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Faculty & Staff Newsletter

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The Tang celebrates its fifth birthday with a conference on college museums next week. [Read more](#)



Hurricane expert Robert Young (shown viewing damage after Hurricane Katrina) will give this year's Strock Lecture. [Read more](#)



Not exactly the most appealing accommodations for a vacation traveler. [Read more](#)

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Welcome -- The Skidmore *Intercom* Faculty-Staff Newsletter is a production of the Office of College Relations. All members of the campus community are invited to submit story ideas or news items, using the contact information provided below. Department chairs and office directors are asked to please print a copy of this document to share with colleagues who do not have regular access to a computer.

We hope you enjoy this electronic newsletter and encourage you to share your impressions via email or telephone.

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Vol. 5, No. 5 - March 31, 2006**Tang Museum Celebrates Fifth Year with Conference about College Museums**

The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery will present a conference titled *The College Museum: A Collision of Disciplines, a Laboratory of Perception* Friday and Saturday, April 7 and 8. The conference will explore the potential that college museums can have as sites for engaged inquiry and discovery, and will reassess their influence on their campuses, their surrounding communities, and the museum world. Open to the public by prior registration (by April 1, with a \$75 fee), the conference will bring noted artists, museum directors, curators, art scholars, and academics to the Tang, which celebrates its fifth anniversary this year.

Topics of discussion will include the role of college faculty as curators; the college museum as a means to effectively teach a wide array of academic disciplines; the rich possibilities for performing arts within the museum; and the museum's potential reach into the community and the wider art world. Among those participating in panels and workshops will be renowned artists Fred Wilson, Janet Cardiff, and George Bures Miller; Adam Weinberg, director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, and Jock Reynolds of the Yale University Art Gallery; art scholar Ivan Karp; and museum consultant Elaine Heumann Gurian.

The conference represents the culmination of the internationally acclaimed Fred Wilson's three-year fellowship at the Tang, supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, Inc. At the core of the program is the faculty seminar, in which faculty members from across the disciplines refine their ability to use the museum as a site that provokes critical and engaged learning.

A site-specific theater performance created in response to the current Tang exhibition, *And Therefore I Am* will be presented at 5:30 p.m. Friday, April 7, in Bernhard Theater, as part of the conference, and a public reception beginning at 6 p.m. Saturday, April 8, will celebrate all three of the museum's spring shows.

For more information or to register for The College Museum, call the Tang Museum at 518-580-8080 or go to hudson2.skidmore.edu/tang. The Tang Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; the museum is closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is free; donations are suggested.

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Yale Scholar to Deliver Inaugural Kuroda Lecture April 7

"Has Civil War Memory Divided or United America?" Yale University scholar David W. Blight will answer the question when he gives the inaugural Tad Kuroda Lecture at Skidmore Friday, April 7. The talk is scheduled at 8 p.m. in Davis Auditorium of Palamountain Hall. Admission is free and open to the public.

Since 2003 Blight has taught at Yale University, where he is the Class of 1954 Professor of American History and the director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition.

In his award-winning book, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Harvard University Press, 2001), Blight presents a new way of understanding the nation's collective response to the war, arguing that in the interest of reunification, the country ignored the racist underpinnings of the war, leaving a legacy of racial conflict. The book has won the Bancroft Prize, the Abraham Lincoln Prize, and the Frederick Douglass Prize, as well as four awards from the Organization of American Historians, including the Merle Curti prizes for both intellectual and social history.

He also is the author of a book of essays titled *Beyond the Battlefield: Race and the Civil War in American History and Memory* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); and *Frederick Douglass's Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (LSU Press, 1989). Blight is the editor of and author of introductions for six books, including *"When This Cruel War Is Over": The Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey Brewster* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), and is co-editor with Brooks Simpson of *Politics and Race in the Civil War Era: Essays in Honor of Richard H. Sewell* (Kent State University Press, 1997).

In 2004 Blight participated in the discovery and bringing to light of two new slave narratives that will serve as the basis for a forthcoming book from Harcourt Press.

A frequent book reviewer for *The Washington Post Book World*, Blight has written many articles on abolitionism, American historical memory, and African-American intellectual and cultural history. He lectures widely on Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, and problems in public history and American historical memory. He also teaches summer institutes for secondary teachers and for park rangers and historians in the National Park Service.

Blight has a Ph.D. degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has taught at Amherst College, Harvard University, and North Central College in Naperville, Ill.

The College's Tad Kuroda Lecture is part of a weekend symposium that honors Kuroda, a longtime member of the History Department, who retired in 2005. One of Skidmore's most popular and respected professors, Kuroda earned degrees at Yale and Columbia before joining the Skidmore faculty in 1969. A specialist in American history, Kuroda is an expert on the Electoral College, which was the topic of his 1991 Edwin M. Moseley Faculty Research Lecture. Selection as the Moseley Lecturer is the highest honor that the Skidmore faculty may bestow upon a colleague.

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Hurricane Researcher to Present Strock Lecture

Nationally recognized hurricane impact researcher Robert Young, associate professor of geosciences at Western Carolina University, will discuss "Atlantic Hurricanes: Hot New Science...Same Old Policy," when he delivers the Lester W. Strock Lecture in Geosciences in April. The talk will begin at 7 p.m. Monday, April 10, in Gannett Auditorium of Palamountain Hall. Admission is free and open to the public.

Over the past 20 years, Young has conducted research on behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Science Foundation, and the insurance industry through its Public Entity Risk Institute. He also maintains the Coastal Hazards Information Clearinghouse, a web-based resource for information about coastal hazards and detailed hazard maps of most U.S. shorelines.

Following Hurricane Katrina last August, Young and colleague Andrew S. Coburn, of the Duke University Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, chartered a small airplane and flew over the Gulf Coast from Pensacola, Fla., to Grand Island, La. Young said then, "I have been on the scene of every major hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. since Hurricane Hugo in 1989. The damage caused by Hurricane Katrina is by far the most damage I have ever seen." Young's research was directed at Katrina's effect on the coastal communities of Alabama and Mississippi. The over-flight was part of his examination of such factors as storm surge, storm over-wash, and patterns of damage and debris to help determine why some sections of coastline fare better than others during major storms.

Young has long advocated a new scale that would forecast with greater detail what happens when storms move on shore. Although the Saffir-Simpson scale - which ranks the severity of hurricanes as category one to five, depending upon such elements as barometric pressure, wind speed, and storm surge - describes the strength of a hurricane in the open ocean, it is not as effective in predicting the effect of a hurricane on the shore at landfall, according to Young. Instead, he believes that such factors as coastal geomorphology, storm history, and other characteristics also play a major role in a particular storm's destructiveness.

Through their work studying Katrina and other hurricanes, Young and his colleagues hope to convince government officials and policy-makers to re-examine notions of appropriate places on the coast to build - and in the case of the Gulf Coast - to rebuild.

In November, Young testified before Congress on the Coastal Barriers Resources Act, which eliminates federal subsidies for flood insurance, transportation, utilities, and erosion control for any new development on barrier islands officially designated as "undeveloped." The act is intended to shift the financial burden of building or rebuilding in high-risk coastal areas away from the federal government. At that time, Young said, "Continued federal disaster aid for rebuilding vulnerable coastal areas has cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars in the last two years. Irresponsible development of vulnerable coastal areas is becoming a burden on the federal budget, as well as an environmental disaster."

Young earned a B.S. degree in geology at the College of William and Mary, an M.S. degree in quaternary studies and geology at the University of Maine, and a Ph.D. degree in geology at Duke University, where he wrote a dissertation titled "The impact of sea-level rise on the coastal wetlands in Albemarle, Pamlico, and Carrituck Sounds, North Carolina: A study of sedimentology, stratigraphy, and wetland dynamics."

Skidmore's Lester W. Strock Lecture was endowed by geochemist Lester Strock, a well-known authority on Saratoga's mineral springs. Strock, who died in 1982, spent much of his career in research at MIT and at the Sylvania Electric Co. The First-Year Experience is a co-sponsor of the Strock Lecture this year.

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McCormack Visiting Artist-Scholar on Campus Next Week

Acclaimed jazz vocalist Nnenna Freelon will be on campus April 3-7 as the 2006 McCormack Visiting Artist-Scholar at Skidmore. Her schedule includes a number of campus and community events, including a role at guest artist in the Music Department's collaborative student-faculty program "[Hated Music and Music Against Hatred](#)," scheduled Thursday, April 6; and a solo concert on Friday, April 7. Admission to both events is free.

[Read more about Freelon and the McCormack Residency.](#)

"The Saga of the Soferet" to Be Presented April 4

Aviel Barclay, a soferet (female scribe) and creator of a Torah scroll commissioned by a Seattle synagogue, will present "The Saga of the Soferet" at 8 p.m. Tuesday, April 4, in Emerson Auditorium of Palamountain Hall. Admission is free and open to the public.

The handwriting of sacred Jewish texts (such as the Torah scrolls found in every synagogue) is an ancient craft practiced by specially trained scribes. Tradition requires that these scribes be men, who learn the many laws of Jewish scribal arts as disciples of a master scribe; women have been excluded from the profession.

The first Torah scroll publicly acknowledged to be written by a woman has been commissioned by Kadima, a synagogue in Seattle. Barclay is the soferet who is currently writing this Torah scroll. Her story is a dramatic tale of the road less traveled, and includes provocative discussion of the political and Jewish legal complexities involved in her work.

Barclay is grounded in Judaism's mystical and legal traditions. In the summer of 2003 she traveled to Jerusalem, where she completed her training as a soferet with her two Orthodox mentors. Following her certification, she began writing scrolls of the biblical book of Esther and is currently writing a Sefer Torah (Torah scroll).

Barclay's work has been featured in solo and group shows in Canada, Israel, and the United States, and her ketubot (Jewish marriage contracts) have been featured in the Israeli journal Oren. Her art and designs can be found in private collections across North America.

She lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and offers courses in Hebrew calligraphy, as well as Jewish legends and mystical teachings on the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Her work may be viewed at her web site, www.soferet.com.

Panel Discussion to Consider Labor Movement

A panel featuring students, faculty, and an employee will look at the "Past, Present and Future of the Labor Movement" in a discussion scheduled at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 5, in Emerson Auditorium, Palamountain Hall. The College community is welcome.

Mehmet Odekon of the Economics Department will moderate the discussion, which will include economics faculty Armagan Gezici and Yahya M. Madra; William Lewis of the Philosophy Department; and Rik Scarce of the Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work Department. Emma Yorra '08 of United Students Against Sweatshops and Kevin Lloyd of the College's Transportation Department, representing SIEU Local 200D, also will participate.

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Kate Greenspan, associate professor of English, has been accepted into a National Endowment for the Humanities seminar titled "Seven Deadly Sins" to take place this summer in Cambridge, England.

Denise Hughes, secretary in Art and Art History, has received a New York Credit Union Foundation Professional Development Grant to attend the 86th annual meeting and convention of the New York State Credit Union League May 15-18 in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Penny Howell Jolly, professor of art history and Kenan Professor of the Liberal Arts, accepted an invitation to the Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Feb. 14-16. While there she gave a public lecture titled "Maternal Metaphors: Mary Magdalene and Pregnancy in 15th-Century Netherlandish Paintings" and presented a graduate student-faculty symposium on "Rogier van der Weyden's Braque Triptych: The Wise and Foolish Magdalene."

Publications

Sandy Baum, professor of economics, was a source for a story titled "The New Gender Gap" published in the March 27 issue of the Portland (Maine) *Press Herald*. She also was interviewed for "Benefits clear, costs of selling MOHELA less tangible," published Jan. 30 in *The Kansas City Star*, about a proposal by Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt to sell the assets of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority, a quasi-governmental agency that services student loans.

Giuseppe Faustini, professor of Italian, published an article on "Luigi Pirandello's American Sojourns: Reception and Representation of America," in the latest issue of the *Pirandello Studies Annual*, Vol. XVII (2005). He also serves as book review editor for the journal.

Paula Newberg, dean of special programs, wrote "U.S. and Pakistan: An Insecure Alliance," an opinion essay published March 3 in the *Daily Times of Pakistan*.

Jay Rogoff, lecturer in English, has had *The Long Fault*, a new book of poems, accepted for publication by Louisiana State University Press.

Robert Shorb, director, Student Aid and Family Finance, was interviewed for a story titled "When Faculty Kids Apply to College, Egos and Emotions Come Into Play," published in the March 31 edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

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