

The Fourth International Mountmakers Forum, on May 14 and 15 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, was, against many, if not all, odds a success!

The first cool and clear spring day, held in the beautiful and intimate (the microphone was almost unnecessary) auditorium of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History, was opened with a brief introduction to the northern New Mexico pueblo culture by John Garcia, of Santa Clara Pueblo, just about 15 miles north of Santa Fe. John spoke a bit about the Santa Clara people, and gave a blessing for the success of the event in Tewa, one of the northern New Mexico native languages.

Because of the spring storm the day before (it had snowed briefly in Santa Fe), many attendees experienced flight delays. The first presenter, Vincent Avalos, of the Asian arts Museum of San Francisco, only arrived a few hours before he was scheduled to go on, at 9 am, and without his luggage!

Despite those difficulties, Vincent's presentation was extremely interesting, and overlapped some important topics that were covered in later presentations, such as patterning and best conservation practices.

Steven Sciscenti, from the Oakland Museum, gave an illuminating presentation on safe and secure supports for certain types of objects while in collection storage, which I think is an often overlooked area.

Dan Radven gave a presentation on a unique design for display of necklaces in an exhibit setting.

We then had all presenters up to the front for questions from the other participants, which was great. Lots of good questions and comments.

After a long lunch break, where participants were able to avail themselves of some of the wonderful restaurants in downtown Santa Fe, BJ Farrar, from the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, gave an informative presentation on template techniques for mountmaking, imperative especially when we are unable to have the objects in the shop.

We next took a break to the lovely old courtyard of the Palace of the Governors, adjacent to the History Museum, for some coffee and delicious chocolate elixirs, the chocolate courtesy of Kakawa chocolate, in Santa Fe.

Next we had the good fortune to have Megan Dattoria and Richard Gould, from the Smithsonian Office of Exhibits Central, speak a bit about how 3D printing can be used for making artifact mounts. This was an unscheduled talk, but worked out perfectly, as we had a prior presenter unable to make it. They even brought some examples!

Our last presenter was McKenzie Lowry, of the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, speak about Preventative Conservation issues of Mountmaking, with some sobering examples of damaged art, and what could have been done to prevent that damage, as well as some safe practices for us all to use.

We then had the afternoon presenters all come up for a wide-ranging question and answer session, which was followed with a reception at the History museum for all participants, with wine and barbeque provided by the Cowgirl Barbeque in Santa Fe.

To finish the day (and night), there was rockabilly at the Matador bar, around the corner, with DJ Prairiedog, long into the night.

As if that weren't enough, the next day we had four great poster presentations in the lobby of the History Museum: Physics of Mountmaking and Seismic Considerations by Vincent Avalos from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, a great system for textile mounts by Robin Hanson and Philip Brutz, of the Cleveland Museum of Art, a beginning presentation of a draft of a book on the art of mountmaking (along with some interesting tests of a silicone as a potential material for mountmaking) by Jamie Hascall, and a 3D printing demonstration by Greg Vigil, from Highlands University.

In addition, we had tours throughout the day of some of the facilities of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, including Exhibits Central, the two conservation labs, collections at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, the Press at the Palace of the Governors, and the Organ in St. Francis Auditorium.

Looking forward to the next one in 2016, wherever it may be!

Video of the presentations available on YouTube at: [2014 Mountmakers Forum](#).

Paul Singdahlsen
Exhibits Central
Museum Resource Division
New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs