

LABOR OF

Love



BY ELISE POIRIER '12



Top, Marie-Claire and her father, Carl, share insights about one of Rice's block prints that the Treseder family gifted to the University from their private collection. Above, Marie-Claire and her father prepare the art for exhibition with the help of professor and mentor Dan Kasser.

Marie-Claire Treseder's senior project curating an art exhibition of her great-grandfather's work culminated a five-year journey of discovery and provided a strong foundation for her future career.

"I've been thinking I chose Pacific, but really, Pacific chose me," says Marie-Claire Treseder '11, reflecting on the art exhibition that was her senior project. "And until this exhibition, I never thought of it that way."

Treseder curated the exhibition "Valley Impressions: Historic Block Prints and Watercolors by William S. Rice" in Pacific's Reynolds Gallery from March 1 to April 5, 2011. Rice was Treseder's great-grandfather. He moved to Stockton in 1900 to oversee the art programs in Stockton public schools. Fascinated by the local landscape, he began to create watercolors and block



California artist William S. Rice

prints that depict scenes from Stockton and the San Joaquin Valley. In 1910, Rice moved to the East Bay, where he taught art in Alameda and Oakland schools, and printmaking at the California College of Arts and Crafts. He lived in Oakland until his death in 1963.

The idea for the art show began when Treseder was still a junior in high school trying to decide where to go to college.

“I first looked at Pacific five years ago and met with Professor Dan Kasser,” says Treseder. “He carved out three hours to talk to me.” That meeting was a defining moment that set the course of Treseder’s college career.

As they talked about University of the Pacific and the art program and Treseder shared her goals, she also told Kasser about her great-grandfather, his art and his connection to Stockton. It was then that Kasser suggested the idea of a show featuring Rice’s work, which Treseder herself would curate.

“He became so animated about what Pacific means and what it’s about,” says Treseder. “Dan Kasser is the reason I came to Pacific. I made my decision because of that meeting with him. By the end of the three hours, we had planned my senior show.”

Throughout her career at Pacific, Treseder maintained close relationships with her professors. When it came to putting together an entire art show from start to finish, she continued to rely heavily on faculty members, including Professor Kasser, Professor Merrill Schleier, Assistant Professor Bett Schumacher, who was then director of the Reynolds Gallery, and others. They mentored her through the process of researching and obtaining the artwork, preparing it for display, and promoting the exhibition.

“When you think of putting up artwork on a wall, you think it’s going to be so simple, just grab a nail and a hammer,” she says. “But there’s so much going on behind the scenes that I am very lucky to have been so well mentored. My senior year has been a journey of details: dealing with insurance, coming up with gallery lists and picking the artwork. I put the artwork on the walls and created the brochure.”

She collaborated with her father, Carl, in arranging for the loan of works for the show. Many of the pieces in the exhibition belonged to other family members and one

to Treseder herself. She also obtained the loan of artwork from the Haggin Museum in Stockton and the Annex Galleries of Santa Rosa, California.

“I grew up around this artwork. A fourth of it is from my parents’ walls. But the mirroring between my great-grandfather’s life and mine didn’t sink home for me until I saw the artwork up on the wall. For example, there is a painting of the levee,” she says, referring to the levee along the Calaveras River, which winds through the University campus. “This is where I spent the last four years.”

The exhibition was made possible by a \$3,000 grant from the Pacific Fund. A large part of the grant went to matting and framing the artwork for display. Treseder says the learning experience went far beyond just curating the exhibit.

“Being able to plan an event is an integral skill,” she says. “Working in media and being able to do strategic writing, getting practice in public relations, and getting opportunities to work with people hands-on is so important.”

“We were very proud of Marie for having a very broad liberal arts education,” says Robin Treseder, Marie-Clare’s mother. “It’s a foundation for professional growth. She’s

developed skills and interests that she can parlay into a career. We’re glad that Pacific has faculty that understand the value of what they teach.”

The culminating experience was even more fulfilling as Marie-Clare stood with her father at the show’s opening reception to introduce the “Valley Impressions” exhibition to members of the Pacific and Stockton communities.

“It’s been a personal journey,” Treseder reflects. “It’s like there’s a big long mirror in front of my face, looking back on my past. The project has been five years in the making, but it’s been a labor of love.”

Epilogue: Since graduation, Treseder has already put her skills to use. She is curating an exhibit for the Appel Gallery in Sacramento that opens in March. This time, she’s excited to be highlighting two of her previous mentors. The show will exhibit photography by Professor Dan Kasser and feature a gallery talk by Dr. Bett Schumacher.

Elise Poirier '12 is a founder of Pacific's English club, The Society of English Cohorts. She is double majoring in English and French and is studying abroad in France in spring 2012.

