



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-30-15-0321-15
Project Category: Collections Stewardship
Funding Level: \$25,001-\$150,000

Metal Museum (National Ornamental Metal Museum)

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$26,000
Amount of cost share:	\$28,888

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing narratives for FY2016 applications differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2014 and FY2015 applications. Most obviously, the names of the three narrative sections and the order in which they appear have changed. Be sure to use the narrative instructions in the FY2016 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Lead Applicant and Partners

The National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, TN requests IMLS support in the amount of \$26,000 to fund the creation of an open-access artist database containing the digitized archives of the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG). The SNAG archive is comprised of approximately 16,000 images of artwork on 35mm slides. It includes the portfolios of over 300 metalsmiths of national and international significance, as well as a series of exhibition records and metalworking tutorials. The digitized SNAG archive will be hosted on the American Craft Council (ACC) website as part of their Library Digital Collections database and will be accessible through the Museum's and SNAG's websites.

Needs Addressed by Project

Digitization of the SNAG archive addresses two high-priority collections challenges: conservation of the slides and accessibility of the materials contained in the archive. The issue of slide preservation was addressed by a private grant that covered the cost of cleaning, color-correcting, and digitizing the slides. IMLS support is necessary to address the challenge of accessibility. The requested funds will be used to hire a temporary Digital Archive Assistant who will help Collections staff upload the images and all related metadata to the ACC website where they will be fully accessible to the general public.

Project Activities

The project time frame is October 1, 2015 – December 31, 2017. Activities include reviewing and annotating catalog records for each image, creating a metadata template for the SNAG archive, uploading all images and metadata to the ACC database, and promoting the archive to the widest possible audience.

Project Beneficiaries

The specific audiences served by this project are artists, researchers, educators, and students who will benefit from this vast amount of primary source material. The broader audience includes on- and off-site Museum visitors and the general public. The Museum and its project partners, SNAG and ACC, will benefit from introducing the art and craft of fine metalwork to a worldwide audience.

Intended Results

Digitization of the SNAG archive is intended to substantially raise the quantity and quality of accessible information about the artists and exhibitions represented therein.

Measures of Success

Short-term success will be measured by the amount of web traffic the database receives. Success in the long term will be measured by future scholarship and evidence of increased attention to and knowledge about the artists represented in the SNAG archive.

1. Project Justification

What does the project propose to do?

The National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, TN requests IMLS support in the amount of \$26,000 to fund the creation of an open-access artist database containing the digitized archives of the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG). The SNAG archive is comprised of approximately 16,000 images of artwork on 35mm slides. It includes the portfolios of over 300 metalsmiths of national and international significance, as well as a series of exhibition records and metalworking tutorials. The digitized SNAG archive will be hosted on the American Craft Council (ACC) website as part of their Library Digital Collections database and will be accessible through the Museum and SNAG websites.

Project Background

In 2004, SNAG ceded complete ownership of this 35mm slide archive to the Metal Museum for educational use. These materials document artists whose work has revolutionized the contemporary craft world. Many of them are represented in the Metal Museum's permanent *Master Metalsmith* collection, named for the title bestowed annually on an artist nominated by his or her peers for outstanding achievements in the field. Examples include Mary Lee Hu, Richard Mawdsley, and L. Brent Kington (1934 – 2013), who is credited with introducing blacksmithing as a contemporary art form in the United States during his 35-year tenure at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, the site of the country's only Master of Fine Arts Program in Blacksmithing. In addition to individual artist portfolios, the SNAG archive contains slide catalogues of 22 national and international metals exhibitions dating back to 1970, step-by-step tutorials and demonstrations of different metalworking techniques, and other thematic slide sets of student work and early twentieth-century pieces. A complete list of the SNAG archive contents, as well as other documents pertaining to the 2004 donation, can be found in Supporting Document 1.

The slides are currently stored in the Museum's on-site library, available to visitors, researchers, educators, and our ongoing rotation of Blacksmith Apprentices and Artists in Residence. In keeping with our 2015-2017 strategic plan goal of expanding our audience, the Museum seeks to digitize the SNAG archive and make all 16,000 images available online, extending the availability of this collection far beyond the grounds of the Museum.

The first phase of the project, the slide digitization itself, has been funded through a grant from the John & Robyn Horn Foundation, a private grant-issuing foundation based in Little Rock, Arkansas that supports art education projects. Digitization will be completed by late summer 2015. IMLS funding is necessary to begin the second phase, beginning in October 2015: uploading the digitized slides and all related metadata to the

ACC website. Averaging four to five minutes per image, data entry for such a large collection of images will require 1,200 – 1,400 hours of labor, staff time that the Museum cannot afford to dedicate to a project that is outside the scope of normal operations. The funds requested will be used to hire a temporary Digital Archive Assistant to handle the majority of metadata entry for the duration of the project.

Collections Needs Addressed By Project

Digitization of the SNAG archive addresses two high-priority collections challenges: conservation and accessibility. The majority of these portfolios are decades old, and the slides show signs of deterioration. Many images are discolored, and their mounts are beginning to split apart, leaving the 35mm film vulnerable to scratches, dust accretion, and other damage. These conservation needs will be addressed during the digitization phase funded by the Horn Foundation grant. The slides will be sent to a professional digitization vendor to be physically cleaned, digitally color-corrected, and stored according to established museum standards. See Supporting Document 2 for full details of the digitization process.

Although digitization will address the need for preservation of the archive, it does not address the second challenge of accessibility. The digitized slides could still only be viewed by those who are physically present at the Metal Museum. Creating an open-access online database will increase access exponentially. The ACC promotes their Library Digital Collections to artists, students, curators, educators and collectors throughout the United States and abroad. An average of 1,200 unique visitors access the site each month and view over 30,000 individual pages of content. Supported by donations to the ACC, access to the Digital Collection is free and is part of the Council's ongoing effort to bring the resources of the ACC Library to students, researchers, and craft enthusiasts anywhere in the world. Links to the digitized archive will also be posted on the Metal Museum and SNAG websites.

Project Beneficiaries

The specific audiences served by this project are artists, researchers, educators, and students who will benefit from this vast amount of primary source material. The broader audience includes many non-specialists who are interested in fine metalwork. The archive will also enhance the experience of on-site visitors who, after admiring the work of a particular artist in the Metal Museum's galleries, can then explore an extensive portfolio of that artist's work at a computer in the Library reading room.

Intended Results

Digitization of the SNAG archive is intended to substantially raise the quantity and quality of accessible information about the artists and exhibitions represented therein. Performance goals include:

- Verifying and supplementing the companion catalog records that were submitted by SNAG when the slides were donated in 2004
- Creating a metadata template for the SNAG archive that is appropriate to the current project and could also be used to add to the database in the future
- Hiring a qualified Digital Archive Assistant to expedite the data entry process
- Uploading the complete contents of the archive to the ACC Library Digital Collections site by the end of the grant period
- Promoting the digitized archive to the widest possible audience through partnerships with SNAG, ACC and other organizations and institutions that support the advancement of the art and craft of fine metalwork

Relevance to Strategic Plan

The Metal Museum is the only institution in the United States devoted exclusively to the advancement of the art and craft of fine metalwork. One of three goals outlined in the Museum's 2015-2017 strategic plan is increasing our recognition as an international center for metalsmiths by promoting artistic excellence and cultivating a wider audience. The proposed SNAG image database is a digital asset that can be incorporated into a range of formal and informal educational offerings that will benefit artists, students, researchers, and other metalwork enthusiasts. Making the database fully accessible online will also make the Metal Museum and its mission available to a worldwide audience.

This project also aligns with the Collections Stewardship goals outlined in *Creating A Nation of Learners: IMLS 2012-2016 Strategic Plan*, which promotes the use of technology to increase access to museum and library collections, specifically developing and enhancing collections databases and reaching a nationwide audience through digitization initiatives.

2. Project Work Plan

Project Activities

With IMLS support, beginning in October 2015, Metal Museum staff will partner with the ACC Library to transfer the digitized contents of the SNAG archive (approximately 16,000 images) to an open-access online database. IMLS funds will be used to hire a temporary Digital Archive Assistant who will contribute 1,300 hours of metadata entry to the project over the course of a two-year contract beginning in December 2015. This assistant will upload images and metadata to the "landing page" that the ACC Librarian will create for the SNAG archive on the Library Digital Collections website (see Supporting Document 3 for a sample catalog entry). The SNAG images will be clearly labeled as a collection that belongs to the Metal Museum, but that is hosted through the

ACC's site. Content will be added to the online database on a rolling basis throughout the grant period as sets of images (a full artist portfolio, an exhibition catalog) are prepared by the Digital Archive Assistant. ACC and SNAG will assist the Metal Museum in promoting the digitized archive to artists, educators, students, researchers, and the general public.

Project Management and Staffing

Project personnel include one full-time Museum employee, one full-time ACC employee, one temporary part-time Digital Archive Assistant, and a total of four research interns (one per semester for the duration of the project). IMLS funds are required to hire the Digital Archive Assistant; the time contributed by all other project personnel is counted as cost share.

- *Kimberly Bradshaw, Collections and Curatorial Assistant*, will serve as Project Director throughout implementation, overseeing the Digital Archive Assistant and the Collections Research interns. She has several years' experience working with collections databases and will ensure that all image records are accurate and as thorough as possible, with a particular focus on progress against the project's timeline.
- *Jessica Shaykett, American Craft Council Librarian*, will provide the technical support necessary to launch the SNAG database. She has served as the ACC Librarian since 2010 and overseen the digitization of over 5,000 images and documents from the organization's archives. She will create a metadata template for the SNAG archive and provide Museum staff with instructions and training specific to ACC's CONTENTdm digital collections software. She will also assist and advise Bradshaw in searching for a qualified Digital Archive Assistant (see Supporting Document 4 for a full description of this temporary position)
- *Collections Research Interns* are recruited from Museum Studies Certification Programs offered by local universities. Each must complete a formal application/interview process and come highly recommended by the faculty in their respective departments. The intern's role in this project will be to assist the Collections and Curatorial Assistant in reviewing the physical catalog records that accompany the SNAG slides, making revisions where needed, and conducting any additional research necessary to populate all fields of the ACC metadata template for each image.

Sequence of Activities

1. Creation of metadata template, training of Metal Museum staff
Responsible: ACC Librarian
Active: October – November 2015
Completion: November 30, 2015

2. Hire and train Digital Archive Assistant
Responsible: Collections and Curatorial Assistant, assisted by ACC Librarian
Active: November – December 2015
Completion: December 31, 2015
3. Review SNAG catalog records, revise/supplement as needed
Responsible: Collections and Curatorial Assistant, Collections Research Interns
Active: October 2015 – September 2017
Completion: September 30, 2017
4. Metadata entry for SNAG images
Responsible: Digital Archive Assistant
Active: December 2015 – November 2017
Completion: November 30, 2017
5. Launch SNAG database through ACC website, uploading new content regularly
Responsible: ACC Librarian, Collections and Curatorial Assistant,
Digital Archive Assistant
Active: April 2016 – November 2017
Completion: November 30, 2017
6. Marketing/promotion of complete digitized archive
Responsible: Collections and Curatorial Assistant, ACC Librarian
Active: October – December 2017
Completion: December 31, 2017
7. Final Project Report
Responsible: Collections and Curatorial Assistant
Active: December 2017
Completion: December 31, 2017

Financial Resources

The total budget for the creation of the SNAG database is \$54,888. The contribution amount for the Metal Museum staff and interns is calculated based on the amount of time each will spend on the project, a total of \$23,888. ACC has committed \$5000 in staff time and resources to the project, bringing the total cost share to \$28,888. The amount of IMLS funding requested, \$26,000, will be used to hire the temporary staff necessary to complete the project.

Project Tracking

The Collections and Curatorial Assistant will provide the Executive Director with quarterly reports that assess in-house progress and adherence to the overall project timeline. A final project report that compares actual hours/expenses with estimated

hours/expenses will also be prepared for the benefit of both the Metal Museum and the ACC, in order to inform future collections digitization initiatives.

Sharing Project Results

The Metal Museum, ACC, and SNAG will all be responsible for sharing the complete digitized SNAG archive with artists, students, educators, researchers, and the general public. In addition to the permanent web links mentioned above, each organization will promote the archive to its members and partners through email blasts, newsletters (print and digital), social media, and press releases sent to a variety of media outlets. The archive will also be promoted through feature articles in the print publications of SNAG (*Metalsmith* magazine) and the ACC (*American Craft* magazine). The Project Director will share the outcomes of the project with peers at museum conferences.

3. Project Results

How will the care, condition, and/or management of museum collections improve?

The most immediate positive outcome of this project will be an exponential increase in the public accessibility of the primary source materials contained in the SNAG archive. The condition of the archive itself will improve due to the thorough review and annotation of catalog records that will occur throughout project implementation.

What tangible products will result?

The project will result in an open-access online database containing the complete slide archives of the Society of North American Goldsmiths, which consists of approximately 16,000 images of artwork in the form of individual artist portfolios, exhibition records, metalworking tutorials, and other thematic slide sets.

What are the performance indicators?

Short-term success will be measured by the number of unique visitors to the online database each month, the average number of page views, and how much web traffic the archive receives through the links posted on the websites of the Metal Museum, ACC, and SNAG. Success in the long term will be measured by future scholarship and evidence of increased attention to and knowledge about the artists represented in the SNAG archive.

How will you sustain the project and its benefits?

The project itself is intended to sustain the SNAG archive and ensure its availability to as large an audience as possible by distributing its contents in a format suitable to the diverse digital platforms present today, as well as those anticipated in the future. A plan

will be established for the ongoing maintenance and backup of the SNAG archive to ensure the long-term viability of the images it contains. The benefit of identifying, recognizing, and promoting the work of contemporary metalsmiths will be sustained by creating a template that will allow additional materials to be uploaded to the database as they become available. This template will enable individual artists to submit images and metadata in a format that will not require additional staff to maintain.

