2019 SICC ē-miciminâyakik Gathering
Museums, Cultural Centres, Archives, Interpretive Centres & Libraries
Workshop 6
Nancy Odegaard

Title: Identifying Infestation in a Collection
Presenter: Nancy Odegaard

Biography: Dr. Nancy Odegaard is an objects conservator and Head of the Preservation Division at the Arizona State Museum of the University of Arizona. She is also a professor with the Department of Material Science & Engineering, the School of Anthropology, American Indian Studies and the Heritage Conservation Certificate Program in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture. She is also actively involved with the preservation program at the Mission San Xavier del Bac, built between 1783-1797 and located on the Tohono O'odham reservation near Tucson. Her work includes survey, examination, analysis, new treatment methodologies, and collaborations related to the field of conservation. She has led major conservation projects involving survey, tribal consultation, research, treatment, and storage upgrades for a wide range of collection types. She regularly works with Indigenous community partners across the United States on collection issues, including contaminated collections. Her books include: Old Poisons New Problems: Information and Resource Guide for Contaminated Cultural Materials in Museum Collections (AltaMira); A Guide to Handling Anthropological Museum Objects (WAAC); Curating Human Remains: A Guide for Museums and Academic Institution (AltaMira); and, Material Characterization Test for Objects of Art and Archaeology (Archetype).

Abstract: Pest infestations are a form of biodeterioration involving the combination of an organism (the pest), a food source (the museum object), and a suitable environment (a quiet, dark, comfortable place). The most common pests that occur with museum collections are people, fungi, bacterial, insects, and rodents. Pesticides have been primarily used to counter the adverse effects of insects. Signs of insect infestation include live insects, insect remains, frass or droppings, and holes or tunnels in materials. To make signs of infestation apparent, it is important to vacuum shelves, window sills, and baseboards regularly and inspect collection areas. Online references can help identify insects, clarify their nutritional preferences, and determine their reproductive life span. Infestations and suspected infestations need to be dealt with immediately.

Learning Objectives: Participants will:

- Learn about conditions for biodeterioration, common collection pests, and methods of treating an infestation.