

President's Letter

Geneva Griswold

Dear WAAC Members,

Happy New Year! I extend my thanks to all of the 2021 WAAC annual meeting speakers, who gracefully engaged over 100 virtual attendees. The abstracts are in this issue and available at <https://www.waac-us.org/2021fallgathering> for your perusal.

Thank you to all Board members for their contributions and special thanks to Justin Johnson, WAAC's talented webmaster, for making the virtual meeting technically possible.

Preparations are underway for the 2022 WAAC annual meeting to be held (fingers crossed) in Seattle in early October. Stay tuned for more details.

Geneva

To relieve Geneva (who is doing two years of presidential duty) of the task of writing six letters, I asked Sophie Hunter, current Member-at-Large, to sub by answering some questions about her work at the wonderful new Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. (Editor.) (Can't wait to have a meeting here in LA so we can have a special WAAC tour.)

What is your favorite object?

This is an almost impossible question to answer, because there are so many categories of objects in the museum from makeup cases and costume illustrations to puppets and large painted backdrops, all from different periods of Hollywood history.

My favorite objects tend to fall into the category of film technology, though. I love the cameras, projectors, and lighting equipment! One of my absolute favorites is the Lumiere Cinématographe, invented by the Lumière brothers in France. It is one of the oldest, and arguably most important objects to filmmaking history in the collection, dating back to the 1890s.



Lumière Cinématographe.

Photo by Joshua White, JW Pictures/© Academy Museum Foundation

It was a camera, projector, and film printer all in one, and is beautifully crafted out of wood and brass. This device is how one of the very first commercial films was shown in a salon in Paris in 1895. Its advent allowed multiple viewers to watch a film simultaneously for the first time, eventually giving rise to the movie theater. Visitors to the museum can watch clips of the short silent films made with cameras like this one next to where the object is displayed. It's very cool.

What was the most difficult treatment?

I have to say, there were a lot of difficult treatments, in part due to the nature of the collection. Many of the objects were crafted with contemporary materials that were not necessarily made to last. For instance, Edward Scissorhands' "metal" scissors are actually cast polyethylene foam!

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