

**Letting Go: A History of Save Outdoor Sculpture!
as a National Crowdsourcing Effort to Document and Preserve Outdoor Sculpture**
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Author's note: This essay covers five decades of activity that culminated in the founding of the Save Outdoor Sculpture! program in 1989. Multiple names are used for organizations, with attention to the contemporary name used when the events occurred. For instance, the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) is used as well as the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Heritage Preservation (HP) is used as well as the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property (NICCP).

Introduction

In 1989, before wide-spread use of the internet and the existence of social media, Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!) was launched as a form of crowd-sourcing that engaged thousands of individuals contributed to an effort to document outdoor sculpture and, in turn, to re-establish a commitment to the nation's cultural heritage. Nationally and state-wide appeals were made inviting participation in this initiative, all of which was funneled through state and regional reporting to the Smithsonian. With the goals “*to inventory all publicly accessible outdoor sculpture in the United States and to raise public awareness about the need to provide professional treatment and routine maintenance of artworks in their communities,*”² SOS! offered an important first step in the long-range task of raising an owner's “consciousness about the intrinsic value of outdoor sculpture and the need for responsible ongoing care.”³ Supporting these two goals, the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property and the Smithsonian Institution contributed to the success of the SOS! initiative which remained active for twenty-five years, until the dissolution of Heritage Preservation in 2014.

Origin Stories of the NCAC, NICCP, and SOS!

The origins of SOS! are tied to those of Heritage Preservation, which was first known as the National Conservation Advisory Council (NCAC) and then as the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property (NICCP). The NCAC was incorporated in 1974 as a non-profit organization “...created by agreement of its members (1) to promote and facilitate the conservation and preservation, including preventive care, of the Nation's publicly and privately owned cultural property, architecture, and natural history specimens; and (2) to pursue such other activities enumerated in its Bylaws or approved by its Board of Directors that are consistent with these Articles of Incorporation.”⁴ Its founding members included individuals associated with museums, scholars who worked with collections, and conservators who desired an organization

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² Susan Nichols, “SOS! Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going?” *CRM* 18:1 (1995): 15.

³ Susan Nichols, “Saving Outdoor Sculpture: A Nationwide Survey is Underway,” *CRM* 16:5 (1993): 8.

⁴ Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 1. Also contained in this box is notice of the organization's name change to the National Conservation Advisory Council on May 19, 1982.

whose structure and advocacy function was a familiar approach of other U.S.-based scholarly and professional societies in the field of art and museums, such as the American Alliance of Museums (AAM)⁵ and College Art Association (CAA).⁶ Moreover, the NCAC shared interests with conservation, research, and dissemination organizations that came into their own during the Institute's early years, including The Association for Preservation Technology (APT)⁷ and AIC (American Institute for Conservation).⁸

The organization took its cues from the Conservation and Scientific Research Division of the National Gallery of Canada, established in 1957 under the leadership of Nathan Stolow, chemist and "scientific advisor" to the museum's director.⁹ The goal of establishing a conservation institution in the U.S., however was also a product of the time, as cultural heritage organizations had supported initiatives related to the centennial celebrations of the Civil War and ushered in a wave of activity focusing on the nation's bicentennial.¹⁰ The concept of *celebrating* the Civil War, its participants on both sides of the battlefield, and the valorization of military prowess and idolatry of leadership (more generally) were, actually, an important means of garnering support for sculpture conservation, treatment, and long-term care by communities who had erected the sculptures. In fact, in the drive to commemorate on a national scale, it became apparent that the iron, bronze, and stonework of the past hundred years had aged and, as a result, showed signs of wear and needed help.

Simultaneously, materials science research had identified at least one of the causes of the deterioration of outdoor statuary as environmental pollution, and, in particular, acid rain. The NICCP was interested in pursuing this research and learning more about the effects of acid rain, particularly as related to the nation's outdoor sculpture. David Shute, Chair of the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property Board since its founding in 1982 as the successor to the NCAC and appointee to a Scientific Advisory Council on Acid Rain, and Michael Richman, Editor of the Daniel Chester French papers at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, became interested in devising a plan to document and to assess this cultural resource. In short, they conceived of SOS! in the fall of 1984, although it took a few years for the initiative to get off the ground.¹¹

⁵ Founded in the U.S. in 1906, the American Alliance of Museums (formerly the American Association of Museums), is the national accrediting body for museums in the U.S. See "About AAM," American Alliance of Museums, <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/about-aam/>.

⁶ Founded in the U.S. in 1911, CAA is focused on scholarship and practice of "art, teaching, and research of and about the visual arts and humanities." See "What is the College Art Association," College Art Association, <https://www.collegeart.org/about/>.

⁷ The cross-disciplinary organization APT, dedicated "to promoting the best technology for conserving historic structures and their settings," was founded in 1968 as a "joint venture among Canadian and U.S. preservationists." See The Association for Preservation Technology International, <https://www.apti.org/>.

⁸ See "Fact Sheet 2017," American Institute of Conservation, <https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/administration/governance/fact-sheet-june-2017.pdf>.

⁹ John McElhone, "Nathan Stolow (1928-2014): An Art Conservation Pioneer," National Gallery of Canada Magazine, December 12, 2014, <https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/in-the-spotlight/nathan-stolow-1928-2014-an-art-conservation-pioneer>.

¹⁰ For instance, the AASLH (American Association of State and Local History) began publishing its technical leaflets in 1968.

¹¹ The author of this essay is writing a longer history of SOS! which details the early account noted here, museum computing, data gathering initiatives, and a fuller description of resources, programs, and case studies of SOS!

To serve as an advocate for collections, in general, and to meet the ambitious and comprehensive goals related to the preservation, care, and maintenance of outdoor sculpture in particular, NICCP joined forces with another organization interested in data collection, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art, to create a nationwide private/public partnership. Like NICCP, the Smithsonian American Art Museum was interested in gathering data about collections throughout the United States. Having launched the computerized database to the Inventory of American Painting (IAP) in 1976, the museum sought to undertake a second initiative of documenting indoor and outdoor works, later named the Inventory of American Sculpture (IAS), to serve as a companion to IAP.

Clearly there was a motivation on the part of museums, an interest among institutions and the cultural ethos of the time, and a cohort to facilitate the conservation. The next step was to thread these strands together and, ultimately, to mobilize individuals and organizations to document in word and image the outdoor sculpture around them, to report the information and images to the Smithsonian, and to spur them into action to save outdoor sculpture.

In 1986, NICCP conducted the Public Monument Conservation Project,¹² which set out to study publicly accessible outdoor sculptures and monuments that needed care.¹³ That study led to the creation of Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!), a partnership between NICCP and the Smithsonian American Art Museum,¹⁴ which was fully launched in the fall 1989. The responsibilities of each entity were clear: NICCP would conduct the outreach and awareness-raising, gather the data from all states and territories. They would serve as the people-facing effort, while the Smithsonian would serve as the home for the data and its dissemination. The focus of this essay is the public-facing program, Save Outdoor Sculpture!, its parent organization and its surrogates throughout the U.S., as well as the Smithsonian initiatives toward managing and sharing the data.

Why SOS! at this Moment?

SOS! was defined as “the nationwide effort to inventory all sculpture in the public realm and elevate the preservation needs of those resources in the public mind.”¹⁵ According to National Park Service architectural historian Dennis Montagna, the elevation of these needs has been served by public projects such as the restoration of the *Statue of Liberty* and the 1993 conservation of the figure of *Freedom* atop the U.S. Capitol. Sculpture had been denied its appropriate care, according to art historian Michael W. Panhorst,¹⁶ which, in turn, had an impact on how they were received. Writing in 1985, Panhorst argued “Bronze portraits of soldiers,

¹² In 1984, the NIC submitted a proposal to the NEH a proposal for a monuments conservation project that served as the seed for submission in 1985 from NIC of a joint project with AASLH as Public Monument Conservation Project (a monument conservation proposal submitted to the J. Paul Getty Trust).

¹³ HP looked toward all outdoor sculpture, even those whose ownership was not always clear. See Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Boxes 4, 9, and 26.

¹⁴ Diane L. Mossholder, “Save Outdoor Sculpture! A Community-Based Conservation Program,” *Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter* 22:2 (Spring 2007), https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/22_2/news_in_cons1.html.

¹⁵ Dennis R. Montagna, “Public Monuments and Outdoor Sculpture,” *CRM* 18:1 (1995): 3.

¹⁶ As of CRM 7:2, 1985, Panhorst was a Ph.D. candidate, Department of Art History, University of Delaware, and a consultant to the National Park Service on the materials and distribution of outdoor sculpture. See Michael W. Panhorst, “The Appreciation and Preservation of Monumental Bronze Sculpture,” *CRM* 7:2 (1985).

statesmen and local heroes erected around the turn of the century have lost much of their power to inspire public sentiment for the individuals and national ideals they memorialize. Weathering has adversely affected their appearance while their significance to patrons, sculptors, and audience has been forgotten.”¹⁷ He further clarified the significance of not having a national methodology and relationship to research: “Art historians and sculpture conservators remain undecided about the most effective cures for “greening,” streaking, and staining; but they have begun to assess the situation, and two things are clear: (1) monumental bronze sculpture represents a rich cultural, historic and artistic heritage that merits serious study and interpretation, and (2) the statuary itself demands prompt attention if it is to endure.”¹⁸

The work of SOS! involved education and consciousness-raising that took the shape of awareness, first and foremost, of sculpture and its ubiquity as well as an understanding as to how to foster its long-term care. Several years into the program, SOS! staffer Jessica Ruskin claimed “Public outdoor sculpture is the most accessible form of history and art, found in virtually every community in America. Outdoor sculpture tells the stories of our history and reflects the values and ideals of our culture. Unfortunately, it is largely unnoticed by passersby, and its rich interpretive possibilities are too often overlooked by museums, libraries, and schools.”¹⁹ Therefore, sculpture must have an advocate, which it found in 1991 through the SOS! pilot project.

The Early Years of SOS!

The Pilot Study (1991): Illinois, Tennessee, and West Virginia

With the goal of launching a nationwide survey, SOS! developed a survey questionnaire and a volunteer's handbook and tested them during a pilot study in three states in 1991. The program used a train-the-trainers approach, inviting state coordinators to Washington, DC, for hands-on instruction. They returned to their states to teach the rest of the volunteer surveyors.²⁰ To facilitate trainings beyond an initial cohort onsite in Washington, DC, materials were created to determine the feasibility of training volunteers to record data and holding organizations accountable for reporting. According to NICCP president Larry Reger, “These materials have been reviewed by the NIC staff and members from the conservation and curatorial communities. They will be tested as part of a three-state pilot study to be conducted in West Virginia, Illinois (Chicago will serve as our urban center sample) and a state to still to be determined.”²¹ Once the pilot study is completed, the materials, reporting processes and communication systems will be refined and revised. A final approval packet of materials will be distributed to the coordinating organizations to begin recruiting volunteers and inventorying our nation's outdoor sculpture. We expect to have the first wave of fully trained project volunteers in the field by fall 1992, with the remaining training to be completed by fall 1993.”²² Following this period, nonprofit

¹⁷ Panhorst, *CRM* 7:2 (1985): 1.

¹⁸ Panhorst, *CRM* 7:2 (1985): 2.

¹⁹ Jessica Ruskin, “SOS! Brings Outdoor Sculpture into the Classroom,” *SOS! Update* 11:2 (Fall 2000): 5.

²⁰ Letter from Larry Reger to Charles Meyers, Program Office of the Getty Grant Program, April 12, 1991, Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 1.

²¹ Tennessee was the additional state.

²² Letter from Larry Reger to Charles Meyers, Program Office of the Getty Grant Program, April 12, 1991, Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 1.

organizations and state agencies were invited to submit proposals to manage a state or metropolitan-area survey, resulting in the training of 7,000 volunteers and the documentation of nearly 32,000 sculpture. In terms of funding, by August 1991, \$3,750,000 had been raised in public and private support; a second \$1M appropriation for FY 1992 was pending.²³

At its height, SOS! was in contact with volunteers and staff at 113 coordinating agencies. Managing such an infrastructure required sharing information, for which SOS! developed a newsletter called *SOS! Update*, a thrice annual publication. In describing the newsletter to a funder, NICCP president Larry Reger noted in 1991, “We have been aggressively promoting the project and increasing its visibility by producing *SOS! Update*, a newsletter that reaches approximately 4,000 as of 1991 [by 1997 that number was 5500] organizations and individuals, publishing articles in publications of allied organizations, attending conferences, making presentations at professional meetings and to the general public and producing “SOS! Sculpture at Risk,” a slide presentation.” The reach was broader still, infiltrating other organizations through articles and editorials about SOS! appearing in *Preservation Forum* and *Preservation News*, publications of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. These prompted inquiries from the general public as well as ideas for possible financial assistance—critical in-roads during these early days.²⁴

Moving Beyond the Pilot Study (1992)

In moving beyond the pilot study, support had to be garnered among additional states. Within a short year, the initiative had grown. According Susan Nichols, by 1993, “the project [was] underway in 43 states plus the District of Columbia and involves 122 organizations. Of the primary or lead organizations, 35 have a history or preservation interest, including state historic preservation offices; 31 are arts-oriented; 10 are universities, museums or civic groups.”²⁵

Over these years of the first-phase of data collection and documentation, 106 regional partners corraling more than 7,000 volunteers to work together with Heritage Preservation’s SOS! team to conduct the first-ever national outdoor sculpture survey. They documented and photographed approximately 32,000 outdoor sculpture in the U.S., which laid the foundation for the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Inventory of American Sculpture (IAS) database.²⁶ The data gathering is often relegated to this first phase of SOS!, ca. 1990-1995, however it is important to note that data continued to be gathered by regional organizations and forwarded to the Smithsonian, thus maintaining interest among volunteers in seeking out new sculpture to add

²³ Larry L. Reger, “A National Initiative to Save Outdoor Sculpture!” *Dialogue/89—The Conservation of Bronze Sculpture in the Outdoor Environment: A Dialogue Among Conservators, Curators, Environmental Scientists, and Corrosion Engineers*, Houston: NACE, 1989, 342.

²⁴ Letter from Larry Reger to Charles Meyers, Program Office of the Getty Grant Program, April 12, 1991, Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 1. In Box 23, Susan’s note that SOS! Update goes to 5500 member-mailing list and NIC members and several thousand volunteers and related entities.

²⁵ Nichols, *CRM* 16:5 (1993): 6.

²⁶ See Smithsonian American Art Museum, “Save Outdoor Sculpture!” <https://americanart.si.edu/research/inventories/outdoor-sculpture>. This site relegates data collection to the first five years, and narrows the scope of funding support to include only SOS! was jointly sponsored by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Heritage Preservation, Inc.

to the database while motivating organizations to save the sculptures that were known to be in peril.

Mobilizing People in Every State

According to Susan Nichols, “The SOS! survey mobilized people in every state and the District of Columbia to seek out and become invested in their public sculpture. Once people rediscovered the sculptures in their communities—the history and context—they became advocates for their care and preservation. The survey started a process that led to assessments and conservation treatment.”²⁷ The initial phase—a national survey and condition assessment by volunteers who worked under the supervision of state and local SOS! coordinating organizations—was a thorough and yet highly competitive proposal process such that the state and local organizations recruited, trained, and followed-up with volunteers. The volunteers came from historical and preservation societies, university students and alumni associations, service clubs, and other organizations. This questionnaire was developed as part of the 1986 Public Monument Conservation Project before its roll out in 1992 on the national level.²⁸ Beyond guidance in data collection, volunteers learned what they needed to recognize signs of age, neglect, vandalism, or potential loss and could, in turn, work together to preserve the sculpture in their communities. After treatment of the sculpture, stakeholders worked together to “encourage the establishment of long-range maintenance programs with the guidance of conservators.”²⁹

From Data to Action (1997-2002)

Pivoting from data to action, a second phase of SOS! was initiated at a November 1996 meeting in Washington. With more than 200 people in attendance, accolades and accomplishments were noted as were plans for the future, which included a shift from documentation to care of sculptures in need. The new awards program from 1997-2002 gave Assessment Awards for more than 550 condition assessments by qualified conservators and 64 Achievement Awards funding preservation, scholarship and public awareness activities.³⁰

Tender Loving Care, established in 1997

The Tender Loving Care (TLC) program began in fall 1997, with conservators training volunteers to perform basic maintenance.³¹ Initiated as a pilot project, TLC brought a conservator and curator into a community three times over 12 months to train individuals to provide this *tender, loving care* for sculpture. This program expanded in 1998 with Conservation Treatment Awards secured by funding from Target Stores and the National Endowment for the

²⁷ Mossholder, *Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter*.

²⁸ According to Larry Reger, the intent was for local availability, though clearly unaware of the potentialities of Web 2.0 when he stated this in 1989: “Tentative scheduled to be accessible in 1992, the Inventory [of American Sculpture] will be available for use by scholars, conservators and others through the Smithsonian Institution Bibliographic Information System (SIBIS). Eventually project co-sponsors hope that the database will be accessible locally, perhaps through a national subscription network with terminals available in major research facilities the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) has expressed interest as well.” Larry L. Reger, “A National Initiative to Save Outdoor Sculpture!” *Dialogue*/89: the conservation of bronze sculpture in the outdoor environment : a dialogue among conservators, curators, environmental scientists, and corrosion engineers, 1989, 341.

²⁹ Nichols, *CRM* 16:5 (1993):6-7.

³⁰ Mossholder, *Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter* 22:2 (Spring 2007)
https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/22_2/news_in_cons1.html.

³¹ Mossholder, *Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter* 22:2 (Spring 2007)
https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/22_2/news_in_cons1.html.

Arts (NEA) and Maintenance Training Awards funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to support training of non-conservation professionals by those professionals in 19 communities.³² These competitive efforts were run alongside the treatment of monuments of national significance such as the Francis Scott Key Monument in Baltimore which earned recognition by virtue of its announcement by then-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. In May of that year, Clinton helped launch the nation-wide \$1.4M project aimed at nonprofit organizations and government agencies. These entities were invited to apply for the grants, which required matching funds. Review panels of experienced professionals in the fields of art history, conservation, and public art administration made recommendations for funding based on the significance of the sculpture, the urgency of its need, the ability of the applicant to carry out the project, and the applicant's plans for public awareness. The Conservation Treatment Awards yielded the care of 123 sculptures nationwide; along the way, communities rallied around their sculpture.³³

Save America's Treasures, established in 1998 for the millennium

The aforementioned effort at conservation treatment and maintenance was part of a broader effort, "Save America's Treasures" that was initiative in 1998 as an Executive Order by President Bill Clinton as a public-private partnership of the White House Millennium Council,³⁴ the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service. As evidence of the broader coordination and impact on the local and regional levels, all grants were matched 1:1 from non-federal sources. The award selections for the projects were made by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) with the goal of highlighting the importance of preserving America's cultural heritage, including endangered sites, collections, and works of art including outdoor sculpture.³⁵

SOS2000!

Even amidst this growing momentum furthered by funding from the federal government and private foundations,³⁶ the SOS! movement and the mobilization to care for our nation's cultural heritage did not rest on its laurels, setting its sights on the millennium by launching SOS2000!,

³² Mossholder, *Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter* 22:2 (Spring 2007)

https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/22_2/news_in_cons1.html.

³³ Mossholder, *Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter* 22:2 (Spring 2007)

https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/22_2/news_in_cons1.html.

³⁴ The White House Millennium Council was established in 1997 by President and First Lady Clinton to encourage communities around the country to mark the milestone of the new millennium in meaningful ways that "Honor the Past and Imagine the Future." For more information, visit the Millennium Council's Web site www.whitehouse.gov/Initiatives/Millennium.

³⁵ Smithsonian Institution Archives, "Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014" Box 19.

³⁶ By 2000, the language describing SOS! had expanded considerably as the list of funders and collaborators expanded. According to *SOS! Update*, 11:2 (Fall 2000), 7, the program was described thusly: "Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!) is a joint project of Heritage Preservation and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. SOS! volunteers provided information and images to create a comprehensive database of the nation's outdoor sculpture and focus attention on preservation of public sculpture and monuments. Major contributions have been provided by Target Stores, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Getty Grant Program, the Henry Luce Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities."

an initiative aimed at sparking the preservation of 10,000 outdoor sculptures by the year 2000.³⁷ Driven, in part, by the preservation zeal and concerns for the immediate care of outdoor sculpture, SOS2000! and the broader SOS! movement also sought to cement institutional memory and practices. As Mark Rabinowitz, deputy chief of operations for preservation of Central Park Conservancy, advised, “Institutional memory of the cyclical maintenance needs of an outdoor collection often exists only in an individual who has assumed responsibility either through planning or temperament. The departure of that individual can mean loss of the commitment to manage a maintenance program, particularly when works are owned by agencies whose primary agenda is unrelated to the curatorial care of outdoor sculpture, like departments of parks or transportation or boards of education.”³⁸ The plan to re-energize momentum around conservation treatment and maintenance was also a way to re-energize interest in volunteer efforts and specific funding opportunities.

Lincoln SOS!

In addition to SOS2000!, an additional effort was made to re-invigorate efforts to care for sculpture, and in particular statuary of Abraham Lincoln, the nation's 16th president. The project, entitled *Lincoln SOS!— Saving Abraham Lincoln's Monumental Legacy* was carried out from February 2008 through February 2010 with the goal of “saving” 50 Lincolns over this period, the year prior to, including, and following the bicentennial of his birth. This effort was part of the broader Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (ALBC)'s goal of informing the public about the impact Lincoln had on the development of the U.S.

The choice of Lincoln was intentional, as he was considered “the most honored person in America's outdoor sculpture”³⁹ meaning that more than 220 outdoor sculptures were in need of care—information that was only revealed through the inventory work conducted as part of SOS!—and documented in the Inventory and for which the organization made the pitch to communities nationwide to report on their hometown Lincolns and to photograph and document them for SOS!, as well as the nation.

Although *Lincoln SOS!* unfortunately the effort fell short of its goal to conserve more than 220 sculpture, it still yielded interest in caring for outdoor statuary. Perhaps its attention to a single individual was too focused to garner widespread support. Or, perhaps the tide was turning away from statuary to other endangered works in the public sphere, such as murals. Thus, the Lincoln project seemed to be a final effort before a broader effort to pivot toward saving public murals.

Resources to Support The SOS! Initiatives

Over its twenty-year run, SOS! created a library for communities to use to support their efforts at documenting their outdoor public sculpture, at fundraising in order to preserve their local cultural

³⁷ The initial idea for SOS2000! emerged at an NIC Board Meeting March 21, 1996. See NIC Board Meeting Notes for March 21, 1996, Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 2. SOS! See <http://cool.conservation-us.org/byorg/hp/PDFS/SOSMaintenanceConsiderationsToSaveOutdoorSculpture.pdf>.

³⁸ SOS Maintenance Considerations to Save Outdoor Sculpture, 13.

³⁹ According to the article “Lincoln SOS! Project Endorsed,” *Save Outdoor Sculpture!* <https://cool.culturalheritage.org/byorg/hp/PROGRAMS/SOS/LincolnSOSProgram.html> Lincoln's status as the most “honored” person in outdoor sculpture comes from the Inventory of American Sculpture.

landscape, and at developing maintenance practices and programs to prolong the preservation and long-term care.

Viewpoint

SOS! Brings Outdoor Sculpture into the Classroom

by Jessica Ruskin

Public outdoor sculpture is the most accessible form of history and art, found in virtually every community in America. Outdoor sculpture tells the stories of our history and reflects the values and ideals of our culture. Unfortunately, it is largely unnoticed by passersby, and its rich interpretive possibilities are too often overlooked by museums, libraries, and schools.

SOS! is giving three-dimensional shape to the stories of outdoor sculpture by developing an object-based, hands-on teaching kit for elementary-school groups throughout the Washington, D.C., area. The kit, entitled *Inside Outdoor Sculpture*, uses sculpture as a catalyst for the hands-on exploration of science, history and art. Through connections to the fourth- and fifth-grade curricula, *Inside Outdoor Sculpture* supports state-mandated standards of learning while raising awareness about outdoor sculpture's rich cultural heritage.

The kit contains a curriculum guide with indoor and outdoor learning activities focused on history, science, and art with language arts, geography, and math connections. The kit also includes laminated images of outdoor sculpture from around the country, sculptural media, child-safe acids and cleaning solutions, pH paper, cameras, and resource books. The SOS!4Kids Web site (www.heritagepreservation.org/programs/sos/4kids/s4kidshome.htm) will be integrated with the kit.

This spring, SOS! tested activities from the kit with fifth graders at Brent Elementary School in Washington, D.C., and with Girl Scouts from Arlington, Virginia. In total, 70 children explored the kit and talked to SOS! about their experiences.

Students at Brent Elementary School performed classroom experiments to discover the effects of acid rain on stone and metal. They soaked chalk in Kool Aid™ to demonstrate how water is absorbed into

the pores of a stone sculpture. The students were shocked to see copper turn green and marble chips dissolve away when acids were applied. After observing the destructive effects of pollutants on outdoor sculpture, they brainstormed ways to protect America's sculptures—including covering them all with cloth veils or with clear shrink-wrap packaging! Using cleaning solutions and waxes included in the teaching kit, students created their own virtual conservation lab to understand how conservators really do clean and protect outdoor sculptures.



The Girl Scouts used the SOS! kit to learn the different purposes of outdoor sculpture. In the process, they also learned about cooperation, creativity, and their own ideals. They worked in groups to make their own sculptures representing what Girl Scouting means to them. Their experience was summed up in the words of one Scout who said, "My favorite part was making a sculpture with my Brownie buddy. I learned how to be more creative and that you really can make anything you want!"

A search is underway for funding to further test, refine, and produce the final product for national loan. ■

Jessica Ruskin began work on the kit as her museum education internship project and was then employed by SOS! through July on contract to continue work on the prototype kit.

FIG. 1: SOS 2000 Teaching Kit

SOS! Publications

SOS! Update

Key among these resources was the publication *SOS! Update*, a newsletter that was delivered to all interested individuals and organizations from 1990-2003.⁴⁰ This publication started small, gained momentum, and at its height was reaching a readership of 5500 (in 1997), a number that telescopes its full capacity, as many organizations received a single copy that would have been read by several staff persons interested in, and doing the work of, SOS! The first several issues reported on the collection of data and the opening of the Inventory of American Sculpture to public (announced in Winter 1992-93). There was also a bit of naming and shaming, for instance, with the publication of lists of unfunded states so as to mobilize interest in keeping up with one's neighbors. The newsletter was the primary means of communication about programs, but also served as a point of reference for demonstrating the possible outcomes of this kind of work and how institutional and foundation support could drive remarkable results. *SOS! Update* was simultaneously a tool of public relations as well as educational outreach. Unfortunately, the publication ceased when Susan Nichols left her position as the inaugural director of SOS!

Other SOS! Publications

Communicating information for specific purposes, such as maintenance and planning, were developed by Susan and the SOS! team from 1992 through 2000, the high-water mark of SOS! A periodic, brief reportage, *SOS! Tips Digest* was published from 1992-1995⁴¹ while *Fund-Raising Tips, Tales and Testimonies: Private-Public Partnerships to Save Outdoor Sculpture* (1994) made clear the advocacy work required to assure care.⁴² A comprehensive *SOS! Adopt-A-Sculpture Kit* (1996)⁴³ containing several resources, was available for free to communities interested in caring for their sculpture:

- a print booklet **[INSERT LINK TO PDF 1 HERE]** *Maintenance Considerations to Save Outdoor Sculpture* which made the case for maintenance, identified basic and model maintenance programs, and presented options for programming;
- a video “*Maintain Outdoor Sculpture Today for Tomorrow*” which raised collateral issues as to why maintenance was an important part of the process—that works cannot simply be conserved and then left uncared for;
- a planning guide “*Designing Outdoor Sculpture Today for Tomorrow*” **[INSERT LINK TO PDF 2 HERE]** which identified factors to consider, such as materials and siting, front-end actions that can reduce long-run costs;
- a condensed guide *Today for Tomorrow* which offered an overview the basic steps of setting up a collections management plan for outdoor sculpture and fundraising to underwrite costs; and
- the *Guide to the Maintenance of Outdoor Sculpture* written by conservator Virginia (Ginny) N. Naudé and Glenn Wharton offered models for developing maintenance plans.

⁴⁰ Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 26.

⁴¹ Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 27.

⁴² Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 26.

⁴³ Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 27.

These resources aimed at education as well as engagement through care of collections. One arm of this care was the “Adopt-A-Sculpture” program which shifted attention away from documentation and toward long-term care and responsibility for sculpture in public places. While any of the aforementioned resources would have been useful to those who had adopted sculpture, focused documents such as “Establish Your Adopt-A-Sculpture Program: Extend a Legacy for the New Century,” gave clear guidance on how to proceed with such an endeavor to move beyond treatment or occasional maintenance to long-term stewardship and engagement.

[INSERT LINK TO PDF 3 Girl Scout Patch Program HERE]

The efforts by individuals, communities, and organizations were happening at a robust pace over the years of the initial survey. In some cases, where community groups such as the Friends of Cleveland Sculpture and Military Outdoor Sculpture Education Roundtable (MOUSER), as well as organizations with broader support, such as Girl Scouts and United Daughters of the Confederacy were engaged in the care of sculpture, activities continued beyond the initial treatment. Such partnerships aimed at singular tasks—such as documentation for an inventory—and also had long-standing aims, such as collections care and greater public awareness. Education was an important part of this arrangement. In addition to myriad resources made available to help train volunteers in this national effort, one resource in particular also served as a means of celebrating the accomplishments of the thousands of SOS! volunteers—the SOS! exhibit.

Other SOS! Produced Resources: Exhibition

Curated by the SOS! staff, *Preserving Memory: America's Monumental Legacy* consisted of 20 color panels that showcased more than 200 works of art from throughout the U.S. that had been part of the SOS! effort. The exhibition served as “valuable tools for enhancing public awareness and support for conservation of cultural resources,” touring U.S. venues from September 2002 through April 2006. Described by SOS! staffer Dianne Mossholder “The exhibit...encourage[s] visitors to consider the creation of public sculpture and to reflect on their own community's historic and creative heritage. *Preserving Memory* also explains threats to outdoor sculpture, features communities that have taken steps to preserve these treasures, and includes special panels for children.”⁴⁴ The exhibit was a culmination of images and stories from across the U.S.; it told the stories of America's outdoor sculpture and how it has been cared for. *Preserving Memory* was the point at which, in the words of Susan Nichols, when “the rubber hits the road.”⁴⁵ In short, the exhibition evidenced the valiant work done, and sought to kindle the flames of additional support.

Simultaneous to this public-facing historical overview of SOS! was the idea for a formal publication. That second output was to have been written by Susan Nichols. When Susan left the organization September 2002 to assume a position as the Lunder Education Chair at SAAM, the intent was that Susan would write this history, an action with the Board of NIC supported. Unfortunately, that book never happened: this essay aims, in some ways, to fill that gap.

⁴⁴ Mossholder, *Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter* 22:2 (Spring 2007)

https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/22_2/news_in_cons1.html.

⁴⁵ “NEH Administrative, 2001-2002,” Smithsonian Institution Archives, “Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014” Box 35.

Diminished Resources & New Initiatives

Following Susan's departure, further reductions in staff occurred. With a skeleton crew running the organization, priorities were shifting to another art format—public murals, as documented elsewhere on this website. Simultaneous to the shifts in personnel and gaining interest in public murals, the mission of Heritage Preservation seemed to center on one of its long-standing interests in collection care, thereby drilling down to examine the preservation needs assessment collections in the U.S.

In collaboration with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Heritage Preservation published *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections*, aka "Heritage Health Index" or "HHI." The first comprehensive condition and preservation needs assessment of U.S. collections, the HHI was distributed to more than 14,500 museums, libraries, archives, historical societies, and other collections from every U.S. state and territory in an effort to get a read on the state of the nation's collections. Published in December 2005 (and plans were underway to repeat this survey, although the second survey was not published until 2019), the information in the HHI provided "the first data on all the holdings of the U.S. collecting institutions...[with] more than 4.8 billion artifacts being cared for nationwide."⁴⁶ The pivot toward the Heritage Health Index (HHI) & HHI II fostered interest in the conditions and preservation needs of our nation's collection and further drew HP, as an organization, away from programmatic and educational endeavors.⁴⁷

By 2014, SOS! had ceased operations: likewise, the work of its parent organization, Heritage Preservation, was coming to an end. The HP Board proposed the transfer of HP website, as well as the online community, to the American Institute of Conservation. The transfer of some programs was administered through a \$275K grant with IMLS "with a continuation of the good work that HP started."⁴⁸

Access to the Data

The data and documentation gathered and shared, over the course of the SOS! initiative, with the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM).⁴⁹ Housed within the SAAM's Research and

⁴⁶ "About the Heritage Health Index," <http://resources.conservation-us.org/hhi/home/about-the-heritage-health-index/>.

⁴⁷ The HHI II did not happen due to HP's ending; but the data was released in 2019 by IMLS *Protecting America's Collections: Results from the Heritage Health Information Survey* based upon the data collected in 2004. See <https://www.infodocket.com/2019/02/25/new-report-from-impls-protecting-americas-collections-results-from-the-heritage-health-information-survey/>.

⁴⁸ See October 6, 2014, handwritten notes, Smithsonian Institution Archives, "Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014" Box 4.

⁴⁹ See <https://americanart.si.edu/research/inventories/outdoor-sculpture>. The website gives the dates of the SOS! initiative as 1990-1995, although the initiative (as described in this essay) extended far beyond these dates, and into the 2000s. Also, though very much beyond the scope of this essay, the SAAM established a "Save Outdoor Sculpture" Flickr page to serve as an affinity group for sharing images of outdoor sculpture. Like all of Flickr, the SOS! Flickr offered crowdsourcing of images around a theme or subject, while also providing a platform for discussion: it represents an authentic platform for crowdsourcing. While the "Group Description" defines the community as related to SOS!, its aims and outcomes are vastly different from the meticulous documentation, education, and advocacy of SOS! The page does not have a clear "founding date," although SAAM debuted on

Scholars Center, the data is part of one of the Smithsonian's archive and index resources, which also includes the Inventory of American Painting and the Nam June Paik Archive, and the Photograph Archives. SOS!'s data is part of the Inventory of American Sculpture.

Inventory of American Sculpture

What makes the SOS! collection unusual among the other data and records maintained by the Smithsonian is that SAAM does not own or hold any of the collations themselves, making the data management and access a particular challenge. Unlike the other resources available in the "Research and Scholars Center" which refer to collections and materials held within the walls of the institution – photographic collections, painting, sculpture, and other works of art—the SOS! inventories are data alone, with no analog surrogate.⁵⁰ Therein lies the challenge and responsibility of data management and data stewardship.

Flickr in 2008, meaning that the SOS! Flickr began after that date. See <https://www.flickr.com/groups/saveoutdoorsculpture/>. As of July 2022, the channel has 53 members and 185 photos.

⁵⁰ In this way, they are similar to the other inventory, that of American Paintings. See <https://americanart.si.edu/research/inventories>. Together with the Inventory of American Paintings (which includes indoor works that are publicly-accessible and in private collections), both the IAP and the IAS document more than 400,000 works of art (documented with 80,000 images). The Inventory of American Paintings includes works by artists who were active in America by 1914, while the sculpture database includes works from the colonial era through the present day.

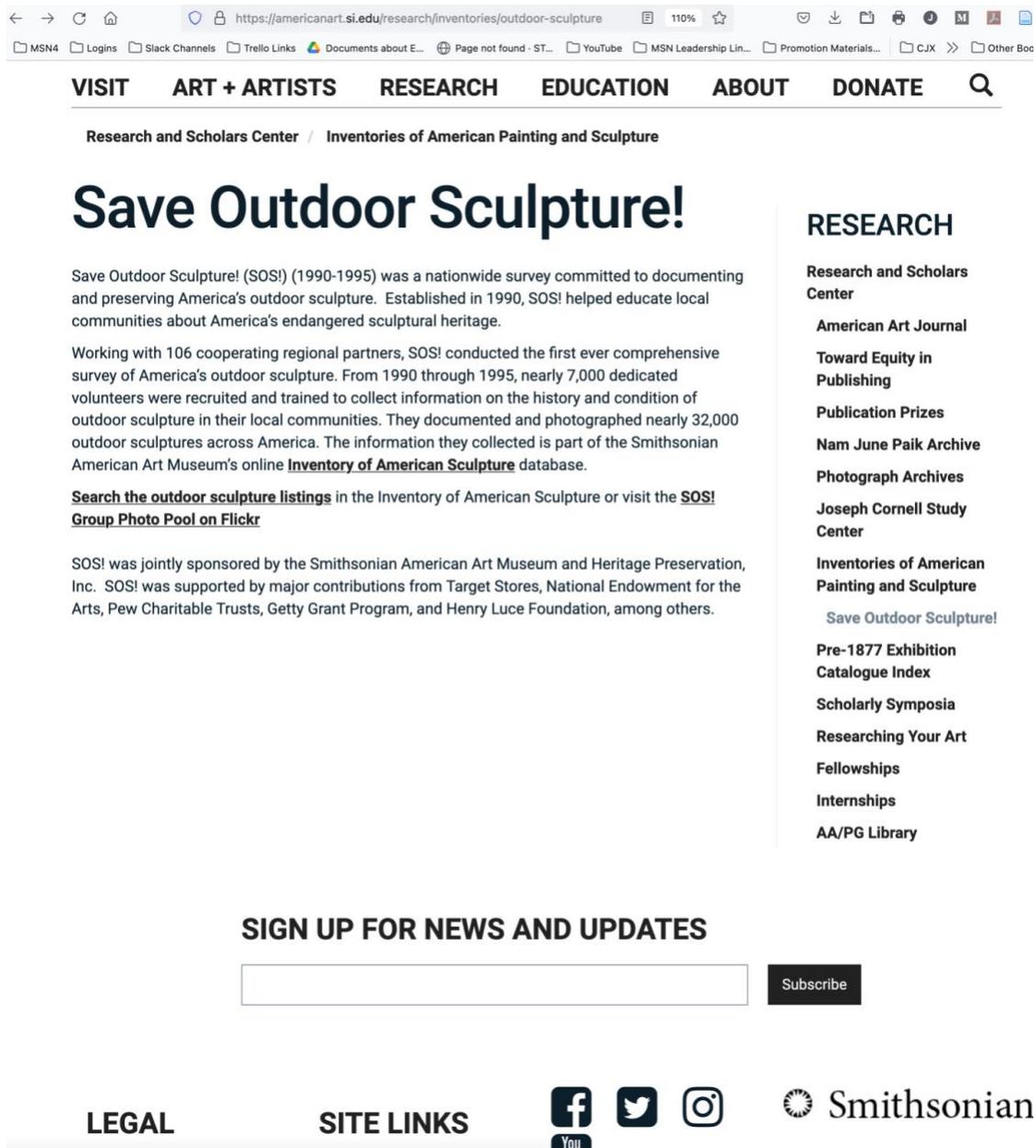


FIG. 2 Inventory of American Sculpture homepage

The SAAM, thus, is the caretaker of SOS! digital legacy through the Inventory of American Sculpture (IAS): herewith, the Smithsonian controls information and the digital assets for close to 32,000 sculptures across America gathered by nearly 7,000 volunteers who gathered the data and photographs to share with 106 cooperating regional partners who then passed along the information to the SOS! office before deposition at the Smithsonian. The inventory is accessible online through a link from a landing page that sends visitors in two directions. To search for sculpture, a link sends visitors to the Smithsonian's catalog system whereas to update information or to add further sculpture, the landing page provides access to an online reporting

tool to enable visitors to the website to report, change, or add information to SOS!.⁵¹ Some of those updates could include conservation information, as part of the promise, when the SOS! program was fully active, that SAAM vowed to update condition reporting for the sculpture through the Conservation Treatment Notification form available on the SAAM website.⁵²

All of the information gathered about each sculpture was keyed into data fields of the Smithsonian database: the SAAM brought the community and state efforts into sharper focus by taking the majority-paper records and keying in the data for each record. This included the basic “tombstone” information about the sculpture, as well as the owner/location, references, and summary. In addition, photos of the sculpture were digitized to accompany the information.⁵³

⁵¹ See <https://americanart.si.edu/research/inventories> for the link to the SIRIS database, the guidelines for reporting works for both inventories (painting and sculpture) and the online and PDF versions of the reporting forms. The online reporting form is a new addition in 2022. Prior to that, the only way to report changes or updates was to download the PDF form and mail it in or to email or call the Research and Scholars Center of SAAM.

⁵² The SOS! website pointed visitors to www.americanart.si.edu/art_info/sos-getinvolved.cfm which now re-directs to <https://americanart.si.edu/research/inventories/outdoor-sculpture>.

⁵³ Some exceptions to this workflow include the occasions where paper records were already converted to digital information, as is the case with the data gathered in the state of Ohio and aggregated by The Sculpture Center, in Cleveland, which then transferred the data to the Smithsonian via FTP. The data was regularly transmitted to the Smithsonian to assure that any updated information was also included in the national database, as well as Ohio's own database.

Art Inventories Catalog
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS)

Search Search Images About

Keyword Browse Combined Highlights Search History All Catalogs

Search: General Keyword Save Outdoor Sculpture Refine Search

> You are only searching: Art Inventories

Search Results

31926 titles matched: Save Outdoor Sculpture

1. **Armillary Sphere, (sculpture).**

Artist: A. Turler & Company, fabricator.
Title: Armillary Sphere, (sculpture).
Date: Dedicated June 1966.
Medium: Brass and cast iron sculpture on concrete base.
Owner: University of North Dakota, University Advancement Office, Grand Forks, North Dakota
Control_Number: ND000025

2. **(Courthouse Relief), (sculpture).**

Artist: A. W. Rush & Son, architectural firm.
Rush, A. William, architect.
Rush, Edwin A., architect.
Title: (Courthouse Relief), (sculpture).
Date: Installed 1896.
Medium: Limestone.
Owner: Rush County Courthouse, Rushville, Indiana
Control_Number: IN000028

3. **Edward A. Filene Plaque, (sculpture).**

Artist: Aarons, George, 1896-1980, sculptor.
Title: Edward A. Filene Plaque, (sculpture).
Date: 1958. May 1959.
Medium: Bronze set in granite.
Owner: Administered by City of Boston, Boston Art Commission, Office of Cultural Affairs, Boston, Massachusetts
Located Boston Common, Boston, Massachusetts
Control_Number: 87710012

4. **George Washington at Valley Forge, (sculpture).**

Artist: Abate, Carlo, 1860-1941, sculptor.
Title: George Washington at Valley Forge, (sculpture).
Date: Installed 1918. Relocated 1948. Relocated July 1986. Rededicated July 16, 1986.
Medium: Sculpture: granite; Base: granite.
Owner: Administered by Camden County Board of Freeholders, Camden, New Jersey
Located Camden County Hall of Justice, Camden, New Jersey
Control_Number: 64440005

FIG. 3 SCREENCAP of SEARCH RESULT SOS in SIRIS

The screenshot displays the Smithsonian Institution's website interface for searching art records. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Smithsonian Institution', 'New Search', 'Gallery', 'Transcription', 'Items on Exhibit', 'Browse', 'Blog', 'Tutorial', and 'About'. A search bar with 'Enter keywords' and a 'Search' button is present, along with 'History' and 'My Lists' links.

The main content area shows search results for sculptures in SIRIS. On the left, a sidebar contains utility links: 'View Full Record', 'Print', 'Share', 'Map', 'Contact Info', and 'Resource Link'. The search results are organized into four expandable/collapsible sections:

- Illinois Memorial, (sculpture)** (expandable):
 - SCULPTOR: Mulligan, Charles J. 1866-1916
 - MEDIUM: Exterior: Georgia granite and marble; Base and steps: Stone Mountain Georgia granite; Female figures: white marble; Eagle: bronze with gold leaf; Tablets: bronze
 - TYPE: Sculptures-Outdoor Sculpture
 - DATE: 1905-1906. Dedicated Oct. 26, 1906
 - CONTROL NUMBER: IAS 77006444
 - DATA SOURCE: Art Inventories Catalog, Smithsonian American Art Museums
- Capt. Andrew Hickenlooper, (sculpture)** (collapsible):
 - SCULPTOR: Couper, William 1853-1942
 - SUBJECT: Hickenlooper, Andrew
 - MEDIUM: Sculpture: bronze; Base: grey granite
 - TYPE: Sculptures-Outdoor Sculpture Sculptures
 - OWNER/LOCATION: Administered by United States Department of the Interior National Park Service Washington District of Columbia Administered by Vicksburg National Military Park 3201 Clay Street, Box 349 Vicksburg Mississippi 39180 Located Vicksburg National Military Park Stop #3 Vicksburg Mississippi
 - DATE: Installed 1912
 - TOPIC: History--United States--Civil War Portrait male--Full length Occupation--Military--Captain
 - CONTROL NUMBER: IAS 87490162
 - DATA SOURCE: Art Inventories Catalog, Smithsonian American Art Museums
 - EDAN-URL: edanmdm:siris_ari_27556
- Colonel Edward Higgins, (sculpture)** (expandable):
 - SCULPTOR: Kitson, Theo Alice Ruggles 1871-1932
 - MEDIUM: Relief: bronze; Stele: white granite or light grey and black granite
 - TYPE: Sculptures-Relief
 - DATE: Dedicated June 1910
 - CONTROL NUMBER: IAS MS000013
 - DATA SOURCE: Art Inventories Catalog, Smithsonian American Art Museums
- Colonel Skidmore Harris, (sculpture)** (expandable):
 - SCULPTOR: Brewster, George Thomas 1862-1943
 - MEDIUM: Relief: bronze; Stele and base: pink/gray granite
 - TYPE: Sculptures-Relief
 - DATE: Dedicated 1919
 - CONTROL NUMBER: IAS MS000015
 - DATA SOURCE: Art Inventories Catalog, Smithsonian American Art Museums

FIG. 4 SCREENCAP of SEARCH RESULT SOS in SIRIS

Smithsonian Institution New Search Gallery Transcription Items on Exhibit Browse Blog Tutorial About Enter keywords Search History My Lists

CollectionsSearchCenter

Capt. Andrew Hickenlooper, (sculpture)

Record Link Print Share Map Contact Info Search Results

Catalog Data

Add to My List

SCULPTOR: Couper, William 1853-1942

SUBJECT: Hickenlooper, Andrew

MEDIUM: Sculpture: bronze; Base: grey granite

TYPE: Sculptures-Outdoor Sculpture
Sculptures

OWNER/LOCATION: Administered by United States Department of the Interior National Park Service Washington District of Columbia
Administered by Vicksburg National Military Park 3201 Clay Street, Box 349 Vicksburg Mississippi 39180
Located Vicksburg National Military Park Stop #3 Vicksburg Mississippi

DATE: Installed 1912

NOTES: Couper, Greta Elena, "An American Sculptor on the Grand Tour," Los Angeles, CA: TreCavalli Press, 1988.
Save Outdoor Sculpture, Mississippi survey, 1993.
National Park Service, American Monuments and Outdoor Sculpture Database, MS7117, 1989.
Vicksburg National Military Park, 1988.
Image on file.
Couper, Greta Elena, "An American Sculptor on the Grand Tour," Los Angeles, CA: 1988, plate 123.
(On bronze plate on front of piece) ANDREW HICKENLOOPER-/CAPTAIN FIFTH OHIO BATTERY/CHIEF ENGINEER 17TH ARMY CORPS/MARCH 29-JULY 4, 1863/LOGAN'S APPROACH AND THE MINES/AT ITS HEAD UNDER THE CONFEDERATE/THIRD LOUISIANA REDAN WERE UNDER/HIS PERSONAL DIRECTION-/GIVEN BY HIS FAMILY
The information provided about this artwork was compiled as part of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Inventories of American Painting and Sculpture database, designed to provide descriptive and location information on artworks by American artists in public and private collections worldwide.

SUMMARY: Standing portrait of Hickenlooper in Confederate military dress. He holds in his proper left hand a pair of binoculars and in his proper right he holds a sword. The statue stands atop a two-tiered base. Upper tier has a molded capitol and bronze text plaque.

TOPIC: History--United States--Civil War
Portrait male--Full length
Occupation--Military--Captain

CONTROL NUMBER: IAS 87490162

DATA SOURCE: Art Inventories Catalog, Smithsonian American Art Museums

EDAN-URL: edanmdm:siris_ari_27556

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FIG. 5 SCREENCAP of SEARCH RESULT SOS in SIRIS

Within each SOS! sculpture record, information about the documentation is included in the expanded content (i.e., “Notes”) for each sculpture. Sourcing was given on the state wide level, with a citation to the Save Outdoor Sculpture survey of which the monument was a part. When applicable, additional citation was paid to the National Park Service’s American Monuments and Outdoor Sculpture Database survey. Finally, the following source information was included in the catalogue record for each outdoor sculpture: “The information provided about this artwork was compiled as part of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Inventories of American Painting and Sculpture database, designed to provide descriptive and location information on artworks by American artists in public and private collections worldwide.” Each record also has

a “control number,” an alpha-numeric string that is a unique identifier associated with this sculpture as part of the Smithsonian catalogues.⁵⁴

The Inventory of American Sculpture, accessible via the Smithsonian Institute Research Information System (SIRIS) provides access to information about 31,926 outdoor sculptures, as of July 2022. Many records include images, as well, thus bringing the documentation effort SOS!—the first comprehensive survey of America’s outdoor sculpture—into the 21st century through public access searchable online. If you know the address of SIRIS, you can begin to search for sculpture!⁵⁵

Smithsonian Learning Lab

A new initiative of the Smithsonian, and perhaps the most appropriate inheritor of SOS! is Smithsonian Learning Lab.⁵⁶ Launched in 2015 by the Smithsonian’s Office of Educational Technology as a space for discovery, creation, and sharing, the Learning Lab is intended “to inspire the discovery and creative use of its rich digital materials—millions of images, recordings, and texts” by helping teachers (primarily) and anyone accessing the site to find materials of interest by navigating a visual platform that is personalizable through the enabling of “favorites,” public or private list creation tools through the “collections” feature, and a repository of user-generated resources. The goal is “to build a global community of learners who are passionate about adding to and bringing to light new knowledge, ideas, and insight.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ See sample record for Capt. Andrew Hickenlooper, which is cited to the SPOS, Mississippi survey of 1993 and the National Park Service, American Monuments and Outdoor Sculpture Database, MS7117, 1989. <https://siris-artinventories.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?&profile=ariall&source=~!siartinventories&uri=full=3100001~!27556~!0#focus>. The control number for this work, for instance, is IAS 87490162, with IAS associated with the Inventory of American Sculpture.

⁵⁵ Due to limitations of the search and catalogue records, it’s unclear if updates are made to this system regularly. When I searched for “date-descending” within the SOS! records, the first result showed a sculpture installed in 1975.

⁵⁶ The Smithsonian Learning Lab has assumed distribution of some of the data from SOS! See here: https://learninglab.si.edu/search/?f%5Btypes%5D%5B%5D=resource&st=Save%20Outdoor%20Sculpture&s=created_at_desc&page=2.

⁵⁷ Smithsonian Office of Educational Technology, “What is the Smithsonian Learning Lab?”, <https://learninglab.si.edu/about>, accessed July 2, 2022.

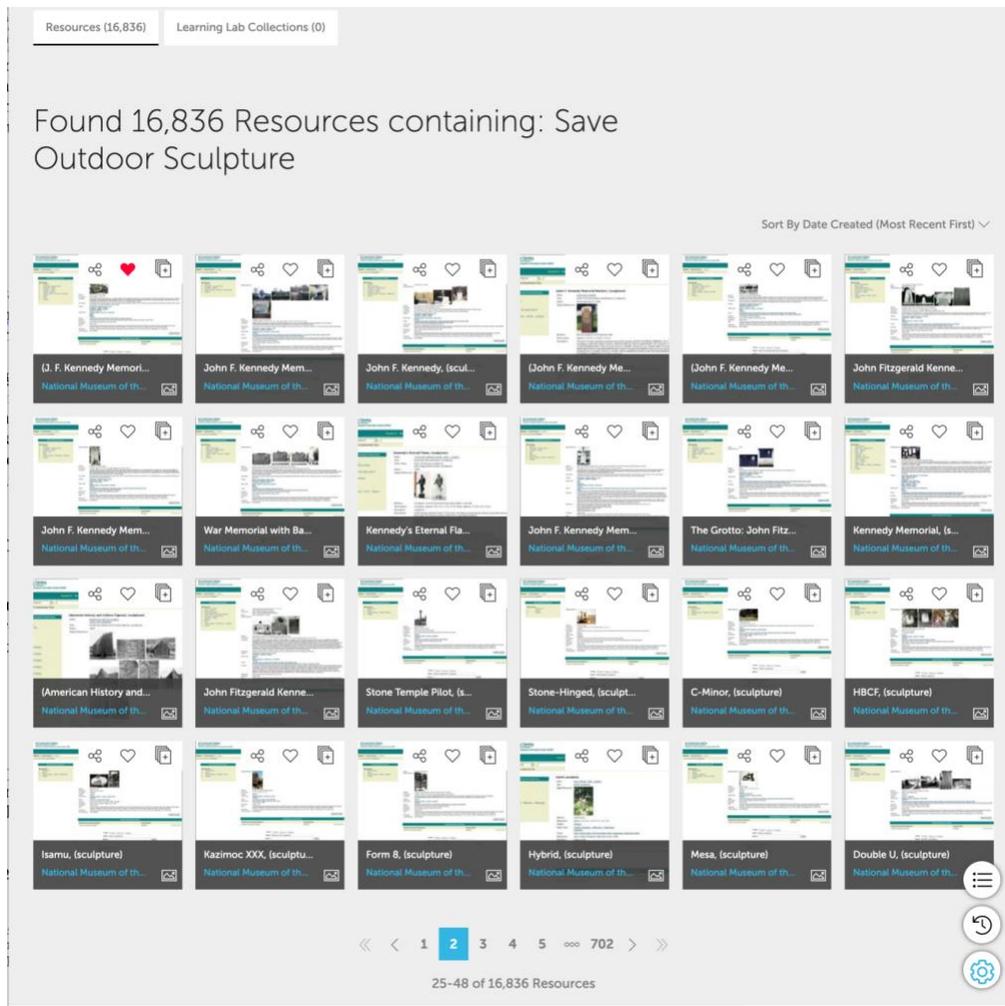


FIG. 6 SCREENCAP of LEARNING LAB

An article⁵⁸ focusing on need-centered professional development and content available through digital museum resources accessible through Smithsonian’s Learning Lab highlights the strengths of the Learning Lab initiative. The findings include the success of cultivating long-term, supportive relationships with PD (professional development) participants and partners and offering consistently available support with museum staff well beyond the workshops.” The study noted the responsibility of museums and cultural organizations to meet the demand to engage digitally with educators and posited that the information gained through this focused study could be adapted by other organizations to provide access to digital resources for educators.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Christina Talbert, Giuseppe Monaco, Darren Milligan, Ashley Naranjo, Philippa Rappoport, and Tess Porter, “Lessons Learned: A Reflection of Five Years of Engaging Educators with Digital Museum Resources,” *Digital Studies/Le champ numérique* 12(1): 1-37, doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/dscn.8074>.

⁵⁹ Christina Talbert, et al., “Lessons Learned...” 1.

Just as the Learning Lab has adopted the ethos of cultivating long-term, supportive relationships, these efforts were also a hallmark of the SOS! program – with its focus on documentation and preservation through education, advocacy, and long-term engagement. The documentation and preservation of outdoor sculpture required, as this essay has shown, persistent engagement and cultivation. Copious clippings in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution Archives⁶⁰ show the efforts that communities went to— throughout the United States—to document the cultural heritage surrounding them and to raise funds to care for this sculpture. These efforts were guided by Susan Nichols and the entire SOS! team who provided free printed and video resources to help communities learn about sculpture, how to care for it, and how to raise funds in one's own community to pay for a professional conservator to visit, treat a sculpture, and provide training to help communities to care for sculpture. This effort required long-term investment and partnership.

⁶⁰ See SIA15-306_V0017UC, Accession 15-306 Heritage Preservation (Organization) Records, 1973-2014," Boxes 19-23 especially.

25 Communities Celebrate Sculpture Day

by Annie Sugar

On July 4th, Americans gathered on the National Mall in the District of Columbia to celebrate the newly restored Washington Monument. Earlier this year, Save Outdoor Sculpture! invited art lovers across the United States to honor the beauty and significance of local outdoor sculpture, and 25 communities answered the call to participate in this summer's Sculpture Day program! The festivities were creative and diverse, ranging from a small memorial wreath laying ceremony to honor a husband's memory in Tenafly, New Jersey, to the cable broadcast of a conserved sculpture's rededication in Oskaloosa, Iowa, to an entire Sculpture WEEK in Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania! SOS! thanks and applauds all who participated. ■

Annie Sugar is Assistant Director of SOS!

Cleveland, Ohio's Sculpture Center "Create a Colorful Sound Sculpture" booth at the annual Parade the Circle festival drew more than 500 visitors and was popular with younger participants. The booth offered adults a chance to learn about conservation efforts at the nearby Fine Arts Garden Area while children created their own works of art.



Photo: Bill Jirousak, The Sculpture Center



Organization

Tenafly Borough Historian
City of St. Joseph
Thomas Starr King Middle School
Southington CFWC (General Federation of Women's Clubs)
Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans
The Sculpture Center
Patriots' Trail Brownie Troop 2112
Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Garden
Saginaw Hareitage Council
Liberty Deli
Oskaloosa Historic Preservation Commission
State of North Dakota
DAR, Lagonda Chapter (Daughters of the American Revolution)
Elmwood Cemetery
Association for Tennessee History
Fairmont Park Art Association
Connecticut Historical Society
Lackawanna Historical Society
Cultural Council of Georgetown County
Patriots' Trail Girl Scout Troops 9414/9366
Booker T. Washington High School
PROUD
Arts Commission of the Pike's Peak Region
Greene County Library

City, State

Tenafly, New Jersey
St. Joseph, Michigan
Los Angeles, California
Southington, Connecticut
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Cleveland, Ohio
Framingham, Massachusetts
Saginaw, Michigan
Saginaw, Michigan
Seattle, Washington
Oskaloosa, Iowa
State of North Dakota
Springfield, Ohio
Memphis, Tennessee
Nashville, Tennessee
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
State of Connecticut
Scranton, Pennsylvania
Georgetown, South Carolina
Dorchester, Massachusetts
Atlanta, Georgia
Ferguson, Missouri
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Paragould, Arkansas

FIG. 7: SOS Sculpture Day

Legacy and “Letting Go”

The history of Save Outdoor Sculpture! as an initiative of Heritage Preservation and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, signals the importance of private-public partnerships and coalition building around the documentation and collections care as well as public education and awareness. It is noteworthy that this initiative achieved success in advance of the internet and ahead of the “letting go”⁶¹ movement of museums and collecting institutions to share authority with the public and visitors.

SOS! orchestrated the maneuvering of thousands of volunteers to contribute their time, effort, and energy to a project that required condition report and, oftentimes, education and maintenance training by SOS! staff and, by extension, the trained became trainers of another corps of trainees-turned-leaders. The coordination of training and dissemination was accomplished through pre-internet means, that is, phone calls, snail mail letters, and face-to-face communication. The amount of time, effort, and energy that went into communication is astounding: the project was accomplished and succeeded without the benefit of social media and blanket email communication which, in the 21st century, can mobilize, organize, and orchestrate in a very short time.

The educational outreach, like communication, was mediated as a tactile, in-person, and analog process that put resources into the hands of SOS! coordinating agencies who, in turn, coordinated the use of the materials such as handouts, laminated images, and resources among a multitude of groups, including elementary through post-secondary and other educational institutions; historical societies and related history-focused institutions; arts organizations; social and advocacy organizations; and myriad affinity groups.

As someone who was involved as a conservation program coordinator and manager of educational programs, I saw (and continue to see) the value and importance of getting the public engaged with their cultural landscape—building lesson plans, bringing children (particularly 3rd, 4th, 5th graders) to sculpture sites, asking individuals for help documenting and recognizing. The legacy of SOS! is one of documentation, first and foremost. SOS!’s Founding Director Susan Nichols stated recently in an interview that the effort to “save” outdoor sculpture was the beginning. “‘Save’ is where you have to begin. That’s the first step. ‘Oh, we got it saved. Now we have to maintain it.’... But at its core, it was conservators, and not really because they wanted to work, because they valued what was not being cared for. That was the baseline, and once they got that platform out there and projects going on, then I was able to step in with my education and school group focus, and I think add the piece that would [guide] the generation that, two or three down the road.” Nichols added that the project instilled pride and passion among those who participated.⁶²

⁶¹ The term “letting go” comes from public history practice centering the work based at museums and historical institutions intersecting with the internet, Web 2.0, and social media. It centers what it means to share authority between institutions and audiences. See Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski, *Letting Go: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World*, (Washington, D.C.: The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, 2011).

⁶² On “saving” and “educating”, see Interview 1 with Susan Nichols, June 2, 2019, 30-32. Quoted material on pages 30-31. Unpublished material in the possession of the author.

In addition to documentation, one of the legacies of SOS! is the Adopt-A-Monument program, among the earliest of which was announced in Dallas at a press conference in November 1988. This public-private partnership was formed in 1988, on the heels of the pronouncement of the endangerment noted in the 1985 Public Monuments survey spearheaded by Michael Panhorst and prior to SOS! had officially launched. Residents of Dallas have chipped in with pennies and dollars in hand—literally, in the case of the 1990 project to conserve the monument to George Bannerman Dealey, businessman and publisher of *The Dallas Morning News*. Still in existence today, as Dallas's Adopt-A-Monument Fund, this program has rescued a number of works over its more than 30-year run, including bronzes by Henry Moore and Felix W. deWeldon as well as painted and gilt multi-material sculptures by Marta Pan and Allie Tennant.⁶³

Prairie Village, Kansas's Adopt-A-Monument program was a private-public partnership based in the City of Fountains Foundation that provided more than \$200,000 of assistance to repair and maintain outdoor sculpture, including fountains.⁶⁴ Established in 1992, Baltimore's Adopt-A-Monument program "supports the ongoing maintenance of Baltimore's history monuments by professional conservators" as part of a realization that the city's budget cannot fund the care needed to ensure their preservation and maintenance. As of October 2019, the program has resulted in the adoption of 25 monuments. Through contribution to the Baltimore Heritage's fund, financial support enables works to be adopted for three-to-five years.⁶⁵

The notion to adopt monuments extended beyond the United States to include Europe, with examples in Scotland and Finland, among others. A key difference, however is the content and media: unlike SOS! and the U.S. Adopt-A-Monument program which focused on outdoor sculpture and an occasional fountain or functional work, European programs emphasized architecture and sites.⁶⁶

Beyond Adopt-A-Monument programs, what responsibility do we have to document and preserve outdoor sculpture today? Aware that the SOS! legacy could be invigorated for the 21st century, Susan Nichols offered suggestions, in 2019, for engaging school children today, offering the opportunity focusing on posing questions of learners. She saw the information about sculpture as the first step, again, and second, to scaffolding that information with curriculum and materials that were formerly available through SOS!. "You can make the links so that [they don't] have to do all the research, but you could pose questions that require [them] to go look at the artwork to make determinations or to make a response to the question. I can see [them] learning about the founders of their town, male and female, and then doing an essay on what they want to do for their town, when they grow up what they would like to be with regard to their town, or what they look around and see needs help now. And this all doesn't require a sculpture, it just requires the impetus. Learning about the artwork can be the impetus to get [them] thinking about a comparable problem in the 21st century, or a parallel problem, an issue."⁶⁷

⁶³ "Dallas' Adopt-A-Monument History," <http://www.inspireartdallas.org/dallas-adopt-monument-history/>.

⁶⁴ *The Prairie Village Voice* February 2009, 2, <https://www.pvkansas.com/home/showdocument?id=1258>.

⁶⁵ "All About the Adopt-A-Monument Citywide Partnership Program," Baltimore Heritage Fact Sheet, October 2019, <https://baltimoreheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Info-Sheet.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Council of Europe, "Strategy 21—Good Practices," <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/-/adopt-a-monument>.

⁶⁷ See unpublished interview with Susan Nichols, June 3, 2019, 15. Susan also offered suggestions as to what she might do differently, noting that the database would benefit from potential partners in city and state organizations

Susan's vision is, in some ways, what the Learning Lab initiative seeks to do. With web 2.0 capabilities at the forefront of collections practices today, and attuned to the idea of "letting go" and sharing authority among us, repositories such as IAS and the related content on *Learning Lab* can be the source of inspiration for learning about the outdoor sculpture around us. These resources could both celebrate and continue the initial effort and recognize the past effort and continue it for the future. As Nichols stated, "There's got to be some accolade or glorification of the initial effort and recognition that this second era with so many advances in technology could ramp up and extend and offer so many more opportunities for...local agencies interested in maintaining, elevating, integrating into classrooms, senior facilities."⁶⁸ Building an educational framework around the content on Learning Lab, which was rooted in the initial SOS! surveys, could be a way to convene conversations around all sculpture, including contested monuments and memorials today.

Post-Script

Now, in 2022, individuals, communities, and institutions recognize the burden of responsibility that each of us bear concerning meaning-making in public contexts. Re-thinking of public spaces has, in some cases led to appeals to remove texts, imagery, and public sculpture, as a result of vociferous remonstrances focused on the names of buildings, streets, and public spaces that memorialize our contested past; any presence of Confederate iconography; and the existence of monuments and memorials on town squares and what they embody as to the publics who encounter them repeatedly. Public sculpture reflected and, in fact, directly engaged with these legacies of the past. What does that mean for us today? What does that mean for SOS! and its legacy? Could an effort like SOS! be developed, delivered, and sustained today? Perhaps, if framed correctly.

As monuments and memorials, in particular, are being reconsidered as part of our national reckoning with injustice, racism, and violence following the extrajudicial killing of George Floyd in May 2020, we must acknowledge, in a post-SOS! landscape, our shared responsibility as individuals, communities, and a nation in celebrating examples of liberty, courage, and sacrifice. Rather than looking to the past and accepting its representations, the focus of a new SOS! initiative might turn toward questioning what we see by using sculpture as a springboard for conversation rather than as a *fait accompli*. A renewed SOS! could open up a multitude of perspectives around our built environment, expressions of histories, and the complexities of the commemorative landscape.

Such effort requires us to move past centennial *celebrations* of the Civil War, recounted earlier in this essay. We can, instead, see opportunity in the commemorations (rather than celebrations) that lay ahead, chief among these is the semiquincentennial of the founding of the United States. We can use existing outdoor sculpture to ask questions about our past, present, and future:

- How can outdoor sculpture begin to more fully reflect inclusive narratives about the past?
- How can we use historical thinking about outdoor sculpture to approach and answer questions about today?

working with and in public art, coordination and sharing of information from conservators, and feedback from teachers who used the curriculum (which was only received on a minimal level at SOS!).

⁶⁸ See unpublished interview with Susan Nichols, June 3, 2019, np.

- How can outdoor sculpture serve as a framework for history and humanities education in the U.S., formally and informally through schools, museums, and public history convenings?
- How can outdoor sculpture help us to consider questions about the past and future?

A new SOS!—SOS! 2.0 for the 21st century—could still emphasize documentation and care but also might bend the arc away from *accepting* what stands and moving toward *conversation*. With knowledge of our country's past and present coming into sharper focus, we can turn to existing public monuments and memorials, and outdoor sculpture more broadly, as sources of inspiration to renew our engagement and understanding of who we are as a nation, as communities, and as individuals. In doing so, our efforts to gather, convene conversations, re-think, and re-imagine our cultural landscape mirror the valiant effort of more than three decades ago to usher in an era of “letting go” of institutional authority and to forge ahead with an initiative to document and preserve outdoor sculpture. Like the corps of volunteers then, we, too, are asked to re-establish a commitment to the nation's cultural heritage—in all of its diversity—across the United States.