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Hi, I'm Lynn Boland and I am currently director of the Gregory Allicar Museum of Art at Colorado State University. Being a director can be very rewarding but it's not nearly as much fun or as interesting as being a curator. So, rather than give you a week that is at least half budget work, grant writing, meetings with administrators, and the like, I thought I would describe a week in the life at my last job, which was as a Pierre Daura Curator of European Art at the Georgia Museum of Art (GMOA), University of Georgia. I should note that some elements of being a director are interesting, but they overlap curatorial duties that I'll be describing. I should also mention that being a curator does mean some days tending to budgets, grants, and university administrators' fancies, but not nearly so many as directorship.

I'm having to reach back to May 4–8, 2014, when I was five years into the job. I'm not sure that there are any two weeks that are really the same in the job of curator but there are some typical duties. I've looked through sample weeks in various years past and picked one that combines many of these tasks.

Week at a glance...

- Monday:** 9am, Staff Meeting
Deinstall/reinstall Morehead wing (all week)
- Tues:** 10–11am, Tour for GACAA
- Wed.:** 9–10am, Review new gifts w/Carl and Tricia
10–11am, Meet w/Joan re, WWI provenance research
11:30–1pm, Docent annual mtg and luncheon
2–3pm, Meet w/Bill re. Daura/Perpignan
- Thurs:** morning: Pack and drive to ATL
Lunch w/Bert
6:15pm UA 8830-Frankfurt; LH 0305 Florence
- Fri:** 11:10am Arrive, check-in at hotel, meet w/Rigaud staff at 2pm

Monday, May 4, 9am: Staff Meeting

Museum work is necessarily highly collaborative and all staff work closely with one another in different ways. A regular staff meeting is a time for everyone to make sure they are on the same page and know what colleagues are doing.

During exhibition planning and installation, a curator works closely with registrars, who care for and keep track of works in the collection (among other things), and preparators, who install the art in the galleries (among other things). Most museums have temporary exhibition galleries that change shows every few months or at least once a year, and permanent collection galleries, that stay more consistent. This was a temporary exhibition wing that we were changing over from one set of shows to another. I would direct the installation team here and there throughout the day. I also worked as a gallery and museum preparator sometimes in grad school during show changes. I did a little extra (to upgrade from ramen for a bit), so I also liked to help out in the galleries at GMOA and GAMA, hanging and installing. Those can be a useful skills and aren't unusual for a curator to have (I've only met fewer directors who hang art). I also assisted with a student gallery and other low-fi shows in my youth, but many come into the role of curator from a purely academic background.

I should also mention that the empty areas in my calendar were invariably filled with mainly emails. The role of curator is large-part project manager, one is usually working on lots of projects at



once, on various timetables, and with numerous collaborators. There are lots of meetings, but the bulk of my work was and is by email.

I would usually be able to carve out an hour or two for research on objects in the collection and/or for upcoming exhibitions and catalogues. In addition to that, as curator, I would set aside additional time for prolonged research on an as-needed basis for big projects. I was a little spoiled in a number of ways, including that I had one of my biggest projects handed to me right when I started and had many months of research time devoted only to that project. That's never really happened again.

Above: Deinstallation/Reinstallation in the Morehead wing throughout the week.

Tuesday, May 5, 10am : Tour for Georgia Assembly of Community Arts Agencies

Most public tours at larger museums are led by Docents, volunteers (often retired educators) who are trained by museum staff, especially by curators. However, for specialized tours—for professional groups, university classes, etc.—curators will most often give the tour in order to focus the discussion on themes and issues that are most relevant for them.

Right: This isn't a picture of the GACAA tour. Rather, it is an online interview with a featured artist, back when Skype was novel and fun.



Wednesday, May 6, 9am: Review new gifts with Carl and Tricia

Carl was the Chair of the museum's Advisory Board and Tricia is GMOA's Head Registrar.

When gifts of art are offered to the museum, the curator under whose area it would fall typically reviews them first, along with the registrar. If the curator believes it could be a useful addition to the museum's collection, then the gift offer is usually presented to the museum's Collection Committee. This is most often made up of members of the museum's Advisory Board. The Collection Committee hears from the curator and votes on whether to advise the museum to accept the offer or not.

Aside from the quality and usefulness of the art, storage is often a concern. In advance of a Collection Committee meeting, the museum's head registrar and I would often give the board chair (who also served on the committee) a preview.

Wednesday, May 6, 11am: Meeting with Joan re. WWII provenance research



Madeline, on the left, was one of my undergraduate interns. Joan is on the right and was a graduate intern in my department. Working with interns is an important part of the job for any academic curator. Joan was assisting me with a long-term project in which we researched the ownership history of European works in our collection that might have changed hands around the time of WWII, making sure nothing was in our collection that had been stolen by Nazis. Ongoing collection research to ensure ethical standards are being met is especially important, also, for objects made by Indigenous artists and those from non-Western cultures.

Left: Madeline, me, and Joan at annual docent luncheon.

Wednesday, May 6, 12pm: Annual docent meeting & luncheon

As mentioned earlier, docents give most of the tours for a museum, and they are primarily trained by museum curators. This luncheon was our annual 'thank you' to all the docents for their hard work and dedication.

Wednesday, May 6, 2pm: Meeting with Bill re. Daura/Perpignan

Bill is the director of GMOA. We were meeting to touch base, finalize the agenda, and strategize about a series of meetings we would be having with staff at the municipal museum in Perpignan, France. Perpignan is a city in southwestern France, near the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean coast. Many now-famous artists spent time in this region, their works eventually finding their way into the museum collection.

We were looking to borrow some paintings from them for an upcoming exhibition of ours, and we were speaking with them about them showing one of our traveling exhibitions. Exchanging artwork is one way for museums to grow relationships with other institutions around the world.

Thursday, May 7, Athens to Atlanta to Perpignan

Today is a busy day. I get up early to pack for my trip to Perpignan, France. On the way, I will meet and have lunch with Bert. Bert is a major art collector in Atlanta. He's also a great cook!

Part of a curator's responsibility is "stewarding" donations of art—essentially, building a relationship with a collector so they trust your institution as an eventual caretaker of works from their collection. Bert is a fun person and we had some shared interests in art, so we got together whenever I made it out to Atlanta. Coming from Athens, Georgia (about 60 miles NE of Atlanta), my late afternoon flight offered a perfect time to meet for lunch, catch up, and spend some time with his Kandinsky paintings.

Friday, May 8, 2pm: Meet with Rigaud Museum, Perpignan

This trip involved a series of meetings with staff at the municipal museum of art in Perpignan, the Musée d'art Hyacinth Rigaud. Specifically, I was looking at paintings by Louise Heron Blair, an American who studied and then showed in France in the 1920s and 1930s. My director, Bill, and I were also talking with them about hosting a traveling exhibition I had organized about an abstractionist group co-founded by the artist's husband in 1929.

For me, the most glamorous and most grueling part of this job was the travel. Side note: my title at the Georgia Museum of Art was "Pierre Daura Curator of European Art," and when you have someone else's name as part of your title, it means money is attached. The appointment is endowed, so there are investment payouts that support salary and more. I think I mentioned that I was spoiled. It was my first job out of grad school, and I had a travel budget that anyone would go gaga over, but I just thought I had worked hard and gotten my just rewards. Frankly, I was exceedingly lucky.

Still, the travel was exhausting. Bill and I once literally flew to Florence, arriving one for a single meeting that day, then we got on a flight back that evening for a later commitment that evening. While in Florence, I did get a private tour of the Vasari corridor prior to our departure. Just another perk of the trade.

Right: Bill taking a picture with his phone.



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