

12-2010

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Foundation

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THE JOHN AND MABLE RINGLING MUSEUM OF ART FOUNDATION

An Internship Report

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

University of New Orleans

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Arts Administration

by

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December 2010

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Abstract

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Foundation is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that operates the Ringling Museum of Art, *Ca d'Zan*, the Circus Museum, and the Historic Asolo Theater. My internship position was within the Registration office, which oversees the objects, both permanent and loaned, housed in these buildings. Throughout the internship it was my responsibility to assist in overseeing the management of the wide collection. This included monitoring the environment, preparing for exhibits, and helping with rights and reproductions. My primary project was working on photographing, cataloging, and storing the museum's Cypriote collection, which had been tucked away in the depths of storage for decades. The following report includes an overview of the organization, a description of my internship, a SWOT analysis, a best practices overview, and recommendations for the museum.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their help, guidance, and support. I am extremely grateful to Mr. John d’Addario for serving as my lead thesis advisor. I also greatly appreciate the support of Mr. Lawrence Jenkins and Mr. Richard Read who served on my committee. I am thankful to all my educators who have challenged and supported me, especially Dr. Susann Lusnia of Tulane University and Dr. Harmon Greenblatt of UNO. I am indebted to the folks at Christies Auction House for giving me a truly unique experience in the art world as Administrator and Sale-Coordinator of Furniture and Decorative Arts. The opportunity would not have been possible without Mr. Stefan Kist, head of European Furniture. I am thankful to the staff of The Ogden Museum of Southern Art for the opportunity to serve as a Graduate Assistant. Also, thank you to my fellow and former Graduate Assistants. Because of my experience and education I was accepted into the Ringling Internship Program. I am grateful to my supervisor at the Ringling, Mrs. Ashley Burke for being such a wonderful teacher and mentor. I cannot say thank you enough to my Grandmother, Mrs. Richard McCracken for her generosity in the use of her condo while at the internship. Accordingly, I must thank all my family and friends, in particular Ms. Megan Rebuck, Mr. Michael Rebuck, and Mr. Matthew Ghabrial, for their love and support. Finally, my love of art and history would not exist without my parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Rebuck. I am grateful for their constant support for the path I have chosen and their continued encouragement to pursue what makes me happy.

Introduction

The decision to apply for an internship at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art was based on my graduate education at the University of New Orleans. While there I had the experience of working as a Graduate Assistant at The Ogden Museum of Southern Art and was immersed in my first job with a non-profit organization. This invaluable experience along with the advice and support of Dr. Harmon Greenblatt to look beyond New Orleans for a meaningful internship led me to The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. In June 2010 I began my internship in the Collections Management Department under the supervision of Mrs. Ashley Burke, Associate Registrar.

Chapter One: Profile of the Organization

History

John Ringling (1866-1936) was one of the original five brothers who began Ringling Brothers Circus and later acquired Barnum and Bailey Circus. In 1911 Mr. Ringling purchased property in Sarasota, Florida overlooking the Bay and he began spending his winters in the small town with his wife, Mable (1875-1929). Eventually Mr. Ringling decided to make Sarasota the winter haven for his circus as well. The Ringlings dreamed of helping Sarasota develop into a metropolitan boom town and they became involved in the community, bought real estate, and eventually owned approximately twenty-five percent of Sarasota's total area.¹

John Ringling was a great entrepreneur and a savvy businessman. However, he also had a passion for traveling and art that he shared with Mable. As one of the wealthiest men in America he was able to travel to Europe and purchase rare masterpieces, as well as attend auctions and buy up valuable fine art, decorative art, and antiquities. One of John and Mable's first ventures in Sarasota was to build a home, which could display these works. In 1924 they commissioned New York architect Dwight James Baum to build a home in the style of Venice's Doge's Palace and *Ca d'Oro*. It was completed in 1926 and was named *Ca d'Zan* or "House of John" in Venetian dialect.

Ca d'Zan was just the beginning of construction on the Ringlings' property. John and Mable were also inspired by the idea of creating a memorial museum for their growing art collection, which John envisioned as an art center for the Southeast, since there was no major museum in that part of the country.² In 1928 construction began on his Sarasota property to build a museum of art for their vast collection. Another New York architect, John H. Phillips, designed the building for the museum with inspiration from the Renaissance and Baroque palaces of

Italy.³ The museum opened in 1931; however, Mable would not live to see the completion, as she died from diabetes and Addison's disease in 1929. Shortly after her death the stock market crashed and Mr. Ringling's finances and health began to decline. At his death in 1936, John Ringling bequeathed his entire 32 acres estate on Sarasota Bay, *Ca d'Zan*, the Museum of Art, its art masterpieces, and \$1.2 million in operating endowment to the people of Florida, and so preserved in perpetuity The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.⁴

After John Ringling died, a battle ensued between the state of Florida and creditors over the fate of the Museum of Art and *Ca d'Zan*. It took ten years for the state of Florida to establish title and governance over the estate. In those ten years the property was not maintained well or even open on a regular basis. This all changed in 1946 when the state prevailed and the museum reopened under the leadership of its first director, Chick Austin. He helped expand the museum to include the Historic Asolo Theater and the Circus Museum. However, the success was short-lived and the estate again fell into disarray. The \$1.2 million endowment managed by the government did not grow, and the funds languished without strategic investing.⁵ The buildings began to fall apart and eventually the Asolo Theater was condemned. By 1996, *Ca d'Zan* had deteriorated so badly and had so many leaks that visitors found buckets on the floor to catch the water.⁶

The crisis had finally reached its peak and on July 1, 2000 the state of Florida handed over governance of the estate to Florida State University. After the merger, state, university, and museum leaders worked together to coordinate a Ringling/FSU master plan. It was clear the entire Ringling complex was in ruin and needed funds immediately to repair the buildings and secure the artwork. The state budget for 2002-2003 included \$42.9 million in FSU's allocation to fund the plan. However, it came with a challenge. Half of the funds were held in reserve and

would only be payable to the Ringling Museum if the Board of Directors could raise \$50 million for endowment funds in five years and the first \$10 million had to be raised in the first year.⁷ It seemed an impossible challenge because in sixty years of operation the museum had garnered less than \$5 million for endowment funds, but under the newly appointed Ringling director, John Wetenhall, the museum met the challenge and then some. The Ringling experienced a rebirth under the new director and FSU. Today, staff and leaders continue to raise money and use their growing endowment to expand and restore the Ringling “campus” (see Appendix A). The Ringling Museum has emerged as one of the top museums in the United States and continues to carry on the legacy of John and Mable Ringling.

The Collection

The Ringling Museum of Art Foundation, Inc. operates the 66 acres complex partially purchased by Mr. John Ringling in the early 20th century. The estate includes numerous buildings, which house a range of objects and activities. The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art maintains, manages, and includes the Ringling Museum of Art; the Ringling Museum of the Circus; the *Ca d’Zan*; the historic Asolo Theatre; the Museum Library and the Museum Archives; and the historic semi-tropical grounds and gardens.⁸ According to interim director, T. Marshall Rousseau, “It’s like running four museums”.⁹ The four museums he was referring to are the Museum of Art, Circus Museum, Historic Asolo Theater, and *Ca d’Zan*.

The bulk of the collection resides in the Museum of Art, which was built to house Mr. Ringling’s growing personal art collection in 1928. John had acquired many objects at auction, as well as during his travels abroad. Mr. Ringling’s passion for collecting art was centered on the Baroque period, in particular the Italian and Northern Baroque.¹⁰ His most famous acquisitions, one tapestry and five cartoons by Peter Paul Rubens, greet visitors as they enter the Museum of

Art. He also purchased masterpieces by Van Dyck, Titian, Tintoretto, El Greco, Gainsborough, Reynolds, and more. There are twenty-one galleries (Appendix B) in the museum of art and ten of them are dedicated to 17th century baroque paintings, sculpture, and decorative art. The remaining galleries feature other aspects of the permanent collection including objects from the Emile Gavet Collection, the Astor rooms, ancient artifacts, non-western art, and modern/contemporary art.

In addition to Ringling's founding collection, the galleries have been enriched by purchases, donations, and bequests. Funds pledged by a local art collector are being used for the establishment of an Asian art gallery. The donation also includes almost 1,000 Asian objects and will eventually reside in the renovated west wing, which is now closed. Many other pieces of modern and contemporary art are just beginning to be brought out of hibernation. These objects were added to the collection over the last 70 years, but have never been shown. Currently a selection is being exhibited in the brand new Searing wing on the north side of the museum. This coincides with the museum's purchase of a James Turrell "sky piece", currently being constructed in the Searing courtyard.

The Searing wing is one of the museum's newest additions and is reserved for exhibition space. The galleries host approximately three shows per year and can include three different sources or types. The three types are in-house, partner, and package exhibitions. Currently, the museum is focused on doing in-house exhibitions, such as *Heyday: Frederick W. Glasier's American Circus 1890-1925*, *Splendid Treasures of the Turkomen Tribes from Central Asia* and *20th Century Abstract Art from the Ringling Collection*. However, they also are trying to more regularly partner with other museums to put on shows. One example is the exhibit *Venice in the Age of Canaletto*, which traveled to the Memphis-Brooks Museum after it closed at the Ringling.

Finally, package exhibits are featured, but can be costly. For example, the upcoming Yinka Shonibare exhibit (only seven pieces) borrowed from the Brooklyn museum of Art ran a budget in excess of \$40,000. This fall the Ringling will show *Threads of Gold: Renaissance Tapestries from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*, which has many ties to the permanent collection. The museum rarely features blockbuster exhibitions and prefers to focus on the depth of the collection they already have, which is extensive.

While the Museum of Art features the art collection of John and Mable Ringling, *Ca d'Zan* focuses on displaying their personal artifacts and showcases a unique historic home. The house was built in 1924 for the sum of \$1.5 million. After Mr. Ringling's death, maintenance of his estate was deferred especially on *Ca d'Zan*. In 1996 it was used as the centerpiece for the 1996 film of the epic novel, *Great Expectations*, as Miss Havisham's decrepit ruin.¹¹ It truly was a ruin and it would take \$15 million to restore the infrastructure over the following decade, including restoring murals by Willy Pogany and original molding, chandeliers, and tile. Today it is a luring tourist attraction and serves as the backdrop for many weddings and special events.

Other major tourist attractions on the estate are the Historic Asolo Theater and the Circus Museum. Both were constructed after the death of Mr. Ringling and are the brainchild of the first Ringling director, A. Everett "Chick" Austin, jr. The Ringling Museum of the Circus was opened in 1948 and was the first museum in America to document the rich history of the circus.¹² There are many people who live in and around Sarasota with ties to the circus and therefore the collection has grown quickly. It has also benefited from a \$6.5 million expansion to include the Tibbals Learning Center, which includes a 3,000 square foot true to life circus model.

The Historic Asolo Theater is another addition to the original museum complex. Chick Austin acquired the Venetian Theater in the early 1950's and brought it to America in the

tradition of the Ringlings' desire to showcase European culture. The theater was originally created in 1798 in Asolo, Italy to honor the exiled 15th century Queen of Cyprus, Caterina Cornaro.¹³ Today, the theater has been renovated and re-housed in the visitor pavilion. It has become the focus and setting for many of the museum's programming and education initiatives.

Programming

The Ringling Museum serves the public with a broad range of educational and cultural programs for all ages. Family friendly programs such as Art After 5 have recently become popular, offering late night hours with children and adult activities. This summer the introduction of CSI (Cool Summer Investigations) has attracted hundreds of children and school groups that participate in identifying objects from the museum of art and circus museum. Other programs include Saturday morning lectures for adults, teacher workshops, and guided tours of the collection and special exhibitions,

The Ringling Museum and FSU have worked together to develop and operate an internship and fellowship program for recent graduates and graduate students in art history, museum studies, library science and/or performing arts fields to gain experience in a major museum complex, as well as specific departments. They also offer a spring practicum for undergraduate students to introduce them to the museum field.

Recently, the Historic Asolo Theater has served as the backdrop for a major festival, the Ringling International Arts Festival (RIAF). It showcases talent from all over the world in music, dance, and theater and takes place October 13-17 this year. This festival not only serves the community of Sarasota and Bradenton, but also attracts national and international attention. The museum has begun to use its space for special events surrounding the festival and coordinate

exhibits that tie into the festival and appeal to its followers. The theater also presents circus acts, films, and other performances throughout the year.

Finally, the museum offers a variety of resources that are not always afforded by smaller museums. These include the library, archives, and the conservation lab. The library is open to the public and serves students, employees, and the community in their research endeavors. It has almost 70,000 holdings, including John Ringling's original rare books collection. The Ringling Museum Archives maintains and further develops a nationally important archival collection of institutional records and manuscript materials that document the history of the Museum, the Ringlings and the American circus.¹⁴ They are currently developing a system to facilitate the collection to an online database. While the conservation lab is not open to the public, the two-person team has paved the way for the rebirth of the Ringling. Many of the objects and buildings would not exist today if there were not a conservation team already in place to oversee the daily operation of restoring it.

Mission and Goals

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art's mission and goals for fiscal years 2007-2012 were adopted by the Board of Directors on June 22, 2007. The board also adopted a position statement, vision statement, and institutional values (Appendix C). The mission and goals have helped guide the museum in its endeavors over the past three years and will continue over the next two. These are reevaluated periodically and will be amended in 2012 to help the museum continue to grow and ensure that they are serving their constituents. The current mission and goals are the following:

Mission Statement

The mission of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, a division of Florida State University and the State Art Museum of Florida, is to engage

visitors with our collections, exhibitions, cultural programs and the Ringling Estate.¹⁵

Goals

1. Endow staff positions, internships, cultural programs, and preservation of the Ringling Estate.
2. Enhance the facilities and grounds by:
 - a. Expanding the Circus Museum and replacing the aging structure;
 - b. Enclosing the Searing Wing courtyard with a “sky piece” by James Turrell;
 - c. Constructing the Dr. Helga Wall-Apelt Asian Art Galleries; and
 - d. Developing our landscaped grounds to their full potential.
3. Establish a compelling and prestigious “brand” position for the Ringling Museum – locally, nationally, and internationally.
4. Initiate and develop an adult institute for cultural learning, a children’s cultural camp, and university-level educational programs.
5. Develop and implement strategic plans for Statewide outreach.¹⁶

Management Structure

Florida State University and Museum Staff

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art is governed by Florida State University. In 2000 FSU President Sandy D’Alemberte and others state leaders rescued the museum. Today, there is a new FSU President, Eric Barron, who carries on the responsibility of overseeing the state museum of Florida. Specifically Sally McRorie, Dean of the College of Visual Arts, Theater, and Dance is responsible for many executive decisions concerning the museum. The museum’s Interim Director, Marshall Rousseau, and the Board of Directors report to her. The most recent organizational chart for the Museum has thirteen executive positions overseeing the financial, marketing, curatorial, and development departments (Appendix D).

The museum maintains a staff of over 100 people in approximately twenty-four departments. Most of the staff is security, as the museum has an in-house security team, and

facilities management team to maintain care of the huge complex. The Museum also employs seven summer interns. Currently the Museum is experiencing a hiring freeze, thus the museum has declined in personnel with many employees absorbing the job of two staff members. The museum has also begun to utilize part time and hourly employees to fill voids.

Board of Directors

The merger between the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art and Florida State University dissolved the existing Board of Trustees. The board had been responsible for the management and operation of the Museum until 2000. The law that assigned responsibility for the Museum to FSU created a Direct Support Organization (DSO). FSU elected to have The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Foundation, Inc., the existing fund-raising arm of the former Trustees, as this newly constituted DSO.¹⁷ Today, the board functions as an advisory board, as opposed to many other museums with a governing board (Appendix E). However, their support and guidance have sustained the Museum during a difficult transition and have sustained them during tough economic times.

The Board of Directors of the Foundation consists of no more than 31 members at any time. No less than one-third of them are from Sarasota and Manatee counties, Florida. They meet four times per year and operate under a charter and bylaws approved by FSU. Its primary responsibilities are to recommend policies to maintain and preserve the collections of the museum, to help raise funds for the museum, to expand access to its resources, and to raise the museum's national and international reputation. The DSO board is also empowered to nominate candidates for the museum's Executive Director position to the FSU president.¹⁸

Chapter Two: The Internship

Description of Internship

I began my internship with the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Foundation in June of 2010 as one of seven interns selected for the Ringling Summer Internship Program. A few months before this I was interviewed by Karen Patriarca, Student Services Coordinator, and Ashley Burke, Associate Registrar, after applying for an intern position within the Collections Management Department. My job description according to the Summer 2010 Internship Program website posting in Collections Management is the following:

The intern will be introduced to all aspects of the Collections Management Department and its role within the Ringling Museum. The intern's primary project will consist of working with the Collection's database TMS; updating records for the Cypriot collection, Photography collection etc.; assist with the digitization project to facilitate collection objects entering the Artstore database. The goal of the internship is for the intern to be a valued, productive member of the Museum staff, as well as gaining invaluable experience and tangible projects that can be used to further a resume or future education.¹⁹

My work schedule in the Collections Department was Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and I earned \$11.25 per hour during the internship. I was also expected to participate in intern lectures, activities, and trips to better understand the operation and intricacies of a major museum complex.

Collections Management Department

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art has a diverse collection comprised of more than 15,000 works that represent Western and non-Western art from 2500 BC China, the European Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, and American art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The core collection begun by John Ringling encompasses six primary areas of interest and acquisition: European art before 1900; Ancient art; Modern and Contemporary art; Decorative arts; Circus Art; and Non-Western Art.²⁰ The Collections Management Department

bears the responsibility and functions that provide for the accessibility, accountability, utility, and preservation of the collections and associated data at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. The department ensures that collections, exhibitions and loans are documented according to museum standards, so that the Ringling staff is able to account for their location and to provide information about them via manual, electronic, and photographic records. The Registration department often collaborates with the Conservation and Curatorial departments to ensure that all collections are stored and exhibited appropriately to prevent deterioration and are protected against damage, loss, and exposure to harmful environmental conditions. Finally, the department ensures that the Museum is legally accountable for collections records and operates in a responsible and ethical fashion.²¹

The Collections Department maintains a staff of four people that serve the department in various roles depending on their education and expertise. The staff includes:

- Francoise Hack, Director of Collections Management
- Ashley Burke, Associate Registrar
- Heidi Taylor, Assistant Registrar
- Gabriela Gil, Registrar Assistant

Cypriote Project

My primary project as the Collections Management intern was dealing with the museum's Cypriote collection. In preparation for a new exhibit dedicated to John Ringling's ancient art collection the entirety of the collection needed to be unpacked and photographed in order for the curator to determine which pieces to include. The nucleus of the ancient art collection centers on John Ringling's 1928 purchase of more than 2,200 objects from the Cesnola collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.²² Luigi Palma di Cesnola was the

American Consul to Cyprus and later became the first director of the Met in 1879. He brought to the Met his collection of antiquities that he amassed during his years in Cyprus. The Met sold a portion of the collection at auction through Anderson Galleries in 1928 and John Ringling bought almost all of it. Thus, this is an important collection in the Ringling Museum, which has a unique history and was a personal favorite of Mr. Ringling. This project was also an opportunity for me to see many registration processes (handling, marking, photographing, cataloging, storing) and learn about various issues concerning the collection.

Handling

Handling museum objects can be a thrilling and scary experience at the same time. Touching a rare ancient object is a huge responsibility. There are many things to consider when handling objects, including being aware of your surroundings, knowing where they are going, and keeping movement to a minimum. I took many precautions while unpacking the ancient art objects to protect them. I removed my jewelry so that it would not scratch the objects and wore cotton gloves as an added measure to preserve the objects. While it was not as important to wear gloves while working with the clay and stone objects, it was imperative to wear them while handling the glass. The loss of the iridescence was already underway and we did not want the pieces to deteriorate further.

Before handling the objects themselves, I had to move the box that contained them. Many of the Cypriote objects were stored in large cardboard boxes housed in the main (old) vault of the museum. The goal was to bring these boxes one at a time to the new vault located in the education and office building across the street to be unpacked, photographed, and re-housed there in the new vault. We used carts to transfer over the boxes and then the unpacking began. There always needed to be two people transferring a box for safety reasons. It was important to

unpack these boxes, not only because the objects might be used in an upcoming exhibit, but also because it was hazardous to the objects. Unfortunately, cardboard boxes are acidic. Furthermore, bubble wrap, which the objects were wrapped in, is abrasive. Some of the objects had been restored and conserved with glue many years ago and it had begun to deteriorate and the objects were crumbling. In addition, the Cypriote Collection is basically unknown to most of the public. Once the objects have been completely photographed and catalogued they will be available for people all over the world to view, research, and enjoy.

Marking

Once the objects were unpacked I began the process of marking and labeling each object. Numbers provide immediate identification and serves as a link between the object and its documentation.²³ Each object had been assigned an accession number before they were boxed up years ago. The accession number began with SN (state number) followed by the number 28 (acquired in the year 1928) and then followed by a series. An example is SN 28.103. I used acid free paper tags and wrote the accession number corresponding to the piece in archival ink. Previous labels had metal edges around the labels, which were abrasive, and had to be removed.

Each piece was given a semi-permanent label marked on the object itself in addition to being tagged. This type of marking is one of the most invasive procedures undertaken in registration.²⁴ The marking solution for these objects is using carbon-based ink between layers of Paraloid B-72. It is fade-proof, waterproof, and rub-proof. Most importantly, it is a reversible method that will not damage the object. A basecoat of Paraloid B-72 was applied and then the number was written in ink over the basecoat. Finally, an overcoat of Paraloid B-72 was applied. For certain fragmented items and glass this process was not efficient. Instead archival plastic

bags were labeled with the accession number on an acid free label with archival ink. Once the objects were marked they were ready to be photographed.

Photographing

While many organizations hire professional photographers they can be very expensive. For a project of this magnitude the decision was made to use the museum's camera equipment and photo light box, which was recently purchased. Photography of an object serves as visual documentation, but photography can also aid in research, object retrieval, and education. It also can be used to document the condition of an object for future comparison.²⁵ As someone who is inexperienced in using high-tech cameras and photo light boxes, this was an intense schooling in photography. I learned the importance of choosing viewpoints, backgrounds, scales, lighting, as well as the functions of the camera. The most important functions to consider when photographing these objects were the aperture and the shutter speed. The aperture controls the focus on the object and the shutter speed controls the amount of light. The process of finding a balance between these two functions helps create an accurate photograph. When photographing the objects I used a plain white background because many of the objects were made of red clay and had detailed designs. While the white may seem plain it helped the object pop out. I also chose several different viewpoints to capture the idea of the piece as a whole. A ruler or coin was sometimes added to give perspective to the correct dimensions, especially for smaller pieces. Photographing the objects was an opportunity for me to learn about each piece, while creating a visual record that people will eventually be able to request or access online.

Storing

Once I had finished photographing a cart I would begin the storage process. Since more than 80% of museum collections nationwide reside in storage, proper housing and care in storage areas are critical to preserving objects for the future.²⁶ The office of the Registrar is responsible

for the physical care and movement of the collections. They are entrusted with the physical maintenance and integrity of the objects. Thus, proper storage techniques are important to the future of the object. The storage facility itself is also important because it is the environment the objects will live in.

Unpacking a collection as large as the Cypriote one creates storage issues. The first is the issue of where to put all of the 2,000 plus objects that needed to be unpacked. It is easy to inventory and store one box compared to eighty-five pieces within it. I began by determining space to store the items. The old vault did not have proper shelving installed so I had to move and transfer items in the new vault. An entire aisle of shelves (approximately twenty) was cleared and rearranged to house the items.

After photographing a group of items I then had to properly and safely store each piece on the shelf. Each individual piece presented its own challenges as well. Some were just fragments while others were large objects several feet long. I began by lining each storage shelf with a layer of ethafoam. For small to moderate size objects I wrapped them with tissue snakes or created foam beds for them. For smaller items I used archival boxes to store the objects. The archival boxes were lined first with polyester batting to support the object and then I covered the batting with Teflon so the batting would not be abrasive to the object. The glass items presented even more challenges, as they had to be stored in archival plastic bags and then placed in boxes with the interior lined with foam or polyester batting. Both the boxes and the individual plastic bags had to be labeled with the correct accession number. The goal of storing each artifact was to protect and preserve it for the future; thus each piece was treated individually with different storage concerns in mind (Appendix F).

Cataloging

Cataloging objects is very important because it is the way information about a museum's collection is recorded permanently. The Ringling Museum uses The Museum System (TMS) database to record information about all of its objects. In turn, many departments can access this information to help prepare for exhibits, docent tours, educational activities, or sending out reproductions.

I had several advantages when I began the process of cataloging the Cypriote Collection. First, there was already a data entry associated with the accession number in TMS. While the information included in the entry was sparse and the pictures were either black and white or non-existent, this did save me the time of creating a new entry for every object (Appendix G). Secondly, every object had a typewritten object card associated with it as well. These object cards were the museum's previous form of record keeping and sometimes they held a great deal of cataloging information. I used these object cards as the basis of my cataloging entry and updated the TMS entries. The object cards contained information on the classification, culture, date, provenance, medium, and description. I also entered any differences on the condition, the new location of the piece, dimensions, and uploaded a new media file (Appendix G). The new records reflect a methodical and consistent way of cataloging the Cypriote Collection.

Rights and Reproductions

Many large museums have their own rights and reproductions department; however, the Ringling Museum assigns the duties of rights and reproductions to the Registrar Department. Dissemination of reproductions of objects in museum collections advances the educational mission of the museum and generates income.²⁷ When a request is submitted, the Assistant Registrar, Heidi Taylor, must first determine the object SN number and then locate the image. In

the case of the Ringling a large portion of the collection has images that have been scanned and this has expedited the process. However, objects, such as the ones in the Cypriote Collection, may have no image at all, and then a picture must be taken. Several requests came in over the summer for images of objects that we had to locate and photograph. I was able to help Heidi with some of the requests, especially the Cypriote objects. Before sending out an image digitally or through the mail, Heidi arranged for the paperwork to be signed and fees paid for the image. If the image was for educational purposes the fee was usually waived in return for a copy of their work.

Environment and Pests

The Ringling Museum's collection is incredibly vulnerable to the environment and pests. It is important to monitor both the environment and pests in order to preserve the collection otherwise the environment and/or pests can wear down art objects and they can deteriorate over time. Part of my intern responsibilities was to help monitor the temperature and humidity of the buildings and warehouses holding art objects, as well as look for signs of pests. The Ringling has in place data loggers, a relatively new tool for climate monitoring. They are strategically placed throughout the museum galleries, warehouses, library, circus museum, and *Ca d'Zan*. They record the temperature and humidity of the room. The device is hooked up to a PC and the results can be downloaded, analyzed, and then the data logger is recalibrated. The ideal temperature is 70 degrees and humidity is 50. Most of the time the environment was stable, but there were a few instances when the humidity or temperature was abnormal. This was mostly due to air-conditioning issues or larger crowds.

Monitoring for pests is not as simple as downloading data onto a PC. Most of the problems do not occur within the galleries, but rather in the vaults and warehouses. The best

method for easy detection of pests is placing adhesive tape on the floor. There were no issues in the vaults with pests, but when cleaning out the warehouse I did notice that there were some pests among the objects including dead lizards and spiders.

Loans and Exhibitions

The logistics of incoming and outgoing loans and exhibitions are primarily handled by the Registration Department. During the summer the Ringling loaned several objects from the Brooklyn Museum of Art to exhibit in the Astor Room galleries. The exhibit was titled *Yinka Shonibare MBE: Mother and Father Worked Hard So I can Play* (Appendix H). The exhibit was previously shown at the St. Louis Art Museum and did not officially open at the Ringling until July 31, 2010. Thus, I was able to take part in many aspects of the loan process.

The idea to bring this exhibit to the Ringling began with curator Matthew McClendon. It was a small exhibit with only seven pieces and was specifically chosen for the Ringling's period rooms. Although, this was a smaller exhibit, the loan process was the same as a larger scale exhibit. A contract was drafted stating who was responsible for expenses, insurance, and shipping between the two institutions. These contracts are carefully reviewed by the Registration department and then passed along to the legal and financial departments for final review. It is interesting to note in this case the loan fee for the exhibit was substantially smaller than the shipping fee. Upon the arrival of the exhibit I began to understand why. Each piece was packed in its own crate ranging in size from four feet to nine feet in length. These crates arrived in their own truck, which was climate controlled. The one expense the Ringling did not incur was a courier fee. The Brooklyn Museum had decided that the exhibition was not worth enough to send a courier with the truck.

Once the crates were unloaded we moved them to the Astor galleries where they remained until the following day. It is standard practice to allow the pieces twenty-four hours to

adjust and acclimate to the temperature and humidity before unpacking them. Before we opened the crates we examined them to make sure there was no exterior damage to the crates that might indicate that the objects were compromised. Then we began the process of unpacking one crate at a time and removing the figures. We had set up a staging area for the figures to be placed on once they were removed. The figures then had to be examined and condition reported in the condition binder that was sent with the crates from St. Louis. The figures were wearing intricate and unique fabrics that had to be examined. This was a slow process that demanded patience and a trained eye. Ashley was aware of things to look for, such as accretions, scratches, and fraying cloth. Once the figure was examined it was set up the way the curator wanted it to be exhibited.

After all of the figures were arranged, precautions had to be taken before the exhibit could be open to the public. The figures were the size of small children and enticing to touch. Therefore, they roped off each figure to prevent people from touching the figures or even tripping over them. The lighting was adjusted as well to showcase the figures. This was a problem because the lighting could only be so high since the exhibit was in the period rooms. The other fear that if the lights were too hot they would cause damage to the rooms outweighed the concern that people could not properly see the figures. Although, I was not there for the conclusion of the exhibit, the process will reverse itself when it comes time to examine, pack, crate, and ship the figures back to New York.

The Ringling also is able to make money by loaning out particular works or entire exhibits. The Ringling curatorial staff had curated a show of Old Master Drawings in 2009 and had agreed to loan it to the University of Georgia's Art Museum. I was able to watch the outgoing loan process during the second week of July. The fine arts shipping company, U.S. Art, was hired to pack, crate, and ship the items to Georgia. There were five crates and each crate was

designed to fit five to six drawings according to their dimensions. The drawings were not removed from the frame, but carefully wrapped in Dartek. Dartek is a soft, transparent nylon film. It does not puncture easily or stick to the drawings and therefore protects the drawing from dust, but also the other drawings if the plexi-glass frame was to break during shipment. Once the frame was wrapped in Dartek a premade label is attached to the Dartek, noting the object's number, title, and artist. A crate label was also placed on the outside to identify where the crate is going. However, the contents of the crate are not listed, as museums do not want outsiders knowing what specific objects are in the crate in case they are of significant value.

Similar to the incoming loan process there is an outgoing loan agreement. Each drawing was examined before being packed. The condition of each drawing and its frame is noted in the condition binder, which is sent with the crates along with the exhibit list and loan agreement. The Ringling chose not to send a courier with this exhibit, which was a questionable decision since the exhibit is worth in excess of one million dollars. Typically a courier is a museum employee in the Registration, Conservation, or Curatorial department. They escort museum objects that are fragile, rare, and/or valuable to ensure their protection during transit until they are released to the borrowing institution. The Ringling agreed to send the exhibit with other items on the truck. This was done as a favor to the UGA Art Museum in order to cut down expenses for them. Usually an exhibit of this sort would be sent on its own truck, but the University of Georgia asked for it to be taken on a truck with other items Georgia bound.

Chapter Three: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

1. *Name*

The greatest strength of The Ringling Museum is its name. The name Ringling is recognized by many people nationally and internationally because of the notoriety of the Ringling circus. While many people may be lured to the museum for the circus aspect, they are also exposed to a historic home, art museum, and theater. There is literally something for everyone and it appeals to a wide variety of constituents. Families, children, art enthusiasts, theatergoers, and garden lovers can all find something that interests them at the Ringling. Therefore, the Ringling has created a strong identity as not only an art museum or circus museum, but as a cultural center for the arts.

2. *The Collection*

It is especially the depth of the art collection, which makes this museum so special. In particular, the collection of Baroque masterpieces is sought after by many museums throughout the world for their own special exhibitions, including Francesco Cairo's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* and Frans Hals's *Portrait of Pieter Jacobsz Olycan*. It is a credit to the museum's collections, curatorial, and conservation staff that they are able to preserve and care for these masterpieces and able to courier them around the world to promote the Ringling Museum. These efforts have led to an increase in people traveling to Sarasota for the primary reason of visiting the museum.

The strong name and identity of the Ringling has led to many recent successes. There has been much media attention surrounding the acquisition of a James Turrell sky piece and they were featured in a March 18th New York Times Sunday article (Appendix I). The article

applauded the museum's efforts in trying to increase their profile.

3. Location

Another strength of the Ringling is its ideal location. Sarasota is a beautiful resort and beach town located south of Tampa. Many people call Sarasota home during the winter months and it attracts tourists from all over the country seeking out the white beaches. This is what initially attracted the Ringlings as well and led to their decision to make Sarasota the winter home of the Ringling Circus. They created a vibrant arts community that remains active today. The Museum is fortunate to have such a strong volunteer list, that there is a waiting list of people to be trained as docents.

Those not fortunate enough to call Sarasota home come to visit and escape the north. The Ringling has been able to thrive on this tourist industry and it sees its highest attendance rates during the months of March and April. In recent years the Curatorial staff has begun to tailor exhibits to the season. During the spring of 2010 the exhibit *In Search of Norman Rockwell's America*, featuring Rockwell images, garnered huge audience response and bolstered sales for the season. This well thought out exhibition planning will continue to drive sales and help sustain the Ringling during the less busy summer months.

Weaknesses

1. Management

The Ringling's alignment with Florida State University has allowed the museum to thrive and grow in the last decade. Without Florida State University, the museum would no longer exist. The alignment has helped promote the name of the Ringling Museum, provided students and adults with additional educational opportunities, and brought further professional expertise to the museum. However, these are uncertain economic times, especially in Florida. The budget

cuts to the university and state have begun to trickle down to the museum. Today, the Ringling is experiencing a hiring freeze and this is a direct result of being under the umbrella of FSU. The Ringling has had to resort to hiring part-time employees to fill gaps left by the departure of full-time employees.

The other main management weakness is the lack of a permanent Executive Director. The departure of John Wetenhall in 2009 left the museum with a void in leadership. This has filtered down to all levels and affects the staff morale. In response to the situation the board and FSU hired Interim Director Marshall Rousseau. Mr. Rousseau was the former Executive Director of the Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida and thoroughly capable of handling the position. However, the interim position has turned into a position with no end in sight. The museum has lacked an Executive Director for over a year. The interim Director is acting on the museum's behalf for the moment and therefore long term decisions are being put off and the museum may suffer in the future for it.

Unfortunately, the Board of Directors is only an advisory board and does not make the final decision in whom to hire for the position of Executive Director. They are empowered to nominate candidates, but the final decision is the responsibility of FSU President, Eric Barron. The slow process in hiring a new Executive Director can be attributed to several factors. First, the Board only meets four times a year. This is a small amount of time to discuss potential nominees. Furthermore, the President of FSU is six hours away in Tallahassee, Florida and not always present at board meetings. This is a huge weakness in the management chain, as the museum staff, Board of Directors, and FSU leaders are not working effectively together to hire an Executive Director.

The gap in executive leadership and the hiring freeze have combined to create a situation

where the staff is consistently overburdened and pulled in many directions. For example, the Collections Manager of the Ringling has become the head of conservation, preparation, and curatorial, as well as collections. Most days she was held up in meetings from nine until five with a parade of people in and out of the office voicing their concerns. While she is an effective manager, she had little time to address collections issues because of other staff issues. In addition the communication between curatorial, collections, and prep was sometimes lacking because there is no head curator and the prep department is understaffed. Therefore, the coordination of exhibitions and reinstallations sometimes became heated debates and personnel departments did not work effectively together.

2. Website

The Ringling's website is a weakness because it has failed to change with the times. While larger museums, such as MOMA and the Brooklyn Museum of Art continue to make their collections accessible online, the Ringling struggles to find its place in cyberspace. The museum did scan many images in order to have them on file for rights and reproduction requests and they have recently begun the process of making certain highlights of the collections available online. However, they have a long way to go with over 15,000 objects in the collection. The outdated website fails to draw in the public and especially is not appealing or helpful to students and younger audiences.

Opportunities

1. Loans and Exhibitions

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art stores and exhibits over 15,000 works of art. Many of these works are stored in the vaults and off-site warehouses and rarely seen by the public. Increasing the loans brings in revenue for the museum and ups its profile. While

many of the museum's baroque masterpieces are requested for loans, it is in the best interest of the work of art and the museum to be picky and conservative in loaning them out due to their condition and value. One way to increase loans is to create package exhibits and shop it to vendors. Not only can the museum use it for their own exhibit, but also expose museum-goers in other cities to the works and Ringling Museum. One example is the Old Master Drawings show that was exhibited at the Ringling and then loaned out to the University of Georgia this summer. The museum needs to continue to partner with other museums and create their own exhibits from their vast collection in order to boost revenue and their name.

2. Permanent Collection

The museum has the ability to loan out and create package exhibits, as well as showcase a more diverse collection. While the major strength of the collection is the Baroque items, there is also a tremendous amount of Asian art, Cypriote art, and Modern and Contemporary Art that has not been displayed in many decades if at all. Recently the museum has taken steps towards bringing these collections into focus. The museum is in the process of reopening the West Wing in order to exhibit the large collection of Asian art that has been donated to the museum and collected by John Ringling himself.

The Cypriote art is just beginning to be unpacked, cataloged, and photographed with the idea that an exhibit of select pieces will take place sometime next year. However, there are over 2,200 pieces from this period and the curators are planning a temporary exhibit in the Searing Wing featuring approximately twenty pieces. This collection should have pieces permanently displayed in its own gallery space and they should be rotated out to preserve them as well as showing new works to the public.

This is also the same situation for the Modern and Contemporary art. Currently the

museum has an exhibit in the Searing Wing titled *20th Century Abstract Art from the Ringling Collection*. Again, this is an in-house exhibit temporarily on view. With the recent addition of a modern and contemporary curator, Matthew McClendon, there should also be a permanent gallery space dedicated to showing modern and contemporary works. Furthermore, the ongoing James Turrell “sky piece” project is another reason to open a gallery for these modern and contemporary works. They can be shown alongside the “sky piece” and really cement the Ringling’s status as a museum of not only famous baroque paintings, but also of modern and contemporary art.

With the development of two galleries out of twenty-one dedicated to Cypriote/Ancient art and Modern/Contemporary art, this would also allow for many of the other works of art to be deinstalled and conserved. Many of the works of art have been hanging for many years without being conserved or allowed the chance to be safely stored out of the light and protected against the natural environment, such as humidity and pests.

Threats

1. Natural disasters

Similar to New Orleans, Sarasota is extremely vulnerable to hurricanes. In particular, the John and Mable Ringling Museum sits on the Sarasota Bay. This location is beautiful but leaves the museum’s buildings and its works of art in the direct path of a hurricane. Since the effects of Hurricane Katrina were witnessed, the museum has developed an intricate Emergency Plan. A museum disaster-preparedness plan focuses on preparing and mitigating the damage from catastrophic events that endanger people and collections.²⁸ While natural disasters are unavoidable, emergency plans can help museums save and recover works of art, communicate with employees and the public, and secure the grounds from future damage.

2. Economy

The economy continues to pose a threat to non-profit organizations across the country. The Ringling is no different. Many of its constituents are second homeowners or tourists who travel and live in the resort city. The loss of the funds from these people would be detrimental to the collection and to the staff who cares for it. Besides the major donors feeling the effects of the economy, Florida State University also feels it with state budget cuts, which trickle down to their visual and performing arts department that governs the museum. Already the budget cuts have cost the museum with a hiring freeze and the inability to bring in blockbuster exhibits.

3. Climate

The climate of South Florida is hot and humid and not conducive to valuable works of art. The climate also allows pests and critters to thrive and threaten the buildings and its works. The vaults and warehouses are in various locations, which makes installing, and deinstalling exhibits and pieces tricky because they will be exposed to the natural elements outside during transportation. A major milestone was reached this summer when funds were secured to purchase a climate-controlled van to help transport works of art to and from galleries, vaults, and warehouses. However, the climate will always be a threat to these works of art and the curators, conservators, and collections staff have chosen to move artwork during the winter instead of the summer to curb the threat.

Chapter Four: Best Practices

The American Association of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community.²⁹ It represents over 3,000 institutions in the United States, including the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. The Ringling is currently both an accredited museum and historic site. AAM Accreditation is a widely recognized seal of approval that brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement.³⁰ AAM's seven main accreditation program standards consist of public trust and accountability, mission and planning, leadership and organizational structure, collections stewardship, education and interpretation, financial stability, and facilities and risk management (Appendix J).

An analysis of the Ringling in regards to AAM's characteristics of an accreditable museum is based on my first hand experience and The John and Mable Collections Management Policy. A collections management policy is a detailed written statement that explains why a museum is in operation and how it goes about its business. The policy articulates the museum's professional standards regarding objects left in its care and serves as a guide for the staff and as a source of information for the public.³¹ The Ringling's policy outlines the mission and purpose of the collection, legal procedures, ethical issues, and access to the collection. Therefore, an analysis of the Ringling's policy and the AAM standards is appropriate.

Public Trust and Accountability

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art has identified and developed a strong audience following of both Florida natives and tourists. It tries to serve them to the fullest

by planning exhibits and events that will appeal to the diverse audience, including an international performing arts festival, rotating exhibits, circus performances, and docent led tours of the historic home and permanent collections. The Ringling does fall short on being a good neighbor to other museums in its geographic area. This is not malicious or intentional, but simply that it does not capitalize on partnership opportunities with other museums in Florida, including ones less than one hundred miles away. As the State Art Museum of Florida, there needs to be initiative and outreach on the part of the Ringling.

The Ringling does succeed in providing public access to intellectual material as well as their collection. The Collections Management policy states the following in regards to access and accountability:

The Museum provides access to the collections while ensuring preservation and care, which includes the documentation, title, security, physical protection, conservation, storage, access, inventory, and records system in accordance with accepted museum practices. Access is provided through research opportunities, exhibitions, publications, educational and interpretive programs, response to public inquiries, loan of the collections and information management. Accountability is attained through internal controls, written collecting plans, and authorized, documented collections management activity. The dual goals of access and accountability underlie all collections management activity.³²

Based on the above written policy it is evident the Ringling is committed to public accountability and access. The Ringling also recognizes the importance of complying with government legislation, applicable law and is committed to following museum regulations. This includes museum policies, the Code of Ethics, the Museum Emergency Plan, and the governing documents for the museum. These documents include The John Ringling Last Will and Testament and codicil, the Articles of Incorporation, the By-Laws of the Board of Directors, and Florida Statutes, Section 240.711.³³ They also take into account other legal and ethical considerations, such as Artists' rights, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, and ownership.

Mission and Planning

One of the core questions AAM is concerned with is how well an institution meets its mission and goals. The Ringling Museum has clearly identified its mission and goals, which was adopted on June 22, 2007. The mission statement is *to engage visitors with our collections, exhibitions, cultural programs, and the Ringling Estate*. While the mission statement is broad, it is reinforced with a position statement, vision, and institutional values. The Museum staff, Florida State University, and the Board of Directors work together to advance the mission of the museum.

Five goals were developed in 2007 with the idea that they would be accomplished by 2012. These goals are evaluated and discussed at each board meeting that takes place. The museum uses these goals to measure the success of its efforts. With 2012 looming the museum has put into motion or accomplished many of the goals including endowing internships, expanding the Circus Museum, building a “sky piece” by James Turrell, initiating a children’s cultural camp, and developing university-level educational programs.

The Collections Management Policy enables the Museum to fulfill its mission with respect to the preservation, development and enhancement of the legacy of John and Mable Ringling.³⁴ The safety, conservation, and maintenance are the responsibility of the museum to ensure the collection will be available to future generations. The collections management department is one aspect of the museum operation and it is focused on care for the collection and allocates resources, both time and money from its budget, to achieve this goal. One indication of this is the recent hiring of a part time employee to monitor the museum environment weekly. Other indications are the accessioning of pieces that enrich the collection including Ringling Brothers circus memorabilia and Mable Ringling’s personal artifacts.

Leadership and Organizational Structure

The handing over of governance of the John and Mable Ringling Museum to Florida State University is less than a decade old and already the results and impact are profound. FSU, the staff, board and volunteers are passionate about John and Mable Ringling, their collection, and the mission of the museum. Although they understand the needs of the museum and have supported it through tough economic times, they do not always work effectively together and communicate with one another.

One of the least successful things about their organizational structure (Appendix D) is the non-governing Board of Directors. The board is extremely successful in making suggestions and raising money. However, they do not have their hand in every decision and only meet four times a year. This allows the staff to work more closely together and proceed with making the daily decisions regarding the collections, education, and programming, but leaves the board unaware of the museum and its staff's needs. In particular what type of a person to nominate for the position of Executive Director.

The organizational chart does indicate a division of responsibility and a staff with various interests and backgrounds. Furthermore, within the Collections Department there is a division of labor and clear roles. The three and a half employees of the department efficiently care for one of the largest collections in the country.

Collections Stewardship

The Collections Management Policy of the Ringling addresses all of the AAM stipulations for good collections stewardship and observes museum standards. The Ringling does not acquire or accept objects that they have reasonable cause to believe may have been obtained under illegal circumstances. The Director and the Board of Directors do not acquire or accept

objects with questionable legal title. Finally, the Ringling does not accept a work if such acceptance can be construed as conveying its commercial endorsement of the work.³⁵

With the policy as their guideline, the curators, education staff, and registrars have been able to plan and develop future exhibits that are keeping within the museum's mission. The museum also draws from its own collection, as well as loaning from other institutions to highlight not only the life of John Ringling, but also his artistic interests and thus, they succeed in being good stewards of the museum's collection.

Education and Interpretation

The Collections Management Policy takes into account the educational aspect of the collection and states the following:

In its operations the Museum collects, preserves, exhibits, and makes available for study materials of artistic and educational significance and provides related educational services for the purpose of increasing knowledge and enriching the cultural life of the Museum, the State of Florida, the local community, its visitors and through its affiliation with FSU. The Museum also uses and creates information about its collections.³⁶

The Ringling's education staff is one of the most driven, creative, and innovative I have worked with. Part of the reason is that they have a lot of material to pull from and a large, enthusiastic audience. The museum took into consideration educational goals when building the Searing wing and the Circus Museum's Tibbals Learning Center. They designated and developed separate rooms adjacent to the galleries as Educational Areas. These areas provide both the younger and older audiences to participate in activities that enhance their visual experience. Hands on educational activities have not yet been expanded to permanent installations in the museum or *Ca d'Zan*. However, the museum does offer informative and unique tours for these collections.

In addition to the activities, tours, and space provided for viewing the collection and exhibits, the Ringling provides many other forms of educational programming and opportunities.

This includes the Library and Archives, research access to the collection, fellowships, internships, and summer camps.

Financial Stability

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Foundation, Inc. statement of activity for the period between July 1, 2009 – April 30, 2010 indicated a fiscally responsible institution with revenue outweighing expenses. Total cash and investments increased over the previous year primarily due to improved market conditions.³⁷ Despite better market conditions total gifts and grants were significantly lower than the previous period. This is most likely due to the fact that an individual donor and board member, Howard Tibbals, sponsored the \$6.5 million expansion to the Circus Museum and endowed several staff member positions. These generous gifts have allowed the Ringling to expand and grow into the museum it is today. The museum is also generating long term sustainability through developing its membership base and attracting visitors with popular exhibits. Membership and admission revenues increased and exceeded budget primarily due to an increase in general admission prices. While the Ringling has reaped the benefits of individual gifts, they can't always rely on them in this economy and must bear in mind that ultimately their budget is tied to Florida State University's budget.

Facilities and Risk Management

The Risk Management and Safety sections of the Collections Management Policy state the following:

Risk Management is a high priority in the Museum's care of its collections. The Museum maintains appropriate fine art insurance to protect its collections and objects in its possession or on loan to the Museum. Permanent collections are insured at acceptable limits that are deemed appropriate and in accordance with industry practice. The Collections and Conservation Department oversees the adequacy and sufficiency of fine art insurance in conjunction with the Deputy Director and Chief Curator. Risk management and the security of the collections also is governed by the principles and procedures contained in The John and Mable Ringling Museum Emergency Plan, which

is intended to secure the collections from theft and vandalism; Identify, eliminate and reduce potential hazards to the collection, including natural disasters, vandalism, theft, human error, terrorist threats, mechanical or operation system failure, and deterioration.³⁸

According to AAM the museum must take measures to ensure the security of the people, safety of the collection and its facilities. Curatorial, registration, facilities management, and security staff address safety issues. One example of how these departments work together to achieve a safe environment was the installation of the Yinka Shonibare exhibit. The exhibit posed a variety of safety and security issues because of the small accessories with the mannequins as well as the design of the exhibit. The curator of the exhibit had to lay out a different scheme for the exhibit after it was set up because the mannequins were too close to entrances and exits. Due to the dull lighting the staff was concerned audiences might trip over the objects and hurt themselves and the art. In response the museum arranged to rope off mannequins and place two security guards in the galleries to oversee it.

The museum has generated a Disaster Emergency Plan, in addition to their Collections Management Policy, to set protocols and procedures in the event of an emergency. These documents help protect the museum against risk and loss.

Chapter Five: Recommendations

The following are my recommendations based on my experience in the Collections Management department regarding management, marketing, development, legal applications, and financial management.

My primary recommendation to the Ringling Museum of Art is to hire a permanent Executive Director immediately. While I understand that it takes time to find a leader qualified to handle a museum of this magnitude, the search has been slow and the museum and its staff have suffered. The search began over a year ago and since then there has been a lack of consistent leadership and management. It has also been a time when leadership is crucial. The board is only an advisory board, not a governing board, and cannot make executive decisions concerning financial matters. FSU is located hundreds of miles away in Tallahassee and can't see to the daily operation and details of the complex either. It is the board's duty to nominate candidates to the FSU President. The board, senior level staff, and FSU leaders need to make this a priority in order to ensure that the museum continues to function as a world-class institution. Therefore, it is time for the Ringling to seriously consider candidates and options for its future.

In regards to marketing, the Ringling has begun to develop a national and international brand for itself. The recent purchase of a James Turrell "sky piece" and the Ringling International Arts Festival has put the museum on the map as a destination to visit. While the museum has been promoting its Baroque masterpieces and circus collection for years, the development of other collections, exhibits, and programs will ultimately contribute to an expanded and diversified audience. The Ringling has appealed to a specific audience for many years, but is beginning to develop a relationship with more diverse and younger constituents. It needs to continue to market itself to younger audiences through continued creative programming.

It would benefit the museum to market itself through the use of social media and an interactive website.

In addition the Baroque masterpieces and John Ringling's basis for his collection should not be ignored. These works are the museum's greatest asset and they should continue to market them to audiences in their community and abroad. These works also should be treated with continued due care. While it is time consuming and hard work I would recommend that these precious permanent works be rotated every few years. This does already take place to some extent and this continued process will help preserve them for the future by letting them be conserved and rest out of the public's eye. It also allows the exhibition space to be used to showcase other objects from the permanent collection that may never have been seen.

In terms of legal applications, I would recommend that the collections department continue to comply with applicable law. The museum has a strict policy on being a party to any act that violates national or international laws that protect the rights of artists in their work(s); rights of countries or their indigenous people in their historical, religious and cultural patrimony; or the maintenance of endangered species and conservation of natural history.³⁹

In general the Ringling's finance and development leaders need to establish better relations with FSU. They rely heavily on individual gifts from people in the community and the board, but ultimately their budget is tied to FSU's. If higher education budget cuts continue, then eventually the Ringling will suffer. There has to be a long-term financial plan initiated jointly by the Ringling and FSU staff in order for the organization to remain fiscally healthy.

I would also recommend that money continues to be budgeted for the conservation and preservation of the museum's objects. This includes data loggers to monitor the environment, computer software and photo equipment to record and document pieces, conservation tools and

materials to clean and restore art, and climate controlled transportation. In addition it is important for the Ringling collections department to reevaluate its loan and reproduction fees. The Ringling is very generous in waiving fees for people and institutions, but other institutions are not always granting them the same courtesy. They must be fair, but also benefit financially from their efforts in order to continue to care for the collections and exhibit them.

Chapter Six: Contributions

I have contributed to the Collections Management Department at the Ringling in many ways. Primarily, I helped to begin the long process of bringing the Cypriote Collection into focus. This is a tedious project that will take many months to complete. I am proud to say that I completed unpacking fourteen boxes and photographing and cataloging over 400 objects out of 2,200. I have contributed to a project that will have a lasting impact on the Ringling, but also aide many other students, researchers, teachers, and the general public in their quest to learn more about ancient art. I have done this by bringing photographs and information up to date, which the public can now access, but also that the rights and reproduction department can send out to interested parties.

While the Cypriote project has allowed me to leave my mark on the Ringling, there were many other contributions, both small and large, that I made during the course of this internship. My previous experience working at the warehouse of Christie's Auction House, LLC allowed me to help clean out the Ringling's off site warehouse. Both my physical labor and ideas on creating space were appreciated. This also was useful when storage space was in short supply in the museum's many vaults on site. There was a need to create effective storage areas while preserving the objects.

I also believe that my past work experience was helpful when dealing with outgoing and incoming loans. I had experience in packing and shipping and could add valuable suggestions to the registrars. This is especially true of the condition reporting process that took place when the Yinka Shonibare exhibit arrived. Every detail of each piece needed to be examined and noted before the pieces could be displayed. This is similar to the process that takes places when objects

arrive at an auction warehouse before they are catalogued and assigned for sale.

Finally, in speaking and comparing experiences with fellow interns working in other departments I felt that I was considered part of the work force and not just someone to do errands and busy work. It was an engaging internship and one of my greatest compliments to the department is that I never used the copier machine. Everyone in the department was encouraging, open to discussion, and looked for input when it came to decisions on how to handle, photograph, or store an object.

Conclusion

My internship at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art has been an incredible learning experience. This internship has allowed me to see firsthand the inner workings of a major museum's Collections Management Department. It has also helped me to meet fellow students from across the country in Arts Administration and Museum Studies programs, and build relationships with knowledgeable people in my industry. While my time at other arts organizations was also important to my education, this experience has truly directed me to my career path. My summer at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, along with my Arts Administration courses, have contributed to my desire to remain in the museum field and my recent decision to accept a position as Assistant Registrar of the Historic New Orleans Collection.

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- ⁴ John Wetenhall, *A Museum Once Forgotten: Rebirth of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art* (Tallahassee, Florida: Florida State University, 2007), 13.
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- ⁷ Wetenhall, 58.
- ⁸ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Collections Management Policy, 1.
- ⁹ T. Marshall Rousseau, June 11, 2010.
- ¹⁰ Boyer, ed., 7.
- ¹¹ Wetenhall, 19.
- ¹² Boyer, ed., 175.
- ¹³ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Performances, <http://www.ringling.org/HistoricAsoloTheater.aspx>.
- ¹⁴ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Resources, <http://www.ringling.org/Resources2.aspx?id=456>.
- ¹⁵ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Board of Directors Report, June 25, 2010.
- ¹⁶ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Board of Directors Report, June 25, 2010.
- ¹⁷ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, About the Ringling, <http://www.ringling.org/About2.aspx?id=7708>.
- ¹⁸ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, About the Ringling.

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- ¹⁹ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Employment and Opportunities, <http://www.ringling.org/Opportunities2.aspx?id=6398>.
- ²⁰ Collections Management Policy, 3.
- ²¹ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Employment and Opportunities.
- ²² Boyer, ed., 9.
- ²³ Terry Segal, "Marking," in *The New Museum Registration Methods*, eds. Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore (Washington D.C.: AAM, 1998), 65.
- ²⁴ Segal, 65.
- ²⁵ Victoria Pointer, "Photography," in *The New Museum Registration Methods*, eds. Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore (Washington D.C.: AAM, 1998), 95.
- ²⁶ Lynn Swain, "Storage," in *The New Museum Registration Methods*, eds. Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore (Washington D.C.: AAM, 1998), 109.
- ²⁷ Mary Holahan, "Rights and Reproduction," in *The New Museum Registration Methods*, eds. Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore (Washington D.C.: AAM, 1998), 225.
- ²⁸ Ann Fuhrman Douglas, "Disaster Mitigation Planning," in *The New Museum Registration Methods*, eds. Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore (Washington D.C.: AAM, 1998), 247.
- ²⁹ American Association of Museums, About AAM, <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutaam/>.
- ³⁰ American Association of Museums, Museum Resources, <http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/accred/index.cfm>.
- ³¹ Marie C. Malaro, *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*, 2nd ed. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1998), 46.
- ³² Collections Management Policy, 2.
- ³³ Collections Management Policy, 1-2.
- ³⁴ Collections Management Policy, 1
- ³⁵ Collections Management Policy, 20.

³⁶ Collections Management Policy, 2.

³⁷ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Board of Directors Report, June 25, 2010.

³⁸ Collections Management Policy, 4.

³⁹ Collections Management Policy, 20.

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Appendix A



DAILY PUBLIC TOUR SCHEDULE

GUIDED TOURS are complimentary with paid admission. Space is limited and available on a first come, first served basis. No reservations are required. Simply arrive at the venue prior to the posted tour time.

AUDIO TOURS

For an enhanced experience, custom audio tours on iPod® media players are available to rent. Set with period music, character voices, and high-resolution digital images, audio tours give visitors a chance to create their own personal tour, spending as much time in each gallery as they choose. Audio tours are available for \$5 / \$4 for Ringling Members and come with disposable headphones.

Museum Of Art 5

All Tours Meet in the Museum Lobby

JOHN & MABLE'S MUSEUM

DAILY 11:00, Noon, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00
An introduction to Mr. and Mrs. Ringling's travels through Europe and some of the master works on view in their magnificent Museum.

SPECIAL EXHIBITION TOURS

All Tours Meet in the Searing Wing Lobby
SEASONAL AVAILABILITY 1:30, 2:30
This tour focuses on the changing exhibitions that are currently on view.

Circus Museum 15

All Tours Meet in the Circus Green Gallery

WHAT A SHOW!

DAILY Noon, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00
A tour featuring the Ringling family and the great American circus.

Cà d'Zan 10

SELF-GUIDED EXPERIENCES

Cà d'Zan first floor is available for self-guided visits daily at:

- 11:30 – Noon
- 12:30 – 1:00
- 1:30 – 2:00
- 2:30 – 3:00
- 3:30 – 4:00
- 4:30 – 5:00

DOCENT-LED TOURS

All Tours Meet in the Cà d'Zan Solarium

DAILY 11:00, Noon, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00
A tour of the first and parts of the second floor of John and Mable's winter home.

ALL TOURS are subject to docent availability and are subject to change. Tour participation may be limited due to Museum safe-practice policies.

Special Cà d'Zan Experience

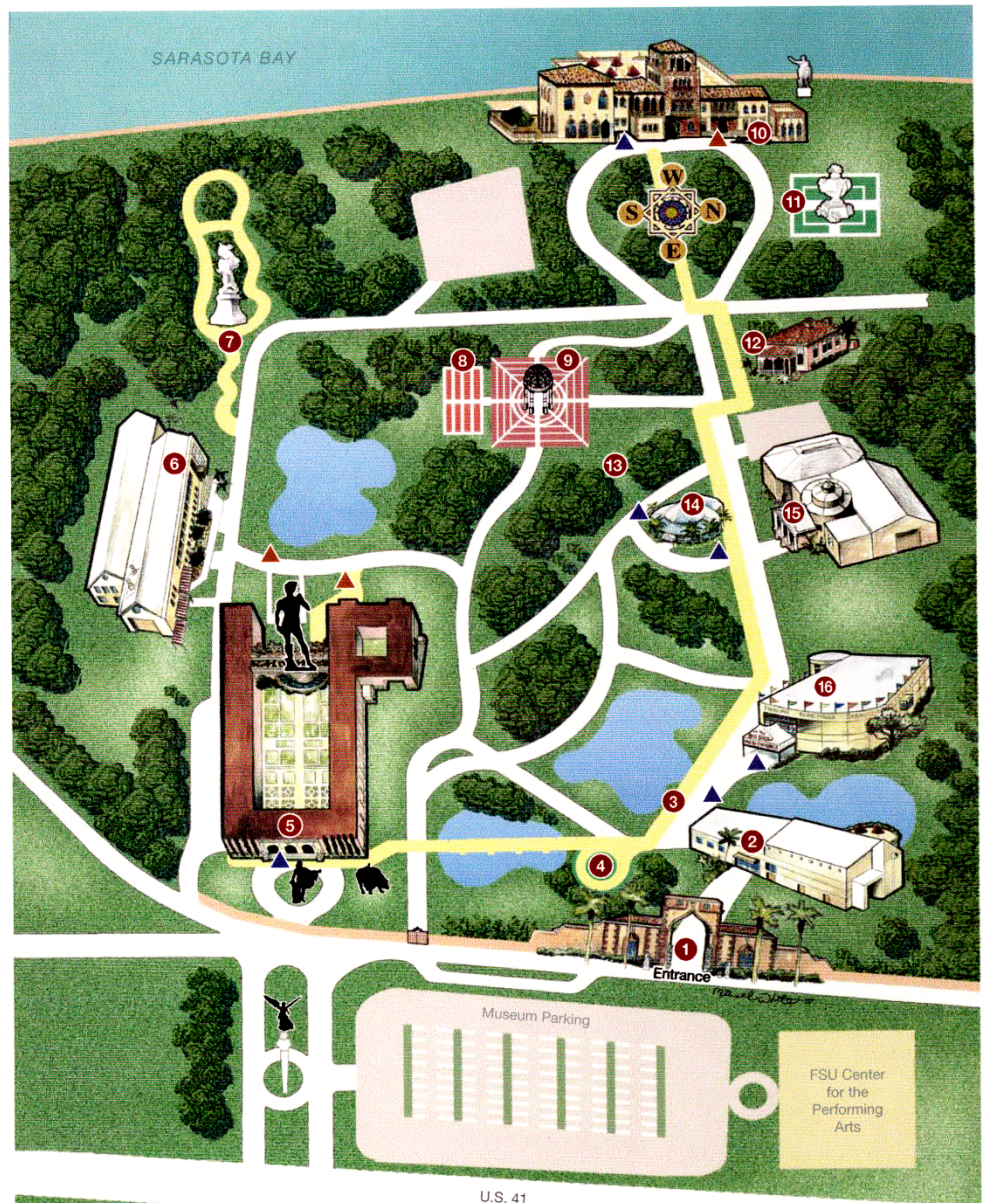


This tour is not included with admission and may be purchased on-site or in advance by calling 941.358.5810.

PRIVATE PLACES TOUR

DAILY 11:00, Noon, 2:00, 3:00
An exclusive 45-minute tour through the Cà d'Zan Mansion where the rich and famous stayed when visiting the Ringlings. Included is John Ringling's study and exercise room, the delightful Game Room, and weather permitting the glorious view from the Belvedere Tower. Restricted to seven guests.

All Tours Meet in Front of Cà d'Zan
TICKETS: \$20 / \$10 RINGLING MEMBERS and must be purchased in advance at the Visitors Pavilion.



Estate Map Locator

1. Entrance - Cà d'Zan Gatehouse
2. Visitors Pavilion
3. Historic Asolo Theater
4. Treviso Restaurant
5. Museum Store
6. Sidewalk
7. Dwarf Garden
8. Museum of Art
9. The Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Wing
10. Education Conservation Complex
11. Art Library
12. Millennium Tree Trail
13. Test Rose Garden
14. Mable's Rose Garden
15. Cà d'Zan Mansion
16. Secret Garden

▲ Tram Stops – drop-off / pick-up
▲ Tram Stops – drop off only

Restrooms are conveniently located at all the main venues and all except the Circus Museum have accessibility for the disabled.

Getting Around the Estate

There is a tram stop directly behind the Visitors Pavilion and there are clearly marked tram stops conveniently located all over the estate. Wheelchairs and strollers are available in the Museum of Art, Cà d'Zan, and Circus Museum.

Estate Policies

Backpacks are not permitted in Estate venues. Personal photography is permitted for non-commercial purposes; however, tripods, mono-pods, lighting equipment and flash photography are not allowed. No images taken on the Estate may be reproduced without prior written permission.

We're Glad You're Here!

Appendix B

Highlights

GALLERY 1

Peter Paul Rubens
The Triumph of Divine Love, c. 1625
Museum Purchase, 1980

GALLERY 2

Peter Paul Rubens
*The Meeting of Abraham
& Melchizedek*, c. 1625
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 3

Lucas Cranach I
*Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg
as Saint Jerome*, 1520s
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 4:

Piero di Cosimo
The Building of a Palace, c. 1515/20
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 5:

Lettuccio, 1500s
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 6:

Paolo Veronese
The Rest on the Flight into Egypt,
c. 1580
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 7:

Simon Vouet
*Time Discovering the Love of Venus
and Mars*, c. 1640
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 8:

Bernardo Strozzi
*An Act of Mercy: Giving Drink to
the Thirsty*, c. 1618/20
Museum Purchase, 1950

GALLERY 9:

Pietro da Cortona
Hagar and the Angel, c. 1637/38
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 10:

Karel Dujardin
Hagar and Ishmael in the Wilderness
c. 1662
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 11:

Frans Hals
Portrait of Pieter Jacobsz. Olycan
c. 1639
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 12:

Adam Pynacker
Landscape with Hunters, c. 1665
Museum Purchase, 1971

GALLERY 13:

Peter Paul Rubens
Portrait of the Infante Ferdinand, 1635
Museum Purchase, 1948

GALLERY 14:

Diego Velázquez
Philip IV, King of Spain, c. 1625/28
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 15:

Noël-Nicolas Coypel
*Portrait of Madame de Bourbon-Conti
as Venus*, 1731

GALLERY 16:

Giambattista Tiepolo
*An Allegory Representing the Glory and
Magnanimity of Princes*, c. 1760
Museum Purchase, 1951

GALLERY 17:

Giovanni Paolo Panini
Circe Entertaining Odysseus at a Banquet,
c. 1718/19
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 18:

Thomas Gainsborough
*Portrait of Lieutenant General
Philip Honywood*, 1765
Bequest of John Ringling, 1936

GALLERY 19:

Salon from the Astor Mansion, New York

GALLERY 20:

GALLERY 21:

Robert Henri
Salomé, 1909
Museum Purchase, 1974

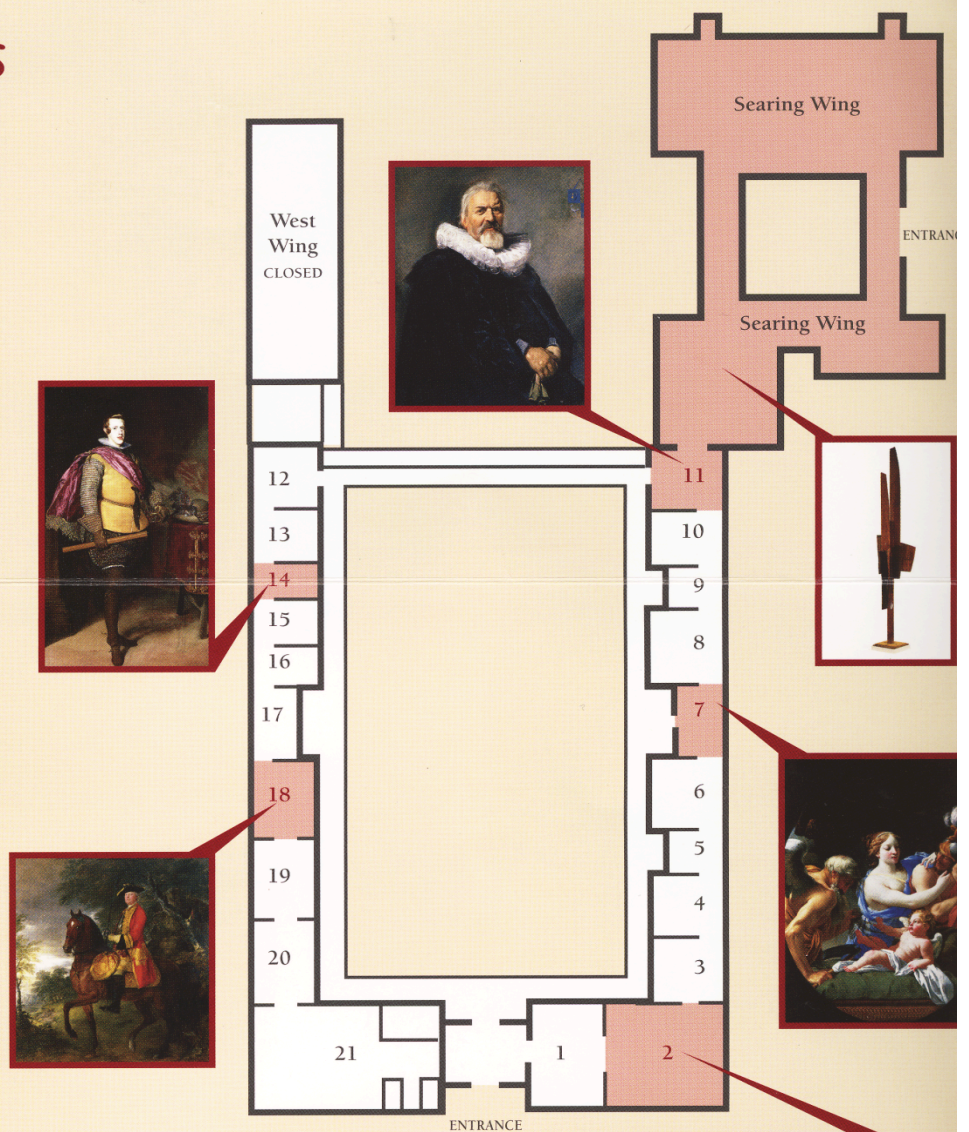
THE SEARING WING:

Modern and Contemporary Art, Asian Art, Special Exhibitions

Gabriel Kohn

Homage to Dylan Thomas, 1958-1963
Bequest of the artist, 1980

Highlighted objects may be on loan to other



Appendix C

~Mission Statement~

To engage visitors with our collections, exhibitions, cultural programs and the Ringling Estate.

~Position Statement~

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art preserves and enhances the legacy of John and Mable Ringling and engages a large and diverse audience through its Museum of Art, Circus Museum, *Ca d'Zan* mansion, Historic Asolo Theater, and historic grounds overlooking Sarasota Bay. The Museum is a division of Florida State University and is the Official State Art Museum of Florida.

~Vision~

To become recognized internationally as one of North America's leading cultural institutions, known especially for engaging interpretation of its superb collections, in-depth learning opportunities, and a dynamic professional staff.

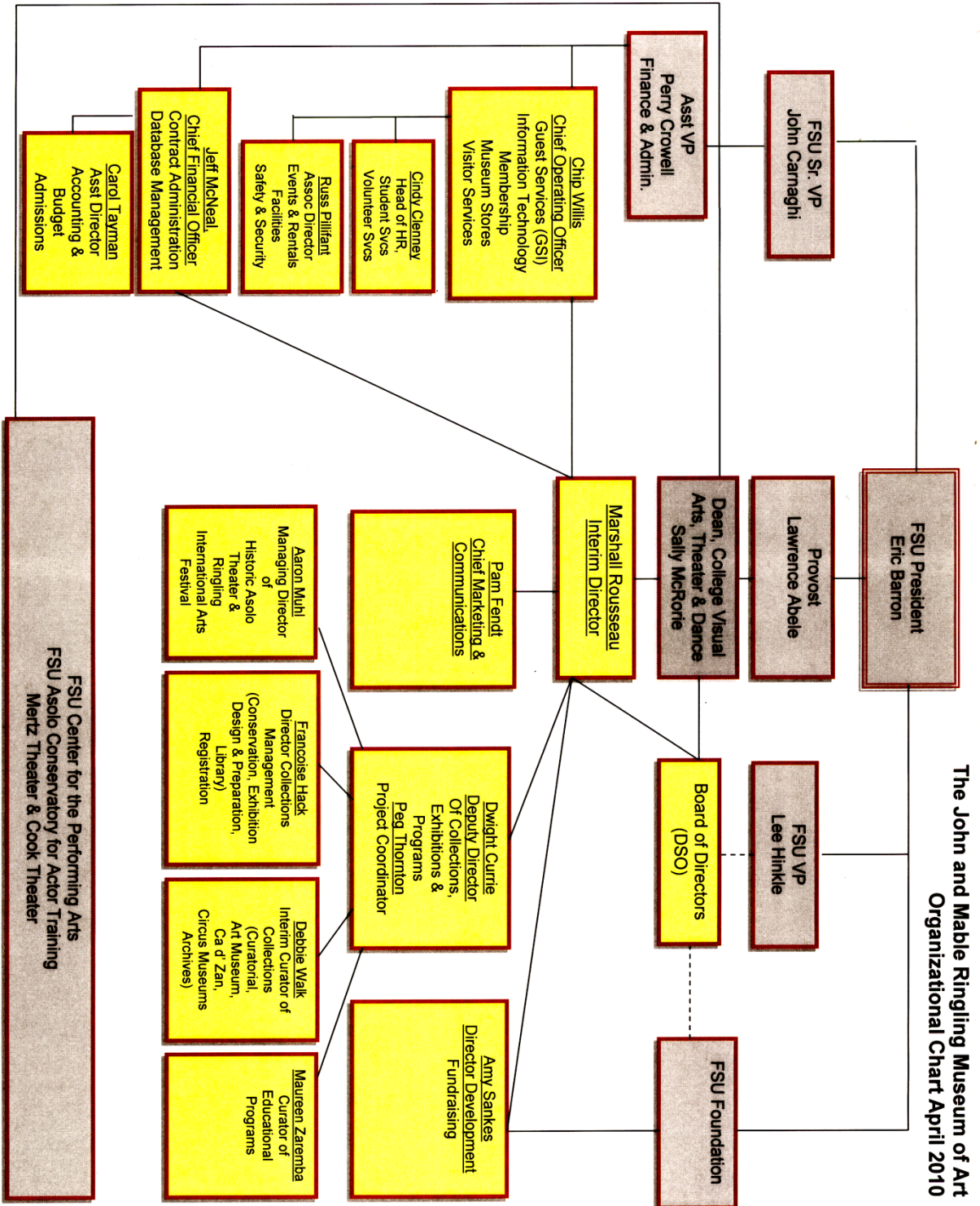
~Institutional Values~

- Integrity
- Exquisite quality
- Exceptional Service
- Speed and Flexibility
- Unity among Staff, Board, and University

~Goals For FY 2007-2012~

1. Endow staff positions, internships, cultural programs, and preservation of the Ringling Estate.
2. Enhance the facilities and grounds by:
 - a. Expanding the Circus Museum and replacing the aging structure;
 - b. Enclosing the Searing Wing courtyard with a "sky piece" by James Turrell;
 - c. Constructing the Dr. Helga Wall-Apelt Asian Art Galleries; and
 - d. Developing our landscaped grounds to their full potential.
3. Establish a compelling and prestigious "brand" position for the Ringling Museum – locally, nationally, and internationally.
4. Initiate and develop an adult institute for cultural learning, a children's cultural camp, and university-level educational programs.
5. Develop and implement strategic plans for Statewide outreach.

Appendix D



Appendix E

Board of Directors

Barbara J. Siemer, Chair*
Senator John M. McKay, Vice Chair*
Les R. Smout, Treasurer
Clifford L. Walters, III, Secretary*
Sara A. Bagley*
Robert E. Christopher*
H. Talbot (Sandy) D'Alemberte
George R. Ellis
Andrea Gonzmart-Turner
Priscilla M. Greenfield
J. Roderick (Rod) Heller, III
Dr. Patrick J. Hennigan*
Christine L. Jennings*
Senator Robert M. Johnson*
Jeffrey L. Maulsby*
Samuel L. (Bo) Perry, Jr.
Alice W. Rau*
Michele D. Redwine*
Frank J. (Sandy) Rief
Howard C. Tibbals*
James B. Tollerton*
Michael E. Urette
Peter A. Vogt*
Dr. Helga M. Wall-Apelt

Ex-Officio Board Members

John B. Fisher*, Chair, Volunteer Services Advisory Council
Donna N. Grasel*, President, Members Council
Sharon Erickson*, Chair, Docent Advisory Council

*Sarasota/Manatee County resident

Appendix F



Appendix G

Objects			
File Edit Display Mode Query Report Conservation Registration Related Tools Maintenance Help			
<input type="checkbox"/> Curator Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Public Access <input type="checkbox"/> On View <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accountability <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Object		1 / 1	
The Museum System Inventoried ANCIENT ART		SN28.654	
Classification (not assigned)		Culture 	
Period 		Date 	
Constituent(s) Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cesnola Collection		Group Information 	
Title Juglet		Object Name 	
Medium 		Dimensions 	
Description 		Credit Line Bequest of John Ringling, 1936	
Paper/Support 		Catalogue Raisonné 	
Signed 		Portfolio/Series 	
Mark(s) 		Current Location SN28.654: STORAGE, NEW VAULT, SE QUAD AISLE 3, SHELF 2, E, BOX 119 [Jul-27-2010], STORAGE	
Inscription(s) 			
Front Card Notes Documentation Media Context Related Other			




Before TMS record updated

Objects
 File Edit Display Mode Query Report Conservation Registration Related Tools Maintenance Help

☐ Curator Approved
 ☐ Public Access
 ☐ On View
 ☒ Accountability
 ☐ Virtual Object
 1 / 1

The Museum System **Inventoried ANCIENT ART** **SN28.654**

Classification CERAMICS	Culture Cypriote	 <p>2 media on file...</p>
Period 	Date 	
Constituent(s) Artist: Unknown Bequest of: John Ringling, American, 1866 - 1936	Group Information 	
Title Juglet	Object Name 	

Medium Clay	Dimensions 3 1/4 x 3 3/16 in. (8.3 x 8.1 cm)
Description Handle missing; base chipped. Hard, coarse, brown buff clay;	Credit Line Bequest of John Ringling, 1936
Paper/Support 	Catalogue Raisonné
Signed 	Portfolio/Series
Mark(s) 	Inscription(s)
Current Location SN28.654: STORAGE, NEW VAULT, SE QUAD AISLE 3, SHELF 2, E, BOX 119 [Jul-27-2010], STORAGE	

[Front Card](#)
[Notes](#)
[Documentation](#)
[Media](#)
[Context](#)
[Related](#)
[Other](#)

After TMS record updated

Appendix H

Yinka Shonibare's will be at Ringling Museum of Art | HeraldTribune.com

8/10/10 3:37 PM



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Printed on page E1

THE ARTS

Yinka Shonibare's will be at Ringling Museum of Art

By [Susan L. Rife](#)

Published: Sunday, August 8, 2010 at 1:00 a.m.

The three letters after artist Yinka Shonibare might be insignificant to Americans, but they mean something in the United Kingdom.

"MBE" means that Shonibare, who was born in London and raised in Nigeria, is a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

"It's an honorific bestowed by the queen, to recognize artists for their contribution to the arts in the United Kingdom," explained Dr. Matthew McLendon, associate curator of modern and contemporary art at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, where seven sculptures by Shonibare, "Mother and Father Worked Hard So I Can Play," are on exhibit through late October.

The initials also have an ironic meaning for Shonibare.

"A lot of people think it's quite odd that he would accept this leftover (relic) from the colonial period," said McLendon. "He uses it because of the irony."

Shonibare's sculpture often reinterprets scenes from 18th-century European painting, except that the figures are headless mannequins costumed in clothing fashioned from Dutch-wax fabric, which has its own unique history.

The fabrics incorporate what are seen as traditional African designs, but were made in Europe starting in the 19th century specifically for an African market.

"These very brightly patterned fabrics that many people think were indigenous to West Africa, were manufactured in Europe and produced for an African audience," said McLendon. "So this became the perfect kind of metaphor or symbol for Yinka, whose work deals with identity, with ideas of 'Africanness' in the colonial and post-colonial world."

Shonibare is one of a group of artists sometimes referred to as the YBAs, "young British artists," who came to prominence in the mid- to late 1990s.



STAFF PHOTO / E. SKYLAR LITHERLAND

Seven headless, child sized mannequins outfitted in traditional Victorian dress are part of a new exhibit within the Astor Galleries at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art entitled "Yinka Shonibare MBE: Mother and Father Worked Hard So I Can Play." The exhibition runs from July 30 to October 24, 2010.

Educated at Goldsmiths at the University of London, Shonibare was challenged by a professor who asked why he was not creating African art.

"He had to confront that people saw him as African when he saw himself as a citizen of the world," said McLendon.

The show at the Ringling comes from the Brooklyn Museum of Art and is installed in the Astor Galleries. Seven child-sized mannequins are set up at play --a little girl on a scooter about to break up a game of marbles being played by a little boy; a little girl skipping rope; another child seated in "time out" on a bench; a little girl playing with her doll beneath a piano.

"There was a narrative running through my head as I put them together," said McLendon, who started planning the exhibition from photos of the sculptures he printed out and arranged around the galleries.

"It is like directing a play," he said. "You want to give them a motivation, a reason for doing what they're doing."

The mannequins are headless, McLendon said, to avoid overt references to ethnicity, and also as a somewhat sly reference to the beheading of French aristocrats.

"I think it's something very different for the Ringling," said McLendon, who, in just a few months, has begun to aggressively promote the museum's own extensive collection of modern and contemporary art.

"I think because it's dealing with ethnicity, with cultural identity, with the Gilded Age and colonialism, this speaks and hopefully will speak to a very wide audience, including audiences who haven't felt they've been very well represented at the Ringling."

This story appeared in print on page E1

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Appendix I

Museums Special Section - A Master Showman's Old Masters - NYTimes.com

Page 1 of 3

The New York Times

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March 18, 2010

MUSEUMS SPECIAL SECTION

A Master Showman's Old Masters

By GERALDINE FABRIKANT

JOHN RINGLING, one of five brothers who created the Ringling Brothers Circus (which later acquired the Barnum & Bailey Circus), was an avid art collector. With a fortune that placed him among the country's richest men, Mr. Ringling and his wife, Mable, bought thousands of art objects from 1920 to 1930 and created the John and Mable Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Fla., to display them.

"It is one of the most significant museums in America," said George Wachter, co-chairman of Old Master Paintings Worldwide at Sotheby's. "Ringling was a showman, and he was attracted to big, showy pictures."

Best known for its Baroque Italian and Flemish works, the museum owns one enormous tapestry and five cartoons — preparatory works for tapestries — by Rubens, as well as paintings by van Dyck and by Italian Renaissance masters like Titian and Tintoretto. It also has antiquities, including 2,200 that Mr. Ringling bought from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Cesnola collection in 1928.

In 1936, Mr. Ringling willed the property, including his home, Cà d'Zan, to the state and left \$1.2 million to support the museum. The museum went through good times and bad, and by 1996, Cà d'Zan had deteriorated so badly — with so many leaks that visitors found buckets on the floor to catch the water — that the museum board closed it for a six-year renovation financed by the state and local fund-raising.

In 2000, the state handed governance of the museum to Florida State University, an arrangement orchestrated by John McKay, then president of the state Senate and a member of the Ringling board, who is expected to be elected its chairman this summer.

"It had been treated like a redheaded stepchild and had not received enough money to meet its potential," Mr. McKay said. "There are benefits to placing it under the guardianship of a university." For example, once the museum was governed by the university, the university essentially had to match any gift the museum received.

For nearly a decade, money flowed in from gifts and grants: for a circus museum, new exhibition space and other benefits, and the art museum itself, presided over by the museum director, John Wetenhall.

In 2002, "we got a huge grant of \$49 million for expansion through Florida State University," recalled T. Marshall Rousseau, the museum's interim director, who is also a Ringling board member. In turn, the museum expanded its endowment, which now holds \$24 million, with more pledged.

The Ringling also mounted exhibitions with other museums, like the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, which helped put it on the national map.

But with the financial crisis and the recession came cutbacks and casualties. Because the museum is governed by the university and financed by the state legislature, it appears to have been caught between the two when they struggled over the budget. Last spring, Florida State, which supplies roughly half the museum's \$13.5 million budget, said it might have to stop providing financing.

"The university itself was facing a 25 percent budget cut, bigger even than California," said Sally McRorie, dean of the College of Visual Arts, Theater and Dance at Florida State. "It was not as if we were a state that had always invested heavily in higher education, so there was not a lot of cushion, and we had to look at budget items very carefully."

Since the spring, the university and the museum have been seeking strategies for cutting costs and increasing revenue.

Mr. Wetenhall resigned in August. He declined to comment, but several people with knowledge of the situation said he was weary of the political wrangling.

"Closing was never an issue, but the museum needed to find additional sources of revenue," Mr. McKay said.

The Ringling has cut its budget 20 percent, according to Mr. Rousseau, and has avoided layoffs. Equally important, the museum, its trustees and the university trustees have avoided any devastating battles over the future of the collection, like the one at Brandeis University, where the museum collection was almost sold until an uproar from donors and the public stopped the process.

Much of the collection is protected by the provisions that Mr. Ringling made before his death in 1936.

"He was a populist and stipulated that the art could not be sold, nor could any portion of the facility," Mr. McKay said. "Otherwise, everything would revert to his heirs." Art bought since his death is not subject to those provisions.

In recent months, the Ringling has found other means to stabilize its situation. It focuses more heavily on exhibitions drawn from its own collection, rather than relying on art borrowed from other institutions. The current "Gothic Art in the Gilded Age," for example, is drawn from its own collection.

"I am committed to doing exhibitions focused on our permanent collection," said Virginia Brilliant, one of the museum's two curators.

The museum is also strengthening ties to the university. Students can take courses at the museum as part of a graduate program in museum studies. Ms. Brilliant is teaching at Florida State, traveling more than 300 miles to its campus in Tallahassee and sometimes having students come to the museum. The other curator, Matthew McLendon, will join the program in the fall.

In another effort to increase the museum's profile, this winter the Ringling, with the [Baryshnikov Arts Center](#) in New York, mounted an arts festival and sold 93 percent of the tickets.

Despite the weak economy, the museum is visited by more than 300,000 people a year and has 10,000 members, far more than the average membership of university museums, which is 1,000, according to Ford Bell, president of the American Association of Museums.

For now, the speculation about closing appears to be over. But the financial pressures remain. Hearings on the state budget resumed this month, and Florida still faces a deficit.

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Appendix J



*Museum Advancement & Excellence
Accreditation Program*

Accreditation Program Standards:

Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum

Approved by the Accreditation Commission on December 3, 2004

Effective January 1, 2005

Public Trust & Accountability

- The museum is a good steward of its resources held in the public trust.
- The museum identifies the communities it serves, and makes appropriate decisions in how it serves them.
- Regardless of its self-identified communities, the museum strives to be a good neighbor in its geographic area.
- The museum strives to be inclusive and offers opportunities for diverse participation.
- The museum asserts its public service role and places education at the center of that role.
- The museum demonstrates a commitment to providing the public with physical and intellectual access to the museum and its resources.
- The museum is committed to public accountability and is transparent in its mission and its operations.
- The museum complies with local, state, and federal laws, codes, and regulations applicable to its facilities, operations, and administration.

Mission & Planning

- The museum has a clear understanding of its mission and communicates why it exists and who benefits as a result of its efforts.
- All aspects of the museum's operations are integrated and focused on meeting its mission.
- The museum's governing authority and staff think and act strategically to acquire, develop, and allocate resources to advance the mission of the museum.
- The museum engages in ongoing and reflective institutional planning that includes involvement of its audiences and community.
- The museum establishes measures of success and uses them to evaluate and adjust its activities.

Leadership & Organizational Structure

- The governance, staff, and volunteer structures and processes effectively advance the museum's mission.
- The governing authority, staff, and volunteers have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- The governing authority, staff, and volunteers legally, ethically, and effectively carry out their responsibilities.
- The composition, qualifications, and diversity of the museum's leadership, staff, and volunteers enable it to carry out the museum's mission and goals.
- There is a clear and formal division of responsibilities between the governing authority and any group that supports the museum, whether separately incorporated or operating within the museum or its parent organization.

Collections Stewardship

- The museum owns, exhibits, or uses collections that are appropriate to its mission.
- The museum legally, ethically, and effectively manages, documents, cares for, and uses the collections.
- The museum's collections-related research is conducted according to appropriate scholarly standards.
- The museum strategically plans for the use and development of its collections.
- Guided by its mission, the museum provides public access to its collections while ensuring their preservation.

Education & Interpretation

- The museum clearly states its overall educational goals, philosophy, and messages, and demonstrates that its activities are in alignment with them.
- The museum understands the characteristics and needs of its existing and potential audiences and uses this understanding to inform its interpretation.
- The museum's interpretive content is based on appropriate research.
- Museums conducting primary research do so according to scholarly standards.
- The museum uses techniques, technologies, and methods appropriate to its educational goals, content, audiences, and resources.
- The museum presents accurate and appropriate content for each of its audiences.
- The museum demonstrates consistent high quality in its interpretive activities.
- The museum assesses the effectiveness of its interpretive activities and uses those results to plan and improve its activities.

Financial Stability

- The museum legally, ethically, and responsibly acquires, manages, and allocates its financial resources in a way that advances its mission.
- The museum operates in a fiscally responsible manner that promotes its long-term sustainability.

Facilities & Risk Management

- The museum allocates its space and uses its facilities to meet the needs of the collections, audience, and staff.
- The museum has appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of people, its collections and/or objects, and the facilities it owns or uses.
- The museum has an effective program for the care and long-term maintenance of its facilities.
- The museum is clean and well-maintained, and provides for the visitors' needs.
- The museum takes appropriate measures to protect itself against potential risk and loss.

Vita

A native of Moorestown, New Jersey, Jennifer Rebuck made the long journey to New Orleans, Louisiana to attend Tulane University in the fall of 2002. During the summer of 2005 Hurricane Katrina sent her evacuating to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she continued her studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Ms. Rebuck returned to Tulane later that year and graduated *cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in Art History and Classical Studies. Ms. Rebuck spent two years working for Christies Auction House, LLC in New York City before moving back to New Orleans to begin a Master of Arts degree in Arts Administration at the University of New Orleans. Ms. Rebuck currently resides in New Orleans, Louisiana and is Assistant Registrar at The Historic New Orleans Collection.