

Manitou resident foresees great future for alliance

By Rhonda Van Pelt

Spend five minutes with Michael Howell and you'll get a sense of how happy he is about Colorado College's alliance with the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, which has been in the works since last fall.

The Manitou Springs resident's latest stint at the FAC has lasted six-plus years, after a period in the late 1990s as exhibit designer/lead preparatory and assistant curator.

Now, he's the FAC's registrar and collections manager, but his titles and responsibilities are being reviewed since CC took on management of the art center's three components: the museum, the theater program and Bemis School of Art.

"As of Sept. 1, I began working with the new museum director, Rebecca Tucker, associate professor of art history at Colorado College. I've worked on various projects with Rebecca and other CC faculty and staff, particularly Jessica Hunter-Larsen, director of CC's IDEA Space Gallery, and I'm quite excited to be part of this innovative team," he said.

Howell has a strong background in the arts and academia, with a bachelor of fine arts degree from Colorado State and a master of fine arts degree from Michigan's Cranbrook Academy of Art, and experience in campus galleries and classrooms in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Although he and many others at the FAC and CC hit the ground running as soon as the alliance became official, Howell is sure that it will be worth all the effort.

"I am confident that what we are all are undertaking will have regional, national and international significance within the museum field and the ideals of a liberal arts education."

As collections manager, he oversees the condition, location and status of the art center's collection and objects on loan; as registrar, he handles loan agreements and contracts, insurance issues, brokers and customs, and the transport of art to other institutions in this country and around the world.

Bottom line: Howell's ultimate mission is to protect and preserve the art collection.

Tucker is assessing the current staff's needs with an eye to clarify each employee's role and, Howell said, possibly to hire an assistant registrar, a collections manager and an additional exhibit preparator. A Southwest collections curator is likely to join the ranks.

He foresees that his registrar duties will soon expand.

"Faculty and students are anxious to begin work with the collections so we are trying to move as quickly and carefully as possible," Howell said. "The safety and care of the art will be paramount and strict international museum standards will be the framework on how we proceed."

Fortunately, Howell has been trained in the conservation of textiles and objects, "which has proven to be an extremely useful skill with the FAC's and CC's amazing Southwest collections."

He's most looking forward to updating and expanding the FAC intern program he started five years ago. It will be a "unique and intensive undergraduate intern program," comprised mainly of CC students who will study contemporary museum

“

What we are all are undertaking will have regional, national and international significance.

— Michael Howell

”

theory and receive hands-on experience; it's already stirring interest on campus.

One major focus will be returning Native American sacred and cultural objects to the appropriate entities, a project

that Howell started with CC student Abby Stein.

"Much of the work will be done by a CC intern while I assist and mentor," Howell said. "My educational philosophy is rooted in placing students and interns at the forefront of projects like this. My prime concern is creating a student-run program, with experienced students training younger students."

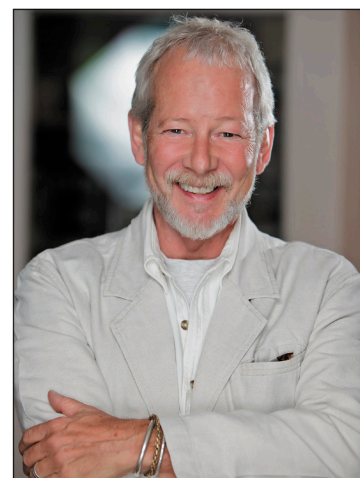
Howell's passion for working with students led to his involvement with several "Wunderkind" exhibits at the Manitou Art Center while he was on the MAC's board of directors. Last

year, Howell and his intern, Hollins University student Amber Wyatt, won a Pikes Peak Arts Council award for their "Wunderkind" work.

The Brooklyn native ended up in Manitou after — he swears this is true — he ran out of gas on his way to California in the 1970s.

"Since then, I've always considered Manitou my home: The people, the culture, the land have held my heart since that first day here. I've left for university and grad school, but continued to return," Howell said. "After years back east as an academic director/curator, I came to grips with the fact that I miss this quirky little town and my friends here. So this is it, I'm home and part of wonderful community."

Although Howell is cautious about predicting the outcome after Tucker finishes assessing and prioritizing the



Michael Howell

community's issues and concerns, he anticipates that he'll spend more time monitoring the collections and developing protocols as more people want access to them.

"The alliance has opened the doors for amazing opportunities and potential for CC and the FAC to build upon the long standing excellence of both institutions. The educational and aesthetic possibilities are virtually limitless at this point. The cultural impact on the region is going to be astounding," he said.

OCT 1ST - 8 AM
MANITOU SPRINGS - COLORADO

Mayor's Cup 5K Run
FOR THE MINERAL SPRINGS



JOIN US FOR ALL WATERFEST EVENTS:

FIVE INFORMATIVE AND INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS
MAYOR'S CUP 5K RUN FOR THE SPRINGS
MINERAL SPRINGS TREASURE HUNT
WATER TASTING
HARRY POTTER WATER QUIDDITCH
COMMUNITY YOGA, GUIDED BIKE RIDE, AND MORE!

LIMITED SEATING - SIGN UP EARLY!
REGISTER AT WWW.MANITOUWATERFEST.ORG

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS | PARTNERS

THE INDEPENDENT | SUNWATER SPA | PEAK LIVING PROJECT | HISTORIC MANITOU SPRINGS | MSSD14
 MANITOU SPRINGS FOUNDATION | PIKES PEAK BULLETIN | COLORADO RUNNING COMPANY
 BALNEOLOGY ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA