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DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
Team of Creatives, LLC

ADVERTISING
Al Rickard
arickard@assocvision.com
703-402-9713

ALLIANCE PRESIDENT AND CEO
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MUSEUM (ISSN 0027-4089)
JULY/AUGUST 2018, VOLUME 97, NO. 4
PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY (J/F, M/A, M/J, J/A, S/O, N/D) BY THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS
2451 CRYSTAL DRIVE, SUITE 1005, ARLINGTON, VA 22202; 202-289-1818; FAX 202-289-6578;
WWW.AAM-US.ORG.

Annual subscription rate is $38. Copies are mailed to all members. Single copy is $7. Overseas airmail is an additional $45. Membership in the Alliance includes $22 from annual membership dues applicable to a subscription to MUSEUM, except for students and retirees. (This notice is required by the US Postal Service.) POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSEUM, 2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 1005, Arlington, VA 22202.

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MUSEUM is indexed in The Art Index, which is published quarterly and available in public libraries. The magazine is available from ProQuest in the following formats: microform, electronic and paper. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Alliance. Preferred Periodical postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the US by Lane Press, Burlington, VT.

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You Think Museums Can Change the World? Me, Too

Champion museums. Nurture excellence.

This is the tagline we adopted six years ago when the organization rebranded as the American Alliance of Museums. These four words are also in our official mission statement: champion museums and nurture excellence in partnership with our members and allies. That statement guides everything I do every day, along with the incredibly dedicated and talented board of directors and staff at AAM.

But our work is not just on behalf of the diverse field and its *institutions*. Our work is also to champion YOU.

We recently launched a multifaceted and ambitious Internet platform and content strategy that features you, the Alliance members. At AAM-us.org, you will find a new and exciting online space that is a real-time connection to colleagues and thought partners across the globe, a stage for field-wide debate and an amplifier of voices not often heard. This is your platform. Please check out the new website and resources, and start sharing your voice and your stories.

Being a champion for you isn't just about this new website. We're connecting you face-to-face as well. This past year, the Alliance has hosted numerous regional convenings, across the Americas, on a range of topics, from museum leadership and governance to financial crises and deaccessioning to the future of historic sites, among other topics.

I encourage you to stay engaged, share successes and failures, and be part of the solution to many of our community's challenges. If we become apathetic or stay within our safe museum bubble, we not only risk irrelevance, we miss opportunities to make the world a better place.

One example we explored at this year's AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo in Phoenix is museums' role in preK-12 education and being recognized as important centers of learning in our communities. A big challenge for museums is to move beyond decades of isolated pilot programs and one-off grants that don't take hold. We need to preach beyond our own choir, beyond the museum field, so that our museums are woven into the fabric of local school systems.

Another area where some museums can lead is in environmental and climate change issues. This issue of *Museum* demonstrates how museums are stepping up to educate and show our relevance in this discipline. Museums are the home to some of the world's best scientists, academics, researchers, historians, and curators. Our work on environmentally related exhibits and education programs that engage, inform, and activate the public is important and gaining momentum. Increasingly, we are earning public support for our institutional and community-related environmental practices.

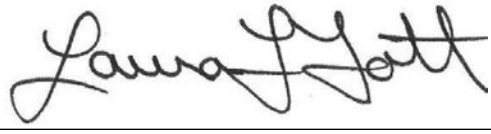
AAM's longstanding PIC Green professional network is adopting a new name: Environment and Climate Network. This Alliance community of passionate museum professionals is committed to establishing museums as leaders in environmental sustainability and climate action.

In the article "We Are Still In," two of the leaders in this professional network, Stephanie Shapiro and Sarah Sutton, explain how a group of museums, zoos, gardens, aquariums, and historic sites known as #MuseumsforParis stepped up in April 2017 when the US government announced plans to withdraw from the multinational Paris Agreement to combat climate change. #MuseumsforParis was the source for the new Cultural Institutions sector in the We Are Still In coalition. I encourage you to consider joining them and take the "We Are Still In" pledge this summer.

Whether it's the environment, education, leadership, diversity and inclusion, or other challenges facing our field, our country, or our world, I invite you to engage with us on what's important to you and to your museum. One or more of the Alliance's 19 professional networks is a good place to start.

You, the extraordinary people who make up this field and this Alliance, are the continuous learners and leaders we must champion—and learn from.

There is no Alliance without you!



Laura L. Lott is the Alliance's president and CEO. Follow Laura on Twitter at @LottLaura.

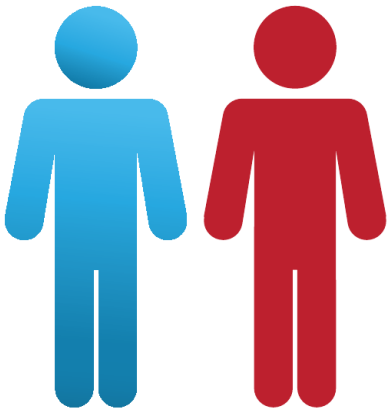
Being Green

At least **80%** of botanic gardens are taking action in some way in response to climate change, including specific climate change research, modified planting schemes, education and public awareness, and reducing institutional carbon emissions.

Source: Botanic Gardens Conservation International

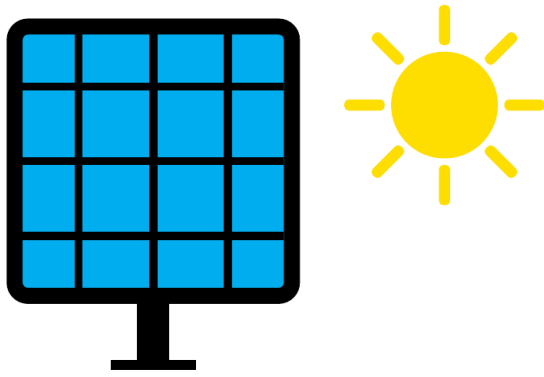
150+ citizen scientists participate in the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network.

Source: Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum



1 in **2** US adults are interested in energy and environmental science news.

Source: Botanic Gardens Conservation International



301 solar panels are on the roof of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, a 100 kW solar array.

Source: SunPower

By the Numbers was compiled by Susie Wilkening, principal of Wilkening Consulting, wilkeningconsulting.com.
Reach Susie at Susie@wilkeningconsulting.com.

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museum day

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Gadsden Arts Center & Museum

The Gadsden Arts Center & Museum will host two solo exhibitions centered on art as a catalyst for conversations about social change. Mark Messersmith's moody, chaotic landscapes feature crimes against the environment and indigenous cultures, and evils specific to Florida and its unique ecosystems. Carrie Ann Baade creates imaginative, surrealist meta-narratives detailing her view of the apocalyptic climate the world has adopted due to religious, sexist, political, and racist dynamics.

Dates: September 28–December 15, 2018
Location: Quincy, Florida
Learn more: gadsdenarts.org

The Hyde Collection

In collaboration with Plein Air Adirondack, The Hyde Collection is hosting a juried Plein Air Festival to coincide with its annual Community Day on August 12, 2018. The Plein Air Festival will begin with a presentation by guest juror Ann Larsen, followed by two days of outdoor painting, including a nocturne painting invitation in downtown Glens Falls. The event will conclude with an art show and award ceremony during The Hyde's Community Day celebration.

Dates: August 9–12, 2018
Location: Glens Falls, New York
Learn more: hydecollection.org/events/plein-air-festival/

The Durham Museum

With guidance from museum staff, local university students researched objects from The Durham Museum collection, presented a public lecture, and guest-curated the exhibition "Omaha in the Anthropocene: A Learning Exploration with Creighton University," which is based on their research. The Anthropocene, a new geological epoch currently under consideration, represents claims that people have become a significant force in changing the earth.

Dates: through January 27, 2019
Location: Omaha, Nebraska
Partners: Humanities Nebraska, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship at Creighton University
Learn more: durhammuseum.org/exhibits-collections/current-exhibits/

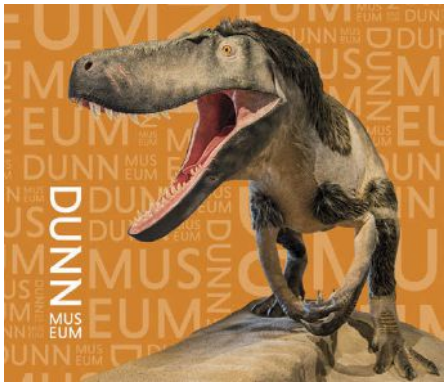
Top: Carrie Ann Baade; Bottom: The Durham Museum

Left: Lake County Forest Preserves;
Right: National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum

Bess Bower Dunn Museum

After relocating its vast historic collections and building brand-new exhibitions, the Lake County Forest Preserves has opened the new Bess Bower Dunn Museum, formerly known as the Lake County Discovery Museum. Dedicated to sharing the entwined stories of people, events, and nature, the Dunn Museum provides a chronological walk through Lake County's history from prehistoric times to the present and invites visitors to explore the land where it happened.

Location:
Libertyville, Illinois
Learn more: lcfpd.org/museum



National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum

Once a bonanza silver mine of the 1880s, the Matchless Mine has remained a historic landmark of the boom/bust days that put Leadville, Colorado, on the map. "Matchless: The Mine, The Myth, The Legend" shines a spotlight on the Matchless Mine, which is often overshadowed by the story of the scandalous Tabor family who claimed its riches. This new exhibition includes mining maps, ledgers, geologic atlases, historic photographs, and silver ore from the Matchless.
Dates: through January 2019
Location: Leadville, Colorado
Learn more: mininghalloffame.org/page/exhibits

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The New England Ski Museum

The New England Ski Museum has opened a second location, the Eastern Slope Branch in North Conway, New Hampshire. The museum, in a renovated former community center with 1,200 square feet of permanent exhibitions, highlights and interprets the rich history of skiing in the region. Objects on display include Olympic trophies and clothing, historically significant skis, rescue equipment from Tuckerman Ravine, and a quad chairlift that serves as the seating for a brief film on the sport's history.
Location: North Conway, New Hampshire
Learn more: newenglandskimuseum.org/eastern-slope-branch/

Mingei International Museum

"Israel—70 Years of Craft and Design" celebrates the art and innovation of Israel's diverse people through a rich range of objects of daily use. Over 100 objects—including Yemenite jewelry, Bedouin textiles, contemporary garments, sustainable and industrial design, adornment incorporating ancient materials, furniture, and ceramics—illustrate the special fusion of European and Arab influences embodied in Israel's modern craft and design.
Dates: through September 3, 2018
Location: San Diego, California
Partner: House of Israel
Learn more: mingei.org/exhibitions/israel/

Baltimore Museum of Art

Jack Whitten made his sculpture privately in Greece—even after he became one of the most important artists of his generation. For the first time, these revelatory works will be on view in "Odyssey: Jack Whitten Sculpture, 1963–2017." The exhibition features 40 sculptures carved from a diverse spectrum of materials—including wood, marble, copper, bone, and personal mementos—contextualized with African, Minoan, and Cycladic sculptures and other examples of objects that inspired Whitten.
Dates: through July 29, 2018
Location: Baltimore, Maryland
Partner: The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Learn more: artbma.org/exhibitions/whitten

What's New at Your Museum?

Do you have a new temporary or permanent exhibition, education program, partnership/initiative, or building/wing? Submit your news at http://bit.ly/MuseumNewsAAM and it might be featured in an upcoming issue.

Top: Jay Philbrick, Philbrick Photography; Middle: Noa Raviv, Ensemble from Hard Copy Collection, 2014; Bottom: *Anthropos #1*, photograph by Genevieve Hanson, NYC

Children's Museum of Manhattan

The Children's Museum of Manhattan has acquired a new home: a historic church at 361 Central Park West at 96th Street. The 1903 building was designed by Carrère & Hastings to house the First Church of Christ, Scientist. The renovation, led by FXCollaborative, is expected to double the current exhibition space while accommodating up to twice as many visitors a year. The museum anticipates moving into the new building in late 2021.

Location: New York, New York
Learn more: cmom.org/our-future-home/

Tampa Bay History Center

Featuring a 60-foot, 18th-century pirate ship as its centerpiece, "Treasure Seekers: Conquistadors, Pirates and Shipwrecks" introduces visitors to explorers who landed in "La Florida" more than 500 years ago as well as little-known pirates who prowled Florida's coasts in the 1700s. The 8,500-square-foot permanent exhibition includes the Touchton Map Library and Florida Center for Cartographic Education—a partnership with the University of South Florida—which features about 6,000 maps of Florida and the Caribbean dating back to the 15th century.

Location: Tampa, Florida
Learn more: tampabayhistorycenter.org/permanent-galleries/

Left: Emily Munro; Right: Tampa Bay History Center

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SCAN TO SHOP

Left: Turtle Lagoon not only is an important visitor amenity at Phipps, it also helps manage all the stormwater over three acres. Right: The energy-efficient Tropical Forest Conservatory is 100 percent passively cooled and has no greenhouse effect.

Cultivating a Long-Term View

Museums need to be on the forefront of sustainable and environmentally sound practices.

By Richard V. Piacentini

If a crystal ball could show us what the world will look like in 25, 50, or 100 years, there is reason to believe it would not be a pretty sight. Environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, and all the catastrophes related to climate change will take their toll.

Is your museum doing its part to mitigate these challenges?

Given the way many of us run our institutions, one might mistake us for hedge fund managers, constantly focused on the bottom line and immediate payback. Taking care of our organizations today is challenging, but short-term thinking alone is shortsighted. We also need to focus on making our institutions relevant and resilient in the future.

I used to think that only museums with mission statements that include a specific call to action related to conservation or the environment could justify addressing climate change in their operations. I now realize we all have to address it, because climate change will impact all of us no matter where we live.

The Ways We Interact with the World

In her work, author and educator Carol Sanford describes four paradigms for interacting with the world:

The **extractive** model is all about "me," the individual who doesn't care who or what is hurt as long as that person gets what he or she wants. Individuals in this paradigm see the world in fragments—everything is there for the taking. This is colonialism.

In the **less bad** model, we see a shift in thinking from "me" to "us"; an

Left: Denmarsh Photography Inc.; Right: Paul G. Wiegman

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individual in this paradigm sees the world as fragmented, but recognizes the fragments as interconnected and tries to stabilize them. This is where the environmental movement started, as exemplified by the "reduce, reuse, recycle" hierarchy and the first green building certification systems.

The **do good** model is also about "us," but it recognizes reciprocity; an individual in this model sees the world as fragmented but interconnected and tries to improve it. Some later iterations of green building programs fit this model.

The final paradigm is the **regenerative** model. It is about "us" and seeing the world as an interconnected system. Here, individuals move beyond thinking about themselves in isolation and see the lesser and greater nested social and natural systems that we collectively need to survive.

The 16 oil cans in front of the Phipps Welcome Center demonstrate the amount of carbon dioxide typical Pennsylvania households produce.

A regenerative practice is, at its core, an exercise in developing the capacity and capability of people and systems. To be regenerative, we must transform how we think and how we work. Embracing this way of thinking is the only way we can address climate change and ensure the long-term survival of our institutions.

The Way We Live

Institutions and individuals alike routinely support activities that are bad for human and environmental health. By using end products such as fossil fuels and plastics, we are supporting a future where we will be remembered not for our technological or artistic achievements, but for the terrible harm we brought upon the planet.

It doesn't have to be this way. But to change this future, we can no longer ignore the way we live.

Imagine what your museum would look like 10 years from now if it were regenerative. What is holding you back from making that happen? Often, the answer is, "We can't afford it." In the developed and rapidly developing parts of the world, this answer doesn't cut it anymore. If we cannot construct a building or operate a program that contributes to making the world a better place, we need to seriously consider whether we should build or do it at all.

And if we don't change, why should our visitors?

The actions of the current US administration—most prominently the announcement of the intent to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement—have alarmed many who care about the environment. In response, we have seen states, cities, and companies pledge to meet these commitments through their own efforts. We must join them, but recognize first that climate change is not the main problem; it is a symptom of the way we live.

How to Enact a Green Evolution

So how can museums start a green evolution of their operations? A good place to start is with the Living Building Challenge (LBC), which encompasses regenerative thinking

The Evolution of Sustainability at Phipps

At Phipps, the focus on sustainability started with our buildings but quickly moved to operations as well. This timeline illustrates decisions driven by our developing value chain.

2005
- Adopted 100 percent renewable energy campus-wide
- Began aggressively using integrative pest management and reduced toxic pesticides

2006
- Eliminated plastic disposable serviceware
- Began composting all pre- and post-consumer food waste

2009
- Eliminated bottled water
- Switched to hormone- and antibiotic-free meat, rBST-free milk, and cage-free eggs

2010
- Offset all carbon produced to heat all of our buildings

2011
- Eliminated soda and junk food from our café
- Eliminated factory-farmed meats

2015
- Divested from fossil fuel investments and eliminated fossil fuel company sponsorships

2017
- Defined new socially responsible investment guidelines

From 2005 to 2016, Phipps also reduced the carbon dioxide output from our buildings by 56 percent per square meter, twice as much and twice as fast as the parameters set in the Paris climate agreement. We continue to look at ways to improve efficiency and reduce the use of fossil fuels.

Paul G. Wiegman

for human and environmental health in the built environment. The LBC starts with a powerful premise: to create a world that is socially just, culturally rich, and ecologically restorative. Projects must have net-zero energy consumption by producing renewable energy on-site and achieving net-zero water use. Materials must be nontoxic and low impact. Projects must integrate local culture, biophilia, and beauty.

At Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, we have become leaders in green energy, net-zero energy buildings, and sustainable programs and research. We started the process with our buildings because the built environment is responsible for approximately 40 percent of the energy we consume and pollution we produce each year, but we didn't stop there. (See "The Evolution of Sustainability at Phipps" sidebar for details on what we have accomplished so far.)

Recently, we have focused on helping our visitors adopt more sustainable lifestyles. In January 2017, we forged an agreement with a renewable electricity provider in which it purchases Phipps memberships in bulk and at a discount. The renewable energy provider then offers these memberships as incentives to switch to clean energy. However, the deal is only available during visits to Phipps (to prevent procrastination in making the switch).

Also, because people cannot visualize what a ton of carbon dioxide looks like, we lined our entrance with 16 oil barrels to demonstrate the amount of carbon dioxide that typical Pennsylvania households produce each year when they power their homes.

The results have been phenomenal. In the first 12 months, more than 2,500 families switched to renewable energy, and those 16 barrels of oil not burned each year now number more than 42,000.

By taking a long-term, regenerative approach to addressing climate change and altering the way we see and interact with the world, museums can make a difference in our communities. By doing so, museums will be safeguarding our personal health, the health of our institutions, and the health of the planet. Our institutions need to survive in the short term; however, our long-term efforts will ultimately define our success.

Richard V. Piacentini is the executive director of Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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Museum Sustainability 2.0

How can museums and cultural institutions do sustainability well?

By Leslie Tom

Buildings are responsible for consuming nearly half of all energy produced in the United States and almost half of our carbon dioxide emissions, according to the US Energy Information Administration. Proactive municipalities and commercial building owners are endorsing "net zero" building practices that lower energy use, greenhouse gases, and carbon emissions.

Why not museums?

Museum buildings, policies, and experiences are uniquely positioned to practice and promote sustainability. When museums utilize the triple-bottom-line approach—people, planet, and profit—we can improve our institutions' economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

So how can museums do sustainability well? The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (The Wright Museum) has been asking itself this question. Following are some examples that demonstrate how we are making the shift to a green culture.

#SustainabilityNeighbors

In 2014, Juanita Moore, president and CEO of The Wright Museum, created the position of chief sustainability officer—my position—to lead the institution's efforts toward long-term health. We soon realized, however, that we needed partners from the neighborhood, community, and beyond to properly do this work.

Therefore, The Wright Museum created the #SustainabilityNeighbors initiative to promote greater engagement. The museum is collaborating with the Michigan Science Center (MiSci), our next-door neighbor, on a variety of projects and looking to engage the larger Midtown Detroit cultural district.

For example, The Wright Museum and MiSci are jointly collecting and analyzing data about our resource and utility usage so that we can both reduce costs and our carbon footprints. Also, both institutions are building green stormwater infrastructure. (More on these projects later in this article.) This collaboration would not be possible without the support of Wayne State University's Detroit Revitalization Fellows program, which has helped us add mid-career professionals to increase our internal staff capacity.

The two museums are building a multidisciplinary team with participants who have formal training and experience in architecture, UX design research, engineering, business, marketing, film, and more. Together we will create a data-driven, holistic approach that introduces our museum guests to sustainability practices while moving our institutions forward.

At the same time, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan has created an Office of Sustainability, which, in addition

Wheelhouse Detroit bike shop ran the bike valet at African World Festival.

Leslie Tom

Leslie Tom

Organizers kick-started the 2017 #detroitclimatemarch, held in solidarity with the People's Climate March in Washington, DC, at the Charles H. Wright Museum.

A variety of collaborations—some top-down and others bottom-up—will better spread our sustainability work and messaging.

to coordinating the city's sustainability efforts, has just kicked off the Sustainability Action Agenda. Through inclusive community input and partners like Detroit's Cultural Center, this will serve as a citywide roadmap for sustainability.

Information Wants to Be Free

We believe sustainability starts by creating a shared understanding of what is and what might be. With open, data-driven practices, our past information can create better future practices. Furthermore, being transparent about this data will allow feedback loops with our staff, community, and experts that can drive continual improvement.

Most museums only see one piece of data about their energy usage: their monthly bill. But more information is available. The Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager can help your museum track and improve its energy usage. Using this tool, The Wright Museum and MiSci are collecting their utility data and benchmarking it against similar institutions.

The Wright Museum also installed submeters to measure electrical usage in real time. Our facilities department now has insight into what is driving our energy use and is alerted if a system is underperforming. The more data we can share, the better we can analyze which green projects have the largest return on investment. (View a short video about our plans at vimeo.com/246184274.)

We have also built a three-dimensional model of The Wright Museum, MiSci, and the space between our museums. This real-world representation provokes conversations and allows us to add extra "dimensions" of data to our information models. For example, the model helps us understand how a project will be delivered (4D), what it will cost (5D), how it should be maintained (6D), and the life-cycle strategies (7D) so that we can be proactive about our plans, funding needs, and impact.

Engaging the Community

Long-term success requires us to lean on the expertise of museum and sustainability professionals while always focusing on and working with the community members we serve. A variety of collaborations—some top-down and others bottom-up—will better spread our sustainability work and messaging.

A community-driven example of sustainability in action occurs at The Wright Museum's African World Festival. This annual August event attracts more than 150,000 people, including vendors, artists, musicians, and craftspeople, for a free, three-day outdoor celebration. For the past two years we have been greening our festival, working with vendors and community members to offer bicycle valet, recycling, solar-powered phone charging and microphone stations, sustainability information tables, and healthy food choices. This is a

tangible way we can annually work with our community to highlight sustainability.

Other sustainability projects require expert counsel. Consider contacting local affiliates of the US Green Building Council, The Living Future Institute, the American Institute of Architects Committee on The Environment, and others for guidance on your sustainability projects.

For example, The Wright Museum and MiSci worked with the US Green Building Council's Detroit Region to become involved in the group's ADVANCE program. This program brings green building resources and expertise to new, underserved, and underrepresented audiences. Through ADVANCE, The Wright Museum and MiSci engaged with more than 75 local designers, engineers, builders, and museum staff through a series of workshops. These conversations helped shape the vision for a green museum cultural district and built a strong network of expertise that we can draw from.

Museums also need to work with our communities on creating educational outcomes related to our sustainability projects. The Wright Museum and MiSci have received funding to transform the space between our institutions so that we can implement green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) practices. GSI, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavement, diverts stormwater from sewers to avoid flooding our communities. Our museum leadership, the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, and Detroit's Water and Sewerage Department and Office of Sustainability are supporting opportunities to tell the story of water in Detroit from both a science and an African American history and culture perspective.

Community partners can also provide other related programs and projects. The Detroit Independent Freedom Schools created an urban garden on the grounds of The Wright Museum. The youth garden project heightens awareness of students' interrelation with and dependence upon the natural environment, demonstrating the principles of self-determination and discipline in the growing, harvesting, preservation, and preparation of food. The museum is also part of a collaborative effort called Wild Indigo Nature Explorations with Audubon Great Lakes and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, among others, to build an appreciation for wildlife and natural habitats as an important part of African American heritage.

In putting inclusive design first, as modeled by UNESCO's Creative Cities of Design Network—of which Detroit is a member—we intentionally integrate community-driven input to connect community resources to create functional and beautiful green spaces. Our sustainability work builds on a history of funding and working with community artists who communicate with the public about our relationship with water and other natural resources.

Above all, museums are educational institutions. We then must ask ourselves: How can we use everything—our building systems, public programs, and our external grounds—to provide valuable visitor learning experiences and promote the long-term sustainability of our communities?

Moonsail North

Juanita Moore, CEO and president of the Wright Museum, poses with museum neighbor Tonya Matthews, CEO and president of the Michigan Science Center.

Leslie Tom, Assoc AIA, MIMS, is the chief sustainability officer at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, Michigan.

Resources

AAM's Environment and Climate Network (formerly PIC-Green)
aam-us.org/resources/professional-networks/pic-green-network

The Living Future Institute's Red List Materials
living-future.org/declare/declare-about/red-list/

US Green Building Council ADVANCE
usgbc.org/articles/advance-framework-expand-access-green-building-all

Blog post by Joyce Lee on museum energy use
imt.org/news/the-current/exploring-an-energy-star-score-for-museums

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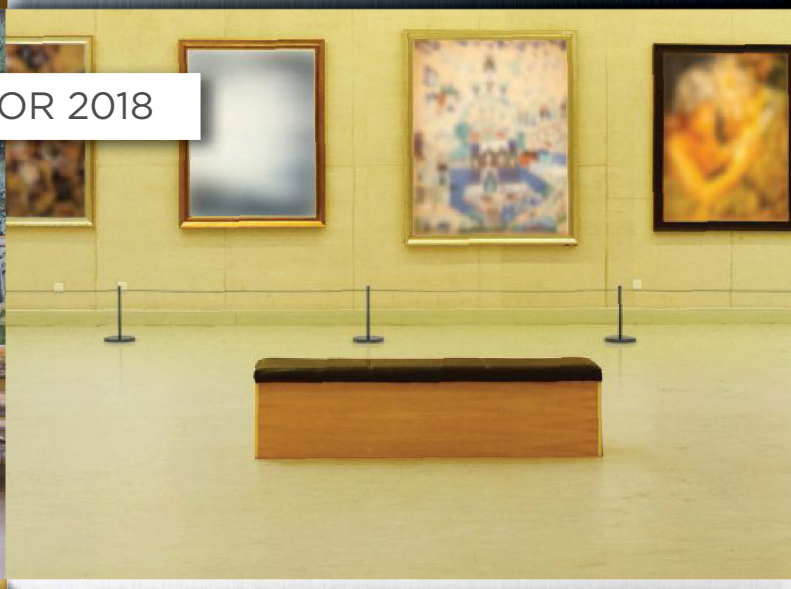

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THE ART OF SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

By Michael Fiegenschuh

Museums can use environmental performance to enhance their mission and visitor experience.

The program for the Sustainability Treehouse was stacked vertically to preserve the surrounding forest and provide a unique experience within the tree canopy.

Design by Mithun; photo © Joe Fletcher

Museums have long held a special place in the hierarchy of our communities. They are sources of local, regional, and national pride. They remain trusted sources of information in an age when such trust is hard to come by. They are stewards of our collective histories and often serve as a mirror to our values and aspirations.

However, many museums operate in an energy-intensive and ultimately unsustainable way due to operational challenges stemming from collection preservation requirements and other unique systems. Throughout the 20th century, building design and engineering has largely focused on maximizing comfort (through mechanical means) and minimizing construction costs (taking the quick and easy path) while paying little heed to environmental impacts, resource consumption, and long-term operating costs. The negative results of this predominant approach to our natural surroundings and climate are well documented—but the approach to design is changing slowly.

In 2000, the United States Green Building Council launched the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, which minimizes buildings' environmental impact. LEED has quickly gone mainstream: as of October 2017, LEED buildings represented more than 6.2 billion square feet of certified commercial construction. A few pioneering cultural institutions, such as the Grand Rapids Art Museum, were early LEED adopters, proving that museums could find creative ways to reduce their environmental footprint while maintaining best practices for care of collections.

While the collective impact of this green building movement has been significant, what more can we do to reverse these trends and create a truly sustainable built environment? Perhaps more important, how can museums serve as positive examples of a shift from a reductive attitude of minimizing negative impact toward a mindset of maximizing positive change?

Connecting Mission to Operations

If we connect the design of museum buildings and landscapes to their positive and forward-thinking mission statements, we can harness the story-telling

The Welcome Porch invites visitors into the Louisiana Children's Museum along a shaded path that follows the restored lagoon shoreline.

Design by Mithun; image by Mithun

strengths of museum professionals to ensure that sustainable designs have a lasting impact on visitors. This mindset moves beyond the "checklist" approach that rating systems such as LEED use to a more artful design process that includes intentional and thoughtful design decisions.

Every project, large or small, has its challenges and budget limitations, but this mission-focused design methodology can help focus the countless decisions that must be made to create a refined design with meaningful measures of sustainability. The goal is to enhance the museum's mission and interpretive opportunities, improve its environmental footprint, and reduce long-term operating costs.

Following are three examples of museums that have recently sought to improve their environmental impact through design.

Louisiana Children's Museum

In 2006, shortly after Hurricane Katrina, the leadership of the Louisiana Children's Museum sought to reimagine the New Orleans-based museum. "The goal was to think holistically about how we design a building, grounds, exhibits, programs, partnerships, and family learning experiences—all to advance goals of sustainability and stewardship for our community," says CEO Julia Bland. "This integrated planning approach has taken us on an amazing journey, and will ultimately give our youngest citizens and their families a broad variety of experiences that will help build a much more resilient community—while having a lot of fun together."

Unlike the museum's space in the Warehouse District, a new facility in New Orleans City Park, opening mid-2019, will have plenty of outdoor play and exhibit space. Carefully sited at the edge of a lagoon and positioned to protect the nearby live oak trees, the new building and landscape create a series of choreographed visitor experiences. The project will restore and naturalize the shoreline of the man-made lagoon, which benefits local wildlife and provides a rich interpretive experience.

The project site, however, is not without its challenges. Hurricane Katrina left City Park under several feet of standing water, so to protect critical building systems against any future severe weather events, the building will be constructed on structural piers approximately five feet above the existing water line.

Another design challenge involved meeting stringent new city criteria to store a significant amount of storm water on site. Rather than building a costly detention vault underground, the landscape includes a series of bioretention planting beds to absorb the storm water like a sponge. The plantings do double duty, enhancing the beauty of the site and the visitor experience while also filtering contaminants from the parking areas before the water reaches the lagoon.

Other sustainable features include a large south-facing brise-soleil that shades the building facade and Welcome Porch, and a radiant floor design that provides cooling while enhancing energy performance. In addition, a rainwater harvesting system captures rain from roof surfaces to be used for outdoor water play.

Nordic Museum

Linking mission to design was also a key strategy for Seattle's Nordic Museum, which had outgrown its original location in a former school building. The new facility embodies Nordic design in its simplicity and efficiency while keeping its sustainability visually understated.

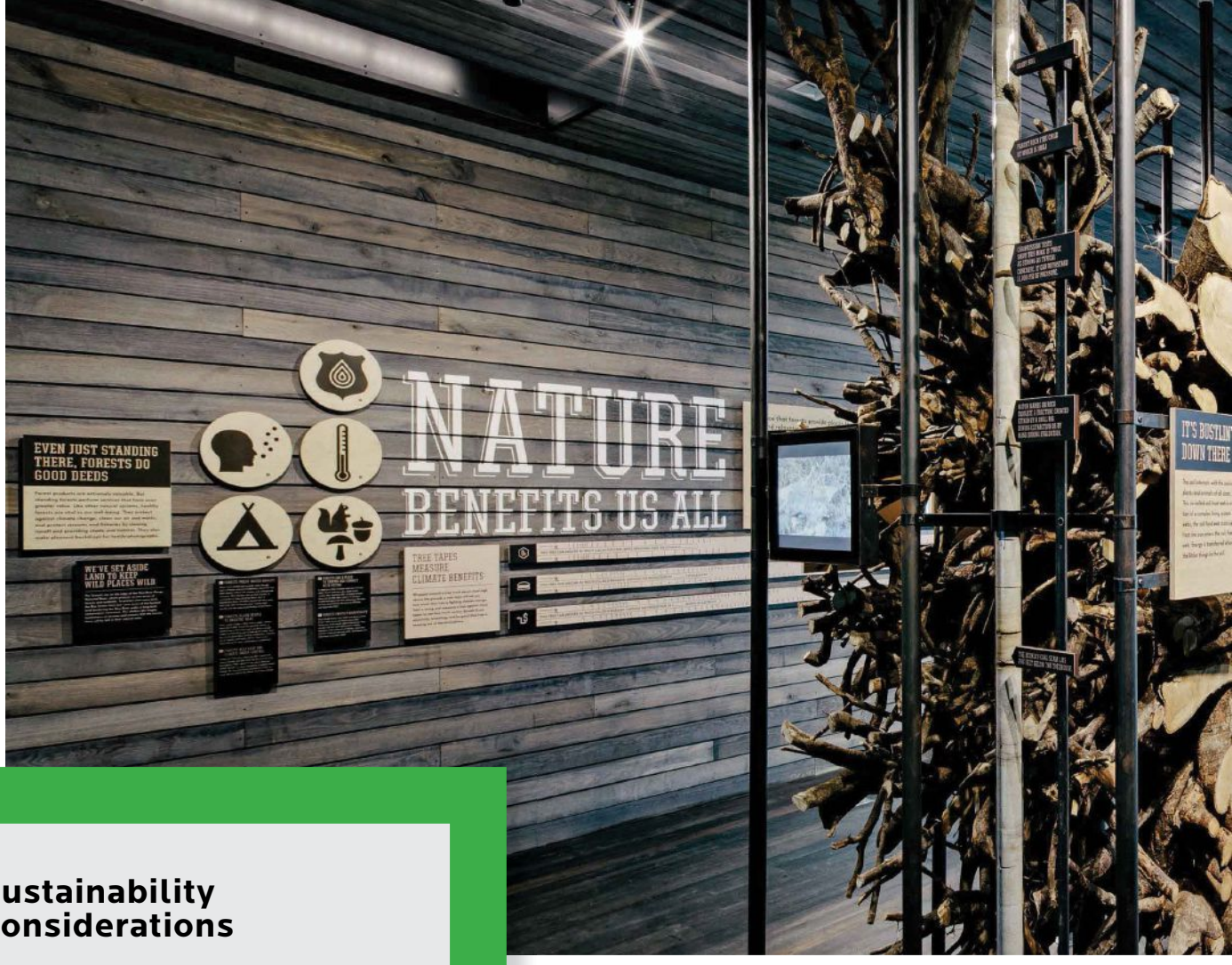
Climate control is an environmental challenge for many museums, since properly storing and exhibiting art and artifacts can be an energy-intensive

photo © Joe Fletcher

What Is the Living Building Challenge?

Managed by the International Living Future Institute, the Living Building Challenge asks, "What if every single act of design and construction made the world a better place?" The Living Building Challenge simplifies the intent of many LEED credits, but goes further by requiring facilities to be net-zero energy and water, among other rigorous requirements.

In addition, the Living Building Challenge includes a material "red list," a prohibition on the use of materials containing chemicals known to be harmful to building occupants and the environment. It also takes the unique step of requiring projects to be "beautiful" in order to enhance human comfort and delight, but also because we will better protect and care for facilities we love—extending their lifespans long into the future.



Sustainability Considerations

Whether your institution is considering a new building or a renovation, here are some things to consider as you start the project.

- **When exploring options for new mechanical systems, consider performing a life-cycle cost analysis to determine long-term operating costs versus initial construction costs. Often the payback period is relatively short over the long lifespan of a museum facility.**
- **Use the entire site to enhance the visitor experience by designing landscapes that are both beautiful and conducive to interpretive opportunities. Landscaping can also enhance water quality and storm water control.**
- **Select interior materials and paints with low or zero VOCs (volatile organic compounds). VOCs have harmful long-term effects on human health and possibly collections.**
- **Take advantage of capital campaigns to prioritize funding for building system upgrades, which will enhance energy and water performance while reducing long-term operational costs.**

practice. In the original project requirements for the new Nordic Museum building, the entire facility was to meet American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Class A criteria for temperature and humidity controls, which establishes a very limited range of variability in the indoor atmosphere. While this approach is ideal for the preservation of sensitive objects, it also significantly increases energy consumption and long-term operating costs.

As the architects and engineers worked with museum staff, it became apparent that many items on display in the museum's collections could easily tolerate wider variability in temperature and humidity. This meant that most of the facility could be designed to meet ASHRAE Class C levels, while retaining Class A levels in select areas, like the collection storage areas and the temporary gallery. Sensitive artifacts displayed outside these areas are exhibited in climate-controlled vitrines to properly ensure their safekeeping.

This approach has resulted in energy savings that well exceed the Seattle Energy Code's strict requirements—a remarkable achievement for a collection-based museum—as well as reduced

Design by Mithun; photo © Joe Fletcher

Each level of the Sustainability Treehouse provides interpretive experiences that illustrate various lessons on the environment and on the building's net-zero energy and water features.

construction and operating costs. The museum is now able to receive sensitive artifacts on loan from other museums, including those from Nordic countries—an opportunity that had not been possible in the original facility because it did not meet many institutions' minimum requirements for borrowing objects.

Sustainability Treehouse

In contrast to the Nordic Museum's understated approach, the Sustainability Treehouse wears its eponymous mission on its sleeve. Designed for the Boy Scouts of America at the site of its National Jamboree in West Virginia, the Sustainability Treehouse seeks to capture the wonder of childhood adventure while encouraging environmental stewardship. The Treehouse includes a series of exhibit galleries and environmental interpretive experiences stacked vertically into the surrounding tree canopy.

The original design evolved from a one-story environmental education center to a multi-story treehouse to minimize the facility's footprint and preserve the site's many beautiful trees. It also harvests all the energy and water resources it needs through renewable energy systems and rainwater capture—one of the ways the design is targeted to meet the Living Building Challenge, one of the most rigorous standards of sustainable design. (See "What Is the Living Building Challenge?" sidebar on p. 23 for more information on this standard.)

Where Do We Go from Here?

As our society continues its gradual shift to a more sustainable future, museums can help lead the way. Each capital project—whether large or small, new or renovation—can advance a museum's mission and improve its environmental impact, while enhancing visitor experience and staff well-being.

For example, selecting low-emitting materials and paints improves the overall indoor air quality and better protects collections. Upgrading dated mechanical and electrical systems can save significant money over time, which can be redirected toward programming. Landscapes can be crafted to interpret ethnobotanical topics while improving local water quality and reducing heat-island effects.

It is an exciting time for the design and construction industry; we are on the precipice of a significant shift toward a more environmentally friendly built environment. Using the momentum LEED established, new rating systems, like the Living Building Challenge and the WELL Building Standard, are propelling the industry forward, redefining what it means to be truly sustainable and advancing human health and well-being in the built environment.

Ultimately, we can design the future we want for our organizations and society as a whole. Through their high profiles and respected stature in our communities, museums are uniquely positioned to be leaders in this positive change. A thoughtful approach to design can unify mission, building, and site to create a powerful visitor experience. Each project is a golden opportunity for a museum to artfully enhance its natural surroundings, improve its environmental footprint, and physically embody what it truly values.

Michael Fiegenschuh, AIA, LEED AP, is an architect at Mithun and a member of AAM's Environment and Climate Network (formerly PIC-Green). He also serves on the Western Museums Association Board of Directors.


WE
ARE
STILL
IN

A look at how the cultural institutions sector has responded to the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.

By Stephanie Shapiro and Sarah Sutton

On June 1, 2017, President Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the multinational effort to take concrete steps toward combating climate change and adapting to its effects.

However, this decision was not the end of US participation in the Paris Agreement. Just five days later, on June 5, 2017, the We Are Still In (WASI) coalition formed—public and private sector organizations from across the country pledged to support US goals in the Paris Agreement.

mycola

In April 2018, the allied museums, zoos, gardens, aquariums, and historic sites known as #MuseumsforParis became an official sector of the WASI coalition. Cultural institutions are now a part of the world's largest gathering of "sub-national actors" committed to the Paris Agreement. We seek to align the significant abilities, resources, and influence of the sector with the greatest social, scientific, and economic challenge ever: a changing climate.

WASI is a coalition of great scale and opportunity. Having cultural institutions alongside higher education, faith organizations, states and tribes, cities and counties, and business and investors reinforces the need for everyone to act against climate change and highlights collaboration required for success.

The Paris Agreement and WASI

In 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change produced what is known as the Paris Agreement, or the Paris Accord. It was adopted by 195 countries, including the United States, at the 21st Conference of the Parties in December 2015. According to the United Nations, "all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and given the grave risks, to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius." The US agreed "to achieve an economy-wide target of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 26–28 percent below its 2005 level in 2025 and to make best efforts to reduce its emissions by 28 percent."

Cultural institutions are part of the commitment's "economy-wide target." The Institute of Museum and Library Services estimates there are more than 35,000 museums and historic sites in the United States. According to the AAM report *Museums as Economic Engines,* museums contribute $50 billion to the US gross domestic product, including $6 billion to trade, transportation, and utilities. They employ more than double the number of people in the professional sports industry. If the sector were to track its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, it could no longer ignore its direct impact on climate change. The physical presence of US museums is significant enough to warrant changed behavior.

But the Paris Agreement is not only about carbon and other GHGs. It is also a call to limit, and adapt to, the changes to the climate that are threatening and will continue to threaten the planet's cultural and natural resources. The UN's 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) support the worldwide implementation of the Paris Agreement. They address life on this planet through peace, justice, and strong organizations; poverty, education, hunger, and health; life on land and below water; sustainable communities and clean water; and collaboration.

What the Paris Climate Agreement Says

The second article of the Paris Agreement explains its purpose:

1. This Agreement . . . aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by:

    (a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2° C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;
    (b) Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production;
    (c) Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

2. This Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.

Read the full Paris Agreement at sustainabledevelopment.un.org/frameworks/parisagreement.

riccardocova

Polling shows that museums are considered the most trustworthy sources of information in America. Therefore, we can help spur behavioral change among the public. Participation in WASI can help.

Kevin Taylor is a senior program officer for cities and climate change with the World Wildlife Fund, one of the nongovernmental organizations leading WASI. He describes WASI as "a coalition of American leaders that are committed to taking action not only within their own institution, but increasingly with one another as well. It's a coalition that's bipartisan, focused on solutions—and [with] a level of ambition that matches the science and understanding of where we are and what we have to do to actually tackle this problem and create a safe future for all. The coalition represented by We Are Still In understands the urgency we need now to create a climate-safe future."

The first cultural institutions to join WASI are the Abbe Museum, the Brick Store Museum, the California Academy of Sciences, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Phipps Conservatory and Botanic Gardens, the Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center, the Science Museum of Minnesota, Strawbery Banke Museum, Michigan Science Center, and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. More continue to join.

"We're looking forward to working with We Are Still In to learn more for our own work and to share what we're learning about working with the community here in Portsmouth to deal with sea-level rise," says Larry Yerdon, president and CEO of Strawbery Banke Museum.

Reaching the nation's goals in the Paris Agreement will require collective action. We will need to change how we source and use energy and materials, design our communities, and organize our lives. These changes must take place in many ways: individuals will make new purchasing and voting decisions, companies will make new energy and production decisions, and state and local governments will plan and serve communities differently.

For this to happen, a symbiotic relationship will need to emerge among the WASI sectors. Governments, businesses, investment bankers, and other sectors can partner with us to engage the public in collaborative learning and decision-making. Cultural institutions can access other sectors' technical guidance, join research partnerships, or become part of cooperative arrangements that advance local, regional, and sectoral work on environmental sustainability and climate-change response.

Serving Our Audiences

If your institution chose to set a GHG reduction goal, would you need help establishing a baseline and monitoring your progress? Do you want resources on socially responsible investing or community partnerships for developing infrastructure for electric vehicles? WASI and its member organizations can help museums implement solutions and reach climate goals.

The work of achieving sustainable development goals aligns with any museum's mission, whether through science, art, heritage, natural resources, or social connections. WASI makes it easier to identify those alignments and highlight the work we do for our communities; the coalition makes it easier to reach larger audiences as we fulfill our public education responsibilities and our charitable responsibility to benefit our communities.

Ninety-seven percent of the American public believes that museums provide their communities with valuable educational experiences, according to *Museums & Public Opinion 2017*. In addition, data from the national Awareness, Attitudes, and Usage Study finds that about three-quarters of the public believe that museums should suggest or recommend certain behaviors or ways for the public to support their causes and missions. WASI gives us more ways to do just that. We are well positioned to surface the stories, ideas, and questions about the environment and climate from our collective 850 million visitors, and we can engage them in building the community-wide solutions we need to successfully address such complex challenges.

Reducing humans' negative impact on the environment is most effectively achieved through collaboration. By joining WASI, museums and other cultural institutions can demonstrate our sector's collective ability to reduce negative impacts and achieve climate and sustainable development goals. In addition, each participating institution gains partners to help accelerate this change.

Not a part of the We Are Still In coalition?

Join now at wearestillin.com/

More on We Are Still In

A year after its formation, more than 2,500 state and local leaders from government, the private sector, higher education, and various nonprofit organizations had signed the We Are Still In (WASI) declaration, representing more than 127 million Americans and $6.2 trillion of the US economy. To date, We Are Still In is the largest cross-section of local leaders in support of climate action in the United States.

WASI's coordinators are the American Sustainable Business Council, The B Team, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Center for American Progress, Ceres, CDP, Climate Mayors, Climate Nexus, C40, C2ES, Environmental Defense Fund, Environmental Entrepreneurs, the Georgetown Climate Center, ICLEI, National League of Cities, Rocky Mountain Institute, Second Nature, Sierra Club, Sustainable Museums, The Climate Group, We Mean Business, and World Wildlife Fund.

Find out more at wearestillin.com/about.

Through WASI and its online portal, we have a new tool for aggregating the cultural sector's environmental, social, and economic impacts. We can decide how we measure this. We will need new, possibly unconventional, skills and practices; coordinated efforts; and determined cross-sector support and dissemination to make a true impact. WASI is our opportunity to scale these efforts and to demonstrate positive impact.

Being part of WASI, says Richard Piacentini, executive director of Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, is "an important way to show that cultural institutions and the communities they serve can play vital roles in honoring the commitment of the Paris Agreement."

Stephanie Shapiro is a manager at Eagle Hill Consulting LLC and the chair of AAM's Environment and Climate Professional Network (formerly PIC-Green). Sarah Sutton is principal of the consulting firm Sustainable Museums and is the We Are Still In sector leader for cultural institutions.

Soft_Light

The Right Side of History

How can museums support Native-led climate justice initiatives?

By Beka Economopoulos

"We humbly ask permission from all our relatives: our elders, our families, our children, the winged and the insects, the four-legged, the swimmers and all the plant and animal nations, to speak. Our Mother has cried out to us. She is in pain. We are called to answer her cries. Msit No'Kmaq—all my relations!"

—**Indigenous prayer**

"On the brink of crisis and major global collapse, museums are, and need to be, agents for change."

—**Valine Crist**, Haida Nation, at the ICOM NATHIST conference Anthropocene: Natural History Museums in the Age of Humanity

rabbit75_ist

In the summer of 2016, in the middle of brown flatlands on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation near Cannon Ball, North Dakota, a sprawling camp of tepees, tents, and RVs appeared. Members of more than 300 Native Nations and several thousand supporters formed an unprecedented alliance against the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), which, despite tribal opposition, was set to cut through Sioux territory and across the Missouri River. DAPL risked jeopardizing the primary water source not only for the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, but also for 17 million people downstream.

Standing Rock captured headlines around the world and held the attention of millions. It invoked the horrifying memory of Wounded Knee, where more than a century ago hundreds of Lakota people were massacred by the US Cavalry for protecting their treaty lands from the encroachment of gold prospectors. This time, it felt like maybe if we did something, the outcome could be different.

In an open letter, more than 1,400 museum directors, archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians joined the Standing Rock Sioux in denouncing the company behind DAPL for desecrating ancient burial sites, places of prayer, and other significant cultural artifacts sacred to the Lakota and Dakota people. This letter was initiated by my institution, The Natural History Museum in Brooklyn, New York.

The Natural History Museum was founded in 2014 as both an institutional transformation project and a traveling museum. With decades of experience in both community organizing and exhibition development, we serve as a "skunkworks" for the museum sector—an independent research lab that develops projects that enable museums to try new forms of collaboration and public engagement programming, use their influence, and increase their relevance.

We believe that to be relevant in this time of environmental crisis, museums must move beyond the ambition to just be sustainable and carbon-neutral. We must also address and support the needs of frontline and fence-line communities that are struggling for a more just and sustainable world for all.

Being environmental stewards within this context means we need to align our practices with the global climate and environmental justice movement. This movement is led by Indigenous communities and born from cultures and bodies of knowledge that are already present—as artifacts, stories, and didactics—in the Native halls of the country's natural history museums. In the post-Standing Rock era, these objects are charged with new meaning and significance. Through their curation and interpretation, we can connect history to the present—and impart lessons for the future.

Tribal members and scientists from three communities gather to protect water and oppose oil and gas pipeline projects that threaten waterways, biodiversity, public health, and sacred sites.

All photos courtesy of The Natural History Museum

Lummi elder and carver Doug James and Lummi tribal councilman Freddie Lane lead a totem pole blessing ceremony at the Ramapough Lenape's land in New Jersey on the eve of the opening of the exhibition "Kwel' Hoy: Many Struggles, One Front" at The Watershed Institute, a science center in Pennington, New Jersey.

'Kwel' Hoy: We Draw the Line'

Many American Indian and Alaska Native tribes face an array of health and welfare risks stemming from environmental problems, such as surface and groundwater contamination, illegal dumping, hazardous waste disposal, air pollution, mining waste, and habitat destruction. They are the first to experience the effects of climate change, yet they contribute the least to environmental degradation. Indeed, while Indigenous communities inhabit just 2 percent of the world's land mass, they steward 80 percent of its biodiversity.

Leaders in the US museum sector have already begun questioning how they can begin to address Indigenous responses to climate change. The theme for the 2017 ICOM NATHIST (the International Council of Museums Committee for Museums and Collections of Natural History) conference was the Anthropocene Era—in which humans are not simply one species in a planetary ecosystem but a force that is modifying all of nature. The conference, at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH) in Pittsburgh, explored how natural history museums can interpret the implications of the Anthropocene for the public.

When The Natural History Museum was asked to participate, we invited a delegation of tribal leaders from across North America to take part in panels, roundtables, and luncheons around the question of how museums can support Native-led climate justice initiatives. We also used the conference to debut at CMNH "Kwel' Hoy: We Draw the Line," a three-year traveling exhibition and event series co-created with leaders from the Lummi Nation, a Coast Salish tribe from the Pacific Northwest that has been leading efforts to protect water and land in its region and around the country. At the center of this project is the Totem Pole Journey.

For the last six years, leaders from the Lummi Nation have transported a series of hand-carved totem poles along North American fossil fuel export routes to honor, unite, and empower communities working to protect water, land, and public health from the impacts of coal and oil transport. As the pole travels, it helps build alliances between Native and non-Native communities. In extending the Totem Pole Journey into CMNH, our aim was to engage the museum—and the museum public—as allies on the journey.

The exhibition featured video, audio, and interactive components, as well as the totem pole carved for the 2017 journey. The totem pole was displayed horizontally on a trailer as it traveled across the country, and visitors were invited to touch the pole and explore the stories about the red, black, white,

yellow guardians of the Earth carved into its surface. It was paired with a participatory mobile mural painted by more than 140 Native and non-Native community members from cities and reservations along the journey's route and coordinated by artist Melanie Schambach.

We also exhibited a series of Story Poles, vertically stacked shipping crates displaying objects selected by tribal leaders and community members living along the Totem Pole Journey route. From a sacred pipe used in ceremonies to a sample of coal ash from coal trains that have contaminated the Pacific Northwest's Columbia River, the mix of objects in these displays were accompanied by audio interviews that conveyed the personal stories of climate justice and injustice that these items symbolized. Members of more than a dozen Native Nations helped develop the exhibition.

"Kwel' Hoy: We Draw the Line" was intentionally placed in dialogue with "We Are Nature: Living in the Anthropocene," the CMNH's major exhibition on the Anthropocene. Within the conversation started by "We Are Nature," our exhibition highlighted the communities that are working to protect water, land, and our collective future.

We also wanted to explore how an exhibition about fossil fuels and fossil fuel resistance could be staged in the heart of coal and fracking country, where the environmental impact of fossil fuels continues to be a contentious topic. By centering this project on the totem pole, a cultural artifact that one might expect to find in a museum of natural history, "Kwel' Hoy" functioned like a Trojan horse, to paraphrase Lummi Tribal Councilman Freddie Lane. It helped us bring the Lummi campaign for a safe and sustainable future into the museum context.

The exhibition at CMNH represents only one stop in an evolving museum exhibition and public programming series that over the next three years will travel to the Florida Museum of Natural History, the Milwaukee Public Museum, the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, and other museums. Each exhibition will have the totem pole as its centerpiece but will be customized to include the host museum's collections, the local Indigenous and

This Story Pole installation in "Kwel' Hoy: We Draw the Line" features everyday and sacred objects curated by tribal members and allies that tell stories about climate justice and injustice.

Lummi Nation tribal councilman and Totem Pole Journey organizer Freddie Lane speaks at the debut of the exhibition "Kwel' Hoy: We Draw the Line" at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History.

frontline communities, and the climate and environmental justice issues that those communities face.

What Can Your Museum Do?

"Kwel' Hoy" is as much a content-driven exhibition as it is a model for replication. We want to shine a spotlight on the many ways museums can participate in the climate and environmental justice movement, not only as advocates but also as supporters of communities that are leading the charge. Of course, every museum has its own specific mission, expertise, and operational limitations, but even the smallest institutions in the most conservative states can take real steps. Here are two possibilities:

1. Focus on the "just transition." A common concern we hear from colleagues at peer institutions is that taking on environmental justice concerns in regions where fossil fuels are the bedrock of the local economy can make visitors feel alienated or attacked. What happens to their jobs, their homes, and their local economy when fossil fuels are abolished?

One of the most important concepts advanced by the climate justice movement is the notion of a "just transition" from a dirty energy economy to a clean energy economy. The climate justice framework plots an extensive plan in which nobody—including those currently employed by fossil fuel companies—is left behind. The discourse on just transition can help museums broach this topic with both decision-makers and visitors. Organizations such as Movement Generation offer age-appropriate trainings, workshops, and curricula on such climate justice concerns.

2. Partner with communities. The communities that are leading climate and environmental justice campaigns are using history, tradition, story, song, and distinct iconography in the context of their struggles. As trusted institutions, museums can lend their institutional support to these communities by contextualizing and uplifting their symbols, stories, struggles, and objects through exhibitions and public programs. They can only do this if they reach out, listen to, and work in partnership with the communities they want to support.

At many museums, increasing community engagement is now a top priority. Some, such as the Queens Museum in New York City, have hired full-time community organizers to broker relationships with historically underserved communities. Institutions that are unable to expand their operational capacity can reach out to grassroots networks such as the Climate Justice Alliance, Indigenous Environmental Network, and Native Organizers Alliance. The Natural History Museum is also able to facilitate collaborations between museums and communities that meet the needs of the various stakeholders involved.

A museum's exhibitions, programs, outreach initiatives, and public statements need to underscore that environmental crises are also social crises, and that the climate disruption experienced today is a consequence of the exploitation of land and life everywhere. We need to challenge the perspective that nature is a commodity, and we need to elevate the alternative view that regards all things as relatives rather than resources to be extracted and sold for profit.

At the Totem Pole Blessing ceremony that opened the 2017 ICOM conference on the Anthropocene, Tsleil-Waututh Nation leader Rueben George asked how future generations will view the environmental decisions we have made. Referring to the totem pole, George explained, "This will represent that we did something. That we stood for something. That we said no to money, and we said yes to earth and air and water."

The Totem Pole Journey has inspired so many to draw a line against the forces pushing us toward extinction. The Lummi and their allies invited museums to join them on the right side of history.

Beka Economopoulos is the director of The Natural History Museum in Brooklyn, New York.

Exhibit from the 2017 ARoS Triennial: *Solar Grow Room* by Meg Webster

What the Garden Tells Us

A new triennial's first exhibition chronicled man's evolving relationship with nature.

By Erlend Høyersten

All photos by Anders Sune Berg

As the number of art museums in the world has steadily risen, so has the number of biennials, triennials, and art fairs. Some survive. Many are unsuccessful. This latter fact would prompt a cynic to say there are too many such events. A romantic, however, would say there are too few.

In 2017, ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, an art museum in Aarhus, Denmark, for which I am the director, launched its own triennial. Why? Because we felt that society, more than ever before, needs art and culture to remind us where we come from, where we are today, and where we are heading.

The ARoS Triennial is our contribution to the dialogue about what it means to be a human being among other human beings—what really matters? To define what it means to be a human, we looked at how man has thought about and depicted nature through the ages. After all, how we live with or against nature will decide and define the future—for everyone.

That's why our first triennial exhibition was "The Garden—End of Times; Beginning of Times." Throughout history, the garden has been viewed as a place of scientific study, an oasis for solitary reflection, or a place of entertainment. Our culture sees the garden as a meeting place of civilization and nature, a meditative space between two worlds. The garden meets various needs in different cultural contexts and becomes the perfect image of the diversity that makes up our world.

Not Red But Green by Per Kristian Nygård was a site-specific installation at ARoS during the 2017 Triennial.

Driftwood Circle by Richard Long is an example of the land art exhibited during the Triennial.

Historical Awareness, Contemporary Understanding

Biennials and triennials are usually linked to contemporary art, reflecting our own times. I would argue that a major problem facing today's society and our ability to navigate in the world is a general lack of knowledge, not just about distant cultures but also about the various historical preconditions that form our present lives. For this reason, the time perspective of the Triennial was crucial, not just to recount an interesting story, but also to raise historical awareness.

The Triennial was split into three sections: **"The Past"** examined the landscape and man's relation to nature viewed through the lens of art and the history of ideas. **"The Present"** looked at nature in the context of the modern city. And **"The Future"** examined artistic responses to ecological change. The exhibition occupied galleries in the museum ("The Past"), spread into urban spaces in the city of Aarhus ("The Present"), and continued along the coastal stretch south of the city ("The Future").

"The Garden" chronicled man's coexistence with and view on nature, how diverse world views (be they religious, political, ideological, cultural, or scientific) have manifested themselves in man-made natural landscapes for centuries. The narrative spanned 400 years, within which the audience could see works from Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain along with Robert Smithson, Doug Aitken, and Katharina Grosse.

The exhibition attempted to shed light on the ways in which man, over time, has transformed nature. What were the underlying ideals for this transformation, and what can these ideals tell us about man's philosophy? We didn't claim to be exhaustive; indeed, we would have been kidding ourselves if we pretended we could deliver the full story. We focused on selected historical cross-sections, giving visitors the opportunity to dip into various elements. This approach required visitors to actively participate in the conceptual and creative processes.

The Past, Present, and Future

The exhibition at the museum—"The Past"—set the historical framework for the Triennial's overall focus, the transformation of the relationship between nature and man over time. We looked at how different historical periods altered the mutual influence of nature and man, often manifested in art.

How Did It Go?

We had three clear strategic objectives with the first ARoS Triennial. First, we wanted to increase international awareness of ARoS and what we stand for. Second, we wanted to produce a triennial of high artistic quality. Third, naturally, we wanted the exhibition to attract many visitors.

We achieved all three goals. From April through October 2017, 863,500 people visited the ARoS Triennial, which attracted international media coverage, including from CNN Style, the *Guardian*, the *Sunday Times*, *Vogue*, *Frieze*, *Artnet*, the *Art Newspaper*, and the German television channel ZDF. In total, ARoS and the ARoS Triennial received more than 1,160 international digital press postings. And the reviews were great.

The exhibition began with the Baroque landscape architecture of the mid-1600s, where nature was tamed, organized according to a Cartesian mathematical design, laid out in straight lines. The Baroque period was overtaken by the Rococo, with its lyrical gardens, then by the Enlightenment and the English garden, and finally by Romanticism and a sublime view of nature.

The exhibition then depicted modernism and the modern times. The breakthrough of modernism in the early 20th century brought with it a new diverse approach to nature, spanning the Fauvist celebration of the human animal and the untamed forces—and the assertion by futurism that technology and machines have triumphed over nature—to the surrealist ideas that the natural world is in a one-to-one relationship with man's natural instincts and subconscious. In the exhibition, the inner landscape of the surrealists was followed by the massive land art projects.

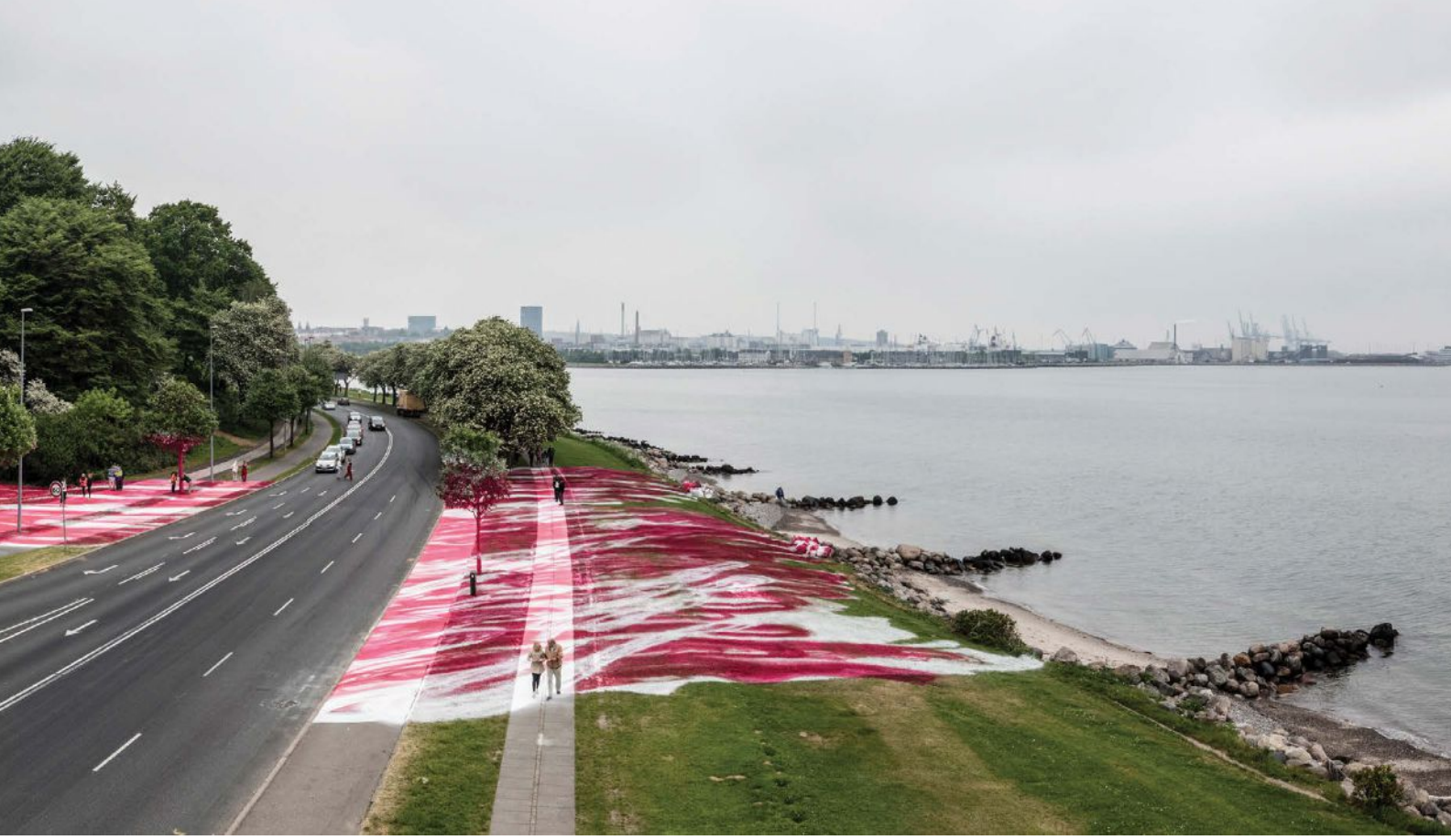
Katharina Grosse's *Asphalt Air and Hair* was part of "The Future."

Damián Ortega's *Eroded Valley* was part of "The Past."

Land art from the 1960s and 1970s seeks to establish a new relationship between viewers and works via a series of monumental and surprising encounters in the natural world. Many land art works intervene in nature, their monumentality stressing the fact that man will intrude on nature as he pleases. At the same time, the works show nature's countermeasures: many of the works are perishable. The works cut into the natural landscape but will eventually erode according to nature's dictates.

We then used the contemporary to put the presented history into context. Contemporary art will naturally react to society's current challenges. One of the most pressing challenges today is man's relationship with nature, given the realities of climate change and other detrimental environmental issues. Art provides a space for reflection where, for once, it is possible to merge often hard-held positions with separate sciences.

In the exhibition section titled "The Present," which was outside in the city, we attempted to capture the manic now, which is defined by massive demographic changes, diaspora, immigration, global capital flows, and global cultural circulation. We focused on the accelerating global situation, which currently takes world images that have shaped our identity and turns them upside down. The idea of a homogeneous and stable world picture is replaced by a kaleidoscopic diversity of views and directions. The barrage of impressions in our global reality



cannot be captured by the West's centralized gaze. The central element in "The Present" was the impossible task of capturing the contemporaneous in a fragmented reality where the illusory idea of containing the world in a collective narrative has foundered.

Where "The Present" took stock of the global reality of our lives at this precise moment in time, "The Future" sought to unfold the new challenges facing humanity on the threshold of what has been termed the Anthropocene epoch, which is defined by man's impact on the earth. This epoch punctures our preconception of man's special position in relation to nature and of nature as a passive romantic entity.

"The Future" showed that nature is neither beautiful nor benevolent, nor something we are required to save; on the contrary, we must take advantage of potential we have so far been unable to perceive because our previous preoccupation with nature has veiled and romanticized it. The longing for unblemished nature stands in the way of inevitable evolution. Katharina Grosse's installation along the coastline, *Asphalt Air and Hair*, started a large public debate—that spanned residents, politicians, and royals—about environmental issues.

The Beginning

Time and again, I find myself describing ARoS as a mental fitness center, a place to train and develop one's brain and one's thinking. The Triennial further develops this mindset: it is a platform for mental workout—somewhere to sharpen the critical gaze, the imagination. It is a place to gain a historical perspective on our identity in the world.

Art easily touches our emotions. "Using" art in this way also makes it easier for us as an institution to communicate with a wider audience. We wanted to use this opportunity to challenge our audience to be more aware and knowledgeable about the questions touching sustainability. We did not want to preach morality but instead stress the importance of knowledge and conversations. In addition to the works of art and the educational text, we also held many talks on the topic, presented by a variety of experts. These discussions weren't about art but instead about our profound understanding of how we can live with nature. Knowledge is power.

"The Garden" was meant as a challenge, a generous gesture and an invitation to everyone interested in art, to professionals, and to those partial to a surprise. But the first triennial was never intended to be a goal in itself. It is part of a bigger plan to create new possibilities for art and its impact on the development of societies.

Erlend G. Høyersten is the director of ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum in Denmark.

American Alliance of Museums

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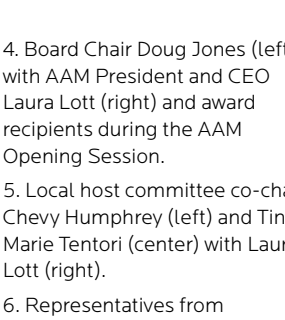
1. Ericka Huggins, educator and former Black Panther Party member, inspired us to bring our fullest selves to the table and transform the world through the power of love.

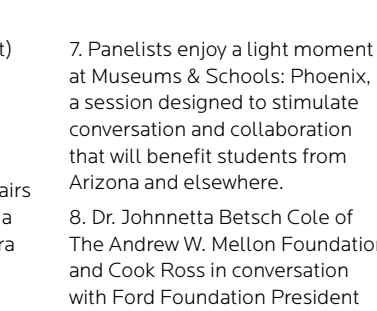
2. Award-winning educator Donovan Livingston and Sicangu Lakota hip-hop artist Frank Waln explored decolonizing our education system and how museums can play a role.

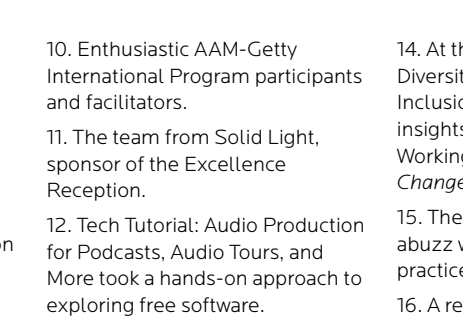
3. Kevin Jennings, president of the Tenement Museum and former assistant deputy secretary of education at the US Department of Education, shared how everyone's story is worth telling.

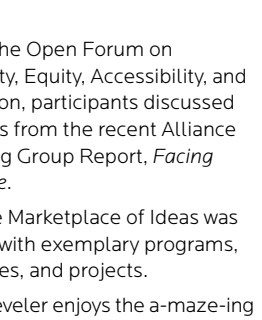
2

3









4. Board Chair Doug Jones (left) with AAM President and CEO Laura Lott (right) and award recipients during the AAM Opening Session.

5. Local host committee co-chairs Chevy Humphrey (left) and Tina Marie Tentori (center) with Laura Lott (right).

6. Representatives from Travelers, sponsor of the Alliance Leadership Dinner held at Wrigley Mansion.

7. Panelists enjoy a light moment at Museums & Schools: Phoenix, a session designed to stimulate conversation and collaboration that will benefit students from Arizona and elsewhere.

8. Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Cook Ross in conversation with Ford Foundation President Darren Walker at the CEO Summit.

9. The Breeze Creative animated sandbox was one of hundreds of exhibits at the MuseumExpo.

10. Enthusiastic AAM-Getty International Program participants and facilitators.

11. The team from Solid Light, sponsor of the Excellence Reception.

12. Tech Tutorial: Audio Production for Podcasts, Audio Tours, and More took a hands-on approach to exploring free software.

13. Attendees pose at an evening event at the Musical Instrument Museum, supported by Gallagher & Associates.

14. At the Open Forum on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion, participants discussed insights from the recent Alliance Working Group Report, *Facing Change*.

15. The Marketplace of Ideas was abuzz with exemplary programs, practices, and projects.

16. A reveler enjoys the a-maze-ing AAM Closing Reception hosted by Children's Museum of Phoenix and Arizona Science Center.

See you next year at #AAM2019 in New Orleans, May 19–22!

American Alliance of Museums

The Alliance wishes to express appreciation to the following organizations and individuals that have generously supported the museum community and the 2018 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo.

Visionary

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Arizona Science Center — Never stop wondering.

blackbaud — power your passion

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Congratulations to the 2018 Sustainability Excellence Award Winners!

Winner
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Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum

Honorable Mention
Programs, Large Museum:
San Diego Zoo Global

Winner
Facilities, Large Museum:
Missouri Historical Society

Honorable Mention
Facilities, Large Museum:
Science Museum of Minnesota

The **Sustainability Excellence Award (SEA)** is a signature program of the Environment and Climate Network that educates, facilitates, and encourages green practices in museums. Started in 2014, the award recognizes sustainability efforts in facilities, programming, and exhibits in both large and small institutions. The award provides the opportunity to share sustainability stories and encourage museums to develop and educate visitors about green practices. SEA winners are honored at the AAM Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo. For information on previous winners visit: https://www.aam-us.org/programs/awards-competitions/the-sustainability-excellence-award-sea/

PIC Green Adopts A New Name

The leaders of PIC Green have decided that a new name better reflects their focus. At its meeting at the AAM annual meeting in Phoenix, the leadership team approved a new name: Environment and Climate Network. The group, one of AAM's Professional Networks, is committed to establishing museums as leaders in environmental sustainability and climate action, issues that are fundamental to all museum missions. The leaders are dedicated to sharing information and building awareness. Get involved! Contact environmentandclimate@aam-us.org

American Alliance of Museums Environment and Climate

NEW JOBS

Arizona

W. James Burns, executive director, Arizona Historical Society, Phoenix

Bonnie Rose Sullivan, studio educator, The New Britain Museum of American Art

California

Peter Forbes McDowell, director of development, American Friends of the Louvre, Los Angeles

Nicole Pasten, education and community engagement assistant, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Los Angeles

Connecticut

Cynthia Cormier, director of education, The New Britain Museum of American Art

District of Columbia

Saharah Moon, executive director, United States Botanic Garden

Florida

Kaitlin Romey, collections manager, Marco Island Historical Society

Georgia

Meghan Anderson, curator, Andalusia: Home of Flannery O' Connor at Georgia College, Milledgeville

Illinois

Alicia LaVire, vice president of marketing and communications, The Morton Arboretum, Lisle

J. Gibran Villalobos, partnerships and engagement liaison, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Kentucky

Cameron Walpole, manager of tours and education, Ashland, The Henry Clay Estate, Lexington

Louisiana

Kelsey Brosnan, Doris Zemurray Stone curatorial fellow for European art, New Orleans Museum of Art

Megan Koza Mitchell, executive director, Hermann-Grima + Gallier Historic Houses, New Orleans

Madeleine Wieand, collection database associate, New Orleans Museum of Art

Maryland

Omar Eaton-Martinez, assistant division chief of historical resources, Prince George's County Parks & Recreation, Upper Marlboro

Massachusetts

Jennifer Liston Munson, executive director, Armenian Museum of America, Watertown

New York

Stacy C. Hollander, acting executive director, American Folk Art Museum, New York

Christina Ely Milliman, director of museum and library collections, Fenimore Art Museum, The Farmers' Museum and Research Library, Cooperstown

North Carolina

Darcie Cook, science content developer, Cape Fear Museum, Wilmington

Cordelia Norris, exhibits coordinator, Cape Fear Museum, Wilmington

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Texas

Gary N. Smith, president, The Summerlee Foundation, Dallas

Virginia

Katie Wallmeyer Payne, director of government relations, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond

KUDOS

The Noguchi Museum in Queens, New York, has selected industrial designer Naoto Fukasawa and landscape designer Edwina von Gal as recipients of the 2018 Isamu Noguchi Award, an accolade given to individuals who share Noguchi's spirit of innovation, global consciousness, and commitment to East-West cultural exchange. The award was presented at The Noguchi Museum Annual Benefit on May 22, 2018.

IN MEMORIAM

Lori Jacobson passed away January 31, 2018. She worked for the McAllen International Museum in McAllen, Texas, and was the executive director of the Western Museums Association. As a consultant, she led many cultural institutions through the development of exhibit and interpretive master plans, program needs assessments, and exhibit design and fabrication. She was committed to creating engaging and memorable experiences for learners of all ages. Lori wrote once, "I am a spiritual person who seeks to find the good in others and in myself, to live mindfully, and to be grateful throughout."

» Advertiser Guide

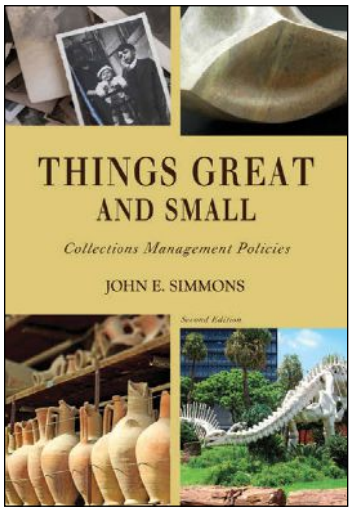
No circumstance so forcibly marks the desolation of a spot once inhabited as the prevalence of nature over it.

Rose Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* (New York, 1966), xvi

"Model T Headquarters, Highland Park, Michigan," 2008 © Andrew Moore from *Detroit Disassembled*, courtesy of the Yancey Richardson Gallery

American Alliance of Museums

Essential resources for museum professionals



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BY JOHN E. SIMMONS

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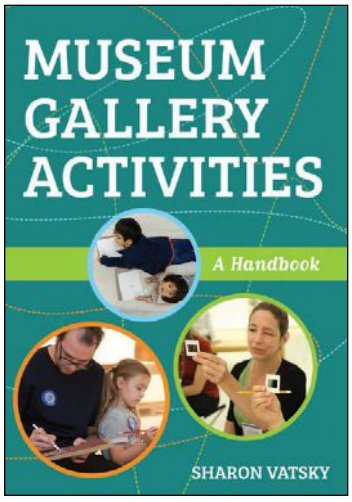

FORTHCOMING

MUSEUM GALLERY ACTIVITIES

A Handbook

BY SHARON VATSKY

In order to engage the entire group in the interpretive process, museum educators frequently employ gallery activities. These activities enlist other sensory components and learning styles to experiencing the work of art. As in crafting open-ended discussion questions, the activity must be carefully designed to allow everyone in the group to contribute, be inquiry based, and be directly related to the work of art under consideration. This handbook provides a compendium of successful gallery activities.

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