



President's Message

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN, AND AGAIN

In August of 1919, three months after the Treaty of Versailles ended World War I and the 19th Amendment was approved by Congress, giving American women the right to vote, Henry and Arabella Huntington drew up the trust document that would transform their private estate into an institution whose purpose would be the “advancement of learning, the arts and sciences, and to promote the public welfare.”

Eight brief pages of “general provisions” comprise the document that made possible the institution we know today. In some respects, it’s almost unfathomable that this astonishing trove of rare manuscripts and books, priceless works of art, and important botanical collections would establish a home on what was then a ranch on the outskirts of Los Angeles. But Henry Edwards Huntington was, indeed, prescient: he had an inkling about the significance of Los Angeles in the world. “The Huntington Library is not for a day only,” he said. “If we may envision the future, I believe the Pacific Coast will one day be the center of culture extending around the world. ...[T]he Henry E. Huntington Library will be found rightly placed, I think, to be most accessible to the world’s best scholarship.”

Indeed, the Huntingtons’ simple act of philanthropy would ensure their indelible place in history by giving Los Angeles one of the most remarkable cultural institutions in the world. One can’t help but wonder what the two would say were they to see the place today and discover the degree to which The Huntington has influenced the work of tens of thousands of scholars, engaged and educated generations of school children, and enthralled millions of visitors over the years.

We have just begun rolling out plans for The Huntington’s Centennial celebration, which runs from September 2019 to September 2020. We also have just unveiled the glorious new Centennial rose, ‘Huntington’s Hundredth’, aptly named and absolutely lovely thanks to Tom Carruth’s incredible handiwork at hybridizing. Tom, our rock star E.L. and Ruth B. Shannon Curator of the Rose Collection, has done it again! Look for the rose at our Jan. 10 plant sale.

While we will honor the past during this anniversary with tremendous appreciation and affection, I am particularly excited to see how the Centennial might spur new interpretations of the collections—by artists, writers, and scholars who will find new meaning in our historic holdings.

This moment presents us with a framework within which we think about the institution’s future, including the opportunity to explore The Huntington in the context of relevance, diversity, and accessibility. These collections are meant to be studied, interpreted, and reanimated, again and again.

This is certainly the point of our ongoing project, */five*, the third installment of which opens in the Chandler Wing of the Scott Galleries on Nov. 10. This year’s */five* collaboration is with the Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College and two artists commissioned by the curator there, Pilar Tompkins Rivas. The Los Angeles-based artists, Carolina Caycedo and Mario Ybarra Jr., have been immersed in our collections, creating new works based on their experiences over the past year. As both artists have found, often it’s the process of discovery—that element of surprise—that makes The Huntington such fertile ground for conjuring new work. Their exhibition, “Rituals of Labor and Engagement,” explores the complicated issues of labor and identity, and, more specifically, the people, mainly of color, who built Los Angeles and the American West. You can read more about the exhibition in the story on page 3.

I cannot believe my good fortune to have joined this amazing institution on the threshold of its Centennial and the start of its second century, with a future that grows more exciting with each day. With this last issue of the *Calendar* for 2018, let me take this opportunity to wish you happy holidays with hopes that we’ll see you here for other inviting programming we have in store. This is the season of giving, and it seems, the gifts of The Huntington appear at every turn. We look forward to sharing them with you.

Karen R. Lawrence, President