

Nelson Mandela Museum/Michigan State University Museum Curatorial Fellowship Program Michigan State University Museum and The Graduate School, Michigan State University Summer/Fall 2016

The Michigan State University Museum (MSUM) and The Graduate School, Michigan State University are sponsoring a fellowship opportunity for graduate students—the Nelson Mandela Museum/Michigan State University Museum Curatorial Fellowship Program (*NMMMSUMGC*).

The Nelson Mandela Museum/Michigan State University Museum Graduate Curatorial Fellowship supports graduate student community-engaged research, education, collection management, and exhibition projects based at the Nelson Mandela National Museum and the Michigan State University Museum.

The Nelson Mandela Museum (www.nelsonmandelamuseum.org.za/), an associated institution of the South African Department of Arts and Culture and one of South Africa's National Legacy Projects, is located in Mthatha, a town in South Africa's rural Eastern Cape Province. The museum's mission is "to be a living museum that embraces development and is a fitting tribute to the legacy of Nelson R Mandela, a product of *ubuntu* and to inspire and enrich humanity through exercising effective stewardship, learning and sharing the heritage resources linked to Nelson R Mandela." The work of the museum is "guided by the principles of *ubuntu*, including respect for human dignity and a person is a person through people...[inspiring] people to be the best they can be." Mandela, a 1993 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, received an honorary degree from MSU in May 2008.

Michigan State University Museum (www.museum.msu.edu), initiated in 1857, is one of the oldest museums in the Midwest and is accredited by the American Association of Museums. In 2001, the MSU Museum became the first museum in the state to receive Smithsonian Affiliate status from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the world's largest museum and research complex, thereby giving the MSU Museum broader access to Smithsonian cultural and scientific resources. Designated an anchor organization by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the museum is Michigan's leading public natural science and cultural history museum, the state's only land-grant university museum, and a public steward for nearly a million objects and specimens of cultural and natural history from around the world. In this capacity, "Michigan State University Museum" cultivates an enhanced understanding of and respect for the cultural and natural diversity of Michigan and the world, and an enhanced capacity of students and communities to engage with both their heritage and the issues that will define their future." The arts and humanities-based research, exhibition, and education programs of the museum reflect a commitment to community engaged work and an awareness, appreciation of, and understanding of diverse cultural traditions.

The **Nelson Mandela Museum/Michigan State University Museum Curatorial Fellowship Program** is one of many MSU programs that help meet post-apartheid South Africa's challenge to document, preserve, and interpret history and expressive culture. The NMMMSUMCFP springs from a history of two museums (Michigan State University Museum and the Nelson Mandela Museum) working together and independently on similar activities and the desire of both institutions to work on new projects that further their respective missions. The Mandela Museum is especially interested in a) the development of sustainable economic growth, particularly based on local cultural skills and knowledge, for the citizens who live in the communities near the Mandela Museum; b) stimulating international and African continental use of the Mandela Museum's new educational conference center/gallery as a locale for conferences, especially those focusing on peace and reconciliation; c) and engaging students and scholars in the documentation and interpretation of the life of Mr. Mandela.

Michigan State University Museum seeks simultaneously and in the spirit of its land-grant university parent, to use its resources to assist in solving global problems and to create meaningful, experiential opportunities for university students, especially those enrolled in museum studies, African studies, art history, history, and other programs at MSU. The MSU Museum is also seeking opportunities to engage larger communities both in Michigan and in South Africa in activities that would generate awareness and understanding of issues facing their respective locales and nations.

Curatorial fellowship projects will be conducted during the summer and fall semesters. Ten weeks of the summer semester will be spent in South Africa (with at least eight weeks working full-time at the Mandela Museum based in Mthatha) and the following fall semester will be spent working part-time at the MSU Museum. Curatorial fellows

will be expected to plan and complete projects in collaboration with and mentored by MSU faculty and professional museum staff at each institution. Projects must reflect the educational and research missions of the two museums, address identified needs of the museums, ideally incorporate technology, and be in compliance with international standards of museum practice. Special emphasis is given to projects that demonstrate the spirit of *ubuntu*, the traditional South African humanist philosophy focusing on people's allegiances and relations with each other.

The primary goals of the *NMMSUMGC* Fellowship Program are to provide opportunities for a diverse group of graduate students to prepare for work in the 21st-century university, museum, and professional arenas in which graduate students not only must master their discipline but also to situate their work in a *global* context and to become experienced in *community-engaged* research and teaching.

The *NMMSUMGC* program is for graduate MSU students with interests in scholarly and teaching careers based in museums and/or universities. The program welcomes applicants from any college but the focus is on museum-based research and education related to cultural heritage. Fellows will be encouraged and supported to disseminate project results on websites, at conferences, and/or in peer-reviewed journals.

Each fellow will receive \$16,000. Up to an additional \$500 will be available to attend a cultural heritage conference in South Africa and up to an additional \$1000 will be available to cover travel and conference registration costs to present the results of fellowship experience or work to a professional or academic meeting in the U.S.

One award per year will be made to an individual who, in the judgment of the review panel, has demonstrated academic achievement, is committed to incorporating art and cultural heritage curatorial experience into his/her career, and shows potential of future achievement as a scholar and educator.

Applicants should be enrolled full-time in a program leading to a terminal degree that is normally understood as a prerequisite for academic jobs (usually a Ph.D.), be in good academic standing, and making progress on their degrees. Applicants must have taken, minimally, the Foundations of Museum Studies course at MSU (or completed a comparable course or had curatorial experience at a museum).

Applicants should submit the attached application form; a C.V.; and a brief essay that describes their career goals, why they are interested in NMMSUMGC, and how they anticipate that participation in NMMSUMGC will enhance their professional development. Applications must be submitted on or before Friday, February 19, 2016. Announcements of the fellowship recipient will be made by March 25, 2016.

For further information or questions regarding the program, please contact the program coordinators Dr. C. Kurt Dewhurst (517-355-2370 or dewhurst1@msu.edu) or Dr. Marsha MacDowell (517-355-2370 or macdowel@msu.edu).

**Nelson Mandela Museum/Michigan State University Museum
Graduate Curatorial Fellowship Application
Summer/Fall 2016**

Instructions: Please complete items 1-6 and have your faculty advisor and department chair sign the endorsement statement (see box below). Submit the complete application, C.V., and short essay (see below) to: Dr. C. Kurt Dewhurst, NMM/MSUM Program Co-Coordinator, Michigan State University Museum, 409 West Circle Drive, or by email (dewhurs1@msu.edu).

All applications must be submitted on or before **February 19, 2016**.

- 1) First and Last Name: _____
- 2) Department/School: _____
- 3) College: _____
- 4) Campus Address: _____
- 5) Email: _____
- 6) Campus Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

*Please write a two-page essay that a) describes your professional goals; b) explains why you are interested in the NMM/MSUM Graduate Curatorial Fellowship Program; c) describes your previous museum or cultural heritage training and experience; and d) describes how you anticipate that participation in the NMM/MSUM Graduate Curatorial Fellowship Program will enhance your professional development.

Endorsement by Department Chair or Director of Graduate Committee, Associate Dean, and Advisor

The above is a doctoral student in good standing who has my endorsement for his/her participation in the Nelson Mandela Museum/Michigan State University Museum Graduate Curatorial Fellowship Program.

Signature of Department Chair or Graduate Program Director

Name (print) of Department Chair or Graduate Program Director

Signature of Graduate Associate Dean of Applicant's College

Name (print) of Graduate Associate Dean of Applicant's College

Signature of Graduate Advisor

Name (print) of Graduate Advisor