

Curriculum Vitae

Elisabeth Watkins Sommer
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Education

Graduate:

The University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4101
Degrees earned: MA and PhD
Areas of concentration: Early Modern Europe/Early America

Undergraduate:

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Greensboro, N.C. 27402-6170
Degree earned: BA
Major: History
Minor: World Literature

Additional:

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Dates of matriculation: August 2000 to December 2001
Graduate coursework in Museum Studies, including Museum Administration, Collections Management, Museum Education and Exhibit Development, and Material Culture Theory

Language Skills:

German: read fluently, speak less fluently
French: read moderately well

Computer Skills:

Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Publisher, Outlook, Past Perfect, Googledocs, Facebook, Wordpress, Dropbox

Professional Portfolio

www.museumdoctor.wordpress.com

Professional Employment History

Director of Museum Studies and Lecturer, University of Texas at El Paso, Jan. 2018 to present

- Manage and market Museum Studies Minor

- Teach classes in Museum Studies including the following:
 - Introduction to Museum Studies (Exhibition Practices I)
 - Exhibit Development and Design Lab (Exhibition Practices II)
 - Material Culture and Museums,
 - Curation and Collections Management
 - Museum Education and Interpretation
- Advise Museum Studies Minors
- Supervise Museum Studies internships, including assisting with placement in regional institutions and development of project outcomes
- Supervise special projects including annual exhibition implementation and independent student research
- Teach classes in Humanities program including Faith to Reason: Humanist Culture from the Early Middle Ages through the Reformation

Adjunct Professor of Museum Studies, University of Texas at El Paso, Aug.-Dec. 2017

- Teach Introduction to Museum Studies

Education Curator, El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, TX, Feb. 2013 to Sept. 2017

- Develop and evaluate interpretive elements for permanent collection galleries and special exhibitions, including labels, gallery guides, audio guides, interactives, and any necessary background research
- Manage all program and grant budgets in areas of responsibility including simultaneous grant budgets totaling over \$90,000
- Assist with grant writing and reporting, serving as lead grant writer when appropriate
- Assist with exhibit development
- Develop and implement new tours as needed
- Select, train, lead and motivate 30 volunteer docents
- Select and manage additional “regular” volunteers as available
- Manage school tour programs, including identifying relevant curriculum connections
- Schedule all tours and manage docent sign-up
- Offer teacher training workshops/sessions
- Create or manage the creation of supporting materials for school and general tour programs including inquiry-based scavenger hunts and gallery guides
- Develop and manage public programs, including musical, dance, and theatrical performances, gallery talks, lectures, and panel discussions related to special exhibits, such as panel and in-gallery fashion show on The Color Red for *The Red That Colored the World*
- Served as grant writer and project manager for Texas Commission on the Arts funded Community Catrina initiative in partnership with Armijo Recreation Center
- Served as project manager for NEA funded performing arts series in partnership with the El Paso Opera, the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, and El Paso Pro-Musica (\$34,500 grant) 2014-16
- Served as project/grant manager for Kress Foundation funded project to produce

animated videos of 15 paintings in EPMA's European Collection (2-year \$65,000 grant); responsibilities include research, development of audio narrative, working with contract media developer, assisting with locating supplemental images, reviewing storyboards and rough cuts, locating and engaging scholars to review audio transcript, developing, implementing and processing evaluations, and writing grant reports

- Served as manager for "Impressions" Alzheimer's program, including supervising program coordinator and evaluating program (in partnership with The West Texas Alzheimer's Association)
- Served as project manager for lecture series to support *Modern Masters: Highlights from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, 2014-15 including securing speakers, arranging hospitality, assisting with marketing, and overseeing budget
- Initiate and assist with creation of community impact partnerships, including development and project management of "Art Beats" partnership with the El Paso Symphony Orchestra's Tocando Music Project afterschool program
- Assisted with IMLS funded bi-lingual early childhood and family program (3-year grant)
- Select and supervise Education Department interns, including providing final reports to educational institutions
- Provide material for use on EPMA Facebook page
- Manage Reading the Easel book club
- Purchase supplies for public programs and docent training
- Assist with development of PR for all areas of responsibility
- Conduct tours when needed
- Represent Education Department at exhibit openings and special events

Visiting Professor of Museum Studies, University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, Va.
2008-2011

Courses Taught:

- Introduction to Museum Studies
- Laboratory in Exhibition Design and Interpretation
- Curation and Collections Management in the 21st Century
- Museum Education and Interpretation
- American Forms and Values (material culture)
- Preserving Historic America (intro to Historic Pres.)
- Group Independent Study on Museums in the Digital Age

Museum Studies Projects Supervised:

- Class development and implementation of *Down Freedom's Main Line*, an exhibit honoring the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, installed in the lobby of Dodd Auditorium
- Group development of virtual exhibit on the material culture of life in the 18th and early 19th centuries for the Fredericksburg Area Museum and Cultural Center
- Evaluation of the use of interactive elements in Virginia museums
- Survey and study of the challenges of collections management in house museums

- Study of the challenges of “old loans” within collections
- Survey and study of the interpretation of slavery in Virginia museums
- Survey and study of the objects as protected artifacts and objects as educational tools in Virginia museums
- Creation of museum education program for special needs students

Additional Responsibilities:

- Serve on Museum Studies Committee
- Advise all Museum Studies Minors in Historic Preservation Dept.
- Serve on special committee for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, including sub-committee for development of outdoor exhibit (winner of International Grand Gold Medal from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education)

Manager of Education and Interpretation for Roanoke Island Festival Park, Manteo, N.C.

November 2004 to March 2007

- Serve as head of Education Department
- Hire, train, and evaluate all interpretation staff, including three supervisory staff and three museum tech staff (total of 12-23 staff depending on season)
- Institute and manage all interpretive activities, including training in modified first person interpretive techniques
- Manage exhibit development and relevant research
- Manage collections, hands-on Adventure Museum, and art gallery, including maintaining and improving exhibits, hanging art shows
- Develop and manage special events, including multi-day events with outside participants
- Assist in the development of interpretive characters for interpreters scheduled on the sailing vessel and settlement site
- Manage all interpretive special events and presentations
- Develop and manage two separate budgets including submission of payroll
- Develop and manage project and work plan for Winter closure period
- Manage all purchasing
- Oversee development and implementation of all school programs, including curriculum based hands-on elements, and “travelling trunks”
- Conduct research for developing new public and school programs
- Foster partnerships with other educational and community organizations
- Serve on Strategic Planning Committee
- Oversee all interpretive or collections management related internships
- Write articles for quarterly publication

Director of Research and Interpretation for the Staten Island Historical Society/Historic Richmond Town, Staten Island, N.Y. October 2001 to November 2004

- Serve as head of Education Department

- Responsible for oversight of interpretation department and library/archives
- Hire, train, and evaluate all interpretation staff including three supervisory staff (total of 10-20 depending on season)
- Institute and manage all interpretive activities
- Assist with finding and submitting grants, supervise grants received
- Develop and manage all interpretive special events, including multi-day programs with outside participants, and first person theatrical presentations
- Develop and maintain all school programs, including specialized Curriculum Tours and outreach programs
- Project Manager for developing and implementing interpretive and furnishing plan for Revolutionary era Christopher House
- Assist with marketing including creating flyers and handling press relations
- Conduct research for developing new public and school programs
- Member of strategic planning committee, education committee, and collections committee
- Assist with exhibit development and oversee relevant research
- Develop partnerships with community organizations and schools
- Oversee all departmental internships including those in archival work
- Oversee visitor center and gift shop

Contract Curator/Registrar for Hall House holdings (period range from c.1790-1920), Historic Salisbury Foundation, Salisbury, N.C. March to October 2001

- inventoried all holdings
- identified, catalogued and photographed all furniture
- photographed and drafted condition report on all clothing
- wrote recommendation report for future care and interpretation

Professional Projects

Assessing, photographing and re-housing costume collection for Centennial Museum at the University of Texas at El Paso (current project)

Developed 5th grade curriculum for Art Beats program at the El Paso Museum of Art (previously developed 3rd and 4th grade curriculum while on staff at EPMA)

Reworked training manual for Civil War “Discovery Cart” for Fredericksburg Area Museum

Developed African American focused gallery guide for Fredericksburg Area Museum’s permanent exhibits

Assisted with development and implementation of the Fredericksburg Area Museum and Cultural Center’s 2010 summer art camp program “History and Art: Where the Past is Present”

Consultant for new tour development for Kenmore Plantation, The George Washington Foundation

Conducted docent training for Kenmore Plantation, The George Washington Foundation

Developed four curriculum-based school programs covering grades 1-5 and 8-11 for the Thomas Wolfe Memorial

Wrote exhibit labels for “Groovy Garb: Paper Clothing from the Mars Manufacturing Company” for the Asheville Art Museum

Conducted furnishings analysis of the Thomas Wolfe Memorial with recommendations for revision and interpretation

Created photographic notebook exhibit of upstairs area for use by the disabled at the Thomas Wolfe Memorial, a North Carolina State Historic Site

Contract Work (short term)

Contracted by Dahlgren Heritage Foundation to conduct “Museum 101” training session for board members, June 29, 2012

Contracted by Manassas Museum to supervise packing of Civil War collection for return to lender, December 2011

Contract Historian for the Historic Bethlehem Partnership, Bethlehem, PA, July 2008 to Jan. 2009

- Develop narrative for introductory film
- Write script for film and podcasts
- Suggest visual elements/approach to be used

Other Professional Activities

Member of the Board of El Paso Art Association (current) and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee

Member of the Planning Committee for exhibition *The Town and The Smelter* at the Centennial Museum at UTEP (scheduled to open in July 2019)

Judge for National History Day at UTEP 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019

Presented on Art Beats program at “Idea Swap” session during plenary address at the Texas Commission on the Arts State of the Arts conference, January, 2015 (one of only 12 programs chosen to be highlighted)

Invited to represent the El Paso Museum of Art at the Golden Partner Award ceremony where the museum was recognized as the most valuable community partner for 2014-15 for the School of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas El Paso

Served as grant reviewer for the Texas Commission on the Arts, grant round 2013 and 2014

Proposed, developed and implemented decorative arts exhibition "Drink Up! The Art and Culture of Beverages" El Paso Museum of Art, December, 2013

Served as Museum Education MA Thesis Defense Committee Chair, University of the Arts in Philadelphia, December 2012

Presented talk on two paisley shawls that belonged to the King family of New York for King Manor Museum's lecture series "If Objects Could Talk," October 26, 2012

Led session on learning from photographs (using VTS) at the Fredericksburg Area Museum, for the Minnieland Merit Academy summer program, July 10 and 12, 2012

Member of Museum Studies Committee at the University of Mary Washington 2009 to 2011; assisted with crafting the Museum Studies Minor and launching it in the Fall of 2010

Member of Freedom Rides Commemoration Committee; member subcommittee charged with creating outdoor exhibit on James Farmer and the Freedom Rides, University of Mary Washington, 2010-2011 (project won the International Grand Gold Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education award for 2011)

Member of Subcommittee of Museum Education Roundtable Publications Committee charged with researching other practitioner-based publications in the field and making recommendations regarding current MER publication practices (active Fall 2010)

Presented "Scripting an Exhibit: The Development of a Clothing Exhibition as a Class Project" at the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the Costume Society of America, October, 2009

Developed and chaired panel on "Using Historic Sites as Learning Laboratories" for the Gotham Center for New York History's annual conference "Teaching New York City History in Grades K-12" held April 10, 2003

Publications

Web and Other Media

20 Audio Guide entries, scripted, recorded, and uploaded to Guide By Cell, El Paso Museum of Art, Permanent Collection, July, 2017

27 entries on works in the Permanent Collection of the El Paso Museum of Art, for publication on new website to be launched December, 2017

Edited Journal:

Guest editor for *Protecting the Objects and Serving the Public, an Ongoing Dialogue*, the Summer 2011 volume of *The Journal of Museum Education* published by the Museum Education Roundtable; conceived theme, recruited all authors, completed initial editing of articles, wrote introduction

Books:

Serving Two Masters: the Moravian Brethren in Germany and North Carolina 1727-1801. University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, Kentucky, 2000.

Co-editor with Lynda Coon (Associate Professor, University of Arkansas) and Katherine J. Haldane (Associate Professor, The Citadel) *That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives on Women in Christianity*. University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, Virginia, 1990.

Articles:

"Animating the Kress Collection: New Media for an Old Collection," in progress with co-author Dr. Sabiha Khan, Assistant Professor of Digital Media, University of Texas at El Paso

"Fashion Passion: The Rhetoric of Dress within the Moravian Brethren in the 18th Century" in *Pious Pursuits: German Moravians in the Atlantic World*, Michele Gillespie and Robert Beachy eds, Berghahn Books: New York, NY, 2007.

Entry on "The Moravians in New York" in *The Encyclopedia of New York State*. Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, NY, 2005.

Entry on "The Moravian Brethren" in *Europe 1450-1789: The Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World*, Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, NY, 2003.

"Gambling with God: the use of the lot among the Moravian Brethren 1727-1801" *Journal of the History of Ideas*. vol.59, no.2, 1998.

"A Different Kind of Freedom? Order and Discipline among the Moravian Brethren in Germany and Salem, North Carolina 1771-1801." *Church History*. American Association of Church History, vol.64, no.2, June, 1994.

Book Reviews:

Mark Jantzen, Mary S. Sprunger, and John D. Thiesen, eds., *European Mennonites and the Challenge of Modernity over Five Centuries: Contributors, Detractors, and Adapters*. Bethel College: North Newton, KS, 2016. Reviewed in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*. Vo. XLIX, no. 1 (Spring 2018)

Leland Ferguson, *God's Fields: Landscape, Religion, and Race in Moravian Wachovia*. Univ. P. of Florida: Gainesville, FL, 2011. Reviewed in *The Journal of Southern History* (May 2013)

Katherine Carte Engel, *Religion and Profit: Moravians in Early America*. Pennsylvania State Univ. P.: State College, PA, 2009. Reviewed in *The Journal of American History* (Fall 2009).

Hermann Wellenreuter and Carolla Wessel eds., *The Moravian Mission Diaries of David Zeisberger 1772-1781*. Pennsylvania State Univ. P.: State College, PA, 2005. Reviewed for H-GAGCS, H-Net Reviews. September, 2009.

Select Papers Presented

"Our Community, Our House: Using Historic Houses to Foster Civic Engagement" included in the papers given to participants in the "Great Places, Great Debates: Opening Historic Sites to Civic Engagement" conference organized by The National Park Service, April 2004

"Making New History in an Old House: The Challenge of First Person Interpretation" presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of State and Local History, September 2002

"Fashion Passion: The Rhetoric of Dress within the Moravian Brethren" presented at the symposium "The German Moravians in the Atlantic World" held at Wake Forest University, April 2002

References:

Daniel Carey-Whalen, Director
Centennial Museum
University of Texas at El Paso
501 W. University Ave.
El Paso, TX 79968
(915) 747-5565 (djcareywhelan@utep.edu)

Rebecca Gavin, Director of Educational Programs
The Connecticut Historical Society
One Elizabeth St.
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 236-5621 (Rebecca_gavin@chs.org)

Professor Gary Stanton, (Emeritus, Department of Historic Preservation)
University of Mary Washington
816 Brompton St.
Fredericksburg, Va. 22401
(540) 899-7648 (gstanton@umw.edu)

Laura Zamarripa (former Community Engagement Manager-head of Education, El Paso

Museum of Art)
Currently living in South Korea
(412) 251-2622 (laurazamarripa@yahoo.com)

Anna Davis, Manager of Education and Interpretation
Roanoke Island Festival Park
One Festival Park
Manteo, N.C.
919-943-8911 (anna.davis@ncdcr.gov)

Brenda Cowan, Associate Chair
Graduate Program in Exhibition Design
Fashion Institute of Technology
Seventh Ave at 27th Street
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