Welcome to our first VCESDA newsletter! It’s been an incredibly trying time for all of us these last few months, and we hope you and your family are well and staying safe. All of us have missed our time with loved ones, friends, and being out and about—including at the DIA.

During our last VCESDA Board meeting, we talked about the need for increased engagement with our membership. This quarterly newsletter was born of that discussion. Our hope is to keep you informed of the many things that continue to happen at the DIA, and to highlight new virtual content as well as some of the amazing artwork in our collection.

We also want to thank you for your continued membership. It makes a difference to the DIA; last month, VCESDA made a one-time contribution of $25,000 to the museum’s Sustainability Fund which will be used to support operational needs, including care for our existing collection and salaries and benefits for DIA employees.

We look forward to the time we can see each other at the museum, but for now, please enjoy our first issue of our VCESDA newsletter.

With all our best wishes,

Alan P. Darr
Charles L. Dunlap
Dr. Chassica (Chaz) Kirchhoff, Assistant Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, joined the DIA in February from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There, she was an Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Research Fellow in the Department of Arms and Armor. At The Met, Chaz contributed to the watershed exhibition, The Last Knight: The Art, Armor, and Ambition of Maximilian I, and its catalog. She also recorded the provenance histories of over 825 objects, including not only armors and arms, but equestrian equipment, costume elements, sculptures, paintings, stained glass, manuscripts, and even sumptuous collars for princely hunting dogs.

Chaz holds bachelor’s degrees in both Art History and Studio Art, and her undergraduate studies included blown glass apprenticeships, a welding certification, and a summer in residence at Santa Reparata International School of Arts in Florence. Her background as an artist working in metals and glass informs her scholarly explorations of the processes of creation, contexts of reception, and long afterlives as objects of display that shape and reshape works of art.

In 2018, Chaz completed a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Kansas, where she also designed and led courses on European Art, including a summer intensive taught in London and Edinburgh. From 2009 through 2018, Chaz held various appointments as a graduate curatorial intern and research assistant in the Spencer Museum of Art, where she contributed to the realization of over thirteen exhibitions and several significant acquisitions.

Chaz’s scholarly research combines direct engagement with artworks and archival research with theoretical models derived from social history, semiotics, and memory studies to reveal armor and arms—both real and represented—as persistent sites of meaning. She was a 2017 Renaissance Society of America Research Fellow and has published on the visual languages and mnemonic potential of armor, as well as on histories of collecting and provenance research practices.

WHAT CHAZ IS READING

Wolfram Koeppe et al.  
Making Marvels: Science and Splendor at the Courts of Europe.  
On February 1, 2020, Dr. Alan Darr was formally awarded the insignia of Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Cultural Ministry for his many years of contributions to French & Franco-American Cultural Programs, Exhibitions, Acquisitions & Events. Mr. Guillaume Lacroix, Consul General of France in the Midwest, made the official presentation, which was followed by a lovely Champagne reception.

Félicitations, Alan!

Photos by: Doug Coombe

Dr. Darr receives the French insignia of Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres

Dr. Darr, Salvador Salort-Pons and all past and present VCESDA chairpeople

Toasting Dr. Darr at the Champagne reception
REMEmBERING LILA SILVERMAN
by Salvador Salort-Pons

Lila Silverman passed away May 7, 2020. Lila and her late husband Gil were founding members of VCESDA and she served on the VCESDA Board for many years, and was Chair from 2000-2006. The Silvermans were also avid collectors and supporters of contemporary art; a gallery at the DIA is named for them. Lila also served on the board of FMCA from 2008-2017, and held the position of chair. She was a member of the Collections Committee, a Tannahill Society Member, an EPC board member and chair, honorary board member since 2007, and received the Lifetime Service Award with her late husband in 2003. From their nomination for that award:

“Their involvement with the Detroit Institute of Arts has been marked by notable service on the museum’s governing boards, exceptional support of the auxiliary support groups, countless hours of committee work, significant donations to the collection, generous loans from their personal collection, and a keen and abiding interest in the Detroit Institute of Arts.”

Lila and Gil underwrote many important DIA and VCESDA acquisitions and donated important works of art to the museum, including the Hector Guimard Hallstand from Maison Coilliot, Lille, 1898, (2005.48), a masterpiece of Art Nouveau design. As a tribute to Lila’s excellent leadership & chairmanship of the VCESDA, the auxiliary and the DIA acquired the expertly carved Bouquet with Lilacs, Poppies, and Hollyhocks by Aubert Parent, who was the favorite sculptor to Louis XVI. The Silvermans also donated approximately 125 Fluxus works to our contemporary collection.

Lila was enormously respected for her wisdom, willingness to speak her mind frankly, great friendship and generous support of the DIA in many ways. We are deeply saddened by her passing and send our deepest condolences to Lila’s extended family.

Hector Guimard Hallstand, 1898

Commissioned to design a residence for ceramics contractor Louis Coilliot in Lille, French architect Hector Guimard envisioned the Maison Coilliot as a total work of art. He employed the same sinuous lines and unorthodox materials for the interior and furnishings that he used for the facade of the building, creating a fully unified and singular aesthetic. This hallstand—remarkably fabricated as well as designed by the architect—features taut, undulating contours. The delineation of the silhouette suggests the force of organic growth. The enameled lava that embellishes the lower part of the hallstand was also extravagantly applied to the building's facade. This new technique, pioneered by Guimard and marketed by Coilliot, is as durable as it is beautiful, able to withstand hard use and repeated washing. Fusing form and functionality, this hallstand represents both the modernity and the reverence for natural beauty that defined the spirit of Art Nouveau design. DIA 2005.48

Gift of Gilbert and Lila Silverman
A lan Darr, Senior Curator of the European Art Department and Walter B. Ford II Family Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, has created a wonderful virtual lecture on our very own Doria Commode. Click here to view it on YouTube.

Did you know the museum re-opens July 10 & All memberships have been extended two months?

VCESDA 2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar

VIRTUAL 32nd ANNUAL MEETING: Saturday, September 26th, 2020, 10:30 AM-12 PM Microsoft Teams Virtual Event-Instructions to Follow

VIRTUAL FALL PROGRAM: (2020 Dr. Coleman Mopper Lecture) Wednesday, November 4th, 2020, 5:30 PM- 6:45 PM Microsoft Teams Virtual Event-Instructions to Follow