a 127 percent increase in the number of catalogued specimens in the P. W. Parmalee Malacology Collection. Collections work like Irwin's, funded in part by museum membership and donations, greatly expands the museum's research capability and accessibility. By cataloguing these specimens—which come from state and federal agencies as well as private donors—the collections become accessible to agencies, researchers, and students, who can then use them in their research projects.

Irwin also used the collections in her own undergraduate research comparing archaeological shells—some around 2,000 years old—to modern shells of the same species. Her comparison of the growth bands on archaeological and modern shells implies that modern shells are growing faster, which has important implications for water quality issues and land use changes. The museum looks forward to having Irwin use the collections further in her future research as she pursues a master's degree in UT's Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries in 2016.



Community Engagement

The museum has been working to create new types of programming to engage diverse audiences, to collaborate with other university departments, and to connect the university and local communities with one another.

Tibetan Monks Construct Sand Mandala

Tibetan monks from the Drepung Loseling Monastery in Atlanta, Georgia, created an intricate mandala in the museum as part of programming related to *Embodying Enlightenment: Buddhist Art of the Himalayas*. The mandala, constructed over a week in September 2015 and made of millions of grains of sand, was destroyed shortly after its completion as a metaphor for the impermanence of life.

The museum had approximately 3,000 visitors during the week the monks constructed the mandala, including several UT art history and religion classes that used the opportunity to talk about Buddhist iconography and ritual in their coursework.

Geography Department Displays Museum's Maps

The museum recently hung twenty-seven maps in UT's Burchfiel Geography Building, adding to several dozen already on display. The maps, which depict Europe and other parts of the world from the 1500s through the 1800s, come from a collection of 200 rare maps gifted to the museum last year by Jeffery M. Leving of Chicago.

Henri Grissino-Mayer, professor of geography, notes the maps create a connection between the department and McClung's collections and serve to remind students, professors, and visitors of "the importance of space and place in human history, that to know *where* things are is to know better *why* they are."

UT Scholars Help Host *Can You Dig It?*

For the past three years, faculty and students from UT's anthropology, art, classics, earth and planetary sciences, and religious studies departments have made the museum's *Can You Dig It?* program possible. Observing both International Archaeology Day and National Fossil Day, the fall program draws hundreds of people and showcases research in archaeology, paleontology, and geology.

The catch—it must be interesting to families with children. This hasn't been difficult for most faculty and students, who helped identify visitors' artifacts and objects and staffed tables featuring activities and crafts for children.

The partnership underscores how the museum is collaborating with UT departments to make research at the museum and the university more accessible to the public.

New Acquisition

The museum acquired an early Chinese Buddhist stela, or relief sculpture, currently on view at the museum.

Gifted by Chinese art collectors Colin Johnstone and John Fong of Philadelphia, the sculpture is made of painted limestone and once graced a Buddhist temple. The piece is particularly important as it serves as an example of the first distinctively Chinese style of Buddhist art, which emerged during the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534). In it, a central Buddha figure is flanked by dragons, lotus flowers, and two *bodhisattvas*, or heavenly beings.

Museum Director Jeff Chapman notes that the sculpture is "an extraordinarily significant addition" to the museum's growing Chinese art collection, which includes a sixth-century stone Buddhist sculpture, also a gift of Johnstone and Fong, a large collection of Tang dynasty (618–906) ceramics from Simone and Alan Hartman, a Ming dynasty gilt lacquer Buddha from the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, and other key examples of Chinese art traditions that continue today.



Professor Henri Grissino-Mayer with the rare maps in the Burchfiel Geography Building.



Professor Stephanie Drumheller-Horton shares her research on crocodilian bite marks during *Can You Dig It?*



A Tibetan monk works on the sand mandala in the museum.



In the Spotlight

Melinda Narro, who works in the Museum Store and as a volunteer, graduated in December from UT with a degree in art history. Her enthusiasm is contagious, whether she is welcoming visitors and volunteering at museum events or helping research a gilt Buddha in our collections. We wish her all the best as she pursues a career in the arts.



Holding history in their hands. Students get up close and personal with objects from the McClung's collections in the object study room. UT history students engage in lively discussion about everyday life and economics during the eighteenth century.



People and Events



A.



B.

A. Through the Lens Stroller Tour. Children participate in an art project with their caregivers during a June Stroller Tour in conjunction with the special exhibition *Through the Lens: Botanical Photography of Alan S. Heilman*.



C.

B. U.S. Bank Sponsors Second Boomsday Gala. (L to R) Tamara Boyer, vice president, and Rebecca Franse, client representative, of U.S. Bank's Private Client Group; Barbara Forbes; Bill Forbes, market president, U.S. Bank.

C. Staff and Supporters Gather During Sand Mandala Creation. (L to R) Lindsey Wainwright, academic coordinator; Jeffery Davis, UT professor; Tom Cleland, member; Maksims Gamolins, Milarepa Ösel Chö Dzong Retreat Center; Stephanie Cramer, UT retiree; Stacy Palado, associate director of external relations; Prasad Hutter, member.



D.



E.

D. Embodying Enlightenment Family Day. A young visitor created positive messages inspired by Tibetan prayer flags during a September Family Day related to the special exhibition *Embodying Enlightenment*.

E. Boomsday Gala Guests in Geology Gallery. (L to R) Nancy Hays, Katie Hays, Rosemary Gilliam, and Rena McAlister enjoy food, fun, and entertainment while supporting education outreach programs at the museum.

Museum Store: Artist Profile

Unique earrings and necklaces by local Knoxville jewelry designer Veronica Hahn are now available in the Museum Store. Hahn, who has a BFA in design from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and a master's degree from Columbia University in New York City, uses polymer clay to create designs inspired by the beauty of the natural world.





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1327 Circle Park Drive
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Event Calendar

February

2/8, 10 am, Stroller Tour: Love Around the World

2/21, 2 pm, Civil War Lecture Series

2/25, 5:15 pm, Exhibition Lecture:

“The Once and Future Maya—Cultural Revival
and Resurgence in the Modern World”

2/27, 1-4 pm, Family Fun Day:

Celebrating African American History

March

3/7, 10 am, Stroller Tour: The Mayan Calendar

3/20, 2 pm, Civil War Lecture Series

April

4/9, 1-4 pm, Family Fun Day: Maya Festival

4/18, 10 am, Stroller Tour: Mayan Folktales

4/24, 2 pm, Civil War Lecture Series

New Year, New Goals

January may have passed, but the year is just beginning. Have you thought about upgrading your membership this year? An increase of just \$50 can cover the cost of art supplies for one Stroller Tour.

Visit mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/membership.

Recently Moved? New E-mail Address? Let Us Know!

With the switch to a quarterly newsletter format it's even more important that we have updated contact information from our members. Visit tiny.utk.edu/mcclungupdate or call 865-974-2144 to update your information.