

Bringing history to *life*



Doctoral student Melanie Pavich-Lindsay and collaborating artists capture St. Simons Island plantation's history – for better and worse

It has been said that it is impossible to understand race relations in contemporary America without a profound understanding of its institution of slavery," says young history scholar Melanie Pavich-Lindsay.

"History is often thought to be dry and factual; art to be elusive and subjective. By combining historical information and personal recollection with imaginative imagery, we attempt to affect in visitors a new level of understanding and identification with past human experience."

The combination to which she refers is a 2,000-square-foot multimedia installation, using historical artifacts and contemporary art to explore the 19th century slave community at Retreat Plantation on St. Simons Island, Georgia.

"Retreat: Palimpsest of a Georgia Sea Island Plantation," resulted from a collaboration between Pavich-Lindsay, a UGA doctoral candidate in social foundations of education, and Atlanta artist Lisa Tuttle that began in 1997.

The installation is a visual and textual journey through the land that became known as Retreat Plantation. It is a multi-layered story of the people who lived on this piece of coastal land including indigenous peoples, European colonists, enslaved Africans, plantation owners, freedmen and women, golfers and vacationers.

"The concept of a 'palimpsest,' a parchment or manuscript written upon two or three times with the earlier writing having been wholly or partially erased to make room for the next, is central to this work," said Pavich-Lindsay.

Historic artifacts accompanied by text, letters and documents tell the story. Maps are provided in each section, including a rendering of the plantation, its buildings and gardens.

In the post-Civil War section, a newspaper article and photograph of Neptune Small (he took the last name "Small" after emancipation) are displayed. Small relates the story of his young master's death at the Battle of Fredericksburg. He tells of going onto the battlefield to look for Henry Lord Page King, only to find him face down, his face shot away, recognizable only by the feel of his hair.

Pavich-Lindsay's 10-year research for a master's thesis in history has also resulted in a new book titled, "Anna: The Letters of Anna Matilda Page King of St. Simons Island, Georgia, 1817-1859," being published this fall by The University of Georgia Press.

One excerpt from King's letters describes the beating death of a young boy in nearby Brunswick. Another describes the wedding of Neptune to Ila, who had to return to her own plantation the morning after her wedding.

In addition, she, Tuttle and artist Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier produced an artists' book based on the installation titled "Look Back," published by Nexus Press. A summer-long exhibit at the Atlanta Contemporary Art center and the artists' book were supported by a \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Nita Paris, a recent doctoral graduate in educational psychology, received the 2002 Distinguished Dissertation Award of the Year from the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE).

Paris, now an assistant professor of educational psychology and graduate program coordinator in secondary and middle grades education at Kennesaw State University in Marietta, received her PhD in applied cognition and development.

Julio Rojas, a doctoral candidate in counseling and psychology, was one of two UGA students named 2002 K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders by the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE).

Rojas was chosen for the honor because of his service to academic counseling, civic responsibility and participation in the Preparing Future Faculty (PPF) program.

He has also served as an academic counselor at UGA's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and provided substance and mental health counseling to residents of an Athens-area homeless shelter and has volunteered to help Hispanic clients gain access to psychological services.

Drew Frank received UGA's prestigious and highly competitive Presidential Graduate Fellows award. A program designed to recruit exceptionally qualified students to UGA, the awards include an annual stipend of \$20,000 plus tuition for three to five years. Only 12 such awards are made each year.

The 26-year-old Sandy Springs middle school teacher will begin pursuit of a master's and doctorate in educational psychology and curriculum this fall. Frank received a BS in middle grades education from Kennesaw State University. While finishing his degree, Frank worked with enrichment students at Davis Academy, a middle school in Atlanta, and served as co-coach for the state's representatives in national MATHCOUNTS competition in May 2001.

He is the fourth COE recipient of the award since its inception three years ago. Other Presidential Graduate Fellows in the College include Amy Hackenberg in mathematics education, Julie Sanchez and Anna Kroncke, both in educational psychology.