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Smith College / Smithsonian Institution Internship Program

2015 Research Project Proposal

Name of Supervisor(s): Greg Adams and Stephanie Smith

Department or Office: Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives & Collections   Museum/Unit: CFCH

Phone Number: Greg (202) 633-6512; Stephanie (202) 633-6439

Email Address: adams@si.edu; steph@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections is the home of several major recording collections and papers including Folkways Records, and also houses the written, audio, and visual records of projects and exhibits sponsored by the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, most notably the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. (Please see http://www.folklife.si.edu(center/archives/archives_collections.html for additional information on some of our collections.) The archives have strong holdings of world ethnic music traditions, early country music and bluegrass, blues, and the Folk Revival on Folkways and other labels available for in-house listening and research, as well as documentation (photos, audio and video tapes) from the Smithsonian Folklife Festival going back to 1967. The Archives also have several significant photograph collections.

In 2008, the Smithsonian’s paper conservator Nora Lockshin conducted a preservation survey on the paper collections in the Rinzler Archives, resulting in a detailed report with recommendations for preservation and access. The archivists are engaged in a long-term initiative to improve the overall health of the paper collections by rehousing and more fully processing them. The archivists are currently implementing preservation measures recommended by Lockshin in the preservation survey. As part of our broad collections processing and preservation initiative, the archivists are focusing on the creation or enhancement of inventories and finding aids for various collections and sub-collections, as well as preparing collection for digitization. The present goal for the Archives is to get more collections information online so that this information is more accessible to researchers and the general public.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The duties of this project will be to assist the processing archivist with processing activities focused on the business papers of the Moses and Frances Asch Collection. This collection documents the work, life, and business of Moses Asch (1905-1986). The collection includes personal papers, business records, correspondence, notes, photographs, and multi-format audio materials.

In 1948, Moses Asch co-founded Folkways Records with Marian Distler (ca 1919-1964) and went on to produce over 2,100 Folkways recordings. The son of Yiddish author Sholem Asch, Asch was born in Poland and came to New York as a youth. He developed relationships with iconic figures such as Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Langston Hughes, Mary Lou Williams, Ossie Davis, and Ella Jenkins. He recorded Margaret Mead and W.E.B. Du Bois. Ethnographers sent him field recordings. He had Sam Charters, Harold Courlander, Harry Smith, Fred Ramsey, John Cohen, and Mike Seeger develop recording series and compilations. He gave Guy Carawan a tape recorder to document the
African American Civil Rights Movement. Asch formed a partnership with Norman Granz for a jazz series. He released protest music of the 1960s. He also documented computer music, the sounds of frogs, and the streets of New York. Asch used Ben Shahn artwork for album covers and pioneered the use of detailed liner notes. The Smithsonian’s acquisition of Folkways Records, initiated by Ralph Rinzler before Moe’s death, was completed by the Asch family in 1987 (for more information, see http://www.folklife.si.edu/center/legacy/asch.aspx).

The nature and scope of the work will be to complete the archival series and subseries arrangement for all of the Asch business papers, approximately 105 cubic feet of papers, photographs, ephemera, ledgers, correspondence, tax and legal materials, and publishing and production. The intern would have the chance to contribute to two overarching tasks. First, she will assist the processing archivist with finalizing subseries arrangements, updating descriptions that will eventually be ingested into Archivists’ Toolkit (archives management system), and making recommendations for targeting specific portions of the papers as we prepare to digitize the collection. Second, she will work with the digitization archivist to create selection criteria for the digitization of the paper records. Due to the large size of this collection, we will have to think creatively about what we will spend time digitizing, and what our users will find most valuable in a digital resource of this collection.

This project is ideal for an intern with an interest in archival work and digitization as well as coursework covering vernacular music traditions, popular music, music history, ethnomusicology, American studies, social history, folklore, visual media, or photography. Experience in a library or archives would be helpful, but not required.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

One possible research product for the Fall 2015 Smith College intern would be to report on subsequent processing progress for the Asch business papers—fine tuning the subseries arrangements, addressing preservation issues, and discussing the creation of a metric for targeted digitization. The intern could also further expand the current finding aid for the Asch papers as relates to the collection’s scope and compiling more granular information about specific record groups that would be most desirable to researchers. Any updated information would be a product that could be displayed online through the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (http://www.siris.si.edu). Alternately, the project could be a research paper about the Asch business papers or an aspect of the larger collection, based on the materials in the collection and other related materials.

The intern would also have the opportunity to create one or more SI Collections Blog posts about the collection, the significance of the Asch business papers (see the following link for an example of a potential blog post: http://si-siris.blogspot.com/2011/03/voice-from-mountains.html).
1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The Archives Center at the National Museum of American History is committed to broadening access, revitalizing education, utilizing collections in novel ways, and encouraging new methods of scholarship that involve emerging technologies. It strives to experiment with surprising ways to think about and present American history, make collections accessible and relevant across the nation and around the world, and build important new constituencies. Currently the Center is working to enhance access to archival collections relating to African Americans. These materials have high research value and address, among others, such topics as the civil rights movement, District of Columbia and United States culture and politics, and everyday life. In addition to paper-based textual records, many of these collections contain photographs, motion picture films, videotapes, and sound recordings. Despite their importance to the scholarly community these materials are currently "hidden" because they have not been processed or fully catalogued.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The intern will primarily be responsible for physically arranging materials in the Archives Center that relate to African Americans. This will include conducting research on the subject of the collection, creating custom housing for fragile and delicate materials and developing an intellectual framework for arranging these materials for research use. The intern will also be required to write a narrative about the history or background of the creator along with a description of the materials and their research value. A listing of the contents of each collection will also be required and will serve as part of a finding aid.

The intern should have solid research and writing skills and have completed courses with components in 19th and 20th century United States and African American history. Courses with a focus in music, photography, material culture, history of marketing, advertising, theater, and race relations would most likely be helpful.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:
There is a wealth of primary materials within the collections in the Archives Center relating to African Americans, consumer culture, music, science and technology, photography and women studies all of which yield great potential for interesting and informative research products. While the Archives Center has been very successful in identifying, acquiring and preserving these materials it has lacked the resources for creating innovative tools and products for presenting them to the public. The potential intern will build on their knowledge skills and research interests to develop either a paper based or digital project. Research products may include teaching guides, research papers, possible articles for publication or a virtual exhibit for the Archives Center's homepage. The intern will also be given time to explore the full range of collections at the Archives Center and other archival repositories as well as collections within the museum to compliment their end product.
1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage produces the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival, a ten-day outdoor cultural event on the National Mall, and occasional public programs at other times of the year. This research-based Festival features U.S. states, regions, foreign countries and themed programs each year. Preparations for the Festival include field and library research, and follow-ups on past Festivals include the creation of educational materials, exhibitions, and videos and other web content. The office also administers Folkways Recordings, the Ralph Rinzler Archives, Cultural Heritage Policy projects and other cultural heritage activities. For more information see www.folklife.si.edu

The supervisor is a Festival curator and education specialist with over 20 years experience at the Smithsonian Institution, and is also a Smith College graduate (Smith 1977).

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

Intern will aid research and outreach projects being developed by a partnership between the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and the ePals/Cricket Media organization. This partnership produced the Junior Folklorist Challenge in 2014 (see http://challenges.epals.com/folklife/ ), and in Spring of 2015 will pilot a special issue of the magazine Faces, which is part of the Cricket Media group (see http://www.cricketmag.com/FAC-FACES-Magazine-for-Kids-ages-9-14 ). In Fall of 2015, a new Junior Folklorist Challenge will be launched, and research on a new issue of Faces will begin, centered around some appropriate aspect of the culture of the state of California, to be featured at the 2016 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Duties of the intern will be to help promote the Challenge to U.S.-based schools and educational organizations, to help keep the content on the site (including videos and question-and-answer information sections) refreshed during the Challenge period, and to help organize and, if possible depending on calendar for the Challenge (which is still being developed), help judge the entries from U.S.-based students. In addition, for the Faces issue, the intern will have the opportunity to conduct research for and author or co-author at least one of the features on the culture of California (which will center around either Native American group(s), or a specific immigrant group to California).

This is an ideal project for a student who wishes to pursue a career in teaching and/or cultural research and education, and who finds the idea of connecting U.S.-based students to their peers in other countries around the world intriguing and valuable. Every effort will be made, within the framework described
above, to connect the project to special interests and academic/practical talents and career aspirations of the intern to the project. Some background in teaching (in-school, after school, summer camp, etc.) or coursework in education, as well as anthropology/cultural studies would be helpful for this internship. Conducting cultural research and the skill of writing for the general public, especially school-aged children, would also be helpful. Some web development and video skills would be helpful as well. The important thing, however, is for the intern to be highly interested in and motivated by the opportunity that this project presents.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

As stated above, the intern will be involved in research leading to the effective administration of the Junior Folklorist Challenge, as well as development of the Faces issue. The research products will include the intern's contribution to insuring that the Challenge is robust and attracts high-quality entries from the U.S. The Faces issue will result in the authorship or co-authorship of a short, student (sixth-grade and above) level article to be published in a Spring 2016 issue of the magazine. In addition, the intern will be expected to write an evaluation of the process of the Challenge in order to improve that process in coming years. The Challenge, in its second year, is still evolving, but has the potential to become a major force in cultural education for students aged 8 – 18 in the U.S. And around the world which aligns with many Common Core objectives. Last year, there were relatively few entries from the U.S. The right Smith intern could help foster these important educational tools administered by two powerful cultural education powerful (the Smithsonian and ePals/Cricket Media) which could be a major resume builder for graduate school applications and a future career in teaching and/or cultural research and education.
1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

I perform historical research that informs the history of the space sciences and especially 20th Century astronomy and astrophysics. I am responsible for museum collections in those areas. I also have active interests in astronomy education through our exhibitions, public observatory and planetarium. I work in an office setting with other curators and specialists and our main focus is on historical informed collecting in space history, as well as related exhibitry and public outreach.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

I am looking for a motivated researcher interested in one, or the other, or either of the following themes, areas I will be working in in Fall 2015:

a. Assessing the history of the search for life in the universe, from 1850 till now, with a view to determining what artifacts need to be preserved in order to best capture that search – its social, cultural, scientific and technical aspects. Perform detailed content analysis outlines of selected historical volumes on the subject.

b. Creating a detailed annotated timeline that documents the development of detectors for astronomical use, from the mid-19th century to the present. This timeline would then be used as basis for assessing how well the Smithsonian’s collections preserve this history and where it might be strengthened.

Specific areas of interest: History of Science and/or Technology, Museum Studies, and strong interest in astronomical hardware. Desired intern must be a skilled, thorough, and creative researcher, adept at working with electronic and paper sources to perform an exhaustive search of the existing literature. In addition, the intern must be able to read and summarize scholarly and non-academic articles and books, taking clear notes on sources with complete references maintained for any and all material gleaned. Intern should be willing and able to visit multiple sites (Museum archives, Library of Congress, etc.) to conduct research. Clear writing, analytical thinking, and attention to detail are all requirements. Demonstrations of success in previous research work and computer skills (such as manipulating PDFs) are highly desirable.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

Work will result in internal reports and memoranda, but if the intern desires it, we can work toward a publication, either print or electronic publication.
Smith College / Smithsonian Institution Internship Program

Research Project Proposal

Name of Supervisor(s): David Haberstich

Department or Office: Archives Center          Museum/Unit: NMAH

Phone Number: 202-633-3721          Email Address: haberstichd@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The Archives Center collects documents, manuscripts, photographs, other visual materials, and audio-visual items related to many facets of American history. Archives Center collections complement the Museum’s artifacts and are used for scholarly research, exhibitions, journalism, documentary film/video productions, school programs, and other research and educational activities. The Scurlock Studio collection contains photographs and business records of an important African American family-owned photographic studio in Washington which operated from 1911 to 1994. I am writing and editing a critical, scholarly book of essays related to the studio’s work and its position in social and cultural history, the history of art and photography, and a variety of other topics.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

This project would involve working with the Archives Center’s Glen Fishback collection. Fishback was a photographer, columnist, and teacher of photography who produced advertising photographs for photographic manufacturers, including Kalart electronic flashguns, taking frozen-action shots to show the capabilities of electronic flash. Our collection of his work, including photographic negatives and prints, correspondence, and business papers (such as materials related to Fishback’s photography columns and photography school), needs to be processed and described for our online catalog. Subject matter includes a wide variety of topics, primarily from the 1950s-1960s. The intern would help organize and catalog the collection, producing an archival finding aid. She would also do some limited rehousing of the collection and improve its storage environment, learning about archival and museum methodology. A background in the history of art and/or the history of photography would be helpful.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

The Fishback collection could yield a research paper about how magazine photography reinforced the optimistic attitudes of the 1950s in America; the use of nude photography in advertising and editorial use during the period; history of photographic education (we have other collections involving this topic), or a biographical essay about this relatively unknown photographer. In connection with the latter idea, Fishback’s photographer son, with whom I have been in contact, could provide additional information. There are a number of other photographic collections in the Archives Center which could serve as inspirations for biographical or critical essays, or studies in social and cultural history as revealed by our photographs.
1- Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office: A naturally occurring migratory flock of black crowned night herons [BCNH] reside at the Smithsonian’s National Zoo from March to September each year. The BCNH population is well known to local birders and is described in many birding guides as one of the best places to view the species in the Washington D.C. area. The colony has nested and bred here annually for nearly 100 years. Every March, 200+ birds arrive around the Bird House and begin nest-building. Chicks hatch May, June and July. By September, the colony has departed on their fall migration to spend the winter elsewhere. It is not known where the birds go once they leave the Zoo but Scientists from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center [SMBC] are tracking them using satellite telemetry. Concurrent to the satellite tracking, I am researching the history of the colony at the National Zoo. This includes documenting the date of first arrival at the National Zoo which is believed to be around 1911. Describing the history of the herons at the National Zoo will complement the research of SMBC scientists and enable Zoo staff to tell the whole story about the species at the National Zoo. This is important because the more we learn today about birds like the black crowned night heron, the more we can ensure that they will continue to arrive at traditional breeding grounds like the National Zoo and amaze visitors for years to come.

2- Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation: The intern will research the early history of the colony [1850-1950] using a variety of documents including historic field guides, books and archived Smithsonian materials. The work will occur in a variety of locations to include the Smithsonian National Zoo, the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, and the Library of Congress. An interest in ornithology is preferred but not required.

3- Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program: at the end of the internship, the student will generate a report outlining the history of the colony in the Washington DC area and the National Zoo. The information will eventually be used in a research paper.
1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The Archives Center collects documents, manuscripts, photographs, other visual materials, and audio-visual items related to many facets of American history. Archives Center collections complement the Museum’s artifacts and are used for scholarly research, exhibitions, journalism, documentary film/video productions, school programs, and other research and educational activities. The Scurlock Studio collection contains photographs and business records of an important African American family-owned photographic studio in Washington which operated from 1911 to 1994. I am writing and editing a critical, scholarly book of essays related to the studio’s work and its position in social and cultural history, the history of art and photography, and a variety of other topics.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The Archives Center has a number of collections containing fragile glass plate negatives which need to be scanned and catalogued into our online database according to archival standards and practices. Some of these plates date from the 1860s, while others were made from the 1890s to 1920s. The intern would learn how to identify various photographic processes, proper care and handling of early photographic materials, descriptive standards and practices, and professional digitization methods. As part of this work, she would also be able to straighten out some confusion and errors made during previous digitization projects, including re-scanning negatives or prints as needed. Course work in the history of art or the history of photography, as well as experience in digitizing images, would be helpful.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

The intern could pursue research projects related to the glass plate collections or any other Archives Center collections which interest her, whether photographic or not, although I am specifically interested in supervising projects related to visual images. Topics might include aspects of documentary photographs as historical evidence, critical-biographical essays on photographers represented in the collection. There are a number of photographic collections in the Archives Center which could serve as inspirations for biographical or critical essays, studies in social and cultural history as revealed by our photographs, etc.
Smith College / Smithsonian Institution Internship Program

Research Project Proposal

Name of Supervisor(s): Pamela M. Henson

Department or Office: Institutional History Division
Museum/Unit: SI Archives

Phone Number: 202-633-5907
Email Address: hensonp@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The Institutional History Division of Smithsonian Institution Archives is the public history office responsible for research and public outreach on the history of the Smithsonian Institution itself. Staff conduct an oral history project on the history of the Institution, supervise the research of pre and postdoctoral researchers, prepare websites, maintain databases and curate exhibits on SI history, respond to queries on SI history from Smithsonian management, scholars and the general public, and present public programs. Research topics include the history of museums, history of science, women’s history, and institutional history.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The intern could work on one of several possible projects include 1) processing oral history collections of interviews with Smithsonian staff; 2) conducting research on a specific topic to prepare web pages and online database entries [http://siarchives.si.edu/history]; or 3) assisting with public outreach programs. Recent projects have included preparations for the 50th anniversary of the National Museum of American History in 2014, how the Civil War affected the Smithsonian, and the history of forensic research at the Institution. The specific topic will be determined so it is compatible with the intern’s academic interests. The intern will gain experience in primary and secondary source research, by working with the archival, oral history and library collections of the Smithsonian, and hands-on experience in public history. The intern is also very likely to gain experience in digital history—presenting research results to the public via websites and other digital media.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

The intern can complete a research paper on a specific topic, such as the history of a museum, or significant event in Smithsonian history, such as World War I or the opening of the Hirshhorn Museum, or a biography of a Smithsonian figure, or outreach programs at the Institution. The student can also work on a “hands-on” project to gain practical experience, tied to the research paper. This might include processing an oral collection, writing blogs on their work, creating database entries that will be available on the website, draft website pages on some aspect of the history of the Institution, assist with a planned exhibition on the history of the Smithsonian or edit and prepare finding aids for oral history collections. The SI Archives Institutional History Division website can be found at: http://siarchives.si.edu/history and the databases are in the History of the Smithsonian catalog, found here: www.siris.si.edu. Blogs by previous interns can be found at http://siarchives.si.edu/blog.
Smith College / Smithsonian Institution Internship Program

Research Project Proposal

Name of Supervisor(s): Dr. Roger D. Launius

Department or Office: Assoc. Dir., Collections and Curatorial Affairs
                  Museum/Unit: NASM

Phone Number: 202-633-2428
Email Address: launiusr@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

   The Department of Collections and Curatorial Affairs consists of the research divisions of Aeronautics, Space History, and Earth and Planetary Studies, as well as Archives, Collections, Publications, Research Fellowships, and Web and New Media. It is the core function of the museum, charged with both the increase and diffusion of knowledge.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

   This is a project entitled "Seeds of Discovery: An Economic History of Innovation within NASA." It investigates an economic history of efforts within NASA to structure partnerships and other institutional arrangements as a means of promoting technological innovation and cost reduction. Some efforts succeeded; others did not. It examines NASA’s interactions with space companies, laboratories, government units, and other entities. During its history, NASA has developed a number of initiatives that have sought to reduce the cost of space flight or increase the amount of capacity that can be accommodated for a fixed cost. They fall under six broad categories. NASA has partnered with research laboratories to develop new products (like the Apollo guidance computer). It has used competitive mechanisms to spur innovation and restrain cost (such as the Discovery Program). The agency has provided reimbursable services in a competitive marketplace (such as the original space shuttle commercial payload pricing policy). It has employed inter-agency and international partnerships (such as those on the with DoD and private sector firms) as a means of cost-sharing. It has pioneered cooperative ventures first in the context of international relationships (such as NASA’s first bilateral agreement that made possible the flight of Ariel 1). Most significantly, it has entered into comprehensive commercial partnerships in which all sides bring resources to the endeavor (such as the X-33 and the COTS/CCDev programs).

   The intern will serve as research assistant for this project. She study will explore and analyze historical episodes in America relating to the critical activities discussed above. Through these case studies we may learn better how to apply more effectively already tested models of government support for commercial activities, and the interactions of both the public and private spheres in this new opportunity zone in space.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

   The intern will undertake research on specific issues concerning this study, helping to frame questions, seeking to fill in information necessary to answer questions, writing individual background pieces, and working with others to complete the research and writing project,
including undertaking photo research and completing licensing issues. The intern would have the opportunity to develop firsthand knowledge of how a complex exhibit project with a myriad of participants is created.

Intern will also work with the PI to research these various efforts. She must be a skilled, thorough, and creative researcher, adept at working with electronic and paper sources to perform an exhaustive search of the existing literature. In addition, the intern must be able to read and summarize scholarly and non-academic articles and books, taking clear notes on sources with complete references maintained for any and all material gleaned. Intern should be willing and able to visit multiple sites (Museum archives, Library of Congress, etc.) to conduct research. Clear writing, analytical thinking, and attention to detail are all requirements. Demonstrations of success in previous research work and computer skills (such as manipulating PDFs) are necessary.
Smith College / Smithsonian Institution Internship Program

Research Project Proposal

Name of Supervisor(s): Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.

Department or Office: Office of Curatorial Affairs  Museum/Unit: NMAH/Archives Center

Phone Number: (202) 633-3729  Email Address: robinsonf@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

My current research focuses on a work in progress entitled: *The Home Place: A Southern Maryland Family and Their Farm, 1843-1975*. The book at its core centers on the Robinson family and the tobacco farm they owned for 132 years in Prince George’s County, Maryland exploring family, farming, and labor during the stated time period. I am employed as an Archives Specialist in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History. The Archives Center supports the mission of the National Museum of American History by preserving and providing access to documentary evidence of American’s past. The Archives Center’s collection complement the museum’s artifacts and are used for scholarly research, exhibitions, journalism, documentary productions, school programs, and other research and education activities. Over 1,300 Archives Center collections occupy more than 18,000 feet of shelving. In addition to paper-based textual records, many collections contain photographs, motion picture films, videotapes, and sound recordings. The broad topics of technology, advertising, and music offer one way to categorize the Archives Center’s varied holdings. The collections are also rich in material that cuts across these subjects.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The project will involve reading, extracting relevant information, documenting findings, and writing research reports. The intern will primarily research in one specific collection: The Robinson and Via Family Papers, 1845-2010 (bulk 1872-2000) (AC/NMAH AC0475) primarily working with the photography portion of this collection with an emphasis on portrayal of women focusing on dress and costume to compile a fashion history of the women photographed, both studio portraits and candids. There is an extensive collection of costume (dress, jewelry, millinery, etc.) in the Division of Home and Community Life, NMAH for at least two of the women.

The intern will focus their research on the time period 1865-2000. The intern will compile a documented and footnoted report specific to costume that these women have chosen to wear for studio portraits and for candid shots. Focusing on the women photographed the intern will detail style, construction, possible materials used, possible point of purchase (mail order, homemade, store bought), and how these styles relate to the broader scope of women’s dress in the given time period when the photograph was taken (is it current or a fashion trend behind?). Where is costume/dress mentioned in the written record within the collection and does it relate specifically to the photographs in the collection? The intern will research comparable style dress in mail order catalogues, dress patterns, and similar resources to discern the ancestry of the dress—more specifically the style of dress—was it seen in a catalogue and homemade, is there a dress pattern that matches the dress, is it ready to wear bought from a department store or mail order? Where did the dress or idea for the dress most likely come from? Research will be
complemented with focused search in the trade catalogues at the Archives Center, Smithsonian libraries and/or the Library of Congress and other repositories in the area. Journals on JSTOR, on-line databases (ProQuest, Ancestry.com, etc.) newspapers on microfilm at the Library of Congress and relevant records at the National Archives are also available as well as SI on-line databases. There is also an extensive collection of costume (dress, jewelry, etc.) in the Division of Home and Community Life that may be accessed.

The intern should have solid research and writing skills and have completed courses with components in antebellum, Reconstruction and 20th century United States and women’s history. Courses with a focus or segment in dress, design, photography, decorative arts, material culture, history of marketing, antebellum mid-Atlantic agriculture, antebellum, study in gender and clothing would most likely be helpful.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

There is a wealth of primary sources within the 165 year time span of the Robinson and Via Family Papers: ledgers, correspondence (personal and business), financial records, business and personal ephemera, product cookbooks, farm journals and diaries, film–all of these may yield fertile ground for an interesting and informative research product. Building on their knowledge skills and research interests the intern may develop a paper based on material discovered and available in this collection or from their assigned project. Research products that may be created from this internship and project are: teaching guides, gender studies papers, possible articles for publication or research papers centering on gender roles and women’s studies, labor, agriculture, food preparation and production, family, photography, home movies, and costume. The intern will also be given time to explore the full range of collections at the Archives Center and as time permits within the museum and other repositories with an eye to complimenting their end product.
1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The Nutrition Laboratory at the Smithsonian National Zoological Park focuses on three areas of basic and applied research: clinical nutrition, milk composition, and nutritional ecology. We are one of the few zoos in the world with a comprehensive on-site nutrition lab. Michael Power conducts and oversees research in all areas; but is especially interested in issues of nutrition related to the costs and consequences of female mammal reproduction. Mike Maslanka focuses on clinical nutrition, including the nutritional assessment of animals and their feeds, and developing appropriate diets.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

Nutrition Lab interns typically perform tasks both individually and as a team. There are always multiple projects being undertaken, and which ones an intern assists with is determined by Dr. Power with regard for the intern’s interests and skill set. An intern will always be involved with more than one project. Projects range from basic science questions to practical application of lab work in assessing foods to be fed the zoo animals. The current projects planned for this summer include:

1) longitudinal changes in milk composition in mammals and their relation to infant growth
2) evaluation of diets and diet testing for quality control for selected species within the zoo’s collection.
3) Assaying plant materials for nutrient composition to support projects investigating the nutritional ecology of wild animals in situ

Interns will largely perform laboratory assays on biological samples (e.g. milk, insects, plant materials). Interns will be responsible for recording all data into a lab book, entering the data into spreadsheets, and preparing summaries of the results. Interns are expected to be present Monday to Friday, 8am – 4pm; however, the occasional weekend project may arise, in which case other days off will be taken in exchange. Interns will have a rotation to the zoo’s commissary to experience diet preparation and activities necessary to maintaining a centralized diet management system for zoo animals.

Learning objectives:

Interns will be trained to become proficient in a number of laboratory analytical techniques. Interns will be trained in the basics of animal body condition scoring. Interns will be trained how to collect, organize, and perform preliminary analysis of nutritional research data. Interns will attend 3 - 4 lectures on research topics in biology. Interns will read 3 – 4 journal articles relevant to the research studies in which they are involved. Interns are encouraged to take advantage of scheduled zoo activities, such as Pathology Rounds and NZP Lectures/Seminars as part of their internship time. Interns will prepare a final report on their activities, listing techniques learned, assays completed, brief summary of data produced, and on how this internship has influenced their thinking regarding their future career and educational goals.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

Interns perform tasks for more than one project and receive training in many areas related to clinical nutrition and nutritional research. Two of the main projects for this coming fall will be: Gombe chimpanzee nutritional ecology, assaying plant foods collected in Gombe Tanzania; and milk composition of a variety of species including gorillas and orangutans. In both projects there will be opportunities for interns to produce a summary of analytical findings, informed by the lectures and specific instruction provided by the supervisors and post doctoral fellow in the lab.
Name of Supervisor(s): Fath Davis Ruffins
Department or Office: Home and Community Life
Museum/Unit: NMAH
Phone Number: 202 633-3730
Email Address: ruffinsf@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

Within NMAH, the Division of Home and Community Life focuses on the architecture, foodways, and lifeways of Americans. This newly created division incorporates collections such as Ceramics and Glass, Costume, Textiles, Domestic Life (home furniture and furnishings; toys, games, and dolls; kitchenware; architecture, etc.). In addition, this Division holds collections on various American racial and ethnic groups, immigration, religion, folk music, and other materials. Within this division, I have a particular specialty in African American History and Culture as well as in immigration and ethnic history.

Throughout 2015, I will be working as a curator for a major exhibition project titled: Our American Journey: Many Voices, One Nation which is to open in 2016. This exhibition is a 21st century presentation about the "peopling of the nation" and the cultural complexities out of which American society has emerged. During 2015, this project will be in the final stages of development, especially working on the planning of the audiovisual pieces, the educational elements and curricula, and the public programs that will accompany the opening of the exhibition. Also, I will be working on several essays that involve the analysis of African American collections and public history.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

Serving as a “junior curator” under my direction would allow the Smith student to participate in an extensive graphics and artifactual research process necessary for the interpretive development of the audiovisual and educational aspects of a major exhibition; to participate in the intellectual process for acquiring and selecting objects, and other project related tasks. The student will learn a great deal about how the museum selects and prepares collections; about the research and interpretive elements of curatorial work; and about the preparation and development of public programming.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program.

This is an educational opportunity for someone with a background in American Studies or U.S. History, (or perhaps Ethnomusicology, Folklore, Anthropology, Cultural Geography, or Ethnic Studies or African American Studies) to utilize their prior training and apply this knowledge to the particular situation of producing an exhibition and its attendant programming. In order to do this, the student will need to analyze historical and contemporary texts, prepare interpretive strategies based on those texts and their object research, and formulate component ideas and design strategies for the audiovisual elements of the exhibition and for a variety of different kinds of educational and public programming. The student will have the choice of writing a traditional term paper or developing a research “notebook” for a specific section or program of the exhibition.
Smith College - Smithsonian Institution Internship Project
Research Project Proposal, 2015
Name of Advisor: Joanna C. Scherer, Emeritus Anthropologist
Department or Office: Department of Anthropology
Bureau: National Museum of Natural History
Telephone & E-mail: (202) 633-1962; schererj@si.edu

1. Please provide background information on the work of your office and own research:
   For advisor’s independent research see the following Smithsonian web sites:
   http://www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/wrensted
   http://www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/redcloud/
   And publications:

2. Describe the proposed research projects including duties, nature and scope of the work, and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation to undertake this project:
   Research on the subjects of North American Indian ethnology and photography and the history of anthropology.
   Current projects:
   1-Ongoing projects include the transcription of Alice C. Fletcher’s original field notebook from her work among the Sioux and Omaha in 1881-1882. I am also preparing a second publication on A.C. Fletcher. This work-in-progress includes Fletcher’s firsthand observations of the Sioux Sun Dance and publication of her “Going Home with the Indians” an account of her escorting Sioux students from Carlisle Indian Industrial School back to their reservations for their summer vacation.
   2-An in-depth study of iconic images to bring back their identities such as “Migrant Mother” the famous photo by Dorothea Lange, 1936.
   3-Production of web sites of several of advisor’s most well-known articles on North American Indian photography.
   4-Historical research on two American artists: Raphael Strauss and W. Durette Stokes.

No courses required. Must have strong interest in Anthropology and/or American History and Native Americans. Attention to details is required and the ability to work independently.
3. Describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smiths College Program:

Research products could include a paper on many aspects of Alice Fletcher’s life and career especially comparing her unpublished manuscript with various published articles on subjects such as Omaha/Sioux women’s societies, subsistence activities, Indian myths, the reservation system, and mission school life. Other products could include creation of a web site on a number of historical photo research projects relating to advisor’s work, and a paper on unlimited number of photographers and artists who specialized in American Indian images. I will train the intern in my research methods and office procedures and will oversee the work product. The intern is expected to keep a journal during the course of the internship that will record the research, readings and work completed. Research will primarily be conducted at the Smithsonian’s Department of Anthropology Library, supervisor’s office in the National Museum of Natural History and National Anthropological Archives. Some research may be conducted at the Library of Congress and the National Archives and Records Administration. The goal of this internship is to provide the student with a working appreciation of research necessary to bring academic materials, mainly on North American Indians, to the public, either through exhibit or publication.
1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections is the home of several major recording collections and papers including Folkways Records, and also houses the written, audio, and visual records of projects and exhibits sponsored by the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, most notably the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. (Please see [http://www.folklife.si.edu/center/archives/archives_collections.html](http://www.folklife.si.edu/center/archives/archives_collections.html) for additional information on some of our collections.) The archives have strong holdings of world ethnic music traditions, early country music and bluegrass, blues, and the Folk Revival on Folkways and other labels available for in-house listening and research, as well as documentation (photos, audio and video tapes) from the Smithsonian Folklife Festival going back to 1967. The archives also have several significant photograph collections, and collections resulting from various research projects undertaken by the Center, a number of which have not been processed.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The project would be to assist with the processing, finding aid creation, and selective digitization of the English Country Dance Documentation Project Collection. The collection has its origins in a project to document English country dancing (ECD) and its history in the Eastern U.S., and even more importantly some of the significant dance leaders who have invigorated and inspired dancers in the past forty years. The principle creators of the collection are CFCH Archives Director Stephanie Smith, CFCH Video Producer Charles Weber, and Daniel Walkowitz, Professor of History and Metropolitan Studies at New York University. In the early stages of the project, the principles decided to produce a documentary film on ECD in America which has just been completed, and awaits release on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

The collection consists of the planning documents, budgets, release forms, video and photograph logs, and images scanned or acquired for the production of the film. The video footage is primarily on Betacam SP and Mini DV. The footage includes shoots of CD events, places of historic importance in the history of ECD, and interviews. The history of ECD in America, which involves the English folk song and dance collector Cecil Sharp (1859-1924), is deeply linked to the state of Massachusetts. It was Helen Storrow of Boston who befriended Sharp, participated in many of the early dance events that Sharp put on in visits to America, and also funded his travel to collect songs in Southern Appalachia. Storrow owned a Girl Scout camp on Long Pond, near Plymouth, MA, which eventually became Pinewoods Camp, where a lot of the project filming took place in 1999. Sharp held his first summer school of English country and ritual dance in Eliot, Maine, and in 1916 and 1917, the summer school was held in Amherst, MA on the grounds of what eventually became the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Amherst was also the site for summer schools held in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This project was done in cooperation with and support from the Country Dance and Song Society of America, now based in Easthampton, MA.

The duties will consist of reviewing all the components of the collection: papers, digital images, and
video, and consulting with the supervisor and other archives staff on processing procedures and the creation of a preliminary finding aid. The intern will be trained to digitize the video and embed the metadata (information) into the video files using Adobe Bridge. The files will then be ingested into the Smithsonian’s Digital Asset Management System (DAMS). The supervisor will try to make it possible through assistance for the collection processing to be completed in the course of the semester term.

No specific course background would be required for this project, but an interest or coursework in folk music and/or dance, social history, folklore, visual media, or photography would be very useful. Experience in a library or archive would be helpful but not required. Adobe Photoshop/Bridge skills are useful but I will train the intern how to embed collections metadata into video files.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

There are several research products that an intern could undertake. One would be an analysis of the activity and challenges of processing, describing, and digitizing the collection, along with the completed finding aid. It could be that the intern finds a research topic within the video or other collections material. As noted above, English country dance has a long and rich history in Massachusetts, and ECD is done regularly in Amherst (see http://amherstedc.org/), so there would be a chance for the intern to investigate the activity before coming to DC.

The intern would also have the opportunity to create one or more SI Collections Blog or Rinzler Archives blog posts about the collection. See http://si-siris.blogspot.com/2014/10/from-sambusas-to-pupusas-washington-dc.html for an example.

Cecil Sharp (center facing camera) and students dance in Amherst, Massachusetts during a summer school of the English Folk Dance Society, American Branch, 1916 or 1917. (Schools were held both years, but the year of the photograph is not known.) From Pinewoods Camp Archives.
1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

In 2018, the National Portrait Gallery will open “The Sweat of their Face: Portraying American Workers”, a landmark exhibition that explores the visual history of American labor in the portraiture of major American artists from Copley to Cindy Sherman in a variety of media from painting and sculpture to photographs, prints, and time-based media. Research and organization for this project, including the exhibition and catalogue, will be the focus of the internship.

The exhibition’s title comes from the Biblical judgment that expelled Adam and Eve from Paradise, enjoining them to work and “eat bread/In the sweat of their face.” The moment is a key one in western history since it starts time, making men and women agents of their own destiny, in all the pain and triumph that working for that self-definition entailed.

Work has always been central construct in western civilization, and it has been especially so in America where it has been crucial to the self-definition of Americans – and America. Work was not only a necessity but it was how Americans measured their lives and assessed their contribution to the wider society. That Paul Revere was first a silversmith, Benjamin Franklin a printer, Charles Willson Peale a jack of all trades artisan is essential to their activism as revolutionaries; the republican ideology of American radicalism was rooted in the skills and craft of artisans. And in the nineteenth-century, work was valued as the key element in an ideology of self-improvement and social mobility that underlay the American value system. Work not only powered the economy, but was crucial to the creation of American citizens.

Yet work was also something imposed upon people: it was exploitative, painful, and hard. The awareness of work’s toll is etched into the faces of the people depicted in “Portraying American Workers” as the skill of the artisan devolved under industrialization. Indeed, the future of labor is very much in question at the start of the 21st century with the “de-industrialization” of the economy effectively devaluing labor itself.

While there have been many documentary visual histories of American labor, there has been no exhibition that details how work and workers were portrayed by fine artists in the context of the history of portraiture. In this vein, the role of the artist as worker is emphasized to reveal the empathetic connection between artist and subject. “The Sweat of their Face” will make a telling contribution to the history of portraiture and, by doing so, also on the histories of working Americans.

In planning this exhibition and its accompanying catalogue, we were surprised that portraits of
workers was a major theme in the work of major American artists from John Singleton Copley to Winslow Homer to Elizabeth Catlett and Grant Wood to contemporary artists like Duane Hansen, Gordon Parks, and Cindy Sherman. In other words, work was not simply a subject treated in genre paintings, although those are plentiful. Rather, the subject of the laboring body engaged the attention of American artists and spurred them to produce iconic and socially significant images that have not been brought together and studied in the context of the history of American portraiture until now. From Paul Revere to “Rosie the Riveter” (subject of a painting by Norman Rockwell as well as popular prints), portraits of labor constitute a distinct and important strand in the history of American portraiture.

Combining art and social history, “The Sweat of Their Face” addresses key questions about the intersection of high and popular culture in American history. Through its artwork, the exhibition portrays the diversity of America against the backdrop of historical change as this country’s economy developed and expanded. While not celebratory, in the seriousness of its scholarly intentions the exhibition will commemorate the role of working people in the creation of American society. As well, it will trace the history of work itself through its impact on the men and women whose laboring bodies are depicted. We believe that “the Sweat of their Face. Portraying American Workers” will expand the scope and range of the NPG’s programming in art and history, one that will be recognized by both scholars and our national audience.

The proposed catalogue will include two introductory essays: one by a prominent social and cultural historian on the history of work and industry in America to provide the narrative around which the exhibition’s art work is organized; and a second co-authored by the curators about the formal issues of portraying workers and the intersections of social history with the fine arts. The catalogue will be divided into sections organized by both period and the state of work in American society: the Empowered Artisan of the Colonial Period; Industrialization: The Machine in the Garden; Slavery, Race and the Depiction of Un-Freedom; Cogs in a Machine: Images of Industrial Labor; Crisis of Industry: Crisis of Labor – The Depression; World War II and After: The Rise and Fall of Labor; The Invisible Worker: The Disappearance of the Worker. Each section will have an introduction and every work of art in the exhibition will be reproduced with a full-fledged entry on its artistic, cultural and social significance. Additional images will be included in the catalog to augment and support the guest scholar’s and co-curator’s contributions.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The object list has been finalized for the exhibition and loan letters are starting to be sent to museums across the United States. The important work of researching each object and building files for the objects has not yet begun and we will be relying on the intern to help with this. The internship will require a background in American history and the history of American art. Much of the work will be research driven and we will expect the intern to take advantage of resources across SI units as well as the National Gallery of Art and the Library of Congress. Dorothy Moss and David Ward will work closely with the intern to orient her to these resources in Washington and will have regular weekly meetings to check in and guide the intern in her research. The intern will have the opportunity to draft exhibition labels and other interpretative material. We will also work with the museum’s senior editor and exhibitions staff to plan the catalogue and layout of the exhibition. The intern should expect to learn about museum work across departments (curatorial, history, publications, education, design, conservation, etc) with an emphasis on curatorial research and exhibition planning.
3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

The intern might write a paper about an object or group of objects that will be included in the exhibition through a particular lens. For example, the history of slavery, the rise of the feminist movement, or the “disappearance” of the worker. The intern might also write a paper that addresses institutional history and the presence of the artist as worker in the art museum. Self-portraits of the artist as worker could be a fruitful topic. The intern might design a section of the exhibition and write about the history of American portraiture at a particular time period using the objects chosen for that period to guide the story of portraiture of that period from the perspective of portrayals of workers in contrast to the conventions of the commissioned portraits of the period. Dorothy Moss and David Ward will be receptive to the intern’s academic interests and will guide her to find a project that advances those interests while bringing the theory and practice of museum work into focus for her.
Smith College / Smithsonian Institution Internship Program

Research Project Proposal

Name of Supervisor(s): Asma Naeem, curator

Department or Office: Prints and Drawings
Museum/Unit: National Portrait Gallery

Phone Number: 202-633-8319
Email Address: naeema@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The work would be related to a recently approved exhibition on the works of Don Bachardy, the gifted, mostly overlooked, California-based artist (b. 1934). Since the early 1960s, Bachardy has drawn preeminent poets and writers (Frank O’Hara, Truman Capote), playwrights (Anita Loos - of Gentlemen Prefer Blondes fame), actors (Stella Adler), and artists (Ed Ruscha). The examples provided so far are drawn solely from the NPG’s collection of Bachardy works, of which we have twelve. Bachardy’s emphasis on line, combined with the typically piercing gaze of his sitters, is the impetus for the show’s proposed title, “Sight/Line: The Portraits of Don Bachardy.” Even though Bachardy has been professionally active for some fifty years and his work is in the collection of major museums, he has received scant scholarly attention. Bachardy has long been a presence in the California art scene and is such a fixture in Hollywood that Angelina Jolie recently commissioned him to draw her pregnancy portraits. Beyond his strong contemporary presence, Bachardy’s star power reaches back to the late 1950s, when he was first introduced to celebrities, artists, and the intelligentsia through his partner, the acclaimed British-American novelist Christopher Isherwood (whose novel A Single Man was recently turned into the Oscar-winning movie). Bachardy and Isherwood were together for over thirty years; their relationship is a famed May-December romance (they were thirty years apart in age and met when Bachardy was around 16 year old).

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The intern would be working closely with the curator as she develops the exhibition, including evaluating the Portrait Gallery’s holdings of Bachardy’s (we have a dozen drawings), and locating other potential objects for the show. The intern also would be researching the life and work of Bachardy, including the biography of the artist and the biographies of his many famous sitters. In addition to researching works of art at the Portrait Gallery and primary source materials available at the Smithsonian (such as the Archives of American Art), the intern would be in contact with Bachardy’s long time gallery representative Craig Krull Gallery in Santa Monica, California, to facilitate the exchange of information and/or any published materials. The intern would be collating this information and developing a timeline of the artist’s life, as well as documenting the various illustrious writers, actors, and artists whom Bachardy depicted, and the nature of these relationships. This would require excellent research and writing skills, strong organizational skills, and a familiarity with the major players in the California arts (acting, writing, artistic) scene from the 1960s to the present. Attention to detail and fastidiousness in attributing sources are also desired.
3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

There are several research products that the intern could develop, both of which would offer the opportunity for original scholarship and/or highly advanced critical thinking skills. The first option is to write a research paper on a specific aspect or set of issues surrounding Don Bachardy’s artistic production, for example, gay culture in California in the 1960s, the intersection of Isherwood’s writings and Bachardy’s artmaking, and so forth. The second option would be the materialization of a mock Don Bachardy exhibition, either virtually (should the intern have the commensurate web design skills) or as a written product complete with images curated by the intern for the mock exhibition. Both products offer the intern to move from researcher and compiler of information to curator and exhibition designer. The written portion of either product would allow the intern to demonstrate their ability to think more broadly about the works and the issues they raise, along with, of course, their ability to fashion a cogent written argument.
Smith College / Smithsonian Institution Internship Program

Research Project Proposal

Name of Supervisor(s): Tiarna Doherty and Dr. Virginia Mecklenburg

Department or Office: Conservation Department and Curatorial Department,

Museum/Unit: Smithsonian American Art Museum

Phone Number: 202 633 5802 Email Address: dohertyt@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:

The conservation department has expertise in the fields of paintings conservation, paper conservation and sculpture conservation at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The collection strengths cover the 18th through 21st century of American Art. As works of art are proposed for conservation treatment, research must be done to coordinate art historical information about the piece as well as the history of its display. This research includes existing files in the museum conservation, curatorial and registration offices as well as additional sources found in Smithsonian libraries and other Smithsonian museum departments.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:

The Conservation Research Assistant will liason between the conservation department, curatorial department and registrars department within the American Art Museum. Working with individual conservators, the research assistant will learn about the proposed conservation treatments of paintings, sculpture and works of art on paper and what the research questions are. The research assistant will gather materials from existing museum records and discuss the content with museum staff. The research assistant will be encouraged to pursue some avenues of research relevant to their own interest as well (projects may be chosen to relate to the student’s major area of study regarding art history, history or the sciences). This unique position will allow the Research Assistant to learn about conducting research in a museum environment related to art history, technical study of artist’s materials, conservation and restoration as well as the history and exhibition and display of art.

An academic background in art history is preferred. Knowledge of studio arts, history, chemistry or biology will be helpful, although not required.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:

The research assistant will be able to produce research that is described as technical art history. Their research projects will allow for an in depth understanding of artist’s working methods and techniques as well as issues related to the preservation of the work. The student will be able to produce a paper on at least one project. In addition, the Research Assistant may be able to work with staff towards a publication related to the conservation and restoration of work in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.
Smith College / Smithsonian Institution Internship Program
Research Project Proposal

Name of Supervisor(s): Dr. Karen Lemmey, Curator of Sculpture

Department or Office: Curatorial
Museum/Unit: American Art Museum

Phone Number: 202-633-8354
Email Address: lemmeyk@si.edu

1. Please provide information on your research and/or the work of your office:
I am responsible for the stewardship of a collection of about 2000 sculptures made from a wide array of media, the majority of them created during the last 200 years. My scholarly research investigates the biographies of sculptors and the history of fabrication, conservation, display, and reception of this sculpture collection. I am committed to disseminating this research through publication, exhibitions, public programs, docent training, and a range of other outreach initiatives. I am also responsible for identifying sculptures for potential acquisitions through purchase or gift, organizing exhibitions, and cultivating interest and support for the collection.

2. Describe the project (include duties, nature and scope of the work), and indicate any particular academic background or specific courses needed as preparation:
This project offers a terrific opportunity to broadly survey the American sculpture collection at SAAM and learn how to comprehensively catalogue different types of sculpture. Part one involves combing through the online database and corresponding paper cataloguing records in order to identify errors and fields where information is absent. For example, which sculptures are listed without dates? What inconsistencies do we find in the ways medium, foundry marks, etc. have been recorded? Which object entries require the most attention? Part two involves researching and examining some of the sculptures identified in part one. Responsibilities may include conducting primary research using the museum library, Archives of American Art, Library of Congress, and other local institutions. The intern would be involved in close examination and recording of inscriptions on the objects, drafting text, and assisting staff members to disseminate information about the sculptures.

Much of the work for this project is detail oriented, and it is unlikely that one semester will prove sufficient to proof every record. But the goal is to gather enough data by the semester’s end to identify larger trends in an attempt to answer such practical questions as: what are the strengths and weaknesses of the collection? which objects have never been on view and should be seen? which have been on view the most (and why)? which are in urgent need of conservation? which are in need of rehousing? Are there groups of works that could be exhibited together? Such information is crucial in planning for the preservation, installation, and interpretation of the collection.

No special knowledge of sculpture or American art is required; in fact, this internship offers a great opportunity to learn about this area. The intern must have completed some basic coursework in art history and have experience with basic methods of art historical research. The intern must be well-organized, attentive to detail, self-sufficient, a strong writer, and collegial, since collaboration with museum staff in education, conservation, registrar, and other offices will be required. Basic knowledge of Excel is required and familiarity with TMS is desirable.

3. Please describe possible research products an intern might develop, either from the project or the work of your office, to fulfill the academic requirement of the Smith College Program:
I would encourage the intern to explore a term paper (or approved creative equivalent) that compares cataloguing methodologies across a few sculpture collections (ie Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art); or that examines interesting test cases from SAAM’s collection; or that considers collecting trends that contributed to the museum’s collection across last 150 or so years.