

museum



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Museums and Accessibility

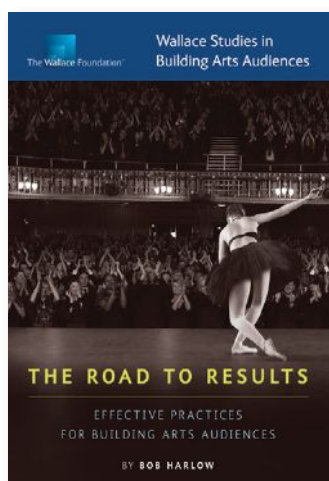
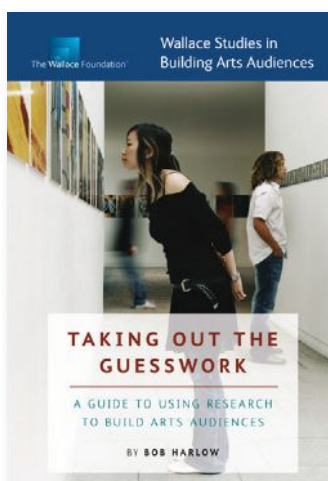
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
An interview
with the NEH's
new chairman



American
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FEATURES

26 Museums and ADA@25

A look back.

By Greg Stevens

28 Museums and ADA@25

Progress and looking ahead.

By Beth Bienvenu

36 Visitor Voices

A story of accessibility and inclusion.

*By Barbara Johnson Stemler, Annie Leist
and Sheri Levinsky-Raskin*

43 Turning the Museum Inside Out

Opening collections, engaging audiences.

By Winifred Kehl

48 The Human Experience

A conversation with NEH Chairman
Dr. William “Bro” Adams.





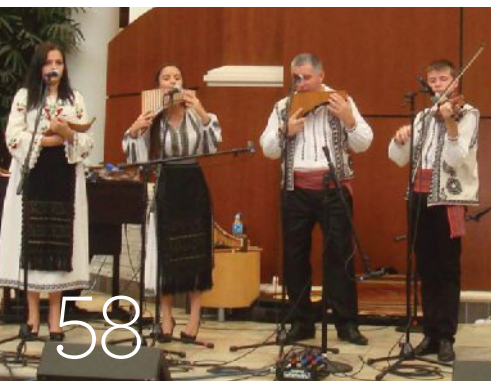
22



12



14



58



DEPARTMENTS

5 From the President
and CEO

56 Advertiser Guide/
Photo Credits

7 By the Numbers

58 Alliance Community

8 Débuts

64 Showcase

14 What's New

17 Inside View

Philadelphia program opens
doors to teens.

22 My Take

Museums need more disability
narratives.

Cover: From *Collage Works* (2014) by Kate Mahony. The eight-collage artwork was part of the DisArt festival, featuring artists who creatively examined disability. Image courtesy Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA). See page 28.



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WHEN WE WELCOME GUESTS into our museums, we are welcoming them home.

There is nothing more exciting to me than seeing the museum community provide the public with physical and intellectual access to our institutions and resources. As I travel around the United States and the world visiting Alliance members, this commitment quickly becomes evident as I witness museum employees and volunteers opening their “homes” and making accessibility for all a top priority.

Today’s discussion of accessibility comes 25 years after President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—bipartisan legislation that outlaws discrimination toward people with disabilities, embracing fully equal opportunity for all.

The ADA’s enduring legacy means more than installing grab bars or widening walkways. The ADA has helped countless people, including parents pushing strollers and families walking alongside a slower-moving elder. We may be differently abled, but we share the wonder that museums can bring.

Museums for All

So while this milestone is worthy of celebration—including events such as the ADA Zoo Day at the Toledo Zoo and ADA 25th-anniversary events at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History—it is more than that. It is an opportunity to note how the museum community is imbued with the ideals of the ADA. Neither a slogan nor a mandate, “everyone’s welcome” is an ethos we strive to maintain.

This edition of *Museum* features the many ways that museums are demonstrating that commitment. Make sure you read about plans for the new Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture in Seattle. Designed to enhance the community’s access to its collections and research, as well as to improve audience engagement, the museum embodies accessibility in action.

For a historical look back at the influence of the ADA on museums, how they responded to the passage of the law, where things stand today and tips for further improvement, read the two “Museums and ADA@25” stories and “Visitor Voices.”

Also, read the “Inside View” by Lauren Zalut, whose museum participates in a Philadelphia-based initiative to improve the accessibility of cultural institutions for teenagers. In “My Take,” the magazine’s regularly appearing opinion column, Day Al-Mohamed advocates for greater inclusion of disability-related content within museums.

We do not weave the concept of accessibility throughout our institutions by ourselves. The support of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), among other agencies and organizations, is crucial to our work. NEH is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Since its inception, NEH has awarded 6,200 grants to museums, totaling \$750 million for about 2,600 exhibitions.

In my first few months of listening and learning in my new position as AAM’s president and CEO, I had the chance to interview NEH Chairman Dr. William “Bro” Adams. I asked him about the insights he has gained during his first year. Read his response, as well as his thoughts on changing demographics and the role of technology in expanding access.

Lastly, I urge you to make your plans early for the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo. We will gather Thursday, May 26, through Sunday, May 29, 2016, in Washington DC—for the first time in over 30 years—to explore how the themes of power, influence and responsibility shape the work of museums.

We must continue to educate government and other sectors about the powerful role of museums in our communities, and there’s no better place to do that than in our nation’s capital. Please join us to answer the question: How is your museum using its power?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura L. Lott".

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CORRECTION

The robot from "Robot Revolution" at the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, that appeared on the Showcase page of the July/August issue was Baxter, not ROBOTIS-OP (shown here) as described in the caption. *Museum* regrets the error.



Do you have comments or concerns about *Museum* magazine content?

Please share your thoughts.

Contact Managing Editor Susannah O'Donnell
at sodonnell@aam-us.org.

43

the number of museum
schools (K-12) in the
United States

Source: National Association of Museum Schools

Average amount households spend on fees
and admissions (including museums),
by educational attainment



\$247/year

Not a college graduate



\$1,078/year

College graduate

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics - Consumer Expenditure Survey

MUSEUM-GOERS



GENERAL PUBLIC



■ Perception of museums as being educational

Source: Reach Advisors | Museums R+D

60%

Percentage of Americans who think the **STEM** subjects and
arts and humanities are **equally important**



Source: Reach Advisors | Museums R+D

By the Numbers is compiled by Susie Wilkening of Reach Advisors | Museums R+D, a national research and development collaborative consisting of museums that want to understand the impact they are capable of having on the lives of their visitors and their communities, and, as a field, the impact museums have on society.

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Graphics created by PSG Design, LLC

When Americans want to learn about history,
science, or art, what percentage seek out museums?



31% seek out **history museums** or **historic sites** to learn about history



25% seek out **art museums** to learn about art



16% seek out **science centers** and **museums** to learn about science

Source: Reach Advisors | Museums R+D



Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Hartford, CT | The longest-operating art museum in the United States reopens on September 19 with a refreshed building, shedding new and natural light onto its European art collection. Open since 1844, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art launched a \$33 million renovation project five years ago to renew the institution's historic Beaux-Arts building and add some 16,000 square feet of gallery space. Once the new galleries are unveiled, it will be the first time in almost half a century that all of the Wadsworth's public art spaces are open at once. In addition, the upgraded Morgan Memorial Building will present more than 1,000 works of European art—including painting, sculpture and decorative objects—in galleries featuring newly restored skylights

and windows. Highlights of the reinstalled collection include the 1628 oil *St. Serapion* by Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán and the newly acquired *Self-Portrait as a Lute Player* (above) by Italian artist Artemisia Gentileschi.

Also marking the occasion is a new photographic series by Hartford native James Welling that celebrates the museum's history. These colorful composites juxtapose archival images with modern ones that the artist took himself during the five-year renovation. The Wadsworth is considering the completed inkjet prints—in particular, the one titled *Morgan Great Hall*—as visual commemorations of its reopening.

Bruce Museum

Greenwich, CT | Eighty-eight million years of isolation provided plenty of time for Madagascar, the island nation off of Africa's southeast coast, to breed animals that can't be found anywhere else on the planet. "Madagascar: Ghosts of the Past" introduces the singular species that have populated Madagascar's ecology over millennia. The exhibition starts out in ancient times, when cannibalistic dinosaurs and vegetarian crocodilians roamed the island. It then moves forward through the ages, with the introduction of pygmy hippos and elephant birds, and concludes in the present day, with a note of caution on how humans are affecting Madagascar's remarkable wildlife. To Nov. 8, 2015.



Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum

Peoria, IL | Children can become construction workers, farmers and riverboat operators in the Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum. Part of the Peoria Park District, the museum opened in June—a feat that required nearly 15 years of fundraising to achieve. Exhibit designers Jack Rouse and Associates led the fabrication of six distinct zones within the 8,000-square-foot space, each of which teaches youngsters how to explore and create. Several also relay details about Illinois life, such as "By Your River Gently Flowing," an overview of the Illinois River and its ecosystem, and "Peoria Then and Now," a venture back through the city's timeline.



The Strong|National Museum of Play

Rochester, NY | Nothing evokes notions of “play” as much as toys, so it’s only fitting that The Strong is adding the “Toy Halls of Fame” to its spirited institution. Opening September 19, this new exhibit combines the museum’s existing National Toy Hall of Fame and the Toy Industry Association’s Toy Industry Hall of Fame into a single installation featuring some of history’s most treasured playthings. Inside the vivid, captivating space, visitors young and old can interact with toys both classic and futuristic. Longtime favorites such as Mr. Potato Head, Barbie, G.I. Joe and Monopoly are explored, as are their creators. Other features delve into the inventive minds of toy titans including Walt Disney, Jim Henson and Ole Kirk Christiansen, known for creating LEGO. Then there are the toys of tomorrow, such as a 20-foot bubble tower on which ascenders can create virtual bubbles to manipulate and



pop, or the Crayon Piano that blends color and sound. Overhead are strings of LED lights, a 20-foot-wide mobile that can be shifted with the use of air cannons and a kinetic toy sculpture that visitors can interact with using its cranks and pulleys. In total, \$4 million went into crafting this new state-of-the-art experience.



Mystic Seaport

Mystic, CT | Capt. Frederick Howland Smith's ditty box, a container to hold his personal items while at sea, is made from panbone, part of a sperm whale's jaw. Fashioned in 1877, the object is one of dozens of whaling-related items on view in "Voyaging in the Wake of the Whalers," which examines how this industry has affected the national and global economy and environment. Delving far deeper than the pages of *Moby-Dick*, the 4,400-square-foot exhibition juxtaposes historical artifacts and records with multimedia elements, including high-definition footage taken during the 38th voyage of the *Charles W. Morgan*, an 1841 American whaleship. Open indefinitely.

Walt Disney Family Museum

San Francisco | Two visionary men shared an extraordinary friendship. "Disney and Dalí: Architects of the Imagination" retells the relationship between surrealist artist Salvador Dalí and legendary animator and entrepreneur Walt Disney. Both born in the early 1900s and raised in small towns, the artists followed trajectories that were largely in sync even before their works were displayed in the same 1936 Museum of Modern Art exhibition. Less than a decade later, Disney approached Dalí about collaborating on a *Fantasia*-esque film, a vision that never came to fruition. Still, their bond and mutual admiration endured, as the exhibition proves through displays of their correspondences, as well as art, photographs and other recollections of each artist. To June 2016. Additional venue: Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, FL.



Harvard Art Museums

Cambridge, MA | From beneath her black-and-white habit, Corita Kent, a Roman Catholic nun also known as Sister Mary Corita, created striking commentaries on pop culture. As a resident, student, teacher and, ultimately, head of the art department at Los Angeles's Immaculate Heart of Mary, Kent fashioned works that echoed those of the larger pop movement. "Corita Kent and the Language of Pop" places her screenprints, films, installations and other artworks alongside those of better-known pop artists, such as Andy Warhol and Ed Ruscha. It also reveals how Kent's works both affected and reflected shifts occurring within the Catholic Church. To May 8, 2016. Additional venue: San Antonio Museum of Art.



Pennsylvania Lumber Museum

Ulysses | White pine and hemlock trees were once a mainstay of American industry. In the late 1700s, these sturdy woods were in hot demand, used to erect ship masts and to construct new homes. The Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, which reopened this spring after a \$5.4 million renovation project, is dedicated to preserving this slice of United States history. A 7,000-square-foot expansion has given it more room to do so—as has a new core exhibition, “Challenges and Choices in Pennsylvania’s Forests,” which examines the past destruction of and current efforts to restore the state’s woodlands.

Phoenix Art Museum

As the highs of the Roaring Twenties devolved into the depths of the Great Depression, artists in the United States and abroad responded with a dramatic new vision of their rapidly changing times. “American and European Art from the 1920s and 1930s” presents works by Pablo Picasso, Everett Shinn, Isabel Bishop, George Grosz and other modernists who broke with long-established artistic traditions. Twenty-five paintings and drawings—including still lifes, portraits and abstract landscapes—demonstrate how these new expressions permanently changed the face of art throughout the Western world. To Nov. 15, 2015.





Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery

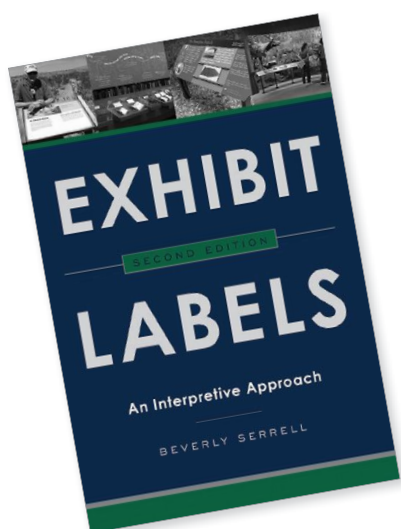
Washington, DC | Flipping through magazine pages or scrolling through Facebook feeds, readers encounter countless images of celebrities. But how did these people achieve their larger-than-life status? Does the viewer determine who is worthy of fame, or is it the star who defines that relationship? “Eye Pop: The Celebrity Gaze” takes a hard look at these queries, which are especially prevalent in our social media-oriented age. Portraits of household names ranging from Britney Spears to Sonia Sotomayor invite visitors to take a look and then turn inward to examine what “fame” truly means. To July 10, 2016.

Missouri History Museum

St. Louis | Aboard a trolley, kids can roll back through the history of St. Louis at “History Clubhouse,” a new permanent exhibit at the Missouri History Museum. Designed by and for local families, the installation immerses children and adults within a life-size replica of the historic city. From the present-day skyscrapers downtown, visitors travel back to the 1800s to experience the era of steamboat travel on the Mississippi River. Other destinations include the Cahokia Mounds, with details about how Mississippians lived a millennium ago, and Forest Park, where families can dress up to attend the 1904 World’s Fair. On view indefinitely.



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



Do museum visitors even read wall labels anymore? And if they do, how can writers make these short texts engaging and educational at once? Released this spring, the second edition of *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach* takes an optimistic approach to answering these questions, positing that wall text can indeed be effective when well written and smartly designed. The 376-page manual begins by addressing the definition of and various types of exhibition labels. It then leads readers through strategies for reaching their target audiences and enhancing the in-gallery experience for those visitors. The “Tasks” section gives a practical approach to writing, reviewing, designing and evaluating the text; and a fresh set of case studies addresses concerns not tackled in the original 1996 edition, such as writing in multiple languages and for digital devices. Throughout, author Beverly Serrell shares her insights from nearly four decades of providing advice on exhibits for all manner of museums.



Since 2010, masterworks from the Detroit Institute of Arts’ collections have been hitting the streets through the museum’s Inside|Out program. The success of this community engagement effort has led three other US cities—Akron, Philadelphia and Miami—to follow suit. With \$2 million of support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Akron Art Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Pérez Art Museum Miami are sharing their

own prized pieces with local residents beyond museum walls. High-quality prints of such works as a Vincent van Gogh self-portrait and a Dwight William Tryon landscape can now (or will soon) be spotted on Akron’s wooded jogging trails, at Philadelphia’s cafés, beneath Miami’s palm trees and in Detroit’s parks. Institutions in other communities are planning to join in the trend over the next few years.



Thousands of pictures of El Paso, Texas, have been uploaded to DIGIE, a new addition to the El Paso Museum of History. An acronym for Digital Information Gateway in El Paso, this three-dimensional digital screen is the first of its kind in the country and the second one in the world. Five 95-inch

LED touchscreens comprise the 35-foot interactive. A moving collage of images, added by the museum and community members, filters across the screens, providing a visual tour of El Paso today and yesterday. Viewers can tap into the pictures, adding their own personal insights on the city’s cultural history.





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Teens board a bus for a museum scavenger hunt sponsored by Students at Museums in Philly (STAMP).

A Movie, a Mall, a Museum

Philadelphia program opens doors to teens

BY LAUREN ZALUT

The idea seemed simple: get more teens to visit museums! But in Philadelphia, a city saturated with cultural experiences like theater, concerts and dance performances, how could the museum community entice teens through our doors? How could we get them to visit beyond a school field trip and see us as

relevant to their lives? And how would they pay for admission?

Bringing in teens is not a new challenge to the museum field—it's something we (especially museum educators) have struggled with for years. We lose teens as visitors between their years as children visiting with their parents or on school trips, before

they return to us as adult visitors and donors. I've always been interested in serving Philadelphia teenagers, and luckily Eastern State Penitentiary, an abandoned prison turned historic site, has always drawn young adult visitors. But I didn't have the resources to start a teen docent core or provide programming beyond a class trip. To further

» Inside VIEW

complicate matters, Philadelphia teens are stereotyped as aimless or as out-of-control flash mobs. Why should museums welcome teens—especially if they don't bring their adults with them?

Things shifted in 2013, when I was invited to a meeting hosted by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (GPCA). This organization dedicated to the cultural sector wanted to launch a museum pass program for teens to get them interested in visiting museums as a leisure-time activity—a movie, a mall, *a museum*, as they put it. I was pleased that Eastern State Penitentiary was included, but nervous about what was in store. This was a new and incredibly ambitious idea. What did the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance know about teens that museums didn't? Could they really get teens through our doors?

I walked into a room filled with my favorite colleagues from museums around the city, and GPCA presented their idea: Students at Museums in Philly (STAMP). The main component would be a pass providing free admission for Philadelphia teens ages 14 to 19. GPCA had received funding to compensate museums for these visits, and as participating museums, we could help shape the program. We could even restrict the days and times teens could visit if we wanted. GPCA staff had done extensive research on teen programming in museums; many of us were invited for our expertise working with this age group.

I left the room feeling energized and excited, and I could see many of my colleagues felt the same way. I knew

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site had to be a part of it. Our city's school district is underfunded and Philadelphia youth are under resourced. These teens need museums more than ever! But what about the risks that come with trying something for the first time? And since we had to apply to participate, what if we didn't get picked? Would it be easy to collaborate

with GPCA and other museums?

Without having to do much sweet-talking back at the office, I was encouraged to apply for the program (without imposing many restrictions—just an age minimum of 15 because of adult content), and we were accepted as a founding museum in the STAMP program. Then the detail work started: writing text for the STAMP website,

The STAMP Teen Council is comprised of Philadelphia high school students who help shape the program.





The STAMP pass provides free museum admission to teens ages 14–19.

preparing our staff for working with teens visiting a museum without adult supervision, and planning for the launch party that would unveil the program to the city and its teens.

Each museum was paired with a member of the STAMP teen council, a group of teens who shape the program from designing the logo to writing blog posts to posting on Instagram and other social media. Teens have to apply to serve on this committee; applicants come from many different backgrounds and attend high schools all over the city. What an experience for them to have on their resumé for college applications!

Teen council members not only serve as the spokespeople for the STAMP program, but become the teen voice of the museum they represent. They have to write blog posts for the STAMP website and meet with museum staff regularly so they can learn more about the institution and

promote upcoming events. The council also comes to visit each museum as a group to get to know all of us and what our work is all about.

Sharon Shania, Eastern State Penitentiary's current teen council member, summarizes the value of her experience: "I would never imagine a place having this much impact in my life. I've visited this place at least 50 times and I have discovered new things each time I go there. By coming here, I've learned to really appreciate the history of Philadelphia."

Over 250 teens from around the city came to the launch party at the African American Museum in Philadelphia to sign up for their STAMP passes and learn more about the museums they could visit. I attended the event with an education intern and one of our most skilled tour guides. We used an activity about notable inmate Pep the Dog and other outreach efforts to get teens excited about visiting

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Since the Alliance Purchasing Cooperative launched one year ago, museum members have been saving on purchases. Here are two recent success stories:

Saving on Energy Costs

Allegany Museum (Cumberland, MD) engaged **5**, an energy advisory firm, to audit their energy costs and evaluate their current energy management strategy. The **5** team negotiated a more favorable rate with an alternative energy provider that provided a transparent pricing structure and enabled **Allegany Museum** to take advantage of historic lows in the energy market. As a result, the museum is projecting a **savings of approximately 20%** on their electricity costs in 2015.

Simplifying Event Management

The Mint Museum (Charlotte, NC) engaged **Classic Party Rental** to provide event rental supplies and services for all of the museum's affiliated locations. By working with Classic through the cooperative, the museum now gets **special cooperative pricing on its rentals** and is able to work with a single point of contact for all of its event management needs.

Your museum can have its own success story, saving money and resources. Visit the Alliance Purchasing Cooperative at vcadvantagepurchasing.com/aam or call **(888) 318-4758** or to learn more about the 15 vendors that provide special discounts to Alliance Tier 2 and Tier 3 museum members.

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Eastern State Penitentiary. Other area museums such as the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and the Mütter Museum of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia also showcased their most teen-friendly activities and objects.

Events like this party are a critical part of the program. They are always hosted by a participating museum, feature staff and activities from all the museums, and usually involve a popular DJ or musician, prizes, creative activities, food and sometimes even an appearance by the mayor. STAMP events help promote the program and increase sign ups, while giving the teen

council members an opportunity to talk formally and informally to other teens about the program.

The last few years of the STAMP program have been a period of growth, including new participating museums that accept the pass, bringing the total to 15. As of May 2015, over 12,000 teens were enrolled in STAMP pass. I'm happy to say that many of them come to visit Eastern State Penitentiary. This year I wanted to create a guide by teens for teens, so I teamed up with a Philadelphia high school class to develop a teen scavenger hunt for STAMP pass holders to complete during their visit. All of these students enrolled in the STAMP pass program and visited

Eastern State Penitentiary as well as the Barnes Foundation for their project. Their teacher, Breanne Lucy, says that many of the students had never been to a museum before, and that working on the project helped them "become more confident museum patrons."

Another exciting development this year was the addition of Culture Spots, a smartphone audio tour for each participating museum written by teen council members. While challenges arose—many of us already have audio tours, or work at large museums where other departments need to sign off on such programming—most of us were able to make it work and launched this

Continued on page 57



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An exhibit at the Lowndes Interpretive Center sets an example for museums striving for disability-related content.

True Inclusion

Museums need more disability narratives

BY DAY AL-MOHAMED

Twenty-five years ago, President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law, remarking that it was time to “let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down.” Today, we see inclusive approaches to education, housing, transportation and employment. By all means, the work is not over, and many in the disability community

would argue that it has only begun. The law is always “just a beginning,” and just like the Civil Rights movement before it, enforcement of inclusion, acceptance of inclusion and, yes, even embracing inclusion, takes much longer.

The central role of museums and galleries has been collection, preservation and education. It is important to

recognize, however, that the history of museums was built upon a Western colonial interpretation, and that it has been a long and sometimes painful struggle to build inclusive narratives—“to be places where all sections of the community can have a voice and be reflected in a museum’s collections and displays,” as suggested by the UK-based Museums Association.

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In 1968, the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition campaigned against the Whitney Museum in an effort to have more black artists' work exhibited, more of their work purchased and greater diversity in museum staff and committees. Over the years, we have seen those early efforts expand, and many museum professionals are actively seeking to develop more inclusive portrayals of women and of racial and ethnic minorities.

Representation matters. Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Junot Diaz said in a speech, "There's this idea that monsters don't have reflections in a mirror. And what I've always thought isn't that monsters don't have reflections in a mirror. It's that if you want to make a human being into a monster, deny them, at the cultural level, any reflection of themselves. And growing up, I felt like a monster in some ways. I didn't see myself reflected at all.... And part of what inspired me, was this deep desire that before I died, I would make a couple of mirrors ... so that kids like me might see themselves reflected back and might not feel so monstrous for it."

Diaz is talking about representation in fiction. But can we overstate the importance of representation and its relevance in the real world? Museums, art galleries, local "pop-ups" and historical sites have that same social and political responsibility. When so many of these entities are seeking to better engage with the public and become spaces of community congregation, development and sharing, inclusive

exhibits and programming make a difference.

Although there has been a growth in exhibits for minority groups—particularly in the collection of oral histories, and identification of stories and traditions—there seems to be a dearth of representation for disability narratives. With the exception of occasional "special exhibits" that focus on disability rights and organizations, famous disabled individuals in history or disability narratives that are enmeshed within discussions of medicine or war, there is almost a total preoccupation with accessibility. The "mechanical" aspect of access to exhibits has overshadowed the importance of inclusion in museum content. To reference Junot Diaz, there are no mirrors for me.

In 2004, the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) at the University of Leicester published a report, *Buried in the Footnotes*, based on a year-long investigation of the absence of disabled people in museum narratives. They surveyed the collections at 26 different museums and galleries in the United Kingdom and discovered that "wide-ranging collections of all kinds do, indeed, contain a wealth of relevant material but ... its significance to disability is not generally considered or understood ... is infrequently displayed, its link to disability is seldom made explicit or is poorly interpreted and, in only a few noteworthy cases, does the interpretation resist stereotypical and reductive representations of disabled people...."

The invisibility of disability

manifests in our general public consciousness, and that cultural exclusion carries over into the museum world.

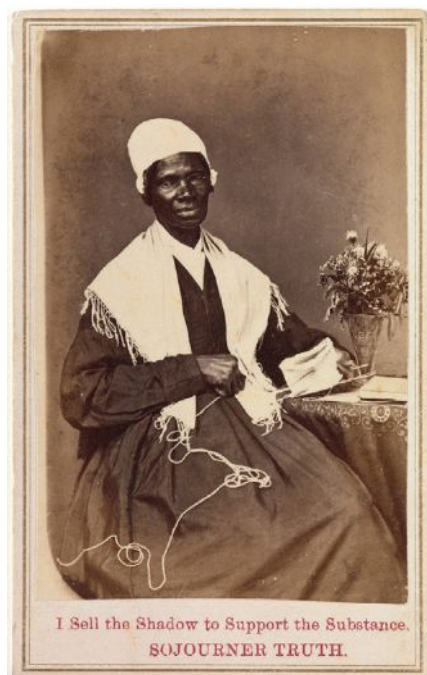
We see this in:

- **narratives of famous or powerful individuals whose disability has been lost**

Mathew Brady is known as the photographer of the Civil War. His thousands of images have given us our vision of the war and of the men who served in it. The photos are ubiquitous—present in books, television programs, on the Internet. But although Brady had courage, funds, his own studio and permission from President Lincoln himself to photograph the battlefield sites, many of these photos were taken by his assistants. Brady had an eye condition, and his vision began to deteriorate in the 1850s, well before the war. He was almost totally blind the last few years of his life. Mathew Brady had a disability.

- **narratives of individuals who purposely suppressed public awareness of their disability during their lifetime**

Sojourner Truth, one of the most powerful voices of the abolition movement, is known for her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech—a 19th-century demand for action and equality. After 30 years as a slave, she gave herself the name Sojourner Truth and spent the rest of her life lecturing on abolition and women's rights, using feminist and racial-pride rhetoric. She created photographs of herself and sold them to fund her public appearances. The most common shows her sitting next



to a table with flowers, holding knitting needles. But because of an injury to her hand years before, she could not actually use those knitting needles. Sojourner Truth had a disability. Because ability and strength were viewed as important during that time period, she actively negated her disability—which is elided from her legacy to this day.

- **narratives in which disability becomes the focus of the exhibition or individual and overwhelms other perspectives**

Helen Keller is the most cogent example of this phenomenon. At a 2009 American Association of People with Disabilities luncheon, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said, “Congress will unveil a statute of Helen Keller in the Capitol. As a deaf-blind individual who was a world leader in disability rights and social justice, and a woman ahead of her time, Helen Keller will be

a proud addition to our halls.” Keller is publicly known as the deaf-blind advocate for people with disabilities. But she was also a radical progressive, a suffragist, a socialist, an advocate for fair pay, a supporter of communism, a pacifist in a time of war. She was pro-civil rights, anti-child labor, a strong supporter of the NAACP, anti-establishment, anti-corporate and one of the founders of the ACLU. All that passion and advocacy is subsumed by her disability and then forgotten.

As exhibitions become more contemporary in outlook, and make more attempts to address issues of political intent, racial bias and inaccurate historical representation, they can also become more controversial, as Moira G. Simpson explains in *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*. Consider, for example, painter John Currin’s *The Cripple*, which has been on exhibit at several museums. The work depicts a smiling, voluptuous young woman in a low-cut dress, leaning on a cane. Describing the painting in a publication about Currin’s work, art historian Norman Bryson says, “Since Currin’s image of a girl with a walking cane owes so little of its morphology to what a disability or locomotor disorder is actually like in the world, the figure’s misshapen and twisted body evidently originates with the painter, whose attitude toward the deformation he inflicts seems to include enjoyment.” The painting seems to exude excess and, like many of Currin’s disproportionate, asymmetrical figures, invites one to gawk. Many

members of the disability community loathe the work; others embrace it as a recognition of disability even if only as a satirical analogy.

While many examples of disability inclusion are less than perfect, it is sometimes possible to find a positive example. At the National Park Service’s Lowndes Interpretive Center, located along the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail in Alabama, statues illustrate the march and the progress of civil rights through time. Among them is a statue of Jim Letherer, a one-legged Jewish man who marched with Martin Luther King from Selma to Montgomery. The exhibit is about the march and voting rights, but happens to have disability as a part of the story—not because of any particular agenda or perceived political correctness, but because *disability was there*.

Disability inclusion goes beyond audits of programs and lecture offerings and beyond the desire for a line item in the budget for accessibility. The objects, people and histories are already present in collections; all it takes is a little thought to recognize and actively include them. Museums have the power to create cultural mirrors, like those Diaz spoke of, that can reflect back a world in all its myriad diversity—including disability. «

Day Al-Mohamed is a council member of the Alliance’s Center for the Future of Museums, founding director of the Lead On Network and senior policy advisor with the US Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy.



Museums and ADA@25

A look back

By Greg Stevens

J uly 2015 marked the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal law intended to guarantee equal access for people with disabilities to employment, government programs and services, public accommodation, transportation and communications. Many younger museum colleagues may not know a time before the ADA, but baby boomers (born 1940–60) and traditionalists (born 1920–40) will recall that the ADA grew out of a growing disability rights movement that gained momentum after World War II, with disabled veterans advocating for access to employment, housing, education, programs and services. This movement coincided with and contributed protest and pressure to the period of social consciousness and unrest in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s.

“The most important thing for people to understand is that the ADA is a *civil rights* law for people with disabilities,” says Beth Ziebarth, director of the Accessibility Program at the Smithsonian Institution in

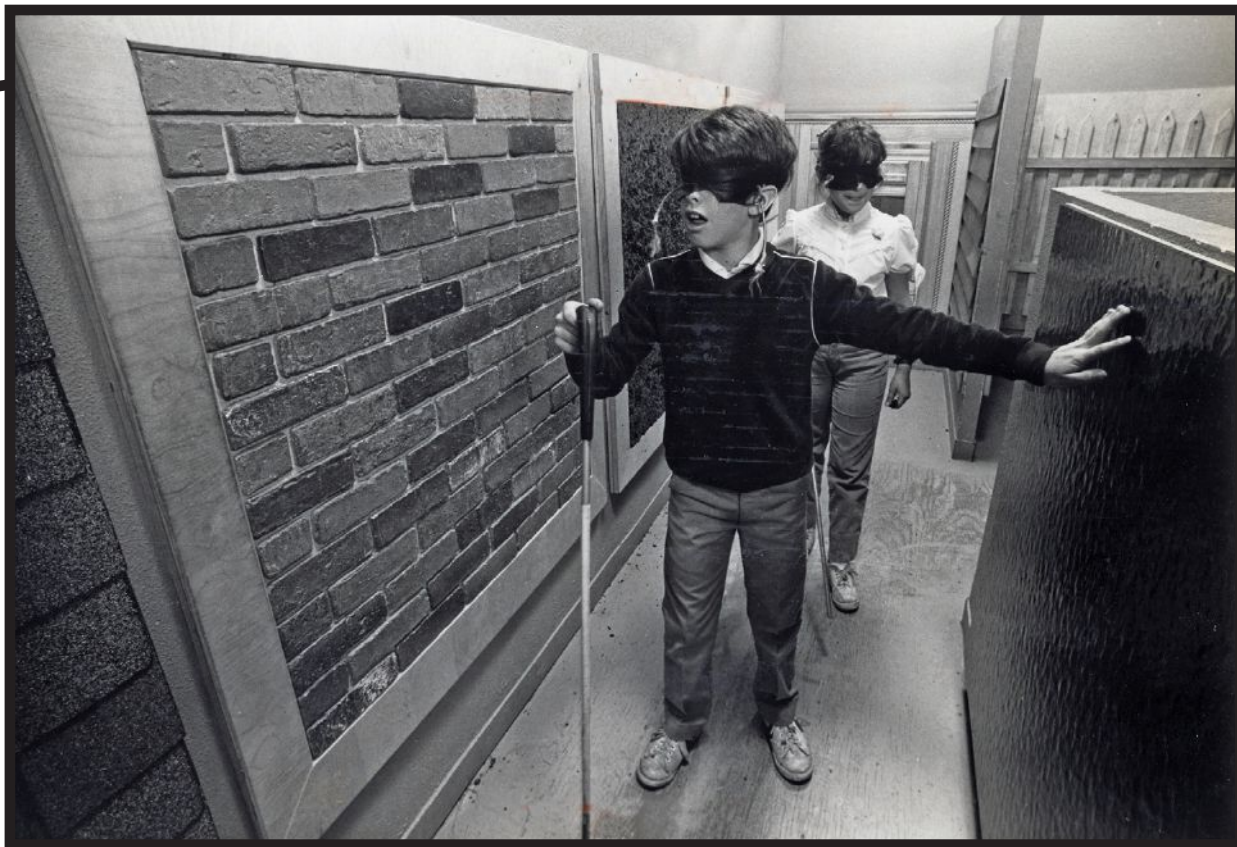
Washington, DC. “It came about because people with disabilities in the United States wanted to get rid of outdated stereotypes and to be more fully included in society—whether it was employment, being able to go to the dry cleaners in your neighborhood or going to your local museum.”

The movement was undertaken by a diverse disability community that included people with mobility, hearing, vision and cognitive or developmental disabilities, as well as their families, friends, acquaintances and service organizations (all of which are protected under the ADA). Their collective efforts, not without division and disassociation across the general categories of disability, resulted in important civil rights legislation including the Architectural Barriers Act (1968), Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (1973), the ADA in 1990 and its subsequent amendments and regulations in 2009 and 2011.

The national social consciousness and the ADA prompted significant reflection and action on

the part of leaders of museums of all types and sizes who were concerned with how to make facilities, programs and services accessible to all people. But it went beyond compliance for many. In her preface to *The Accessible Museum* (American Association of Museums, 1992), Dianne Pilgrim, then director of the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt Museum and a wheelchair user for several years due to her diagnosis with multiple sclerosis, wrote: “Just because there’s a ramp to the door, or a grab bar in the lavatory doesn’t mean that the problems of accessibility have been solved. Our attitude must change to view the public as just that: a group of diverse people with various needs, concerns, abilities and limitations.”

Before the ADA, museums in the United States had varying degrees of experience in accommodating visitors or staff with disabilities. Some museums were ahead of their time. The Boston Children’s Museum, for example, began offering classes for children who were blind or deaf as early as 1916, and opened a landmark exhibit in 1976



The landmark 1976 exhibit "What If You Couldn't?" at the Boston Children's Museum helped visitors better understand the challenges of living with a disability.

called "What If You Couldn't?" designed to help children and their families better understand the challenges of living with a disability. Institutions in the 1970s and 1980s began responding to the needs of disabled visitors by adding ramps and curb cuts, accessible parking, new signage, large-print versions of handouts or enrichment activities. In 1986, Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts established an advisory council comprised of members of the community with disabilities, their advocates and the museum's staff, with an accessibility coordinator hired to oversee the effort. In 1988, the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island in Washington printed a common-sense handbook for staff and volunteers on how to communicate with and assist

disabled persons. "Speak directly to the person, not the interpreter," reads one sensitive direction.

Still, as late as the 1980s other well-established museums were not so adaptive to the spirit of inclusive change for disabled visitors and were offering separate "blind tours" and "wheelchair tours." The call for accessibility and inclusion was not always a swift and universal process.

"When the ADA was passed," observes Ziebarth, "museums were probably nervous: 'What does this mean for us? What are we going to do?' Whether it was a historic house or a large museum—everybody had facility issues that they were taking a look at. It was outlined in the law and people started planning, budgeting for, and implementing the changes necessary. The ADA really

made people think."

The ADA joined with the collective voice of the disability community and the ongoing evolution of standards and best practices in the museum field, Ziebarth believes, creating ongoing positive effects on how we address issues of accessibility and inclusion.

...

To read more about how museums have evolved since the passage of the ADA to become more accessible—and how they can strive to become yet more inclusive—please turn the page. <<

Greg Stevens is assistant director for professional development at AAM. He is the co-editor of A Life in Museums: Managing your Museum Career (The AAM Press, 2012).





Museums and ADA@25

Progress and looking ahead

By Beth Bienvenu

Our country has been celebrating the 25th anniversary of the passage of the ADA with commemorations, concerts, festivals, parades, social media conversations (see #DisabilityStories, #ADA25) and gala events. Throughout this past summer, people took time to reflect on how far our country has come in ensuring full inclusion for people with disabilities. In the past quarter of a century, there has been an increase in opportunities for employment, education, transportation, healthcare and participation in public life, as well as significant progress in terms of acceptance, attitudes and perceptions about disability.

Within the cultural sector specifically, there has also been progress for inclusion of people with disabilities. Museums have been steadily incorporating accommodations and programs that ensure inclusion for all visitors and participants. For people with vision disabilities, museums are using audio guides, large-print labels and materials, and content in Braille, as well as tactile tours, models and maps. For people who are deaf or hard of hearing, institutions offer captioned video, sign-language interpreted tours, assistive listening devices, real-time captioning and sign-language interpretation. Museums are also paying more attention to physical access by ensuring wheelchair access to all physical spaces and installing exhibits and displays at heights

that accommodate people in wheelchairs or those of short stature. Additionally, museums are more apt to offer seating options throughout galleries and have increased accessible seating in auditoriums.

Museums have also responded to particular conditions and circumstances as evidenced in new partnerships with the autism and Alzheimer's communities (see sidebar, page 32). Specifically, many museums offer visiting times for families with members on the autism spectrum when galleries are less crowded, special materials to help orient new audiences, and educational programs for people with dementia and their caregivers (see sidebar, page 41, for some examples).

Many of these innovations in accessibility are due to the passage of the ADA in 1990, but the advocacy work began much earlier. When the Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1973, federal agencies were required to make their activities, and those that they fund, accessible to individuals that receive their benefits. This meant that museums receiving funds from federal agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had to begin looking at how they welcomed

Opposite (clockwise from top left): Kate Mahony, *Collage Works* (2014); Laura Swanson, *Uniforms*, 2014–2015; Martin Kersels, *Flotsam (Chairs Arterial System)*, 2010. These artworks were on display in "The Art of the Lived Experiment" at the DisArt Festival, which aims to change perceptions of disability.





visitors with disabilities.

Since the 1970s, the NEA has educated its grantees about these requirements, while also working with its network of state arts agencies to help them interpret how best to assist cultural organizations with the accessibility requirements. The NEA published a handbook called *Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook*, which provided easy-to-use information and resources on making programs and facilities accessible. The most recent version, published in 2003, is still used as a reference guide in museums across the country. The NEA, working in partnership with NEH, IMLS, the Institute for Human Centered Design and other organizations, is updating the guide and will launch a new, comprehensive Web resource in 2016.

The NEA also partnered with the Smithsonian Institution and other museums to educate the museum field and provide resources for museum and exhibit accessibility. The Smithsonian took a leadership role in not only ensuring accessibility in its own programs and exhibits but by guiding science, art, culture and history museums across the country through its various publications and resources, including the Smithsonian's *Guide to Accessible Exhibit Design*. The NEA worked with early champions of museum accessibility, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Boston's Museum of Science and the Museum of Modern Art, to incorporate access and inclusion programs. Additionally, the NEA worked with the Graphic Artists Guild to develop a set of accessibility symbols, used in museums across the country; helped build the field of universal design (see sidebar, facing page); and was the first to work with museums to provide audio description of art for visitors with vision disabilities.

Despite such efforts, people with disabilities are still underrepresented in

museum visitorship. A recent *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* conducted by the NEA finds that adults with disabilities comprise less than 7 percent of all adults attending performing arts events or visiting art museums or galleries, as surveyed in 2012. The data also reveal that 21 percent of all adults visited an art museum or gallery, but only 11 percent of adults with disabilities made such a visit.

According to the Census Bureau, the Baby Boom population is turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 per day, and by 2030, 20 percent of the US population will be over 65, which will potentially increase the number of people with diminished eyesight, hearing, mobility and cognition. In addition, according to the 2013 American Community Survey, there are 3.6 million veterans with service-related disabilities, and more people with disabilities are living independently in communities, increasing the potential audience of museum visitors.

Museums can benefit from attracting and retaining this valuable pool of visitors. Although museums have worked to increase their audiences of people with disabilities, there is still much to be done to involve those with disabilities in the curatorial, content and decision-making activities of museums. Such a gap is noted by performer and activist Mat Fraser in his exhibit and performance piece, "Cabinet of Curiosities: How Disability was Kept in a Box." Fraser addresses this issue by challenging museums to question their view of people with disabilities as objects of exhibit and display, and to include their voices and experience in the work of the museum. As evidenced by the disability rights movement's slogans, "nothing about us without us" and "nothing without us," people with disabilities should be included as curators, exhibit designers, artists, historians, scientists, administrative staff, Web and application developers, and volunteers. They need to be a part of the conversation and the work of museums.

Leading the way in this regard is the DisArt Festival, launched in Grand Rapids, Michigan,

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

A reality facing society and museums is the large population of older people—the 78 million baby boomers who are living longer than previous generations. These individuals are facing the physical challenges that come with growing old, as well as a range of cognitive issues like Alzheimer's and dementia. Valerie Fletcher, executive director of the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD), shared in a 2010 AAM webcast that the aging of the world's population is the "most dramatic catalyst" for universal design—the design

of products and environments to be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. IHCD advances the role of excellence in design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experience for people of all ages and abilities. Universal design affects a museum's built environment and the ways it communicates with visitors. When a museum embraces the requirements of the ADA, it can also embrace the spirit of the ADA by incorporating universal design principles. As a result,


visitors of all ages and abilities can enjoy museum facilities and programs.

"One of the challenges of universal design," cautions Fletcher, "is to get people to appreciate that we're really talking about everybody. You have no idea who has heart disease. You can't guess who has less vision and you can't guess most people who have hearing loss. The people whom we need to welcome have nonapparent conditions."—*Greg Stevens*

Learn more about the Institute for Human Centered Design at humancentereddesign.org.

The New York Transit Museum's Subway Sleuths program reaches out to young train enthusiasts on the autism spectrum.





this past spring. The festival's goals are to change perceptions and ignite conversations about disability and how it informs artistic practice. The festival and its follow-up activities have drawn more than 20,000 visitors, featuring hundreds of artists and community members with disabilities. The festival's success was due in part to its many community partners, including the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts and the Grand Rapids Art Museum. The festival's centerpiece was an exhibit curated by Amanda Cachia and funded by the NEA, called "The Art of the Lived Experiment." The exhibition, initially presented at DaDa Fest in Liverpool, England, featured more than 19 US and international artists whose sculpture, video,

painting, drawing, photography, ceramics and performance creatively examined disability from an experimental point of view and addressed the uncertainty and change in both art and life. Through this exhibit and numerous additional exhibits, films and community events, the DisArt festival succeeded in its mission to change perceptions of disability, effectively involving those with disabilities in all facets of the event.

What else can museums do to ensure full inclusion? The options are unlimited, but to name just a few:

- Consider the legal requirements and design standards set by the ADA as merely the *minimum* standard and expand efforts to ensure full access and inclusion for everyone.

MUSEUM ACCESS CONSORTIUM

One important aspect of the accessibility and inclusion movement is an increased awareness about people with cognitive or developmental disabilities, including those who are near or on the autism spectrum, people who have mental health issues like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder or adults who have Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Museums have a continuing part to play in their lives and can be useful in bridging communications between families, caregivers and the person with the disability. A well-designed program for people on the autism spectrum and their families, for example, can positively impact the museum experience for the family and whether it becomes something that is a future choice in leisure-time activity. The Museum Access Consortium (MAC) in New York is a dynamic model of a

group addressing this particular audience. MAC was formed by a small group of museum and disability professionals that started meeting informally to discuss topics related to accessibility at their New York-based institutions. In the past five years, MAC has hosted 10 professional development workshops, a public fair, a symposium and a new website focused on improving accessibility for visitors who have autism. Overall, MAC offers a network of mutual support to help practitioners engage with disability advocates and people who have disabilities to learn about, implement and strengthen best practices for access and inclusion in cultural facilities of all types throughout the New York metro area and beyond.

"We have learned from our collaborative efforts these past several years that there is a great

need to better reach and meet the needs of adults with autism at cultural institutions," says Cynthia VandenBosch, MAC's project leader of Cultural Connections for People with Autism. "It's been exciting to see how bringing people together in a safe and supportive space to openly discuss their experiences and challenges has led to more thoughtful, innovative and inclusive programming across the city."

"Over the next few years, [MAC will] be leveraging the foundation we've been building to focus on specific areas of growth," she adds. "We'll be sharing findings, case studies and resources nationally and researching and documenting best practices in engaging adults with autism ... to develop life skills with a focus on job readiness and skill-building." —Greg Stevens

Learn more about MAC at museumaccessconsortium.org.



Left: Ellen Friis, *STELA*, 2014, from "The Art of the Lived Experiment." Right: The New York Transit Museum offers early opening hours for children with disabilities and their families.

- Incorporate universal design principles (see page 31) throughout the museum, ensuring that exhibits and facilities are designed to be accessed by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.
 - Consider accessibility from the start when developing and designing exhibits and programs, not as an afterthought.
 - Incorporate the best practices listed at the beginning of this article throughout the museum experience.
 - Work with curators and exhibit designers to design exhibits that are accessible to not only those with physical disabilities but also those with sensory or brain-based disabilities.
 - Pay attention to exhibit and display heights and font sizes to enable viewing and engagement for people of all abilities.
 - Establish an advisory board of people with disabilities to advise on access and inclusion.
 - Partner with local disability organizations to help inform your museum's work and develop new audiences.
 - Train all staff to be fully aware of accessibility requirements and how to provide accommodations, rather than relying on one person or department.
 - Take affirmative steps to recruit staff and volunteers with disabilities.
 - Work with local college and university disability offices to recruit interns and graduates with disabilities.
- The future offers many opportunities to expand access through technologies such as 3D printing, mobile applications and new adaptive devices, as well as partnerships with the disability community and design with disability in mind from the start. Disability is a natural part of human life and offers a broad window into the



human experience, from the perspective of the arts, culture, science, technology and history. It is a perspective that museums should embrace. <<

Beth Bienvenu is accessibility director, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC.

Resources

Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrators Handbook

arts.gov/publications/design-accessibility-cultural-administrators-handbook

Smithsonian's Guide to Accessible Exhibit Design

si.edu/Accessibility/SGAED

Downloadable Disability Access Symbols

graphicartistsguild.org/tools_resources/

[downloadable-disability-access-symbols](#)

Principles of Universal Design

ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm

Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, Arts Data Profile #7: A Matter of Choice? Arts Participation Patterns of Americans with Disabilities

arts.gov/artistic-fields/research-analysis/arts-data-profiles/arts-data-profile-7/arts-data-profile-7

NEA Arts Magazine accessibility issue, Challenging Notions: Accessibility and the Arts

arts.gov/sites/default/files/nea_arts/FINAL_NEA%20Arts_1_2015.pdf

Katherine Sherwood, *Maya*, 2014, from "The Art of the Lived Experiment."



AAM Accessibility Resources and References

- This fall, AAM is offering a webcast series, *Stories of Inclusion: Inclusive Practices at Cultural Institutions*. Visit aam-us.org/resources/online-programs for more information. This project is supported in part by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- The fall 2014 issue of *The Exhibitionist* contains a useful article, “An Accessibility Adventure: Teaching and Learning Exhibition Design through the Lens of Disability Studies.” *The Exhibitionist* is available from and published by the National Association for Museum Exhibition, one of 22 AAM Professional Networks. Visit name-aam.org/resources/exhibitionist.
- In February 2014, the AAM Board of Directors approved the AAM Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement (see page 36). Visit aam-us.org/about-us/who-we-are/strategic-plan/diversity-and-inclusion-policy.
- The AAM recorded webinar, *Universal Design: Beyond ADA*, presented in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, is available in the Mission and Institutional Planning section of the AAM Recorded Webinar Library. This project was supported in part by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Visit aam-us.org/resources/online-programs.
- The AAM member Resource Library features information on accessibility and universal design in the Education and Interpretation and Facilities and Risk Management sections. Visit aam-us.org/resources/resource-library.

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Education, which produced the 1991 report, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (see below).

Hirzy, Ellen C., ed. *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 1991. Puts forth key ideas and principles calling for museums to become “more inclusive places that welcome diverse audiences ... and reflect our society’s pluralism in every aspect of their operations and programs.” The publication changed the landscape for museum policies and practice, including accessibility and inclusion.

Merritt, Elizabeth. *TrendsWatch 2012–15*. Washington, DC: American Alliance of Museums. An annual publication by AAM’s Center for the Future of Museums that analyzes significant trends that have the potential to impact society in general and museums in particular. Some of these trends, like wearable technology, robots, 3D printing, augmented reality and multisensory experiences, have the potential to transform museum experiences for visitors of all ages and abilities via technology. Other trends, like unplugging from a hyperconnected world, the slow movement and creative aging are more broadly related to museum experiences that are not technology infused but still impact people with disabilities.

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Sartwell, Marcia, ed. *The Accessible Museum: Model Programs of Accessibility for Disabled and Older People*. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 1992.



Visitor Voices:

A story of accessibility and inclusion

The “Visitor Voices” session at the 2015 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo in Atlanta featured stories and perspectives from museum visitors with low vision, hearing loss, autism and dementia, and discussion of how museums have responded. Session leaders shared practices that create inclusion by utilizing accessible technology and resources, rethinking policies and programs, and overcoming existing physical barriers. **Annie Leist** is an artist, and special projects lead at Art Beyond Sight, New York City. The organization strives to make arts and culture more accessible to people with disabilities, engaging them in their community via the arts. **Sheri Levinsky-Raskin** is assistant vice president for education and evaluation and **Barbara Johnson Stemler** is manager of access programs at the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, New York City. The Intrepid’s specialized programs serve students with autism and developmental disabilities and individuals with dementia. The museum also offers touch tours, tactile guides, assistive listening systems, and American Sign Language-led and -interpreted programs. An institution-wide approach aims to ensure that any visitor coming at any time for any reason is welcomed and feels included in the museum experience.

The following is an adaptation of their conversation.

Disability Statistics

According to *Americans with Disabilities: 2010*, a report by the US Census Bureau, more than 56 million Americans have disabilities. Over 50 percent of those individuals identified as having mobility disabilities. Other disabilities—including vision disabilities, dementia and Alzheimer's, emotional disabilities and hearing disabilities—hover around 14 percent of that 56 million. These percentages add up to more than 100 percent because there are people who have identified as having more than one disability.

This means that 1 in 5 people in the United States has some sort of disability—and that number went up in 5 years by 2.2 million. The number of people who identified themselves as having severe disabilities increased, and the number of people who needed assistance increased. The impact on the economy and on society has been growing, and that trend is only going to continue. Only 41 percent of people with disabilities who were of working age (21 to 65 years old) reported being employed. That's compared to close to 80 percent of people without a disability. Finally, about 5 percent of school-age children report having a disability.

This is a significant group of people who want to experience your cultural institution. And these figures only include people who self-reported as

having a disability. For example, the numbers don't include individuals who perhaps hear just fine when they're at home, but not when they're in a loud, crowded environment; they might not include the people who broke their leg and are on crutches and therefore have a temporary mobility disability; and they don't include other groups such as the family members, friends and companions of the people with disabilities. When you start adding up these numbers, they become a huge potential museum audience.

Diversity and Inclusion

AAM's Diversity and Inclusion Policy, adopted last February, offers this definition of diversity: "The quality of being different or unique at an individual or group level. This includes age; ethnicity; gender; gender identity; language differences; nationality; parental status; physical, mental and developmental abilities; race; religion; sexual orientation; skin color; socio-economic status; education; work and behavioral styles; the perspectives of each individual shaped by their nation, experiences and culture—and more. Even when people appear the same on the outside, they are different." The policy provides this definition of inclusion: "The act of including; a strategy to leverage diversity. Diversity always exists in social systems. Inclusion, on the other hand,



Left: Programming at the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum allows individuals with dementia and their caregivers to look at historic photographs and objects together while listening to and sharing stories.

must be created. In order to leverage diversity, an environment must be created where people feel supported, listened to and able to do their personal best.”

It’s important to recognize that diversity is a natural thing: we are all different; we all live on some spectrum of experience, background, abilities and more. And each person is on many spectrums. Someone with a disability also belongs to a particular race or ethnic group, and is of a particular economic status. These metrics apply to each person. Every individual with, for example, vision loss is going to have a unique experience. It’s important to bear this in mind when you create programming or think about accessibility and inclusion goals for your institution.

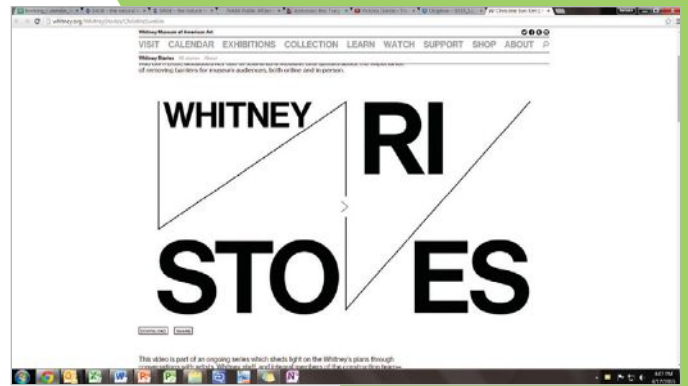
This ideal of inclusion is something that we have to actively create. Inclusion doesn’t necessarily happen naturally, and it takes a group effort. One person can make a big difference, but you need help from others.

Visualizing a Visit

Take a moment and think of any event that you have attended within the last three to six months, whether it was at a museum, gallery space or sports arena. How did you find out about it? Did your friend tell you? Did you find it on a website? Did you see a flyer? And then, how did you get there and what was it like to approach that event space? Whom did you encounter? How did you know where to go once you were there? From that overall experience, think of a memorable moment, whether it was the best or the worst. Finally, when it was all over, how did you go back home?

Now reimagine that experience as if you had a physical, cognitive, visual, hearing-related, social-emotional or memory-related disability. Start from the top. How would you find out about that event? How would you get there, and how would you know where to go once you arrived? What would be your memorable moment, and how would you get home?

This is a powerful exercise. From it we have identified four major areas in which museums



might face challenges in creating accessibility: **communication, environment, collections** and **social opportunities**. For each, we have included stories from individuals with varying disabilities about what they need from cultural institutions during their visits, and how impactful an experience can be with or without accommodations. We also provide examples from museums that have overcome each challenge and become more inclusive as a result.

Communication

Communication includes letting people know what amazing programs you’re setting up for a particular audience, or for any audience. But it also involves communicating within your museum. If you have a particular opportunity available for someone with a disability and they come in and your front-line staff is not aware of it—or winds up trying to figure things out while the visitor waits—it can be disconcerting. It’s not the most welcoming environment. It might make visitors feel like they’re being a burden, or set apart.

The style of communication is also important. “Guides will always be better off with folks on the spectrum by being specific and avoiding euphemisms, soliloquies, figures of speech,” said Michael John Carley, founder of GRASP Network for adults with Asperger Syndrome, at a professional development workshop organized by the Museum Access Consortium. “When I was a kid and heard, ‘Let’s toast the bride and groom,’ I had nightmares for two weeks.”

There are so many nuances, including body language and facial expressions. Sarcasm can be really hard. One form of communication will not

work for everybody. There needs to be a range. You need to know your audience, or at least be sensitive to the fact that you don’t know your audience. Try and gauge how they’re responding to what you’re saying or not saying.

Communication also takes place among your audience members. A visitor who has an awkward experience coming to a museum might say to somebody else with similar potential for experiencing barriers, “You know, I had a really tough time there. Just be aware of that.” Someone in that community might be less likely to go if another member had a difficult experience.

INCLUSION AT THE MUSEUM: COMMUNICATION

At the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City, programming, resources and staff training help visitors who are deaf feel welcome. Even the guards know a little bit of sign language so they can say “Hello, how are you?” or “Thank you, have a nice day.” The museum has developed Whitney Video Blogs, or vlogs—short videos featuring deaf museum educators communicating in American Sign Language. The vlogs give people an opportunity to access the museum without being physically present.

Environment

Museum spaces come in all shapes and sizes. One thing they usually are not is traditional. There’s something interesting or different. They can be big, crowded or unusually shaped. They can have noise levels that you might not encounter on a day-to-day basis. They’re special environments, and we have worked hard to create them that way. Knowing what to expect from that initial moment when you walk into the museum can be really helpful.

At a focus group related to mobile technology and accessibility for visitors who are blind or have low vision, Art Beyond Sight asked, “What would you like to know before you go to a museum?” One visitor to a certain museum responded, “The thing that’s always missing is how you negotiate [the space] when you get there. That’s where the anxiety comes in ... especially if you’re not familiar

with it. And the people who work there are not trained, tuned out, care less. They have no idea how to greet you, how to treat you. It wouldn’t take much for everyone to be trained to see a white cane and say, ‘Can I help you? Do you know where you’re going? Would you like directions?’” She explained that while she had no qualms about traveling internationally on her own, the anxiety about that initial welcome was enough to prevent her from visiting museums alone.

A museum can provide information, perhaps on the website, to give people an idea of what to expect. This would be helpful not only for people who are blind or have low vision, but for anyone who might have some anxiety. That’s related to both communication and creating an environment where people will feel welcome.

INCLUSION AT THE MUSEUM: ENVIRONMENT

The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum offers Early Morning Opening programs for children with autism. The museum is not normally a quiet environment, so the initial challenge was finding ways to change it. Individuals with autism can have a tendency to wander and run, and that can be a risk and concern for many families. How can you alter an environment to make it safer? By opening the museum early for these families, there are no loud crowds, wait time is reduced, exhibition lighting and sounds are controlled, and it can be much easier to track a child who is running. There's a no-judgment environment with the families, because everyone is experiencing something in their own way. All the families are not the same, but they seem to understand each other.

Collections

Museum visitors who are blind or have low vision sometimes say, "I never thought there was anything for me at a museum, because everything is so visual." Making your collections accessible to people who perceive and learn in different ways opens your museum up to an entirely new audience and can alter assumptions.

Some museums permit visitors to touch certain artifacts in a controlled setting—while wearing protective gloves, for instance, and under the supervision of museum staff. Even if you don't have artifacts or a collection that visitors can touch, there are other steps you can take to make your collection more accessible. For visitors who are blind or have low vision, describing things verbally is important. Instead of just talking about

the history of the object, use visual language to talk about what it looks like. This approach is helpful not only for visitors who are blind or have low vision, but for any audience as a way to highlight certain elements of an object or artwork.

Providing objects that can be touched can also enable visitors who are blind or have low vision to engage more deeply with your collection. Even if you don't have historic or authentic objects, you can be creative if you have 3D printers. You can find examples of different materials to highlight an artistic process or a historical context. Objects that are meaningful and purposeful can enhance and enrich the experience, and can be easier to find than you think.

Making your collections more accessible to all kinds of audiences and learners involves a

Left: Participants in an Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Access Family program use question prompts to interview a former crew member. Right: A boy who is blind touches the T-34 Mentor during a touch tour for families.



multisensory, multimodal approach. Think about interesting sounds that might be relevant to an object that you're talking or teaching about. Consider interactive or visualization activities. Anything that can make the experience a little bit more interactive—while still being on point,

on mission and relevant—can make it more accessible, and not just to people with disabilities. Kinesthetic learners might identify with an object if they can physically imitate a pose or an action. For someone with memory loss, singing songs from the time period of a painting could be a positive experience.

INCLUSION AT THE MUSEUM: COLLECTIONS

MoMA's Art inSight program is held monthly in the galleries for individuals who are blind or partially sighted. Specially designed lectures highlight specific themes, artists and exhibitions, engaging participants through extensive verbal descriptions. "Art is explained in a way that I can see it. And that's an experience that I haven't had before," said one participant in a video about the program. "And since I discovered the accessibility of the museums, I have been able to appreciate art, which I never could before. Today, we felt a Matisse sculpture. I mean, who in the world would think that anybody could ever feel a Matisse sculpture? For just me, to be able to feel Matisse ... thrilling!"

Social Opportunities

Museums have social value and are social experiences. They can provide social opportunities for people who may otherwise be isolated. (This is not to say that people with disabilities are always isolated. People with disabilities have diverse active lives.) The social aspect of museums is just as important for audiences with disabilities as it is for anyone else. And the social experience of some of these group

activities is going to be just as important for their care partners.

The goal is for visitors to feel like that the museum is their museum—and that they're not alone. A lot of the families who attend the Intrepid's Access Family programs for children with autism, for example, have created their own support system. The museum thereby helps create a network outside its walls. «

INCLUSION AT THE MUSEUM: SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Intrepid Museum's Access Family programs for individuals with learning and developmental disabilities are designed to offer a fun, educational and structured social experience for families. At one, a former crew member and helicopter mechanic described his experience working and living on the aircraft carrier. Program leaders distributed cards printed with different questions that the children could ask, thereby practicing their social skills. The questions are in large print and are accompanied by visual cues. While some children can ask their own questions, others might need some prompting, feel nervous or have limited expressive language. They were able to hand a question card to the individual, and that became their interaction.

Intrepid's Stories Within program for individuals with dementia and their caregivers creates opportunities for visitors to look at something together—perhaps a historic photo in front of a World War II-era airplane—discuss their reactions, and tell each other what they see and think.

Next Steps for Inclusion

1. Contact your regional access cultural consortiums, such as:

- Access Indy (Indianapolis): facebook.com/AccessIndy
- ARTability (Arizona): vsaaz.org
- Bay Area Arts Access Collective (California): facebook.com/bayareaaccess
- Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium: ChicagoCulturalAccess.weebly.com
- Cultural Access Network Project (New Jersey): njtheatrealliance.org/cultural-access-network-project
- Cultural Access New England: ca-ne.org
- DC Arts & Access Network (Washington, DC): dcaan.org
- Museum Access Consortium (New York City): museumaccessconsortium.org (for more information, see page 32)
- Florida Access Coalition for the Arts: flaccess.org
- Pittsburgh Arts Council: pittsburghartscouncil.org/accessibility

2. Identify foundations that support programs in your area.

Foundations can provide financial support for museums and visitors, and can be partners in developing programs and community outreach.

3. **Create an access advisory board within your museum.** Pull people from different communities with varying disabilities to form a group that meets regularly, evaluates your programs and tools, and helps you set goals. If you're having trouble finding people representing particular audiences, try looking at national disability or veterans' organizations that can connect you with local chapters or members of the community. Consider creating a cross-departmental task force as well. Accessibility is important in all areas of the museum, from front-line staff to executive leadership.
4. **Reach out to visitors.** Has a community or group come to your institution and told you they had a great time? Include those who have already expressed an investment in your space. Or have you had visitors with complaints about something that didn't go well? Invite them to accept an advisory role. Take that feedback, value it and ask them to help you improve.
5. **Keep talking.** Attend conferences like the AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo and LEAD, the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability, run by the Kennedy Center (kenedy-center.org/accessibility/education/lead). The ADA National Network (adata.org) also offers a variety of resources, trainings and webinars.

Turning the Museum Inside Out

Opening collections, engaging audiences

By Winifred Kehl

On a corner near the north entrance of the University of Washington in Seattle, set back from the road and obscured by evergreens, sits the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture. Hidden behind brick walls hums an active research base with world-class collections of fossils, bones and Native American artifacts (among many, many other things), as well as public exhibits that feature the city's only mounted dinosaur skeletons. Not that you would know it from the outside—and most Seattle residents don't.

The Burke hopes to transform into a highly visible (and visited) institution with the construction of a new building that will sit alongside the university thoroughfare near its current location. Glass exterior walls will allow the public to see into the museum. Inside, more glass will give visitors visual access to the museum's collections and research lab. Groundbreaking is planned for late 2016, dependent upon funding status.

"We are the Washington State [natural and cultural]

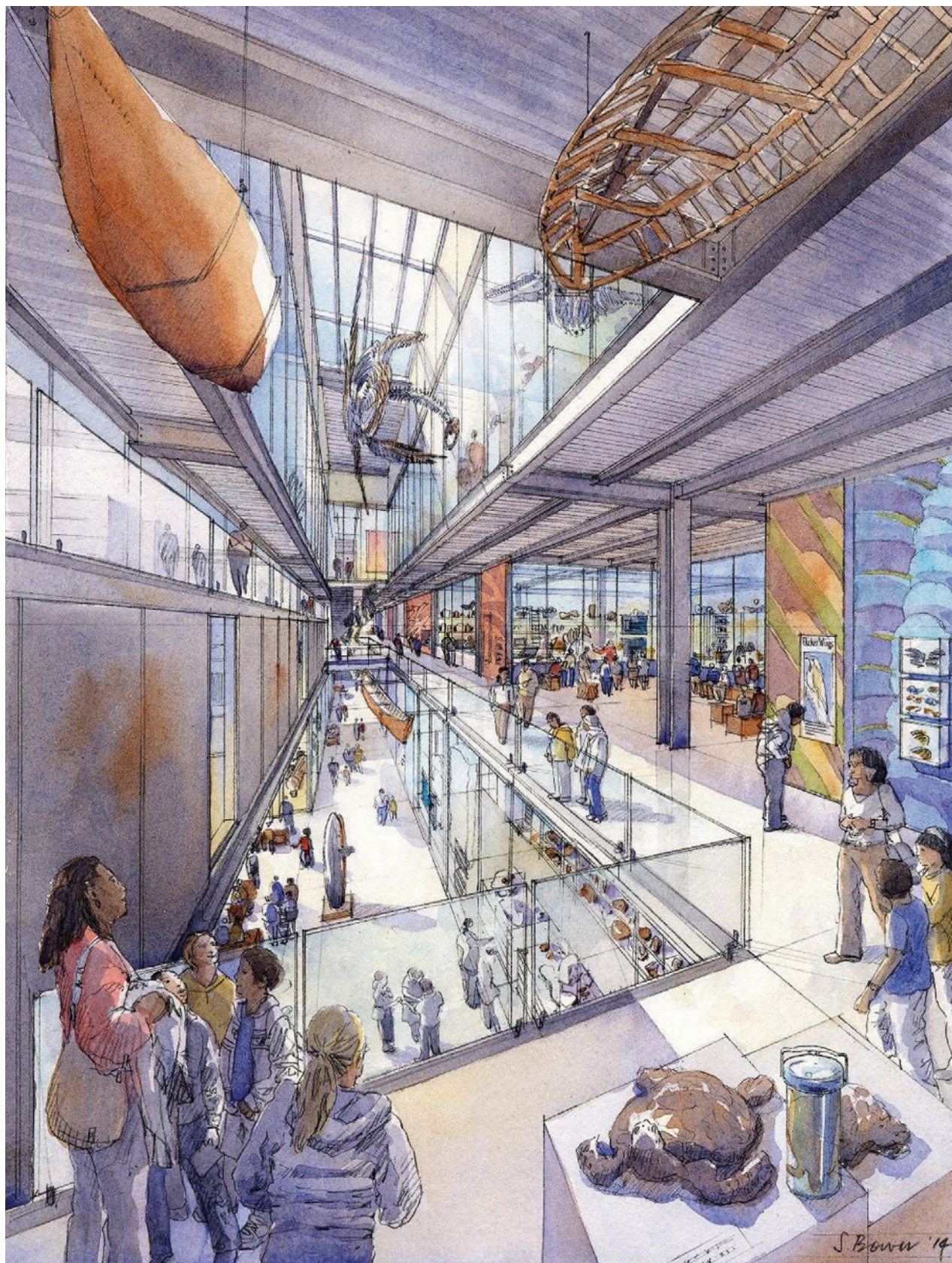
history museum, so our collection belongs to the public. Technically the citizens of the state own our collections," explains Eldon Tam, the Burke's project manager, adding that if Washingtonians "don't get a sense of objects in the collections," the Burke can't fully execute its mission and vision: to inspire people to value their connection with all life and act accordingly. "The short phrase we use is 'inside out'—exposing the everyday work of the museum, the research staff, the collections," says Tam. He adds that during the planning process, staff visited other museums but didn't find a model that seemed to fit the Burke's identity as a research museum on a university campus. While many museums have a visible lab, often a fossil preparation area, "no one seemed to be doing it nearly to the extent we wanted, to expose everything," he says. "We're kind of forging our own path."

The see-through collection and lab areas take into consideration the needs of the visitor and of the museum's staff and objects.

"There's a point of tension there that we need to resolve. How do you balance the light requirements of the collections with the fact that you want the visitors to see the collections?" says Tam, noting that the museum also wanted visitors inside to be able to see *outside* the museum. "It seemed inappropriate not to get a sense of the outdoors, as a natural history museum."

The solution came with help from an architectural daylight lab on campus, which modeled how daylight would interact with the new building. The result—in addition to carefully controlled artificial light—is exterior glazing, skylights, and shades with timers and light sensors.

The museum currently exhibits less than 1 percent of its total collection. By turning the museum "inside out," as Tam says, visitors will have a view of almost all the collection spaces. Not all of the museum's collection objects, however, will be fully visible. It isn't feasible to put windows into the bank of huge freezers that make up the genetic resources collection, and there will be pockets



Glass walls at the new Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture will allow visual access to the collections and research lab.

of collection spaces hidden from public view to protect, for example, culturally sensitive objects or lab spaces for handling hazardous materials. But the general idea is to arrange small displays of objects near the windows for visitors' benefit while letting them see into collections areas and extrapolate on the vastness of the Burke's holdings. "These are working labs," Tam stresses. "We don't want them to be show labs."

to enter the paleontology curators' lab. One of the culture experience alcoves (for ethnology) is adjacent to a workshop where artists can study and work on everything from Native American basket weaving to watercraft. Its 600 square feet of space can expand or shrink as needed to allow work and interpretation to take place in the artists' workshop. And the archeology department opted to combine their alcove and gallery

you serve. There's a greater capacity for change," explains Brian J. Carter, the Burke's manager of exhibit experiences. He leapt into action after coming to the Burke just shy of one year ago. Physical plans for the new Burke building were well underway, but Carter had loftier goals: "How can we better engage communities? We listen instead of talking, and we do it again and again and again."

The Burke has a small, loyal community of visitors dubbed "Burke nerds." As is true for many museums, the Burke's visitors are likely to be white and highly educated. In a city that's nearly 70 percent white, generally highly educated, and with a median household income well above the national average, what does successful community engagement look like? "Who isn't coming?" is the easy question—the harder questions are "why not?" and "what can we do to change that?" Or, as the Burke phrases it, how can the museum be "a place where everyone will feel welcomed, acknowledged and respected"?

The museum partnered with the university's business school to conduct market research and hired an audience researcher firm; they're finishing their second year of participation in the Washington Informal Science Education survey. Perhaps more important than the formal reports are the ongoing conversations, which have expanded to cover the topic of plans for the new building. The museum's Native American Advisory Board, which meets twice a year, was

How can the museum be "a place where everyone will feel welcomed, acknowledged and respected"?

In addition, the museum is creating "experience alcoves" to bridge the traditionally public side of the museum with its traditionally hidden side. Four of these roughly 600-square-foot areas will be located adjacent to collections and lab spaces. They're designed to be flexible, able to host school groups and visitors, with interpretation that can be changed quickly. Glass doors to the adjacent lab space allow visitors to see into working labs; they can be opened and a rolling counter placed in the doorway to allow docents or scientists to interact with visitors, or they can be fully opened to allow visitors into the lab space (of "clean" labs, where dangerous tools or chemicals are not a worry). Visitors won't be able to enter the paleontology prep lab, for example, but they will be able

space into one larger, flexible area.

Programming for the museum's new incarnation is still in development, but, Tam says, "Access requires more staff in order to be successful." The museum plans to hire personnel who have a collections background but can still focus primarily on the visitor. "So basically they're the interpreter between the research and the visitor," he says.

• • •

Enhancing the museum's accessibility also requires engaging the community—ensuring that as wide and diverse an audience as possible will come through the doors of the new facility. The Burke's staff aren't waiting for groundbreaking to begin these efforts. "Moments of transition are an opportunity to question who you are and who



Carefully controlled natural light will flood the new structure, sited along a major university thoroughfare.

involved in both the architectural and exhibit planning, and working groups for each topical area (paleontology, archeology, etc.) are helping to shape exhibit planning for the new structure.

The museum also recently wrapped up their Community Ambassador Project, an effort to give the Burke “access to a lot of people who hadn’t been to the Burke and [ask] them about their experiences with museums in general—natural history museums, and the Burke in particular—and how can we support the issues in their lives and the things they’d like to learn about,” explains Tam.

The basic idea was to recruit 12 diverse ambassadors who could, in turn, each recruit 10 community

members to participate in listening sessions. The resulting conversations would help the Burke form relationships with new audiences and inform future museum decisions.

Carter assembled an internal working team made up of the museum’s director of external affairs, the project manager, the curator for Pacific and Asian culture, and himself. They met every two weeks to plan everything from logistics to philosophical underpinnings. With the help of a consulting firm and the support of the museum’s executive director, they participated in facilitation training and created an overarching charter that set out the project’s goals, scope, process and strategy.

Their overarching goal of making a “significant shift in how the institution relates to the community” is broken into short-, medium- and long-term goals: by 2015, a better understanding of the communities they hope to serve; by 2017, the development of exhibits and experiences that “reflect the input of the broader community” and “engender the concept of ‘public as a philosophy.’” By 2020, the Burke hopes that its relationships with the ambassadors will make the museum “an invaluable resource for a much larger and more diverse community.” The project charter also includes principles of engagement to guide everyone involved: engage diverse voices, listen, build trust, share what they learn, demonstrate stewardship and show appreciation.

The 12 ambassadors (who, for the purposes of the pilot project, come from the Seattle metro area) are connected to different local communities and have ties to the Burke ranging from tenuous to deep. The internal working group asked the museum’s staff to reach out through their personal networks to potential ambassadors, seeking to gather as diverse a group as possible. Each ambassador assembled a group of about 10 of their peers, with the goal that the groups would reflect future Burke visitors.

“These aren’t focus groups,” stresses Carter. “A focus group wants specific approval or critiques of a specific product. We’re not going in knowing the answers we want to get.” He reiterates

these thoughts while welcoming a small group of women gathered at the Seattle Central Library for a listening session. They are all involved in local nonprofit organizations and have been recruited by one of the Burke's ambassadors, a program manager for the Seattle Public Library. "I really want to hear your thoughts and perspectives," Carter tells the group. "How can we convince new audiences that the Burke is theirs?"

Four broad questions are written on a white board: What are your experiences with and perceptions of museums? If you have visited the Burke, what motivated you to do so; if not, why? What's important to you and your community right now? What role can the Burke play in your life and your community? Carter considers the last question the most important.

Over the course of about 90 minutes, Carter gently steers the otherwise unstructured listening session through those broad questions. The conversation ranges from discussions of the cost of admission and parking to concerns over politics, conservation issues and the rising cost of living. "Why don't local nonprofits cooperate more? It seems like they don't talk to each other," one woman observes. "How is the Burke relevant to me when I can't afford rent?" another asks. Eventually, the group wishes aloud that the Burke would be a part of things outside its walls, with a priority on coming to people who can't easily get to the Burke. They wonder if technology is part of

the answer.

With the first round of listening sessions completed, Carter's internal working group and the project's ambassadors will decide on 10 key findings to bring to the museum. "That's when the work really starts," says Carter. "How can we use those 10 key findings as a measuring stick or a guide to develop strategies and tactics that align with the needs of our community and achieve our mission?" The project will continue to work with the original 12 ambassadors who, Carter explains, can provide deep and ongoing access to communities and individuals that the Burke simply can't reach. Post-listening session questionnaires showed that the ambassadors considered their participation a positive experience, which Carter considers a victory.

"I really appreciated the Burke's effort in this light," says Cassie Chinn, deputy executive director of the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience in Seattle and one of the Burke's ambassadors. The Wing (as it's known for short) has a strong reputation for grounding their work in their community. "[The Burke] stepped out to do something they hadn't done as robustly in the past.... That example of leadership was encouraging," she says, adding that even museums with established community reputations can always strive to improve: "More than just listening, how do community members become direct decision makers ... and

what is the accountability back to those community members?" At the Wing, community members are deeply involved from start to finish with every exhibition the museum creates.

To Chinn and Carter, museum access should expand beyond collections objects to the institution's functions and processes. "Look at your strategic plan and how you go about doing things," says Chinn. "What are all the ways we could go about engaging community more and integrate them into this process [and] have them take a decision-making role?"

Carter notes that while the new building is an opportunity for the museum to examine its community relationships, the structure won't catalyze change by itself. "It's essential for museums in general" to be engaging their communities, he says. "This is where museums need to be going."

Tam agrees that the Community Ambassador Project is part of an ongoing effort: "The next stage of the Burke isn't just about a new building. It's relaunching an entire organization, its posture and how it serves the public," he says, adding that after the new building opens, continuous feedback will help the Burke "morph and change and adapt to an evolving society."

"If we relentlessly pursue engagement," says Carter, "magical things will happen." «

Winifred Kehl is a museum exhibit developer and science writer based in Seattle.

The Human Experience

A conversation with NEH Chairman Dr. William “Bro” Adams

After being nominated by President Obama to serve as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Dr. William “Bro” Adams was confirmed by the US Senate in July 2014.

Chairman Adams brought a vast array of experiences to the NEH, including his service as president of Colby College, home of the AAM-accredited Colby College Museum of Art. During his time there, he led a \$376 million capital campaign that included an expansion of the museum and investments in internationalism, environmental sustainability, ocean sciences and civic engagement.

A native of Birmingham, Michigan, and son of an auto industry executive, Adams earned his undergraduate degree in philosophy at Colorado College and a Ph.D. from the University

of California at Santa Cruz History of Consciousness Program. He served as a first lieutenant in the US Army during the Vietnam War, and studied in France as a Fulbright Scholar before beginning his career in higher education with appointments to teach political philosophy at Santa Clara University in California and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Adams went on to coordinate the Great Works in Western Culture program at Stanford University and to serve as vice president and secretary of Wesleyan University. He became president of Bucknell University in 1995 and president of Colby College in 2000.

Alliance President and CEO Laura L. Lott sat down with Adams as he approached the one-year anniversary of his tenure as the 10th chairman of the agency.





Top: Dr. Adams with actress and 2015 Jefferson Lecturer Anna Deavere Smith.

You're coming up on your first year on the job. Tell us how it's going, what you've learned, what's surprised you.

One of the surprising things to me, which I don't think you can grasp until you're on the job, is how big, robust and varied the humanities community is in the United States. One of the reasons it's big is because of AAM and the universe of members and individuals you represent. The museum community, historic sites, cultural organizations of various kinds, libraries, both public and private, research in general—here

at NEH, this is our universe in addition to the academic community. It's a big country with lots of museums doing all kinds of work. Getting to know that universe has been a real pleasure and really eye opening.

I was looking at some figures that we put together for our 50th anniversary. Over the 50 years that NEH has been in existence, we've given 6,200 grants to museums all over the country, totaling \$750 million for about 2,600 museum exhibitions. That gives you a sense of the scope of our museum work. The other dimension of the museum community that's interesting to me is that museums are starting to think differently about their publics. That was one of the things on display at your annual meeting. The museum as a cloistered place is breaking down into the museum as a community-embedded institution. I think museums are much more public-facing entities.

Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole spoke at the annual meeting in Atlanta about the



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

Founded in 1965, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is an independent grant-making institution of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation and public programs in the humanities, providing grants to museums, colleges, universities, archives and libraries. As of 2014, the NEH had awarded more than \$71 million for a wide range of museum-related projects over the preceding five years. For more information about NEH programs and grants available for museums, go to neh.gov.

challenge and opportunity that museums face with the changing demographics in the country. Is the NEH doing any work related to this trend?

We're talking a lot about it here. We're in the middle of a four-part documentary film series devoted to American ethnic minorities, including Italian Americans, Latino Americans, Jewish Americans and Asian Americans. Another topic that's very interesting to me is immigration: where a lot of this diversity is coming from, and how we can help Americans understand and engage those changes that are caused by immigration. It's happening, so we need to understand it. The changes you observe are happening in institutions of the kinds that we have supported. They have to change, and we have to help them change, and we have to change.

Looking forward to the future of museums and where we go as a field, what are museums doing well and what do we need to do better?

I don't know if I'd give the museum community advice quite yet on what it can do better, but we are following this evolution of the public orientation of museums with great interest, and we're engaged in it by funding projects. Education programs beyond the walls are a big part of what museums are starting to do now. I had an interesting conversation with some people at the Met a couple months ago about what they were doing. Ditto at the Art Institute of Chicago. Those are big, classic American museums that are now thinking about their education programs in a totally different way,

connecting with schools as opposed to just bringing people in to see the riches in the museum. That redirecting is so interesting and promising. Small museums are doing it too, so we're following that shift with great interest. Collaboration between and among cultural institutions is also very important. We want to be a part of that leading edge of change. Our Division of Public Programs, where most of our museum funding comes from, and our Division of Preservation and Access are very involved. There are a lot of technical and technological challenges for museums, particularly related to preservation. We're trying to stay current and leading edge in that field as well.

Congress is currently in the process of determining funding for NEH and the other federal agencies for next year. What messages have you found to be the most compelling and useful when you go to the Hill to make the case for NEH and cultural organization funding?

There are a couple of different arguments that we want to emphasize. One is the local, which is always compelling because all of our money gets spent in organizations that are important to communities. The cultural economy has substantial economic impact and benefit and meaning. NEH and NEA have strengthened the cultural capital of the country in very significant ways. About \$11 billion between the two agencies has gone into cultural infrastructure all over the country. People say, "Well, that's very nice, but the government shouldn't be in that business." The prospect that somebody else would have been there with that \$11 billion



dollars—it would not have happened. The other argument has to do with the national importance of our work. In the American democratic system, the preservation and cultivation of history is hugely important, and so is the preservation and cultivation of the fundamental principles of liberal democracy. That's been one of our strong suits over the 50 years of the agency. There's a national level of discussion that has to do with what it means to preserve the

I have an existentialist and pragmatic view of the humanities, which some people don't share. It's that sense of how salient humanities are to the living of lives.

liberal democracy, what kind of citizens you have to have, what education for citizenship means. The agency is not just a funder of those kinds of things. It's a symbol of the country's commitment to the preservation of its own historic legacy.

We wanted to thank you for hosting the panel on urban museum practice ("Museums Re-imagining the American City") at the AAM Annual Meeting in Atlanta. What were your key takeaways from that session?

Listening to museum experts in the field talk about their museums and what they were doing in their communities, which were quite similar, but in other ways, so specific to each community, museum audience and organization. These are all distinct

organizations that are trying to connect to their communities and local histories in very particular ways.

Our members may know about your army service during the Vietnam War. How does your military service shape your view of the humanities in your work today?

It's the experience that made me curious about a lot of important things in human experience and therefore curious about the humanities and its reflection on human experience. It was a life-changing exposure to a lot of different complex experiential questions that led me into the studies I pursued as an undergraduate. It also anchored my view of the humanities as a form of understanding and knowledge that always comes back to human experience. I have an existentialist and pragmatic view of the humanities, which some people don't share. It's that sense of how salient humanities are to the living of lives. That's the way I look on my work here at NEH. We have a program here called Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War, which is about two things: the American legacy of conflict and war, and the ways in which the humanities can be of service to American soldiers as they attempt to reengage in civilian life. It's been a point of access for me for those programs, which continue to grow. We're very interested in the way museums might thematize the meaning of conflict in American life and history. There are lots of museums that come very naturally to that material.

Tell us about the NEH's Common Good initiative and how museums might be involved with it.

I came here with a strong belief that the humanities can speak to deep and important questions in public life. The Common Good program demonstrates and encourages that. We started the program in January with new grant lines. The first one is the Public Scholar Program [neh.gov/news/press-release/2014-12-01]. It's an effort to interest humanities scholars in taking on research projects and publishing in ways that are more publicly accessible than academic monographs—to pick issues and forms of expression that engage a broader audience than is normally the case. So far it's been a huge success. The response was so significant that we were almost drowning in applications. We had 500 legitimate applications and we're going to fund 36 of them. The second grant program that came out more recently is called Humanities in the Public Square [neh.gov/grants/public/humanities-in-the-public-square], offering opportunities for partnerships of community organizations—including, I hope, museums—to dive into a topic of deep humanities character and interest. I bet we're going to get lots of proposals that have to do with the challenge of race and race relations because of what's been going on in the country.

Another program that might involve museums centrally is called Common Heritage [neh.gov/news/press-release/2015-04-20]. We're going to give financial support to communities to collect privately held materials that are of significance to community history—a cultural legacy. So if you've got something in your attic that has salience to the community, we'll pay



for its digitization and its use in community programming, and we'll have it preserved in places like small community museums and historical societies. There's another program that we're doing with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation called the Humanities Open Book Project [neh.gov/grants/odh/humanities-open-book-program] that will enable the digitization of important books on broad public topics that have gone out of print and that we think are worthy of republishing electronically and made free to the public.

You've talked about the role of technology and expanding access for new audiences that museums and others may not have been successful in reaching before, especially remotely.

We just gave a big grant to the American Foundation for the Blind in New York to digitize the contents of the biggest Helen Keller archive in the country. It's unbelievable what they have there. Digitization is a huge part of the preservation work that we do. We're doing a national digital newspaper project [chroniclingamerica.

Dr. Adams with graduates of Miami Dade College, where he delivered the 2015 commencement address.

loc.gov] with the Library of Congress, digitizing every American newspaper between roughly 1835 and 1928. The digital work that we're doing is enormously important for access.

You're the former president of Colby College, home of an AAM-accredited art museum, the Colby College Museum of Art. One of the challenges we face in the museum field is the tension between the missions of the university and of the art museum on campus. It's played out in a couple of prominent cases where a college deaccessioned the museum's assets, selling collections to meet financial needs. How we can strike the balance between the mission of the university and the duty of the museum to serve the public?

It's an important issue, but I don't construct it along the lines of the college threatening to take away the resources of the museum to benefit the college. Where I saw the tension—and where I think at Colby it was overcome—was



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between the mission of the museum as a place for the public and as a part of the educational program of the institution. What easily happens is that the museum becomes “the big museum” and doesn’t think much about its relationship to the educational program and the institution. At Colby, I was very motivated not to let that happen as the collection grew in importance, stature and value. The director, Sharon Corwin, understood that especially at a liberal arts college, if the museum isn’t anchored in the educational mission of the institution, it quickly loses its most obvious reason for being. We thought a lot at Colby about the regional and public mission of the museum and we

raised money for that, but we were always anchored in the notion that it was first and foremost a teaching museum.

What is the agency doing to mark the occasion of its 50th anniversary?

We are in the planning stages of an *In Performance at the White House* PBS show that would spotlight NEA and NEH. We’re also planning a very interesting event in the fall of 2016 at the University of Virginia that will showcase, in honor of NEH, what a variety of communities are thinking about the future of the humanities. Regional humanities organizations from California to Massachusetts are doing various things by way of celebration. I’ll be

going down to Austin, Texas, to speak about Lyndon Johnson, who signed our legislation, and, more generally, talk a little bit about the history of the agency. We’re having a special communications program that rolls out in September, including digital engagement on the day of our anniversary, September 29, on Twitter and Facebook, and a special issue of *Humanities* magazine. So there will be quite a few things going on, much of it designed to express the importance of the agency over time. I don’t think we’re going to have any trouble getting your community to share in that enthusiasm. <<

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» ADVERTISER GUIDE

ADVERTISER	PAGE
2016 AAM Annual Meeting	54
AAM Purchasing Coop	20
BlueTelescope Studios	6
ClickNetherfield Ltd.	c4
College Art Association	55
Design and Production Incorporated	16
Displays2Go	55
Distinguished	c3
Museum Rails	57
Roblon Lighting	19
Roblon Lighting	63
Sony	15
Takiya	23
Wallace Foundation	c2
Warner Bros	1
Weldon Exhibits	21

» PHOTO CREDITS

Cover: From *Collage Works* (2014) by Kate Mahony. Image courtesy Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA).

p. 6: J.B. Spector/Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago.

p. 8: Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as a Lute Player*, c. 1616–1618. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Charles H. Schwartz Endowment Fund.

p. 9: (top) Crowned lemur. Specimen courtesy Duke Lemur Center. Bruce Museum Collection. Photograph by Paul Mutino; (bottom) photo courtesy Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum.

p. 10: photos courtesy The Strong|National Museum of Play.

p. 11: (top left) Mystic Seaport 1941.399; (right) Walt Disney, c. 1930s. Photograph courtesy of The Walt Disney Company, © Disney; (bottom left) Corita Kent, *for eleanor*, 1964. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Margaret Fisher Fund, 2008.143. © Corita Art Center, Immaculate Heart Community, Los Angeles. Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

p. 12: (top) Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (Amy Killpatrick Fox); (bottom) Victor Higgins, *Arroyo Honda*, c. 1935. Collection of Phoenix Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Orme Lewis.

p. 13: (left) Will Cotton, *Katy Perry* (2010). Promised gift of the James Dicke Family, © Will Cotton; (right) photograph by Cary Horton. Courtesy of the Missouri History Museum.

p. 14: (top right) Children contemplate an Inside|Out reproduction of *Portrait of a Mughal Prince* in a northwest Detroit neighborhood; (bottom right) image courtesy of El Paso Museum of History.

p. 17-18: Courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.

p. 19: Courtesy of the STAMP Pass Instagram, @phillystampass

p. 22: "Finding Marshall." Photo by Marshall Wendler (www.findingmarshall.com).

p. 25: Wikimedia Commons.

p. 27: Boston Children's Museum.

p. 28: (clockwise from top) Kate Mahony, *Collage Works*, 2014; Laura Swanson, *Uniforms*, 2014–2015; Martin Kersels, *Flotsam (Chairs Arterial System)*, 2010. Images courtesy Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA).

p. 31: New York Transit Museum.

p. 33: (left) Ellen Friis, *STELA*, 2014. Image courtesy Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA); (right) photograph by Patrick Cashin.

p. 34: Katherine Sherwood, *Maya*, 2014. Image courtesy Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA).

p. 37: Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum.

p. 40: Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum.

p. 44-46: Olson Kundig Architects | Stephanie Bower Architectural Design.

p. 49: photo by Tom Wolff.

p. 50: photos by Chris Flynn / NEH.

p. 51: photo courtesy William Adams.

p. 53: photo courtesy Miami Dade College.

p. 58-60: photos courtesy Alina Tita.

p. 64: Francisco Franco, *Marilyn Muerta*. Courtesy of the artist.

AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER 1, 2015

RIGHTS & REPRODUCTIONS: THE HANDBOOK FOR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Edited by Anne M. Young

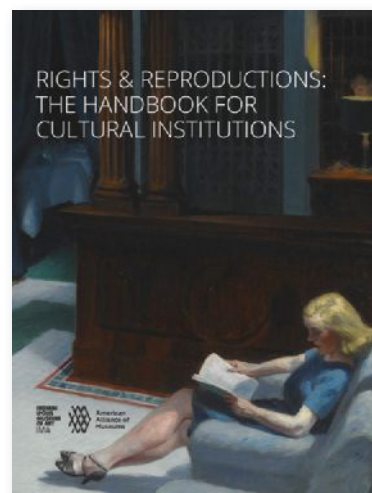
Rights & Reproductions: The Handbook for Cultural Institutions will be the first comprehensive resource to focus solely on the rights and reproductions guidelines, established standards and emerging best practices at cultural institutions. This digital publication, produced using the Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative (OSCI) Toolkit platform, will be a living document that can be updated to remain current with trends and best practices.

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new component in spring of 2015.

Our teen council member was especially excited about Culture Spots. Sharon got to research a topic, write a script and record her own audio tour, with some guidance from me on the content and training on how to write and record an audio guide from the GPCA. She was passionate about that experience and said in a recent e-mail that “after working with several of the penitentiary’s most helpful workers, I’ve learned the true meaning of hard work and dedication.”

So has there been an increase in teen visitors at our site? We’re still measuring the impact, but we get a few

STAMP visitors tend to come in groups to socialize as part of their experience.

STAMP visitors every week—a definite increase in walk-in teen visitation. We’ve also noticed that our STAMP visitors tend to come in groups to socialize as part of their experience. Beyond the numbers, we have created a welcoming environment for teens at Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site. We offer the opportunity for teens to come and visit for free, with their friends and whenever they would like. Our staff is ready to talk to them and engage them with the history and

relevance of the first true penitentiary in the world. This focus on teens as visitors to museums is a success for the city of Philadelphia. <<

Lauren Zalut is director of education and tour programs, Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, where she oversees the development, implementation and evaluation of guided tours. She also works on a variety of public programs including family days, exhibits and community collaborations. For more information about STAMP, please visit phillystamp.org.



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WHAT BRINGS A SMALL

group of West Virginia high school students to Romania? Would you guess traditional Appalachian bluegrass music?

“Common Notes: Connecting Folk Traditions through Technology”—a collaboration between the Alexandru Ștefulescu Gorj County Museum in Târgu Jiu, Romania, and the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences of West Virginia in Charleston—is just one of several Museums Connect projects that have recently reached completion. Museums Connect, an initiative of the US Department of State, is an international exchange program administered by the American Alliance of Museums.

Sponsored projects are cross-cultural collaborations between American and international museums that focus on the communities they serve. To date, Museums Connect programs have enabled museums and communities to learn from each other in 26 states and more than 45 countries.

Common Notes harnessed the universal power of music to create a connection between high school students and educators from two very different parts of the world. Using technology such as Skype, Google+ and GarageBand, students from both West Virginia and Romania were able to keep in touch, compare their traditional music and create music of their own.

In addition to their virtual

exchanges, the students visited each other’s communities, since travel is the heart of Museums Connect projects. These visits were the first trips abroad for many participants. Projects have also created physical or online exhibitions, videos and even recipe books.

A hallmark of Museums Connect is that communities work with museums to tackle important social issues. By undertaking projects outside their walls, museums bring in new and diverse audiences.

This coming year, AAM will oversee projects exploring how art can help communities heal from trauma; the recovery and preservation of lost heritage; climate change and the world’s oceans; and how design thinking can encourage more girls to enter the sciences.

Following are reflections from the Common Notes participants.

...

THOUGHTS FROM THE US PARTNER

William E. Jeffries, III (former director of strategic innovation and grants manager, Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences of West Virginia, Charleston; current director of strategic initiatives, Stepping Stones Museum for Children, Norwalk, Connecticut)

After finding each other through the museum profiles posted on the Museums Connect webpage, the West Virginia and Romania host communities found that their similar sizes made this partnership a natural fit. Both cities—Târgu Jiu and





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Charleston—are government centers and share a strong industrial, manufacturing and mining heritage. And both cities are surrounded by rural, mountainous areas with historically challenging transportation access issues that have led to isolation and underdevelopment.

Both the Appalachian and Romanian communities served by the partnering museums have distinctive folk cultures that have drawn upon rich instrumental (notably fiddle/violin), oral (both storytelling and vocal) and dance traditions to convey the unique socio-economic struggles and historical and political contexts of its marginalized people. In addition, both communities exhibit low levels of digital literacy, lack racial and ethnic diversity and consistent exposure to other cultures and perspectives, and evidence eroding knowledge of their own folk cultural heritages.

Because of these and other factors, both partner museums reached quick consensus that a joint project

would need to promote a deeper understanding of each culture's heritage and identity, and use digital media curation as a lifelong learning tool to increase digital literacy.

Digital storytelling bridges the arts and sciences through the preservation of memory and culture, documenting life experiences and communicating personal family and community history. Digital stories are generally short, first-person video narratives created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images, music and other sounds. It is also a tool that allows participating teachers and students to explore serious issues in their communities through a mixture of investigative journalism, storyboarding and creative uses of technology. It teaches both educators and students to communicate in a multiperspective, organized and entertaining way.

At the project's conclusion, students took part in the growing digitization and mashup music trend

that is popular among the younger generations in both countries. A mashup is a song or composition created by blending two or more prerecorded songs, usually by overlaying the vocal track of one song seamlessly over the instrumental track of another. The resulting mutation echoes the evolution of both of the American and Romanian folk music traditions.

The Clay Center chose Wahama High School, located in very rural Mason County, West Virginia, as its school partner for the project because of an extensive prior relationship with the choral teacher, as well as the school's high poverty rate, lack of racial and cultural diversity, and the fact that many of the students have never traveled outside of their own county or met someone from another country.

In many ways, this project far surpassed the expectations of both museums. The bonds that developed within and between each of the participant groups—including teachers, students, musicians and museum staff—were immediate and profound. Despite an evident language barrier during the first introduction, the American and Romanian musicians

completed their tasks in only two rehearsals during the first travel exchange in Charleston. The American and Romanian students immediately bonded through music at a speed and level of passion that was amazing to witness. From their first rehearsal forward, they worked well together to develop school and public programs, showcasing their individual music traditions and creating at least one composition that merged the two traditions. They also connected through the Google Hangout rooms set up for the project and through Facebook and other social media tools.

A master class during the Romanian delegation's visit to Davis & Elkins College during the first travel exchange was probably the most moving and impactful event of the entire itinerary, demonstrating the cross-pollination of music techniques and folk cultural concepts. The Romanians demonstrated to the American students and faculty key music and dance techniques and then worked with the Americans as they replicated what they observed. The Americans then reciprocated by educating the Romanians about traditional Appalachian dance

» ALLIANCE COMMUNITY

and music forms. The last portion of the master class was an impromptu jam session with all of the Romanian and American participants working together.

• • •

THOUGHTS FROM THE ROMANIAN PARTNER

*Alina Tita (accountant,
Alexandru Ștefulescu Gorj
County Museum, Târgu Jiu,
Romania)*

It all started with an e-mail that our museum received from the US Embassy in Bucharest. The embassy's cultural events coordinator sent information to Romanian museums about the 2014 launch of the Museums Connect program. Our general manager sent me the e-mail because I was the only one who spoke English fluently and could understand what that program was about. I then went to aam-us.org/museumsconnect to better understand the

program's conditions, phases and structure.

I took on the task of submitting our museum profile and then looked for a partner museum. Bill Jeffries of the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences said that our museums met as if through a "museum dating site," and he was right. The partner museums are able to find each other online, get in touch and then agree on a project idea. We decided to focus on folk music, which is influenced by traditions and the history of people. We had to find the right people to work with (museum staff, teachers, students, folk music artists), and we worked on shaping the project for about a year.

At the beginning of the summer, Bill said in an e-mail, "Pack your bags, because you are coming to the USA!" I never dreamed I would go to the USA, mainly because I come from a humble family. This project

opened up a new world for me and brought with it so much happiness—a feeling that goes beyond words.

I couldn't wait to visit America and learn all about it. September was a busy month as my US partner prepared for the first site visit of the project and we prepared paperwork for our visas and interviews. On September 28, 2014, I flew from Sibiu to Washington, DC. I was equally excited and nervous about traveling alone for such a long distance to attend the Museums Connect Colloquium, where I met Bill and the other project managers.

The rest of my team soon joined Bill and me for our journey to Charleston for the first cultural exchange. This was a beautiful two-week visit. We met the incredible staff at the Clay Center, with whom we bonded immediately. A natural relationship quickly formed between the US and the Romanian teams.



We became good friends. They took us on field trips, on museum visits, to a marching band competition and to meet the governor of West Virginia. Music surrounded the cultural exchange, as the folk artists held joint performances of Appalachian and Oltenian folk music. This visit was a great chance for the students who traveled with me to see what an American high school looks like and to get to know American students and teachers.

The first site visit of the Common Notes project ended, and we returned to Romania to our everyday lives. We still keep in touch with our US friends via a private Google+ community. Students and their teachers continue their work, creating digital stories on traditions and folk music. This project allowed them to learn about their cultural identity and other cultures with the help of 21st-century technology. The digital mashup of bluegrass and Romanian folk music helped the students improve their English skills and make new friends. «

A representative of West Virginia Public Radio shadowed the musicians throughout the first travel exchange, recording the entirety of each rehearsal. The resulting article and audio documentary are available at wvpublic.org/post/musicians-explore-connections-between-romanian-and-appalachian-folk-music.

Applications for the 2016–17 Museums Connect grants will be accepted starting in fall of 2015. We can even help you find a partner. Visit www.aam-us.org/museumsconnect to learn more, or e-mail us at museumsconnect@aam-us.org.

RAISE YOUR HAND

Professional Engagement Starts With You!

BY GREG STEVENS

When I was in graduate school in the Museum Education Program at The George Washington University, we were encouraged to advocate for our profession, our visitors and the field by getting professionally engaged. I recall asking our program director, Carol B. Stapp, about the ways in which we might get involved beyond our day-to-day jobs. Her response, which still resonates with clarity, was simple: “Raise your hand.” We all have something of value to offer, regardless of what our jobs may be or where we are in our careers. Professional engagement is good for you, your institution, your community of practice and the museum field. In each sphere of influence, consider how you might align your professional goals as you identify actions you can take now or in the near future. Some of these steps might take longer planning to implement, and some will require more time and strategic effort to put into motion.

For You

Professional engagement is an important aspect of your own career development. By volunteering for a task force, joining a committee, writing an article or co-presenting a conference session, you are building your professional skills, expanding your network and shaping your personal brand. Commit to sharing your knowledge, skills and passions with others, and others will do the same with you.

For Your Institution

Consider how your contributions support the mission and vision of your institution, and ultimately serve your visitors, your community and the field. Wherever you are in the organizational chart, you have the capacity to demonstrate your commitment to the cause. Seek out opportunities to make improvements to processes or programs, build or enhance networks and collaborations, or lend a hand when you can. In doing so, you increase your visibility, reputation and potential for career growth.

For Your Community of Practice

In whatever ways are most comfortable for you, reach out to colleagues from different types and sizes of museums, working in different roles and at various career stages, inside and outside of your museum. Attend a local networking event. Join one of AAM’s 22 Professional Networks organized by disciplines and shared interests. Consider posting an idea or a comment to AAM’s online community, Museum Junction. Engaging with colleagues at this level can offer you the chance to connect with a wide range of peers as you exchange ideas, information and inspiration.

For the Field

Museum professionals typically choose their work because of their love of art, history, objects, ideas, science, children, families, communities, nature and/or learning. This passion fuels a commitment to lifelong learning, skills building, reflective practice and recognition of the power of professional relationships. Professional engagement presents opportunity and obligation for each of us to tap into our unique passions and skills as we “give back” and “pay it forward” for the benefit of the field as a whole.

For Society

Our individual contributions in thoughts, words and deeds have a direct impact on our chosen careers, our institutions, our communities, our field and the world. AAM helps museums tell our story and promotes a deeper understanding of museums with policy makers, the press and the public about why museums are essential in our society.

In what ways can you help “make the case” for museums?

Greg Stevens is assistant director for professional development at the American Alliance of Museums. He is co-editor (with Wendy Luke) of A Life in Museums: Managing your Museum Career (The AAM Press, 2012).

PEOPLE

NEW JOBS



Risha Lee to curator, exhibitions, Rubin Museum of Art, New York City.



Marc E. Check to vice president of technology, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, Cleveland.

Eric Dorfman to director, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh.



Lauren Cornell to curator and associate director, technology initiatives, New Museum, New York City.



Eugenio Valdés Figueroa to director and chief curator, Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami.

Megan MacNeill to program and engagement coordinator, The Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, NY.



Roger S. Wieck (above) to curator and department head, **William M. Voelkle** to senior research curator and **Joshua O'Driscoll** to assistant curator, Department of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York City.



Paul E. Miller to president and chief operating officer, America's Car Museum, Tacoma, Washington.



Gary Blankemeyer (top) to chief financial officer and **Cynthia Moreno** (above) to director of learning & engagement Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina.



Joshua Stapf to administrative coordinator and development assistant, The National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House, Rochester, New York.



Ellen Hanspach-Bernal to conservator of paintings, Detroit Institute of Arts.



Eleanor Hughes to deputy director for art & program, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

Josef Helfenstein to director of Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland.

Neil Karbank and **Lou Smith** to board of trustees, **Shirley Bush Helzberg** to board chair and **Sarah F. Rowland** to chair emerita, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

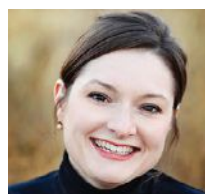
Melissa Fetter to chairman, **Walter B. Elcock** to president, **Catherine Rose** to vice president of the board, **Susan Byrne Montgomery** to treasurer, **Xuan-Thao Nguyen** to secretary of the board, and **Victor Almeida**, **Lucilo Peña**, **Kelli Questrom**, **Gayle Stoffel**, **Elaine Agather**, **Barbara Durham**, **Tom Fagadau** and **Carolyn Rathjen** to board of trustees, Dallas Museum of Art.

Kristine Zickuhr to assistant director for administration, Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, Wisconsin.

Kitty Bowe Hearty to board liaison, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Deborah Lenk to interim executive director, Museum of Glass, Tacoma, Washington.

Leah Fox to director, Vance Wall Art Education Center, Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey.



Cheryl Martin to development associate, The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York.



Jackie Milad to Gretchen Hupfel Curator of Contemporary Art, Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, Wilmington.

Susan Sayre Batton to deputy director for curatorial affairs, San Jose Museum of Art, California.

KUDOS

The Green Restaurant Association (GRA) recertified **Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens** as a 3-star Certified Green Restaurant®, receiving 175.61 GreenPoints™ on GRA's rigorous rating scale. Having implemented 61 environmental steps, Phipps has gone 75.61 percent above and beyond the minimum requirements for certification. CaféPhipps serves the Pittsburgh community, offering fresh, sustainable, inventive and health-conscious cuisine that is good for people and the planet.

The Anne Frank Exhibit at the **Museum of Tolerance** in Los Angeles won an IIDA Caliber Award from the International Interior Design Association in the category of Leisure and Entertainment. The Caliber Awards recognize the excellent work of project teams that have exceeded the expectations of their profession to bring interior design to life.

TRANSITIONS

Frank Milligan retires in November from the position of executive director of Morven Park in Leesburg, Virginia. Milligan spearheaded the launch of extensive new public programming and the implementation of a new strategic plan for the historic site, which includes three museums. Since he joined as executive director in January 2010, the number of visitors to the site has increased by 84 percent.

IN MEMORIAM

Herman Willem Brinkman, former secretary general of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), affectionately known as Manus by his family, friends and colleagues, passed away on July 4 in Thailand. His work focused on highly innovative programs concerning developing countries, racial minorities and disadvantaged communities. As secretary general of ICOM, Manus fought to counter illicit traffic in cultural property, out of his personal wish to act for the respect, equality and promotion of all cultures.



Paul C. Reber, executive director of Stratford Hall in Stratford, Virginia, died in July following

a bicycle accident. A passionate historian, Reber was responsible for the restoration of the historic Great House at Stratford Hall, birthplace of Robert E. Lee and home of the Lees of Virginia. He led new and innovative education programs and spearheaded Stratford's \$17 million fundraising campaign.

His love for history extended beyond academic interests, motivating him to engage audiences and inspire others throughout his 25-year career.

Reber received his B.A. from Gettysburg College, an M.A. from George Mason University and a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College

Park. During his tenure at Stratford Hall, he also served as a historian in residence at American University, where he instructed master's degree students in museum management.

AAM Thanks SMAA Panel

AAM wishes to thank the advisory panel of volunteers from the field who are assisting in the creation of the **Small Museums Accreditation Academy**, a new year-long Accreditation readiness program.

Greta Brunschwyler, executive director, Briar Bush Nature Center, Abington, PA

Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, president & CEO, Abbe Museum, and Alliance board member, Bar Harbor, ME

Charlotte Fitz Daniels, executive director, Greenville Museum of Art, Greenville, NC

Ann Fortescue, executive director, Springfield Museum of Art, and accreditation commissioner, Springfield, OH

Javier Guerrero, executive director, San Diego Children's Discovery Museum, Escondido, CA

Tamara Hemmerlein, director, local history services, Indiana Historical Society, and chair, Small Museum Administrators Committee, Indianapolis

Janice Klein, executive director, Museum Association of Arizona, and Small Museum Administrators Committee board member, Phoenix

Liselle LaFrance, director, Historic Cherry Hill, Albany, NY

Beth Levinthal, executive director, Hofstra University Museum, Hempstead, NY

Allyn Lord, director, Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, and Small Museum Administrators Committee board member, Springdale, AR

Kathy Roberts-Douglass, CEO, Texas Maritime Museum, Rockport

Tracy Spikes, director, Silver City Museum, Silver City, NM

Lisë Swensson, executive director, Hickory Museum of Art, Hickory, NC

Susan Visser, executive director, South Bend Museum of Art, South Bend, IN

Gary Walrath, executive director, Rocky Mount Historical Association & Museum, Piney Flats, TN

Applications for the Academy will be available this fall. The development of this program was generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information, see aam-us.org/resources/assessment-programs/accreditation.

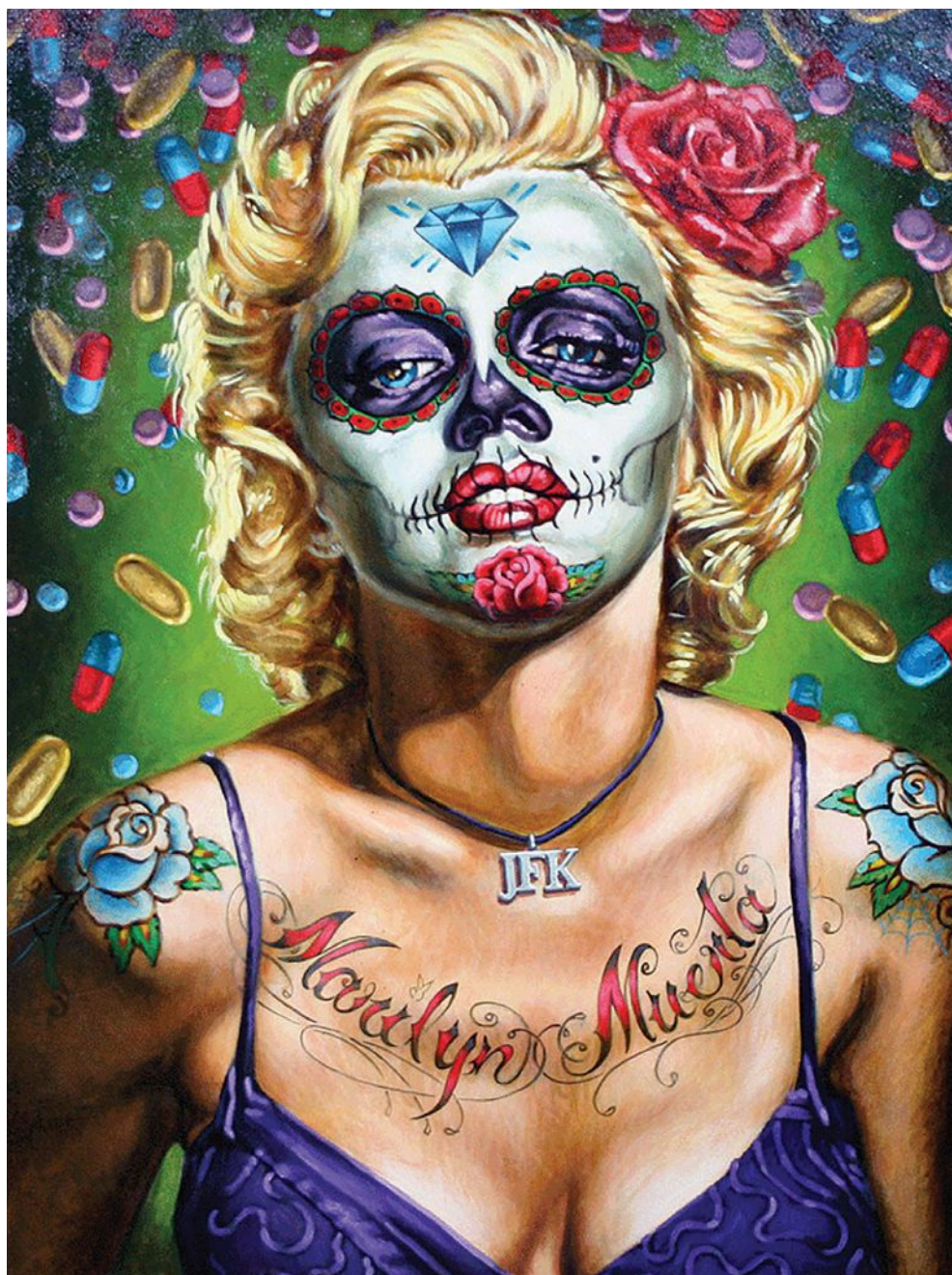
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Under a shower of red-and-blue, gold and purple pills, a dramatically made up Marilyn Monroe gazes out of *Marilyn Muerta*. California artist Francisco Franco created the portrait, on view at the California Museum as part of “Day of the Dead: Art of Día de los Muertos 2015.” The exhibition celebrates this annual Mexican holiday, as well as Hispanic Heritage Month, with a display of contemporary spins on longstanding traditions. Marilyn is joined by sugar skulls, altars and offerings by other area creatives, as well as items left by the public at the Community Altar. To Nov. 29, 2015. Venue: California Museum, Sacramento.

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