



President's Message

FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE

We talk a lot at The Huntington about what it means to be the stewards of our remarkable collections, from the Gutenberg Bible and Gainsborough's *Blue Boy* to the stunning camellia collection and the papers of Octavia E. Butler. The work of our staff on conservation and preservation in all collecting areas—art, library, and botanical—underscores the essence of this place: We are keepers and protectors. But it was clear from the beginning that Henry Huntington did not amass these collections simply to store them away in climate-controlled vaults or in private greenhouses. He made this quite plain when he and his wife, Arabella, established The Huntington 100 years ago this August for the benefit of the public.

Our Library Exhibition Hall allows us to share some of our most prized historical and literary treasures with the general public, while more than 1,700 scholars annually are able to work individually with our extraordinary archival materials. Our art galleries and gardens delight more than 750,000 visitors each year. This in-person experience at The Huntington is fundamental: It is what makes both the first-time pilgrimage and the daily stroll so enlivening.

As we begin our second century, however, one of our strategic priorities is to use technology to augment this reality in myriad ways. Today, there is a gulf between the rich tapestry of the on-site Huntington experience and the virtual presence of our collections. People increasingly spend more and more of their lives connected to the internet, and they expect the knowledge of the world to be at their fingertips. At present, less than 2 percent of our 11 million Library collections items has been digitized and is available online. Over the years, the choice of what to digitize has been largely driven by the availability of special project funding. As a result, a virtual visitor has an incomplete view of the Library's rich and diverse holdings.

We are delighted to have received substantial new support from two extraordinary donor families: Jay and Deborah Last and Mario and Therese Molina. Jay and Mario, both members of the Board of Governors, are each collectors in their own right. Both are contributing to a special digital initiative to build a coordinated digital team, providing the time and expertise necessary to begin strategic digitization of The Huntington's most valuable, popular, and vulnerable Library collections. Additionally, Jay is providing capacity to scale this initiative up, including staff and technologies that will maximize the impact of this new team across the entire organization. In another example of cross-divisional impact, Mario is providing support to allow us to focus on our premier history of medicine collections and selected works on paper from our Art Collections. These gifts will allow The Huntington to begin determining its own priorities for digitization on an ongoing basis.

Building on this transformative initiative, our ultimate goal will be to digitize and integrate art and botanical collections with library material and seamlessly provide online access to materials across all the collections. Unified digital discovery and access tools can aid the scholar who, for example, is searching the collections for both the drawings and the poetry of William Blake. Imagine, as well, an intellectual journey into the origins and use of a historically important red pigment: cochineal. That story can be traced from 16th-century manuscripts related to the tiny cochineal insect, continues through online information about the *Opuntia* cactus plants in our gardens that these insects thrive on, and is embodied in related artworks in the galleries. Connecting the dots virtually will help us maximize the intellectual power of all The Huntington's unique collections.

Online access will also enable a range of new ways of engaging with and using our collections, increasing their impact in the next 100 years. New educational

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resources, online exhibitions, digital publications, and interactive experiences for visitors—many of whom may never have the opportunity to be physically present—all these are possibilities that will be enabled by a robust and well-organized digital collection. The ambitious plans we are developing are multifaceted, multiyear, and comprehensive, with an aim toward substantially improving our technology infrastructure, from the nuts and bolts (wi-fi and fiber optic lines, for instance) to the new virtual pathways imagined above.

As we prepare to launch our yearlong Centennial Celebration in September, we're very excited to be moving forward with this new initiative. The Lasts' and Molinas' visionary generosity is providing a foundation that will help take The Huntington's incredible resources from the gardens, galleries, and vaults, and make them more accessible, for all the world to see.

See related story on page 6.

Karen R. Lawrence, President



CHINESE ARTISANS BEGIN WORK

More than three dozen skilled artisans from Suzhou, China, arrived in San Marino in May and June to begin the specialized carpentry, tile work, and masonry that will give an authentic look to the new sections of the Chinese Garden that are currently under construction. Traditional features of Chinese garden design, which can be seen in earlier parts of the garden, include intricate wood carving on pavilions, handmade clay roof tiles, carved granite bridges, mosaic stone paving, and the placement of distinctive *Taihu*-style rocks within the landscape. Some of the materials, including the roof tiles and carved wood panels, have been fabricated in China and will be installed by the respective specialists. Other features, such as the decorative stone paving, will be created entirely on site. The artisans' work is expected to continue through October.

Key elements in this final phase of the garden include an exhibition complex and a larger café, a hillside pavilion with a view of the Mount Wilson Observatory, a courtyard for the display of *penjing*, and an event space for social gatherings. The anticipated opening date is spring 2020.

The local project team for this final phase of construction is led by Jim Fry Architects, construction engineering firm Snyder Langston, and landscape contractor BrightView Landscape Development.

Special thanks to in-kind donors Air China and Lincoln Plaza Hotel for providing transportation and accommodations for these visiting artisans, and to COSCO (China Ocean Shipping Co.) for shipping all the Chinese materials.



Chinese carpenters construct a distinctive curved roof on a small streamside pavilion. Inset: Materials shipped from China are unpacked.