



# MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Discovering new information about our shared past

The Museum of Anthropological Archaeology is dedicated to original research on humanity's past, as well as the protection of important collections related to that past. All curators in the museum are also professors with research foci on crucial issues in the development of our species, including the origins of human culture in the Stone Age, the beginnings of agriculture and animal domestication, the creation of hierarchical societies and social inequality, and the rise of kingdoms and multiethnic empires in the New and Old Worlds.

We curate archaeological, ethnographic, and archaeobiological (plants and animals relevant to past cultures) research collections from areas as diverse as the Great Lakes, North America, Latin America, Asia, the Near East, Africa, and Europe. These items, currently numbering more than three million, are used not only in the curators' ongoing research but also in educating undergraduates about human diversity and training graduate students to be anthropological archaeologists.

In the laboratories of the Museum of Anthropological Archaeology, undergraduates work side by side with graduate students, curators, and collections managers in the pursuit of knowledge about the past. By handling actual prehistoric material, Michigan students learn how to work in teams, collaborate with fellow researchers, share credit, and gain expertise far beyond that provided in classroom settings. For many students, this is their first exposure both to science and to the use of empirical data in testing theories about what it means to be human. This hands-on learning leads many undergrads to join one of our numerous expeditions to the field to excavate and discover new information about our shared past.

To maintain the Museum of Anthropological Archaeology's reputation as an international leader in research and student training, gifts are vital to support the work of faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students to enable them to contribute new knowledge to the field. We are also seeking funding to support ongoing efforts to engage indigenous and descendant communities, whose material culture heritage we curate. All of these initiatives will contribute to a vital and vibrant museum poised to be a leader in the nation and the field.

## STRATEGIC FUND

Expendable, undesignated gifts of \$10,000 – \$50,000 are extraordinarily important to the continuing success and growth of the museum. Contributions of any size to the Strategic Fund supply the resources that strengthen and enrich the activities of students and the research of faculty by enabling them to present their research at conferences, invite speakers to campus, publish primary archaeological research and data-rich reports that serve as source documents for all future research, and provide for necessary equipment for field and laboratory research.

## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FUND

The museum's curators and research staff seek to involve undergraduates in the excitement of archaeological field and laboratory research. U-M undergraduates participate in archaeological field training projects in Africa, Asia, the United States, and Europe, and conduct original research on the museum's collections. Gifts of \$25,000 annually to this fund will provide fellowships (\$5,000 per student) for students seeking to participate in archaeological fieldwork and to attend conferences to present their work.

## GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH FUND

To attract the very best and most talented graduate students to our program, we need to make research trips accessible to students. These trips are vital to a well-rounded education and are important for graduate students so that they experience archaeological research in the field. Active research sites include Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and North America. A gift of \$50,000 will support two to five graduate students, depending upon the location of their research site.

## WORKING WITH DESCENDANT COMMUNITIES

UMMAA's collections are from all over the world, from Michigan to the Philippines. They represent the material-cultural heritage of hundreds of cultures and descendant communities. A top priority of the Museum is to build bridges to these communities. A gift of \$25,000 would support travel and events that connect descendant communities with collections on campus. An endowed gift of \$1.5M would create a post-doctoral fellowship for an indigenous archaeologist, providing time and resources for a new Ph.D. to deepen and expand their research expertise while also exposing undergraduates to emerging scholarship in this important work.



**“Without this opportunity, I would not have been able to gain the practical experience or professional connections necessary for me to advance my skills in archaeology, much less obtain data with which to write an honors thesis. Donations from people who believe in the pursuit of knowledge and who want to support the researchers of the future mean the world to students like me.”**

**—Mya Welch, Anthropology and Museum Studies student**



## RECONNECT/RECOLLECT AND KNOWLEDGE REPATRIATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

UMMAA became involved in the ReConnect/ReCollect project in 2021 after receiving a two-year grant from the Humanities Collaboratory. The project's focus was "to have conversations in terms of decolonizing the Philippines collections here on campus" said Jim Moss, UMMAA Collections Manager—including examining the history of how the objects ended up in Ann Arbor. As part of this mission, ReConnect/ReCollect hosted several events to bring artists and culture bearers to Ann Arbor from communities in the U.S. and the Philippines so they could engage with the collections and the local community.



*"We say museums hold collections for future generations.  
This is the future generation. The future is now."  
-Jim Moss*

The project also included a trip to the Philippines, led by Deirdre de la Cruz and Ricky Punzalan, to connect with descendant Philippine communities, and the team brought images, scans, and materials that were previously collected through historical trips rooted in colonization. Because of the expertise of Dr. Salvador-Amores, former director of the Museo Kordilyera, ReConnect/ReCollect was able to find the descendant communities to whom these items belonged.

"We met descendants of some of the people in the Worcester collection photos. To hear a woman say 'oh that looks like so and so' really drove home why we are doing this. We say museums hold collections for future generations. This is the future generation. The future is now."

The team also shared digital copies and hard drives with four university museums and archives, as local institutions are better positioned to share these collections with local community members. Moss feels that ReConnect/ReCollect and the trip to the Philippines created a foundation on which he and others can continue building connections with Filipino and Filipino/x-American communities, artists, archaeologists and other scholars, and museum staff. "There's a lot more of this work that can be done in the future. Most of us hope this is the first of many trips."

*for what's next ►*  
**Look to Michigan**

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