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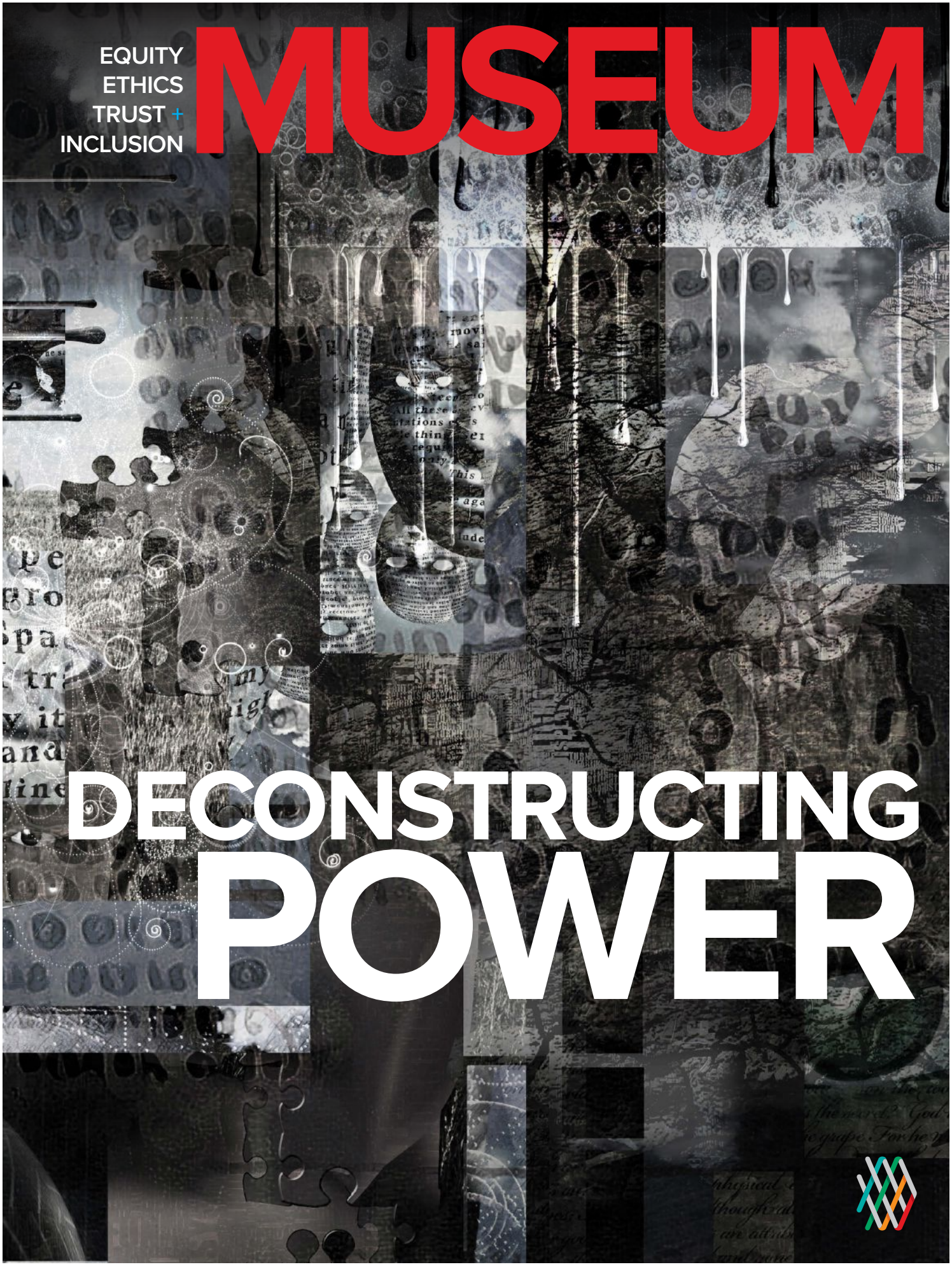

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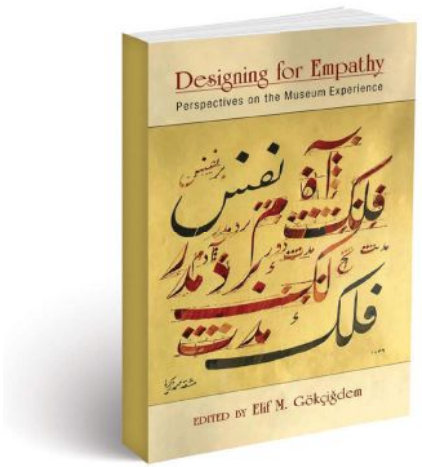

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Perspectives on the Museum Experience

Edited by Elif M. Gokcigdem

Designing for Empathy is a volume of 23 essays contributed by multidisciplinary experts, collectively exploring the state of empathy for its design elements that might lead to positive behavior change and a paradigm shift towards unifying, compassionate worldviews and actions.

Elif M. Gokcigdem, Ph.D., is the founder of *Empathy-Building through Museums Initiative*. She is an innovative thought leader, a historian of Islamic art, and a museums scholar who is committed to creating fertile grounds of empathy through informal learning platforms to inspire positive behavior change, caring mindsets, and compassionate worldviews that value all of humanity and the planet.

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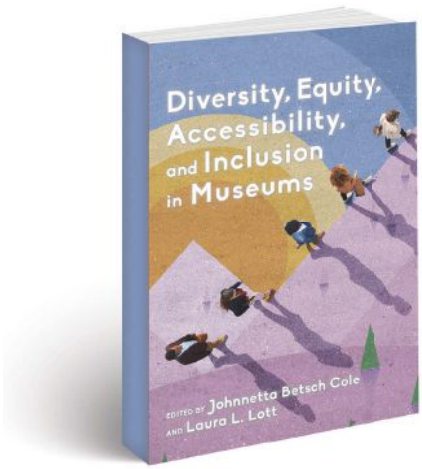

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSION IN MUSEUMS

Edited by Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Laura L. Lott

In this definitive source, thought leaders contemplate the field's struggles with diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion. For the first time, these watershed essays, keynote addresses, and data are gathered in one resource, so we can learn from recent history and build on these leaders' work in the next decade.

Johnnetta Betsch Cole is a principal consultant with Cook Ross, Inc. She is also a senior consulting fellow at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Dr. Cole previously served as Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art and as President of Spelman College and Bennett College.

Laura L. Lott is the president and CEO of the American Alliance of Museums, the only organization representing the entire scope of the museum community. She frequently speaks to non-profit and museum boards about governance, strategy, and inclusion.

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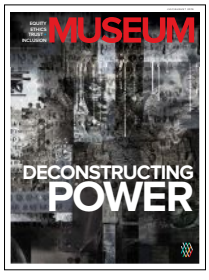

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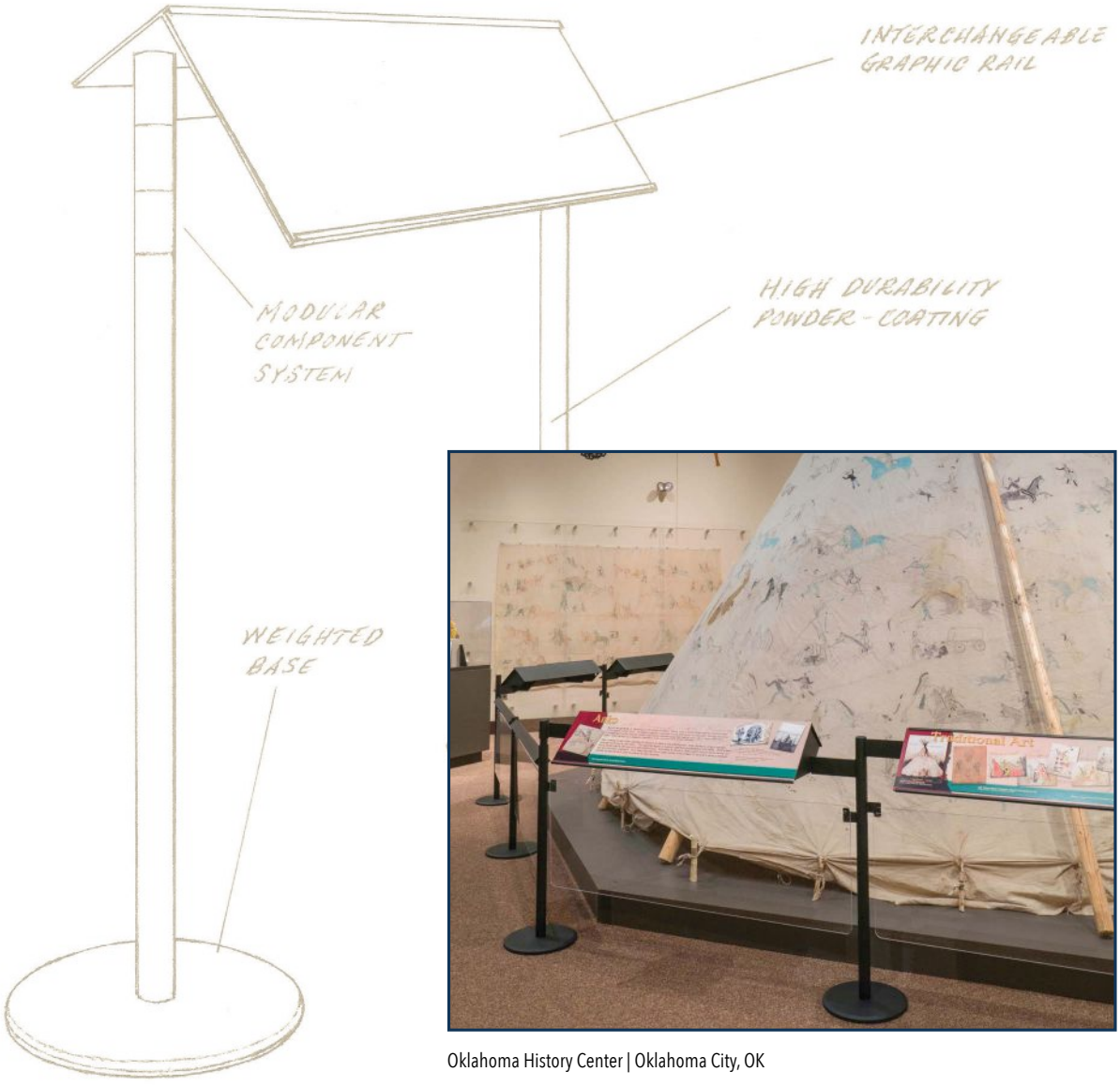

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In Museums We Trust

One of the best parts of my job at the Alliance is that virtually everyone I deal with *loves* museums. A recent public opinion poll of thousands of Americans conducted by AAM and Wilkening Consulting confirmed that supporting museums is a core value of the American public that crosses political lines, bridges divides between urban and rural communities, and is even consistent among those who do not regularly visit museums!

And museums share another unique and favorable attribute. In this age of "fake news" and rampant distrust of traditional sources of information, museums are among the most trustworthy sources. Museums' trustworthiness is rated higher than local newspapers, nonprofit and academic researchers, and the government.

Neither the public's support or trust is a guarantee, however—and museums must fiercely protect both.

We must also realize the weighty responsibility of having the public's trust. The information we choose to share, the stories we choose to tell (and not tell), the individuals we involve in our museums, and how we handle our inevitable mistakes all impact how trustworthy—and worthy of support—the public considers museums.

AAM's newest TrendsWatch report from the Center for the Future of Museums explores actions museums may want to consider to protect their trustworthiness:

- Educate the public on museum standards for research.
- Foster critical thinking.
- Teach people to value evidence-based decision making.
- Carefully consider when and how to take a stand on important issues.
- Acknowledge the role museums have played in perpetuating untruths.

Speaking directly to that last bullet point, many of the articles in this issue of Museum deal with decolonization, grappling with the enduring effects of colonial practice, and, specifically, the ways in which museums have presented Native Americans over time.

The process of decolonization requires dynamic thought and analysis—and transparency. For example, one of my favorite museums (because it's the first museum I remember visiting as a child), the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, recently updated a diorama to point out its own inaccuracies.

The 1939 diorama depicting a meeting between Dutch leader Peter Stuyvesant and a delegation of Native Americans included several common stereotypes and inaccuracies. The museum added labels calling out the inaccuracies and correcting the information, turning the exhibit into a powerful learning experience for visitors who, undoubtedly, encounter similar inaccuracies in other places—including at other museums.

The move to decolonize our institutions—to undo some of the damage inflicted by colonial practices—is also a central theme of the latest TrendsWatch.

TrendsWatch encourages museums to take the lead in truth telling, challenging stereotypical representations, raising up Indigenous voices and perspectives, and prioritizing underrepresented history, art, and stories.

As public institutions, this ongoing work is critical to earning and reinforcing the public's trust and support. In these pages, I hope you will find inspiration, support, and ideas to employ at your institution.

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

BY THE NUMBERS

Decolonizing the US Museum

85%
Percentage of artwork by white artists in the collections of 18 major American art museums

84%
Percentage of the globe controlled by European nations just prior to World War I

2,643
Number of inventories museums and federal agencies have completed since 1994 to assess the cultural affiliation of Native American human remains and associated funerary objects

Sources: From top to bottom: "Diversity of Artists in Major US Museums," Topaz, C.M., et al., *PLOS ONE*, March 20, 2019; National Park Service; TrendsWatch 2019

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

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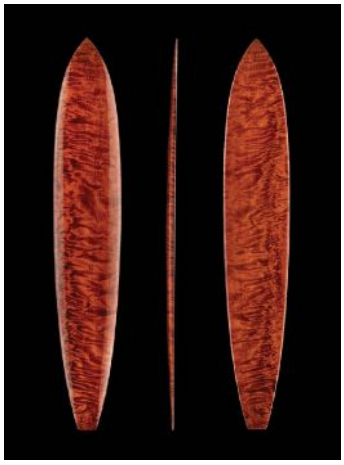


Old Idaho Penitentiary

"Faces of the Idaho State Penitentiary" explores the untold and often overlooked stories of penitentiary residents who were people of color, had different religions, came from various etÚic backgrounds, and otherwise did not fit into the majority population of Caucasian men. The exhibition highlights inmates from each of the 50 states and 45 different countries, as well as the history of religious persecution and other discrimination in Idaho.

Location: Boise, ID

Partner: Idaho Humanities Council

Learn more: history.idaho.gov/oldpen-exhibits/

SFO Museum

"Reflections in Wood—Surfboards and Shapers" illustrates the history of surfboard design through unique examples crafted from rare and reclaimed wood. The exhibition features 27 surfboards constructed by Larry Fuller and a team of iconic surfer-shapers over the past decade, including Native Hawaiian surfboards made from highly figured Santa Cruz redwood; a longboard hand-carved by Reynolds "Renny" Yater from 2,700-year-old sequoia redwood that showcases classic 1960s design; and tow boards shaped by Bill Hamilton from 19th-century California wine-tank redwood that replicate the modern designs used by big-wave surfers.

Location: San Francisco, CA

Dates: through Aug. 3

Learn more: flysfo.com/museum/exhibitions

Marco Island Historical Museum

The Marco Island Historical Society, in partnership with Collier County Museums, has completed an overhaul of its award-winning exhibition "Paradise Found: 6,000 Years of People on Marco Island." The exhibition now features several prominent artifacts on loan, including the world-famous Key Marco Cat from the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, as well as numerous new enhancements and interactive elements.

Location: Marco Island, FL

Dates: through April 2021

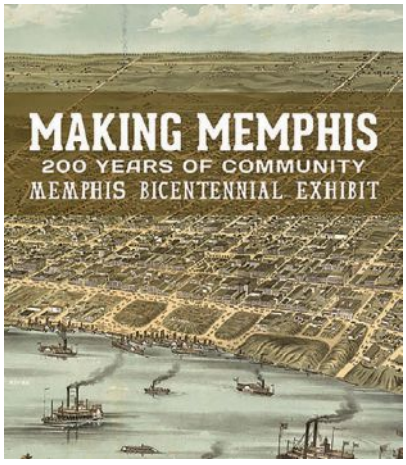
Partners: Collier County Museums; Creative Arts Unlimited, Inc.; Smithsonian Institution; University of Pennsylvania

Learn more: themihs.info/permanent-exhibits/

State Historical Society; collection of Charles Pyle, image courtesy of SFO Museum; Austin Bell

What's New at Your Museum?

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



Flores Mexicanas by Alfredo Ramos Martinez, photo courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society; A. Ruger, 1870; Oakland Museum of California

Missouri History Museum

"Flores Mexicanas: A Lindbergh Love Story" soars beyond the famed aviator's historic flight and examines the little-known connection between a poet, a pilot, a president, and a painter that altered the course of aviation history and left a lasting legacy on US-Mexico relations. On display for the first time in 80 years, the highlight of the exhibition is Alfredo Ramos Martinez's monumental *Flores Mexicanas* painting—one of many wedding gifts given to Anne and Charles Lindbergh in 1929. This and other featured gifts illustrate the couple's celebrity status as ambassadors for aviation and America.

Location: St. Louis, MO

Dates: through Sept. 2

Learn more: mohistory.org/exhibits/flores-mexicanas/

Pink Palace Family of Museums

"Making Memphis: 200 Years of Community" interprets events of the past 200 years that have shaped Memphis' past and present and form the basis for its future. The exhibition features five major threads of history, including Heritage and Identity, Commerce and Entrepreneurialism, Migration and Settlement, Art and Entertainment, and Geography and the Environment.

Location: Memphis, TN

Dates: through Oct. 20

Learn more: memphismuseums.org/pink-palace-museum/

Oakland Museum of California

"Black Power" illustrates the creative ways black anti-racist activists in California supported their communities and challenged the US government. Focusing on the example of the Black Panther Party, "Black Power" brings to light the tensions between a culturally and socially progressive California and examples of economic racism and oppression in the state. This moment in California history is represented through historic photographs, objects, iconic posters, paintings and interactive prompts that encourage visitors to take action out in the world.

Location: Oakland, CA

Learn more: museumca.org/projects/black-power

Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History

The Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, founded in 1866, received a $160 million donation that will be used to comprehensively renovate the museum. This landmark commitment, the largest known gift ever made to a natural history museum in the United States, will vastly improve the museum's facilities and programs. Through this renovation, objects and specimens will be made accessible to a much wider range of faculty, students, and visitors from New Haven and beyond.

Location: New Haven, CT

Dates: public galleries close June 30, 2020, and will reopen in fall 2023

Learn more: peabodyevolved.yale.edu/

Frank Lloyd Wright Trust

Frank Lloyd Wright's Frederick C. Robie House has reopened after a comprehensive, $11 million restoration. Robie House, now restored to its 1910 vision, is a masterpiece of the Prairie style and a precursor of modernism in architecture. The exacting interior restoration reflects Wright's original vision in coloration, wall textures, lighting, leaded-glass windows and doors, millwork, and cabinetry. Several pieces of original furniture, including the dining table and chairs, return to Robie House on loan from the Smart Museum of Art.

Location: Chicago, IL

Learn more: flwright.org/visit/robiehouse

Boone County History & Culture Center

"Faces Found: Boone County Portraits 1886–1940" represents the work of four photographers—Joseph L. Douglass, Henry Holborn, Wesley Blackmore, and JoÚ Francis Westhoff—during a 54-year span in one Columbia, Missouri, studio. Upon retirement or death, each photographer passed down the ownership of their work to the next up-and-coming photographer, creating most of the 500,000 glass-plate negatives in the vaults of the Boone County History & Culture Center today. Video with 3-D animation enhances close-ups of many of the exhibition's images.

Location: Columbia, MO

Dates: through Nov. 10

Learn more: boonehistory.org/events/faces-found-boone-county-portraits-1886-1940/

Centerbrook Architects; courtesy of the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust; Joseph Douglass

National Museum of American Illustration

Featuring original paintings, works on paper, vintage posters, and accompanying artifacts, “Norman Rockwell & His Contemporaries: Fabulous Forties to Sensational Sixties” highlights the changes to daily life in America during three very different decades. Through illustrations created for advertisements, magazines, newspapers, and more, artists showed how American culture and values changed in concert with the constant political unrest.

Location: Newport, RI

Dates: through Dec. 27

Learn more: americanillustration.org/exhibitions/

Museum of Science & History

The Museum of Science & History has started a five-year renovation that is projected to more than double the number of people the museum can serve annually. Plans include an expansion of the museum’s total square footage from 77,000 square feet to 120,000 square feet; reorienting the museum’s entryway toward the St. JoÚs River; and enhancing the museum’s exhibits, installations, programming, educational alignment, and immersive experiences with new and emerging tecÚologies.

Location: Jacksonville, FL

Learn more: themosh.org/mosh2-0/

POINT
OF VIEW

Restoring Indigenous Perspectives

Museums that hold Native peoples' cultural histories need to center those communities in all facets of their operations.

By Jaclyn M. Roessel

There were no museums in my tiny hometown on the Navajo reservation. Regardless, I grew up exploring the interactive galleries of various museums in the Southwest with my dad, a photographer, as he attended meetings about museum exhibits.

Also, my late grandparents helped fundraise for a new facility that would become the Navajo Nation Museum, Library and Visitor's Center. In fact, we would eat dinner with the model of the museum on the table. This spirit of self-determination guided my choice to work in museums. My family saw them as a tool to facilitate our community's ties to our culture and history.

This positive introduction to the world of museums was the beginning of a lifelong journey in the field that has had many unexpected and troubling intersections.

Harmful Practices and Systems

During a visit to a prominent museum with fellow interns, I had my first uncomfortable interaction. We were in the cultural resource department with other Navajo relatives, viewing our ancestors' belongings shelf by shelf, eagerly working our way up the compact storage unit. At one point, my friend was standing high on a ladder and slid a drawer open. At that exact moment, the curatorial staffer who was guiding us walked away. Atop the ladder, my friend let out an audible gasp. He then said a phrase in Navajo in a tone that was somber and cautionary. It was obvious that what he saw was alarming, and he warned us not to look.

As he descended the ladder, we nervously waited for what he would share. He told us that the drawer was full of medicine bundles from our community along with other items, which I choose not to disclose in this article. As we stood there shaken, the curatorial staffer came around the corner and breezily said that we should be aware that the higher we look in the storage, the more sensitive the items would be. This delayed, nonchalant warning has stayed with me for 15 years.

You may be asking why this mattered. For my community, and many other Indigenous people, these items are not simply "sensitive"; they are sacred. The experience was a blunt reminder of the colonial history our community and ancestors survived. The belongings in that drawer are powerful parts of our people's religion. We stood there knowing these sacred belongings should not be in a drawer thousands of miles away from our homelands, separated from our people.

That moment in the cultural resource department was only the beginning of me questioning whether museums were where I wanted to work. In her book, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, Ho-Chunk scholar Amy Lonetree explains, "Museums can be very painful sites for Native peoples, as they are intimately tied to the

Jaclyn Roessel, the author of this article, leading a gallery training.

Photo by Kirsten Dorsey

> "It wasn't until I established my consulting career that I learned the necessity of directly acknowledging the harmful practices and systems that exist within museums and their toll on Native peoples."

colonization process." Each new instance or interaction that made me question my work in museums illustrated this truth to me.

Lonetree's scholarship about decolonizing museums has given me the language and tools to articulate the tensions I felt working in museums. Most important, her research has complemented the teachings of my upbringing as a Diné person. While my family taught me the value and power of building stronger communities, Lonetree showed me that it is also necessary to dismantle inequitable structures to ensure that the foundation upon which we build our community is healthy and strong enough to support the growth we want. Lonetree relates the work of decolonization to three actions: commit to truth-telling, collaborate with Indigenous people, and center Indigenous perspectives.

During my later years working in museums, I was the only Native senior manager at an organization focused on educating the public about Native American art and culture. It was a lonely and exhausting time. I was constantly educating non-Native staff and visitors about various Native cultures and protocols. It wasn't until I established my consulting career

Sunrise on the Navajo Nation.

that I learned the necessity of directly acknowledging the harmful practices and systems that exist within museums and their toll on Native peoples.

Preserving Our Culture

A common misconception museum staff hold is that Native people don't want to preserve their own cultures. On the contrary, Indigenous people think about the preservation of their cultures on a daily basis. Because of modern influences, we are under continuous threat of not knowing our traditional values and practices. Cultural preservation may look different in our communities, but it doesn't mean it isn't valued.

In my community, more than half of the Navajo population is under the age of 30. In the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, more than half the

HOW CAN YOU DECOLONIZE YOUR PRACTICE?

Integrate land acknowledgements into the guiding protocols of your museum.
Paying homage to the homeland community a museum sits on aids in the truth-telling that every organization can do. It helps center Indigenous perspective and history.

Rethink the language your museum uses to describe the cultural material of non-Anglo cultures.
Terms like "artifact" and "object" contribute to the erasure of the Indigenous histories. Using community-centered terms like "belonging" and "cultural resource" acknowledge the ownership and value these items have within Indigenous communities that still exist today.

Establish working groups of Indigenous community members.
Engaging Indigenous community groups around action-oriented issues involves community members in the decision-making of the museum. It is also critical to consider how Native community members and scholars can help shape your museum at all levels, from the board to front-line staff.

Photo by Jaclyn Roessel

population is under the age of 18. Across Indian country, this growing tide of Native youth is challenging us to think about how they will learn how to carry on our ways.

Because of this demographic shift and the migration of our people to urban areas, more Native youth are growing up away from their culture and homelands. As Native communities think about how our cultures will continue to be introduced and taught, it is clear that Native youth will need more opportunities to engage with their peoples' belongings.

This is a need that our communities will continue to have, and our people should not be expected to simply interact with museums on the museums' terms. Instead, we have the right to commune with our cultural belongings in environments and in ways that will help nurture curiosity and foster ties to home communities.

I envision future generations of Native youth having evolving access to their cultural belongings so that they can study them within museums but also have the unhindered ability to return them to their communities for seasons or years at a time. I hope more museums institute community days so Indigenous people have time to pray, sing to, and commune with their ancestors' creations while under the stewardship of the museums.

For museums to evolve and remain relevant, they must decenter and relinquish their power of interpretation and ownership over Indigenous belongings. This is the future that I work toward—one that rightfully restores the perspectives of Indigenous communities and allows us to be stewards of our culture both inside and outside the museum walls.

Jaclyn Roessel is president/founder of Grownup Navajo, a company dedicated to sharing how Native American teachings and values are tools to help build greater cultural equity and inclusion in our society.

The Irrefutable Value of Museums

Alliance President Laura Lott talks to NEH Chairman Jon Parrish Peede.

Photo by Vincent Ricardel, courtesy of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

In April 2018, Jon Parrish Peede was confirmed by the US Senate as the 11th chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). AAM President and CEO Laura Lott recently spoke with Peede about, among other things, his priorities at NEH, the importance of inclusion, and why the humanities deserve support. Following is their exchange.

What brought you to NEH?
I always cared about writing, music, art, but I grew up in a small Mississippi town. So while I could see Eudora Welty in person, I didn't have a first-rate museum in my life. My first art experience, beyond the Rockwell reproductions at home, was of flat-panel art in a caboose on the fairgrounds in Jackson. Even then, I could not imagine my life separate from the humanities and art.

I was an English major at Vanderbilt and was recruited by Bill Ferris to be his fellow for an interdisciplinary graduate studies program in art history, English, folklore, history, so forth. Ferris, who became NEH chairman a few years later, recommended me for my first job as a university press editor. A decade later, [then-Chairman] Dana Gioia invited me to be his counselor at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and then to serve as the literature grants director.

Culture was a personal passion before it was an academic experience, and my chairmanship is about affirming both sides.

What are your priorities as NEH chairman?
After nearly 11 years at NEA and NEH, I understand that I must think like an editor to support scholars and cultural organizations. In grant making you're trying to guide direction, incentivize developments in a field, and support best practices. Even with a $155 million annual budget, you still have to make hard choices, which means you turn down incredibly worthy projects.

I do not see my charge as automatically funding only the highest-scoring proposals. A robot can do that. As a grant maker, I try to ask more relevant questions: If we fund this project, what will it do for the scholar, field, community, or nation? What would it mean in the ecosystem of culture to support this project and to let this voice come forward?

The new NEH Challenge grants support infrastructure and capacity-building. How can museums deliver on that vision?
We've been excited about how museums have responded to this priority because NEH is funding areas that are difficult to raise money for. Private donors don't get excited about supporting digital infrastructure or repairing the HVAC system or expanding glass negative storage. But we are happy to invest in it if it helps fulfill the institution's mission.

We think about museums as an ecosystem consisting of visitors, practitioners, collections, and facilities. The challenge is to ensure our grants are touching every spoke on the wheel. We support lifelong audience learning, from hands-on youth workshops to scholarly lectures. We fund the education of curators, conservators, and art historians at the graduate level and underwrite their research, publications, and exhibitions. Our grants protect collections and present them to the public in person and online. Our grants fortify storage facilities, renovate and expand infrastructure, finance audience development efforts, and seed best practices through partnerships with

"Most museums have a particular point of view, but the point of view shouldn't be divisive, unwelcoming, or exclusionary. Being in and of your community is one way to check that."

national associations such as AAM.

Are there other NEH priorities you want to make sure the museum field knows about?
We are encouraging collection sharing, traveling shows, temporary single-site exhibitions, and the remounting of permanent collections. Also, we are supporting curriculum changes to encourage universities to work more closely with museums. For example, we awarded Tuskegee University a $100,000 grant to create a museum studies minor focused on architecture and the built environment. We want academic institutions to establish more relationships with cultural hubs.

There are some 726,000 jobs in museums. Universities need to better understand the contribution museums make to the economy, and those of us who have a platform need to do a better job of communicating that to civic leaders and policy makers.

Museums are the canaries in the coal mine. They are a marker of the health of a community. When they are in decline, it is an indicator of some unbalance in the local economy. If you have a diversified economy, you usually have a strong educational system and community-focused museums.

Where do you see some challenges and opportunities for museums and for the humanities at large with respect to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion?
A museum that wants to truly serve its community must have a commitment to inclusion. Sometimes we think these issues only apply to etÚicity, race, and gender and forget about class, which is also important. When I was at NEA, we pushed for Blue Star Museums to better engage military families. Frankly, some museums did not think troops needed a special invitation to visit, even in a time of wartime deployments. That was a blind spot in the museum field, and when it surfaced, museums responded appropriately.

Most museums have a particular point of view, but the point of view shouldn't be divisive, unwelcoming, or exclusionary. Being in and of your community is one way to check that.

When we address issues of inclusion, we should draw upon museum collections, scholarship, exhibitions, and guided programming as opposed to seeing the museum as merely a convenient venue for a town hall. A series of community discussions on income inequity by gender could be informed by a screening of the forthcoming NEH-funded film on the 19th Amendment paired with a curated dialogue about gender representation in the museum's collection. We should have humanistic, evidence-based conversations on contemporary issues rooted in museum collections and staff expertise.

At Museum Advocacy Day, you said, "The humanities are not a luxury. They are not frivolous

or divisive. They are what bind us. Your wondrous museums are not citadels. They are sanctuaries." Can you expound on that thought?
In 2017, I was on the stage with Myrlie Evers just a few miles from where her husband, Medgar Evers, was assassinated. She talked about the construction of the new twin Mississippi museums—a $100 million investment of state government funds. She said the creation of the museums was an act of atonement. The weight of that word, "atonement," resonated. It made the essential, irrefutable value of museums so clear. Days such as that one drive my chairmanship.

How do we talk about the importance of humanities? Why do they deserve support?
One of the responsibilities of being a humanities leader, at any level, is to educate the general public about the economic and societal value of the humanities. Every federal dollar we award generates about $5 of economic activity. A diversified economy and cultural tourism are important. But we should be willing to talk about its societal value as well. The humanities are about having a level of understanding of the remarkableness of the American experiment of representative democracy. It could unravel if we don't protect it, and it's hard to protect something that you don't understand. The humanities are an anchor of engaged citizenship.

I cannot name a single significant global city that does not have a strong cultural sector. That's not an accident. Quite often, those great cities are symbols of what a nation thinks of itself. Supporting culture says a great deal about what a community values.

What quote from literature inspires the work you do?
Zora Neale Hurston: "Research is formalized curiosity." As I'm in the business of curiosity, I love that.

TIME FOR NEW NORMS

Museums must address their systemic inequities if they want to be truly inclusive—and relevant—institutions.

By Chris Taylor

In American history, the Civil Rights Movement is held up as a beacon of progress and equality, a momentous time in our country. Recently, however, it has become apparent that our society is still rife with inequities in power and privilege.

Aside from individual acts of discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, discrimination is embedded in our social systems. This institutionalized discrimination systematically advantages certain social groups over others. The norms of these elevated social groups become the norms by which other groups are judged. Groups that don't adhere to the dominant social norms are considered different, other, inferior.

Unfortunately, museums have played a role in creating and elevating certain groups. Critical theorist Louis Althusser used the term "ideological state apparatus" to describe institutions, such as those related to education, churches, family, media, trade unions, and law, that are formally outside state control but transmit the state's values. Museums have resembled these social institutions through their elevation of the cultural norms of rich, white men, whose collections, interpreted by white academics and presented to the public, became the basis of default cultural norms.

Museums have also been shaped by inequities in their social system. It is no secret that the museum workforce lacks diversity, particularly in professional and leadership positions. Within the museum system, these powerful positions create the norms that are regarded as default in our organizations.

As museum practice has evolved, the homogenous nature of the workforce has allowed the cultural values of white men to dictate museums' recognized standards and best practices. These cultural values have not only shaped museum practice, but also our organizational cultures.

This doesn't have to continue. Every museum—regardless of size or budget—can take steps to become more culturally competent and inclusive.

The Evolution of Museum Diversification

For more than 40 years, diversity in museums has been a topic of conversation. Though much work has been done over this period, museums have fundamentally failed to serve communities of color and other communities that are marginalized in our social system. However, the emphasis on diversity has increased sharply in the past decade, with museums creating new mission statements and including more diverse content in their exhibitions and programs.

This increased focus isn't simply altruism. Given this country's changing demographics, the relevance and viability of our museums are at risk, and museums are experiencing interest convergence. According to Derrick Bell, who was a professor at New York University School of Law, interest convergence explains an increase in support for racial equity work by white people when they understand and see that their needs will also be met.

Museums' traditional support base is shrinking, while groups that are underrepresented in our stakeholder profiles are growing. This is not to imply that museum professionals across the country are not passionate about diversity work, but it has increasingly become a priority as the reality of this demographic shift has set in.

Today, museum conferences center annual themes on diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility. Project work, think tanks, and grant programs have also begun to support more inclusive museums. Interest convergence has opened the door for museum practitioners who have been advancing diversity

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work. Colleagues from around the country emphasize more diverse and inclusive museums through projects such as Museum As Site for Social (MASS) Action, Museums & Race, and AAM's Facing Change initiative. The field is building capacity to create meaningful change.

One of the bigger shifts includes a greater internal focus for diversity and inclusion work. In the past, diversity initiatives focused primarily on content and community engagement, positioning diversity efforts as programs rather than organizational initiatives. Increasingly, museum inclusion and equity practitioners have challenged the field to turn the lens inward and take a critical look at ourselves.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT...AND ACTION

At your next staff, leadership, and board meetings, consider taking some time to discuss the following questions to highlight where your organization could focus its inclusivity efforts.

- What is the leadership style of your organization? Command and control? Collaborative? Situational? Transformative? Does leadership see the style the same way employees do?
- What is the turnover rate of employees that identify as diverse compared to staff that identify with the dominant culture?
- What types of learning opportunities does your organization provide employees to develop inclusive behaviors or intercultural competence?
- What type of employee engagement assessment does your organization conduct? Does it include elements that pertain to diversity and inclusion?
- What are the stated values of your organization? What values would employees say are actually lived within your organization? Are these in alignment with the stated values?

However, creating new mission statements or diversity programs cannot be successful in an organizational culture that continues to support dominant culture norms as the status quo. Museums must understand how they have participated in the marginalization of groups outside the dominant culture. Museums must recognize how those same dominant norms have become embedded into organizational policies and practices that have been deemed successful over time. Organizational self-awareness shifts diversity and inclusion work from an externally facing program to an internal change initiative.

There are no easy answers, and inclusion and equity work is not one-size-fits-all. But there are two things I feel are fundamental to any inclusion initiative. First, we have to acknowledge that systemic inequities exist, and they affect our museums just like any other social institution. Too often, we spend time trying to prove the existence of inequities rather than doing the work of inclusion. People who don't experience inequities—and often even benefit from them—can wrongly think they aren't there.

Second, we need to treat inclusion and equity work the same way we treat any other facet of museum work. Inclusion and equity are not "everyone's job" because not everyone is qualified to do inclusion work—just like not everyone is qualified to do curatorial or educational programming work. Museums need to dedicate staff time and resources to ensure a consistent, intentional emphasis on creating a more inclusive organization.

What We've Done

In the summer of 2014, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) created the Department of Inclusion and Community Engagement (DICE) to provide the structure to develop and implement an inclusion initiative across the institution. The first step in the process was convincing leadership that social inequities impacted our work. DICE spent nearly two years assessing intercultural competence and the organizational culture. The results not only helped DICE staff better understand the needs of the organization, but also provided the empirical evidence that helped our leadership understand that we needed to shift from a diversity program—meaning percentages, numbers,

and surface-level representation—to an inclusion effort focused on internal change. We are now focused on the following three components.

Intercultural Competence Development

Creating more exhibitions or programs that highlight diverse content without collaboration from people who live within the culture still comes off as paternalistic. In order to collaborate, learning to work across difference is critical. At MNHS, we provide professional development opportunities—workshops, cohort learning models, readings, discussions, and a full-day conference organized by DICE staff—for staff to work toward increasing intercultural competence.

In addition, we are taking the Head, Heart, and Hands approach to developing intercultural competence. The Head is cognitive knowledge. How much do we know about the cultures that we want to engage? The Heart is the affective or emotional. How do we feel about people from different cultures? How do we feel when we are working with people from different cultures? This includes concepts like empathy and open-mindedness. The Hands is skills-based learning that includes effective cross-cultural communication, listening, and self-reflection.

To reach the Head, community members or organizations can present to staff, or individuals can undertake their own research and learning efforts. The Heart and the Hands can be developed through targeted professional development, such as workshops or individual coaching, on skills and affect.

Inclusive Organizational Culture

Often, museums set goals to diversify their workforce. The focus is the hiring process, and the museum's organizational culture is not recognized as a barrier to staff retention. To retain diverse staff members, museums must have an inclusive organizational culture.

At MNHS, we created an organizational culture assessment to better understand the culture and working environment. We found that staff of color and LGBTQ staff, in particular, felt marginalized. We needed to create a safe space and a process for people with these identities to advocate and impact the organization's work.

We developed Employee Resource Groups, which consult on various departmental internal projects but also raise issues of inequity and offensive content or behavior. They also help recruit staff and shift the perception of MNHS in external communities with like identities. Through these groups, staff members feel more comfortable bringing their authentic selves to work, which maximizes the positive impacts of diversity within the organization.

Cultivating a Diverse Employee Pool

Increasing staff diversity is a goal at MNHS, but rather than zeroing in on recruitment, we have focused on cultivating a more diverse candidate pool. Utilizing programs aimed at high school, undergraduate, and graduate students, DICE staff demystifies the career pathways within museums.

High school students learn about the importance of history and its connections to contemporary issues. Undergraduate students learn about issues of inclusion and equity facing museums and various career pathways while gaining museum experience through internships. And graduate students undertake even more in-depth field experiences while earning a master's degree through a program partnership between MNHS and the University of Minnesota.

I recognize that not every museum budget can support such programs. The scalable factor here is to invest in cultivating talent over the long term. Rather than a one-off internship or volunteer experience, provide a range of opportunities to build experience and skills for emerging professionals.

Museums have the ability to address systemic inequities, but they must recognize that they have embedded these inequities into their organizational systems. Focusing inclusion work on seeking out and addressing systemic issues within our so-called best practices and standards will remove the barriers to becoming inclusive museums. Only then will our field see the type of large-scale, sustainable change necessary to keep our institutions relevant in the future.

Chris Taylor is the chief inclusion officer at the Minnesota Historical Society.

Modern-day regalia and historic images together tell the full story of Wabanaki people in the homeland.

All photos courtesy of the Abbe Museum

Museum audiences react to decolonizing practices.

DISCOMFORT IN LEARNING

By Starr Kelly, Angela Raup, and Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko

Traditional museum models of interpretation have historically failed Indigenous people by creating static spaces where the "vanishing Indian" exists only in the past. This presentation casts Native peoples as unreal, and sometimes mystical, for museum-goers. This misrepresentation, when not recognized and addressed, forms harmful perceptions and oppresses Indigenous people.

The Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, Maine, regularly considers and confronts this problem. Our museum spaces are constructed, supported, and informed by a decolonizing framework that offers a new and welcome perspective for museum workers and visitors alike.

Our decolonizing framework is informed by the research of Ho-Chunk scholar Amy Lonetree. Using organizational examples and rigorous historical research, Lonetree contends that decolonizing practice

The Abbe Museum operates from two locations in Bar Harbor, Maine. The downtown Bar Harbor location opened in 2001 and operates year-round.

is evident when museums collaborate with Indigenous people, privilege Indigenous perspective and voice, and commit to truth-telling history and revealing its harmful legacies. The Abbe applies this framework organization-wide, in its operations, projects, exhibits, educational programming, governance, planning, advocacy, and more. This results in a process—a way of working—rather than an artificial, decolonized product.

Decolonization as an end goal is not possible because of the sustained impact of colonization, which has reshaped present-day lifeways, experiences, and relationships for Indigenous people. The United States remains a colonizing presence and force on Indigenous lands with no plans to retreat. Therefore, it's important for museums to understand that they can engage in decolonizing practice, but decolonization will not be an end result.

In addition to Lonetree's research, much has been written about why decolonizing practice is needed and overdue, and some has been written about how to do the work. Little has been written about how visitors react to and experience a decolonizing museum. Here, we share some of what we've observed and learned over the seven years of decolonizing practice at the Abbe Museum.

What We've Done

Even before we began our decolonizing efforts, we knew that Abbe visitors were ready to engage with decolonizing content, such as hearing directly from Indigenous people about their world view and learning difficult history. A 2012 *Visitors Count!* survey administered through the American Association for State and Local History revealed that the majority of our visitors expect to be uncomfortable because the Abbe is focused on Native history. (Our survey benchmark group included museums focused on social justice and sites of memory and remembrance.) Visitors also indicated that this discomfort is acceptable, and they're willing to engage in it.

There was, and continues to be, an understanding that there is value in learning the full measure of history, even when the topics are painful. Survey respondents also said that they found the Abbe to be "one of the few places where it is conducive to learn about, discuss, and explore difficult issues in history." This knowledge supported the board and staff's decision to create a decolonization initiative and a new core exhibition, "People of the First Light," which informs interpretive programs and other exhibitions.

Part of our strategy is a willingness to prepare our audiences by being forthright about our decolonizing efforts. In the Abbe's orientation gallery, just inside the museum's main entrance, we explain our decolonizing practice, define sovereignty, and introduce the Wabanaki Nations of Maine, northern New England, New Brunswick, and the Canadian Maritimes. To keep the museum-goer engaged, we have trained the

RESOURCES

Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, 2012

Jamie Bissonette Lewey, Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, and Suzanne Greenlaw, "Process Not Product: Decolonizing Practice at the Abbe Museum," under peer review for publication in *Curator: The Museum Journal*

visitor services staff to respond to the inevitable difficult questions that visitors unfamiliar with decolonization, or even cultural sensitivity, might ask, such as "Isn't it about time that we got over all the bad blood? We need to focus on the good." Or, "Those pictures (in exhibits) don't look like Indians; they look European. They probably aren't real Indians anymore."

As a non-tribal museum interpreting Indigenous topics, history, and art, it is essential that we consider how our educational and visitor services staff understand the ethics and tecÚiques of this work. When training new staff, we spend a lot of time preparing them to engage with visitors and to nurture respectful dialogue about Wabanaki peoples and lived experiences. All incoming staff engage in racial bias training; are exposed to numerous training opportunities each month; and learn the tecÚiques of facilitated dialogue, which engages participants in thinking and discussion that reveals personal relevance and affirmation while being clear about boundaries and dismantling racist systems and behaviors.

In addition, the Abbe works with 30 Indigenous educators, performers, artists, and demonstrators to deliver educational programming. We feature the artistic works of approximately 80 Indigenous artists in our gift shop. Staff members have multiple opportunities to build relationships with tribal community members. They understand the importance of representation and self-determination and how that is marginalized in white supremacist structures. As an institution, we actively work to dismantle systemic racism—top down, bottom up, and across teams. Within this workplace culture of inclusion, decolonizing thinking and process lead to growth and change. Our ultimate goal is to present a dignified, humanizing view of Indigenous culture and history.

Decolonizing methodology is visible beyond the entrance and throughout the Abbe. We create educational opportunities in all of our gallery spaces, and we regularly consider how we frame our public programming.

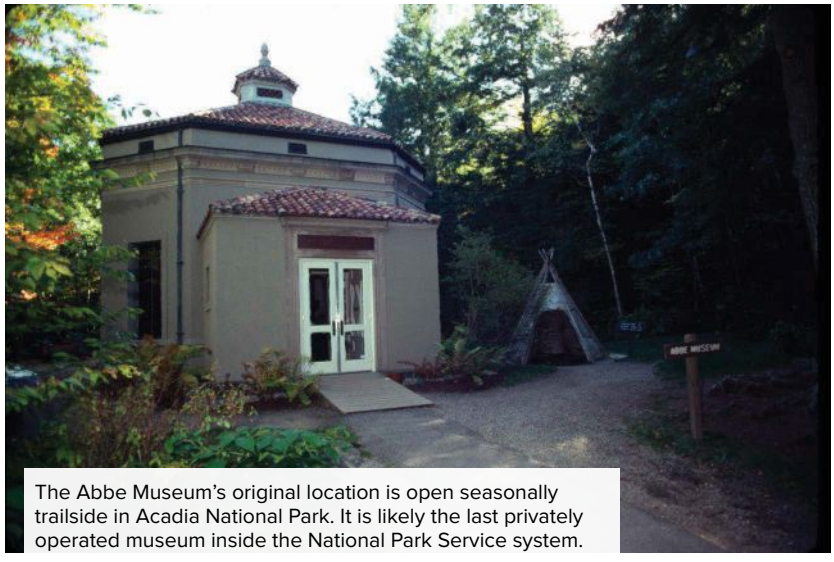
For instance, if a program is related to material culture, we contextualize it by emphasizing humanistic relationships. How is an item an example of Wabanaki tecÚology? How does this particular object tell the story of thousands of generations of Wabanaki people living in the homeland? Instead of focusing purely on the object itself, we want to focus on the personal experience of Wabanaki peoples. Ultimately, we're communicating to our educators and our audiences that people are more important than objects. Though it may contradict traditional models of museum work, we hold fast to this truth.

Visitors reach deeper levels of understanding when exhibits are presented within a decolonizing framework. By talking about our process, we help visitors become critical museum-goers, ready to question narratives and displays. Instead of focusing on material culture and static narratives, visitors are reminded that museums can be transformative spaces where truth, identity, and self-determination are the priority.

How Have Visitors Responded?

Responses from our audiences consistently reinforce both the strength and necessity of decolonizing our museum's content delivery systems. The Abbe's education team has imbedded several touchpoints for visitor feedback throughout the museum. Whenever possible, these interactives are dialogic, intended to promote conversation.

One example is in the Circle of the Four Directions—a contemplative space designed for reflection and minimal visual stimuli—where visitors can respond to questions in a series of dialogue books.



The Abbe Museum's original location is open seasonally trailside in Acadia National Park. It is likely the last privately operated museum inside the National Park Service system.

Each book asks a specific question, such as, "Should a museum like the Abbe work to engage people in taking action on issues important to the Wabanaki? How can a museum or other educational organization do this?"

The responses are evocative, emotional, and reiterate why this work is essential. For example, one visitor shared, "The Abbe should be involved in inclusive curriculum building. The teaching of American history needs to cover all aspects—the negative impacts of colonization, slavery, Jim Crow, anti-immigrant sentiments—so that we can all be more knowledgeable and hopefully do a better job of making life in the future better for all people—especially those who have been hurt."

The themes reflected in the dialogue books are supported by the messages in our guestbooks, digital reviews, and the conversations happening between visitor services staff and visitors. Abbe visitors continue to reiterate that decolonizing is not only important, but a key factor in their enjoyment of our museum.

Passamaquoddy Master Basketmaker Gabriel Frey teaches an ash basket workshop at the Abbe Museum.

Advice for Other Museums

We often receive inquiries from other institutions about how they can incorporate decolonizing practices within their museums. Our response is that there is no prescriptive way to engage in decolonizing work, nor a procedure for specifically applying it to museum education. We have found that being prescriptive and formulaic is oppressive and contrary to educational pedagogy that is collaborative with Wabanaki people, prioritizes Indigenous voice, and is wedded to truth-telling.

EVIDENCE OF DECOLONIZING PRACTICE

As documented and inspired by Ho-Chunk scholar Amy Lonetree

Collaborate with tribal communities. When an idea for a project or initiative is first conceived, we have a conversation with Native advisors to make sure it's a story or activity that we have the right to share or pursue. We don't get halfway down the planning timeline and then check with Native advisors about how we're doing and if we're getting it right. Native collaboration needs to be at the beginning and threaded throughout the life of the project.

Privilege Indigenous perspective and voice. The vast writings on the human experience are with little exception written by white academics and observers. When we begin to prioritize the writings and observations of Indigenous scholars and informants, the story broadens, expands, shifts, and brings a clearer and non-oppressed perspective of Native history and culture.

Be in the business of truth-telling. Histories of Indigenous people connect to today's challenges. Issues around water quality, hunting and fishing rights, and mascots are connected to the past and the present. When we present this full history, we have a better opportunity to identify harmful statements and practices.

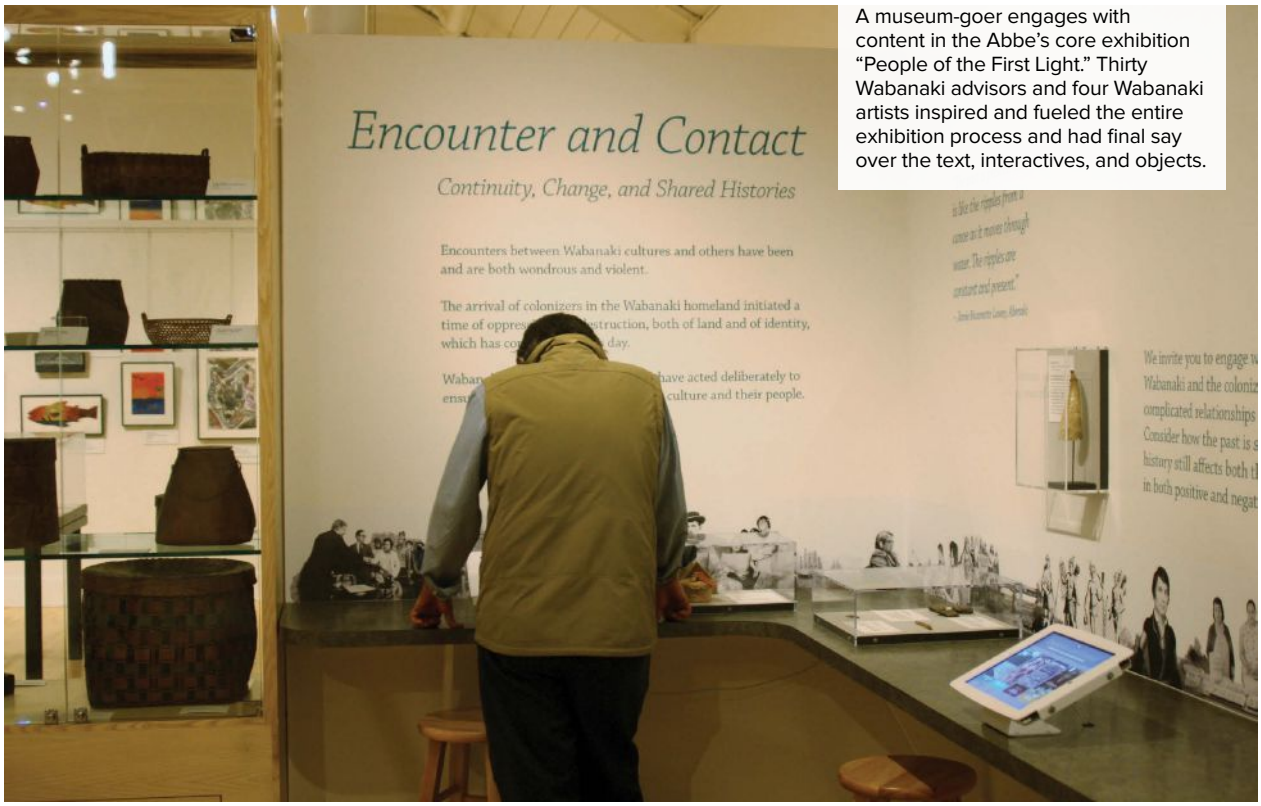
Museums looking to do decolonizing work must analyze their own needs and priorities, learn their histories as a museum, and understand the past and present relationships between Indigenous people and the museum. Doing these things will reveal a story that will vary from museum to museum; this story must be understood and unpacked for the decolonizing practice to take root and be effective.

The examples offered throughout this article are admittedly anecdotal and more qualitative than quantitative. This is often the case with social change. Over the past few years we've regularly conducted visitor and teacher surveys that indicate audience interest and engagement, but a deeper, more thorough look at our decolonizing museum practices is warranted.

With the help of an Institute for Museum Library Services grant award in 2018, the Abbe has been seeking to answer the following questions: What is the methodology of this work and where is the community of practice? How do we do this and who are we learning from and with? In addition, grant funding is supporting the creation of the Museum Decolonization Institute (MuseDI), housed at the Abbe, which will train museum workers on how to initiate decolonizing museum practices and what they could look like in their home museums. In the process, we'll evaluate our effectiveness as a decolonizing museum by looking at our practices, policies, and protocols to date.

Audiences are ready to engage with a decolonizing framework and museum environment. It's now our duty as contemporary museum workers to provide this.

Starr Kelly, from the Algonquin First Nation of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, is the curator of education; **Angela Raup** is the manager of guest experience; and **Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko** is the president and CEO at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, Maine.

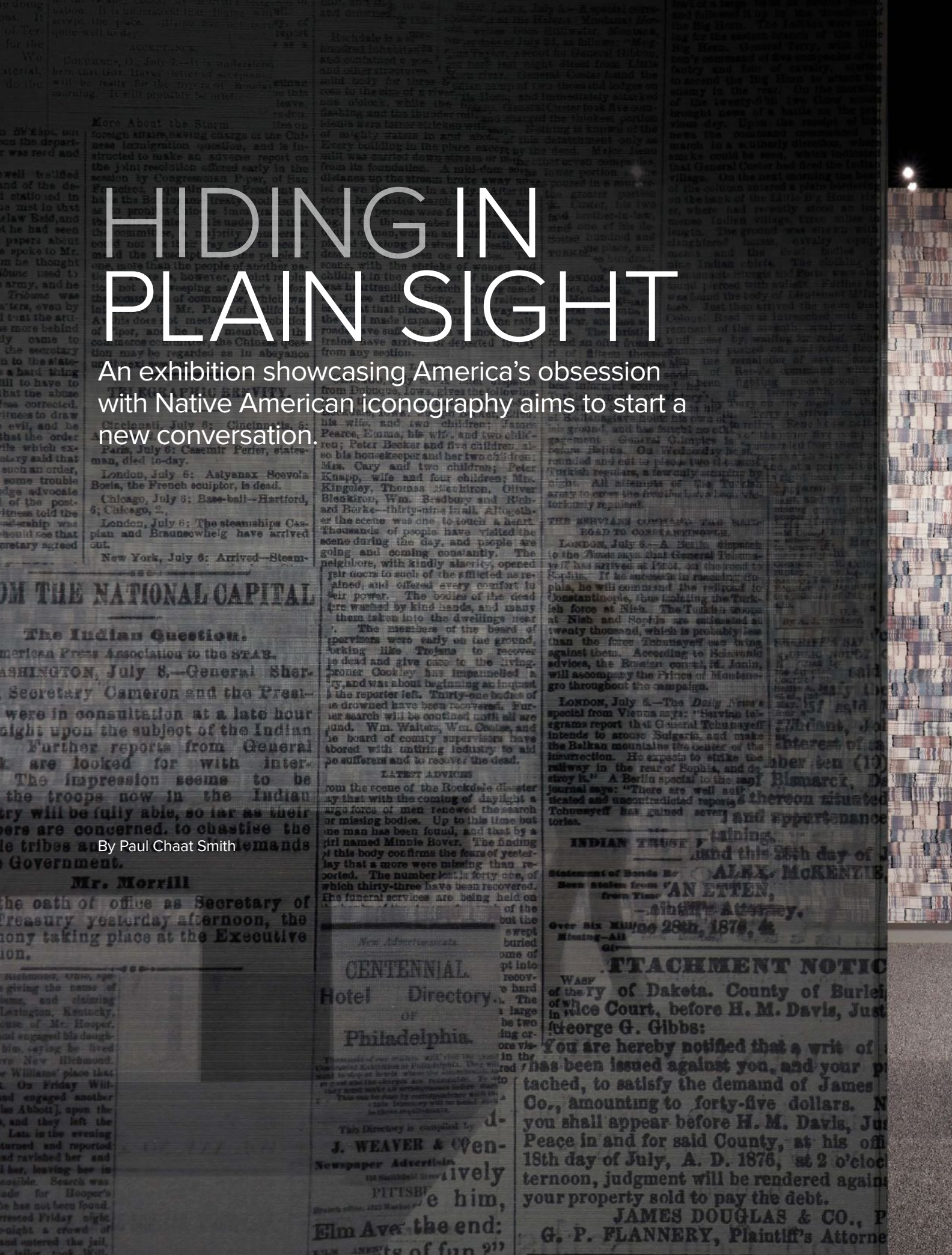


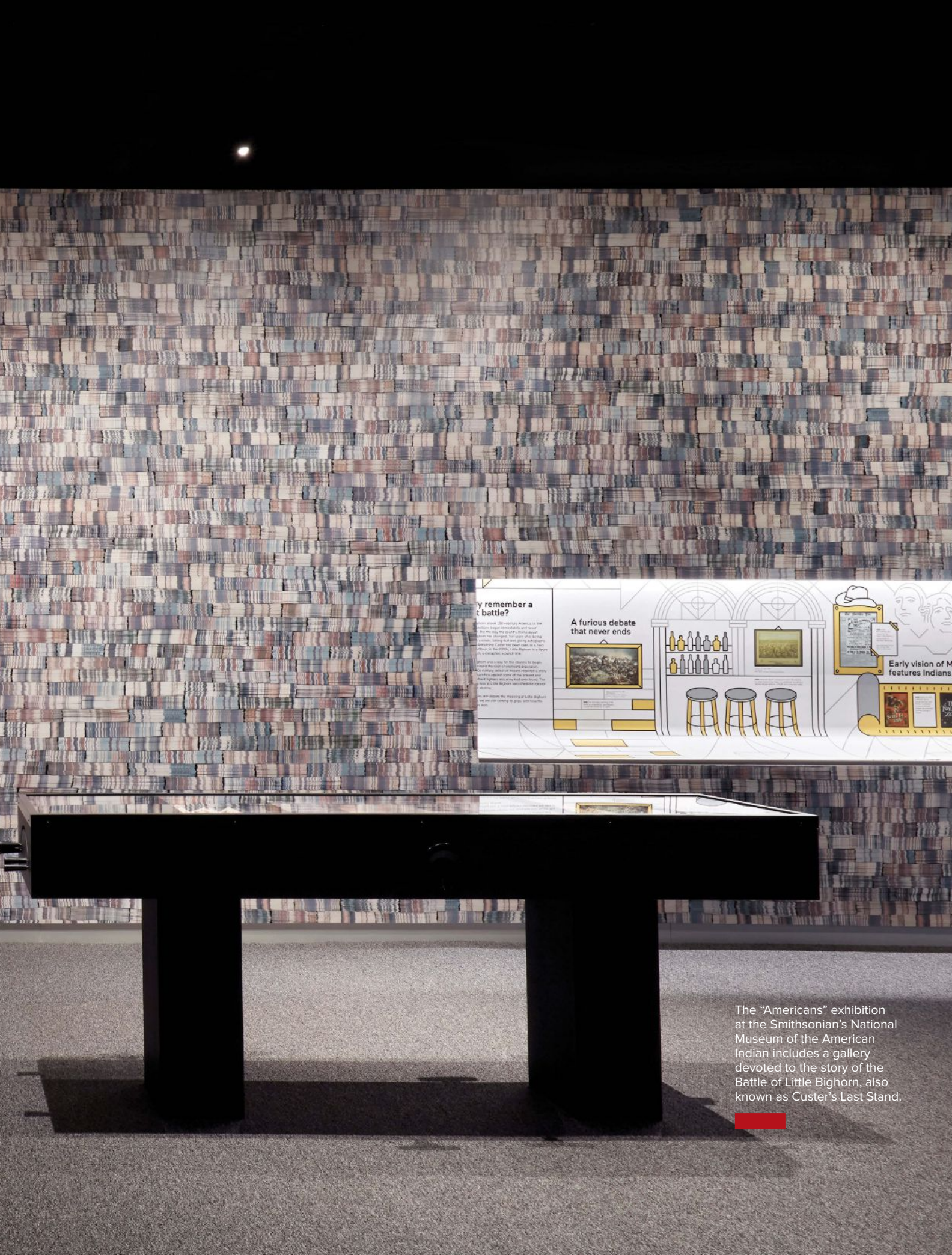
A museum-goer engages with content in the Abbe's core exhibition "People of the First Light." Thirty Wabanaki advisors and four Wabanaki artists inspired and fueled the entire exhibition process and had final say over the text, interactives, and objects.

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

An exhibition showcasing America's obsession with Native American iconography aims to start a new conversation.

By Paul Chaat Smith





The “Americans” exhibition at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian includes a gallery devoted to the story of the Battle of Little Bighorn, also known as Custer’s Last Stand.

By most standards, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, DC, is a wildly successful museum, with a million visitors a year. But when we opened in 2004, many visitors found our exhibitions bewildering, dense, and, worst of all, boring.

NMAI in Washington, DC, has consistently received lower satisfaction ratings than other Smithsonian museums on the National Mall. This is not acceptable if the museum is to reach its ambitious goal of changing the way Americans think about Indians.

The museum's most recent long-term exhibition, "Americans," opened in January 2018 with the goal of reaching visitors who wanted to like our exhibitions (they were in the building, after all) but had left feeling disappointed. The curators also understood that most visitors spend, at best, a half-hour in any single exhibition. Rather than imagine the metric could be reversed, the team embraced it, and we worked to build an impactful experience for people who had just 20 minutes.

The show was conceived to address the most daunting obstacle facing NMAI: American Indians are remote abstractions to the overwhelming majority of our public. Today, most Americans live in urban and suburban areas where Indians are nearly invisible. It's not that they don't know or like Native people, it's that they believe they have nothing to do with Native Americans.

Over time, NMAI staff realized that explaining the harm of US policies or the differences between the Pueblo and the Kiowa has little effect if there is nothing at stake for the visitor. They exit our museums and instantly forget us.

With "Americans," we gambled on a radically different approach. The curatorial team examined all we had learned since opening our first museum in Manhattan in 1994 and the second one in Washington, DC, 10 years later. We concluded that we needed to show visitors that, in fact, their lives are entangled with Indians. The exhibition had to be about our visitors and the Indians they knew best.

Making Visitors Part of the Story

The defining concept of the show is "Indians Everywhere." The idea executes a kind of jujitsu, turning the seemingly unimportant Indian images confronting Americans nearly every waking hour into the argument that these images and place names are profound and consequential. They are reminders that the United States is obsessed with Indians and always has been, for the simple reason that the country's very existence has required the dispossession of Indian nations.

The show is built on this paradox: Indian names and images are etched on the landscape, highways, towns, cities, weapons systems, sports teams, youth organizations, food, cars, and pop culture. Yet this doesn't quite make sense: Indians are just 1 percent of the country's population. No other nation has focused so intently on one minority, endlessly reproducing images generation after generation for centuries.

The exhibition is organized to elicit in visitors specific memories they have about this Indian-themed wallpaper—and avoid contemporary culture wars that would make some of them feel guilty or defensive. The idea is to leverage nostalgia into new insights. We believe that unless something is at stake, unless visitors feel they are part of this story, they will never engage with our larger message: that Indians are central to contemporary American life, history, and national identity.

In order to make that message resonate, we had to bring the abstract Indians into the light to reveal how central they are to national identity and psychology. The sports teams and weapons systems are just the tip of an iceberg representing the deep relationship between American Indians and the people of the United States.

The goal, simply stated, is to have visitors thinking about their experience later, to have them realize that their lives are entangled with Indians, that they are part of a larger narrative about American Indians and the United States.

Opening photo by Thomas Loof

We appear to be meeting our goal, judging from visitor remarks like these:

- "I like that it was presented in a way that you could think about the information. It wasn't shoved down your throat. I honestly think this [is] one of the best Smithsonian exhibits out there."
- "[Before my visit] I felt that I was seeing American Indians as just victims, kind of. I still see them as victims, but it's more difficult. I think it's more complicated..."
- "I went to Hiawatha Elementary School. We had a large mural of a Native American little boy on our gym wall. It never occurred to me to think it was odd at the time. … I would now!"

How We Organized the Exhibition

"Americans" is organized around an expansive central gallery, Indians Everywhere. Hundreds of images and objects dating from the colonial era to the present surround the visitor in a dramatic floor-to-ceiling display. The design makes clear that Indian imagery has been a constant backdrop to American life. The quantity and arrangement of the items underscore the extent to which this imagery has influenced the country's culture. This gallery, which reveals the hidden and not-so-hidden agendas behind the imagery, would make for a compelling exhibition by itself. However, "Americans" needed to go deeper and explain the foundational reasons for the strange national obsession with Indians.

The "Americans" exhibition highlights the ways in which American Indians have been part of the nation's identity since before the country began.

The central gallery of the "Americans" exhibition includes nearly 350 representations of American Indians in pop culture.

Photos by Paul Morigi, AP Images for National Museum of the American Indian

In the three largest side galleries, we explore events in American history that many know something about: the life of Pocahontas, the Trail of Tears, and the Battle of Little Bighorn. In each gallery, we reframe one of the events to focus on how it changed the United States and to explain why it is still in our heads.

We show Pocahontas as a formidable and powerful leader and diplomat whom the country's founders regarded as key to the identity of the new republic. We show the Trail of Tears, a sad and tragic story about the Cherokee, as the most consequential event between the American Revolution and the Civil War, one that reshaped global economies and has haunting resonance today. We demonstrate how the US Army's defeat at Little Bighorn in 1876 was the moment the country decided to romanticize and venerate American Indians, and also freeze them in time.

Each side gallery also includes an unusual timeline. It begins when the event ends: What happened after Pocahontas died, the Indians were removed, the battle ended? Here we show how popular understanding of history changes over time. Each timeline presents the various ways that Pocahontas, the Trail of Tears, or the Battle of Little Bighorn has been interrogated, understood, mythologized, debated, and remembered.

The intent is to connect the emotional and visual experience of the Indians Everywhere gallery to the buried history of three iconic events. One explains the other, each is essential.

In the final side gallery, Americans Explained, four panels concisely summarize the reason for the show, the meaning of the title, and the main idea of each historical chapter. The rest of this small gallery is designed to encourage visitor reflection and response: a three-screen video installation shows average people talking about their connections to Indians Everywhere, and visitors can read or write postcards.

How We Designed the Exhibition

"Americans" aims to help visitors understand that the United States has been built on its complicated relationship with Native peoples. From its overall look and feel to each nuanced detail, the exhibition design brings absolute clarity to this idea via layout, graphics,

THE CRITICS WEIGH IN

A wide range of outlets, from the *Economist* to BBC America, *CBS Sunday Morning*, and *PBS News Hour*, have positively covered the exhibition.

- Peter Schjeldahl, *New Yorker:* "I love, and I wish everyone would see, 'Americans.' ...Apt photographs and entertaining videos abound. So do irresistibly readable texts.... I'll dare to endorse an approach—a specialty of [curator Paul Chaat] Smith's—that lets identity and politics float a little free of each other, allowing wisdom to seep in."
- Edward Rothstein, *Wall Street Journal*: "The curators do not preach; they demonstrate, often with good humor. Their goal is not to dismiss but to examine a complex relationship, asserting that we are 'a country forever fascinated, conflicted, and shaped by its relationship with American Indians.'"
- Philip Kennicott, *Washington Post*: "The museum and its curators have found a voice, and one every museum should emulate: They are going to address difficult questions with nuance and courage.... 'Americans' succeeds without being tendentious or bland.... [It has] achieved what so many other exhibitions fail to find: an objectivity that may placate no one but will provoke actual thoughtfulness."

Plains Indian objects on display in the Battle of Little Bighorn gallery of the "Americans" exhibition.

Photo by Paul Morigi, AP Images for National Museum of the American Indian

materiality, and architectural vocabulary. The power of Americans' and Indians' entangled history emerges from the exhibition's reduced palette of materials, bold spatial organization, and unexpected use of evocative media.

The radial floor plan situates the historical-event galleries off the central Indians Everywhere gallery. Visitors continually pass through the generous central space as they move among the side galleries. This spatial organization is meant to encourage continued browsing, so that visitors will start to see even banal Indian images as indicators of the history explored in the side galleries.

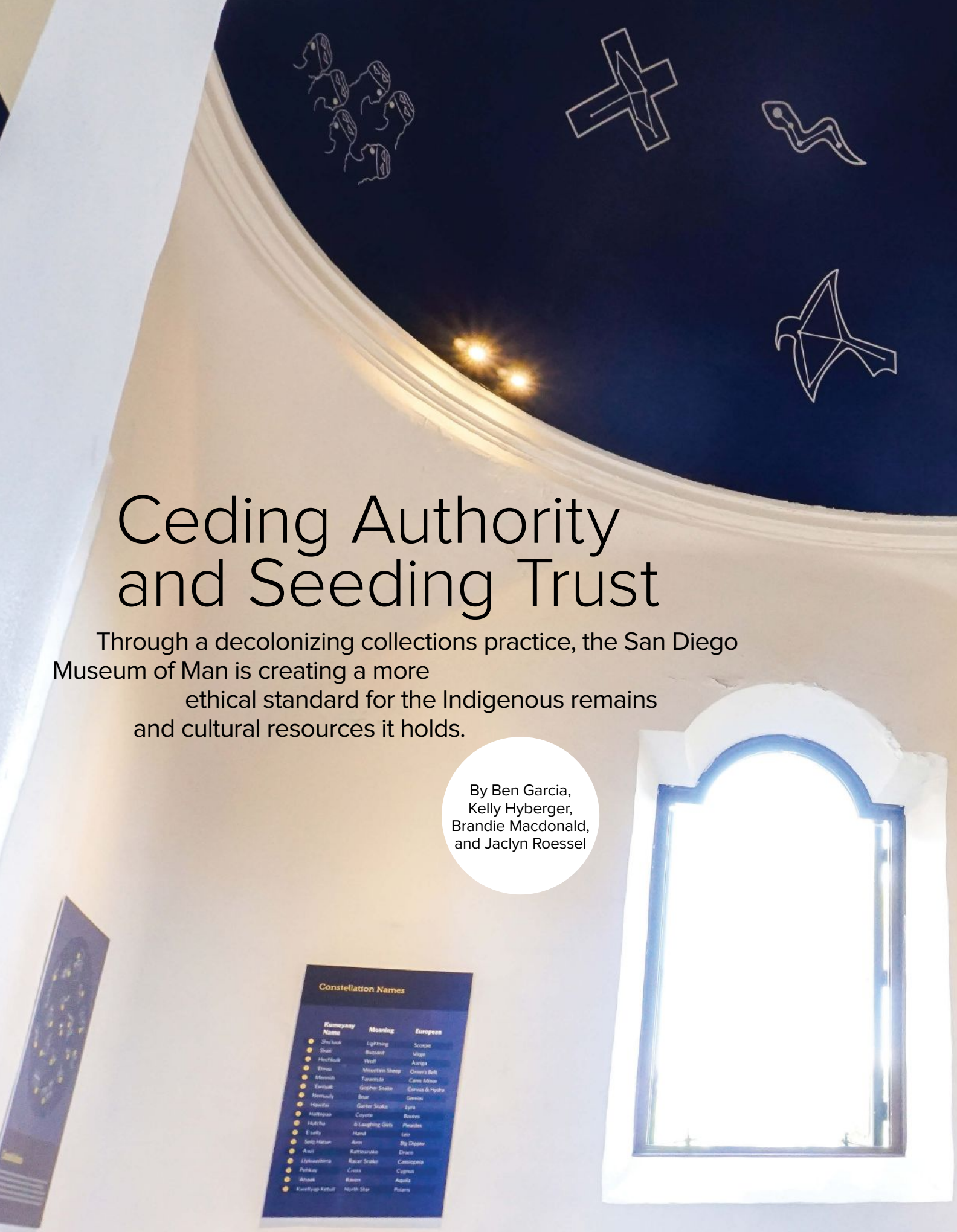
Indians Everywhere is the physical embodiment of the complicated relationship between Native peoples and American culture. In an expansive, geometric armature of white tubular steel (3/4-inch square), nearly 200 backlit graphics, dozens of artifacts, and large-scale objects such as an Indian motorcycle and a Tomahawk missile line the walls from floor to ceiling. Close to 70 television and film clips flicker along the rear curve of the space, while comfortable modular furniture invites visitors to lounge, browse, and chat.

The physical geometry of the display armature in the Indians Everywhere gallery dives into the side galleries and down the entry walls, becoming a bold graphic pattern surrounding pithy, provocative statements. Within the side galleries, this graphic identity of quilted geometry with a modern, sculptural edge is employed throughout. Strongest surrounding the introductory texts and in the custom-illustrated timelines, the effect is dialed back in the heart of each gallery, allowing it to develop its own character.

The exhibition was a risky project. The decision to foreground controversial imagery and objects, and allow visitors to see them without harsh judgment, is wildly out of step with the perspective of some Indian activists and scholars. Some would argue the Indians Everywhere gallery is nothing less than hate speech and has no place anywhere, least of all in a Native American museum. Respectfully, we disagree.

With "Americans," we choose to directly engage the collective memory of 21st-century Americans because we feel that unless we meet visitors where they are, with humor, surprise, and compassion, it doesn't matter what we say about history or living Native people. Indians Everywhere is a curtain that prevents Americans from seeing Indians, and our exhibition brings that curtain, and those representations, out of the shadows and into sharp relief.

Paul Chaat Smith is associate curator at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC.



Ceding Authority and Seeding Trust

Through a decolonizing collections practice, the San Diego Museum of Man is creating a more ethical standard for the Indigenous remains and cultural resources it holds.

By Ben Garcia, Kelly Hyberger, Brandie Macdonald, and Jaclyn Roessel

The San Diego Museum of Man (SDMoM) is situated within the Kumeyaay Nation, the homeland of the Kumeyaay people. We extend our respect and gratitude to the many Indigenous peoples who still reside here and call these lands home.

SDMoM's mission is to inspire human connections by exploring the human experience. Today we recognize that this can only authentically occur in a context of truthfulness and transparency about the ways that our museum participated in the colonial enterprise. For the greater part of our history, we harmed Indigenous communities by participating in the extraction of their belongings, cultural practices, and bodies in service to the museum's goals of preservation and education.

My Uuyow: Kumeyaay Cosmology exhibit, curated by Michael Connolly Miskwish (Campo), at the San Diego Museum of Man (SDMoM).

Courtesy of the San Diego Museum of Man

Egyptian coffin lid on display with a wall label explaining the museum's 2017 policy prohibiting the display of ancestral remains.

Moving beyond our legacies as colonial institutions requires a reexamination of the ethics of collecting, stewardship, and holding of Indigenous tangible and intangible culture and ancestral remains. The law establishes minimum standards; museums also need an ethical standard to meet their obligations for providing true value to society.

Our History

When we began the critical examination of our institution, we immediately found that the museum had acquired the bodies and belongings of Indigenous people, in the United States and globally, in ways that were legal but not just or equitable.

A surface-level examination of SDMoM's acquisition ledgers shows hundreds of legal donations and purchases over a century that filled our storage rooms with tens of thousands of heritage items. However, a close examination of these transactions reveals a more complex story. Here are two examples among thousands that have their equivalents in museums around the world:

- A collection of Apache items donated by local San Diegans in the 1950s were originally collected by US military personnel stationed on the San Carlos Apache Reservation in Arizona during the Apache Wars, a period of violent conflict between the US government and the Apache people that resulted in the forced relocation of the Apache people.
- Another group of items were procured by members of the Stanley Porteus expeditions in Australia. Porteus studied Aboriginal Australian communities in order to bolster his white supremacist racial theories.

For a vast majority of our acquisitions, the transactions that caused belongings to leave Indigenous communities are often obscured by a lack of transparent or available documentation in our records. By simply labeling displayed items with a donor or purchase acknowledgment, the museum effectively erased the genocide, warfare, displacement, and oppression perpetrated against Indigenous communities.

Furthermore, by rarely including Indigenous voices in decisions made about the presentation of their ancestors and belongings, our institution perpetuated the ongoing colonization and appropriation of Indigenous cultures.

Faced with the truth about our museum's role in the ongoing colonial oppression of Indigenous communities, we began the process of decolonizing our institutional practices. In line with Ho-Chunk scholar Amy Lonetree's work in her seminal book *Decolonizing Museums*, SDMoM aims to do three things: include Indigenous decision-making at all levels of the organization; truthfully address the histories and legacies of colonization in its policies, practices, exhibits, and programs; and present the work of Indigenous scholars, traditional knowledge holders, and creatives.

Why Existing Laws Aren't Enough

At SDMoM, we began our decolonizing process by addressing internal policies and practices so that our outward-facing initiatives would be built on a foundation of deep institutional commitment to change. We had all worked in museums where outward-facing partnerships with Indigenous entities (usually in the form of exhibitions or educational and public programs) masked internal colonized structures and power disparities. True partnering, in our view, requires balanced power.

We recognize that perhaps the greatest imbalance in museum/Indigenous relationships is caused by museums' claim of ownership over ancestral bodies and

Courtesy of the San Diego Museum of Man

belongings. And so we began with the policies related to collections, what we now call cultural resources (in recognition of their true value: as resources for Indigenous cultural continuity and not as collectors' possessions).

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) became US law in 1990 to redress the injustice museums and universities perpetrated when they extracted bodies and sacred belongings from some Native American communities. Other international conventions passed in the past century curtail or forbid the extraction of Indigenous bodies and belongings without consent in this era.

However, NAGPRA applies only to ancestral remains, funerary objects, sacred items, and items of cultural patrimony from federally recognized tribes within the United States. Other international conventions do not require that current standards be retroactively applied, as is the case with conventions governing the import and export of certain archaeological and cultural items.

Furthermore, implementation of NAGPRA legislation places decision-making authority for repatriation with the collecting institution rather than with Indigenous communities. Standards of evidence required for the return of ancestral bodies or cultural items are often insurmountable for source communities, and the legislation does not provide adequate recourse for communities seeking the return of their belongings.

SDMoM, like most other museums that hold Indigenous items, had long prevented the return of ancestral remains and cultural resources to Indigenous communities. We complied with the letter of NAGPRA and benefitted from both the procedural disparity written into that law and the limited number of communities with which we were compelled to consult.

For the museum to shift from reluctant, minimal compliance with laws that were seen as a threat to the institution (a 1997 SDMoM SWOT analysis named repatriation as a literal threat), we needed internal policies and procedures that prioritize Indigenous community needs.

Creating Our Own Policies

In 2017 and 2018, the museum passed two policies: one on curating ancestor remains and the other our Colonial Pathways Policy (see sidebar on p. 40 for more on both). Together, these two policies provide a process for all Indigenous descendant communities to consult with the museum and find a pathway home for their ancestors and belongings, either through NAGPRA implementation that complies with the spirit and letter of that law or through deaccession and transfer.

We built these policies on the prior work of our colleagues at New Zealand's Te Papa Tongarewa,

Courtesy of the San Diego Museum of Man

Ole Sankale, Maasai cultural ambassador, and SDMoM Deputy Director Ben Garcia review Maasai belongings in the museum's storage rooms.

TWO POLICIES WE LIVE BY

The San Diego Museum of Man (SDMoM) has created two policies as part of its decolonizing practice.

Policy on Curating Ancestor Remains

Passed by the trustees and enacted in January 2017, SDMoM's first decolonized policy was modeled on a similar one at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in 2008. It recognizes that informed consent is the standard for all contemporary research practice when human subjects and human remains are involved. Our policy (and Denver's) applies this standard retroactively to the museum's ability to hold ancestor remains.

The policy reads in part:

"SDMoM will only accession and/or curate human remains when express written permission is given to do so by the deceased individual, their next of kin, or an authorized designee of the descendant community."

The museum is first addressing its responsibilities to US Indigenous communities under NAGPRA. In time, SDMoM will provide next of kin or descendant communities the opportunity to receive the more than 5,000 ancestors whose remains are housed in the museum.

The Colonial Pathways Policy

In June 2018, the trustees passed the Colonial Pathways Policy. It reads in part:

"SDMoM will accession and/or curate Indigenous cultural resources only in instances where it has documented consent to do so from the Indigenous community, or when it can demonstrate that the cultural resource left an Indigenous community through a decolonized pathway....

SDMoM will establish a process for reviewing all the Indigenous cultural resources currently held at the Museum in consultation with descendant communities to determine their preference for disposition. Disposition might include ongoing stewardship at the Museum, return to the community (repatriation), or any other mutually determined outcome consistent with applicable law."

SDMoM is dedicated to a continuous process of decolonization, and this policy commits our museum to opening and sustaining dialogues about the return of personal and/or communal belongings that left their Indigenous communities through unjust, colonial, or inequitable pathways.

the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, the Abbe Museum in Maine, and others. The legally compliant and ethically mandated standard we are applying at SDMoM provides continuing consent for stewarding Indigenous bodies and belongings. This means that the museum must have documented agreements with Indigenous communities regarding our ability to hold and/or display their tangible and intangible culture and their ancestors' remains. It also means respecting Indigenous knowledge and authority in naming and defining their ancestors and cultural heritage items.

For many years, museums have set the bar for approving the return of Indigenous belongings or ancestors to Indigenous communities. In many instances, museums believed they were qualified to determine whether a community need was legitimate. Decolonization requires dominant culture institutions like SDMoM to let go of their presumed decision-making authority and recognize the authority of Indigenous communities. In practice, this means recognizing the validity of Indigenous definitions of ownership, acknowledging Western secularization of sacred items, and accepting traditions of continuity between Indigenous peoples past and present.

Our decolonization policies recognize Indigenous sovereignty and the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge and shared narratives, whether documented or passed through oral traditions. We acknowledge and believe that Indigenous knowledge is the most reliable evidence when defining the importance of cultural resources to an Indigenous community. Prioritizing Indigenous knowledge and decisions allows us to begin to correct the harm non-Indigenous authorities created by disregarding the expertise of Indigenous communities.

What Now?

Implementing these policies will be our work for the next several decades. We will need to consult with descendant communities on about 80 percent of the museum's approximately 75,000 etÚographic items and archival and audio-visual material, as well as all the archaeology from more than 1,000 sites. We are a

Students on a school tour work with Kumeyaay-approved cultural materials.

Photo by Stacy Keck

midsized museum with an operating budget of about $4 million and about 40 full-time and 20 part-time staff. Given our capacity, this work will take time.

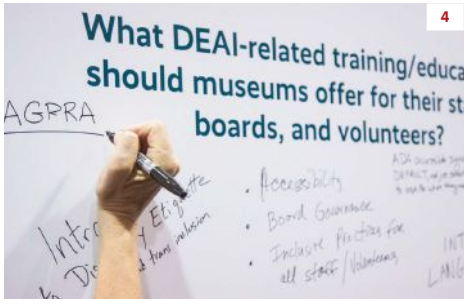
We are beginning with our homeland community and prioritizing the work that still needs to be done under NAGPRA with US tribes. We are currently writing the procedures that underlie these policies, as the issues around domestic and international consultation are complex.

However, we no longer view the process of obtaining consent for holding Indigenous belongings as a task to check off our "to-do" list. Rather, it is our work moving forward. We will remain a museum that serves our community through explorations of ideas and issues that impact us all, providing a broader geographic and historical context for understanding them when appropriate. Our work internally to decolonize our practices will lead to new ideas and stories that we can present in programs and exhibitions.

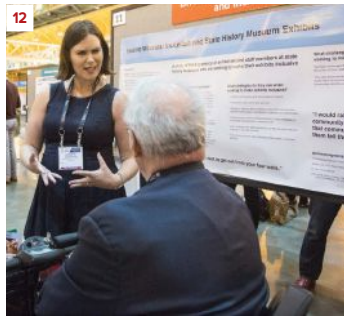
In the end, we aim to transfer a collection of cultural items to the next generation of San Diegans and museum stewards that includes documented consent from source or descendant Indigenous communities for holding them. This work moves at the speed of repairing the world. It moves at the speed of ceding authority (and "seeding" authority, to quote our colleague Noelle Kahanu at the University of Hawai'i). It moves at the speed of trust.

Ben Garcia is deputy director, **Kelly Hyberger** is director of cultural resources, and **Brandie Macdonald** is director of decolonizing initiatives at the San Diego Museum of Man (SDMoM). **Jaclyn Roessel** is president/founder of Grownup Navajo and formerly served as director of decolonizing initiatives at SDMoM. They are members of the SDMoM Decolonization Working Group.

ALLIANCE IN ACTION



1. Marta Mabel Pérez (center) accepts the Chair's Leadership Award on behalf of her staff at the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico with AAM President and CEO Laura Lott (left) and Board Chair Kippen de Alba Chu (right).
2. Mardi Gras beads from the Opening General Session.
3. Closing Party at The National WWII Museum.
4. Attendees respond to prompts about DEAI in museums.
5. Keynote speaker Kimberly Drew, writer, curator, and activist (right), on stage with AAM Interim Director of Inclusion Dr. Tonya Matthews (left).
6. Microsoft's Catherine Devine (center) and Essam Makhlouf (right) with AAM Vice President of Development Arthur Affleck (left).
7. AAM's *Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity and Inclusion* team of staff and Fellows.
8. Keynote speaker Jose Antonio Vargas, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, filmmaker, and human rights activist (left), at his book signing at MuseumExpo.
9. Attendees at the Emerging Professionals Mixer, sponsored by Johns Hopkins University MA in Museum Studies.



10. Second line musician leads a parade from the Opening General Session to MuseumExpo.
11. The winners of the MuseAwards, hosted by the AAM Media & Technology Professional Network.
12. Samantha Rijkers gives a poster presentation at the Solutions Center at MuseumExpo.
13. Local Host Committee Co-chairs Steven Watson of The National WWII Museum (left) and Susan Taylor of the New Orleans Museum of Art (right) with Laura Lott (center).
14. Knight Foundation President, CEO, and Trustee Alberto Ibargüen (center) speaks at the 2019 CEO Summit with the New Museum's Lisa Phillips (left) and facilitator and AAM Board Member Devon Akmon (right).
15. Second line performers at the Lagniappe Lounge at MuseumExpo.
16. Exhibitor LORD Cultural Resources at MuseumExpo.
17. The Opening General Session featured remarks by Laura Lott on financial sustainability.
18. Representatives from the National Federation of the Blind and 3DPhotoWorks meet with museum professionals at MuseumExpo.
19. AAM LGBTQ Alliance Professional Network Chair Mike Lesperance speaks at the LGBTQ Alliance Lunch.
20. The Getty Foundation's Katie Underwood (center) joins AAM-Getty International Program participants at the Scholarship Breakfast.

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 2019 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo.

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New Jobs

Alisa Tsuji, *Curator,* SFO Museum, San Francisco, CA

Carey Mack Weber, *Frank and Clara Meditz Executive Director,* Fairfield University Art Museum, Fairfield, CT

Kudos

Austin Bell, *curator of collections* for the Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS) in Florida, was named the 2018 Citizen of the Year by the *Naples Daily News*. Bell has worked for the MIHS since 2013, curating the museum's three award-winning permanent exhibits. In 2018, Bell spearheaded the return of the Key Marco Cat and other significant artifacts on loan, a significant cultural event in the Marco Island community.

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In Memoriam

Cheryl McClenney-Brooker, a champion of the arts and former director of external affairs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, died on May 7, 2019. McClenney-Brooker, pictured here with former Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, was a key member of the museum's senior administration, serving to generate a broad range of initiatives to attract, engage, and build audiences for the museum and to advocate on behalf of the museum to elected officials and other constituencies. McClenney-Brooker began her career at the museum in 1983 as assistant director for programs. She retired from the museum in 2012 after 29 years of service. "Cheryl was a major force in the museum as a catalyst for community engagement," said Gail Harrity, the museum's president and chief operating officer. "Our audiences became more engaged as a result of her efforts, and we are deeply grateful to Cheryl for her distinguished public service and abiding dedication to the museum and the communities of Philadelphia. We will miss her dedication, wonderful charm, and extraordinary grace."

Gerald Nordland, noted *museum director, art critic, and historian,* died on January 15 at the age of 91. Among his many accomplishments as museum director, he expanded collections, departments, and exhibitions; improved the quality of publications; and obtained AAM accreditation for the Milwaukee Art Museum (1977-85). In his long career, he co-founded *Artforum* magazine and authored more than 60 publications, including books on Gaston Lachaise, Richard Diebenkorn, and Frank Lloyd Wright.

It was a long time ago.
I have almost forgotten my dream.
But it was there then,
Bright like a sun—
And then the wall rose,
Between me and my dream
Rose until it touched the sky—
No longer the light of my dream before me,
Only the thick wall.
Only the shadow.
My dark hands!
Break through the wall!
Find my dream!
Help me to shatter this darkness,
To break this shadow
Into a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand whirling dreams
Of sun!

Excerpted from *As I Grew Older* by Langston Hughes

Fahamu Pecou, *Caged Bird 03*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 inches, private collection

The image appears in *Fahamu Pecou: Visible Man*, published by the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, an awardee in the 2018 AAM Publication Design Competition.

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