

## **History of the Krannert Art Museum**

The Krannert Art Museum was dedicated on May 20, 1961 by philanthropists Herman and Ellanora Krannert. (<http://uihistories.ncsa.uiuc.edu/buildings/krannertart.html>). In 1988 a new wing was dedicated, the Kinkead Pavilion, nearly doubling the building's size to 48,000 square feet and making Krannert Art Museum the second largest art museum in the state of Illinois ([http://www.kam.uiuc.edu/exhibitions/museum\\_prof/museum\\_history.html](http://www.kam.uiuc.edu/exhibitions/museum_prof/museum_history.html)). The permanent collection in the museum consists of eight thousand pieces of art in several different galleries. They include The Trees Collection of European and American Painting, Moore Collection of European and American Decorative Arts, The Olsen Collection of pre-Columbian Art, and examples of 20th Century Art collected during the Contemporary Arts Festivals (1948-1974) (<http://www.kam.uiuc.edu/>). The museum also hosts a variety of exhibitions that change frequently throughout the semester.

## **SCOPE**

We encountered some limitations during our research process at the Krannert Art Museum. To overcome this, we visited the museum to get a feel for what we truly wanted to discover. We decided to focus on the importance of how the mission statement ties into the workings of the museum as a whole. Finding a way to effectively compile this presentation was a challenge. Coordinating four different schedules and perspectives to create one united purpose was an obstacle. Due to our busy schedules, finding appropriate times to work was also difficult. Through communication, via e-mail and meetings outside of class, we overcame this potential barrier. Another struggle came from the difficulty in finding primary sources. There were few relevant documents to help enhance our research. Also, when attempting to conduct interviews, only two Krannert staff members were available for correspondence. This obstructed our ability to reach the project's fullest potential. However, these interviews with both the director and security supervisor proved to be extremely beneficial and informative.

## **COMMUNITY**

The community for the Krannert Art Museum includes a large range of people. Krannert Art Museum is the second largest art museum in the State of Illinois and currently contains famous works of artists from around the world. Artists play an essential role in the Krannert Art Museum. The museum's artists come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and time periods. Many come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and different time periods. There are many international works as well as many archeological artifacts can be found.

The Krannert Art Museum Council is quite possibly one of the most important community members that the museum serves. The council is an independent support group that assists the museum with its activities and programs. The council is nonprofit and is designed for people with a passion and love for art. The council has a wide and varied group of art enthusiasts who are committed to perpetuating the museum and its mission. These members provide support to the museum in many ways including

financial. It organizes many events such as “Petals and Paintings,” which is an annual fund raising event. The council also hosts special member evenings and opening night receptions for exhibitions, sponsors the Collection in Context Lecture Series, organizes art-related trips and lecture luncheons, and serves as ambassadors to the community.

Since the Krannert Art Museum is located on a university campus, it also serves nearly 40,000 faculty, staff, and students of the University of Illinois. The Krannert Art Museum is home to many classrooms that host a wide variety of classes that specialize in art and architecture.

The community of Urbana and Champaign serves about 80,000 people from both towns. The museum serves the community as a statue of art and culture. Many schools in the area take field trips to the museum as well as families that take their children to experience the art.

The museum has many partnerships and collaborations. It just admitted into the Smithsonian Association in Washington DC. The museum is also part of the world renowned Philips Collection. It collaborates with many of community groups and campus activities, tailoring to different ethnic groups. The museum is currently trying to organize activities with the community’s different ethnic groups. In all, Krannert serves a wide audience of over 132,000 visitors annually.

## **RULES**

The rules of the Krannert Art Museum help maintain the functioning of the activity system. Rules for the general public, both students and people in the University’s community, are created to protect the art. Backpacks, umbrellas, and oversized bags are prohibited inside the museum. These items are prohibited to prevent potential damage to pieces on display. To protect the museum’s artworks no running is allowed. Although two-dimensional pieces are framed carefully and three-dimensional works are placed on pedestals covered by a protective glass, running is prohibited. If artworks fall, they could easily be damaged and may never be restored to their original state. People also cannot stand too close or lean over any of the pieces on display to ensure the preservation of art.

The Krannert Art Museum works behind the scenes to protect the pieces. Preparators ensure that the art is displayed in the proper fashion. Preparators are either graduate or undergraduate industrial design majors. They build pedestals for the exhibits in order to both display and protect works. The lighting must be set by the preparators. They use foot candles to determine the specific light measurement for the artwork. Light cannot be too bright for some paintings, because it may potentially damage the pigments. Kathleen Jones is the registrar who makes sure the artwork is cared for and the condition is noted. The permanent collection’s shipment must be checked. If there is any damage to the pieces, Kathleen must make note of it.

The capacity inside the Krannert Art museum is limited to about 25-30 people per room. Crowded spaces increase the risk of knocking over an artwork. The classroom within the

museum has a seating capacity of 146. Krannert also holds lectures within the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery, where a maximum of 150 people can listen to guest speakers. All these rules seem to be the system's efforts to sustain artworks. These rules must be followed by both the general public and the museum's staff. Without these rules, Krannert's mission statement of culturally and politically educating the community would fail to exist.

### **SUBJECT**

The subjects of the Krannert Art Museum consist of students, faculty and the public. When conducting an analysis of an activity system, it is imperative to understand the subjects in order to get some sort of perspective of the system. Each of these groups engage in this activity system for different purposes. The students use the museum as a learning tool to enhance their cultural education. This is not limited to University of Illinois students; local school districts also use the museum. Faculty uses the museum as a teaching tool for their students to partake in. When professors implement the museum into their classes, they help in providing students with cultural awareness. However, there are students who do not take advantage of the different resources available on campus. Krannert is not only a system that is available to University of Illinois students and faculty, but also the public. While students and faculty use the museum largely for educational purposes, general society uses the museum for cultural entertainment.

### **TOOLS**

The tools that comprise any activity system include not only the physical items that compose the center and keep it running, but also the language and symbols that may not be as apparent to an outsider of the system. Through both observation and personal interviews with Krannert Art Museum staff, our group discovered the obvious and not so obvious tools inherent in the center. The most crucial and visible tools were the pieces of art located throughout the various exhibits in the museum. Paintings, sculptures, and other visual displays from a variety of cultures and time periods fill the museum's galleries. Equipment such as display cases, tables, shelves, and lighting present the artworks for museum goers in an organized and complementary fashion. Because the building encompasses vast amounts of precious materials, the tools that comprise a security system are very pertinent. From a high-tech fire alarm system to survey cameras in every room, the importance of the art becomes very apparent. A large, clear box is located at the entrance of the museum for visitors to give monetary donations. This reminds people that Krannert is a business that needs financial support in order to continue to thrive and meet its objectives. Furthermore, a room known as the Education Center contains art related books, posters, and videos that visitors and students can check out. This tool is essential in creating loyal museum visitors and providing them with incentives to make return visits. The actual building is also a very critical tool, as it is large enough to hold the pieces in a spacious and pleasing layout. Furthermore, the center has the obvious tools that run most any business: computers, brochures, offices, and other items that allow people to perform their jobs.

Forms of intangible tools differentiate this activity system from others around campus. An interview with security guard Don Matejowsky enlightened our group on the jargon

that is specific to the museum. For example, “foot candles” describe how much light each unit gives out per foot, “docents” are tour guides, and “friends” are those that support Krannert through donations and service work (Don Matejowsky, Personal Communication, April 7, 2006). These terms, while largely unknown to the outside world, are commonplace to those on the inside of the system. The skills that workers and volunteers possess are also vital to the museum. These include expertise in art and its preservation, security, and customer satisfaction. All of these tools are integral to the daily processes and long-term goals of the system. The tangible tools enable the center to function properly, while the intangible language and workers’ skills distinguish Krannert Art Museum from other activity systems around campus.

### **MOTIVES**

Motives influence the types of activities that take place within an activity system. The Krannert Art Museum’s subjects strive to carry out both their long-term and short-term goals, which are shaped by the museum’s motives. Our group interviewed Director Kathleen Harleman to understand the motives behind the museum’s activities. The primary short-term goal is to collect endowment for the museum. These funds are essential to helping sustain the Krannert Art Museum. Income is gained solely through the donations from community members. Hence, gaining substantial communal support is of top priority. This leads to the long-term, ultimate goal of being actively involved in the community. This long-term goal shapes the museum’s daily activities, such as inviting community groups over to learn more about Krannert and what it has to offer.

### **DIVISION OF LABOR**

The division of labor at the Krannert Art Museum can be broken down into two levels. The administration and staff is the first level in the activity system. The essential duty of people at this level is to keep the museum functioning properly for those at the second level, the participants, to enjoy. The main administrative positions at the museum consist of the director, the exhibition coordinator, the visiting curator, the registrar, and the museum council. This council is an independent group that assists the museum with activities and programs (<http://www.kam.uiuc.edu/resources/membership.html>). The staff of the museum includes the security guards, docents, and volunteers who assist in the day-to-day running of the museum.

The second level of the division of labor is the people who use the museum such as students, educators, and the public. Keeping the museum running is an important job for administration and staff; however, Krannert wouldn’t serve its purpose if nobody visited to enjoy it. Therefore, the people who use the museum play a huge role in the activity system of Krannert Museum. Patrons provide it with a true sense of purpose. Artists create work for people to see and interpret it as they feel. So if no one frequented the museum, the artwork would never be seen, thus making it insignificant.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The textual tool that we chose to focus on is the Krannert Art Museum’s mission statement, because this document lays the foundation of the museum. The statement reads:

Krannert Art Museum preserves, documents, and interprets the art collections it holds in public trust for present and future generations. The Museum functions as a center of aesthetic enjoyment and intellectual inquiry for the University of Illinois community and the residents of Central Illinois. Krannert Art Museum aims to serve as a matrix for cultural engagement with the visual arts in the State of Illinois and beyond, through its exhibitions, educational programs, and outreach activities ([http://www.kam.uiuc.edu/exhibitions/museum\\_prof/mission\\_statement.html](http://www.kam.uiuc.edu/exhibitions/museum_prof/mission_statement.html)).

This mission statement is concise, effective, and very essential to the Krannert Art Museum and its community. These qualities are necessary for the functioning of a business. The document is geared towards those who utilize this facility, because it describes the purpose and existence of the museum.

The mission statement serves a variety of audiences, from people seeking education to those in search of entertainment. This document shows that the museum acknowledges the differing motives and caters to the visitors' needs. Krannert's mission statement verifies that they represent a professional business.

#### **EVOLUTION OF THE MISSION STATEMENT**

To completely understand the mission statement, we must evaluate its evolution and historical value. According to the Director of the museum, Kathleen Harleman, the mission statement has evolved considerably since its inception. When the museum was first erected, it was presumed that the mission statement stated something having to do with the artistic and aesthetics of the museum. This means the mission statement focused on preserving and restoring the artworks. It was more of a safe haven and sanctuary for artworks than anything else, serving as a central goal for the museum at its beginning. Because the museum did not charge an admission fee, the administration most likely ran into a serious financial crisis. With little or no donations, the museum had to drastically change its goals, and subsequently its mission statement, to accommodate this change. The mission statement changed Krannert from being solely a sanctuary for artistic pieces, to a major center of communal exchange. Now, the mission of the museum is to provide the community with a valuable cultural tool, and to expand its presence throughout the region. This will eventually provoke people to donate money, all while educating the surrounding communities with culture.

According to Harleman, the mission statement has been stable for the past ten years. Even though the statement has been fairly static, the implementation of its goals are being seen more now than ever before. The museum has an overwhelming amount of communal involvement, so much that groups have to be waitlisted in some cases. Through this, Harleman hopes to achieve lasting relationships in the community.

What the future holds for the progress of the mission statement is still in question. Harleman believes that the mission is not complete, proposing that it will be slightly altered to accommodate new arenas and prospects for the museum in the next few years.

We see that gradually over the history of the museum the statement has been moving from a simple artistic sanctuary to a communal exchange of arts and culture. Harleman continues to see this mission statement head in that direction. This is mainly for visitors to feel a communal environment (Kathleen Harleman, Personal Communication, April 14, 2006). If this is reflected in the current mission statement is a matter of opinion. We can agree that further evolution of this mission statement will continue to be directed towards serving the community.

### **INTERPRETING THE MISSION STATEMENT**

Kathleen Harleman gave us a better understanding of how the mission statement fits into the museum. She indicates that those who work or simply visit the museum are aware of the mission statement through the physical environment. A well rounded selection of artwork varying from different time periods and cultures illustrates the mission statement's goal of serving "as a matrix for cultural engagement". The visually stimulating works create the enjoyment that the mission statement seeks to achieve. Aspects of different cultures are obvious through galleries such as the Asian Art Gallery, the African Art Gallery, and the Trees Gallery. Each gallery captures the essence of the specific culture through use of lighting, artwork placement and even the color of the room. For example, the Asian Art Gallery uses screens to divide groups of works. This screen is aesthetic, functional, and relative to the collection. Also, the African Art Gallery is careful in the selection of wall painting, which was changed from bright orange to lavender, to ensure a comfortable environment and to eliminate any cultural biases.

### **MOTIVES BEHIND THE MISSION**

The Krannert Art Museum's motives directly relate to its mission statement. The museum has an endowment fund in order to provide art for the public. Without this fund, there would not be a building that could house culturally engaging art exhibitions, educational programs, and outreach activities. The short-term goal of collecting money sustains the building, allowing the Krannert's mission statement to be carried out. The endowment fund gives Krannert the means to serve its purposes in a building and its staff.

Krannert's long-term goal, involving the community, connects with the mission statement. Not only does the community's involvement help increase the endowment fund, connecting with the community gives Krannert an opportunity to reach and inspire people with knowledge. Krannert provides a means for the university to receive knowledge and enjoyment through art. The museum links visual arts to different cultures, inside and outside of the community. Art collections are preserved, documented, and interpreted in order to capture genuine aspects of various cultures, conveniently placed under one roof for the community. Behind the scene work, from the

rules and tools used to how the Krannert staff's labor is divided, shows how much Krannert values the community. According to Kathleen Harleman, the passion for art fuels Krannert's motives and mission. The museum tries its best to collect and present art for the community so that people will gain a passion for art and how it impacts the way we think.

#### **INCORPORATING THE MISSION STATEMENT INTO THE COMMUNITY**

The community seems to be the most important part of the activity system, because the main goal of the mission statement is to adhere to this entity. This not only means the University of Illinois students and faculty, but also the Central Illinois community. According to Director Kathleen Harleman, the main goal of the museum is to build and retain lasting relationships with the community. Through different exhibitions, the museum reaches a variety of people. For example, in the permanent archive, the museum has galleries categorized into four geographical regions: Asia, Africa, America, and Europe. These four categories can reach a vast array of people, because it has the potential to reach family origin and culture. If people feel like they have a personal connection with the museum, they are more likely to visit, thus creating a permanent relationship with the museum.

The Museum's mission statement says that it "aims to serve as a matrix for cultural engagement through educational programs". The Fred and Donna Giertz Education Center located in the lower level of the museum supports this statement. The Education Center provides primary and secondary educators with resources that allow them to engage their students with a diverse cultural experience. Educators can check out materials for no charge. By having these resources available to the educators, the museum helps to open a door to the world for their students. Making these resources available to the community is another way that the museum achieves their goals stated in the mission statement.

Krannert Art Museum's ability to incorporate the community into every aspect of its being shows that it is a facility committed to staying true to its form and the foundations laid out in the mission statement.

#### **CHALLENGES TO THE MISSION STATEMENT**

The Krannert Art Museum's mission statement faces challenges when attempting to carry out its main objectives. One of the primary concerns of the museum staff is building connections with the community. Director Kathleen Harleman states that building relationships and staying connected with groups outside of the museum proves to be a difficult task. She notes that what they search for in other groups is a true passion for art, and that can be difficult when many organizations are not searching for long-term ties. These bonds are heavily sought after, because they will create community exposure and support for the museum and its activities. Another challenge posed to the successful carrying out of the mission statement is the issue of time. Obtaining the level of recognition that the Krannert Art Museum strives for is not automatic, but rather takes substantial time, effort, and trust. This fact illustrates the patience and commitment

needed from staff and museum supporters (Kathleen Harleman, Personal Communication, April 14, 2006).

Another challenge faced by the museum is obtaining more University of Illinois student support. Being an on-campus museum, getting students to visit the museum for the purpose of enjoyment rather than for course-related activities is surprisingly difficult. This valuable tool, right at students' fingertips, is most definitely not used to its full potential. This point becomes clear in the document, because students are more likely to use this museum as a source of "intellectual inquiry" rather than as a place for "aesthetic enjoyment". A task for Krannert workers is to build their visitor base by attracting new students to the center for purposes more along the lines of recreation and pleasure. Difficulties in incorporating the purposes of the mission statement with the actual happenings of the museum are apparent. However, there is continual progress towards closing the gap, such as seeking outside organizational connections that will be valuable and that will increase the diversity of the center. Also, maintaining close ties with professors and art-related courses will gain student exposure to the museum and hopefully spread the word to new students about the enjoyment inherent in this place.