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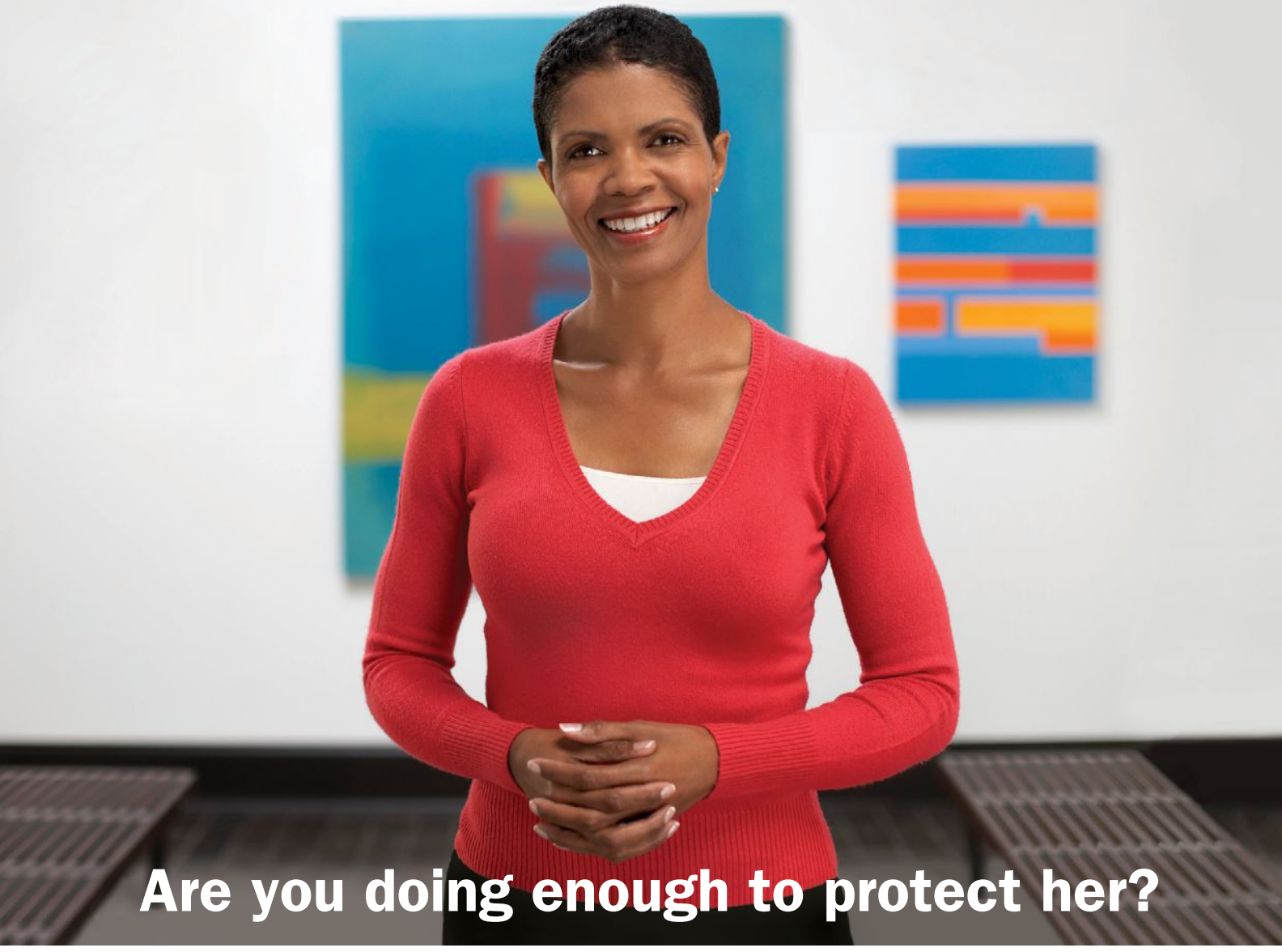

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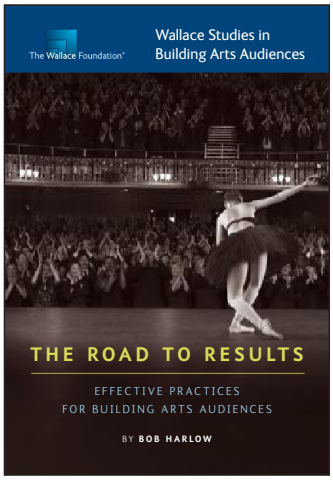

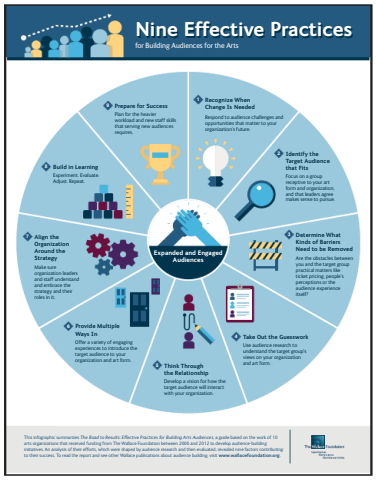

The Road to Results: Effective Practices for Building Arts Audiences

Based on case studies of 10 arts organizations that undertook audience-building projects as part of the Wallace Excellence Awards initiative, this guide and infographic pinpoint nine practices that successful efforts had in common.

The Wallace Foundation®

Download the report and infographic for free.
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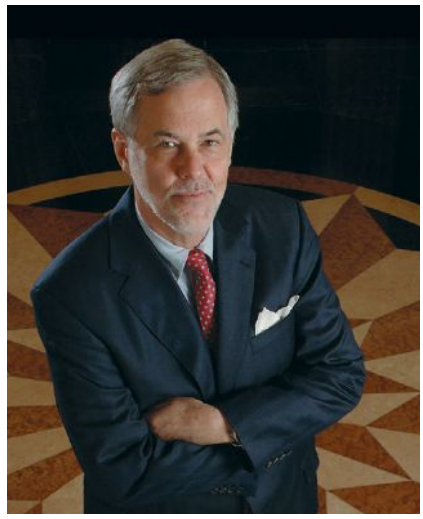
MUSEUM (ISSN 0027-4089)
March/April 2015, Volume 94, No. 2
Published bimonthly (J/F, M/A, M/J, J/A, S/O, N/D) by the American Alliance of Museums
1575 Eye St. N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005; 202-289-1818; FAX 202-289-6578; www.aam-us.org.

Annual subscription rate is $38. Copies are mailed to all members. Single copy is $7. Overseas airmail is an additional $45. Membership in the Alliance includes $22 from annual membership dues applicable to a subscription to MUSEUM, except for students and retirees. (This notice is required by the U.S. Postal Service.) POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSEUM, 1575 Eye St. N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005. MUSEUM is indexed in The Art Index, which is published quarterly and available in public libraries. The magazine is available from ProQuest in the following formats: microform, electronic and paper. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Alliance. Preferred Periodical postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the U.S.A. by Lane Press, Burlington, VT.

Making Connections



THE EXTENSIVE RESEARCH THAT accompanied AAM's rebranding in 2012 underscored an important reality: you look to AAM to help you become better museum professionals. With that important fact in mind, we have made numerous changes and created new initiatives to serve you better. We have rethought and refocused our online professional development programs; reconfigured the editorial approach of this magazine; streamlined our regular communications with the field, creating an e-newsletter (*The Weekly*) rooted in substance and instruction; and restructured our membership in order to make our extensive resource center more accessible to you and your colleagues.

The latest innovation in our service to the field, Museum Junction, launched last fall. This online resource enables museum professionals from anywhere in the world to pose a work-related question or to raise a pressing issue, allowing them to quickly secure insights from colleagues about experiences and solutions.

A sampling of the conversations on Museum Junction shows the breadth of the issues discussed: from a substantive exchange on the most efficient ways of collecting better visitor data, to the variety of approaches in formulating an RFP, to a thoughtful dialogue on noisy museums. Those taking part are a microcosm of the museum field, ranging from young people just starting their careers and seeking advice on how to handle a newly won responsibility, to retirees who provide their experience and expertise, gratis, to their online audience. More than 750 public messages were posted by more than 460 individuals in just three and a half months.

The technology that makes all these discussions possible is familiar to our younger colleagues. But for me, it is truly a wonder how, with a few clicks and keystrokes, the immense wisdom and experience of museum staffs everywhere can potentially be available to all, almost instantly.

We can attain so much by working together. For instance, we have just completed our seventh Museums Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, with more than 300 visits between museum professionals and their representatives in Congress. This event would never have succeeded were it not for the full-throated endorsement of virtually all the regional associations and discipline-specific museum organizations, along with the state associations and individuals who join the chorus each February—and throughout the year—to make the case for museums.

A sharing of views and eventual consensus led to our revamped membership structure, as well as our more user-friendly accreditation process. It was input and wisdom from a range of museum interest groups that led AAM to create Core Documents Verification, an accessible program that enables museums large or small to adhere to common standards and move toward accreditation.

AAM has also strived to forge more collaborative partnerships with museums in the host city of our annual meetings. This effort should make our Atlanta meeting in April even more meaningful for attendees, enabling them to enhance the fortunes of their institutions while advancing their own careers.

With your help and support, we are speaking with one voice to communicate the essential role that you and your institutions play in communities large and small, throughout the United States. Museums advocacy is an example of success on the macro level, while Museum Junction is an example of success on the micro level. Whether macro or micro, it is well worth joining the conversation. I hope you will be part of it.

Ford W. Bell, DVM, is the Alliance's president. Contact Dr. Bell at fbell@aam-us.org.

» *By the* NUMBERS

4,673,740

The number of times the Smithsonian National Zoo's video of (baby panda) "Bao Bao's First Snow Day!" had been viewed as of January 21.

YouTube

75%

The portion of the U.S. workforce that will be comprised of Millennials (people born between 1980 and 2000) by 2025.

http://www.developthenextgen.com/

27,000+

Number of tweets on #MuseumSelfie Day on January 21. The event also boasted 169,600,000+ impressions; 13,000+ contributors; and 57,600,000+ reach.

mardixon.com/wordpress/2015/

$2.9 billion

The value of the U.S. fine arts auction market in the first half of 2014—a 19 percent increase compared to the same period in 2013.

artnet.com/about

51%

The portion of children in public schools eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

http://nyti.ms/1ysRyvD

"Tell Your Story" (Information Please, January/February 2015) documents what museums have been saying forever: they exert a multiplier effect on community economics. This means museums magnify return on investment for a yield far out of proportion to what they cost to run.

But this is only part of the larger picture. Beyond simple economics, there is an expanded yield of social, societal and cultural effects. In addition to the direct economic benefits, the indirect impact on our lives is transformative. Museums drive city and regional reputation as desirable places to both live and visit. They anchor and reflect a vibrant social scene. Second only to universities, they draw businesses and corporations looking for a sophisticated talent pool. This halo effect, in addition to contributing to the health and vitality of our cities, also has measurable economic benefits. People tend to think of museums as cultural institutions, not the economic engines they most certainly are.

MARGARET J. KING
DIRECTOR
THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL STUDIES & ANALYSIS
PHILADELPHIA

I find myself compelled to write this letter because of an alarming trend I perceive creeping into our profession—the movement of major support for museums from the public to the private realm, with an accompanying loss in educational value and service to society. Even though I have been retired for some time, I believe my 36 years in the profession gives me a perspective with some sense of credence based on that history. I was part of the "educator revolt" of 40-plus years ago, which brought the true importance of our institutions—education—into the glaring light of day. Over time, this solidified the role of museums as first-tier members of what contributes to an elevated and enlightened society.

However, it has come to my attention in recent years that museums, in particular public museums, are being forced to relinquish that role for expediency's sake—funding decisions based on immediate needs rather than long-term visioning. Although museums from their beginning have enjoyed private support, it is now becoming evident that the ratio of that support is being forced to dramatically increase. If that meant an increase in public respect it could be applauded, but more often than not it appears to mean a decrease in governmental acceptance of their cultural responsibility. This results in the demotion of museums from tier-one relevance, similar to public schools, to tier two or even three, moving us from the role of educator to the role of entertainer, where attendance numbers become more important than value gained. What is being forgotten is that formal schooling only serves the public for 25 percent of their lives, while museums fill that educational role for 100 percent.

This loss of focus on the museum role is indicative of data revealing that the status of educational prowess in the United States is seriously slipping internationally. Entertainment has replaced education as a tier-one issue for the American public. How very sad—and dangerous. Museums are perfectly positioned to become part of the solution facing this American education dilemma. If I am not mistaken, creativity enhancement based on hands-on learning is still a major element in substantive educational experiences.

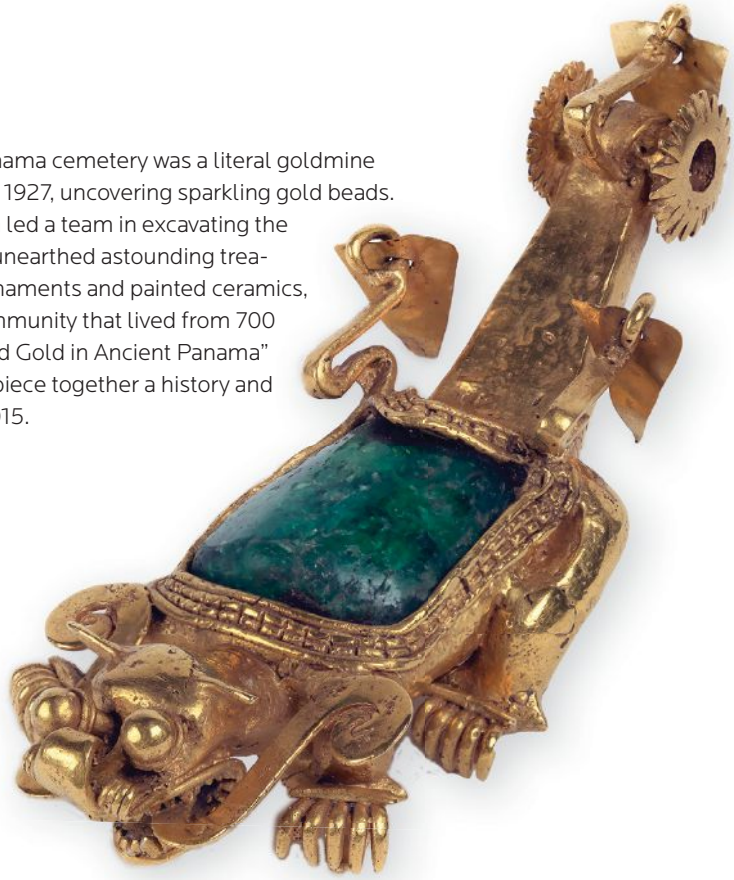
ALLAN D. GRIESEMER
DIRECTOR EMERITUS
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY MUSEUM
REDLANDS, CA

Do you have comments or concerns about *Museum* magazine content? Please share your thoughts. Contact Managing Editor Susannah O'Donnell at sodonnell@aam-us.org.

Andrew Jackson's Hermitage: Home of the People's President

Nashville, TN | Two hundred years ago (and 14 years before he became a United States president), Major General Andrew Jackson won the Battle of New Orleans, the last major clash of the War of 1812. Celebrating the bicentennial anniversary of this historic event, the Hermitage—which Jackson owned for more than 40 years before passing away there in 1845—has opened "Andrew Jackson: Born for a Storm." This $1.1 million exhibit pays homage to Jackson's quote "I was born for a storm, and a calm does not suit me," a remark that certainly could define his storied life. Along with his triumphs as a war hero and his political career, the exhibit surveys Jackson's early life as a frontiersman, as well as the legacy he left behind.

The Hermitage hired the nationally recognized design firm Solid Light to develop "Born for a Storm," which comes on the heels of a major overhaul for the National Historic Landmark: it announced a new logo and tagline late last year, along with a revamped board of trustees. As part of its launch of the exhibit, the Hermitage is offering complimentary visits to Jackson's home for both active and retired U.S. military personnel throughout 2015.

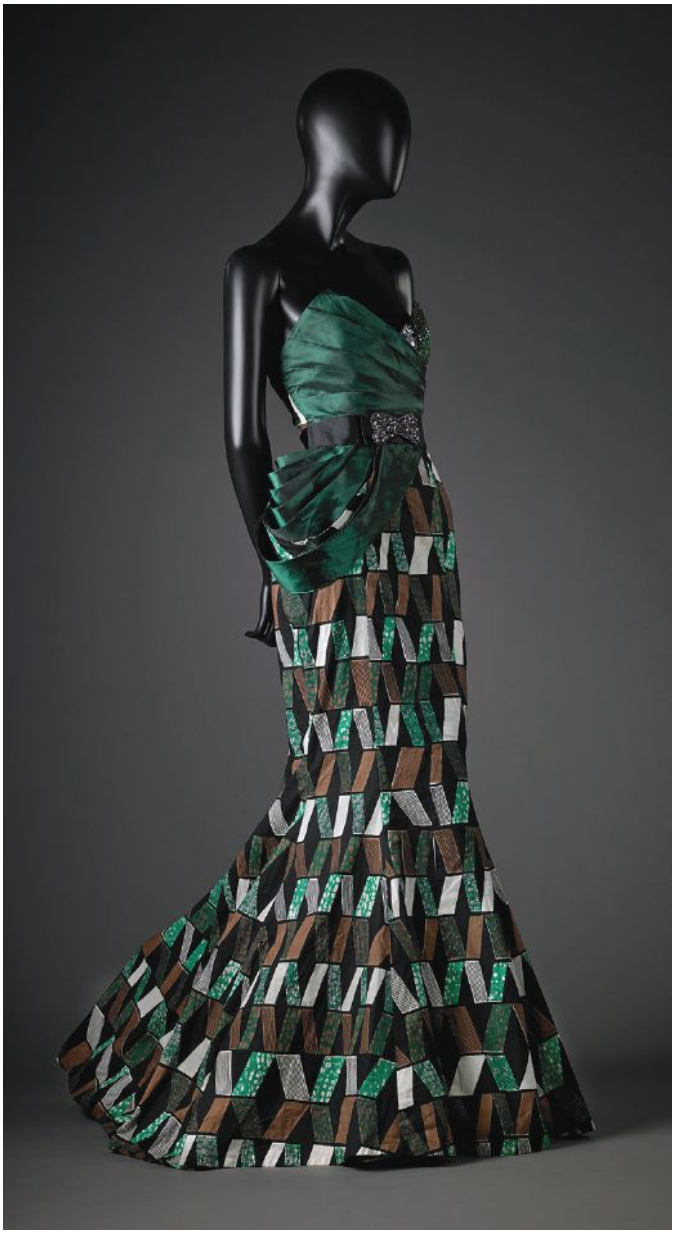


Penn Museum

Philadelphia | No one suspected an ancient Panama cemetery was a literal goldmine until the Rio Grande de Coclé flooded the site in 1927, uncovering sparkling gold beads. Thirteen years later, archeologist J. Alden Mason led a team in excavating the burial ground, known as Sitio Conte. The group unearthed astounding treasures: golden plaques, precious stones, ivory ornaments and painted ceramics, all belonging to the Coclé, a pre-Columbian community that lived from 700 to 900 CE. "Beneath the Surface: Life, Death, and Gold in Ancient Panama" digs deep into these discoveries, using them to piece together a history and understanding of the Coclé people. To Nov. 1, 2015.

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

As a long-reigning and immensely important royal house of Europe, it's no wonder that the Habsburg Dynasty had a slate of masterworks among its holdings. Six centuries of the family's rule—and singular artworks from its collections—are highlighted in "The Habsburgs: Rarely Seen Masterpieces from Europe's Greatest Dynasty." Paintings by Caravaggio, Correggio, Titian and Velázquez join armaments and armor, court costumes and even a ceremonial carriage in this display of nearly 100 pieces, loaned to the United States by the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. To Jan. 17, 2016. Additional venues: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; High Museum of Art, Atlanta.



Harn Museum of Art

Gainesville, FL | Ghana may be better known for its traditional kente cloth than its cutting-edge fashion, but the country's forward-thinking artists are working to bridge its past and present. "Kabas and Couture: Contemporary Ghanaian Fashion" showcases works by the West African nation's internationally recognized designers, tracing new pieces' connections to customary apparel and historical textiles. Runway garments are juxtaposed with the batakari smock, for example, as well as the kaba, a national symbol for Ghanaian women. Also included in the exhibition is a recreated textile and seamstress shop, in which visitors can "commission" and try on kaba fashions. To Aug. 23, 2015.

Palm Springs Art Museum

Palm Springs, CA | The heaviest concentration per capita of midcentury modern architecture happens to be in Palm Springs, California. Accordingly, the Palm Springs Art Museum has expanded with a new center dedicated to architecture and design. The Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, is a 13,000-square-foot space that will host related exhibitions, public programs and research areas, as well as curatorial offices, collections storage and a shop. The building itself is a classic midcentury international-style structure designed by famed architect E. Stewart Williams, to whom the center's inaugural exhibition was dedicated. Marmol Radziner, an architectural firm based in Los Angeles, oversaw the $5.7 million building project.

Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

Chicago | The frigid Chicago winter received a steamy addition this year with "Rainforest Adventure." Vibrant exotic animals—such as talkative birds, tiny tree frogs and coiling snakes, to name a few—thrive in this multisensory exhibit. Along with bird- and reptile-spotting, visitors can scale a 9-foot-tall kapok tree, home to many native rainforest creatures, and peer into a gorilla's nest. They can also learn about tropical rainforests by acting (and dressing) as a "research assistant" or analyzing scientists' findings with microscopes, hand lenses and other scientific tools. To May 31, 2015.

Bowdoin College Museum of Art

Brunswick, ME | As World War II cooled, the Cold War and the Space Race began to heat up. "Past Futures: Science Fiction, Space Travel, and Postwar Art of the Americas" shows how artists reacted and adapted to this quickly shifting era, in which fascinating new technologies sometimes contributed to international tensions. Representing work by both Americans and Latin Americans, the exhibition ranges from kinetic sculptures to vivid, sometimes frightening canvases—such as Raquel Forner's *Astronauta y testigos, televisados* (right), which imagines an encounter between astronauts and extraterrestrials. To June 7, 2015.

Montclair Art Museum

Montclair, NJ | Visualizing the 1990s might immediately bring to mind images of flannel shirts, CD players or O.J. Simpson's Ford Bronco, but the art that defined this decade reaches far beyond its mainstream associations. "Come as You Are: Art of the 1990s" examines the major events that occurred between 1989 and 2001 through the works of 45 artists—all either born or based in the United States—who were active during that period. Divided into themes of "identity politics," the digital revolution and globalization, the exhibition features 2D, 3D and video art by Doug Aitken, Kara Walker, Shirin Neshat and Felix Gonzalez-Torres, among dozens of other artists. Catherine Opie's portraits explore the GLBT community of the time, Mark Napier's *Riot* blends incongruous websites into single works of art and Marina Zurkow's animated series *Braingirl* uses Macromedia Flash to show a girl—and a world—turned inside out. Pop culture is not entirely absent here: Nirvana fans will appreciate *Blur Kurt*, Elizabeth Peyton's visual ode to Kurt Cobain. To May 15, 2016. Additional venues: Telfair Museums, Savannah, GA; University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor; Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas at Austin.

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Hartford, CT | In 1879, artist Samuel S. Carr portrayed Coney Island as a peaceful beach populated by genteel vacationers. In 2000, director Darren Aronofsky showed Coney Island as a seedy center for drug deals in *Requiem for a Dream*, a tragic tale of addiction. The seaside spot's transformation through the decades is traced in "Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland, 1861–2008." Featuring artworks, architectural artifacts and carousel creatures, among other relics, the exhibition examines all iterations of Coney Island: as a destination for wealthy travelers, an expansive adult playground, a community in decline and a national cultural icon. To Sept. 11, 2016. Additional venues: San Diego Museum of Art; Brooklyn Museum; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX.

Museum of Fine Arts

St. Petersburg, FL | On the weekend before Martin Luther King Jr. Day this year, "African American Life and Family" went on view. The exhibition builds upon one that was held 115 years earlier: in 1900, activist and sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois curated "The American Negro" for the World's Fair in Paris, featuring photographs of refined and educated African Americans. In this updated version, the works date from the 1880s to the 1960s and include snapshots, postcards and private portraits that would have been treasured and hung up at home—giving viewers an intimate glimpse of family life during these decades. To May 3, 2015.

Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology

Cambridge, MA | Maces, daggers, spears, shields and suits of armor: along with holding great importance in the heat of battle, such armaments have long been enhanced with elaborate decoration, a trend that is seen throughout the ages and around the world. "Arts of War: Artistry in Weapons across Cultures" unveils the stories behind more than 150 ornamented arms. At once beautiful and menacing, these objects range from carefully carved whalebone clubs used by the Maori people of New Zealand to a horsehead-handled curved knife from northern India. To Oct. 18, 2017.

Let us know what's happening at your institution—new exhibit, new installation, new building. We want to help you get the word out! Send information, including high-resolution digital images, to sodonnell@aam-us.org.

#IfTheyGunnedMeDown is both a hashtag and the title of a new mural by Gaia, a Baltimore-based street artist, at Atlanta's Center for Civil and Human Rights. Touching on recent cases that have prompted nationwide uproar, the hashtag and the work both question the pictures that the media choose to use when reporting on fallen African Americans. Using the hashtag, social media users tweeted images of themselves and their own questions—for the media as well as for all Americans. Gaia then incorporated these posts and photos into his 42-foot-long work, juxtaposed with representations of Persepolis and the Cyrus Cylinder, an iconic symbol of human rights.

A wonder of outer space can now be explored in cyberspace. To enhance visitors' experience when visiting the space shuttle *Enterprise*, New York City's Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum has released a free iPhone app, titled Mission Intrepid: Explore Enterprise. Created in partnership with the digital innovation firm Makeable, the app allows users to access hotspots when they approach particular zones throughout the museum's Space Shuttle Pavilion. As they progress through the exhibit and the application, visitors learn more about NASA, space travel and the shuttle itself through augmented reality, exclusive videos and other multimedia features.

From colossal Japanese guardian figures to tiny shards of Korean ceramics, the Freer and Sackler Galleries, the Smithsonian's museums of Asian art, have digitized their entire collection. More than 40,000 works are now hosted in the Washington, DC, museums' online collections, called Open F|S and located at open.asia.si.edu. Nearly all of the objects are available for high-resolution download; these files can then be used for noncommercial purposes, such as making digital wallpapers, personal artistic creations and gifts for family and friends. Or users can simply use the website's zoom feature to view centuries of artwork in intricate detail.

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Tokyo National Museum, Toyokan, Tokyo, Japan

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*BAM is the German Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing. BEMMA: Assessment of emissions from materials for museum equipment.

First Steps for Engaging New Audiences

Following is an adapted excerpt from *The Road to Results: Effective Practices for Building Arts Audiences* by Bob Harlow. The book is part of the Wallace Studies in Building Arts Audiences series, published by The Wallace Foundation, and is available as a free download at thrivingarts.org. Through a partnership with The Wallace Foundation, the American Alliance of Museums will be sharing the principles in *The Road to Results* through a webcast series on March 11, 18 and 25. Visit "Online Programs" at aam-us.org for more information.

• • •

THE ROAD TO RESULTS details the experiences of 10 organizations that were among 54 arts institutions that received funding from The Wallace Foundation between 2006 and 2012 to develop audience-building initiatives. An analysis of these programs—each supported by evaluation data—revealed nine practices contributing to their success (see graphic, above right).

Taken together, these practices promoted audience engagement in two ways. First, they created a shared sense of purpose that kept an audience-engagement program front and center for leaders and staff, thus enabling the initiative to permeate a wide range of an organization's activities. Second, the practices helped an arts institution make meaningful connections with its target audience. Staff members developed programs that reflected both the audience's inclinations and the organization's mission and strengths. As a result, they not only engaged the audience, but also fulfilled important objectives for their organization, establishing a cycle that reinforced itself and gave the initiative momentum.

Recognizing When Change Is Needed

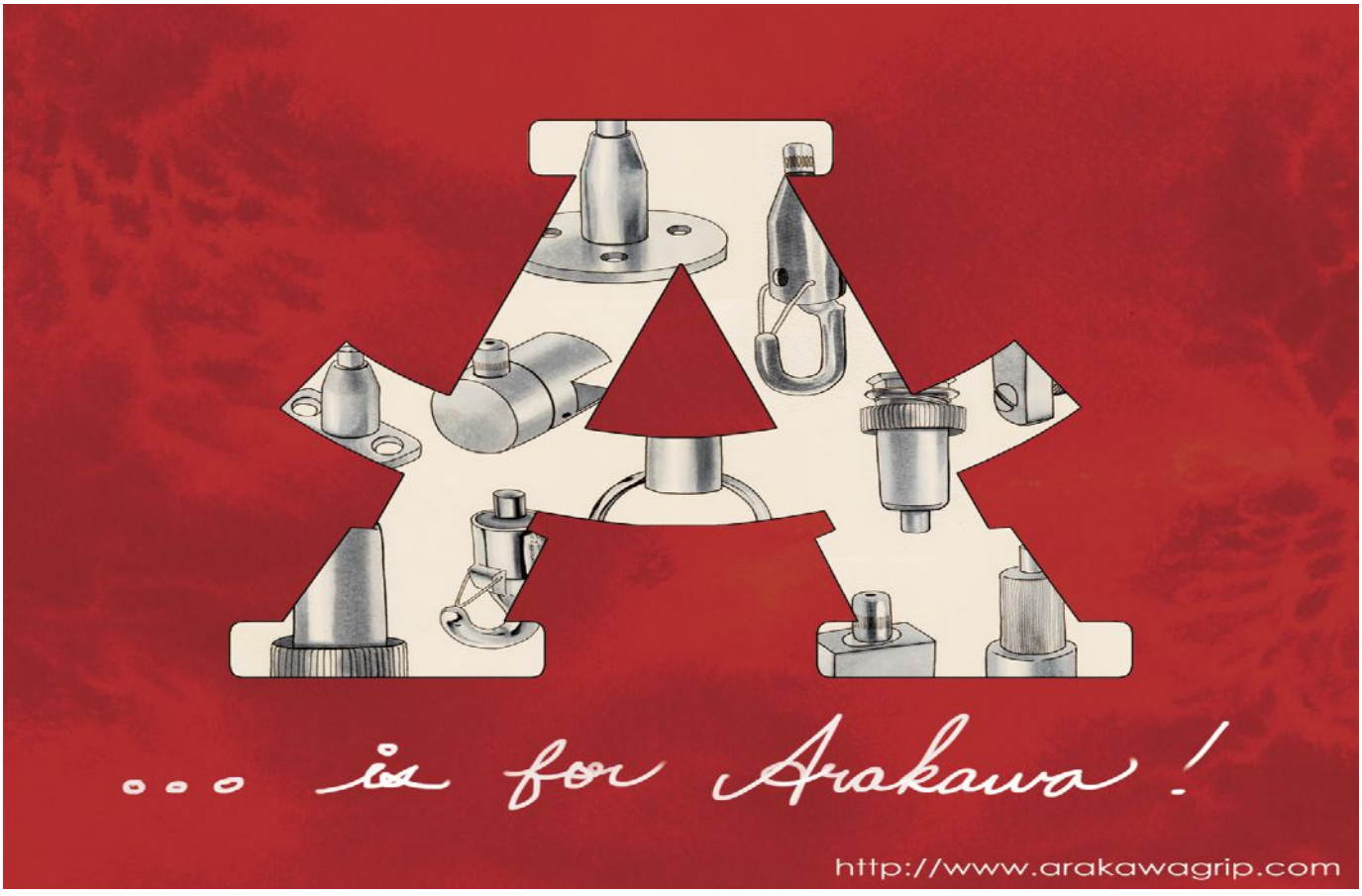
Successful initiatives were born out of an observation, when staff members saw audience attendance patterns or behaviors that they believed had significant implications for the organization's artistic mission, financial viability or both. Acknowledging the weight of those implications prompted action and gave the initiatives momentum.

One example comes from The Clay Studio, which provides ceramics instruction and operates a gallery, studio

and retail shop in Philadelphia's Old City arts district. Senior staff members who interact with the public throughout the day recognized that the organization's audience was not growing. The institution was not only serving the same demographic—well-educated middle-aged or older patrons—but also welcoming the *same people* day after day, month after month. Seeing so few new faces even at special exhibitions "panicked us a little," says Jeff Guido, artistic director at the time. Staff knew that The Clay Studio's future depended on growing its base of visitors, but where would they find them and how would they attract them? This concern kick-started an initiative that ultimately succeeded in drawing hundreds of young adults to workshops and classes.

Making art accessible to all has been the mission of the Fleisher Art Memorial in Philadelphia since its establishment in the late 19th century. Founder Samuel Fleisher pictured a place where people from different cultures, backgrounds and artistic experiences in the surrounding community could create art side by side.

Heading into the 21st century, Fleisher ran classes and workshops in its large South Philadelphia facility, as well as offsite programs in schools and community centers. Different staff members managed onsite and offsite programs until a reorganization made some individuals responsible for both. These staff members now had the perspective to see that students in Fleisher's offsite programs tended to be very ethnically diverse—a reflection of the diversity in the surrounding neighborhoods—and included many newly arrived immigrants. Meanwhile students in its onsite programs were primarily white and from more affluent Philadelphia neighborhoods and suburbs. This divide concerned the staff because it went against Samuel Fleisher's vision of bringing together people of diverse backgrounds and providing access to the arts. The organization channeled that concern into a successful initiative that is beginning



to attract more students and visitors from its ethnically diverse neighborhood to onsite programs. As with most diversity efforts, progress has been slow but steady. Keeping the faith could easily be a challenge, but the importance of this initiative to Fleisher's mission strengthens staff members' resolve and helps them to persevere.

The Clay Studio and Fleisher made their observations in different ways: through on-the-ground experience and gaining the fresh perspective of an internal reorganization. What they have in common is that their observations captured the attention of their entire organizations because they revealed genuine threats to missions or financial sustainability that could not be ignored.

In fact, some top management experts believe that organizational change can only get traction when it invokes a sense of urgency based on a realistic appraisal of opportunities and hazards. That urgency galvanizes leadership to initiate and commit to a course of action. In addition, serving "new audiences" inevitably requires focusing on different objectives and doing some things differently. A sense of urgency combats complacency and motivates staff to move beyond their comfort zones.

This does not mean arts groups should succumb to hysteria over imagined or manufactured crises. The observations at The Clay Studio and Fleisher were grounded in organizational and environmental realities, often complemented by knowledge of broader audience trends. The sense of urgency came naturally because staff members understood that they faced a bona fide challenge or opportunity with major consequences for their organization's future.

Identifying the Target Audience that Fits

It is no surprise that successful audience-building initiatives target a specific audience. After all, it is hard to address attendance barriers or build a meaningful connection with people

using a one-size-fits-all strategy.

At some case study organizations, the mission-critical observation prompting the initiative implied a specific audience. When Fleisher Art Memorial discovered that newly arrived immigrants living in the surrounding area were not coming to its onsite programs, it presented a clear challenge to target them in order to fulfill its mission as a community arts organization.

The target audience wasn't so obvious for many of the other arts groups. Figuring it out required both creativity and strategic thinking. In the end, they asked themselves two critical questions:

1. Is the audience likely to be receptive?
2. Do leaders agree the audience is important to the organization?

Receptive Audiences

Case study organizations pursued audiences that research or past experience led them to believe they could satisfy. When The Contemporary Jewish Museum (CJM) in San Francisco moved from a 2,500-square-foot space to a 63,000-square-foot facility, Connie Wolf, president and CEO at the time, naturally felt pressure to fill it with visitors. She recalled her experience as director of education at New York's Whitney Museum and how families made the museum feel dynamic. "The stuffiness of a museum immediately exits the minute families walk in the door," she says. Moreover, she saw how many families made the Whitney their personal space, returning time and again as loyal visitors.

Wolf envisioned a central role for families in The CJM's new home, and her staff built programs to achieve that vision. They organized exhibits that would appeal to both adults and children, and developed family-oriented tours, artist-led art-making activities for kids and other activities that families could enjoy together. They created a family-friendly environment with seating nooks and other areas

where parents and children could read, draw or just take a moment to refresh themselves. They also forged a series of partnerships with preschools and elementary schools that involved not only teachers and students, but also parents in workshops and museum visits. Within four years, The CJM was welcoming more than 22,000 families a year, compared to 1,300 in its previous facility. Families went from 10 percent of all visitors to 18 percent.

Leaders Must Agree the Target Audience Is a Priority

Importantly, leaders need to agree that a particular audience, and the programs and activities developed to serve it, align with the organization's mission and identity. Without that support, momentum will stall. At one performing arts organization, for example, an initiative led by the marketing department attracted many new patrons, but efforts to re-engage them were stifled when others in the institution resisted efforts to change the wording in some advertising to make the art form more accessible to newcomers. Those who objected did so because they believed the new copy "dumbed down" how they spoke to the public. At the core of the dispute was a lack of consensus on the importance of this audience to the organization's future.

At that organization and some others, executive directors did not seem to have a clear sense of why a target audience mattered, nor did the initiative capture the attention of many department heads. When leaders did agree about an audience's importance, they rallied their organizations to make audiences feel welcome and provide different ways for them to connect with the art. That kind of consensus may be easiest to achieve when initiatives mesh with the organization's core values or are linked to a mission that ignites passion in leaders. «

Detangling Deaccessioning

Defining "direct care" reflects an ethical obligation

BY SALLY YERKOVICH

"Professional codes of ethics set standards that are deemed important in order to uphold the integrity of the profession. The goal of such codes is to encourage conduct that warrants the confidence of the public."

—Marie C. Malaro and Ildiko Pogany DeAngelis, *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*

WHEN AAM PASSED the current Code of Ethics in 1994, it did so after several years of discussion and debate that at times threatened to divide the field irreparably. A major point of contention revolved around how museums should use funds realized from the sale of collections.

Many museums found the 1991 Code's restriction of "the use of proceeds from the sale of collection materials ... to the acquisition of collections" to be excessively limiting—arguing that a museum's responsibilities to care for and preserve its collections were equally important to its obligations to build its collections. After all, why would a museum acquire more objects when it couldn't adequately care for what it had? History museums were often more concerned about caring for and preserving their existing collections than about adding objects. Science and technology centers were shifting their focus at the time to public education through interactive exhibitions, with some giving away their more traditional collections. As Alan J. Friedman explained in the March 1994 issue of *Curator*, such collections were largely becoming a means to an end—tools for education rather than objects to be preserved in perpetuity. Children's and natural history museums also voiced objections.

In response to such dissent, the

AAM Ethics Commission altered the restriction, stating that proceeds from the sale of nonliving collections should not be used for "anything other than the acquisition or direct care of collections." The phrase "direct care of collections" reflected a compromise that would accommodate the different disciplines and professional practices among museums.

Yet we have never defined what we mean by direct care, leaving the media and the public, not to mention many museums, without further guidance. Direct care of collections—which AAM's Accreditation Commission identified as a top priority for the field—became an especially critical issue after the 2008 economic downturn. In response, the Direct Care Task Force has now begun its work (see page 26 for more information), aiming to clarify appropriate practice for the field and build the public's confidence that museums are upholding their promise to present and future generations by caring for our incomparable cultural resources.

Since the passage of the Code in 1994, museums have deaccessioned objects and used the proceeds to acquire additional items for their collections as well as for direct care of collections. Deaccessioning or removing items from museum collections is an accepted collection management practice in U.S. museums, ideally governed by an institution's collections management policy and code of ethics. Yet even two decades later, one can still feel the passion of the various sides of the debate.

Why all the fuss? Past tensions in the field as well as the more recent public controversies over the sale and possible sale of objects from museums' collections speak to museums' position in society as public institutions. It is for the benefit of the public that museums hold these objects. Museums therefore have a responsibility for transparent

and ethical conduct not just to themselves but to the larger community. In defining "direct care," the task force hopes to provide guidance and clarity on one of the field's basic ethical obligations towards the collections with which museums are entrusted.

While the accumulated objects in a museum's collection might yield high proceeds if they were offered for sale in the marketplace, their greatest value is as part of our artistic, cultural and/or natural heritage. In this respect, they are priceless. Part of a museum's duty in caring for its collections is ensuring that these objects remain in the public domain, where people can benefit from them as a source of education and inspiration now and in the future.

Museums have a responsibility for transparent and ethical conduct not just to themselves but to the larger community.

While this may be almost a truism for museum professionals, the recent case of the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) demonstrates that the potential market value of museum collections can be dazzling and the temptation to sell items from a collection to retire a debt or resolve other financial problems almost irresistible. Bankruptcy Judge Steve Rhodes's opinion regarding the Detroit Institute of Arts' collection speaks eloquently not only to the public value of the DIA collection but to museum collections, more generally. A museum "stands ... as an invaluable beacon of culture, education for both children and adults, personal journey, creative outlet, family

National Museum of American History

AAM DIRECT CARE TASK FORCE

At the request of the Accreditation Commission, the AAM Board of Directors approved the formation of a Direct Care Task Force during its May 2014 meeting. The commission and board believe that providing clarity on the use of deaccessioning proceeds, specifically on what is generally accepted as a definition of direct care, is a top priority for the field. The cross-disciplinary group is charged with:

- gathering data to find out how museums of different disciplines use proceeds from deaccessioning and how they define "direct care"
- compiling a list of generally accepted uses of proceeds shared by all disciplines and those specific to each discipline
- evaluating the ethics underlying current standards and practices and advancing the thinking on this topic
- issuing a white paper with task force findings and recommendations, endorsed by the key discipline-specific organizations

For more information, please visit aam-us.org/resources/ethics-standards-and-best-practices.

experience, worldwide visitor attraction, civic pride and energy, neighborhood and community cohesion, regional cooperation, social service, and economic development," he explained in his oral opinion of November 7, 2014. "Every great [c]ity in the world actively pursues these values." He continued: "to sell the DIA art would only deepen Detroit's fiscal, economic and social problems. To sell the DIA art would be to forfeit Detroit's future."

Rhodes could just as easily have been talking about the collections of a historical society, which preserves documents and artifacts that provide unique insights into our histories and identities, or of a zoological society or botanical garden, which conserve elements of the world's biodiversity. Each of these organizations contributes to the well-being of the publics that it serves, and its collections are often at the heart of how it fulfills its missions. Even museums without traditional collections like science-technology centers and children's museums use objects to engage and educate. Using objects, museums provide active and interactive learning experiences that distinguish them from other cultural organizations. As the AAM Code of Ethics for Museums states, "stewardship of collections entails the highest public trust and carries with it the presumption of rightful ownership, permanence, care, documentation, accessibility and responsible disposal."

Ethical collections stewardship also requires clear communication about the field's professional practices. In defining more explicitly what we mean by "direct care of collections," the AAM Direct Care Task Force aspires to give the field more guidance and bolster the public's confidence that all museums are working for the benefit of present and future generations. «

Sally Yerkovich is chair of the AAM Direct Care Task Force. She also serves as director of the Institute of Museum Ethics and as an adjunct faculty member at the M.A. Program in Museum Professions, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey.

Robert Gray, a first responder at the Pentagon on 9/11, views the helmet he donated to the 9/11 Memorial Museum.

From Heroism to Advocacy

FOR THE SECOND YEAR, the Alliance has selected two Great American Museum Advocates from dozens of compelling nominations provided by members in the field. We asked you to tell us your most powerful visitor story, demonstrating how your museum changed someone's life. From an array of moving tales, we chose the two that we believe best exemplify the impact of museums on individuals and communities everywhere.

Following is the story of Robert Gray, a retired fire captain with the Arlington, Virginia, Fire Department and a first responder at the Pentagon on 9/11. Gray donated his fire helmet to the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York to preserve a vital moment in history and to help future generations understand the events of 9/11.

The next issue of *Museum* will feature the story of Fernando Valles, an Iraq war veteran, nominated by the Chicago Botanic Garden for his participation in a new, groundbreaking program in horticultural therapy that supports veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

» ADVOCATE *Story*

These poignant stories were shared with legislators, media and the public during Museums Advocacy Day in February to emphasize the profound ways in which museums are serving our communities. "We are honored to welcome Robert and Fernando to be a part of our seventh Museums Advocacy Day," said Alliance President Ford W. Bell. "These two inspiring stories of public service to our country will impress upon Congress how essential museums are to individuals and communities."

• • •

In September 2014, Robert Gray visited the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York as a stop on the Ride 2 Recovery Minuteman Challenge. This extraordinary bicycle trip took Gray through New York with a group of veterans, firefighters and law enforcement personnel, all of them struggling with profound medical and emotional injuries.

As a captain with the Arlington County Fire Department in 2001, Gray spent weeks fighting the fires at the Pentagon, helping to stabilize damaged sections of the building and searching for and recovering the remains of those killed on hijacked Flight 77 and at the Pentagon. Gray would share his story a few years later with curators from the museum who had traveled to Arlington seeking artifacts and oral histories for the future museum.

Gray specifically told them about two cherished mementos: the fire helmet he had worn throughout his career and a special yellow helmet issued to responders on Day 3 of the recovery mission who were working under hazardous conditions in the collapse zone at the Pentagon. As he came to understand and believe in the mission of the 9/11 Museum, Gray wanted to donate an artifact to the museum's collection that would represent his service and that of his fellow firefighters, but he just wasn't ready to part with both helmets. Eventually he made the decision to donate only the protective yellow helmet, tagged with a sticker honoring the 343 New York City firefighters who had died at the World Trade Center.

Gray was subsequently promoted to battalion chief; he retired in 2011 and relocated to Texas. Just two months after his retirement, while doing odd jobs around his new home, Gray fell off a ladder and suffered a traumatic brain injury. He lost his memory and ability to speak, and underwent surgical removal of parts of his brain. Determined to recover, he slowly

regained his speech and memory and resumed his favorite sport of cycling. All the while, Gray remained in touch with concerned friends at the future museum in New York.

By summer 2014, Gray's health had improved sufficiently to enable him to participate in the Ride 2 Recovery Minuteman Challenge ride, on behalf of Project Rebirth, an organization that supports victims of and first responders to the 9/11 attacks. The ride took him on a 425-mile journey from Boston to New York. On September 12, a day after the 13th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, approximately 150 riders and their supporters arrived in lower Manhattan for an emotional tour of the memorial. A primary goal of that visit was to reunite Gray with his donated helmet, which had been placed on exhibition in the newly opened museum.

Excitement at seeing the helmet again was tempered by the solemn setting, and Gray's unspoken concern about memories that might rise to the surface when he re-encountered reminders of those dark days in 2001. Surrounded by supportive members of his Ride 2 Recovery community—and in the company of the museum's oral historian who had forged the earliest connection between Gray and the museum—he viewed the case displaying his helmet and wept openly. While standing there, he began to open up, sharing with those around him his personal experiences in the aftermath of the attacks, the traumatic nature of the rescue and recovery efforts at the Pentagon, and his deep satisfaction now in seeing his story preserved as part of the museum's Historical Exhibition.

In a Facebook message following his visit, Gray described the museum itself as an example of recovery. And not long thereafter, he understood that it was now time, and he was ready at last to entrust that other fire helmet—the one he had worn throughout his career—to the care and custody of the 9/11 Memorial Museum. *–Amy Weinstein, associate director of collections/senior oral historian, and Jenny Pachucki, oral historian and assistant curator, 9/11 Memorial Museum* «

Interactive music zone at Fort Collins Museum of Discovery


YOUR CITY: TURNING DATA INTO KNOWLEDGE
What does data mean for the future of our communities?
We are capturing more data about our cities than ever before. But how does this data turn into useful knowledge? Explore examples of projects that turn urban data into meaningful insights on the livability and health of Chicago neighborhoods.
Visualizing Chicago's Building Stock
Chicago Buildings by Date of Construction
1980 – 2014
1946 – 1979
1900 – 1945
Oldest – 1899
No data

THE "OPEN" ECONOMY:
Filling the Data Pipeline

A sample of *TrendsWatch 2015.*

BY ELIZABETH MERRITT

"'Open' is already on track to supplant 'participatory' as buzzword of the year, with good reason. The proliferation of groups supporting and encouraging openness in the cultural/creative sector is impressive. Wikimedia, Creative Commons, the Open Knowledge Foundation, free software advocates, open-source software advocates: the list gets longer all the time."

—Ed Rodley

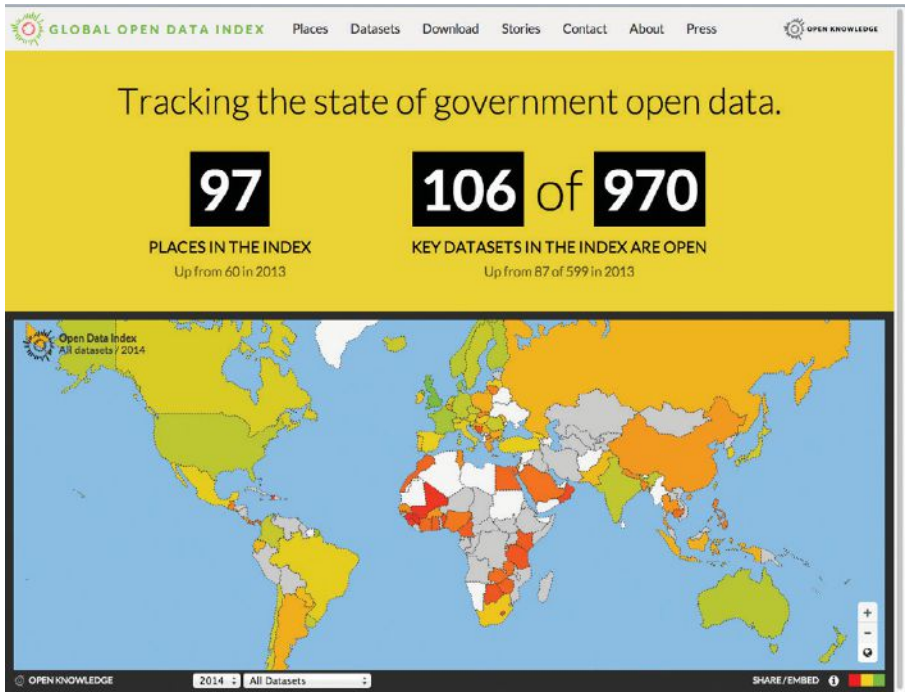
The open culture movement in all its permutations—open source, open software, open government—calls for a fundamental cultural shift from the assumption that information should be tightly controlled to the presumption that content should be made available to everybody, absent a compelling reason to keep it locked up. Open content licensing and Creative Commons copyrights encourage people to reuse, remix and redistribute material. Open source software invites programmers to mess with the underlying code. And the open data movement is racing to get information out in the world, where it can do some good. Governments are adopting open data policies and pouring money into creating open data infrastructure; companies are springing up to

Chicago: City of Big Data at the Chicago Architecture Foundation highlights how city planners, architects, designers and citizens use open data to design for the future.

exploit these new resources; individuals are exploring how access to data sets empowers them as individuals, citizens and entrepreneurs. Museum data—cultural, scientific, especially operational—has traditionally been closely controlled. In a world pivoting towards open, can museums afford to be left behind?

Open data is FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) on steroids. Back in the 1990s, we made a quantum leap towards openness when floppy discs supplanted poor-quality photocopies as a format for obtaining government records. Now, four years after the federal government created data.gov, that open national data repository contains more than 400,000 datasets from 175 agencies. Last fall, when Minneapolis became the 16th U.S. city to pass an open data policy, one city council member explained the action by declaring, "It's the people's data, and it should be out there."

Once data is "out there," people find all sorts of wonderful ways to connect, analyze and mash it up to serve a variety of goals. Open data fuels civic activism and civil rights, as when the New York State Civic Engagement Table merges voting history data with data on public housing to empower community organizers. It supports scholarship and exploration, as when MapStory enables anyone to access, manipulate and annotate public domain map data to "improve our understanding of global dynamics, worldwide, over the course of history." It transforms city planning, as when the Denver Regional Equity Atlas layers data about education, income, health and other measures of equity on plans for the new transit network.



Global Open Data Index.

"Open" comes at a cost, of course. Building the infrastructure to support publicly accessible databases isn't cheap. Last year the European Union announced it was sinking the equivalent of nearly $18M into three open data initiatives—an open data incubator, a Web data research network and an academy to train data scientists. But although the major impetus for open data is government transparency and accountability, open data systems can save money as well. City governments, for example, can use open data to monitor compliance with regulations or respond to citizen concerns in cost-efficient ways.

As the Open Knowledge Foundation points out, "Open Knowledge is what open data becomes when it is useful, useable and used." Many barriers stand in the way of converting data to knowledge, the foremost being compatibility. Interoperability is chimerical if data sets aren't configured to talk to each other. To this end Code for America is promulgating recommended formats to make data easier to access and use. Another thorny issue is "gray data"—data that is only half open, redacted or partially released. With so much data backlogged, and with more being generated at an astounding rate, there is also the question of what to prioritize.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SOCIETY

Open government data facilitates transparency, accountability and participatory democracy. But progressing from data to knowledge is not enough—we have to use knowledge wisely if it is to make the world a better place. Open data could be a force for good, as individuals and civil society organizations use public data to improve their communities, and it could be an impetus for government officials and contractors to self-censor,

obfuscate or falsify information.

Open data, like digital fabrication, is a technology with the potential to catalyze economic growth, spawning jobs that replace those lost in dying industries. A growing list of private companies are building their businesses around public data, working in the realms of business data, health care, energy, education, transportation, real estate and more.

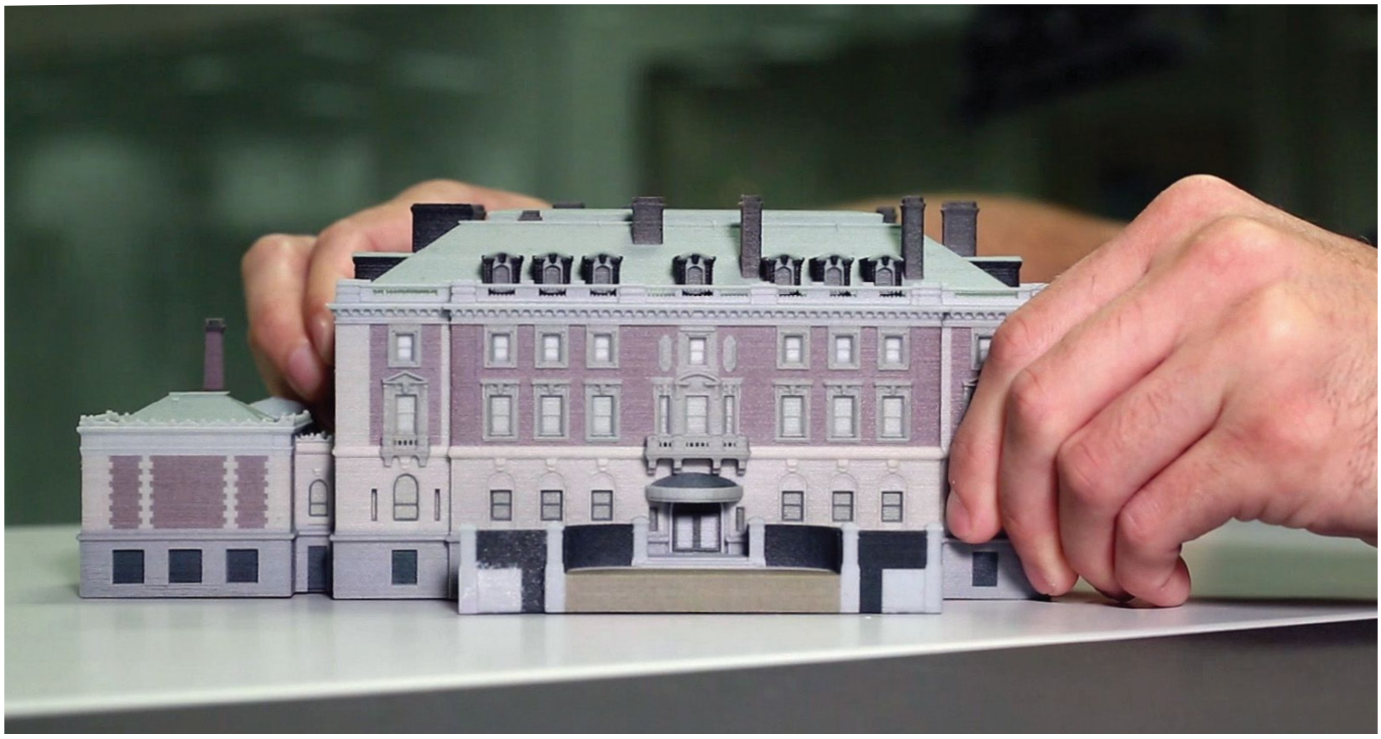
The current focus of the open data movement is government data since we (the public) already "own" this information. Now foundations are driving openness as well—recently the Gates Foundation announced that all the research they fund must meet the standards of open access publishing, including the requirement that all the data underlying published research results be accessible and open immediately. However, many private companies (e.g., Facebook, Google) amass and monetize huge databases culled from users' online behavior. Will we come to expect that this data (which is, in some sense, ours) be made open as well?

As we push towards "open," society has to grapple with what data can or should remain veiled. Edward Snowden's theft of data from the National Security Agency dramatized this issue: on one hand, the information he leaked sparked a much-needed debate on appropriate limits for covert monitoring of U.S. citizens. On the other hand, many maintain his actions seriously damaged U.S. security and strengthened world terrorism. The debate about when data should be open or closed is playing out across the country on smaller stages as well. In Honolulu, two public officials resigned because of a bill that required them to submit asset disclosures online—believing that their right to privacy trumped the public's right to know. Recently the startup Hipcamp protested an RFP by the Forest Service for management of the Recreation.gov website, arguing that the terms of the proposal let the service provider keep too much commercially valuable data secret. When does too much openness threaten an individual's right to privacy, or a company's need to protect data from competitors?

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MUSEUMS

In "The Virtues of Promiscuity," an essay for the Code|Words project, Ed

The Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum encourages users to download free 3D scan data of its building (the former mansion of Andrew Carnegie) for remix and reuse.



This Rosa Bonheur sketchbook from 1847 is one of 100,000 digitized images and associated metadata the Getty Research Institute has made available via the Digital Public Library of America.

Rodley observes that a "central part of the missions of successful museums in the present century will be, as Will Noel puts it, 'to put the data in places where people can find it—making the data, as it were, promiscuous.'" Museums already hold their collections in trust for the public, both from an ethical and a legal perspective. Should the same principles apply to associated data? In that case, building digital infrastructure to support data sharing is as fundamental as creating exhibit galleries and collections storage facilities.

Museums traditionally regard some categories of data as secrets to be kept rather than as knowledge to be shared. For example, in natural history museums it has long been considered appropriate to redact data on collecting localities for sensitive, rare or endangered species. A recent paper in Collections Forum (see Further Reading, next page) challenges this convention, arguing that all collections data should be freely accessible unless such release contravenes applicable laws or regulations; is prohibited by an agreement with the collector, donor or landowner; or is justified in restriction by "very specific circumstances" (their emphasis). What circumstances warrant exemptions to a general commitment to "open?"

For museums, one important manifestation of the open culture movement is open authority, which Lori Byrd Phillips has defined as "a mixing of institutional expertise with the discussions, experiences, and insights of broad audiences." Museums are deconstructing, piece by piece, the authoritarian model that presumes control of what people see, what they learn and how they learn it. Open data vastly accelerates this trend, vaulting us into a world in which users bypass museum controls and filters and go straight to the source. That prospect can be pretty scary. Will open data deprive museums of income streams that come from mediated access? Will it mean that museum curators don't have first crack at publishing on collections they study?

On the other hand, when museums put their data out there for users to play with, they may learn a tremendous amount about what people value about their work, and how people want to work with them.

MUSEUMS MIGHT WANT TO ...

- Audit their data, decide what should be made "open," and create a timeline and budget for doing so. This audit should include an assessment of the challenges inherent in this process: What is the quality of the collections data? Are there legal restrictions on what can be released? What data should be prioritized, and why? Create policies regarding what data will be made public, and how. Consider what data, if any, will be kept confidential, and outline a rationale for those exceptions that is itself made publicly available.

- Treat data as an asset to be managed, tracked and (when appropriate)

monetized. Compiling data isn't cheap, whether it is an image bank created via digital scanning or information on visitor behavior amassed from a program such as the DMA Friends. To create a balanced economy of data, museums need to invest in infrastructure and ongoing costs, and this may be supported, in part, by the sale or licensing of data, to underwrite the portion that is provided in a free and open manner.

- Invite users to play with the museum's data. In February 2013 the White House held its first Open Data Day Hackathon, inviting programmers and technology experts to work with White House staff to build tools using the newly released We the People API. (API stands for Application Programming Interface—a set of protocols and tools for building software applications.) Data Jams, Hackathons and Datapaloozas are becoming common, and museums can instigate their own, encouraging scientists, artists, students, technologists and the general public to mess around with the museum's data, or play with data related to the museum's work and share the results.

- Publicize the open data available about the museum's collections, research and operations and encourage individuals, companies and government entities to use it in their own work. This is one way museums can contribute to civic planning, community activism, entrepreneurship and self-directed learning.

- Identify what public open data could be harnessed for the museum's own purposes—for example, city demographics, use of public and private transportation services, and school performance. «

Elizabeth Merritt is founding director, AAM's Center for the Future of Museums (CFM).

FURTHER READING

Ethics of Data in Civil Society, Conference Synthesis, September 2014. Lucy Bernholz and Rob Reich. (PDF, 11 pp.) Proceedings of a conference held at the Stanford University for the Ethics of Data in Civil Society Conference, September 15–16, 2014.

Beautiful Data: A Field Guide for Exploring Open Collections is a Web-based compendium of resources based on a workshop held June 16–27, 2014 at metaLAB (Harvard), supported by a grant from the Getty Foundation. The site includes a summary of the outcomes of the workshop, a prototyping game, "provocation cards" to prompt adventures in museums and case studies in the use of open data.

Policy guidelines for the development and promotion of open access, UNESCO, 2012. (PDF, 76 pp.) UNESCO's basic text on open access (OA), with recommendations for formulating OA policies. Includes nonprescriptive guidelines to facilitate adoption of open access.

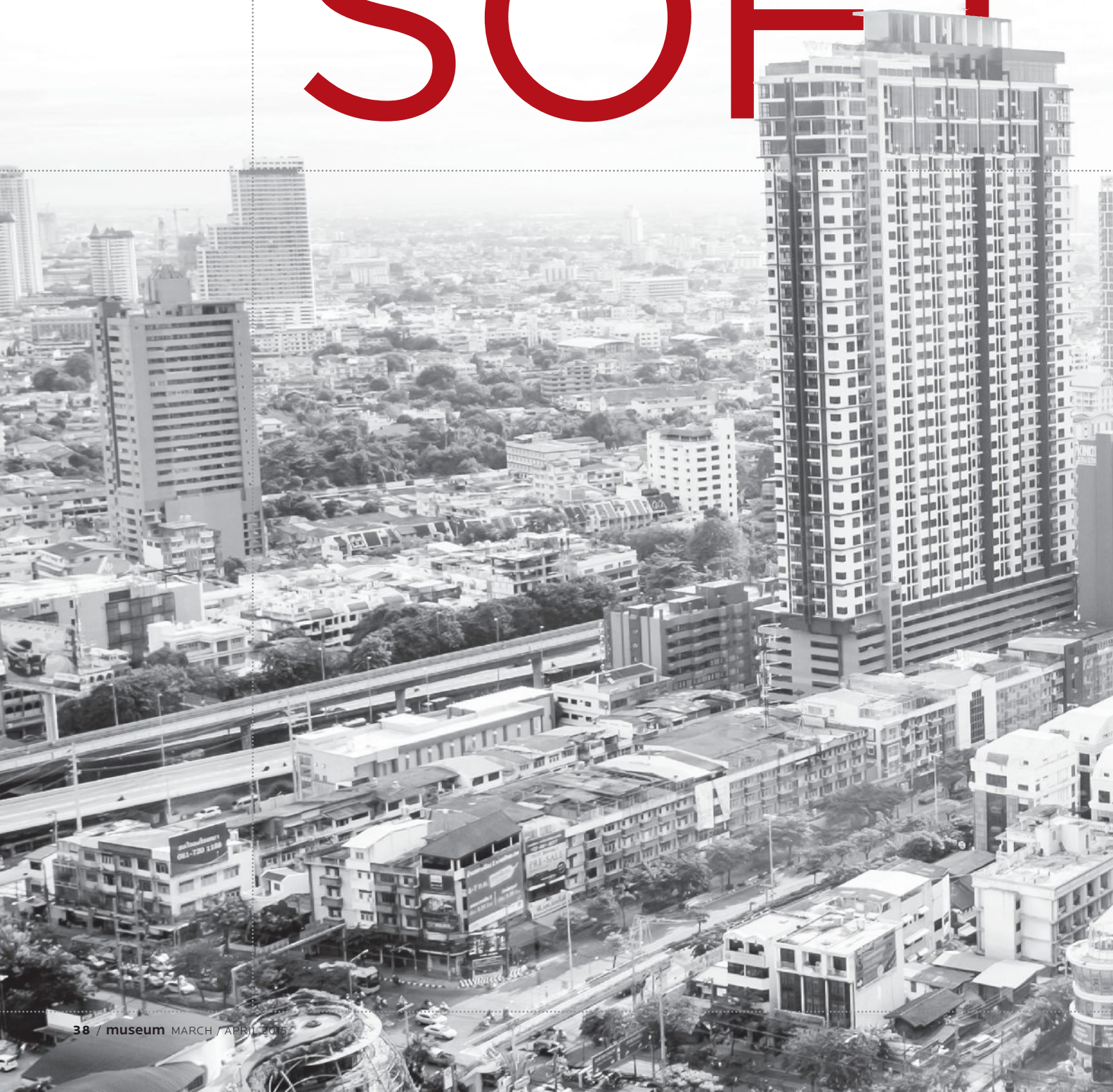
Opinion: Let Your Data Run Free? The Challenge of Data Redaction in Paleontological Collections. Christopher Norris and Susan Butts. Collection Forum 2014; 28 (1-2): 114–119. © 2014 Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections.

TrendsWatch 2015, a CFM publication, is accessible as a PDF at futureofmuseums.org. A print version is available for purchase beginning March 1 at aam-us.org/resources/bookstore.

TrendsWatch 2015 is made possible with the generous support of Alexander Haas, Aon, Blackbaud, Huntington T. Block and PGAV Destinations.

At the White House's second annual National Day of Civic Hacking, civic activists, technologists and entrepreneurs used publicly released government data to improve their communities.

WHY CITIES, MUSEUMS AND SOFT



POWER

An adapted excerpt from *Cities, Museums and Soft Power* by Gail Dexter Lord and Ngaire Blankenberg, available from The AAM Press in late April. Please go to aam-us.org/resources/bookstore for more information and to order your copy.

Museums and cities throughout the world are connecting in a soft power embrace.

Soft power is a concept that emerged a quarter century ago to describe international relations based not on military nor economic might, but on influence. Soft power is the ability to influence behavior using persuasion, attraction or agenda setting. Where the resources of "hard power" are tangible—force and finance—soft power resources are intangibles, such as ideas, knowledge, values and culture. Networks and connectivity enable soft power to spread its influence farther and deeper via Web-based networks and networks of cities. And where there are cities, there are museums.

Political scientist Joseph Nye, who first formulated the term in 1990, recently explained in *Soft Power Revisited: A Current History Anthology* how soft power has increased dramatically in the 21st century as the Information Revolution helped to distribute information of all kinds worldwide. In 2000 there were 5 million websites in the world; today there are more than 1 billion, and more than a third of the global population is online. As a result, more people participate in international conversations that were once the exclusive domain of states and corporations that had the economic and military power to exercise control. Today, Nye notes, information can be launched, exchanged and turned into action more quickly, less expensively, and among more people and organizations than ever before in the history of humankind.

The twin characteristics of soft power—the rise of cities and the role of civil society—are pushing museums from the margins toward the center of soft power.

In the not-too-distant past, museums and the arts were mainly impacted by hard power, which is where their funding and governance originated. National governments of all types and large private corporations were the main patrons. They exercised influence, both directly and indirectly, on what museums displayed and collected and how they presented their material. Michele Acuto notes in *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy, the Urban Link* that during the Cold War, the CIA, in its propaganda war against communism at home and abroad, secretly financed abstract expressionist exhibitions to promote the superiority of American freedom and creativity. In the more distant past, museums were repositories for war trophies, whether acquired from internal wars of aggression against indigenous people or other marginalized religious and ethnic communities, or from external conflicts and colonial conquest. In the museum setting, these trophies became objects of curiosity, displayed to communicate ideas about power and the hierarchy of "civilizations," so that there would be no doubt about the justice of "our empire" or the superiority of "our civilization." The objects that had been gifts between rulers somehow validated the notion of high cultural achievement among civilizations that had diplomatic relations. Natural history museums established a scientific standard for displaying collections in a systematic way that would soon be employed by museums of anthropology and ethnography. Art museums organized their galleries by country and school, such as "Northern Renaissance" or "Italian School," as though the political reality of ever-changing borders (and accompanying bloodshed) were somehow transcended by the glory of art.

Whether we date museums from the cathedral vault or the princely *schatzkammer,* from the great 18th-century universal collections or from childhood memories of geological wonders and terrifying dinosaurs, museums have always been powerful public spaces where the leading ideas of the time were presented. These ideas were often defined by the museum's dominant patrons, based on study of the objects that they collected and preserved. The ideas represented aren't always good ideas. Sometimes they are very bad ideas indeed, like eugenics and imperialism and man's "natural mastery" over nature. Nonetheless museums are places where ideas are openly presented and contested—and have been for hundreds of years.

Now museums are in a process of transformation from government and private organizations to institutions of civil society. By civil society we mean the network of organizations that represent neither big government nor large corporations, but have their roots in the voluntary and nonprofit sectors—often referred to as the "third sector" of the economy. This transformation started in the United States, which has been highly innovative in creating and sustaining the voluntary, nonprofit sector. The voluntary sector has been the cultural ethos of American democracy from its earliest days. In the last 40 years, economic changes such as the increasing concentration of wealth in private hands have stimulated the growth of civil society institutions worldwide. Economic and social theorist Jeremy Rifkin explains in *The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism* that the nonprofit economy is growing faster than the for-profit economy in many countries. More

and more museums are being shifted from the governmental and corporate sectors to the nonprofit sector. This shift in patronage has led to new governance structures that reflect a plurality of voices and influences. Rifkin explores how museums are finding themselves with new roles, responsibilities and expectations as a consequence of their place in civil society.

As government financing decreases both proportionately and in absolute numbers, the museum sector has become more dependent on new forms of patronage from foundations, philanthropists, sponsorship and earned sources. This has resulted in a change from inward-looking, collection-focused institutions to outward-facing, donor- and visitor-focused ones. This generational change occurred in two stages, and this book proposes that they are about to undergo a third—becoming centers of soft power.

The first stage was heralded by the American Association of Museums in 1992 when it released its landmark report, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*. The second transformation followed within a decade and can best be characterized as "Experience and Branding." From within the museum sector, there was a strong impetus to expand and intensify the impact that museums were having on the public. Books like B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore's *The Experience Economy* argued that people were no longer buying products but rather experiences. Museum professionals knew that they provided experiences in their galleries and programs. Now these experiences needed to be enhanced and packaged—packaged through branding.

Museums suddenly had a new importance in the city. They were contemporary landmarks. Not only brands in and of themselves, but also incorporated into the brand of the city. Museums were now seen as an integral part of the promise of their cities.

Museums are in a process of transformation from government and private organizations to institutions of civil society—the network of organizations that have their roots in the voluntary and nonprofit sectors.

In 2000, the opening of Tate Modern in London was seen as a triumph of branding. Tate became synonymous with London as the capital of "Cool Britannia." This dynamic combination of experience and brand became the foundation for a consumer boom in museums, helping to overcome some of the marketing defects from which museums have suffered: for example, that the permanent collection will "always be there," so there is no urgency to visit. The big experience—whether it is the the Museum of Modern Art's 2013 "Rain Room" or the famous traveling "The Treasures of King Tut" of the 1970s and '80s—is time bound. You need to consume it during the limited time it is there, in your city or on your screen.

New technology and impressive architecture certainly intensified the experience. The remarkable success of the Guggenheim in Bilbao,

inaugurated in 1997, proves that the experience of space and place can be more memorable than the exhibitions. The Guggenheim "brand" expresses the meaning of this museum—its sophistication and its relationship to the world of nonobjective art.

The explosion in "experience architecture" highly influenced the brand of the museum and the brand of the city. In many cases, the experience of the building was the experience of the museum. When Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin opened in 2001, it was without exhibits—the building itself was the storyteller. Symbolic storytelling museum buildings continue to attract visitors and debate: Le musée du quai Branly (Paris 2006), Jean Nouvel's metaphorical journey into the worlds of "the other"; the EMP Museum (Seattle 2000), which Frank Gehry shaped after Jimi Hendrix's smashed electric guitar; the King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture (under construction in Dhahran) evokes the subterranean stones, the source of petroleum and gas that brought cultural change to Saudi Arabia. Experience architecture creates new landmarks, speaking even to those who never enter the building.

The third stage in the generational transformation of museums is just beginning: the shift from sites of branded experience to places of soft power.

The emerging soft power of museums responds to three social realities: competition among cities for talent, tourism and investment; the forces of globalization and information technology, resulting in new forms of citizenship; and the growing public participation of women.

As of 2008, for the first time in human history, more than 50 percent of the world population lives in cities, and cities account for 80 percent of the global GDP. In wealthy countries, about 80 percent of the population already lives in cities—and city populations in the rest of the world are continuing to grow toward comparable levels. This means that enormous numbers of people are migrating to cities, between and within countries. Property costs are rising in cities worldwide. Cities are on the leading edge of managing the integration process, as new residents and old learn to live together. Cities throughout the world are evolving their own soft power to advocate for solutions to global issues affecting their residents.

Cities use their soft power to compete in attracting talented workers, clean knowledge-based industries and high-spending tourists. The creative economy consists of science, engineering, research and development, technology-based industries, arts, music, culture, design, and the knowledge-based professions of health care, finance and law. One hundred years ago during the era of the industrial economy, fewer than 10 percent of the population was employed in this way. Today, according to economist Richard Florida, it is as high as 47 percent in Singapore, 46 percent in Amsterdam and 37 percent in Toronto.

Florida has persuasively argued that creative workers gravitate to certain urban environments because the creative economy depends on access to people and ideas, not to land, natural resources or raw materials. Creative workers can and do move from place to place in pursuit of the best work environments.

As the principal custodians of human capital, cities experience the immediate benefits of a healthy, happy, productive and sustainably growing population. Conversely cities suffer the consequences of poverty, marginalization, pollution, inequality and unemployment. Cities are addressing urban challenges by mobilizing networks, including universities and colleges,

The Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art offers socially inclusive spaces to an increasingly diverse public.

cultural institutions and museums, government agencies, private sector organizations and individual citizens using their soft power to change behavior or to come up with innovative solutions.

Cities are magnets for civil society organizations in a myriad of fields, such as health care, poverty reduction, environment, democracy and the arts. The new and expanded museums built in the last 17 years are mainly located in cities: 44 percent in cities of 1.5 million people or more and 20 percent in smaller cities with populations between 200,000 and 1.5 million, according to professor and researcher Guido Guerzoni. Formerly referred to as "the third sector," it is now being described as the social commons where people generate "the goodwill that allows society to cohere as a cultural entity," says Rifkin in *The Zero Marginal Cost Society*.

Prominent museum associations are asking how museums, which are now more than ever civil society institutions, can contribute to this social commons. The Museum Association in the UK launched a campaign on July 1, 2013, called "Museums Change Lives," promoting the impact of museums on "individuals, communities, society and the environment." The American Alliance of Museums has themed its 2015 Annual Meeting "The Social Value of Museums."

Cities attract visitors, including tourists, visiting friends and relatives and students. Many of these visitors immerse themselves in the city's values as expressed in the city brand—tours, festivals, events, shopping, museums, theater, sights and sounds and contact with citizens. With over a billion tourists annually worldwide, tourism has become a significant economic, social and cultural force. Tourism is being harnessed to address a number of issues, from the environment to development goals. Museums are particularly suited for tourism. Unlike many other cultural forms in the city, they are open throughout the year, offer facilities for group

Women are more powerful in museums than in other cultural industries. Museums may open up a new front for feminism and soft power.

tours and enable an instant overview of a new culture and city for a wide range of travelers.

The very idea of citizenship derives from the city and the special status that was conferred on city dwellers. Today citizenship is a matter for national governments and involves issues of sovereignty. And perhaps paradoxically, not all citi-zens (city dwellers) are equal.

A global city is a place where the services essential to the work of globalization congregate: the lawyers, accountants, management consultants, hedge-fund managers and the like—those who are needed to operate international corporations.

Renowned sociologist Saskia Sassen points out in *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* three "structural facts" about global cities: they concentrate wealth among owners, partners and professionals associated with the global firms; they are increasingly disconnected from their region and country; they are also home to a large marginalized population that does not benefit from the financial activities of the big firms. Global cities are unequal and growing more so every day. They are in fact two cities: one experienced by its elite in fenced-off, privatized spaces; and another experienced by the service workers, industrial work force, unemployed, children and youth whose sense of belonging or home is fragile and easily taken away. Museums are increasingly funded by the elites even as they turn their programming toward the others.

While global cities are at the forefront of technology and development, often creating new nodes of power, the structured inequality of contemporary global cities is surprisingly similar to the postcolonial city. One impact of colonialism on cities was to formalize inequality by turning "natives" into migrants and foreigners. This legacy is exacerbated today by the forces of globalization and increasing sprawl.

Most major cities are home to a number of immigrants, labor migrants and others who are part of equally complex, transnational networks. It may seem invisible and powerless, but this labor class is also developing new forms of power and influence through trade and soft power.

Public libraries are creating spaces for people to exercise agency through information technology. It is no coincidence that Toronto, which welcomes 125,000 immigrants a year, also has the top performing public library system in North America. Toronto's library system, like so many others, exemplifies the "sharing economy" and the social commons: everyone has access to information in an uplifting space where people can build a shared sense of identity and trust. Most library systems are civil society institutions that are city- or county-funded and governed by local citizens with support from foundations and friends organizations. Museums are studying libraries to learn from their experience.

Studies have shown that women make up nearly two-thirds of service workers, 60 percent of university campuses, 60

percent of students in courses related to the cultural sector (UK) and more than half the creative class. Women also participate more on social media than men. While women continue to be underrepresented in spheres of political power, they continue to flock to civil society, voluntary and philanthropic organizations and online participation. Women have a better chance of being in a leadership role in the social commons than they do in the political realm, although the glass ceiling here is also thick and bruising.

Women have been relatively successful in the social and cultural commons, including city government, compared to national and state-level political processes and in corporations. Museums in particular offer women an important role in the public realm that they may not have otherwise.

In the U.S. and the UK, women are still underrepresented as directors in the major museums, although the disparity is mostly driven by the largest museums. For most museums, however, with budgets of less than $15 million, female directors on average earn $1.02 for every dollar that male directors earn. In addition, women compose about 63 percent of all professional and senior-level staff in the field, twice the average representation of men. The percentage may be even higher if one counts women who are currently serving as interim directors, consultants, and heads of professional associations and university museum studies programs.

AAM's *2014 National Museum Salary Study* showed that in the U.S., women outnumber men 2 to 1 in director positions of small museums, those with annual operating budgets up to $250,000. "The disparity decreases with budget size," the study states, "and at museums with budgets at or above $1M, the ratio flips and men start to outnumber women. At museums with budgets over $3M, the ratio of female to male directors is 1 to 1.3." Women directors earn only 71 cents for every dollar paid to male directors, the study showed, as calculated from the median in this field-wide survey.

While there are still disparities between the genders in museums, notably among the most senior positions in major museums, on the whole, women are more powerful in museums than in other cultural industries where they represent less than half of the work force. Women comprise the majority of museum workers but have still not achieved equality in the executive offices or in the boardroom. The power that women have is based in the social commons. Museums may open up a new front for feminism and soft power.

Museums are beginning to understand themselves as networked civil society institutions with soft power that can enhance the importance of cities and empower their residents and visitors.

Museums enhance the soft power of cities when they are signifiers of pride and distinctiveness; when they are anchors providing stability, memory, employment and a forum for exchanging ideas; and when they are nodes in an international cultural network promoting lasting relationships among and between cultural workers and civil society.

Museums empower people when they are patrons for artists and thinkers; when they amplify civic discourse, accelerate cultural change and contribute to cultural intelligence among the great diversity of city dwellers, visitors, policy makers and leaders. The very presence of museums signifies that a city is proud of its culture. «

CASE STUDY

How AAM Remade Its Business Model and Reconnected with Its Membership

THROUGHOUT THE SPRING AND summer of 2012, staffers at the American Association of Museums had been spending so much time huddling in a small conference room at their Washington, DC, headquarters that they dubbed it "the war room."

The windowless enclave had become "a place where we had constant meetings," says Janet Vaughan, AAM's vice president of membership and excellence. Vaughan and a half dozen other association employees served on an implementation team coordinating a top-to-bottom relaunch of AAM. They were working to reinvent its membership model; deploy a new technology infrastructure and an entirely new website; expand and simplify the decades-old process of accrediting museums; restructure a loose-knit collection of almost two dozen professional networking groups within the association; and launch a new name and logo. The team members and their colleagues felt that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform the organization.

It was an intense period of transition for the 106-year-old AAM. The membership rolls had been in decline since 2000, and financial losses had been exacerbated by the economic meltdown that began in 2008. Outreach and member retention campaigns were ineffectual. Put simply, Vaughan says, "members were finding it increasingly difficult to justify the value of belonging." As with a political campaign, there was a finish line that everyone was sprinting toward: the first week of September 2012.

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The association's headquarters are just a few blocks from the White House, and AAM tended

Timeline of Changes at AAM

2007 — Ford Bell becomes president of the American Association of Museums.

2008 — As recession deepens, Congress considers leaving museums out of stimulus funding. AAM plans first Museums Advocacy Day for February 2009.

2009 — AAM's worst year financially includes layoffs and hiring freezes. Five-year project to reinvent AAM accreditation begins. "The Spark" strategic plan adopted.

2010 — AAM explores how to operationalize "The Spark" plan; Laura Lott joins as chief financial officer and begins conducting a detailed analysis of AAM's finances and strategy.

to think of itself as another Washington institution that had built up significant stature and influence since its creation in 1906—the undisputed leader of the museum field. But when Ford Bell, AAM's new president, arrived in mid-2007, it was becoming clear that the organization's sense of itself was not shared by museums and museum professionals.

Many museums felt they were getting more from a sector-specific association like the Association of Children's Museums or a regional association like the Western Museums Association. Social networks like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter were making it easier for professionals in the museum field to connect online and communicate with each other; in-person meetings organized by an association like AAM were no longer the only game in town. Bell's assessment, shortly after taking over as president: "We were on a path to irrelevancy, and I think AAM's board knew it. The big question was, what are we doing of value? We didn't have a lot of time to come up with an answer."

Replacing a president who had served for two decades, Bell arrived just in time for a paralyzing recession that affected AAM with layoffs and hiring freezes. And long-time AAM employees describe an organizational culture during that period with little collaboration or communication across departments, and with each group fighting to win and then protect its annual budget allocation—doing its own thing without much thought to the overall strategy.

When Bell tried to get a handle on AAM's financial state, he says it felt like "trying to grab butter—I couldn't get answers to anything." He brought in an accounting consultant from BDO to analyze the association's finances and recruited Laura Lott, a senior executive from National Geographic, to become AAM's first official chief financial officer. Her analysis found that AAM was spending an average of $600,000 a year from its reserves. In 2009, the worst year, AAM was $1.1 million in the red. "We had about five years before we'd essentially go out of business," she says.

One of many wake-up calls for AAM came in the midst of the worsening recession, as Congress hammered out stimulus legislation. AAM's influence on Capitol Hill came into question as elected officials considered whether museums ought to be eligible for stimulus funds. Ultimately museums were added to the list of those eligible for money through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, but zoos and aquariums were not. The inclusion of museums

Results from membership survey point to need for dramatic changes. Investment in new IT systems and equipment begins. Staff designs a new model for membership.

2011

2012

Board approves new membership paradigm and Continuum of Excellence concept, along with a new logo and new name: the American Alliance of Museums. On September 5, the new name, logo, website and membership model are unveiled.

Roll-out of communications plan continues, along with new features added to website and *Museum* magazine redesign.

2013

2014

New, 50 percent shorter self-study for accreditation launches online.

was regarded as a win for AAM, but the difficulties highlighted the need for the entire field to speak with one voice.

AAM's new vice president of government relations & advocacy, Gail Ravnitzky Silberglied, launched the first field-wide Museums Advocacy Day in 2009, bringing several hundred museum directors and staffers to Washington to meet with lawmakers. The event began to build significant momentum, and AAM began to add staff members focused on advocacy.

The organization's website and internal technology infrastructure were rapidly approaching retirement age, and when Bell arrived, there was no unified membership department. "Processing, sending out renewals and customer service were handled in three different departments," Vaughan recalls. Since membership dues were based on the size of a museum's operating budget, there was an incentive to "self-discount," or downplay budget size. In 2008, Bell assigned Vaughan to create a membership department and gave her the title of senior director of membership.

Finally, AAM's accreditation process, which certified that a museum's policies, facilities and personnel were operating at an extremely high level, "was beginning to collapse," says Gary Johnson, president of the Chicago History Museum. "The list of requirements got bigger and bigger, and nothing was ever removed." It wasn't unusual for the process to stretch across three years or more. In addition to several thousand dollars of fees that AAM charged, jumping through the accreditation hoops "almost required hiring a new staff member, just because there was so much work involved," Johnson says. AAM announced a five-year project to reinvent accreditation.

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By the summer of 2009, the seriousness of AAM's predicament was becoming difficult to ignore. At the urging of the board's chair, Carl Nold of Historic New England, and its vice chair, Doug Myers of San Diego Zoo Global, AAM developed a strategic plan called "The Spark," adopted in November 2009. It defined AAM's mission: "to strengthen museums through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and service." It described beliefs ("museums strengthen communities") and values ("integrity and inclusiveness"). It spelled out the need to build a more financially stable organization, make the accreditation process more accessible, and serve as a more vocal advocate for the field at the state and national levels.

It was hard to argue with the vision for the future that "The Spark" distilled: "We will champion the vital role of museums in the 21st

century." But what exactly did that mean, and how would it happen? No one disagreed with "The Spark," but AAM's staffers were "struggling to figure out how to implement it," says Marjie George, AAM's director of member services. "We needed some kind of earthquake moment to shake things up."

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There was an incredible amount of work necessary to make that "earthquake moment" arrive. Board members and staff began working together to explore ways to operationalize "The Spark," focusing on how to make membership more compelling and beneficial to a broader range of museums. AAM engaged the consulting firm McKinsey & Company to diagnose some of the problems with accreditation, a program in which fewer than 5 percent of U.S. museums chose to participate.

A new senior director of information technology, Canan Abayhan, joined AAM in 2010. Even while Lott was looking to trim expenditures, the organization decided it had no choice but to make a major investment in technology infrastructure. Abayhan, Lott and Bell agreed that 2010 would be a year for stabilizing the existing IT systems, cutting costs through measures like backing up data offsite and enhancing the website's functionality. The following year, though, was about designing and deploying an entirely new infrastructure. Abayhan brought in new accounting software from Microsoft and an association management system from Aptify to drive the e-commerce functionality of the new website. Aptify would allow members to not only sign up on the website but complete tasks online like proposing annual meeting sessions. Most importantly, Aptify could be configured to support the new membership structure that was emerging.

AAM also contracted with Shugoll Research to survey members and nonmembers, with the goal of understanding why they belonged—or didn't. Survey results presented in July 2011 demonstrated that a big obstacle to attracting new members was the cost of membership, as was the "perception that AAM better meets the needs of large museums. This is a particular challenge since most nonmembers are small museums." Members said that they had trouble justifying the cost of AAM membership, and often felt forced to make either/or decisions about joining AAM or a regional or discipline-specific association. Nonmembers greatly underestimated the cost of joining—and even then thought the cost was too high.

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In 2012 AAM demonstrated unequivocally its commitment to systemic change. The biggest shift was in the association's core revenue stream: membership. Membership dues represented about 40 percent of AAM's overall budget and were calculated using a one-size-fits-all approach, based on a museum's self-reported operating budget. All museums received the same benefits, regardless of the amount they paid.

Guided by survey findings, AAM broadened its membership options, creating three tiers so that museums could choose the level of benefits and engagement that worked best for them. The top tier provided the most benefits and was priced at $150–$5,000 a year based on a museum's staff size, reducing dues by two-thirds for the largest museums and significantly for most others. The bottom tier was launched as pay what you can, a concept was borrowed from the museum field. AAM eliminated separate fees for belonging to the Standing Professional Committees and Professional Interest Committees and took more control of their management.

The association also devised the Continuum of Excellence, a series of stepping stones leading to accreditation. The very first step is membership and the next step is taking the Pledge of

Excellence to "strive to operate according to national standards and best practices to the best of our abilities and in accordance with our resources." Further steps include verifying possession of core documents, such as a disaster plan and code of ethics. The highest level of achievement on the journey is accreditation. The idea, starting with the online pledge, was to create a larger pipeline of institutions that might eventually seek accreditation. All accreditation procedures moved online. Instead of filling binders with paper, museums could update documents such as a new mission statement or strategic plan as they developed them. The process can now be completed in 50 percent of the time previously required.

As 2012 progressed, some worried that all of the organizational changes might not be visible enough to AAM's current, past and prospective members. AAM's creative director, Susan Levine, had begun developing a new logo that encouraged her colleagues to mull the possibility of a rebranding. The board started to consider that question, and also whether the name American Association of Museums effectively captured the organization's ambitions. They hired the communications agency Satori Engine to develop a new logo and new name to reflect the changes. They considered names like the National Association of Museums and the United Museum Association before settling on the American Alliance of Museums, which would allow AAM to retain its initials. The word "alliance," Lott wrote in an internal memo, "conveys our priority: we will unite the diverse elements of the field." To replace the old logo, a triad of interlocking letters, Satori Engine presented a new logo concept evoking colorful woven fabric. The new name and new logo first surfaced in late August 2012, along with a simpler, more streamlined website built with help from design agency Bean Creative.

Once the first of the major changes rolled out in September, the reaction of the museum field was overwhelmingly positive. Nearly 100 museums joined AAM in the two months following the relaunch—and almost 1,700 in the next two years. After September 2012, there were other key milestones: a redesigned *Museum* magazine, enhancements to AAM's website, salary surveys, and new directories and databases online.

By 2012, AAM was again operating in the black—just barely—after four consecutive money-losing years. In 2013, AAM netted $530,000, its biggest surplus in more than a decade. And in the first year after the "earthquake moment," AAM membership increased by 34 percent, not only reversing a dozen years of decline, but setting a new record. AAM was surprised that more members than it had expected were enrolling at the highest level. Staff had expected about 23 percent of all members to drop into the lowest tier; in reality, just 13 percent did.

By 2013, AAM had gone from representing 15 percent of all U.S. museums to about 20 percent. But there was more work to do, like encouraging more museums to "climb the staircase" toward accreditation. Bell saw international reach as a new area of emphasis, working to bring more international museums to the annual meeting, and to create new collaborations in places such as China, Brazil and Saudi Arabia.

"It was a really magical time in the fall and into 2013," says Myers. "We caught this thing at the bottom, and by working together we turned it around." «

For the complete version of this report, *The Reinvention of AAM: A Case Study*, please go to aam-us.org/about-us.

Case Study Lessons

AAM successfully implemented multiple major organizational changes at once. Although the groundwork for change was laid over several years, AAM took less than a year to go from concept to new brand launch, technology infrastructure rebuild and tiered membership paradigm creation. Typically such changes are spread over several years and phased in sequentially. AAM's changes, however, had a dramatic impact precisely because they happened in short sequence. For AAM, this strategy created tremendous efficiencies as well. At its simplest, redesigning and reprinting the membership materials to reflect both the program changes and the new brand meant doing it only once.

AAM did three key things to make this large-scale, fast-paced change successful:

1. Identify change agents.

AAM's leadership was deliberate in identifying key staff at all levels of the organization and with various lengths of service—from 20 years of employment to new hires—to play critical roles in carrying out the organizational changes. These staff members were explicitly coached. They understood from the beginning that they were being counted on as change agents and expected to play a pivotal role in the success of AAM's reinvention. They would also serve as inspiration for other staff, helping them to get excited about and engaged in the changes happening across the organization. The change agent group met regularly as equals to coordinate many moving parts. They read articles on change management and discussed how to help ease the anxiety of colleagues. Occasionally they participated in what came to be known as "liquid teambuilding"—critical informal time when they were able to commiserate, share fears and think unconventionally at the local pub.

2. Empower staff to think creatively.

AAM is often asked what consulting firm helped develop the radical ideas and changes that were ultimately implemented. The reality is that the best ideas came from within, with lots of shaping from AAM's volunteers, members and other constituents (more on that below). The leadership at AAM made it clear that no idea was too radical; nothing was off the table. Innovative and unconventional—even counterintuitive—solutions to AAM's challenges were prized. With this invitation and a few models of bold thinking, the culture shifted. Staff members who had been waiting to be told what to do now took the initiative in promoting change and innovation. Those who had once clung to the status quo embraced new thinking and developed pride in efficient and effective changes. Departments also became more interdependent. As a result, staff were more accountable to themselves and to each other, not wanting to let their colleagues down.

3. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate more.

Potential changes were shared, thoughtfully but broadly, at all levels of the organization as they were being contemplated. Testing out new ideas refined details of the changes, clarified the ultimate communication about the "new" AAM and, perhaps most importantly, built confidence among the leadership and staff that they were on the right track. This growing confidence fueled the momentum of change and innovation. Of course, longtime volunteers and supporters of the organization were given a preview of the changes before they launched publicly. There was also a strategy to offer a sneak preview of the changes to those who had been most critical of the organization in the past. In the end, it worked to have multiple champions across the country who understood the changes in more depth and could help counter the skepticism and criticism that would inevitably follow major changes at a 106-year-old organization.

AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo 2015

The Social Value of Museums: Inspiring Change

At the conclusion of AAM's 2014 Annual Meeting in Seattle, David Fleming was mobbed by a standing room-only crowd that came to hear his Big Ideas presentation on how museums can promote social justice. As director of National Museums Liverpool, Fleming articulated brilliantly how "doing good" through inclusivity practices can prompt "doing well" by greatly increasing visitorship.

An adapted version of Fleming's speech was the cover story of the July/August 2014 issue of *Museum*. The theme of museums' social value was a natural for this year's meeting in Atlanta, birthplace of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and home to the new National Center of Civil and Human Rights. Authoritative voices will focus on this crucial topic throughout the program at AAM's 2015 Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo.

As communities struggle to keep up with the pace of a more connected world, museums are under pressure to reinforce their roles within a strained and evolving society. April's meeting will be the perfect venue for an ongoing field-wide conversation about museums' capacity to inform and inspire change. Following are some highlights of this timely and constructive gathering.

Big Ideas

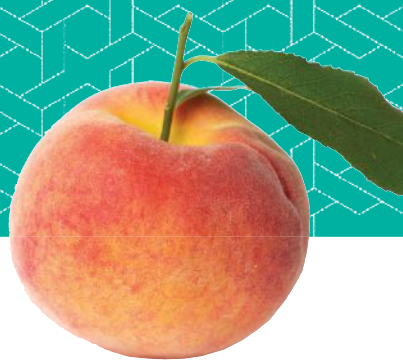
Frans B. M. de Waal

Frans B.M. de Waal is director of the Living Links Center at the Yerkes National Primate Center and the C.H. Candler Professor of Psychology at Emory University in Atlanta. His research focusing on primate social intelligence and behavior has been widely published and translated in books and journals, making him a leading primatologist and one of *Time* magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2007. His Big Ideas session, "The Evolution of Connectivity: Primate Social Skills," is sure to be a treat.

Pearl Cleage

Pearl Cleage has earned commercial and critical success as an educator, author and playwright tackling difficult social issues through stories largely set in her hometown of Atlanta. Cleage offsets the gritty nature of her work with themes of optimism, positive change and transformation, and belief in the power of romantic love. Her first novel, *What Looks Like Crazy* on an *Ordinary Day*, spent nine weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list and was selected as an Oprah Book Club pick. Her views on the social value of museums help continue and expand the discussion we began at last year's conference.

April 26–29, Atlanta



Highlights and New Features

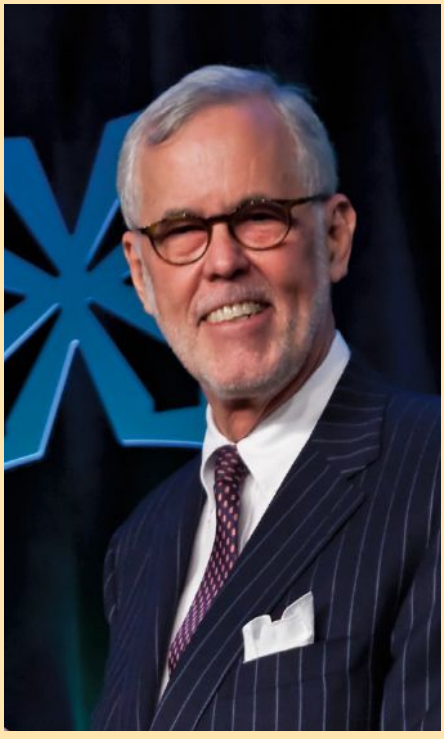
A National Program Committee of museum professionals from across the globe selected sessions for this year's program. A revised track structure will present sessions through new formats that inspire interactive and dynamic discussions among participants and presenters. For example, **MuseumTalks** feature thought leaders from within the museum community sharing insights inspired by the meeting theme, while **Conversation Starters** offer quick examples from the field that address the conference theme within peer-to-peer table discussions.

Back by popular demand in MuseumExpo, the **Federal Pavilion** serves as a one-stop-shop for information and resources from federal agencies and partners. Located in the Technology Innovation Zone, the **Learning Lab Stage** will highlight and demonstrate new front- and back-end technology solutions, including display, gamification, mobile applications and visitor experience systems. The **Emerging Innovators Forum** also returns from 2014 to showcase museum exhibition and programming ideas from current students or emerging professionals with less than three years' experience in the field. Also be sure to check out selected panels from the NAMES Project Foundation's **AIDS Memorial Quilt,** displayed with the help of the AAM LGBTQ Alliance.

Last but not least, the 2015 meeting is an opportunity to bid farewell to AAM President and CEO **Ford Bell**, who is retiring in May. Serving at AAM's helm for seven years, Bell is headed to his home state of Minnesota. The Alliance and members of the field will take opportunities throughout the conference to thank and appreciate our leader, friend and tireless advocate.

"We hired Ford in 2007 with the unanimous belief that he was the best choice—a leader with vision, commitment and a passion for the museum field. I am so pleased that Ford exceeded our expectations, significantly advancing AAM during his tenure. From the founding of the Center for the Future of Museums to a robust year-round advocacy strategy and unparalleled membership growth, Ford's work with the boards, staff, members and partners has been greatly appreciated over the years. Ford has led with an enthusiasm and commitment that emanates from a very special place in his heart for museums, and we are fortunate that Ford has led AAM towards a sustained path for the future."

—Irene Hirano, AAM Board Chair, 2006–08



"Since assuming AAM leadership eight years ago, Ford has done an amazing job leading us to greater heights. It has been an absolute pleasure to work closely with Ford as chair of the AAM board. I speak on behalf of the entire board in expressing our deep gratitude to Ford for his dedication to the entire museum field. With the infrastructure he's built, and the bold innovation that he has inspired, AAM is poised to enter a bright new chapter; and now, with global growth in mind. It's impossible to overstate his value to AAM, but I will try my best when the field convenes for his last official annual meeting in April."

—Kaywin Feldman, AAM Board Chair, 2014 –16

Places to See, Things to Do

Centennial Olympic Park

265 Park Ave. West N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30313
(.2 miles from Georgia World Congress Center)

The Atlanta community came together with private-sector funds to transform this expansive tract of property from a site of urban decay into a "town square" for the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Tragedy struck on day nine of the games, when three pipe bombs were detonated near an amphitheater where spectators had gathered for a late-night R&B concert. The attack left two dead and 111 wounded. The games continued and the park persevered as a living testament of the city's motto, *Resurgens* ("rising again").

National Center for Civil and Human Rights

100 Ivan Allen Jr. Blvd. N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30313
(.5 miles from Georgia World Congress Center)

The National Center for Civil and Human Rights connects Atlanta's civil rights history to contemporary issues and debates related to civil and human rights. The center documents and interprets the civil rights movement through research and public programs while also serving as a setting to discuss and manage contemporary issues on a national and global scale. Opened last July, it is

now one of Atlanta's three members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site

450 Auburn Ave. N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30312
(2.4 miles from Georgia World Congress Center)

The Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site celebrates the life and legacy of one of Atlanta's favorite sons. Administered by the National Park Service, this site in Atlanta's Sweet Auburn neighborhood includes Dr. King's birthplace and boyhood home on Auburn Avenue, Ebenezer Baptist Church, his final resting place, and other monuments and interpretation centers.

Piedmont Park

14th St. and Piedmont Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30309
(2.8 miles from Georgia World Congress Center; accessible by MARTA)

Known as Atlanta's "Common Ground," Piedmont Park has grown from farm to fairground to urban park over the course of nearly 200 years. This year marks the 120th anniversary of the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition, where Booker T. Washington delivered his famous Atlanta Compromise speech, arguing that "in all things social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." With a more recent history dating back to the first-year anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City, the park now hosts one of America's largest annual Pride events and serves as heart and soul for Atlanta's LGBT communities. «

Check out the American Alliance of Museums
2015 Product Preview Guide,
giving you a sneak peek at some of the products and services
on view in MuseumExpo.
Join us April 26–29 in Atlanta for the
AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo
Please see more at aam-us.org/am15.

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p. 64: Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 2013. © Nick Cave. Photo by James Prinz Photography. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

SMALL MUSEUMS

Tackling Uncatalogued Collections

BY ANGELA KIPP AND JANICE KLEIN

It may be the entire museum's collection, compiled over several decades, or a large collection acquired from a single donor, or even the cabinet in your office where you hide the "backlog" of accessioned objects that have never been fully processed. Whatever the origin, you now find yourself responsible for cataloguing a large group of objects, none of which have much in the way of documentation, and you have limited staff, money and time. This is not only a common issue in smaller museums, but one faced by larger institutions.

While there is no magic spell to solve this problem, there are some practical ways to approach it.

A few things you need to remember before you start. First, this is a long-term project. The problem has probably existed for many years, and you certainly aren't going to fix it in a single day, week or even month. It's unlikely that you will be able to work on this project from start to finish. You may only be able to work on it during your off-season, or have the necessary help of an intern or other assistant for only a set period of time. And in a smaller museum it is certain that you will be interrupted by more critical activities and even a crisis or two. Finally, it's important that your overall plan can be broken down into small steps, with "logical exits": stopping points that allow you to take an extended break in the work or for someone else to pick up where you left off.

The key to working with a large undocumented collection is to think in terms of processing the whole collection,

not individual objects. While collections management "best practices" focus on treating each object individually, with fully descriptive computer entries, photographs, condition assessments and proper mounts and storage conditions, large, uncatalogued collections call for a different approach.

One model that American archivists have been working with for the last 10 years is called "More Product, Less Process" (MPLP). Based on guidelines proposed by Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner ("More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," *American Archivist* 68, no. 2, Fall/Winter 2005), MPLP focuses on doing the least amount necessary to describe, organize and preserve the collection so that it is available for users as quickly as possible.

Translating this to museum collections, the question becomes how to identify the key processes and pare them down to the minimum that makes the collection usable and safe.

1. OWNERSHIP

The first and most important determination is whether or not the museum actually owns the collection and also if it wants to retain everything or only a portion of the objects. If this is not the case, then the amount of information gathered and the time and materials expended should be even more limited.

2. DESCRIPTION

The next step is to decide what information is absolutely necessary for someone to work with the collection. Detailed documentation can be added later, but for now the goal is to create a record, usually an electronic entry in a computer database, for each object.

A unique number must be assigned to each object; most often this will be the permanent catalogue number, but there may be situations where a temporary number is preferable. This number must also be securely attached to the object. Paper tags are easiest. Smaller objects can be placed in resealable bags with the number written on the outside or on a

tag that is then put in the bag.

It may be useful to group objects and identify them as "100 coffee makers" or "100 stone tools," but remember to assign each one an individual number and create a separate record for each. Categorization not only saves time, but it also allows you to take full advantage of interns or visiting experts to add detailed information later.

Following the MPLP philosophy, the description should be the least number of terms needed to make the object identifiable. This will vary from collection to collection, but—in addition to the unique number—a generic name, approximate measurements (to the nearest inch or centimeter) and one or two more descriptors should suffice. Some examples are physical shape or the object's geographic or cultural origin. Photographs of each object are also extremely useful, but you need to ensure the object number is visible in the picture so you can associate the image with the object at a later date, if necessary.

One caution: if you are using a collections management system with a multitude of fields and screens, you may find it easier to create a separate Excel spreadsheet with only the fields you are recording for this project. Although Excel has limited searching and organizing capabilities, it comes as part of the standard Microsoft Office Suite and translates easily into ASCII code and thus other programs.

3. CONDITION REPORT AND CONSERVATION

Unless the object needs immediate care, don't bother with condition reports, repair or stabilization. You can note a few extreme problems on the object's record, including if it is broken and into how many pieces. Otherwise just move on.

4. STORAGE

It is an unfortunate truism that good (proper) storage takes at least twice as much room as bad storage. Making individual mounts also takes time and resources. Again, think in terms

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PEOPLE

NEW JOBS

Bradley C. Brooks to curator of the Bayou Bend Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Benjamin L. Clark to manager, Hall of History & Father Flanagan House, Boys Town, Nebraska.

Nathan Stalvey to director, Clarke County Historical Association, Berryville, Virginia.

Gerald W. Cloud to Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Curator of Early Books and Manuscripts, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

▲ **John Elderfield** to Allen R. Adler, Class of 1967, Distinguished Curator and Lecturer, Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey.

Evan Clements to director of grounds, **James Quint** to director of education and **Celia Galens** to engagement coordinator, Historic Columbia, Columbia, South Carolina.

Deirdre Maher to director of communications, Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia.

Doug Allen to chief information officer, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

Tiffany Patterson to director and **Lisa Chastain** to assistant director, Missouri State Museum, Jefferson City.

Elizabeth Athens to assistant curator of American art, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts.

Sheryl Kingery Mays to director, Cape Fear Museum, Wilmington, North Carolina.

Janet Feldstein McKillop to vice president of development, J. Paul Getty Trust, Los Angeles.

Stéphane Aquin to chief curator, Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC.

▲ **Rebecca Shulman Herz** to director, Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum, Peoria, Illinois.

▲ **James Pepper Henry** to executive director, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Trevor Owens to senior program officer, national digital platform, Office of Library Services, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Washington, DC.

Sarah Alger to director, Paul S. Russell, MD Museum of Medical History and Innovation, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.

Tamara R. Bailey (above left), **Khary Bridgewater, Sydney DeVos, Tony S. Lawrence** (above right), **Jane Boyles Meilner** (above center), **Christopher Rosmarin, Joy Uddin and Douglas Williams** to board of trustees, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Michigan.

John Dichtl to president & chief executive officer and **Bob Beatty** to chief operating officer, American Association for State and Local History, Nashville, Tennessee.

KUDOS

The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, was awarded $420,000 in Empire State Development funding through the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council initiative. The grants will support the development of the $4 million, state-of-the-art Toy Halls of Fame gallery.

Coral Gables Museum in Coral Gables, Florida, has received the 2014 Diamond Award for Outstanding Non-Profit Organization from the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. The Diamond Award program recognizes organizations that exhibit business excellence, demonstrated through economic stability and growth, corporate citizenship, outstanding customer service, community outreach and a nurturing workplace environment.

The Maitland Art Center in Maitland, Florida, has become the first National Historic Landmark in Orange County and the 44th in the state of Florida. The designation applies to places that "exceptionally illustrate or interpret the heritage of the United States."

▲ **C. Brian Rose,** Mediterranean section curator-in-charge at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, has received the 2015 Gold Medal Award for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement from the Archaeological Institute of America.

The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) in Washington, DC, has received the 2015 Simone de Beauvoir Prize for Women's Freedom. The museum is the first U.S. organization to be presented this award. Supported by the Institut français, the Mairie de Paris and Paris Diderot University, the prize marks the 100th anniversary of Simone de Beauvoir's birth by honoring those who fight to defend women's rights.

▲ **Alex Nyerges,** director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, was honored by the French government as Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters for his contributions toward promoting international relations with France.

TRANSITIONS

▲ **Graham W. J. Beal** will retire from the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) in June, after serving as director, president and CEO for nearly 16 years. Since joining the DIA, Beal has presided over some of the most significant accomplishments in the museum's history, including a successful reinvention of presenting art to the public; passage of a tri-county millage to support museum operations; and the museum's participation in the historic and unprecedented grand bargain initiative, which secured for future generations the DIA's widely acclaimed art collection while also successfully facilitating resolution of the Detroit bankruptcy.

Douglass W. McDonald, CEO of the Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC) and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, retired in January. When McDonald began in 1999,

the museum had a $2.3 million operating deficit that consumed 26 percent of the museum's endowment. Following a 2012 merger with the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, the museum is today debt free with over $50 million in endowment. In 2009, the CMC received the National Medal of Museum Service from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

▲ **Susan L. Talbott** has announced plans to retire as director and CEO of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art after the completion of a $33 million renovation. Under Talbott's leadership, the Community Engagement Initiative (CEI) has doubled with programs such as Second Saturdays, which has provided free admission to more than 22,000 visitors since 2009, and an art and writing initiative that introduces 4th-grade students to the museum's collection.

▲ Curator **Annette DiMeo Carlozzi** is retiring from the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin. Since joining the Blanton in 1996 as the museum's first curator of modern and contemporary art, Carlozzi has organized dozens of innovative and thought-provoking exhibitions, established a vibrant and diverse contemporary collection and overseen the acquisition of works of art by internationally recognized artists.

Edgar Peters Bowron, the Audrey Jones Beck Curator of European Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, is retiring after nearly 20 years. During his time at the museum, he has overseen the John A. and Audrey Jones Beck Collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings; the Samuel H. Kress and Edith A. and Percy S. Straus Collections of European Old Masters; and the European art collection.

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of the collection instead of individual objects, and focus on finding clean work and storage areas with stable temperature and humidity, free of dust and pests. Careful packing in boxes and poly bags provides adequate stability for most objects.

While the MPLP approach may require a change in your thinking, it will help you reach your ultimate goal: instead of having a few objects "perfectly" processed, your entire collection will be accessible and secure.

Angela Kipp is collections manager, TECHNOSEUM, Mannheim, Germany, and Janice Klein is executive director, Museum Association of Arizona, Phoenix.

Nick Cave—the American sculptor, dancer and performance artist, not the Australian musician—sifts through flea markets and antique shops to compile colorful elements for his "Soundsuits." Based on the scale of the artist's body, these vivid life-size sculptures weave together hats, bags, children's toys and a wealth of other cast-off objects that Cave incorporates into his captivating works. Several of the suits are featured in "Re:Purposed," an exhibition of creations by 10 contemporary artists who all specialize in turning someone else's trash into their own artistic treasures. To May 17, 2015. Venue: John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL.

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