Phantoms of the Clark Expedition

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An installation by Mark Dion

May 9–August 3, 2012

The Explorers Club
New York

This exhibition is organized by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. This exhibition and its interpretation are supported by the Fernleigh Foundation and by David Rodgers.

Mark Dion's *Phantoms of the Clark Expedition*

LISA G. CORRIN

It is no coincidence that Mark Dion's *Phantoms of the Clark Expedition* is installed within the building that today houses The Explorers Club. The stately townhouse, which began its life as the home of the extraordinary art collector Stephen Clark (1882–1960) also serves as the New York office of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, founded by Stephen's brother and located in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Invited by the Institute to create a site-specific installation, Dion has responded to the building as a repository for multiple and overlapping stories with unexpected connections. Dion's installation reveals how the life of Sterling Clark (1877–1956), the mission of the Club, and the closing years of the Age of Exploration are inextricably and poetically entwined.

Heirs to the vast Singer sewing machine fortune, Stephen and Sterling Clark shared a passion for art that placed them each among the greatest art collectors and philanthropists of their time. Stephen is best known for his gifts of art to Yale University, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Sterling and his wife founded the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in the Berkshires. Although disagreements over the disposition of the family trust would eventually create an intraversable chasm between the brothers, the two were close as younger men. In 1911, when Stephen set out to build his townhouse

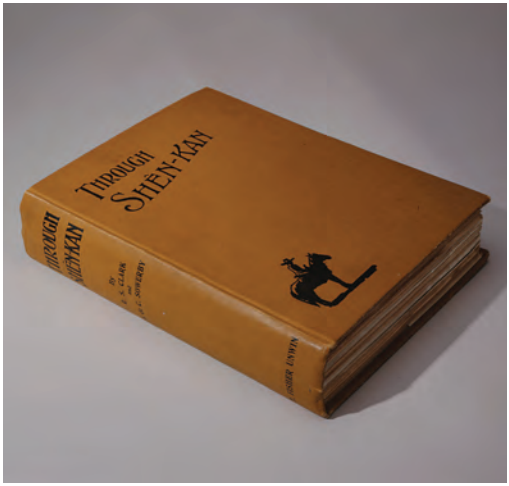
The Trophy Room at The Explorers Club, 2012

on East 70th Street, Sterling helped to form his brother's aesthetic vision, introducing him to art and antique dealers in Europe who would, in turn, assist him in acquiring some of the home's remarkable decorative elements, such as its leaded stained glass and carved stone mantels.

When Stephen Clark lived here, it was his extraordinary art collection—not the trophies of bygone expeditions—that was displayed in the many paneled rooms. Where a painting depicting a famous polar rescue hangs above the fireplace in the Explorers Club library today, Stephen had displayed Georges Seurat's masterpiece *Circus Sideshow.* The fifth-floor trophy room, with its stuffed animal heads and marvels of nature, was once a gallery featuring paintings by Cézanne, Renoir, and Van Gogh, including the Dutch artist's iconic *Night Café*.

Like Stephen, Sterling Clark remains best known for his art collection. Less well known is his support of, and participation in, a major scientific expedition in northern China during the first decade of the twentieth century. Departing from the city of Taiyuan in Shanxi province, Clark's team of thirty-six men traversed "Shên-kan" (the provinces of Shaanxi and Gansu), reaching as far westward as Lanzhou before returning to Taiyuan. In all, the team covered nearly 2000 miles (3200 km), primarily on horse and mule, collecting zoological and botanical

Stephen Clark's gallery of modern art, c. 1960



Clockwise from top left: *Through Shên-kan: The Account of the Clark Expedition in North China, 1908–9;* magpies and other bird specimens collected on the Clark expedition, now in the collection of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution; Hazrat Ali (plate 1 from *Through Shên-kan*); surveying equipment and other instruments from the Clark expedition

specimens, recording meteorological data, and mapping the terrain in what was then a largely uncharted region of the vast country. A complete documentation of their journey, *Through Shên-kan: The Account of the Clark Expedition in North China, 1908–9,* was published in 1912. Testament to their discoveries can be found today in the collections of both the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History and the British Museum, where one can find examples of birds, small mammals, and insects prepared on site and shipped back to the U.S. and Britain for study.

It is difficult today to imagine the commitment required to undertake an expedition in such a desolate place and at a time of political unrest. Clark had recruited an impressive team of professionals to serve in various capacities—the Punjabi surveyor Hazrat Ali, who spoke seven languages and had fifteen years experience in surveying work with the army in India; the naturalist Arthur de Carle Sowerby, who had been born to missionary parents in Shanxi province and was at the beginning of a distinguished career focused in China; the doctor and meteorologist Captain H.E.M. Douglas of the Royal Army Medical Corps; and others—but the sheer logistical challenges were staggering. It took forty-four mules, five donkeys, and eight ponies to carry the hundreds of pounds of equipment required to support their daily life—pith helmets, rope, hooks, coffee grinders, tents, camp stools, knives, guns, ammunition, food, and water—as well as the exquisitely crafted precision instruments required for their scientific work, including watches, weights, scales, and measuring devices. What was the allure of such a trip for a gentleman who, with such vast resources, had no reason to be inconvenienced by such an environment, let alone be put in harm's way? How was Clark's identity as a scientific adventurer forged?

Sterling Clark's interest in science may well have taken root as a very young man. His grandfather, Edward Clark, donated considerable resources to Williams College in support of education in the natural sciences, including a facility to house its collection of geological specimens. In 1899, Sterling Clark graduated from Yale's Sheffield Scientific School with a degree in civil engineering. Another, perhaps more significant consideration is the cultural expectations that formed the model of masculinity in Clark's day. On April 10, 1899, days prior to Clark's graduation, Theodore Roosevelt gave a speech at Chicago's Hamilton Club that was to become one of his most influential. Calling for the nation's men to live a "strenuous life," Roosevelt challenged "every self-respecting American" to demand, "from himself and from his sons," what "shall be demanded of the American nation as a whole":

In speaking to you, men of the greatest city of the West, men of the State which gave to the country Lincoln and Grant, men who preëminently and distinctly embody all that is most American in the American character, I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.

Roosevelt's rhetoric championed action over idleness, and the importance of "some kind of non-remunerative work in science, letters, in art, in exploration, in historical research." Clearly, he was speaking to those most able to devote abundant free time and resources to such noble labors—men like Sterling Clark.

Upon his graduation from Yale, Clark secured a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and was deployed to the Philippines then, in 1901, to China as part of the multinational force sent to suppress the Boxer Rebellion. Like many men of his generation, Clark internalized Roosevelt's exhortation that the nation's future was dependent upon the actions of manly men willing to test their mettle against the unknown, whether it be nature, the frontier or non-white culture (or all three, as was the case in the Shên-kan expedition). Roosevelt himself was photographed in the various guises of such an ideal man: as trailblazer and Rough Rider, as statesman and philanthropist, as naturalist and conservationist, as explorer and great civilizer. He also published many books documenting his exploits, including his near-fatal expedition up the treacherous River of Doubt, a tributary of the Amazon. Similarly, the Shên-kan expedition would be a way for Sterling Clark to prove his mettle as a man, to demonstrate his commitment to Roosevelt's "strenuous life" and to attain "the splendid ultimate triumph."

Top: Sterling Clark, c. 1900

Bottom: Theodore Roosevelt, 1898

Questioning whether the "ultimate triumph" of exploration was really "splendid" has been a leitmotif in the work of Mark Dion. In numerous installations he has reflected on the lives and endeavors of men whose expeditions and collecting missions became the foundations of natural history, including the naturalist William Bartram (1739–1823); the Scottish-born "Father of American ornithology" Alexander Wilson (1766–1813); the zoologist Baron Georges Cuvier (1769–1832); and the naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), a contemporary of Charles Darwin. For some projects Dion "shadows" historic expeditions by personally retracing the footsteps of famed explorers in places as far-flung as the Amazon Basin and the southern coast of the United States. This provides a unique opportunity for the artist to experience the landscapes and conditions they encountered, as well as to consider critically the contradictory impulses and complicated agendas behind exploration. On the one hand, their work was driven by a desire to logically systematize and analyze the world. On the other, their work involved perpetrating violence against the very organisms they had come to study. Ambition could coexist as a strong motivating force alongside a genuine desire to add to the body of knowledge in their fields.

Dion's interventions in the history of exploration also weigh the cost of the ambitious feats of the naturalist—the investment of human and financial resources, time, and the potential loss of one's moral compass in the interest of learning—against what is accomplished. What is lost and what is gained in the search for knowledge? What happens when childlike curiosity becomes raw ambition? What does a study of expeditions tell us about how we regard individuals and communities that are unlike us? How do we retain our sense of wonder when we have charted the last frontier? Is there a last frontier? What does it mean to be an explorer today? How might an expedition in search of scientific fact—even a failed expedition—become an opportunity for self-knowledge?

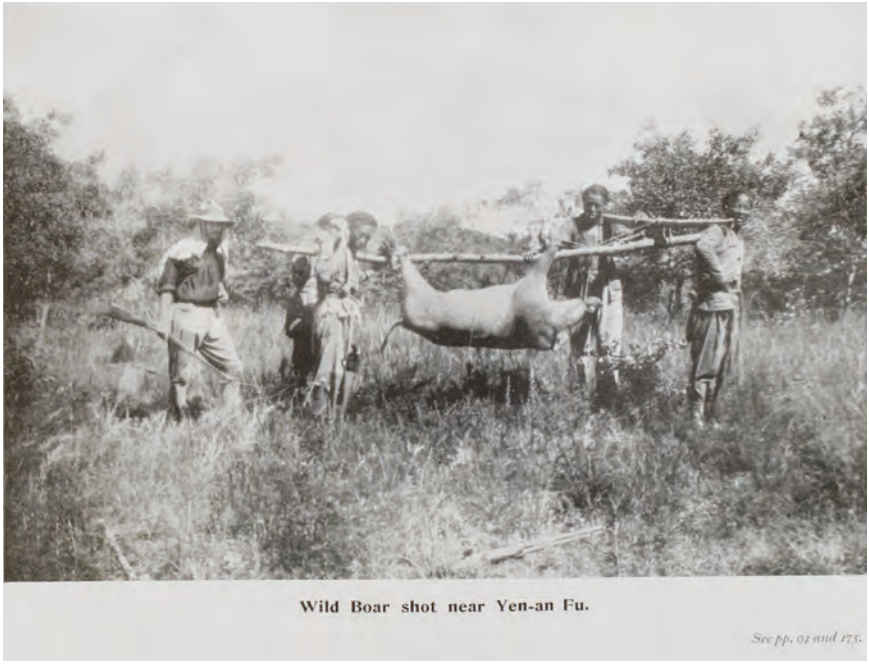
These questions take on extra *gravitas* within the context of the Explorers Club. Conceived in 1904, when Teddy Roosevelt was in the White House, gentlemen-adventurers much like Sterling Clark penned this charter to describe the Club's mission:

> *To further general exploration, to spread knowledge thereof . . . to encourage explorers in their work, and especially to bring them into personal contact and unite them in the bonds of good fellowship.*

Thus, expeditions were organized as much for "good fellowship"—creating a network of male bonds—as they were for furthering the pursuit of knowledge.

Like-minded men came together to work toward a common goal, to urge each other forward as they confronted risk to life and limb, and to serve as witnesses that these unimaginable feats were truly accomplished. On the River of Doubt, Roosevelt had his son, Kermit, and the noted Brazilian explorer Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon. Clark had Sowerby. But the Shên-kan expedition was not by any means the Amazon, and, neither was it, metaphorically speaking, Clark's river of self-doubt. While Roosevelt's journey was a crucible from which he never fully recovered, little remains to tell us what impact the Shên-kan expedition had on Sterling Clark in the long term. We know he never organized another scientific expedition and that after leaving China, he settled in Paris, where he began another chapter in his life.

When Dion set out to create an installation reflecting on the Shên-kan expedition, he asked "Who was Sterling Clark?" and considered the connection between young Clark, the explorer, and the later Clark, the art collector. The artist studied the modest remaining cache of material culture connected to Clark's China expedition: photographs of the expedition, Clark's journal, the measuring instruments used to gather data, and detailed information about the specimens Clark and Sowerby collected.



Hunting party with wild boar (plate 47 from *Through Shên-kan*)

It was the photographs, a number of which are reproduced in *Through Shên-kan,* that were to provide Dion with the richest source of inspiration. Many of the images partake of a repertoire common for documenting expeditions: campsites, members of the expedition with hunting trophies, the expedition caravan moving through rugged landscapes, indigenous populations in local dress, cultural sites, and particularly noteworthy moments in the journey, for example, an arduous river crossing. Using his signature red and blue pencils, Dion reinterpreted these images in a series of drawings that would become the basis of his installation. In the form of a drawing, an image of a campfire or a pile of provisions or a pig on a spit becomes even more generic. However, these images are accompanied by others—the gun left behind by Hazrat Ali on the day he was murdered—depicting objects that are crucial to the story of this specific expedition but which are not to be found among the remaining artifacts. Dion then translated these, yet again, into dozens of white papier-mâché "cartoons," the word he has used to describe the sculptures comprising the installation. His choice of this humble material is rich with association: papier-mâché was used by scientists and early museum exhibition-makers to create models for their discoveries as well as for the first dioramas found in natural history displays. Where no material culture exists from the Clark expedition, Dion has, like many diorama-makers, made models of the types of objects that Clark would have had on hand, based on knowledge of what was typical for expeditions of the time.

Dion's models, however, are far from facsimiles. Set against the dense displays of the Club's hunting trophies, Dion's stark white sculptures are clearly something different. The long table in the center of the room is especially

Above: Mark Dion's preliminary drawings for *Phantoms of the Clark Expedition*

striking. While we can make out the sources of their forms, the objects have become ciphers, colorless "phantoms" of the originals. Like the ubiquitous stuffed heads of antelopes and bison on display, they are stand-ins for the many expeditions—renowned and forgotten. There is something haunting, melancholy, and mournful about Dion's surrogates, intended, in his words, to evoke "the sun-bleached bones of these expeditions past."

This artistic intention is present in Dion's appropriation of the image chosen by Clark for the cover of *Through Shên-kan,* that of a lone explorer on horseback, as the "logo" for his fictional white-on-white expedition flag. Coincidentally, Dion's conspicuously over-sized flag calls to mind the billowing larger-than-life rhetoric of Frans Blom, Danish explorer and archaeologist, quoted in the Explorers Club brochure:

> *When the wind stirs, the Flag moves, seems about to speak, to tell of adventure, of brave men who have died, of wanderers whose bones litter the unknown lands they fought.*

The artist provides other "clues" to his alternative historic narrative in the form of unexpected, strange shifts in scale. These sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic shifts are Dion's way of inverting reality, challenging assumptions, and provoking questioning. Set among the sometimes fearsome-looking trophies we see a squirrel, based on a specimen collected on Clark's expedition. Yet, it is like no squirrel we have ever seen. Are we to believe in its accuracy? Can a moth really be that large, or is its size a poetic emanation of the naturalist's fluttering imagination? What compels a naturalist to turn on the creatures that have inspired his wonder and scholarly inquiry, only to drain their lives and render them inert objects pinned to a wall? How does such uncontrollable desire transform them from living beings into aesthetic objects for personal delectation? Within the context of this unique room at the Club, Dion's delicate gesture of hanging his moth alongside the many stuffed heads invites us to consider the obsessive compulsion behind collecting specimen trophies.

Above: *Equipment—Clark Expedition,* 2012, by Mark Dion

As we explore the Club's nooks and crannies, we take with us these questions and find odd disconnects between the objects we discover and their new context. A stuffed polar bear is wondrous to behold, but is its menacing pose more tragic than threatening? Expedition flags hang in their frames, but without the mountain peaks to give them meaning, they become, like Dion's monochrome flag, flat planes of color, closer to the minimal objects one might find in a Chelsea gallery than symbols of extraordinary human feats. A navigational instrument is prized for its craftsmanship once an expedition is complete. Material culture collected and presented without context becomes merely stuff: the stuff of dreams, the stuff of human desire. Today, the specimens and data amassed by Clark in China are hidden in storage awaiting animation by the museum that can reanimate the very sense of wonder in us that inspired Clark to collect them. A visit to Williamstown this summer provides just such an opportunity when these objects go on view in a special exhibition at the Clark. But how did Clark the explorer become Clark the founder of a renowned art museum?

Dion has concluded that, while clearly earnest about the scientific agenda of the China expedition, perhaps Clark most aspired to be the quintessential ideal man of his class for his time. After proving his mettle during the expedition, he went on to pursue horse breeding, build a library, and acquire great works of art—all typical activities for a man of his position and resources. We will never truly know how the Shên-kan expedition affected Sterling Clark or whether he privately contemplated the paradoxes of his project or his identity. However, the leap from collecting zoological specimens and meteorological data to acquiring Old Master and Impressionist pictures may not be as great as it might seem. While the Shên-kan expedition is particularly notable for its time in its purely scientific focus, and that no cultural artifacts or "treasures" were sought or removed from China, the pursuit of rare aesthetic treasures would become Clark's next frontier when he settled in Paris in 1910. What Clark the scientific explorer has in common with Clark the art connoisseur is that collecting lies at the center of both identities.

Above: *Revolver of Hazrat Ali—Clark Expedition,* 2012, by Mark Dion

The Clark Expedition of 1908–9

THOMAS J. LOUGHMAN

In 1908 and 1909, Robert Sterling Clark (1877–1956)—engineer, former United States Army lieutenant, and an heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune—led a major expedition of scientific exploration through China's northern provinces of Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Gansu. For sixteen months, Clark and his team of five specialists and thirty laborers traversed wilderness and followed ancient cart paths as they collected zoological specimens; took more than one hundred photographs of the people, places, and fauna; observed and recorded meteorological events and geological features; and compiled the data necessary to prepare the first detailed survey of the terrain. The original plan was for the expedition to travel along the edges of a geological formation known as the loess plateau and the Yellow River, skirt the Tibetan plateau, and return to the coast via the Yangtze River.

In the spring of 1908, Clark assembled his staff and crew: the young naturalist Arthur de Carle Sowerby; Captain Henry Edward Manning Douglas of the Royal Army Medical Corps; Nathaniel Cobb, a young artist from Vermont then living in Paris; former British military man G. A. Grant as principal translator and general manager; and Hazrat Ali, a surveyor engaged by Clark from the Royal Survey of India. He provisioned them with state-of-the-art scientific instruments and defined the expedition's aims and tactics. The team mustered near the city of Taiyuan and established their survey's baseline over the summer. In September

Members of the Clark expedition in Yulin, Shaanxi Province, December 1908 (*left to right:* Arthur de Carle Sowerby, Robert Sterling Clark, Nathaniel Haviland Cobb, George A. Grant, Captain H.E.M Douglas)

they began their travels west to Yulin, a city on the edge of the Ordos Desert and the Yellow River, crossing a mountain range and beginning their specimen collecting during the overland trek. From this frontier city within view of the Great Wall, they followed the river south to Yan'an, where they established their winter camp.

Short of funds, Clark continued south to Xi'an with Sowerby and sent the survey team west to Lanzhou. During this hiatus from the main team, Sowerby continued collecting while Clark journey on to Shanghai, where he secured additional provisions and equipment and shipped a preliminary group of mammal and bird specimens to the Smithsonian Institution. In the late spring, Sowerby and Clark rejoined the expedition as it made its way into Gansu and the headwaters of the Yellow River near Lanzhou.

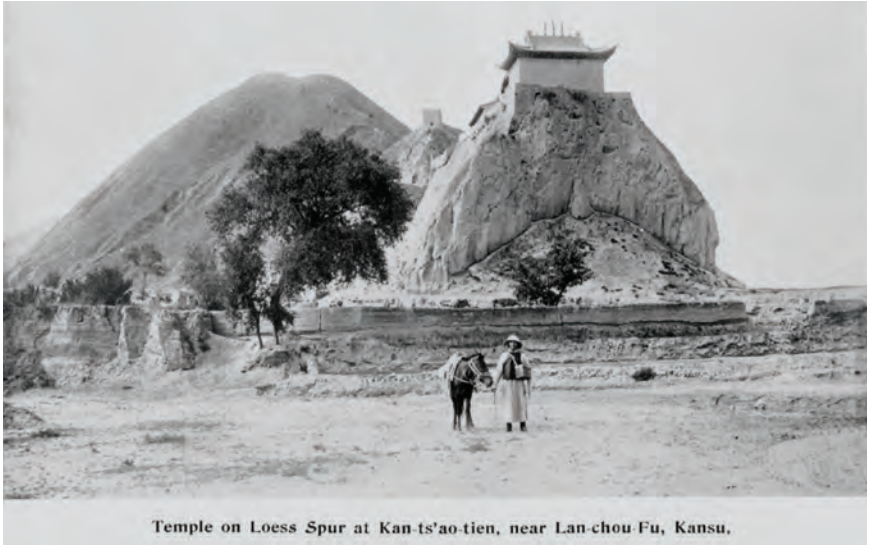
In June 1909, as the team began turning south from Lanzhou along the Tibetan plateau, surveyor Hazrat Ali was attacked and reportedly killed by villagers. The expedition team formed a search party that clashed with a group of locals in a fatal gunfight. Officials representing the Chinese, British, and American governments ordered the expedition recalled. By the autumn, the scientific work was completed and the team disbanded shortly after a board of inquiry was impaneled to investigate the murder. In the end, more than three hundred animal specimens were collected and sent to Washington (among them, seven new species were identified), while others, including insects and invertebrates, were sent to the British Museum. Within three years, the travelogue and findings of the expedition were published—along with a large-scale map—as *Through Shên-kan: The Account of the Clark Expedition in North China, 1908–9* (London and Leipzig: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912).

The centennial of this expedition and the publication of *Through Shên-kan* have been commemorated in myriad ways by people from Britain, China, and the

Above: Map of North China, 1912, from *Through Shên-kan*

United States. In 2008, the Clark presented three communities along the expedition route—Lanzhou, Xi'an, and Taiyuan—with copies of the book and installed special exhibitions of modern prints of the expedition's photo record. That same year, student members of the Oxford University Exploration Club retraced the expedition route, keeping a blog of their experiences along the way. In the years following, members of the Great Wall Society, particularly photographer Li Ju, rephotographed many of the sites and monuments encountered by the Clark expedition, eventually presenting this work alongside the historic photographs in Beijing, Shanghai, Yinchuan, and Wuhan. Historian Shi Hongshuai at Shaanxi Normal University in Xi'an prepared and published a critical translation of *Through Shên-kan,* while filmmaker Steven Shen produced a four-part series and a forty-minute documentary for Chinese Central Television about the expedition and its modern rediscovery.

As a capstone to these centenary celebrations and investigations, the Clark has prepared a series of exhibitions for 2012, including the present installation of Mark Dion's work at The Explorers Club. During the summer months in Williamstown, the Clark will present three interrelated exhibitions: *Unearthed: Recent Archaeological Discoveries from Northern China,* featuring remarkable tomb finds from Shanxi and Gansu, the regions traversed by the Clark expedition; *Through Shên-kan: Sterling Clark in China,* which uncovers the history and legacy of its founder's experience in China; and a presentation of the photographic work of Li Ju. Together these exhibitions will reexamine this dynamic story from its genesis through to its continuing meaning and influence today.



Temple near Lanzhou (plate 32 from *Through Shên-kan*)

Opposite: Mark Dion at The Explorers Club, 2012

Artist's Statement

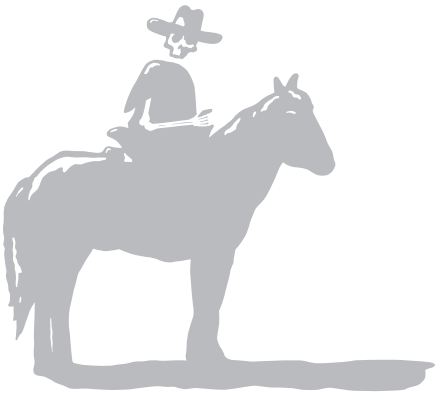
MARK DION

The Clark expedition through northern China in 1908–9 was a rigorously scientific exploration, collecting data in the disciplines of geology, meteorology, astronomy, cartography, botany, and zoology. The seriousness and significance of the expedition is particularly surprising when one considers that its organizer and leader, Sterling Clark, is today largely remembered as a collector and patron of fine art. The Clark expedition was in no way an exercise in the looting of Chinese cultural treasures; indeed, it stands in marked contrast to other expeditions of this period largely because of the cogency of its scientific makeup.

In the researching of the expedition history, what seems striking is the scarcity of the material culture of the expedition itself. This was a massive undertaking, involving dozens of pack animals, a large exploratory team, and a support staff of thirty persons. Such an expeditionary force required vast amounts of provisions and equipment, yet with the exception of a few precision instruments and significant biological and geological specimen collections, little material remains of such an ambitious endeavor. The Clark expedition is well represented textually in *Through Shên-kan,* the book that documents the journey and the data of various kinds produced. It includes a wealth of images, which have also been lost in their original glass negative form.

Phantoms of the Clark Expedition, a project at The Explorers Club in New York, highlights not only what Clark and his team took from China but also what they brought to the site of inquiry. Thus, the equipment and provisions to undertake such a complex tour are given a new importance that emphasizes the labor of the journey rather than the particular scientific results. In this way, the Clark team itself becomes the locus of an ethnographic investigation, an attempt to understand the cultural underpinnings of a distinct social group, based on their physical belongings. Needless to say, these materials gathered and interrogated are not exclusive to this particular expedition but rather are those shared by explorers globally. Certain objects, doubtlessly essential to exploration, are carefully reproduced as papier-mâché surrogates or specters of themselves. Some of these are arranged into tableaux of the expedition archetypes, such as the campfire, provision store, or the specimen. Others are arranged more indexically, a taxonomic grouping based on utility, for example. Objects in the exhibition oscillate between the general conditions and needs of all explorers and the particular goals, results, and follies of the Clark expedition itself.

Any consideration of an historical expedition strives to understand the difference between pernicious colonial expansion and scientific inquiry. In most cases, including the Clark expedition, the distinction between the two is too fine and too utterly entangled to discern. The specter of imperial exploration haunts both this exhibition and the halls of The Explorers Club as well. Should the term *exploration* ever hope to retain its productive and progressive potential, these ghosts of domination must first be acknowledged and, ultimately, exorcised.



Checklist of Works

All works by Mark Dion are papier-mâché unless otherwise noted. Dimensions are given as height, width, and depth. For irregularly shaped objects, the dimension is given at its greatest point.

Equipment—Clark Expedition
2012
Dimensions variable

Provisions & Equipment—Clark Expedition
2012
Dimensions variable

Campfire—Clark Expedition
2012
56 x 64 x 40 inches

Titan Moth—Clark Expedition
2012
14 x 14 x 1 inches

Revolver of Hazrat Ali—Clark Expedition
2012
10 x 6 x 2 inches

Wild Boar Shot near Yen-an Fu—Clark Expedition
2012
31 x 71 x 20 inches

David's Squirrel—Clark Expedition
2012
Synthetic plush material
24 x 36 x 96 inches

Shên-kan Expedition Flag—Clark Expedition
2012
Felt and grommets
36 x 48 inches

Elie Nadelman
American, 1882–1946
Portrait of Robert Sterling Clark
1933
Marble
16 x 10 x 8 1/2 inches
Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute
1955.1011

The Explorers Club—A Brief History

LORIE KARNATH AND DORTHEA SARTAIN

In May 1904, a group of fifty men active in exploration met at the request of author and explorer Henry Collins Walsh to form an organization to unite explorers in the bonds of good fellowship and to promote the work of exploration by every means in its power. At this meeting, The Explorers Club was organized. Then, as now, the membership was diverse, consisting not only of scientists from a wide variety of disciplines, but engineers and technicians; correspondents and broadcasters; filmmakers, writers, and artists; diplomats, soldiers, and others who have contributed to the quest for scientific knowledge through their work in the field.

In the early years, the Club had little more than an office space for its headquarters, leasing other rooms as needed for lectures and events. But in March 1912, the rapidly growing organization moved into an empty loft at 345 Amsterdam Avenue and, for the first time, had a home of its own in which to socialize and in which to gather its books, documents, trophies, and artifacts. Over the years, the Club moved several more times, but the Clubhouse has always served as a meeting point for explorers and scientists worldwide, a place to share past adventures or plot future expeditions. In 1921, from its home at a brownstone on West 76th Street, the Club launched *The Explorers Journal,* a quarterly publication of stunning articles and photographs that continues to this day. In 1928, the Club erected an eight-story building at 544 Cathedral Parkway, since lost, though one can still look up at the façade and see allegorical portraits representing the continents. And at 10 West 72nd Street, across the street from the famed Dakota apartment building, ethnologist Thor Heyerdahl planned his expedition on the raft *Kon-Tiki,* a 4,300-mile voyage across the south Pacific that has inspired countless others to rise to the challenge of exploring the natural world.

In 1965 the Club finally ceased its wandering and purchased this magnificent townhouse at 46 East 70th Street, originally built in 1911 to house the family of Stephen Clark, an arts patron and heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune. This has proven to be a most fortunate destination. Where Clark's remarkable collection of paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts was once displayed, one

now sees the treasures of the elite of exploration. Artifacts such as the bell used by Admiral Richard Byrd for one of his Antarctic expeditions, the sledge used by Admiral Robert Peary to reach the North Pole, and the globe used by Thor Heyerdahl—not to mention the assortment of tusks, shields, and other trophies collected on some of the Club's earliest expeditions—now grace the rooms of this distinguished building.

A number of paintings, drawings, and sculptures also adorn the premises. Most of what we know from early expeditions comes from the accounts of writers and the renderings of visual artists. The artist provides a unique perspective, whether through personal experience and interaction or through creativity inspired by the achievements of explorers. It is this personalized and unique perspective that we are seeking to revive and sustain through this exhibition and other Club programs that feature the art inspired by expeditions.

Opposite: The Explorers Club logo

Above: Thor Heyerdahl and crew onboard *Kon-Tiki,* 1947

Left: Lewis Cotlow, R. C. Currie, and Ningju with Explorers Club flag on Ellesmere Island, 1963

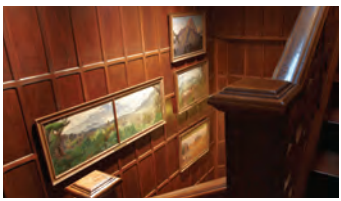
The Explorers Club—A Walking Tour

DORTHEA SARTAIN

As you exit the exhibition, you are invited to look more closely at some of the many expedition artifacts, photographs, and other items that are displayed throughout the building.

The Explorers Club Corner of Honor
SIXTH FLOOR LANDING
Many of the world's greatest explorers can be found among the presidents, medalists, and honorary members pictured here: Peary and Amundsen, the first to reach the North and South Poles; Hillary, Norgay, Piccard, and Walsh, the first to reach the Earth's highest and lowest points; and Armstrong, Aldrin, and Collins, the first reach the surface of the moon.

***Portrait of Carl Akeley,* by J. W. de Rehling Quistgaard**
FOURTH FLOOR LANDING
Known as the father of modern taxidermy, Akeley created innovative methods for mounting animal specimens in dioramas, emphasizing lifelike poses in natural settings, and revolutionized the way that millions came to know and understand the natural world.



***Plein-Air Studies,* by William R. Leigh**
SECOND AND THIRD FLOOR STAIRWELLS
The seventy landscape studies done by Leigh in Africa—working with a rifleman at his back to ward off prowling leopards—were key components in making Carl Akeley's dream of an African Hall at the American Museum of Natural History a reality. Ten are featured here.

Polar Bear
SECOND FLOOR LANDING
One of the Club's most notable features, this polar bear has been guarding the upper reaches of the Club's headquarters since the early 1970s.

***The Rescue of Greely,* by Albert Operti**
SECOND FLOOR, LIBRARY
In 1881, the U.S. government sent twenty-five men into the Arctic to gather scientific data and specimens as part of the first International Polar Year. Only the expedition's leader, Adophus Greely, and six others survived.

***Plundering Polar Bears,* by J. Herbert**
SECOND FLOOR, LIBRARY
One of the greatest enemies of the polar explorer was the "tiger of the ice," or polar bear: "The final cache which I relied so much upon," said Elisha Kent Kane in 1856, "was entirely destroyed. . . . Not a morsel of pemmican remained, except in the iron cases."

***Bust of a Masai Warrior,* by Sally Clark**
SECOND FLOOR, ENTRANCE TO CLARK ROOM
Sally Clark spent decades in Africa while her husband, James, sculpted for Carl Akeley. Later in life, she stepped out of his shadow, becoming a magnificent sculptor in her own right.

Renaissance-Style Italian Mantelpiece
SECOND FLOOR, CLARK ROOM
What is the relationship between man and beast? This hunt scene immortalizes one version of the ever-evolving answer.

Explorers Club Flags
SECOND FLOOR, CLARK ROOM
Since 1918, the Club's flag has traveled from the Earth's highest peaks to the depths of its oceans, through its jungles and deserts, and into outer space. One of those displayed here went to the Gobi Desert with Roy Chapman Andrews, model for Indiana Jones; another crossed the Pacific with Thor Heyerdahl on the *Kon-Tiki;* a third traveled onboard *Apollo 13,* never to be unpacked.

Peary North Pole Sledge
SECOND FLOOR, CLARK ROOM
What began as a large party of men, equipment and supplies steadily dwindled, until at the end only six men and five sledges were left to cover the last 133 miles to the Pole. An Inuit design modified by Peary to carry heavier loads, this oak sled is lashed together with rawhide for flexibility, and has iron-shod runners.

***Portrait Bust of Lowell Thomas,* by Philip Kraczykowski**
FIRST FLOOR LANDING
The author and broadcaster Lowell Thomas was always on the move, whether traveling with T. E Lawrence in Arabia or trekking in Tibet. An Explorers Club member for over fifty years, his service to the Club and the cause of exploration was legendary.

Wright Brothers Mantel Clock
FIRST FLOOR, REAR LOBBY
Man's dream of conquering the heavens truly began to take shape with the invention of the airplane and successful, powered flight. Less than a century after the Wright Brothers' triumph, humans would be flying to outer space, spending days, weeks, and even months living in low-Earth orbit before their return.

***Wooly Rhinoceros with Saiga Antelope and Mammoth,* by Charles R. Knight**
FIRST FLOOR, MEMBERS LOUNGE
Legally blind and painting only inches from the canvas, Knight defined the image of dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures for early twentieth-century viewers, influencing such films as *King Kong* and *The Lost World.*

The Explorers Club Logo
FIRST FLOOR, LOBBY
Originally commissioned as the Club's book plate, this image by George Wharton Edwards of the explorer standing between mountain and sea has since become the Club's official logo.

Biographies

STERLING AND STEPHEN CLARK

Sterling Clark (1877–1956) and his brother Stephen (1882–1960) grew up in a family in which art played a vital role. Their grandfather, Edward Clark, had been a founding partner of the Singer sewing machine company and left his family an immense fortune, including properties in New York City and Cooperstown, New York. With these vast resources, the brothers' parents, Alfred and Elizabeth Clark, began collecting art, and Alfred commissioned work from contemporary artists. It was in this climate of artistic patronage and collecting that Stephen and Sterling first began to appreciate the visual arts.

After a brief career in the military and leading a scientific expedition through northern China, Sterling Clark settled in Paris in 1910, where he began his lifelong passion of collecting art. While in Paris he met his wife, Francine, and over the next four decades they assembled a distinguished collection of European and American art, including Old Master and Impressionist paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, silver, and porcelain. In Williamstown, Massachusetts, they founded the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, which opened to the public in 1955. Embracing a dual mission as both an art museum and a center for research and scholarship in the visual arts, the Institute today organizes groundbreaking exhibitions, offers an international visiting fellows program, and, together with nearby Williams College, sponsors one of the nation's leading master's programs in art history.

Stephen Clark trained as a lawyer and served briefly in the New York State Assembly before assuming responsibility for the family's business affairs as director of the Singer Manufacturing Company and through management of the Clark Estates. Like Sterling, he began collecting art in the 1910s, though unlike his brother, his tastes ventured into modern art. In 1929, he became a founding trustee of the Museum of Modern Art, donating key works of art and serving on the board for the remainder of his life. He also served for many years on the board of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 1939, desiring to boost the economy of his native Cooperstown, he founded the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, later establishing the Fenimore Art Museum, the Farmers Museum, and a number of other philanthropic endeavors. Upon his death, he bequeathed major works to the Metropolitan and to Yale University Art Gallery.

Mark Dion was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1961. He received a BFA (1986) and an honorary doctorate (2003) from the University of Hartford School of Art, Connecticut. Dion's work examines the ways in which dominant ideologies and public institutions shape our understanding of history, knowledge, and the natural world. The job of the artist, he says, is to go against the grain of dominant culture, to challenge perception and convention. Appropriating archaeological and other scientific methods of collecting, ordering, and exhibiting objects, Dion creates works that question the distinctions between "objective" ("rational") scientific methods and "subjective" ("irrational") influences. The artist's spectacular and often fantastical curiosity cabinets, modeled on sixteenth-century *Wunderkabinetts,* exalt atypical orderings of objects and specimens. By locating the roots of environmental politics and public policy in the construction of knowledge about nature, Dion questions the authoritative role of the scientific voice in contemporary society.

Dion has received numerous awards, including the ninth annual Larry Aldrich Foundation Award (2001) and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucida Art Award (2008). He has had major exhibitions at the Miami Art Museum (2006); the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2004); Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut (2003); and Tate Gallery, London (1999). *Neukom Vivarium* (2006), a permanent outdoor installation and learning laboratory for the Olympic Sculpture Park, was commissioned by the Seattle Art Museum, and Dion recently completed *OCEANOMANIA: Souvenirs of Mysterious Seas* for the Oceanographic Museum in Monaco. He is co-director of Mildred's Land, a visual arts education and residency program in Beach Lake, Pennsylvania.

For over two decades Dion has worked in the public realm on a wide range of scales, from architecture projects to print projects in newspaper. Some of his most recent large-scale public projects include *The Amateur Ornithologist Clubhouse,* a Captain Nemo-like interior constructed in a vast gas tank in Essen, Germany; *The Hanging Garden,* a vertical garden made in collaboration with the landscape design firm Gross Max in central London; and *Den,* a "folly" in Norway's mountainous landscape that features a massive sculpture of a sleeping bear resting on a hill composed of material culture from the Neolithic era to the present.

Dion is currently working with the architectural firm of James Corner/Field Operations and Creative Time on the redesign of the Seattle Waterfront. This includes the development of a long-term visual art strategy for the site as well as establishing large-scale permanent ecological interventions.

Dion lives in New York City with his wife and frequent collaborator, Dana Sherwood.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Inside front and back covers: Details of *Equipment—Clark Expedition,* 2012, by Mark Dion

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