

# museum

A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

Also in this issue:  
A tribute to  
Ford W. Bell

## Food in the Museum

Culture, Connections,  
Community



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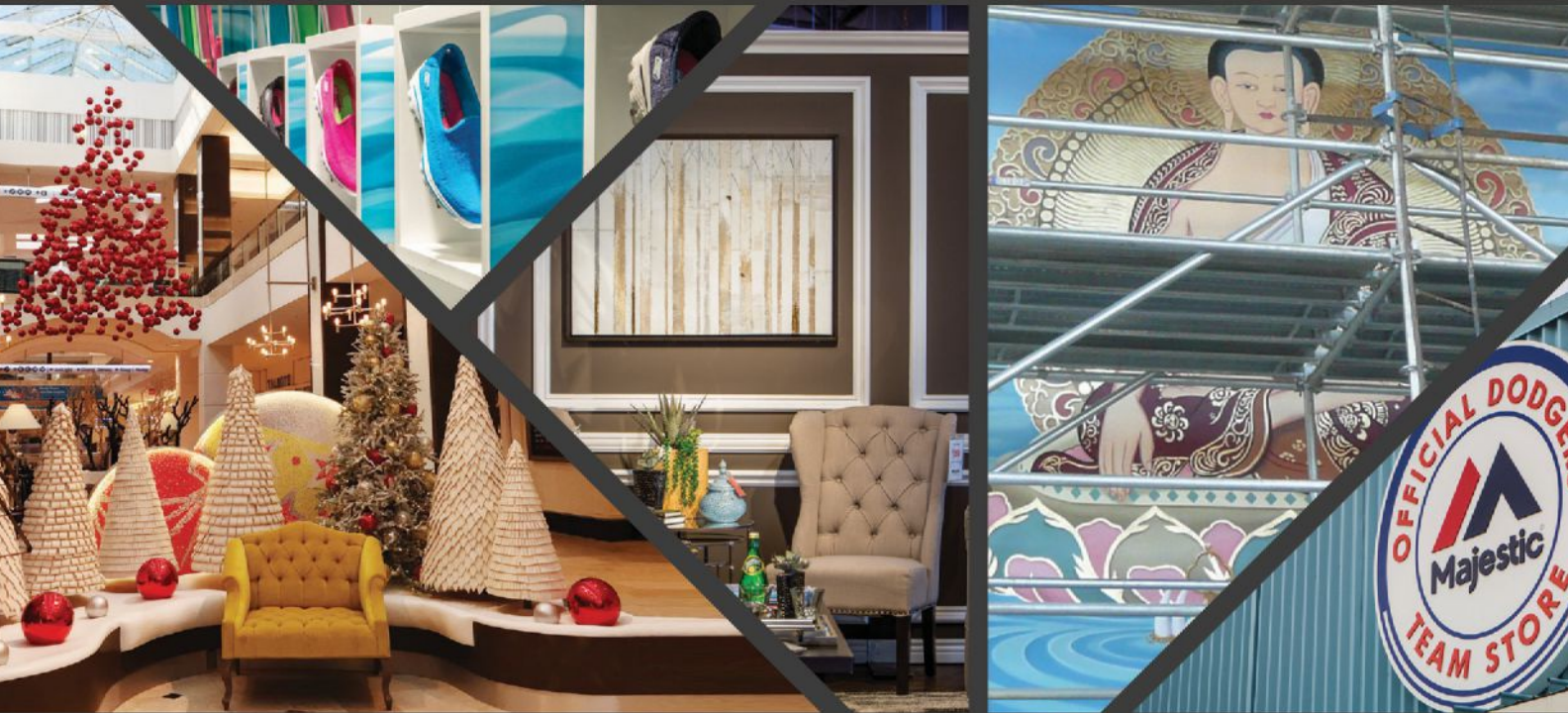
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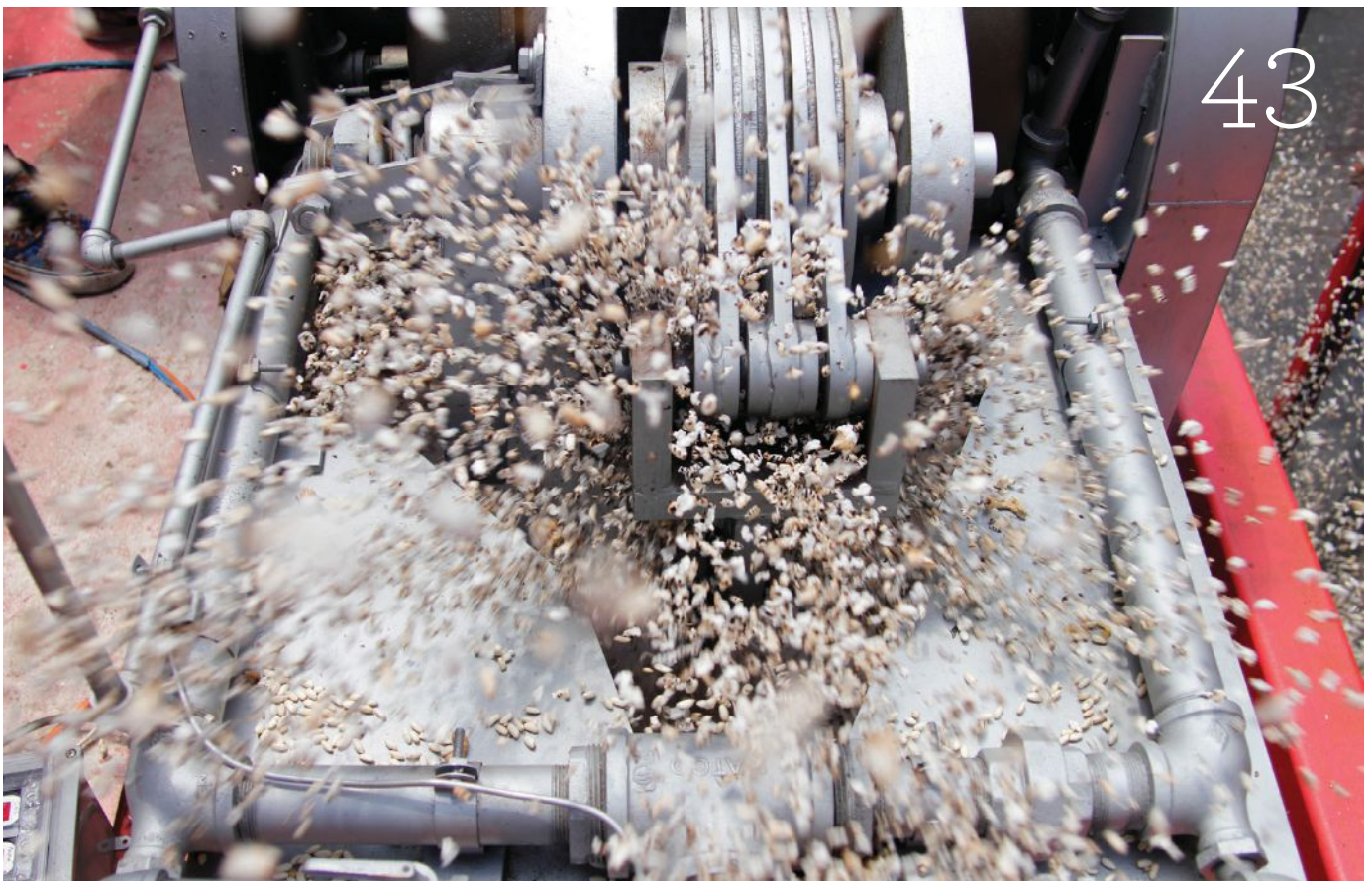
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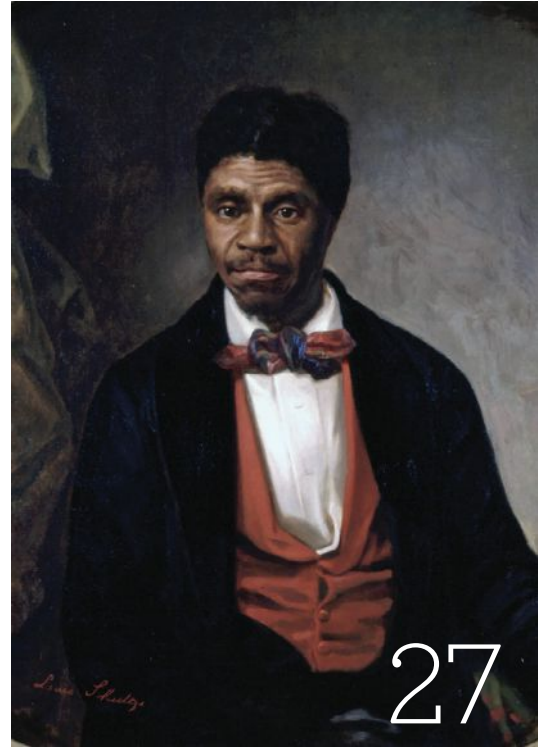
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We want to acknowledge the courage and dedication of the staff of the museums in Tunisia, Syria and Iraq that recently endured horrific attacks against their visitors (in the case of the Bardo Museum in Tunis) and collections (in the case of so many sites in Syria and Iraq).

Many of us wonder what we can do in our own limited ways to support and help museums that are especially vulnerable. Agencies like UNESCO and the Kamel Lazaar Foundation are on

the forefront of efforts, but here are some ideas of what we might do at home: 1) talk about what happened with our colleagues; 2) reach out to our colleagues in especially vulnerable museums; 3) set aside public space in our institutions to raise

awareness; 4) reinvigorate our work in our own communities on behalf of preservation of, access to, and valuing the beauty of art, heritage and culture.

MARJORIE SCHWARZER  
FAHIMEH RAHRAVAN  
MUSEUM STUDIES PROGRAM  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO



A button designed by Miriam Blumenfeld, University of San Francisco Museum Studies Graduate Association. Students sent buttons and cards to the Bardo Museum.

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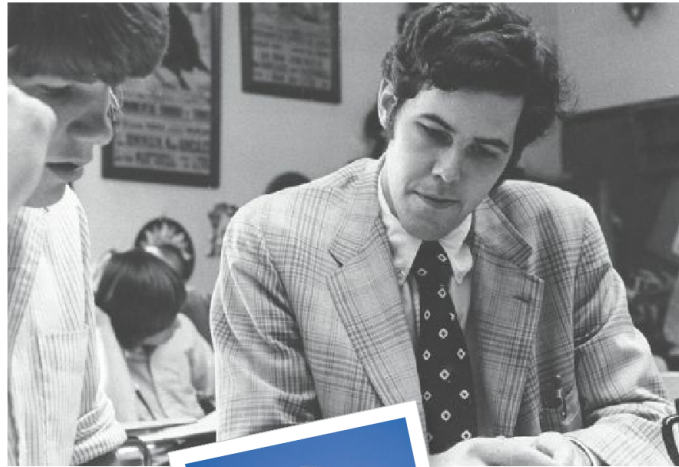
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600,000

Miles traveled while visiting US museums as president of AAM.



3

Years teaching Spanish at the Blake School, Hopkins, Minnesota.

unknown



Number of photos on Twitter hashtagged #BellBomb taken at museum conferences.

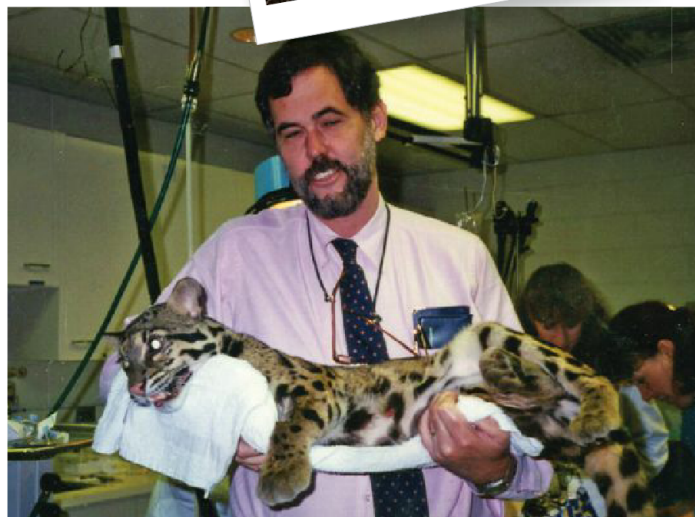


500

Number of museums visited as AAM president.

13

Years spent practicing veterinary medicine.



46

States visited as AAM president.



## Parting Thoughts

**EIGHT YEARS AGO, WHEN** my first column appeared in *Museum*, I was a newcomer to the field. As I write this—500 museums and 600,000 miles and 46 states later—I know that I have learned a lot about the museum field. But what is more important is that I have learned a lot about you, the museum professionals who make our field what it is today. It is all of you—the directors and curators and registrars and educators and interns, and so many more—whose hard work and skills and commitment make museums the essential societal institutions that they indisputably are.

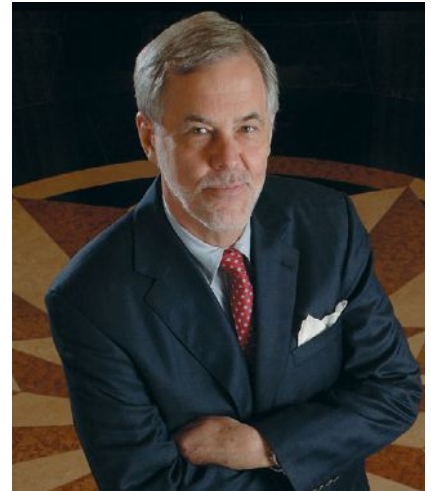
As I have said over and over in speeches, articles and interviews, museums are first and foremost educational institutions, a role that they fulfill with creativity and dedication, day in and day out, often with scant resources. Museums simply never miss an opportunity to inform, to engage and to excite.

But museums are more than educational institutions, despite the primacy of that role. They are research institutions, and they are preservers of our country's—and humankind's—greatest heritages: cultural, scientific and historic. And museums are always, first and foremost, community institutions, dedicated to finding new and better ways to serve and strengthen communities. I like to say that if you name a community problem, I will find you a museum somewhere that is working to address that problem—literacy, children with developmental disabilities, adults with

cognitive disorders, hunger, young people caught up in the juvenile justice system, emerging pathogens, water quality, community development, and on and on.

There is only one thing that we need to do better: telling our story. That was evident to me when 275 of you made the trip to Washington last month to participate in our seventh Museums Advocacy Day. Those 275 advocates made an astounding 350 Hill visits. But if we are going to maintain the scant support that our field gets from the federal government, and from state and local governments, and hopefully grow that support in the future, we need more voices helping us advocate as a field, a gloriously diverse field that encompasses institutions A to Z, art museums to zoos.

We need more voices, and we need new voices, particularly those of our visitors and, above all, those of museum trustees. It is gratifying that we have seen a 58 percent growth in museum membership over the last two and a half years, and all of us at AAM are proud to count 4,000 of your institutions as members. But if we are going to promote and strengthen the cause of museums, we have to speak with one strong voice to communicate to everyone who will listen about the essential work that you and your institutions do every day in communities across America. We need every museum—and everyone who works in, volunteers for or just plain loves them—advocating for you and for all of us. AAM can be the



strong voice for our entire field. I hope you will join that effort.

I will return to Minnesota happy in the knowledge that AAM is going to have an outstanding new leader. Laura Lott is one of the best nonprofit executives that I have ever worked with, and I am confident that she will lead AAM to great things in the future. I know that you will extend to her the same friendship and support that you so generously extended to me.

Nobody could ever have a better job than the one that I have been privileged to hold over the past eight years. It has been a pleasure to get to know many of you, to work with you, to visit your museums, to see the work that you do and the impact that you have on your communities. Thank you for welcoming me to the museum field, and thank you for your friendship over the past eight years. I hope to see you often in the future.

All the best to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ford W. Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.





### Corning Museum of Glass

**Corning, NY** | It's only appropriate that the Corning Museum of Glass's new Contemporary Art + Design Wing was in part inspired by a prized piece of glassware. For his design of the new 100,000-square-foot wing, architect Thomas Phifer looked to artist Alvar Aalto's Savoy vase, an emblem of Scandinavian modernism. The result of the \$64 million project, which opened in March, is a sleek, modern space—made, of course, of glass sheets that allow natural light to stream through. The sun glints off more than 70 contemporary works housed within the 26,000 square feet dedicated to living glass artists,

the largest such space in the world, including creations that were previously too big for the museum to display. Specialized coatings on the glass retain or keep out heat as needed, along with preventing UV rays from damaging the art (or the visitors).

Located next to the contemporary building is another new asset: the Hot Shop, a 500-seat theater that is now one of the biggest facilities on the planet in which audiences can watch glassblowing and glass design in action. Phifer and Partners revamped a 1951 Steuben Glass factory to accommodate this new concept.

**Walker Art Center**

**Minneapolis** | Much as its name suggests, Pop Art could never be contained. Along with New York and London—the two sites most commonly cited in discussions of the genre—Pop had counterparts in South America, Japan and across Europe. “International Pop” highlights corresponding art developments in 13 countries between the 1950s and 1970s, from Japan’s anti-art movement to Brazil’s neo-concretism. By taking a global approach, the exhibition is able to compare and contrast works as seemingly disparate as Andy Warhol’s representations of Jacqueline Kennedy and Japanese artist Tadanori Yokoo’s jarring *Flavor* (right). To May 15, 2016. Additional venues: Dallas Museum of Art; Philadelphia Museum of Art.



**Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**

Responding to societal and political changes in Japan during the late 1960s and 1970s, artists shifted from activism to introspection. Key to this transition was the camera. As examined in “For a New World to Come: Experiments in Japanese Art and Photography, 1968–1979,” a group of artists turned to photography during this period, using it to capture underground protests or explore new conceptual practices. Along with illuminating this pivotal period, the exhibition demonstrates how these camera-based experimentations continue to influence contemporary art in Japan and beyond. To Jan. 11, 2016. Additional venues: Grey Art Gallery, New York; Japan Society, New York.





**Indiana State Museum**

**Indianapolis** | On assignment in Egypt in 1981, Bill Foley, then working for the Associated Press, photographed President Anwar Sadat minutes before he was assassinated. That image represents one of dozens of defining moments that Foley has captured in his 40-year career. With more than 100 vintage photographs, “Art Meets News: The Work of Photojournalist Bill Foley” traces his work, which has made headlines, sent Foley across the globe and earned him a nod from *Life* magazine for taking one of the best photographs that the world has ever seen. To July 19, 2015.

**Shelburne Museum**

**Shelburne, VT** | For more than 20 years, author and illustrator Walter Wick has dazzled and delighted children and adults alike with his vivid picture books. “Walter Wick: Games, Gizmos and Toys in the Attic” brings these cherished publications to life, displaying the three-dimensional versions of the mesmerizing models featured in such volumes as the “Can You See What I See?” and “I Spy” series. Along with peering into large-scale photographs to see the intricacies of his creations, visitors can watch videos of Wick constructing his books, photographic puzzles and mind-bending optical illusions. To July 5, 2015.







### Albuquerque Museum

Resourceful, innovative, spirited and courageous: these are the four sides of the city championed in “Only in Albuquerque.” The \$4.4 million exhibit opened in March, with a quartet of galleries titled after the four key values embodied by New Mexico’s most populous city. All connect to a central gallery, “Our Land,” reinforcing the idea that Albuquerque’s varied cultures all share and define its unique landscape.

Technologies both modern and time-worn allow visitors to experience the city using multiple senses. Interactive kiosks, animated storybooks, videos and a dedicated app provide innovative ways for visitors to learn about Duke City’s past and share its artifacts—such as digitized Route 66 postcards—with family and friends. They can even create “quilts” composed of images from the collections or record their own stories to add to the exhibit. Then there are the old-school fixtures that visitors can crank to smell aromas that have defined the city—green chiles, for example, or the Monte Cristo sandwich that the Alvarado Hotel once served its customers. Overall, the exhibit spans more than 12,000 years of history in the Rio Grande Valley and features hundreds of Albuquerque artifacts.



### Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

**Kansas City, MO** | “Jump In! Architecture Workshop” is an interactive studio in which visitors can try their hand at designing structures. After learning about essential aspects of architectural work, such as landscape, style and materials, visitors can construct models with some 2,000 building blocks or look more closely at existing buildings via touchscreen maps. There’s also a card game for families to play, in which they are challenged to solve unusual design issues. Visitors can then share their creations and solutions within the gallery or by using hashtag #JumpinArch. To July 19, 2015.







### Field Museum

**Chicago** | Beyond the stereotypical image of horned helmets and wooden long-ships, who were the people we know as the Vikings? The exhibition simply titled “Vikings” aims to find out. More than 500 artifacts—from weapons to pendants to drinking horns—show the many sides of the people who lived across Scandinavia during the Viking Age, from the 8th to the 11th century. Far from the “barbaric” quality that the Vikings are often assigned, these diverse people were farmers, crafters, devout believers in Old Norse gods and sometimes—but only sometimes—fearless ocean voyagers. To Oct. 4, 2015.



### National Museum of American Jewish History

**Philadelphia** | Allen Ginsberg (above, center, in *Allen Ginsberg’s Family*), Andy Warhol, Jimmy Carter and Cesar Chavez all posed for portrait and fashion photographer Richard Avedon. From the time his pictures first appeared in *Harper’s Bazaar* in the 1940s until his death in 2004, Avedon helped define the national perception of culture and beauty—and

of politics. Both of these facets of his career are examined in “Richard Avedon: Family Affairs,” which focuses in particular on his work during the late 1960s and 1970s. The exhibition highlights two major projects of Avedon’s, comprising both group and solo portraits of iconic Americans. To Aug. 2, 2015.

## Cici and Hyatt Brown Museum of Art

**Daytona Beach, FL** | More than 2,700 paintings—the broadest collection of artworks created in Florida—are housed in this new museum. The 26,000-square-foot building traces the state’s history through this wide-ranging assemblage of oils and watercolors, some of which date back to the early 1800s. Representing such artists as N.C. Wyeth (below, *Dance of the Whooping Cranes*, c. 1938), Thomas Hart Benton and Louis Comfort Tiffany, along with lesser-known creators, many of the works are tributes to Florida’s native wildlife and warm (if sometimes temperamental) weather. The museum represents historical sites throughout the Sunshine State, from St. Augustine to Miami and the Florida Keys.



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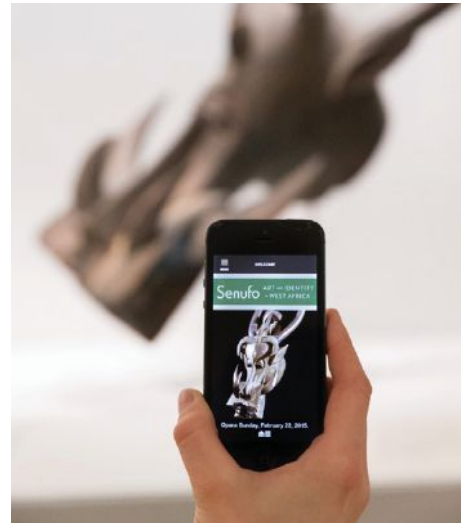
## Wisconsin Historical Museum

**Madison** | Wisconsinites have bicycled across their state for some 130 years. “Shifting Gears: A Cyclical History of Badger Bicycling” winds through this free-wheeling era—from the 1890s, when the Badger State had already established bike paths and become a tourist destination for cyclists, through today, when biking is resurging as a key recreation and mode of transportation in the state. Historic bikes are juxtaposed with interactives that allow visitors to virtually pedal along the Elroy-Sparta Trail or around Lambeau Field as a Green Bay Packer might do, dodging fans along the way. To November 2015. Additional venue: History Museum at the Castle, Appleton, WI.



Start a staring contest with a bodhisattva; put on sunglasses when you see an artwork representing the sun: these are just two of 1,500 prompts in the Infinite Museum, a Web-based app created by Ball State University students for the David Owsley Museum of Art in Muncie, Indiana. With suggestions, quotes, facts and food for thought, the app

engages visitors with works throughout the museum's campus. Prompts range from thought provoking ("How do you honor your ancestors?") to irreverent ("Pretend this coffee urn is your personal barista. Order whatever you would like."). Users can log their responses within the app or simply browse through the art on view.



Accompanying "Senufo: Art and Identity in West Africa" at the Cleveland Museum of Art is CMA Senufo, an exhibition-specific iPhone app. Built by the museum and the local agency DXY Solutions, the app opens with a preview video to orient users to the exhibition. Once the mobile device is logged into the museum's WiFi network, the app unlocks content available only to onsite visitors, such as works from the CMA's collections and on loan from other institutions. Visitors can also tap into an exclusive multimedia tour and access stories about the Senufo-speaking people. CMA Senufo is available for free until the exhibition closes on May 31.



Mayor Javier Gonzales proclaimed the months between Memorial Day and Labor Day to be the "Summer of Color" in Santa Fe. Six cultural institutions on the city's famed Museum Hill have taken on hues that they will explore with their summer exhibitions. The Museum of International Folk Art highlights cochineal, an insect-based dye used to produce vibrant shades of crimson, in "The Red That Colored the World." The Museum of Indian Arts and Culture celebrates its color in "Turquoise, Water, Sky: The Stone and Its Meaning," while the Santa Fe Botanical Garden honors the shade of an endangered butterfly in "Monarch—Orange Takes Flight."







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# Starting Small

## How museums can engage with their youngest visitors

BY SARAH ERDMAN

### **What are parents or caregivers of infants, toddlers and preschoolers looking for in a museum visit?**

A recent online survey administered by Cabinet of Curiosities, a museum and early childhood education consulting company, asked caregivers if they visit museums with young children and, if so, what benefits they look to derive from the experience. Overwhelmingly, they cited the need for “something to do” as a main reason for visiting. A favorite museum can become part of the regular circuit of activities, like the library or playground.

A child’s interest was also a factor when deciding to go to museums. One parent went to a natural history museum because “my daughter is nuts about animals.” It didn’t matter if a museum was known as being “child friendly” if the content appealed to the family.

Beautiful spaces, interesting architecture and access to nature also rated highly. Caregivers freely admitted that they were looking for places where kids who “like to move” could walk and explore in a different environment.

A majority of respondents said they wanted to expose their children to “as many different forms of culture and learning as possible,” things that



An encounter at the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park.

they consider culturally and historically important and “ideas beyond the home.” They wanted their children to learn how to look, investigate and gain a “love of learning and exploration,” and felt that museums provided these opportunities.

### **What do parents feel are the biggest barriers to regular museum visits?**

For caregivers planning a visit with an infant, toddler or preschooler, the logistics of the visit take top priority. Almost all of the parents who responded

to the survey cited some aspect of access and physical comfort as the biggest barrier to visiting museums often. Transportation and parking, bathrooms, food and a space that is welcoming to young children were the factors mentioned most frequently.

### **Transportation**

Having clear information on parking availability and best routes from transportation hubs is a top request from caregivers. Clearly noting any restrictions on strollers or transporting children in front or back carriers,



## » INFORMATION *Please*

posting signage showing stroller accessible entrances and providing advance notice about security screening helps streamline the experience for visitors with young children. If families must deplete all of their energy and good will just to get in your door, they will be less likely to stay and consider their visit successful.

### Bathrooms

It may seem like a no-brainer, but ensuring that your bathrooms are family friendly is one of the most important “fixes” that you can implement. Think about the set-up of your bathrooms. Are changing tables only in the women’s room, leaving a father trying to discreetly change a diaper in a corner? Are the changing tables situated so that an adult can actually maneuver and use them? Is there a safe space for older children to wait?

If you are able to provide a dedicated family restroom, make sure it is clearly marked. Consider providing an adequate supply of paper towels for that space; it is a little thing but can make a huge difference to someone helping a toddler clean up. If you don’t have a family restroom, make sure your frontline staff can direct families to lower-traffic restrooms.

### Food

Museums, understandably, rarely allow food in their exhibits and galleries. In this instance, the museum need not change for visitors, but can educate them and supply reasonable alternatives.

Make sure that your policy on food is clearly stated and that frontline staff



Learning and playing at (clockwise from top) the National Gallery of Art, Seattle’s Museum of History and Industry, and Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History.

are trained to kindly and politely enforce it. Adults may not be deliberately flaunting the rules, they just might not understand why it is important! Providing places nearby where food is allowed will make it easier for a family to relocate and snack and then return to their visit.

It is also important to think through your policies on infants and nursing/bottle feeding. Make sure you are well

versed on your state’s laws regarding breastfeeding (see [ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws](http://ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws).) In most localities, a woman has a right to nurse wherever she and her child are legally allowed to be, and the law could prohibit you from asking her to relocate. This is an important point for anyone who might have contact with visitors. A confrontation is unpleasant and could damage your museum’s

reputation among families.

It is perfectly all right, and a welcome gesture, to provide a quiet space for nursing. Many people would prefer to have some privacy. If these spaces exist within your facility, make sure your frontline staff know about them and can direct people *when requested*.

Think through your policies on bottle feeding. Can you be more relaxed and allow it, or does it fall under the same rules as snacks? Allowing families with multiple children to feed the youngest may enable the older children to stay for a full visit rather than leaving early.

### Welcoming Space

This physical need is a little more nebulous than food and parking but equally important. A majority of respondents said that they tended to choose a museum that was “kid friendly,” had “space for kids” and was “welcoming.” Visitors are not necessarily looking for a specifically kid-oriented space; they really wanted places where kids could explore safely and engage with the collection.

Making families aware of times when your museum is less crowded, guiding (but not restricting!) them to age-appropriate content, and clearly stating expectations and guidelines all

make a space more appealing to caregivers with young children.

A welcoming space must be physically safe. Look around for hazards that might endanger young children. Are there easy fixes (like outlet covers) or are there permanent features (slippery stairs, sculptures on unbarricaded pedestals) that should be mentioned online or in published materials? Very few parents surveyed expected a museum to cater to them, but they did appreciate having information up front. Once again, your frontline staff is your best ally and can help direct parents to spaces where they will be comfortable and secure.

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Gyroscope rendering of an upcoming entryway and interactive public art installation at Abbott Square, for the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH)



**If our institution could focus on one thing that could make us more “family friendly,” what would it be?**

Without question, the most important factor in creating a welcoming space is the staff. Multiple survey responses cited staff interaction as the “make-or-break” part of their museum visit. Parents praised staff who were “helpful” and “engaging,” but were also quick to recognize and feel strongly about staff who were “unfriendly.” One parent said that she avoided places where there was “no eye contact by the visitor team or overzealous censoring of what my child should see or do.”

Likely these “unfriendly” staff are

really just feeling ill equipped to interact with a toddler. Anyone who has contact with visitors should feel ready and able to welcome families with young children. This may mean adding or expanding training and providing staff outlets for discussing difficult situations. For staff or volunteers who prefer interacting with adults, young children can seem overwhelming and unapproachable. Teaching and presenting to a preschooler is not the same as working with even young elementary students.

Making sure that staff have a grounding in early childhood development and resources on family learning will create a better experience for

everyone. There are a number of ways to provide this training. Your local higher education institution might offer classes in child development; local childcare centers can give you basic instruction in how children think and learn. The National Association for the Education of Young Children and its associate organizations provide publications and resources, and there are many others available online. You would never expect a tour guide to walk into a gallery without knowing the content. Equally important is providing the tools and resources for your staff to familiarize themselves with a new and different audience.

*Continued on page 63*





# SAINT JOHN PAUL II NATIONAL SHRINE

PHOTO CREDIT: DUNCAN R. MILLAR



DENVER

Some people thought that Denver, Colorado, was a great choice for the 1976 World's Fair. The product of a meeting of the United Nations, and a result of a process that had been underway for some time, the fair was held in Denver in 1976. The fair was a success, and it was a great event for the city. The fair was held in Denver, Colorado, and it was a great event for the city. The fair was held in Denver, Colorado, and it was a great event for the city.

MANILA

"The World's Fair in Manila was a great event for the city. The fair was held in Manila, Philippines, and it was a great event for the city. The fair was held in Manila, Philippines, and it was a great event for the city. The fair was held in Manila, Philippines, and it was a great event for the city."

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# Do You Speak Visual?

## Why it's essential to teach visual literacy

BY BRIAN KENNEDY

After 25 years in senior museum administration, my greatest lessons about the relevance of museums have been learned from two sources: indigenous peoples, especially those in Australia, who have no written language, and individuals like my son, who had difficulty reading digits and letters.

Both groups privilege sensory experiences. From them, I learned that museums can be multisensory experiential places, what the German polymath Leibniz notably called “theaters for learning.”

In a 2009 report, the Institute of Museum and Library Services offered a list of literacies essential to 21st-century skills, including visual, scientific, numerical, basic, media, ICT (information, communications and technology), civics, health and environment literacies.

That's a lot of literacies. Visual is listed first, but despite our visually saturated digital society, we do not teach students how to read and interpret images. We teach digits and letters, and combinations of them, but neglect to teach fluency in the basic elements of visual language (line, shape, color, space, texture) and the principles that govern their use (emphasis, balance, harmony, variety, movement, proportion, rhythm and unity). Addressing this deficit has been my focus since I



Brian Kennedy, director of the Toledo Museum of Art and visual literacy advocate.

became director of the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) in 2010.

Our current text-dominated world view traces its roots back only 500 years to the advent of the printing press. In the United States, free public education, with its emphasis on technological and scientific progress and the need for certification over education to gain job status, has diminished utterly the previous millennia's dependence on information gained through multisensory learning. For a crash course in this history, look to the publications of David Howes and his colleagues at the Centre for Sensory Studies at Concordia University, Montreal.

Simply put, we need to re-engage the depth of capacity of our human senses. Vision is the dominant sense for information gathering. As John Berger wrote in the book *Ways of Seeing*, “Seeing comes before words.” We take in up to 90 percent of information with our eyes, and 30 percent of our brain cortex is given over to vision. But how many of us have ever taken a course on the methodologies of seeing? It is assumed that as a population we can see, without us ever having been trained in how we see and how to see. We do not imagine it is possible to learn Spanish, for example, without studying its vocabulary and grammar,

so why do we assume we can use visual language without being taught to do so? The educational system marginalizes not just visual language but sensory learning, and dedicates itself to textual learning with digits and letters, along with computer literacy.

John Debes founded the International Visual Literacy Association (IVLA) in 1969 and Merriam Webster first defined visual literacy in 1971, but the concept has made slow progress into mainstream debate. This is partly because of difficulties of definition and mainly because it was rooted in the academic community. I have dozens of books and hundreds of academic articles on the subject, but ironically most have few visuals beyond text!

We need to appreciate visual learning as an entry point for multisensory education. Before leaving Dartmouth College, where I was director of its Hood Museum of Art, I participated in a TEDx event, speaking about “Visual Literacy: Why We Need It.” It has been astonishing to me how many times on multiple sites this short talk has been viewed in the years since. I learned through this experience that using the Internet was clearly the way to spread ideas of this kind.

Make no mistake, a revolution is afoot. While the academy still reveres its digits and letters, the population at

large has embraced the visual, utilizing the cameras we now carry in our pockets and purses. “Do you speak visual?” will be a key question for the future. It should be already. Visually literate people can read and write visual language, constructing meaning from what they see. They understand that we read images 60,000 times faster than text. That text is part of our image world rather than the ruler of it.

So what did we do about this in Toledo? We engaged design thinking and a logic model and developed a strategy for 2011–15 with a constant refrain of “plan, implement, evaluate.” We spent a lot of time refining what we meant by speaking visual, what visual literacy meant and how we could help make our community more visually literate. Focus group research helped us understand that while people accept the need for formal instruction in letters and digits in order to become textually literate, we believe we can understand our visual world without any instruction in how to do so. As a result, we began to replace the term visual literacy with visual language because people prefer talking about visual language leading to fluency rather than literacy.

It became clear that illiteracy and low levels of textual literacy were key challenges for Toledo. Since text is ultimately a type of visual image,

textual and visual literacy are interwoven. We would partner and collaborate to leverage an improved situation by focusing more broadly on teaching visual language. One program partner, Wordshop (Google Wordshop Toledo), engages graphic artists to help children write and illustrate their own stories.

The TMA board has been phenomenal. We worked really hard to make board meetings less show and tell and much more discussion and fun. It took three years of discussions about visual literacy and why we need it to convince the board. Not equally convinced, and this is useful. As with any conversion, we have those who are still a little skeptical and those who are zealous like me. Many of the board members’ businesses have engaged the museum to teach visual literacy techniques to their staff and this has proved a useful learning tool and revenue stream.

To introduce such an ambitious effort, it was first necessary to revamp the curriculum for TMA docent training. TMA was, back in 1946 we are told, the first American art museum to have a rigorous curriculum for its docents. It had been revised many times, but in 2011 the new docent class began a course about visual literacy/language and its techniques, along with lessons learned from cognitive neuroscience. TMA’s visual literacy techniques differ from the much-admired Visual





Preschoolers consider Alexander Calder's *Stegosaurus* as part of a Toledo Public Schools pilot project to teach vocabulary words using art and other multisensory materials.

Thinking Strategies, a teacher-led discussion methodology used in schools and some museums to study art images, although they are related. TMA seeks to not only increase knowledge of the museum's works of art, but to enable visual learning in all aspects of one's life.

Our educational efforts blossomed early. While we had many programs already for children and adults, including those living with physical or mental challenges or dementia, we wanted to concentrate on where we could have the greatest educational impact. We chose babies and children from age 6



Participants in a TMA workshop class work together to create an illustrated story based on an artwork.

months to 5 years as our first area of focus, because young children's minds are the most malleable. We developed publications, educational materials and, notably, launched baby tours and toddler tours based on the collection.

Evaluation is essential to demonstrating our relevance and impact. Late last year the curriculum was rolled out to groups of toddlers recruited by the museum to participate in a 10-week program and to a pilot group of preschoolers from the Toledo public school system. The goal was to evaluate whether our visual literacy methods were working. Initial results based on comparing control and experimental groups in each case show 99 percent likelihood that statistically significant gains in vocabulary acquisition were due to the visual language training they received. In fall 2015 TMA will expand the study to hundreds of children from the Toledo Public Schools. The results were so promising that the aim is to eventually reach the entire system.

The key to success was adopting a model of "training the trainers." In other words, we realized we could not reach every Toledo school classroom, but if we trained the teachers they could accomplish this goal. To do so, we first needed to train those teachers in the system who were responsible for training other teachers. We did the same with Toledo's extensive public library system, introducing visual literacy techniques by working with their team of early childhood librarians.

A recent Pew Foundation study

found that above all else, parents today want schools to teach their children communication skills. Visual literacy methodologies assist communication, behavioral and social skills, while developing critical thinking skills. They offer a form of critical thinking that improves your intellectual capacity. By promoting methods of close looking, a stepped approach to comprehension, they improve the quality of critique and open avenues to alternative viewpoints.

We also offered visual literacy training programs for our staff, guards, docents and ambassadors (a group of some 200 who assist with fundraising and social activities). We manage by deadline, and a key driver was knowing we were hosting the 46th annual conference of the International Visual Literacy Association, the first art museum to do so. The conference was held at TMA in November 2014 and the proceedings are available at [toledomuseum.org](http://toledomuseum.org).

Additional material is available on the separate site [vislit.org](http://vislit.org), which we launched in November 2013. A few years ago, TMA acquired website addresses related to visual literacy including [vislit.org](http://vislit.org), [vislit.com](http://vislit.com) and [vislit.net](http://vislit.net). We also trademarked The Art of Seeing Art®, which is the TMA's basic method of addressing formal language. It is a six-step "slow looking" method—look, see, observe (the reading images stage), describe, analyze, interpret (writing images). The four visual languages we teach are the languages of forms, ideas, symbols and meaning. They are under

the art museum's umbrella subject of art history, especially iconography. Have a look at the website.

There is much to do as the museum moves towards delivery of many more projects. Our "Polishing the Gem: 20/20 Vision" silent campaign to fund our activities is proving a great success, and not surprisingly the first among many millions of dollars contributed, mainly from our board, honorary board, businesses and foundations, came in support of our efforts to promote visual literacy. Today many activities at TMA that are truly visually literate are a surprise to me. For example, our education staff have made exhibition-related games that visitors could play in the lobby based on imagery in our exhibitions. At staff meetings, self-made videos and presentations filled with graphics are typical. And one of our board members completely revised her agency's printed materials to include a full-page graphic on how to access their services. Our staff has integrated the ability to construct meaning from what we see as a basic working method. And happily, museum directors and staff from America and elsewhere are visiting us to witness for themselves our visual literacy initiatives and our efforts to be more efficient and sustainable. Do let us know if you would like to come to Toledo. We will make you very welcome. <<

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*Brian Kennedy is president, director and CEO of the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio.*



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# From Dred Scott to Michael Brown

## Following tradition and responding to Ferguson

BY MELANIE ADAMS

On Sunday, August 9, 2014, the city of Ferguson was transformed from a small St. Louis suburb to a hashtag that represented all that was wrong with race in America. From police brutality to educational inequality to housing segregation, Ferguson brought to light issues that had been part of Missouri's history for more than 150 years. Northern enough to fight for the Union and southern enough to permit slavery, Missouri has always struggled with race relations. The death of Michael Brown served as a tragic reminder of the work that still needs to be done.

When I consider the Missouri History Museum's (MHM) work around issues related to Ferguson, I often think about one of my favorite artifacts in the museum's collection: a portrait of Dred Scott. The U.S. Supreme Court's famous 1857 Dred Scott Decision denying the rights of African Americans as citizens began with legal proceedings in Missouri, so it is not surprising that MHM has such a portrait. But what is interesting is that the artwork was commissioned in 1888 by the white male board of the Missouri Historical Society. There is little related documentation other



Louis Schultze's portrait of Dred Scott set a precedent long ago for the Missouri History Museum.





A town hall meeting at the museum on the day of Michael Brown's funeral was facilitated by activist and author Kevin Powell.

than a letter dated December 31, 1887, written by the society's treasurer and published in the January 1888 issue of the *Magazine of Western History*. The writer explains that although the story of Dred Scott will forever be a part of American history, he belongs to the Valley of the Mississippi. The society then forever claimed Scott by commissioning a portrait by Louis Schultze, who painted portraits of the era's prominent individuals.

Consider the significance of this: 25 years after Missouri's divided involvement in the Civil War, the men of the Missouri Historical Society decided to honor the African American man whose case served as a trigger for the conflict. The work was painted with the same care and attention—and at the same expense—as portraits of his white counterparts. “In choosing Dred Scott as a part of the history of Missouri, you have selected a man of humble men, but one in an exceedingly wide sense of the representation of the

masses of his people in the United States,” said African American activist James Milton Turner in 1882. “You have here invited those people who have served our land and our country so long and so faithfully to step in and take their place in the history of the wonderful past.”

In 1888, MHM decided it was going to be a historically relevant institution that engaged all members of the community in telling the region's history. Over the years, the Missouri History Museum has continued to invite all members of the St. Louis community through its doors to engage in meaningful dialogue about the region's and the country's difficult issues. Using exhibits and programs, MHM does not rehash the traditional historical narratives that give voice only to those of white skin and male gender. The museum tells stories in a way that allows African Americans to take their place in history and have their voices heard. It is this history

of inclusion that allows MHM to be a safe space for difficult community discussions on inequality and race—and which set the stage for our Ferguson-related programs.

The Missouri History Museum presented two programs in direct response to the events in Ferguson. Both were “off calendar” because they did not make it into our fall calendar, which was completed back in June. The first was a town hall meeting held on the day of Michael Brown's funeral, facilitated by activist and author Kevin Powell and his organization, BK Nation. Powell reached out to the museum immediately after the shooting to discuss how our organizations could partner to create an opportunity for the local community to join a growing national conversation. Powell had worked with the museum in the past and knew its reputation for delving into subjects that many would rather avoid. More than 400 people crowded the museum's grand hall that evening for more than three hours of sometimes heated conversation about how our society had gotten to this point and what could be done to heal the community.

The Ethics Project and the YWCA, both regular partners of the museum, hosted the second Ferguson-related program. “Mother to Mother” focused on African American mothers talking to white mothers (and a few fathers) about what it was like to raise their sons. The mothers described conversations they had with their sons about interacting with the police and their constant fear that their sons would not

More than 400 people crowded the museum's grand hall that evening for more than three hours of sometimes heated conversation about how our society had gotten to this point and what could be done to heal the community.

make it home. With more than 200 women in the auditorium, "Mother to Mother" hit such a chord with the community that it has since become a traveling program that goes to area churches, schools and community centers. The museum is proud to be a part of that initial program and happy to see it expand beyond our walls.

In the fall following Michael Brown's shooting, the museum facilitated two other programs that were already scheduled but happened to address similar issues. In a

partnership with the Anti-Defamation League, the National Conference for Community and Justice, and the Diversity Awareness Partnership, the museum worked to bring legal analyst and author Lisa Bloom to speak about her book, *Suspicion Nation: The Inside Story of the Trayvon Martin Injustice and Why We Continue to Repeat It*. The museum had implemented programs immediately following the death of Trayvon Martin, including inviting the community to take their pictures in hoodies holding up their wish for

racial healing in the community. The program with Bloom represented our continuation of this important conversation. In response to the events in Ferguson, the museum expanded the planned event into a panel discussion with national and local speakers and Bloom serving as moderator. As with most of our programs directly addressing community issues, the auditorium was at its capacity of 340 people.

For the 60th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the museum had worked with Washington



Author Lisa Bloom (left) moderates a panel discussion during "Suspicion Nation: Race and Diversity Issues in St. Louis."



## » Inside VIEW

University Law School to present a lecture by NAACP Legal Defense Fund Director Sherrilyn Ifill. She was scheduled to talk about the importance of the Supreme Court decision and the remaining work to be done on school segregation and educational inequality. Realizing the connections between the court case and the tragic death in Ferguson, Ifill restructured her talk and titled it “From Brown to Ferguson: The Unfinished Business of Civil Rights,” addressing the issues that put our region on the map.

When discussing MHM’s community programs with me, colleagues around the country often exclaim,

“Your board/president lets you do that?!” or ask, “How do you create trust in the community to deal with difficult issues?”

The exclamation always takes me aback because I never thought of asking permission to address controversial topics that are clearly present in the community. From the board of trustees to the president, the museum has always been supportive of programs and exhibits that may appear controversial, but are really just part of the institution’s mission—bringing people together to facilitate solutions to the common problems that history produces.

The museum has gained the trust of the community and its leaders by successfully navigating topics that in the wrong hands could lead to disastrous outcomes. We have become a safe space for tackling difficult topics by working with community partners. The Ferguson-related programs, both off calendar and on calendar, would not have been possible without a strong relationship with the St. Louis community, built on decades of programs and exhibits that reach beyond traditional historical rhetoric, deepening our understanding of the past and forging community bonds. Our charter states that our institution was formed to “save

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from oblivion the early history of the city and state.” It was not created to address racial disparities in education, housing and police enforcement. Knowing its limitations, the museum always reaches out to organizations—including the Anti-Defamation League, the YWCA, the National Conference for Community Justice, the Organization for Black Struggle and the St. Louis Urban League—whose main purpose is to address such community issues. Working together, we design, implement and market programs. Trained facilitators are also crucial when addressing difficult community issues.

MHM has further built trust in the St. Louis community through the diversity of our exhibits. We incorporate the story of African Americans into exhibits so that they are central to the story and not an afterthought. An example is our recent exhibit on the Louisiana Purchase—a very traditional story that is described in every textbook as a success for Thomas Jefferson and the country. But what about the women, indigenous people and African Americans living in St. Louis at the time? Was the Louisiana Purchase a great deal for them? Taking the perspective of what was lost as well as what was gained through the land deal

reinforces the museum’s commitment to diverse voices in the interpretation of history.

The Missouri History Museum is proud to be a member of the St. Louis region. The unfortunate death of Michael Brown put a national spotlight on the region and the work of the museum, but it is really business as usual. The museum did not need a tragic event to become relevant and connect with its community. If your museum waits for such a moment, it may be too late. <<

*Melanie Adams is managing director of community education and events, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis.*

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Veteran Fernando Valles at work in the Chicago Botanic Garden.

## Healing in the Garden

**IN THE LAST ISSUE** of *Museum*, we shared the story of Robert Gray, a 9/11 first responder honored as a Great American Museum Advocate at the Alliance’s Museums Advocacy Day in Washington, DC, in February. Here you can learn about Fernando Valles, an Iraq War Navy veteran nominated as a Great American Museum Advocate by the Chicago Botanic Garden. His poignant story, like Gray’s, was shared with legislators, media and the public on Capitol Hill to emphasize the profound ways in which museums are serving our communities.

“We were honored that Fernando

traveled from Chicago to Washington to be a part of our seventh annual Museums Advocacy Day,” said Alliance President Ford W. Bell. “His inspiring story of public service to our country and, subsequently, his work with the Chicago Botanic Garden impressed upon Congress how essential museums are in our society.”



Fernando Valles is a participant in the Chicago Botanic Garden’s collaboration with the Thresholds Veterans Project, a groundbreaking program in horticultural therapy that supports veterans with post-traumatic stress

disorder and other emotional challenges. Thresholds, a community-based mental health agency, transforms the lives of people struggling with mental illnesses. It is the oldest and largest provider of recovery services for persons with mental illness in the state of Illinois.

Based on the healing power of nature and plants, the garden’s project consists of a series of six retreats for 15 veterans and their therapists. During monthly half-day retreats, participants engage in a variety of hand-on activities, from journaling to planting and harvesting projects to creating memorial garden stones. Other examples



## » ADVOCATE *Story*

of activities include learning about the life cycle of a seed and planting a diversity of seeds; using blossoms and foliage from the garden to make an arrangement; or harvesting herbs to mix and taste in a dip like guacamole.

The veterans also benefit from low-impact exercise during walks throughout the gardens. Alicia Green, the program coordinator of five years, says the Botanic Garden has empowered veterans to improve their overall well-being.

The program serves veterans from all branches of the military services, focusing on those returning from recent conflicts. The sessions are designed to

ease reintegration and provide a peaceful environment for artistic expression and self-soothing, as spending time in nature can often calm the symptoms of stress.

“Many of us find stress relief in a garden. In this program, we sought to demonstrate a number of ways to engage with the natural world for the purpose of coping with stress,” says Barbara Kreski, the garden’s director of horticultural therapy. “We were so gratified to share the garden with these men and women who have returned home from military service.”

Kreski says veterans can be a challenging group to reach since they are

often spread throughout the city and suburbs. Some also find reentry easier if they do not identify themselves as veterans. Kreski says a sense of “otherness” often alienates returning veterans and compels many of them keep to themselves.

Valles spent 11 years in the military as a medic, stationed in Iraq, Japan and multiple other locations in the Middle East. He describes the garden as a “safe space” for veterans. “It’s very important to have a safe space because when we were in other places of the world defending this country, we never felt safe,” he says.

For more than 30 years, the Chicago

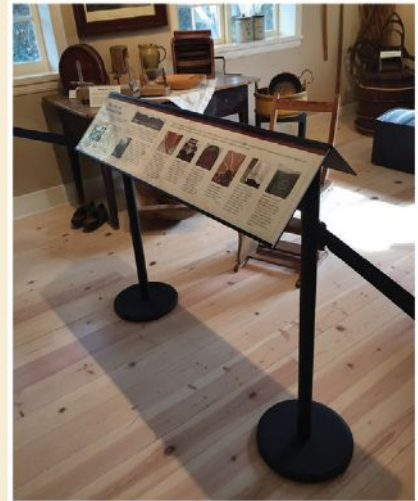
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Botanic Garden has provided opportunities for healing, stress reduction, physical exercise and endless learning through its Horticultural Therapy Services. The Chicago Botanic Garden is a world leader in providing therapeutic horticulture experiences to visitors through its Buehler Enabling Garden, which opened in 1999. Since then, the horticulture therapy staff have worked with more than 200 health and human agency services to provide life enhancement programming that focuses on the healing ability of plants.

In partnership with Thresholds, the

Veterans Project has further explored the many health benefits that are available in nature.

“I had a lot of issues, coming back from deployment. When I started going to the botanic garden, I never knew that there was actually a living museum, and [what] I experienced there was magical,” says Valles, who is currently earning a master’s degree in counseling from National Louis University. “A beautiful, beautiful place, and the people, the staff—everybody wanted to help. For me, that means a lot. It’s a very healing place.” —*Kristin Guiter* «



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# CAFETERIA CONNECTIONS

Some food for thought and  
thought for food



By Jessica B. Harris

We have become a nation of food-obsessed individuals. A glance at television's offerings reveals that we revel in watching food competitions where seasoned chefs badger hapless newcomers, savor *mano a mano* duels between home cooks and hardened professionals, and delight in traveling to places near and far sampling weird food and vicariously tasting the fare of points known and unknown. It is only logical that this national obsession would eventually turn up at our museums.



Cheese board at the New Orleans Museum of Art's Café Noma.



## Mitsitam Café provides a gustatory continuation of the lessons learned in the exhibit spaces. It was a quiet revolution that is ongoing.

It's been a long time coming. Perhaps the first glimpses came in the 1960s and '70s while the nation was watching Julia Child extol the delights of butter on our televisions, and James Beard and the Galloping Gourmet introduced us to world cuisines. Then, some of the museums in the avant-garde began upgrading their cafeterias. I remember joining the Museum of Modern Art in New York because its restaurant offered a Midtown Manhattan haven of calm: a bright room with sleek furnishings, where as a single woman I felt safe, and as a budding food lover (the horrific term foodie had yet to be invented!) I could escape the Schrafft's-like luncheon options that otherwise prevailed when one was on a limited budget. They even served wine! Had I lived in Paris in the late 1980s, I would no doubt have spent a great deal more time in the restaurant of the Louvre. I can still recall being taken there by friends. The fresh taste of a salad of perfect string beans and fresh lettuces lightly dressed with a citrus vinaigrette remains as vivid on my palate as the restaurant's view over the newly renovated courtyard remains in my mind's eye. In each case, the restaurants were a reflection of the food ethos of the times, but bore little

relationship to the exhibition spaces.

In intervening years, there have been other many museum meals. Some were delightful for their food or their ambiance. Others were simply disguised reiterations of school cafeterias complete with the litany of food woes that dwell therein: fried and overcooked fare that was too often calorie heavy and overfilled with salt and sugar. Those two poles, with little middle ground, remained the norm for museum restaurants until 2004.

Then, the National Museum of the American Indian opened Mitsitam Native Foods Café. Mitsitam means: "Let's Eat!" in the native language of the Delaware and Piscataway peoples, and the cafeteria was a revelation. Its self-proclaimed mission is to continue and enhance the museum experience. It features native foods that come from five delineated Native American culinary regions: the Northern Woodlands, the Northwest Coast, the Great Plains, Meso-America and South America. The menu includes traditional items like fry bread, grilled wild elk loin and cedar-planked wild salmon. There are contemporary twists on traditional dishes, such as buffalo burgers, dried cherry doughnuts, and salads prepared from wild rice and watercress. The

café provides a gustatory continuation of the lessons learned in the exhibit spaces. Further, the service areas are not divided traditionally into soups and salads, meats and vegetables, but according to geographic divisions, so that the visitor can sample a taco or fry bread from the Southwest alongside a quahog chowder from the Northeast. The menu is also inflected seasonally. The museum has even had a garden grow some of the foods of the Native peoples and supply some of the ingredients for the café. It was a quiet revolution that is ongoing, as the café remains one of the most popular dining venues on the National Mall.

Certainly many museums are now incorporating fine dining into their offerings. Overseen by culinary legend Danny Meyer, The Modern at MoMA is a far cry from the eatery that began my love of museum dining decades ago. Boasting three stars from the *New York Times*, a Michelin star, multiple James Beard awards and an entrance that makes it accessible beyond museum hours, it is clearly not a traditional grab-and-go cafeteria. Dining has become such a part of its museum experience that MoMA can boast two other venues: Café 2 with Italian food, light fare and an espresso bar, and Terrace 5 with light dishes, seasonal foods, and wine and cocktails. Panini, soups and grilled asparagus with burrata can be had at AMMO at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, an outpost of Chef Amy Sweeney's culinary empire, and the New Orleans Museum of Art boasts an eatery curated by Ralph



MoMA's restaurant, The Modern (top), has won accolades for refined dishes such as the Ricotta Cannoli (bottom right).  
Bottom left: Shrimp Po' Boy at the National World War II Museum's American Sector restaurant.





The American Sector restaurant at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans offers period-appropriate fare in an attractive setting.

Brennan of the much-awarded Brennan family. Some museum restaurants, for these are more than mere cafeterias, have even scaled the culinary heights: Nerua at the Bilbao Guggenheim, like MoMA's Modern, is so exceptional that it too has earned its own Michelin star. But while they are all very fine establishments, they do not as a matter of regular practice do what Mitsitam does—extend and enhance the museum-goer's appreciation of the exhibits. (For an indication of a potential new direction, see page 51.)

Mitsitam redefined the increasing potential for the use of food studies in the museum context. If that were not enough, the display space outside the café has also been given over to food-related exhibits and showcases not

only serving vessels from around the American Indian world, but a brief display of foods developed by them that have become a part of our everyday life in the United States. Corn flakes and quinoa share space with potatoes and hot sauces (chiles were domesticated by Native peoples). In that manner, even while in line for the cafeteria, a continuing lesson is being taught—one that is grounded in food studies.

The discipline of food studies is rapidly growing in the academy, and departments and programs are springing up around the country and indeed the world. The discipline is fluid in scope and can overlap more traditional areas of study from anthropology to zoology. It also touches on new disciplines that reflect contemporary

world concerns such as environmental studies. The influence of food studies provides ample potential for creativity and for enhanced cafeteria and fine dining experiences at virtually every type of museum.

Consider some opportunities. Artists from da Vinci to Warhol have kept journals in which they detailed their culinary preferences. More than a decade ago, a series of cookbooks that celebrated the dining habits of various artists were published: *Monet's Table*, *Van Gogh's Table*, *Cézanne and the Provençal Table*, *Matisse: A Way of Life in the South of France*, *Picasso: Bon Vivant*, *Toulouse-Lautrec's Table* and more. Lautrec himself authored a cookbook. *Frida's Fiestas: Recipes and Reminiscences of Life with Frida Kahlo*

presents the recipes and entertaining styles of another part of the art world. These books detail an artist's culinary preferences, along with images and recipes. The favorite dishes of artists would make for an interesting series of art museum cafeteria specials that would enhance the visitor's experience of the artist's world. You may ask, "Does one understand Monet better after learning about his blue and yellow kitchen and his love of food?" That is not the point. In this food-obsessed era, knowing about Monet's kitchen and perhaps sampling one of the dishes he served may be an entry point to the appreciation of his art for someone who might otherwise not care.

It's not all about the Impressionists, French artists or even art museums. The Field Museum's "Chocolate" blockbuster show of 2002 offers another case in point. The wildly popular show explored chocolate throughout history and around the world and is still traveling. In its second decade of touring, it shows no sign of stopping, indicating a national fascination with food but also offering ample opportunity for cafeteria connections. Who wouldn't savor a taste of chocolate using a recipe from Montezuma's time or a cup of the chocolate that Marie

Antoinette might have shared with her suite of followers? Even the smallest museum dining facility could provide such fare or partner with others who can. Institutions could offer chocolate-themed dinners, afternoon teas or simpler tastings. The complex culinary histories of sugar, coffee, tea or salt offer possibilities for exhibits large and small, all with opportunities for the creative museum kitchen.

In Washington, DC, the 2011 exhibit "What's Cooking, Uncle Sam? The Government's Effect on the American Diet" at the National Archives spawned an extremely popular pop-up restaurant: the America Eats Tavern, researched and designed by DC chef José Andrés, featuring dishes from the country's past like pickled watermelon salad, Maine lobster rolls and fried chicken with slaw, as well as historic cocktails. Opened near the Archives, the restaurant became so popular that in perhaps a unique case of a museum exhibit creating an ancillary business, it outlived the exhibit that created it. In 2013 Andrés opened a permanent America Eats Tavern at the Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner in McLean, Virginia.

The American Sector restaurant at the National World War II Museum

in New Orleans has offered period-appropriate dishes like chicken potpie. Today there is an authentic soda fountain and a special collaboration between restaurant and museum that allows visitors to dine with a curator in a private area with a menu that often fits the theme of the discussion.

Certainly, there is a fine line to tread. It would be naïve not to recognize that some folks will never change. After all, the museum cafeteria is generally a profit-generating enterprise that must be available to all level of museum-goers, from budget-seeking families to connoisseurs. There may always have to be a burger, a chicken dish, a salad and a vegetarian special, as well as those chicken tenders for the kids. However, there is still ample room for adventure.

The Smithsonian, perhaps learning from the lesson of the Mitsitam Café and as custodians of the wildly popular "Julia Child's Kitchen" exhibit, has committed to using food as a lens through which to see American history. It also seems to be in the forefront of a growing movement to continue the exhibit in the cafeteria and indeed enhance the understanding of the museum's experience via the palate. In April of 2014, the National Museum of

The influence of food studies provides ample potential for creativity and for enhanced cafeteria and fine dining experiences at virtually every type of museum.



American History, home of the exhibit, formed a Kitchen Cabinet of leaders in food scholarship, culinary history and food-related businesses tasked with shaping food-related events and exhibits in the upcoming years in an attempt to show us who we are through food.

The difficulty of defining a people through its food and connecting the cafeteria to the exhibit spaces became abundantly clear to me in 2011, when I was asked by the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture to help conceptualize its cafeteria space. The first challenge was the complexity of presenting the full range of African American culinary history in the United States that spans the early years, crosses the privations of the period of enslavement and extends into the current era of new black Americans who are more recent arrivals from all areas of Africa and its diaspora. Also to be considered were Pullman car porters and juke joints, cakewalks, rent parties, church dinners on the grounds, Juneteenth barbecues, Pinkster Day picnics and cowboy chuckwagon cooks. There was a half a millennium of history that included agricultural labor, a long tradition of working in food service both as enslaved and paid laborers, and a cultural and culinary diversity that is often subsumed by race and its history. The seemingly innumerable ways to connect the cafeteria with the exhibit spaces stretched out like an unfurling banner celebrating the past; it was all about keeping communication lines open between curators and chefs and allowing each to experience

the excitement and enthusiasm of the other. All too often this does not happen. The process is ongoing, so I'm not giving away any secrets, but suffice it to say, when the museum opens, culinary history and museum-goers' appetites will both be well served.

Now museum cafeteria kitchens are being encouraged to self-correct and retreat from the stodge that some are still serving. Not only is it time to get beyond the limp grilled chicken Caesar salad, hot dogs and sodas that have become synonymous with museum cafeteria dining, it is also time to make the dining experience a continuation of the museum's mission. Clearly every museum does not have the budget to support a chef-driven major dining establishment. Some will be smaller spots with limited menus and still others may only offer periodic specials. But changes are possible with a sure knowledge of the museum and of food in all of its aspects, and a new sense of collaboration between exhibit and cafeteria staffs. If the "object all sublime" in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* was "to let the punishment fit the crime," perhaps the contemporary museum's objective should be to let the food fit the venue. «

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# BEYOND FOUR WALLS

A conversation with Peter Kim about creating a museum of food and community

By Elizabeth Merritt

Cereal flies from a puffing gun at a Museum of Food and Drink exhibit at the Summer Street Festival in New York.



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Good projects never really end—they flow into the future with all sorts of serendipitous consequences. A lovely ripple effect of the Center for the Future of Museums' (CFM) 2011 food symposium, "Feeding the Spirit: Museums, Food and Community," was connecting me to a plethora of food-related museums and museum projects. One of these was just in the planning stages—the New York-based Museum of Food and Drink (MOFAD). Museums benefit enormously from recruiting people from diverse backgrounds, and the backstory of MOFAD's founding director, Peter Kim, is

about as diverse as it gets. Peter recruited me to be on MOFAD's advisory board (a testament to his powers of persuasion, as I've never accepted an invitation like that before), and I've been tremendously impressed by how the fledgling organization is navigating the contemporary challenges of starting a museum. I took the opportunity recently to debrief Peter on what brought him to MOFAD, and what he's learned so far as a founding director. This article is edited and condensed from that conversation

—Elizabeth Merritt, founding director, Center for the Future of Museums, American Alliance of Museums

**Tell me a little bit about your background. How did you come to be the director of MOFAD?**

Working on MOFAD represents the confluence of a lot of independent strands of experience that I've had throughout my life. They all came together into this perfect project. For one, I started cooking at a very young age because my parents had to work late hours. So when I was 10 or 11, I was already starting to cook, and when I was in high school, I was already cooking big dinners, having lots of guests over. My parents would always invite their friends over and I would cook for them.

The next big thing was in college, when I read Harold McGee's book,



MOFAD Founding Director Peter Kim.

*On Food and Cooking.* That was a significant moment, when I realized that food could be thought of something as more than just recipes and ingredients—a window into culture, history and science.

I started to become fascinated with food culture and food history. Instead of just eating something, I would wonder, well, why is it like this? Why do we eat this at this time of day? Why is breakfast defined in this way? Where do these ingredients come from? What does it mean for me to eat this or for you to eat this?

I worked in hunger policy for a year. I did a fellowship for the Congressional Hunger Center. This was a program for young leaders in development, exposing them to issues in hunger and poverty policy. I worked for a little while at the USDA, helping them with food stamp outreach, and then in DC doing more advocacy work. That opened my eyes to the problem of hunger in the US. It's very real and very complicated. There's personal choice involved, there is policy that's involved, there are cultural norms that are involved.

I ended up living and traveling in a lot of different places around the world: Thailand, the Peace Corps in Cameroon, the Middle East, Europe and Buenos Aires. I was struck in all of my travels by how food could be such an incredible connector. Even when I was in the most remote places with people whom I wouldn't be able to speak with because of a language barrier, there was always food, right? I would say there are a handful of things in the world that are really universal.



And food is one of them. When I was in Cameroon, I was posted in this archetypal Peace Corps village. No electricity, no running water. When I arrived, there were a lot of language barriers, not to mention cultural barriers. One of the ways in which I started to gain the trust of people in my community was inviting them over, cooking for them, showing them American food that was important to me, and Korean food. And then in turn tasting food that was particular to the different tribes in the village. That became a real running theme for me all throughout my Peace Corps experience—bonding with people over food.

When I was in Cameroon, I started a small nonprofit called L'Art de Vivre, which means the art of living. It paired art education classes with public health education. I wanted to have the community work with me on creating this program, so we had advisors from the village. I had a Cameroonian counterpart who ran the program with me. We designed the classes in a way

that would focus on empowerment and choice. We worked with high school kids and gave them art classes, and then paired those with public health education classes.

If they were learning about nutrition, they would learn how to draw fruits, vegetables, meat. If they were learning about sexually transmitted diseases, they would learn to draw social situations that involve boys and girls. After a standard battery of classes, they were each allowed to choose a particular topic that was important to them, pick a medium and decide how they wanted to express the messages that they wanted to share with their peers. They made comic books and flip charts based on what they had learned and their own self-guided inquiry.

They used those flip charts to educate their peers. I made a point of not being the guy going out into neighborhoods and educating people. I felt they would be much more effective if they were doing it themselves. It was an interesting lesson for me about the



value of empowering people to make their own decisions.

**I'm seeing three themes come together here: food and issue activism, experience on how food can serve as a connector between different cultures, and experiences that shaped your philosophy on how a nonprofit can work with communities. How did these come together in your approach to creating MOFAD?**

We want MOFAD to empower people to find their own right solutions from every angle. There's just no way we could tell people what's nutritionally healthy in an absolute sense because it's so relative to your own personal lifestyle and to what's important to you culturally.

We want to show people how exciting it is to learn and care about food, and then provide them with information that has been thoroughly researched and is free of any sort of marketing agenda or paternalistic, didactic finger wagging. We want people to navigate this topic on their own and come to their own decisions.

I'm really excited about the prospect of MOFAD reaching communities that traditionally do not go to museums. We have a unique opportunity because food is an accessible entry—a place that people are familiar with. At a museum of art, there could be a barrier because people might say to themselves, “Well, I don't know enough about art to feel comfortable with going to an art museum.” Whereas with food, everybody is an expert, in a way. Even a 10-year-old has 10 years of experience in dealing with food and drink. We want people to feel like they have a

set of experiences that is entirely valid and important, and should inform the decisions that they make.

Everybody needs to eat. Most people care about the food that they eat, to some degree. We have to meet them there and then try to take them a little further. Given how universal food is, I think we'll be able to reach new audiences with MOFAD that other museums might struggle with.

**Even though MOFAD does not have a physical site, you are beginning this process of reaching out to audiences who care about your issues. Tell me how you're doing that.**

We kicked off the project in 2013. After thinking a lot about how we would want to start off MOFAD, crowd funding seemed like a perfect spiritual fit with the identity of the museum. The campaign was incredibly successful. Most of the donations that we got were really small, but we had over 830 people contribute. That gave us enough to put on an exhibition.

We thought a lot about the first exhibit that we wanted to do, and the puffing gun made a lot of sense for us. Because we're taking care to not choose topics that are just foodie-centric. The puffing gun is a technology that debuted in 1904 at the Saint Louis World's Fair. It revolutionized the cereal industry: most cereals that you see today on the shelves of the supermarket are puffed cereals. Prior to the puffing gun, the only cereals that you had were flaked cereals or shredded cereals or chunked cereals like Grape Nuts. The puffing gun opened the door to a whole range of possibilities

for cereals. It was used to make cereals like Cheerios and Kix. During the hey day of the puffing gun is right about when cereal made the switch from a health food to something that had a lot of different flavors and colors and advertising campaigns attached to it. The puffing gun era was that period when cereal went from something that we wouldn't recognize to something that we would recognize today.

Breakfast cereal is one of these things that, like it or not, is a deeply rooted part of American food culture. Whether you're an immigrant or whether you're from a generations-long family here in the US, it's likely that you have breakfast cereal in your pantry right now. We set up the exhibit in a way that could appeal to adults or children. It really did; it was interesting. We debuted the exhibit at the Summer Street Festival in New York, and had children who were going bonkers with excitement seeing this puffing gun explode cereal. But then we had old-timers looking at it and thinking wistfully about the days of yore when they would see the Quaker Puffed Rice commercials and see the cannons firing.

**That's a great example of how an artifact embodies a really important piece of history and culture and changes in food consumption habits. You've also been exploring contemporary issues through a lecture series and debate series, right?**

Each of the programs that we've done so far has been carefully designed. We want them to strategically show a different facet of what the future brick-and-mortar museum will be like. The puffing gun was an example of a highly



Visitors of all ages were fascinated by the rain of exploded cereal at MOFAD's demonstration.

sensory, highly interactive and sensational exhibit. MOFAD Roundtable is our way of demonstrating the role that MOFAD could play as a forum for differing opinions on controversial food issues. And it's a recognition of the fact that we all feel very strongly about certain issues. Reasonable people will disagree on these issues.

We bring together four people who fundamentally disagree on an issue and leave them to talk to each other with very light moderation. This has been spectacular. We did the first one on the New York soda ban. We brought together a libertarian who represented the soda industry's perspective on the soda ban, a nutritionist who had

advised the city on the drafting of the regulation, an economist and an antihunger advocate who opposed the ban just like the libertarian—on totally different grounds because he viewed it as being paternalistic toward poor communities.

All four people had different perspectives, and it made for a lively discussion. A common response we've been getting from people who walk away from these roundtables is that they've been prompted to reevaluate their positions on an issue. Oftentimes they say that these were some of the best discussions they have heard, because it's contentious, it's lively. And we've managed to keep the tone

respectful. But there is disagreement, which is important to highlight.

We've done this for all sorts of contentious issues. We did GMOs, we did big food and marketing, and then we also did the future of meat. The meat one was quite an emotional conversation. In the middle of the event, we hit this emotional crest where people were screaming at each other. But then it dialed back and we had an interesting resolution. Everybody saw that there was a common goal. Everybody recognized that changes needed to happen in the way we grow and eat meat, and that the way it was going right now was unsustainable.

We have been pleasantly surprised





It's kind of a hybrid digital-physical thing because it's dealing with physical places in the city. Because we don't have this home, we want to make sure that we have a strong digital presence even before we have the brick-and-mortar museum.

There is a challenge for museums in the 21st century in how to stay relevant as information becomes more widely available on the Internet and people can learn about the kind of things that they would learn about in museums but instead in their home on their computer.

I think MOFAD will be relevant even as people can access more information on the Internet because it will be this destination that integrates sensory experience with the information. So if you're learning about Vietnamese street food, you taste Vietnamese street food. If you're learning about coffee, then you'll actually taste coffee from different regions around the world brewed using different technologies, roasted at different levels.

There's a lot of evidence out there that when you combine this sort of sensory experience with the information, it sticks. I don't think there's going to be, in the near future, any kind of technology where you can eat through the Internet. So long as that's true, there's something that MOFAD will be able to provide that you won't be able to get anywhere else. That's one way in which we're well suited for the challenges that museums are facing for the 21st century.

by the diversity of people who have come. At the meat roundtable, we had old-timers from the Lower East Side, right next to a lot of younger food studies students. We had people from government. We had faculty from the NYU food studies department come.

I think we can always do better in reaching a more diverse audience. But so far we've tried to pick issues that everybody cares about, like the soda ban.

**One of the things I get asked is how museums are going to be different in the future because of all this emphasis on digital. What do you see as the relationship between MOFAD's physical experience and its digital reach?**

At this stage, it is imperative that we have a strong digital presence because we don't have that physical space for people to go to. We're developing a new program right now called MOFAD City, which will be a digital initiative

that combines geolocations, smartphone technology and the urban environment to in essence turn the city into a food museum. We'll be highlighting restaurants, markets, food vendors and bakeries in ethnic enclaves and in historically significant neighborhoods around the city. And telling stories like you would see in a museum through exhibits.

When you use the app you'll be able to go and visit, say, a Trinidadian bakery. We would tell you not only where to go and what to order, but also what it means. So if you get a goat roti, we'll connect you to the stories and the information that explain why Trinidadian cuisine includes something like this. What are the cultural influences that came into this? What is the history of Trinidad that allows this dish to be created? How has this dish been adapted by communities in New York City?

### How is starting a museum now different than it was at the end of the last century?

I've definitely gotten some raised eyebrows when we say we want to start a museum at this time. Museums are also facing the challenges of changing demographics. Traditional museum-going audiences are declining as a percentage of the population. We're trying to be prepared for that by framing MOFAD in a way that will be as accessible as possible for as broad an audience as possible. What we're trying to create is unlike anything that exists right now, to our knowledge. We're looking at what seems to work for other museums, taking the best of that and trying to apply it to the way in which we build MOFAD. I feel like MOFAD is going to be a hybrid museum that takes the best of a natural history museum and a science museum. The interactivity of a science museum, but with a collection of historical artifacts. And then we'll have food service throughout the whole museum. So it's unlike anything that we've seen to date. That's definitely been a challenge for us—to get across that vision when you don't have a ready example or analog to point to.

**That's certainly a sea change, because most museums are premised around protecting the collections, with the presumption that you don't have food in the galleries. Do you have any advice for your compatriots who are running traditional museums and trying to adopt food to enhance their mission, exhibits and programming?**

I would highly recommend incorporating food and drink into programming no matter the discipline of the museum. One of the basic theses underlying MOFAD is that food is connected to everything. I honestly can't think of a single subject matter that a museum takes on for which you would not be able to have some sort of food and drink component. It may not be a question of having it built into your exhibition galleries because of restrictions on collections. Think beyond the four walls of the museum and go into communities with food—find a way to think of the bridges between the community and the subject matter that your museum is taking on. And think about the role that food could play in bridging that gap.

### Are any of the trends we explore through the Center for the Future of Museums having a particular impact on MOFAD?

I read CFM'S *TrendsWatch 2015* chapter on the ethical questions that museums are increasingly facing, and it struck home for me because at MOFAD we all feel this obligation to provide people with unbiased information, and for the organization to embody the values that we hope to instill in our visitors.

Unlike other disciplines that are covered by museums, like art, science or natural history, our subject matter is food, which is something that people make consumer decisions about multiple times a day. And those decisions affect our health, communities, the economy, the environment. We take that extremely seriously.

We grappled at an early stage with how we would deal with, say, sponsorships from major food companies. Because that's always the first thing people say when they talk about the fact that we want to build a food museum. They're like, "Oh, you should get Coca-Cola to fund the museum, or Kraft—they have money."

Sure enough, we've been approached by quite a few big food companies, but in every instance we've said no. We made the decision early on for our educational program to not accept funding from companies that have a commercial interest in that particular subject.

So we won't ever do a Starbucks coffee exhibition or a ConAgra grains exhibition. It's not because we're setting ourselves up in an adversarial position. It's more like I view MOFAD's relationship to these companies as being journalistic. We need to maintain that arm's length distance.

### To keep your credibility as an objective observer.

Yes, exactly. I understand that these ethical questions are being raised for museums across all disciplines, but it's something we feel acutely because of the very nature of food and drink as such a part of daily life.



Keep up with MOFAD's development on the Web ([mofad.org](http://mofad.org)), Facebook ([MOFADinfo](https://www.facebook.com/MOFADinfo)) and Twitter ([@MOFAD](https://twitter.com/MOFAD)). To download a free PDF of CFM's *TrendsWatch 2015*, go to [futureofmuseums.org](http://futureofmuseums.org). <<



# FOOD FORWARD

## Eat and drink trends in museums

By Marika Barranco, Sabina Carr, Ann Wei-ting Chen and Lindsay Martin

Museums today are leveraging eating, drinking and tasting in new ways for visitors. Institutions striving to deliver multisensory experiences can find no better vehicle than food. Following are examples of institutions that are using food to complement the museum experience while providing meaningful connections and messages to visitors. They are divided into five main trends that illuminate how the museum food movement is evolving.

**Food as Catalyst:** Food has become a topic for curatorial and public programs teams to explore with rigor and detail. Exhibitions, lectures and public programs help to develop a deeper understanding of food and the many issues that surround it.

**Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens, Washington, DC:** Food is at the core of this institution's history—owner Marjorie Merriweather Post was the heiress of the Post Cereal Company that eventually became General Foods. In 2014, the museum opened two key areas focusing on the culinary history of the home as part of the “Living Artfully” exhibition. The midcentury modern Kitchen and Butler’s Pantry shed light on the work of preparing meals with the domestic technology of the day, including large-scale appliances, standing mixers, a meat slicer, a combination can opener and juicer, and a large-capacity coffee percolator.

**Tenement Museum, New York:** Tours, programs and food tastings explore the cuisines of the Lower East Side and tell the story of America’s immigrant lineage. On the tour “Foods of the Lower East Side,” visitors sample dumplings, fried plantains and cream puffs while discussing how immigrant foods have shaped the American table and diet. This June, the museum looks at vegetarianism now and then through a discussion with the translator of *The Vilna Vegetarian Cookbook*, a Jewish vegetarian cookbook originally published in 1938, and the chef and owner of Dirt Candy, a neighborhood restaurant the *New York Times* the calls “one of the most prominent and influential vegetarian establishments in the United States.”

**American Museum of Natural History, New York:** Traveling to Texas, Colorado, Washington, DC, and Massachusetts, “FOOD: Our Global Kitchen” looks at the many ways humans engage with sustenance.

Interactive scent stations, streaming food photos on social media and a demonstration kitchen developed in partnership with Whole Foods engage every sense. The exhibit helps visitors understand how a vertical garden can be grown in any home and strives to foster a newfound appreciation for food farmers while tapping into the trendy “foodie” movement.

**Chefs as Creative Partners:** Culinary arts are coming into their own, and the people behind the plates acknowledged as artists in their own right. Museums are bringing in chefs not just for their food but for their visionary thinking and creative know-how.

**San Francisco Museum of Modern Art:** From 2009 to 2013 (when the museum closed for expansion), a stunning complement to the rooftop garden were the modern art desserts and other dishes by pastry chef Caitlin Freeman of the Oakland-based Blue Bottle Coffee. Freeman, an art major, was



Pastry chef Caitlin Freeman's collections-inspired creations at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

inspired by Wayne Thiebaud's painting, *Display Cakes*, to create food modeled after items on display in the museum. Freeman's portfolio ranges from a colorful cake inspired by Piet Mondrian's *Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue* to a minimalist tomato soup rendition of Donald Judd's *Untitled*.

**Atlanta Botanical Garden:** The Edible Garden demonstrates to homeowners how edibles can be combined with ornamental plants to create a beautiful landscape; the Vegetable Amphitheater and an herb wall show urban dwellers tight on space how they can grow food vertically. James Beard Award-winning chef Linton Hopkins has partnered with the garden to bring his plant-to-plate concept of cooking with fresh local ingredients to guests who dine at The Cafe at Linton's in the

Garden. In early 2016, the garden will replace the café with a full-service restaurant called Linton's in the Garden, where the chef will offer a menu based heavily on food grown seasonally in the Edible Garden.

**Museum of Modern Art, New York:**

This spring, MoMA brings together Jacob Lawrence's *Migration Series* for the first time in 20 years. The artworks explore the movement of 6 million African Americans from the rural South to the urban areas of the North, Midwest and West. To celebrate the seminal work and connect it to the present day, MoMA commissioned new works by poets, artists, filmmakers and chefs. Marcus Samuelsson (an Ethiopian-born, Swedish-raised celebrity chef and Harlem-based restaurateur), Abram Bissell (currently the

chef at MoMA's fine-dining restaurant, The Modern) and Dan Jackson (executive chef of MoMA's cafés) developed special menus for the museum's eateries showcasing the culinary influence of the Great Migration.

**Beer, Wine and Spirits**

**Exploration:** While museums have long been a place where VIPs, members and guests can sip wine at exhibit openings, now institutions are using beverages to connect with broader audiences, share unique histories, tell a story and even generate some revenue. Museums have tapped into the mixology, craft beer and wine connoisseur movement in creative ways.

**Belle Meade Plantation, Nashville,**

**TN:** In 1953, this legendary horse farm became a nonprofit organization working to educate the public about the property's history, horses and hospitality legacy. Opened in 2009, a modern-day winery is shaped by historical research of the cultivation of Muscadine grapes and the family's production of wine from the property's vineyards. Wine names and labels serve as an opportunity for interpretation, connecting with viticulture (Iroquois Red Cabernet); property heritage and horse racing (Racing Silk Red); and key figures like Bonnie Scotland, the prolific stud horse (featured on the Red Muscadine label art).

**Mount Vernon, VA:**

George Washington operated the largest whiskey distillery in America at the time of his death in 1799. Washington's farm manager, a Scottish immigrant



named James Anderson, convinced Washington that distilling would be a good addition to Mount Vernon, and it proved to be one of Washington's most profitable enterprises. The distillery was reconstructed through detailed research and reopened in 2007 using the same recipes and techniques that Washington and Anderson pioneered. *Founding Spirits: George Washington and the Beginnings of the American Whiskey Industry*, a scholarly publication written by Dennis J. Pogue and commissioned by Mount Vernon, explores George Washington's entrepreneurial exercise in whiskey and the broader history of the distilling in America.

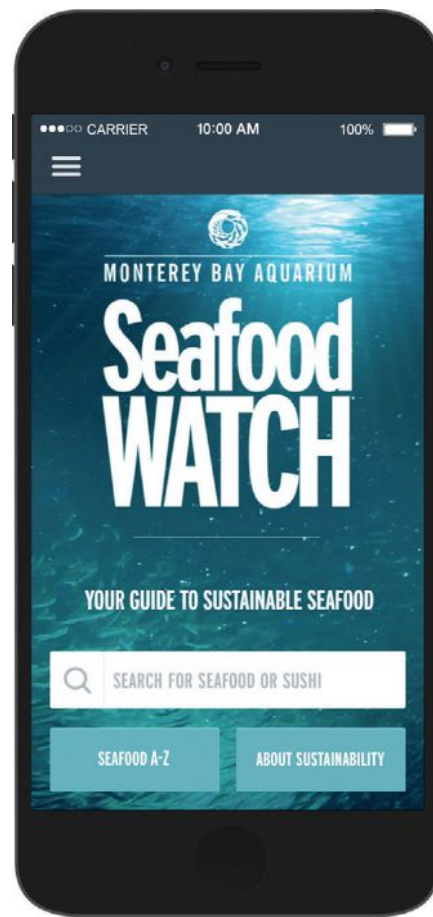
**Garfield Park Conservatory, Chicago:** This May marks the conservatory's sixth annual craft beer event, Beer Under Glass (BUG). The stunning greenhouse designed by turn-of-the-century landscape architect Jens Jensen provides the setting, while Illinois Craft Brewers Guild provides the beer. Capitalizing on the creativity of local brewers, dozens of breweries pour hundreds of options for guests, allowing them to taste beers that incorporate plants and fruits like coffee, pineapple, mango, chiles and licorice. Local restaurants participate in the fun and provide their best beer-pairing bites.

**Reaching Out:** From the farmers who provide products to traditions shared by families, cities and cultures, food is steeped in local connections. Museums are getting in on the action, using food as a tool

to deepen community engagement and build relationships.

**Queens Museum, NY:** People's favorite foods aren't always healthful. The museum worked with its local Corona neighborhood and a nutritionist to transform comfort food favorites into healthful options. As high rates of heart disease and diabetes were a public health concern, it was an opportunity for the museum to demonstrate community partnership and leadership. The result was *A Healthy Taste of Corona Cookbook*, developed using a process similar to curating an exhibition. Compiling community photos and oral histories, the museum set out to accurately portray each neighborhood of the eclectic, ethnic and diverse borough that is Queens. Recipes collected from the community were reimaged by a nutritionist for the cookbook; original and revamped versions are included, allowing the home cook to make the ultimate decision. Content was then translated to Spanish in order to reach the museum's predominantly Latino surrounding community. Today the book is used in the area in English as a Second Language classes and after-school programs.

**Witte Museum, San Antonio, TX:** Local chefs, farmers, ranchers and food historians present information, history and stories in "Salud! Culinary Nights at the H-E-B Body Adventure." This interactive evening program for adults utilizes the museum's demonstration kitchen to present a culturally and seasonally themed menu, as well as wine or beer pairings from well-regarded



The Seafood Watch app helps inform decisions about seafood purchases.

local wineries and breweries. This event builds on a long tradition of community-based food events at the Witte.

**Denver Botanic Garden:** The garden's Chatfield property is the local farm. Started in 2010 with a \$500,000 grant from Kaiser Permanente, the community supported agriculture (CSA) program works to connect people with their food and each other. From June through October, the farm provides fresh local produce to Colorado families and organizations that serve under-resourced communities in the region. Shares of the farm are sold to members of the public who in turn receive fresh produce weekly at pick-up sites in downtown Denver and rural Chatfield. The CSA has grown over 50 tons of

produce and donated over four tons to local charities. The program utilizes local volunteers working alongside veterans who attain sustainable farming skills and look to translate military experience into a civilian career to plant, grow and harvest produce.

**Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA:** The gardens worked with the local community to overcome a challenge during its famed Christmas display. The 1906 restaurant and café, designed for a time when the garden had less visitation, are too small to accommodate today's holiday crowds. So a partnership shuttles visitors to nearby restaurants. The results were successful on every front—visitors were able to get an excellent meal as part of their visit, local restaurants saw an uptick in business and area retailers were able to join in as venues for holiday shopping.

**Making Meaningful Change:** Food is a hot topic with deep connections to complex issues like poverty, social equality, sustainable living, water scarcity, obesity, animal and human rights, genetic modification, corporate responsibility and other pressing concerns. Museums are empowering visitors to make informed food choices that align with their broader values.

**Hammer Museum at UCLA:** The museum believes in the ability of art and ideas to illuminate our lives and build a more just world. In the fall of 2014, “The Future of Food: Democracy or Dictatorship?”—a discussion among food activist Vandana Shiva, environmentalist Derrick Jensen and ecologist

Ignacio Chapela—explored the complex and highly controversial issues surrounding ownership and control of the food system. The discussion explored industrial agriculture's impact on ecosystems and human health; how chemical and seed corporations are moving to control the global food system through genetic patents and seed laws that prevent farmers from saving and exchanging seeds; and the potential of food labeling laws to limit consumers' ability to make informed choices about what they eat.

**Monterey Bay Aquarium, CA:** In its efforts to inspire conservation of the world's oceans, the aquarium launched its Seafood Watch program in 1999. Rather than simply pushing people to not eat threatened and depleted fish, Seafood Watch is working toward a more impactful change by educating consumers and collaborating with fishermen, aquaculture producers and major buyers to transform seafood production in sustainable directions. Researchers evaluate whether species are being caught and farmed in environmentally friendly ways. Results are published online, on pocket-size cards and on the Seafood Watch app to help consumers and businesses make informed decisions when purchasing seafood. While the scientific rigor of the program hasn't changed, the message to consumers has. Initially consumers were encouraged to ask where and how seafood was caught or farmed, in hopes of showing retailers there was demand for sustainable seafood. Over time, it became clear that businesses

were embracing sustainable seafood because it aligned with their own sense of corporate social responsibility rather than in response to consumer demand. Now consumers are encouraged to ask one question: “Do you sell sustainable seafood?” This simple inquiry rewards Seafood Watch partners and businesses that have made the shift to sustainable sourcing, and shows uncommitted business that there is demand for sustainable products.

Seafood Watch also works with producers and businesses to affect the seafood supply chain. Seafood Watch has partnered with some of the largest food service companies in North America to help them make a commitment to sustainable seafood and phase out nonsustainable products from their inventory. This dual approach has been effective, with fish once listed as “Avoid” now reclassified as “Good Alternatives” or even “Best Choices” as fishermen and aquaculture producers respond to customers' requests for more sustainable options. <<

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*Marika Barranco is guest experience manager, Monterey Bay Aquarium; Sabina Carr is vice president, marketing, Atlanta Botanical Garden; Ann Weiting Chen is research director, Banyan Communications; and Lindsay Martin is director, administration, Hammer Museum at UCLA. This article was adapted from content for the 2015 annual meeting session, “Food 4 Ways: Trends, Messages, Programs and Management.”*



# THE MAN FROM

Uniting the richly diverse—but fragmented—museum field has been Ford Bell's mantra since he joined AAM as president in 2007.

Eight years later, we bid farewell to Ford as a stronger and more collaborative field than ever. The evolution of the museum field is the result of many factors, but there is little doubt that at the vanguard of much of the change has been Dr. Ford W. Bell.

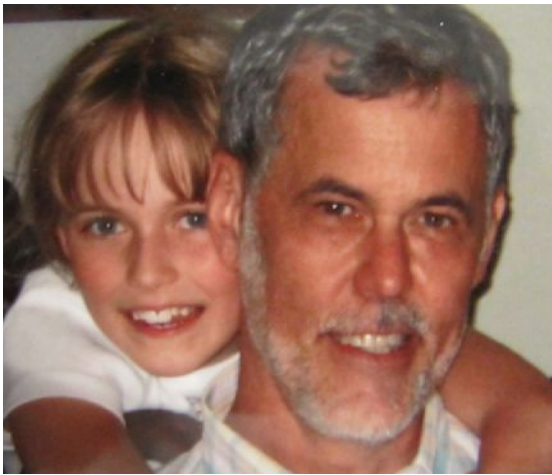
On May 31, Ford will retire as president of the American Alliance of Museums, to be succeeded by current COO Laura Lott. During his tenure, the Alliance has earned the endorsement and support of a larger slice of the museum field than ever in its 109-year history, as evidenced by the 58 percent jump in museum members and 38 percent increase in individual members. Museums of every type, size and geographic region are working across disciplines more than ever for their programmatic work—and for the important work of advocating for the field, at the federal, state and local levels of government.



# MINNESOTA







Ford came to the job with a nontraditional resumé, to say the least. Before devoting eight years of a wide-ranging professional career to the cause of museums, Ford was a veterinarian with a highly successful practice, a respected educator, a US Senate candidate and a leader of an effective medical nonprofit. But he was always a devotee of museums, serving on the boards of institutions in his native Minneapolis, including the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, where he was board chair and where he led a capital campaign that raised \$103 million for one of the city's crown jewels. Museums are in his DNA: his grandfather created and endowed the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History at the University of Minnesota, Ford's alma mater, for which he was also a long-serving board member.

The keystone of Ford's many achievements in the museum field is the rebranding,

renaming and refocusing of AAM. At Ford's initiative, in 2009 the organization launched an exhaustive strategic planning process, the lynchpin of AAM's metamorphosis. Dubbed *The Spark*, the plan was the product of months of talking about the organization's *raison d'être*, the stark realities of the world of trade associations, and what the field wanted and needed from its national association. Serious and extensive research accompanied the effort. But most importantly, the plan was grounded in listening: to members and nonmembers, to regional, state and affiliated discipline-specific museum associations, to funders and foundations, and more.

With the unswerving support of AAM's board—under the leadership of chairs Carl R. Nold of Historic New England, Doug Myers of San Diego Zoo Global and Meme Omogbai of The Newark Museum—*The Spark* emerged, distilling the organization's focus

into a simple tagline: Champion Museums, Nurture Excellence.

Ford had quickly discerned that championing museums through advocacy is at the core of AAM's mission, bringing museums together to speak with one clear, strong, passionate voice about the vital role they play in America's educational infrastructure: as economic engines, civic touchstones and catalysts for a sense of community in locales large and small.

Nurture Excellence expresses AAM's other core mission: to help museums be better, through publications, professional development and vital programs like Accreditation, Core Documents Verification and the Museum Assessment Program (funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services). Ford was an early convert to the hidden value of Accreditation, seeing it as critical to the advocacy initiatives of the entire field, at every level of government, as well as instrumental to ensuring that museums—unlike most other economic sectors—remained self regulating.

But Ford's imprint on the face of AAM starts with the name itself. From 1906 until September 2012, AAM stood for the *American Association of Museums*. To Ford, AAM's middle name seemed a nebulous term in the sharp-elbowed world of contemporary politics and the fight for federal and state funding. In his drive to make the museum field stronger, Ford saw that AAM too had to be stronger, and that started with the name. After much deliberation and more listening, it became the Alliance.

Saying you are an alliance is one thing; embodying all that the word implies—united, vocal, determined, collaborative, indefatigable—is something else entirely. Making AAM a true embodiment of an alliance is work without end for all its members, but Ford's vision and seemingly inexhaustible energy have gone far toward making it so.

As Ford would be the first to say, all of the accomplishments enumerated here were done with the help and collaboration and ideas of many others. But it was Ford who was the impetus, often by the force of his personality. Perhaps it is his Minnesota roots, but Ford Bell is not the hard-charging, ruthless prototype of a chief executive. By contrast, he is engaging and engaged, gregarious, warm, witty, empathetic, with a genuine love of people. Blessed with a hearty sense of humor, he often makes himself its target. He is just as comfortable negotiating with CEOs as he is chatting with young museum professionals just starting their careers. A voracious reader, especially of history, he applies its enduring lessons to the present day. He appreciates and is moved by creativity, whether in music, literature or art. He is equally at home speaking to a corporate board as he is casting a line into one of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes.

For many in the museum field, accessibility is perhaps the most defining characteristic of Ford's tenure at AAM. Over eight years, he has traveled throughout the country visiting hundreds of museums and, at the invitation of museum groups of all sizes and types, delivered hundreds of speeches. Invariably each of these addresses opened with a joke, usually at his own expense. But his remarks have often





proven profound; the then-chair of the National Trust for Historic Preservation once threatened to have Ford deliver his address to its annual meeting twice, having found it so inspiring.

Garrison Keillor has forged a brilliant career out of poking fun at the Minnesota character: How do you tell an extroverted Minnesotan? When they talk to you, they look at *your* shoes. Ford belies that sketch. But true to his Minnesota roots, he is humble, appreciative of the efforts of others and, above all, service and mission driven. Over the past eight years, he has made the mission of museums his own, and the entire field is better for it.

The evidence is everywhere. In July 2007, Ford assumed the leadership of an organization that was viewed as insular, unresponsive, perhaps moribund, authoritarian without being authoritative. Many museum professionals would see that as ancient history now. The Alliance is inclusive, collaborative, a true partner in the field's important commitment to public service

and the go-to source for many things that help those in the trenches do their jobs better.

As Ford returns to his home state, let us take the time to salute the man from Minnesota on a job well done.

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*Dewey Blanton worked with Ford W. Bell as AAM's senior director of strategic communications until 2014. He currently serves as director of communications and public relations at the National Academy Museum and School in New York.*

### Saying Thanks to Ford

Send a postcard to Ford from your museum or city/town. We will compile and present to him a book filled with "Postcards from the Field" as a memento of the ties he has forged with museum professionals across the country and around the world. Mail your postcard no later than May 20 to the American Alliance of Museums, 1575 Eye St., NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005.

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## Announcing the

## Ford W. Bell Fellowship for Museums and K-12 Education

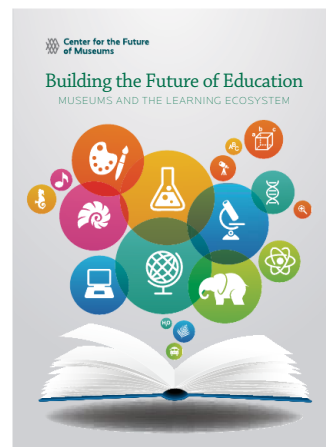
The Alliance is honoring Ford on the occasion of his retirement with a bold new initiative that will help our field shape the future of K-12 education in the US.

*"As a former teacher and tireless advocate for museum education, there is no better way to honor Ford upon his retirement." —Kaywin Feldman, Chair, AAM Board*

Join us by making a contribution today.

Visit <http://www.aam-us.org/fordwbell>

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# Center for the Future of Museums: PROGRESS AND PLANS

## LOOKING BACK

The Center for the Future of Museums (CFM) wouldn't exist without Ford Bell.

When the initiative was just in the planning stages, as Ford took over the directorship of AAM, the cards seemed stacked against it—a major national initiative launching on the eve of a national economic collapse, with just two staff, minimal budget and an ambitious but ambiguous charge. But Ford had an optimistic view. “The center will be our—and your—in-house laboratory,” he told attendees at a 2007 American Association of State and Local History meeting. “We will invite the best thinkers and practitioners from inside and outside the field to get together, generate some new energy, explore new ways of serving the public, develop new approaches and make all of us better prepared for what the future might bring.”

To critics who subsequently asked, “But what, exactly, will CFM do?” Ford said, “If I could tell you *exactly* what it will do in the next few years, it would be doing the wrong thing.”

Ford supported the vision of CFM as a nimble, responsive initiative that could respond to this morning's headlines, while steering a course into the long-term future.

CFM was actually conceived of before Ford's tenure, as part of the strategic visioning that took place during AAM's centennial in 2006. When the board of trustees challenged staff to dream up new initiatives that would help the association lead museums into the 21st century, staff, quite reasonably, pointed out that it was hard to envision what museums would need in the next hundred years without also envisioning the century as a whole. From that observation, the Center for the Future of Museums was born.

Eight years after its inception, CFM has published eight major reports (including four editions of the *TrendsWatch* forecast), received over 1 million page views on the CFM Blog and amassed 39,000 followers on Twitter. We distribute the weekly e-newsletter *Dispatches from the Future of Museums* to 37,000 subscribers. CFM webcasts on demographics, games design and using food to build community have







A lecture by game designer Jane McGonigal was the first CFM event.

reached thousands of people around the globe, and CFM's YouTube channel has provided a platform for dozens of museum professionals to share their views on the future.

So why did we succeed? Strangely enough, the fiscal crisis of 2008 was one of two factors critical to CFM's launch. After decades in which it seemed nearly impossible for a museum to outright fail, our field's traditional income streams faced a perfect storm as government support, philanthropic support, earned income and the value of endowments all plunged. In this climate of profound anxiety, museum directors, staff and funders were open to the message that the future might be very different than the past century, and that they might have to change in order to survive. They were willing to consider new ideas, new ways of operating, because the old ways clearly weren't working.

CFM also reached escape velocity because we launched just as social media began to experience geometric growth and reach. Creating a blog, YouTube channel, Twitter account and (in time) Pinterest boards and a Facebook page enabled us to rapidly recruit a community of users that would have been difficult to assemble via nondigital means.

The biggest challenge for CFM in 2008 wasn't technology or budget, however, it was culture. AAM was over a hundred years old—grounded in the traditions of an academic society and many, many people's vested interests in the existing power structure. How do you take a venerable association into a future shaped by dramatic social, economic and technological change?

From the start, AAM leadership cut CFM the slack we needed to innovate by giving it a semi-independent branding. Of all the programs in AAM, it was the only one to have its own, distinct logo. At a time when the association was struggling to revitalize its fossilized website, CFM established a separate, simple Web presence, enabling staff to broaden our avenues of communication and speak in an informal, provocative and sometimes transgressive voice.

We chose five core strategies to make the most of CFM's modest resources:

**Mobilize concentric circles:** When we launched CFM, we clearly couldn't simultaneously reach the estimated quarter of a million people staffing US museums at the time. So we targeted key influencers—museum directors, the best and brightest emerging professionals, respected consultants—and asked them to adopt, adapt and spread CFM ideas to their colleagues.

**Rely on evolutionary growth:** We didn't try to envision the final form of the initiative, or set specific goals for three or five years out. Ford supported this strategy, encouraging people to trust that we were designing a process that would produce good results.

**Act as a catalyst:** We focused on identifying important issues, bringing together people with resources and people with potential solutions to make things happen. That was the origin of Innovation Lab for Museums, which matched an existing program—created by EmcArts for performing arts organizations—with funding from

MetLife and CFM acting as translator to bring museums into the mix.

**Embrace the virtual:** Digital distribution of content was key. Our first CFM event was a lecture in DC by Jane McGonigal on applying the principles of game design to the museum experience. We recorded the talk and reshaped it as an interactive webcast that reached over 800 people at nearly 400 sites around the world. The full video of the talk was viewed over 2,600 times in the year it remained available on the Web.

**Talk, don't tell:** People want a way to engage with content, not just be told what to think. Early on, we bought a couple of cheap flip video cameras—this was before every smartphone had a video camera!—and mailed them to volunteers who recorded their thoughts and dreams about the future. They would mail the camera back to us, and we would post the video to YouTube. By the end of the second year of running the CFM Blog, almost half of the posts were written by guest bloggers, some from museums and many from people working in other sectors eager to contribute their thoughts on how museums can help change the world.

• • •

Here are some of the most important lessons I learned in the first eight years of building CFM:

**Don't plan too far ahead:** If you are dealing with emerging trends, by the time you've hit your mark the world will already have shifted out from under you. Case in point—for this year's annual meeting, we organized a "Museum of the Future" demonstration featuring Google Glass. About six months before the conference, Google announced it was ditching its plans to market Glass to the public in 2015 and refocusing the device

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Collaborative work from Open Field Drawing Club, 2012 AAM Annual Meeting.

on business applications. This shift illustrated the challenges for museums in deciding when to adopt new technologies, but it still gave me some bad moments.

**Try lots of things:** Because you never know what will work, especially when you are tackling a challenge no one has worked on before. And the ancillary to this rule is...

**Fail fast:** Don't sink a ton of resources into a project until you've tried a rough prototype. That way you can ditch the unsuccessful iterations quickly and concentrate on the promising permutations.

**Don't respect tradition:** Most of the wrong turns I took in the first couple of years stemmed from ignoring this rule. When CFM tried to do conventional things in conventional ways, we fell on our face (but quickly, per the last rule, so we could pick ourselves up and move on).

**Dream big:** The motto we chose for CFM is "because museums can change the world..." and CFM's ambition is to ensure that potential is realized. We've discarded a lot of ideas and passed up many opportunities over the years because we did the math, and the time we spent would simply not have benefited enough museums and reached enough people.





## LOOKING FORWARD

The original charge from the Alliance board was for CFM to be both a think tank and an idea “lab”—discovering new tools and new ways of operating that would help museums thrive in the future. I think we’ve done a good job establishing our reputation as a thought leader for museums, in the broader nonprofit arena and the press. But we haven’t tackled the “lab” part. We are an R & D department without the D.

So for our next stage of growth, we are figuring out how to go from ideas to action. How can we instigate, facilitate, catalyze experiments that address new challenges we’ve identified through our scanning? Our plan is to mature CFM into its second role of research and design lab by launching two new programs:

The **CFM Future Lab** will be an ever-changing series of practicums in a variety of formats (e.g., hands-on learning, retreats, hack-a-thons, video tutorials, online learning, mentorships, prototypes) through which museums explore how to apply emerging technologies and approaches. Future Lab will help museums innovate in response to the challenges we examine in our reports, increase the rate at which innovation diffuses throughout the field and facilitate adoption of new practices in small museums.

The **CFM Fellows Program** will recruit up-and-coming scholars, journalists, artists, futurists, entrepreneurs and educators to spend one to three years helping museums explore the challenges and opportunities presented by trends shaping the future. Focusing on specific trends or issues identified through CFM’s forecasting work, Fellows may, for example:

- expand our understanding of these issues via original research

- raise the profile of these issues through writing and speaking
- foster partnerships between museums and individuals and companies outside the museum field
- work with the CFM Future Lab to prototype and test ways for museums to adapt to change

These plans are not fleshed out (or fully funded), but in the spirit of rapid prototyping that has guided CFM, we will launch pilot projects to test and refine the concepts.



In 2010, the Pinky Show cats time-traveled to future museums and shared their findings with CFM in an exhibit at the annual meeting.

Fittingly, as Ford’s tenure saw CFM through its first stage of growth, we are using the occasion of his retirement to announce the **Ford W. Bell Fellowship for Museums and K-12 Education** (see page 58). This two-year fellowship will build on the groundwork laid by CFM’s ongoing work on the future of education, helping museums create the next educational era, based on the personalized, self-directed, passion-based, experiential learning at which our field excels. Building on the groundwork laid by CFM’s 2014 report on the future of

education, the fellow will take the Alliance the next few steps down the road of incorporating national education into our core activities. I can think of no finer way to honor Ford’s dedication and passion for museums, and all he has done for the field.

I look forward to sharing more information with you about the program—particularly this inaugural fellowship and its goals. Follow our plans and progress on the CFM Blog at [futureofmuseums.org](http://futureofmuseums.org).

Yours from the future,

Elizabeth Merritt, Founding Director,  
Center for the Future of Museums

Information Please  
continued from page 20

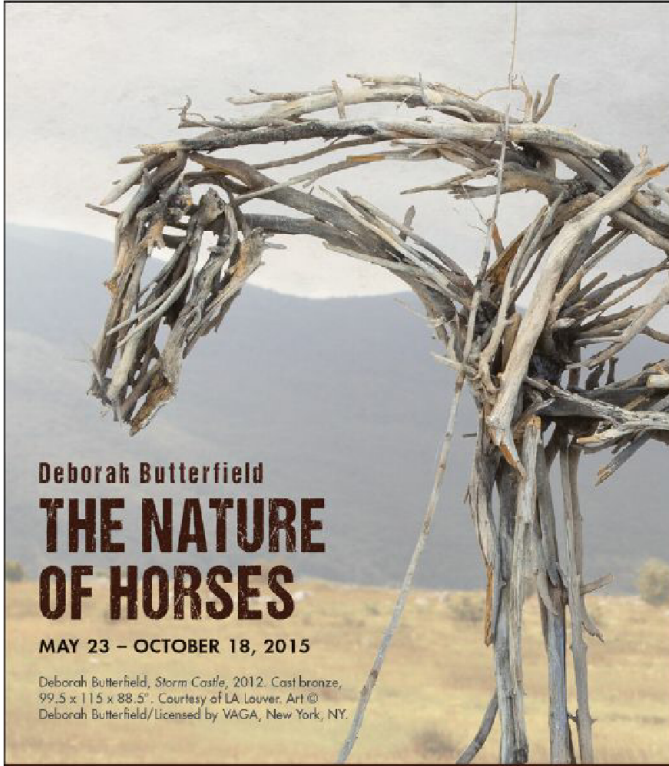
### Where do parents get information about museum exhibits, special programs, etc.?

- **Museum Website:** This was the most cited source for information, from opening hours to parking to special programs. Clear information that is easy to find is noticed and appreciated.
- **Local Blogs:** Although some people talked about using websites like TripAdvisor and Yelp (mainly for parking and logistical information), most turned to local blogs for the “inside scoop.” Building a relationship with your local blogging community can disseminate your programs to a wider family audience
- **Word of Mouth:** Positive feedback from families will spread among their friends and community. Caregivers are always asking each other for new ideas on “where to go,” and if they’ve had a good experience at your museum, they will tell others about it!

### Where can I learn more about young children, families and how they learn?

- National Association for the Education of Young Children ([naeyc.org](http://naeyc.org))
- EdCom, AAM’s Education Professional Network ([aam-us.org/resources/professional-networks/edcom](http://aam-us.org/resources/professional-networks/edcom))
- Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center ([si.edu/seec/about](http://si.edu/seec/about))
- National Science Teachers Association ([nsta.org](http://nsta.org))
- National Arts Educators Association Peer2Peer Google Hangout on Early Childhood Education in Museums ([art-educators.org/community/museum-education](http://art-educators.org/community/museum-education))
- Expanding Early Learning Listserv (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/ExpandingEL/info>)
- Twitter (#Kinderchat, #Museumed) <<

*Sarah Erdman is a mom, museum professional and early childhood educator. Her research and professional practice explore how museums and educators can connect to make meaningful experiences for young children. She writes at [cabinetofcuriositiesva.com](http://cabinetofcuriositiesva.com)*



**Deborah Butterfield**  
**THE NATURE OF HORSES**  
MAY 23 – OCTOBER 18, 2015

Deborah Butterfield, Storm Castle, 2012. Cast bronze, 99.5 x 115 x 88.5". Courtesy of LA Louver. Art © Deborah Butterfield/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

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**p. 10:** (top) Photography by Bill Foley; (bottom) Walter Wick, *Mirror Maze* from *I Spy Fun House* 1993. Organized by the New Britain Museum of American Art.

**p. 11:** (top and middle) Photographs by David Nufer; (bottom) photograph by Chris Crum.

**p. 12:** (top) Gold Filigree Pendant. © Swedish History Museum; (bottom) *Allen Ginsberg's Family, Paterson, New Jersey, May 3, 1970*. © The Richard Avedon Foundation. From the Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Gift of the American Contemporary Art Foundation, Leonard A. Lauder, President, to American Friends of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

**p. 13:** (left) N.C. Wyeth, *Dance of the Whooping Cranes* (c. 1938). Photo: Museum of Arts and Sciences; (right) Sparta's Ben Bikin' statue, near the Elroy-Sparta State Trail. Wisconsin Department of Tourism, RJ & Linda Miller.

**p. 14:** (left) Ball State University; (right) CMA Senufo Mobile App, courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art; (bottom) Zenovia Paricela, Peru; Bob Smith.

**p. 17–18:** photos by Sarah Erdman.

**p. 22 and 24:** photos courtesy Toledo Museum of Art.

**p. 27:** Louis Schultze, *Portrait of Dred Scott*, 1885–1895.

**p. 28:** Photo courtesy Missouri History Museum.

**p. 29:** Photo by Philip Deitch.

**p. 33 and 35:** Chicago Botanic Garden.

**p. 37:** New Orleans Museum of Art.

**p. 39:** (top and bottom right) Photographs by Nathan Rawlinson; (bottom left) American Sector, National World War II Museum.

**p. 40:** American Sector, National World War II Museum.

**p. 42–48:** Museum of Food and Drink.

**p. 51:** Photograph by Lindsay Martin.

**p. 52:** Monterey Bay Aquarium.

**p. 55–56:** Photos courtesy Amy Bell.

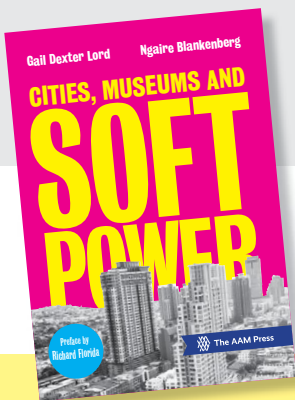
**p. 57:** Photo by Cable Risdon.

**p. 60:** Photo by Kevin Allen.

**p. 62:** The Pinky Show [www.pinkyshow.org](http://www.pinkyshow.org).

**p. 70–71:** Photos by Cable Risdon.

**p. 72:** Mask of Begtse, Mongolia, early 20th century, Rubin Museum of Art.



## Cities, Museums and Soft Power

By Gail Dexter Lord and Ngaire Blankenberg

“Lord and Blankenberg demonstrate how much museums have to offer our rapidly urbanizing planet. Cities will never be the same....” —Richard Florida, author of the international bestseller *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

Museum planners Gail Dexter Lord and Ngaire Blankenberg demonstrate how museums and cities are using their soft power to address some of the most important issues of our time. Soft power is the exercise of influence through attraction, persuasion and agenda setting rather than military or economic coercion.

Fourteen of the world's leading museum and cultural experts from six continents explore the many facets of soft power in cities and museums: how it amplifies civic discourse, accelerates cultural change and contributes to contextual intelligence among the great diversity of city dwellers, visitors and policy makers. Lord and Blankenberg propose 32 practical

strategies for museums and cities to activate their soft power and create thriving and sustainable communities.

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# MUSEUM LEADERSHIP IN A HYPER-CONNECTED WORLD

## Six Skills for Leaders at All Levels

BY MARSHA L. SEMMEL

Our world is changing at a breakneck pace. Pundits have deemed this the “third age” of the Internet, characterized by the seamless incorporation of technology in almost every dimension of life. Futurist Bob Johansen describes our time as “volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous” (*Leaders Make the Future*, 2012, Berrett-Koehler). Many museums are adapting to today’s realities, creating new modes of audience engagement and participatory knowledge creation, developing responsive digital infrastructures, forming new partnerships, and honing experiences and programs that promote 21st-century skills. They are becoming hubs in emerging and connected learning ecosystems, responding to mandates from various civic, policy and philanthropic entities that require demonstration of community-wide impacts that occur beyond the individual institution. Here are six core skills that museum leaders—at any level—need in order to thrive in this evolving environment.

**1. Strategic Agility.** Continuous learning is everyone’s job, more so given that many of today’s engagement, digital and operational challenges don’t have clear solutions or known playbooks. In a February 22, 2014, column, “How to Get a Job at Google,” *New York Times* columnist Thomas L. Friedman reported on an interview with Laszlo Bock, senior vice president of people operations for Google. Bock identified his top five hiring attributes, with number one being “learning ability” or “the ability to process on the fly,... to pull together disparate bits of information.” Museum leaders at all levels need to practice strategic agility, requiring a comfort level with ambiguity, flexibility and the ability to look at problems from different perspectives. They need to exercise what Google calls “emergent leadership” by stepping in to lead at certain moments and stepping back at others.

**2. Getting Personal.** With our increased expectations for customized experiences and services, successfully building and sustaining relationships with current and potential stakeholders (inside and beyond the museum) is more critical than ever. Effective relationship building demands authenticity, intentionality and patience, an emphasis on listening, sharing aspirations and building trust with a healthy dose of vulnerability, gratitude and humility. Further, every person’s relationship sensitivity depends in part on self-awareness: knowledge of one’s own individual talents, passions, strengths and growth opportunities. These qualities are vital within the museum too. Boris Groysberg and Michael Slind suggest that “mental or emotional proximity” between leaders and employees is essential to fostering positive organizational cultural norms (“Leadership is a Conversation,” *Harvard Business Review*, June 2012). Most museum projects, and every successful change effort, require a coalition of workers who can make them happen. A coalition can rise or fall depending on the nature of its relationships and the self-awareness and social skill of its leader(s).

**3. Communication. Communication. Communication.** From the executive suite through every department to our external stakeholders, the scope, content, quality, consistency, honesty and frequency of our messages matter. What you say and how you say it can keep a strategic planning process, restructuring plan, exhibition, education program, funding campaign or community partnership on track—or seriously derail it. John Kotter notes: “Without credible communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of the troops are never captured” (“Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail,” *Harvard Business Review*, March-April 1995). Skilled



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communication includes creating a shared and understood vocabulary and articulating clear expectations and goals for all projects and partnerships. It involves learning productive approaches to difficult conversations and sensitivity to the cultural and individual nuances of

In our networked world, the interconnections among organizations and the potential of partnerships to create significant social and cultural impacts are more important than ever.

communicating in oral, written and digital media. Kotter reminds us that communication comes in “both words and deeds, and the latter are often the most powerful form.”

**4. Data Fluency.** In a time when every dollar counts, expectations of measurable outcomes soar, amassing data on our operations is easier than ever and “open data” is a powerful and spreading trend (*AAM TrendsWatch 2015*), museum leaders must make informed and strategic decisions about collecting, sharing, prioritizing and interpreting data. Too often, we collect information for disparate projects, functions and departments, with museum staff lacking knowledge about how to synthesize, disseminate and reflect on these data in ways that guide strategy, policy and practice. Museum leaders at all levels need to be able to locate, align and implement relevant and emergent field- or sector-wide metrics or benchmarks.

**5. Rapid and Rigorous Prototyping.** Rapid prototyping is an effective way of determining the viability, efficiency and scalability of new programs. Darell Hammond, founder and CEO of KaBoom!, a national nonprofit dedicated to

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healthy and accessible childhood play, routinely employs carefully documented pilot experiments, all with testable hypotheses that are designed with scale in mind. This institution-wide approach, when executed with rigor and set against a carefully developed theory of change, can inform many organizational efforts, acknowledging and managing risk and anticipating failure as a necessary byproduct to innovation.

**6. Systems Leadership (or Seeing the Big Picture).** In our networked world, the interconnections among organizations and the potential of partnerships to create significant social and cultural impacts are more important than ever. Partnership skills, inside and beyond the museum, are essential. Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton and John Kania emphasize the necessity of fostering a practice of “collective leadership within and across collaborating organizations” (“The Dawn of System Leadership,” *Stanford Social*

*Innovation Review*, Winter 2015). Systems leadership requires the abilities to “see the larger system,” engage in “reflection and more generative conversations” and shift the “collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future.” The big picture can keep everyone in the organization focused on the museum’s mission and provide additional value for the community and the public. <<

*Marsha Semmel is principal of Marsha Semmel Consulting, senior advisor, Noyce Leadership Institute and former interim director and deputy of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This column is based on the three-part AAM webcast series, Perspective on Museum Leadership, May 6, 13 and 20, generously supported by the Getty Foundation. Learn more at [aam-us.org/resources/online-programs](http://aam-us.org/resources/online-programs).*



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PEOPLE

NEW JOBS



**Margaret C. Conrads** to director of curatorial affairs and **Robin Groesbeck** to director of exhibitions and interpretive presentations, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.



**Howard McPhail** to curator of minority history and **Jacqlyn Kirkland** to museum relations officer, History Museum of Mobile, Alabama.

**Evan Garza** to assistant curator, modern and contemporary art; **Jeongho Park** to curatorial research associate, department of prints and drawings, and European paintings; and **Beth Shook** to curatorial research associate, Latin American Art, Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin.

**Catherine Futter** to Louis L. and Adelaide C. Ward Senior Curator of European Arts, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

**Rachel Adams** to associate curator, University at Buffalo Art Gallery, UB Center for the Arts, Buffalo, New York.

**José A. Ortiz** to deputy director, Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York.

**John J. Aglialoro, Catherine (Cathy) Hughes** and **Gregory Charles Miller** to board of trustees, Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia.

**Cayetana S. Gómez** to president and CEO, The Mexican Museum, San Francisco.



▲ **Dean Carrell** to vice president of institutional advancement, LeMay – America's Car Museum, Tacoma, Washington.

**Emily Ballew Neff** to executive director, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Tennessee.

**Michael Loop** to preparator, Art Museum of West Virginia University, Morgantown.

**Elysa Engelman** to director of exhibits, Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Connecticut.

**Joan C. Horrwich** to communications and marketing director and **Declan J. Sheehy** to associate director of development, John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Florida State University, Sarasota.



▲ **Fernanda Valverde** to conservator of photographs, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas.



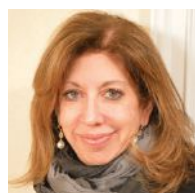
▲ **Michael Tomor** to executive director, Tampa Museum of Art, Florida.

**Serenity Wise** to director of community engagement, Northwest African American Museum, Seattle.

**Katherine Jentleson** to curator of folk and self-taught art, High Museum of Art, Atlanta.



▲ **Ellen Keiter** to chief curator, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, Massachusetts.



▲ **Linda Wolk-Simon** to director and chief curator, Bellarmine Museum of Art, Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut.

**David Breslin** to chief curator, Menil Drawing Institute, Houston.

**Mark Engelen** to director and **Catherine Kuuskraa** to assistant director, Bakersfield Museum of Art, Bakersfield, California.



▲ **Matt Lobdell** to curator and head of collections, Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois.



▲ **Angela Susan Anton** to board president, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn, New York.

**Henry Davis, Diane Landen** and **Lisa Smith** to board of governors, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska.

**Vikki Cruz** to curatorial administrator, Chinese and Korean Department, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



▲ **Jennifer Carlquist** to curator, Boscobel House & Gardens, Garrison, New York.

**Bruce Weber** to curator of paintings and sculpture, Museum of the City of New York, New York City.

**Mark Schlemmer** to associate registrar for collections, New-York Historical Society, New York City.



▲ **Stuart A. Chase** to president and CEO, and **Jorge Zamanillo** to museum director, HistoryMiami.

**Charles Guerin** to executive director, Biggs Museum of American Art, Dover, Delaware.



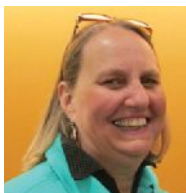
▲ **Meghan Curran** to senior vice president of marketing, guest experience, and sales, John G. Shedd Aquarium, Chicago.



▲ **Macarena Tamayo-Calabrese** to president and CEO, Naper Settlement, Naperville, Illinois.

**Michelle D. Gavin** to managing director, The Africa Center, New York City.

KUDOS



▲ **Rosie Riordan**, head of school and educator services at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, has been named 2014 Educator of the Year by the Missouri Arts Education Association.

The **Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens** in Pittsburgh has achieved the Living Building Challenge for its Center for Sustainable Landscapes (CSL), a facility that houses groundbreaking sustainability research and science education programs, and serves as a key part of the public garden's immersive visitor experience. In producing all of its own renewable energy, and treating and reusing all water captured onsite, the CSL demonstrates the benefits of humanity living in harmony with nature. In

order to meet the Living Building Challenge of the International Living Future Institute, which calls for the creation of buildings that operate as cleanly, beautifully and efficiently as a flower, projects must meet stringent requirements related to site, health, equity, beauty and materials, and prove net-zero energy and water performance over the course of one year.



▲ The National Art Education Association (NAEA) has named **Sara Klein**, teacher and school programs manager at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, Texas, to receive the 2015 Western Region Museum Art Educator of the Year Award. This award, determined through a peer review of nominations, recognizes the exemplary contributions, service and achievements of an outstanding NAEA member annually at the regional level within their division.

TRANSITIONS



**Kathryn Reasoner**, executive director of the di Rosa in Napa, California, is stepping down on May 31 after 10 years to pursue independent projects. Her tenure at di Rosa marked the organization's transition from a private collection to a nationally regarded contemporary art museum. Reasoner hired di Rosa's first full-time curator and expanded shows by emerging artists. She also successfully led efforts to allow the museum to welcome visitors on weekends and without appointment. As a result, tour participation grew by 60 percent, audiences more than doubled, and support from members and patrons increased.

**Michael Taylor** has announced that he has left his position as director of the Hood Museum of Art in Hanover, New Hampshire, to pursue other career opportunities.

IN MEMORIAM

**Michael Rush**, the founding director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in East Lansing, Michigan, and an award-winning curator, author and critic, died March 27 after a courageous two-year battle with pancreatic cancer.

Rush began his tenure at Michigan State University (MSU) in 2010 and was instrumental in the completion of the 46,000-square-foot contemporary art museum, which opened in November 2012. He shaped the museum's dedication to exploring global contemporary culture and ideas through art and serving as both an educational resource for the campus community and a cultural hub for the mid-Michigan region.

Eli and Edythe Broad, longtime supporters of the university who provided the lead gift of \$28 million for the museum and an additional \$5 million for an endowment named after Rush, said MSU will greatly miss Rush's leadership.

"Michael Rush was a visionary founding director of The Broad Art Museum at MSU who set a high bar for innovative exhibitions and programming," said Eli Broad. "Edythe and I are heartbroken that we have lost such a great leader, but we are immensely appreciative of the dedication and commitment he demonstrated during the past two and a half years to making the museum an integral part of the East Lansing community and a world-class destination."

A prodigious essayist and art critic as well as a sought-after public speaker, Rush was a passionate admirer of and rigorous advocate for the traditional arts. Additionally he was recognized internationally as a keen observer of developments in the time-based arts, performance, video and new media art. He was the author of pioneering surveys on these subjects, most notably *New Media in Late 20th Century Art* (1999), *Video Art* (2003, 2007) and *New Media in Art* (2005), all published by Thames and Hudson.

"When you walk in here, you get absorbed in the details of the small exhibits and you want to read every information panel."

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## MUSEUMS ADVOCACY DAY, 2015

On Feb. 24, museum advocates visited 350 congressional offices to make the case for a renewed federal investment in museums. Advocates urged Congress to support federal funding for museums, to protect charitable giving incentives and to recognize the educational and economic impact of museums in all communities.

We are grateful to all who advocated—both in Washington, DC, and from home—and to the 41 generous supporters from state, regional and national organizations and our corporate sponsor, Blackbaud.



Learn more about the fieldwide legislative agenda for museums at [aam-us.org/advocacy/issues](http://aam-us.org/advocacy/issues) and plan to join us for the next Museums Advocacy Day, Feb. 22-23, 2016.







**1.** Kevin Russell of Blackbaud, Alliance President Ford W. Bell, Alliance Board Member Kippen de Alba Chu **2.** Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA) meets with museum advocates **3.** Advocates strategize in advance of their Capitol Hill meeting; **4.** Federal agency officials—representing the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, National Science Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Humanities, and National Endowment for the Arts—answer questions from advocates **5.** Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) meets with Virginia advocates **6.** Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) addresses advocates at the Congressional Breakfast **7.** Missouri museum advocates present Congressional Honoree Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) with an award for his steadfast support of museums **8.** Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) meets with museum advocates **9.** Congressional Honoree Rep. David Price (D-NC) addresses advocates **10.** NEH Chairman William "Bro" Adams, Alliance President Ford W. Bell and Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) at the Congressional Reception **11.** Advocates network with colleagues at the National Building Museum Welcome Reception.





Five menacing skulls top this Mask of Begtse, a god believed to protect the leader of Mongolian Buddhism. Peering out through the mouth, a strong young monk able to support the mask—which is weighed down by some 6,000 pieces of coral—would have worn it in a ritual dance performed to eliminate negative energies and obstacles on the path to enlightenment. Dating to the early 20th century, this elaborate disguise is one of 100 masks and costumes in “Becoming Another: The Power of Masks,” on view at New York City’s Rubin Museum of Art through Feb. 8, 2016.



Albright-Knox Art Gallery • British Museum • Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Cambridge • McCord Museum  
 Dulwich Picture Gallery • Kimbell Art Museum • The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge • McCord Museum  
 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum • University Art Museums • The Jewish Museum of New York • Los Angeles  
 County Museum of Art • The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
 Mingei International Museum • Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum  
 Munson-Williams Proctor House • The National Galleries of Scotland • The National Gallery, London • The  
 National Museum of Natural History • The National Railway Museum  
 The National Archives • The New York Botanical Garden • The New York Public Library  
 Neue Galerie • Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum • Princeton  
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 Rouen • Musées des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Paris • Musées  
 de la Région Occitane, Avignon • Musée Ernest Hébert, Paris •  
 Musée Fernand Léger, Biot • Musée Fesch, Ajaccio  
 Musée de la Ville de Paris • Musée Georges Pompidou, Paris • Musée  
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 Cluny • Musées de la Région Occitane, Vallauris • Musées  
 de la Ville de Paris, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung,  
 Ethnologisches Museum, Hamburg • Münzkabinett, Berlin •  
 Kulturen der Moderne, Berlin • Alte Pinakothek, München •  
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