

THE POWER OF A COLLECTION

What Bringing Beth Shean To Life Taught Me

By: Samantha Jean Kopkowski '25

Background:

- Beth Shean is a site in Northern Israel with a rich archaeological record spanning from pre-history to the Byzantine Era.
- The Penn Museum excavated the site throughout the first half of the 20th century
- The PM is staging a long term effort to re-inventory and photograph its wealth of material from the site.

The Work:

- Inventory boxes from the site of Beth Shean
- Determine which objects need to be photographed and from which orientation to do so (shot down vs shot on)
- Arrange and photograph the objects so as to capture as much information as possible
- Rehouse each object, ensuring its continuing safety, accessibility, and accuracy of labeling

Takeaways:

As a History of Art Student, I've used countless photographs from Museum Inventory Databases for research projects. Thus, I've found myself paying extra attention to making my photos the most informative research tools they can be. I recognize this audience-focused mode of work as a powerful tool for bringing collections to life and democratizing museums

Photography In Process:



Faculty Advisors: Monique Scott, Tiffany Stahl, and Matt Feliz

Field Supervisor: Katherine Blanchard, Fowler/Van Santvoord Keeper, Near Eastern

Collections, Penn Museum