

the MoA Quarterly

A NEWSLETTER OF THE
MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY, MIZZOU

NEW THIS QUARTER:

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NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome Summer! We had a wonderful spring at the museum. Staff have been pulling together the final objects for the exhibits, and we have been working on other parts of the museum such as the text, graphics, and signage. The hallway renovations began as soon as finals were over, and we are installing new lighting so we can exhibit artifacts in the hall as well.

The semester was fantastic as a student exhibit opened for a reception during finals week. The students worked with the people of Kawerak Inc. (kawerak.org), a group of 20 tribes in the Bering Strait region of Alaska to showcase Arctic objects with community support. This exhibit is now online, and you can see it from wherever you are (see the article from Dr. Medeia Csoba DeHass on page 3).

Our team moved a baleen whale mandible while we were moving other objects to new homes. The mandible has a long history at Mizzou. It was originally on display in Academic Hall along with artifacts that are in the Museum of Anthropology and were saved from the tragic 1892 fire. After Academic Hall, the whale was on exhibit in Jesse Hall, Stewart Hall, Mizzou North, and now it has joined the Zooarchaeological Comparative Collection. It can be viewed along with hundreds of other faunal specimens at the Museum Support Center.

We look forward to showing you the progress we are making in the museum and opening our doors to you! 

- CANDACE SALL

COLLECTION SPOTLIGHT: PEST CONTROL

BY JESSICA BOLDT



Molted Carpet Beetle skins

Keeping pests out of collection spaces is one of the primary goals for any collections manager, but just like in your home, completely excluding these creepy-crawlies is impossible. Recently, during one of our routine visual inspections, we noticed evidence of carpet beetles in one of our storage cases. These unwelcome visitors love to snack on animal products, such as wool, silk, leather, fur, and feathers, and must be promptly dealt with before they irreparably damage any objects.

A freezing process is the museum's preferred treatment of objects suspected of pest activity. This is a safer alternative to chemical fumigation which can damage sensitive objects. The object is sealed inside a plastic bag and placed in a freezer with a consistent temperature of at least -20°C (most domestic chest and upright freezers reach -20 to -25°C) for a minimum of one week. Once freezing is complete, the object is slowly brought back up to room temperature and monitored for any continued pest activity before returning to storage.

If you suspect pests or mold are affecting any of your personal collections, you can follow this same process at home. Freezing is generally safe for most objects made from organic materials, such as textiles, paper, wood, and leather. However, some collection materials should not be frozen, such as paintings, objects under tension (drums), inlaid wooden objects, and old photographs. Contacting an objects conservator with any questions will ensure you are using the correct process for your specific object. ❖



Caribou fur boots from Victoria Island, Canada

MU STUDENT EXHIBIT INSTALLATION

BY MEDEIA CSOBA DEHASS

This past Spring 2023 semester, the MU Museum of Anthropology, Kawerak Inc. (the non-profit consortium of 20 Tribes in the Bering Strait region of Alaska), and students in the Digital Indigenous Studies course offered at the MU Department of Geography collaborated on a knowledge repatriation project that resulted in both a physical and a digital exhibit. As instructor for the course, I appreciated the Museum's support to provide an authentic research experience through a community-engaged experiential learning opportunity for undergraduate students.

Based on recent input from Arctic Indigenous communities on the need to further strengthen research equity and from the White House on the full inclusion of Indigenous knowledge into convergent science, the class discussed and followed the co-production of knowledge framework. This process included consulting with Kawerak Inc.'s Social Science Program Director, Dr. Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, and Program Manager, Lisa Navraq Ellanna. In addition to providing guidance for the students in their research and selecting the artifacts to be included in the exhibit, Lisa and Julie also reviewed all exhibition texts and provided feedback that were implemented throughout the project.

The Museum's General and Grayson collections together hold approximately 1,600 Arctic and Subarctic Indigenous artifacts, predominately from Alaska. About 600 heritage pieces are from origin and descendant communities in the Bering Strait region. The majority of the collections are archaeological, with ethnographic pieces mostly representing clothing and items related to subsistence activities. While the pieces selected for the exhibit are all from the Corrington collection, the Museum's Arctic holdings came from several donors. With support from Kawerak Inc. and the MU Museum of Anthropology, students researched and contextualized specific Alaska Native ancestral heritage pieces while prioritizing and amplifying Indigenous perspectives in representing the collection. The genuine commitment of the MU Museum of Anthropology to both Indigenous Data Governance and to hands-on undergraduate research demonstrated that it is possible to foster knowledge repatriation that connects Indigenous ancestral collections with their communities by supporting all varieties of collections research. ♦

Copy and paste the link to view the Digital Exhibition created by students in the Digital Indigenous Studies course:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/af5958c78dod40538190ef33de117ad3>

Alaska Native Heritage from the Bering Strait Region

Alaska Native Heritage from the Bering Strait Region

Highlighting Iñupiaq and St. Lawrence Island
Yupik Collections

Museum of Anthropology at the University of Missouri
May 9, 2023



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

BY AMANDA STALEY HARRISON

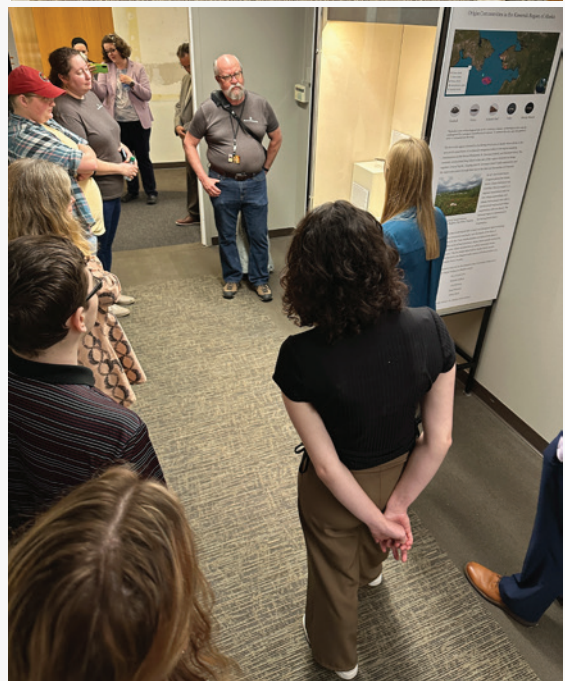
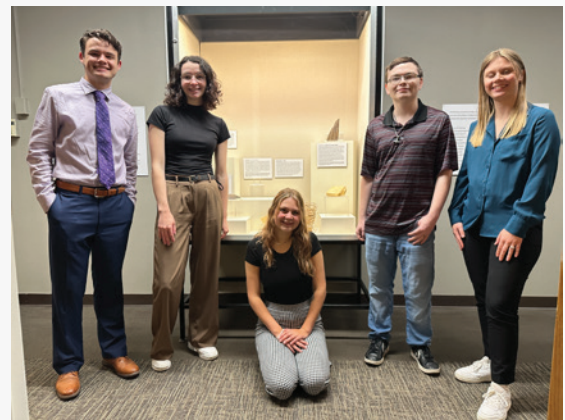
Another academic year is in the books, and I must once again give a shout-out to our students. Our first Mizzou intern since moving to the Ellis Library space summed up his experience for us in this excerpt from his final evaluation:

“What did I do for my undergraduate research this spring? I honestly think it might be easier to go over what I didn’t do, since I felt like each week was something new. My entire goal with this internship was to get a feel for what it would be like to work in a museum/archive and luckily, I came in at the perfect time. With the Museum of Anthropology moving from Mizzou North to Ellis Library, I got to see and experience what it was like to set up the museum and all of the different aspects that went into getting the space ready for the public. There really wasn’t a better semester to get this experience, since this kind of museum set up doesn’t occur regularly.”

The goal of our internship program is to be as truly comprehensive as possible to give scholars a full sense of work in the museum world. It was wonderful to read his opening statement and see that not only did his goals align with ours, we accomplished that goal in the midst of a major museum rebuild.

More on the intern front, we are starting off our summer with two new interns. As a Columbia Public Schools Partner in Education, we are welcoming our second senior from Rock Bridge High School’s gifted program. She will be working with us for the duration of her senior year and jumpstarting her internship with us over the summer. We also have an intern from Westminster College who will be completing her internship over the course of the summer. Both scholars will be working on learning the basics of object care and curation as well as assisting in multiple facets of the daily work at the museum.

Looking further ahead, we are already planning for future collaborations with Mizzou classes during the '23/'24 academic year. After a successful collaboration with Dr. Csoba DeHass’ students we are excited to prepare the permanent space for future student exhibitions and invite additional classes to schedule use of the space. The pilot collaboration with Dr. Csoba DeHass was insightful and we are looking forward to putting what we learned into practice in the future. ♦



Students show off the physical exhibit they created to compliment their digital exhibit in MU’s Digital Indigenous Studies course.



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