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SUMMER 2020 ISSUE

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Little Planet, pedestrian bridge over Rems River, Waiblingen Floodplain, Rems-Murr-Kreis (district), Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany

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American Alliance of Museums

MUSEUM
A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

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Global Thinking

If anyone had any doubts about the importance of "global thinking," the last few months have reminded us just how closely connected we are.

Whether you work in a museum in a major metropolitan area with large numbers of international visitors or a small, local museum that functions more like a community center, all of us have felt the effects of the coronavirus and global efforts to prevent its spread.

A global pandemic is an extreme example of how our individual local actions and reactions often have greater global impact—and how much we can learn from the experiences, challenges, and successes of museums around the world. A global perspective creates fresh vantage points from which to see the world. It is critical to tackle the issues of our time as a global community rather than isolate within our borders.

As International Museum Day approaches on May 18, we are reminded that the American Alliance of Museums is part of a global museum community. Representing the Alliance and the museum field, I have the distinct privilege of meeting museum professionals throughout the world. We speak different languages and have different backgrounds and traditions, but we share many of the same passions about the power of museums to change the world.

"Global Thinking" is one of AAM's most important, but perhaps least talked about, strategic plan goals. The AAM team has been hard at work in recent years to "connect US museums to the international community and foster a global exchange of ideas to broaden US museum perspectives on museum practice."

Since 2015, AAM has been featuring international perspectives on issues related to digital literacy, health and well-being, conflict resolution, truth and reconciliation, and environmental sustainability throughout our blog, magazine, and Annual Meeting.

Four years ago, AAM signed a partnership agreement with the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which set the stage for new sharing of research and best practices. Through our work with the Getty Foundation, we welcome several dozen art museum professionals from developing countries to the AAM Annual Meeting. Every two years, we work in partnership with Argentina-based Fundación TyPA and local hosts for Reimagining the Museum, a pan-national conference to connect with and learn from museum professionals across the Americas.

This global reach and collaboration has shown a positive reciprocal interest in membership and best practices in US museums. In recent years, our accreditation programs have expanded to Central America, Asia, and the Middle East, and our membership now includes museums and museum professionals from 55 countries.

If your museum is small, or has a specific regional or local focus, you may be wondering how thinking globally is relevant to what you do every day. When we identify issues we think of as uniquely our own, it is easy to find examples across the globe that demonstrate they are more universal than we had imagined.

Museums are laboratories in which we can examine any issue to improve our understanding and develop solutions. The conversations and collaboration the Alliance started will continue to reverberate beyond our borders.

—March 30, 2020

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

BY THE
NUMBERS

Bridge to the Future

72

Global average lifespan in 2019, up from 46 in 1950 and 29 in 1800.

2014
The year non-white students became the majority in US public schools.

1 in 2
Proportion of Americans who see made-up news/info as a “very big problem” today.

Sources: From top to bottom: Pew Research Center, OurWorldinData.org, Pew Research Center

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

Andriy Bezuglov / Alamy Stock Photo

Courtesy of the artist and Karma, New York; Roger Shimomura, *American vs. Japanese #3*, 2011, collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer; Frederic Remington, *The Fall of the Cowboy*, 1895, Amon G. Carter Collection

Dallas Museum of Art

Inspired by philosopher Gaston Bachelard's concept of the psychological significance of homes, "For a Dreamer of Houses" explores the importance of the spaces we inhabit and how they represent ourselves, our values, and our desires. Featuring more than 35 artists in the museum's collection, the exhibition debuts new immersive and large-scale acquisitions that use forms derived from dwellings or furnishings to investigate ideas including belonging, alienation, fantasy, gender, and the body.

Location: Dallas, TX

Dates: through Jan. 31, 2021

Learn more: dma.org/art/exhibitions/dreamer-houses

Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon

"Roger Shimomura: By Looking Back, We Look Forward" reviews the artist's long and prolific career in which he uses a brightly colored pop-art style to depict a dizzying combination of traditional Japanese imagery and exaggerated cultural stereotypes. With an ironic touch and acerbic wit, Shimomura creates powerful works that interrogate American and Asian pop-cultural icons, notions of race, self-portraiture, and current political affairs, interpreting them through the prism of his family's World War II internment experience.

Location: Eugene, OR

Dates: through July 19

Learn more: jsma.uoregon.edu/shimomura

Denver Art Museum

"Natural Forces: Winslow Homer and Frederic Remington," featuring 60 artworks, reveals the connections between artistic themes and techniques used by the two acclaimed American artists. Born a generation apart, both artists succeeded in capturing the quintessential American spirit through works of art at the turn of the late-19th and early-20th centuries, an era known for growing industrialization and notions of the closing of the American Western frontier.

Location: Denver, CO

Dates: through June 7

Partners: Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Portland Museum of Art (ME)

Learn more: denverartmuseum.org/exhibitions/natural-forces

Check for Updates

Due to the coronavirus, please visit museum websites as exhibition schedules are subject to change.

Karin Hansen; courtesy of the Arab American National Museum

Boston Children's Museum

Boston Children's Museum has opened a reimagined and redesigned PlaySpace. This permanent exhibit is designed to provide young children and their caregivers with a safe, comfortable environment for the play and exploration that supports children in developing and practicing essential cognitive, physical, social, and emotional skills. Unique in size, scope, and vision, the new PlaySpace has been shaped by 40 years of experience and child development expertise.

Location: Boston, MA

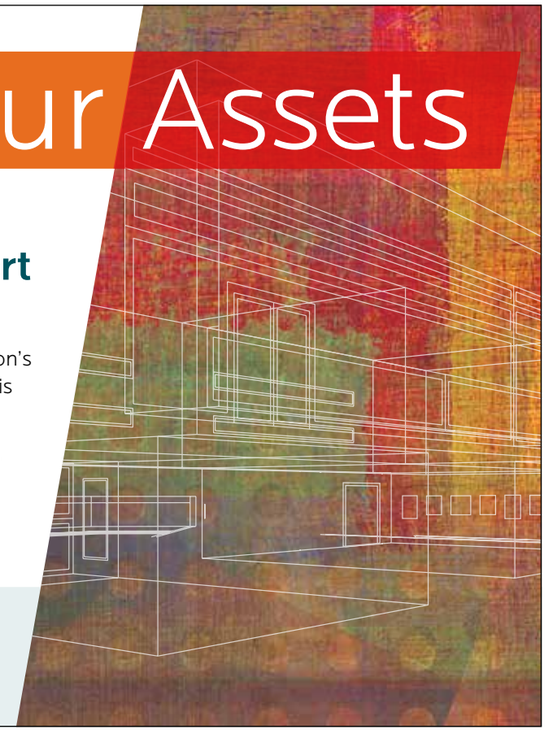
Learn more: bostonchildrens-museum.org/exhibits-programs/exhibits/playspace

Arab American National Museum

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded $750,000 over two years to the Arab American National Museum for its Artists + Residents program. Funds from the grant will be used to support a variety of residencies and will include everything from artist talks and workshops to large-scale productions and exhibitions. Resident fellows will stay in Dearborn for an average of four weeks.

Location: Dearborn, MI

Learn more: arabamericanmuseum.org/artists-residents



Isamu Noguchi, *Ashtray Prototypes*, 1945–48, The Noguchi Museum Archives ©INFGM/ARS; Paul Cézanne, *L'Estaque*, 1879–83, The Museum of Modern Art, The William S. Paley Collection; Pause for Thought

The Noguchi Museum

The Noguchi Museum delves into two forgotten projects by Isamu Noguchi, conceived at the height of American modernism. "The Sculptor and the Ashtray" explores Noguchi's efforts to design the perfect ashtray (a near-universal tabletop accessory in that era), and "Composition for Idlewild Airport" traces the story of Noguchi's unrealized design for a monumental sculpture for the new International Arrivals Building at New York's Idlewild Airport (now the John F. Kennedy International Airport). These side-by-side exhibitions testify to his interest in making sculpture everywhere out of everything.

Location: Long Island City, NY

Dates: through Aug. 23

Learn more: noguchi.org

Princeton University Art Museum

"Cézanne: The Rock and Quarry Paintings" features approximately 15 of Paul Cézanne's most important paintings that take rock formations as their principal subjects, as well as selected watercolors and related documentary material. The exhibition reveals the artist's fascination with geology, which began when he was a schoolboy in Aix-en-Provence, France, and ultimately helped shape the radical innovations of his artistic practice.

Location: Princeton, NJ

Dates: through June 14

Learn more: artmuseum.princeton.edu/art/exhibitions/3447

Adler Planetarium

Ninety years in the making, the Adler Planetarium is unveiling a new brand. Developed and designed by branding partners Pause for Thought and The Change Project, the new Adler identity is the culmination of a multi-year transformation aiming to make science more accessible to all citizens of the world. The new logo took cues from the sky and now incorporates a warm yellow color—bright, cheerful, and optimistic, much like the sun.

Location: Chicago, IL

Learn more: adlerplanetarium.org/blog/new-brand/

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.

The Mob Museum

The Mob Museum, the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement, has released a new mobile app that provides a visitors guide, in-depth education on the history of the Mob and law enforcement, and an interactive look-alike feature called Doppelgangster. Using cutting-edge facial recognition technology, the app compares a user's facial features with a database of more than 800 images spanning notable heroes, villains, singers, comedians, and entertainers—as well as many others from the Mob world—to identify the user's closest Doppelgangster.

Location: Las Vegas, NV

Learn more: themobmuseum.org/app/index.html

The Mob Museum; Taft Museum of Art

Taft Museum of Art

The Taft Museum of Art (TMA) has been awarded the competitive Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in the maximum amount: $750,000. The grant will directly support the TMA's bicentennial infrastructure project that will kick off later this year, which will preserve and reconstruct the museum's 200-year-old historic house.

Location: Cincinnati, OH

Learn more: taftmuseum.org

Clay Farrington/US Navy photo; Missouri Historical Society Collections; courtesy of the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum

Hampton Roads Naval Museum

In "The Ten Thousand-Day War at Sea: The U.S. Navy in Vietnam," visitors share in the experiences of Hampton Roads' Navy Vietnam veterans who endured combat at sea, on land, on the rivers, and in the skies over Vietnam. Sailors also built and staffed hospitals, ferried thousands of refugees to safety, transported supplies, and endured years of imprisonment in North Vietnam. More than 130 artifacts, most on exhibit for the first time, "open the hatches" to their often-overlooked service.

Location: Norfolk, VA

Dates: through 2022

Learn more: history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/hrnm.html

Missouri History Museum

To commemorate the upcoming 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, "Beyond the Ballot: St. Louis and Suffrage" showcases women who made an impact in St. Louis before gaining the vote in 1920. Unique color illustration by a local artist tells the stories of 32 women who lived between 1764 and 1918. Featuring about 80 artifacts, the exhibition traces the long history of the fight for women's suffrage in St. Louis.

Location: St. Louis, MO

Dates: through Aug. 15, 2021

Learn more: mohistory.org/museum

Santa Barbara Maritime Museum

As the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum (SBMM) turns 20, it is expanding and improving its exhibits and educational activities for visitors of all ages. Reflecting its dedication to the community and education, SBMM has been named one of the top 10 maritime museums in the United States by *Marinalife* magazine and is the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce's Nonprofit of the Year for 2020. To celebrate its 20th anniversary, SBMM has planned a busy year, beginning with the submission of its self-study for AAM accreditation.

Location: Santa Barbara, CA

Learn more: sbmm.org/20thanniversary

Redefining Museums

After a rocky start, the International Council of Museums begins anew on defining "museum."

By Kathy Dwyer Southern and William Underwood Eiland

In this treacherous age of foreboding and pessimism—wars and rumors of wars, as the Good Book tells us—refashioning a definition for the word "museum" seems a silly undertaking. After all, we know what a museum is, don't we?

However, the International Council of Museums' (ICOM) current definition no longer expresses the essential nature of museums that now represent different locales, regions, and nations and embrace disciplines as varied as art and history, natural history and science, and zoos and arboreta. Beliefs about the very purpose of museums are stridently argued, especially internationally.

Museums of whatever stripe find themselves coping with the degradation of our natural world, the destruction of such hallowed monuments as Palmyra or the Buddhas of Bamyan, gender suppression in most of the world, and, among other issues, persistent racism. Without clear guidance, ironically, we risk recolonizing (by losing freedom of speech, privacy, and conscience, for example) even as we decolonize.

Once upon a time, "museum" meant truth, conviction, and trust. We search again for that meaning even as we grapple with political falsehood, desultory commitment, and incredulity if not uncertainty. Museums no longer have the luxury of avoiding the socioeconomic and the political; if we care about the challenges all museums are facing and if we revere the object, the living specimen, and ultimately the knowledge we find and disseminate, then we must answer who we are and what we are to become.

Given all this, ICOM undertook a multi-year quest to newly define "museum," culminating in the presentation of the new definition in 2019. Unfortunately, the process began badly.

An audience member asks a question at the Plenary on Museum Definition at ICOM Kyoto 2019.

© ICOM

The Parameters and Process

Involving 44,000 colleagues in the redefinition of "museum" is perhaps an impossible and pointless task. Equally difficult is achieving consensus from this robust, literate, passionate constituency, who often value their differences—their unique missions and collections—more than their similarities.

And yet that is what ICOM set out to do: to create a process in which the world of museum professionals would create a new definition that reflects a consensus of what museums are, what they aspire to be, and what the future holds for them.

Jette Sandahl, chair of the Museums Definition, Prospects and Potentials Committee (MDPP), the ICOM committee responsible for overseeing this work, argues that the current definition "fails to reflect and address the profoundly dissimilar conditions under which museums work across the world, as part of diverse societies marked by conflicts and by continuous and rapid change. It falls short in adequately articulating the current responsibilities and commitments of museums and in guiding and supporting museums in their manifold and complex visions for the future."

"Museums no longer have the luxury of avoiding the socioeconomic and the political; if we care about the challenges all museums are facing and if we revere the object, the living specimen, and ultimately the knowledge we find and disseminate, then we must answer who we are and what we are to become."

The MDPP laid out a multi-year process for this work and developed the following parameters to guide the creation of a new definition:

- The definition should be clear on the purpose and value base of museums and should retain the unique, defining, and essential unity in museums of the function of collecting, preserving, documenting, researching, exhibiting, and in

THE EVOLVING DEFINITION OF 'MUSEUM'

ICOM Museum Definition 2007
The museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment.

ICOM Proposed Museum Definition 2019
Museums are democratising, inclusive, and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations, and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people.

Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality, and planetary wellbeing.

Members of the Museums Definition, Prospects and Potentials Committee speak at ICOM Kyoto 2019.

© ICOM

other ways communicating the collections.
- It should acknowledge the urgency of the crisis in nature.
- It should acknowledge vastly different world views, conditions, and traditions and should recognize the deep societal inequalities and asymmetries of power and wealth across the globe.
- It should recognize the expert role of museums in relation to their communities and should express the commitment to be meeting places and open to diverse platforms of exchange.
- It should express the accountability and transparency under which museums will use their resources.

MDPP's core coordinating committee included representatives from all continents who served in a series of thematic working groups, which met for two years. In addition, during that time, roundtables and conferences reached approximately 2,000 individuals who were solicited to help with MDPP's work. ICOM received several hundred suggestions, which the MDPP and the ICOM Executive Board reviewed and edited to create a reformulated definition for final presentation to the delegates at the Triennial in Kyoto in September 2019.

After heated, extensive discussion, delegates in Kyoto overwhelmingly voted to table the proposal. There were many reasons for this; some felt strongly the definition needed to be changed, while others were equally passionate that the current definition should remain. In the end, it was clear that the new definition did not have the necessary support, and the majority of the membership needed more time for reflection and discussion.

Learning from the Process

The Triennial delegates' strong opposition surprised ICOM's leadership. Clearly, ICOM needed to take a hard look at the process and its aftermath. Following are the key points of this self-interrogation:

- A strong grassroots process was in place from the beginning, but without the concurrence and notification of ICOM's international committees structure.
- The overall project's progress and raison d'être needed to be shared continuously with the membership so that it was clear, understood, and trusted.
- The language of the definition's English and Spanish versions needed editing and was not clearly articulated.
- A project of this scale needed additional staff and funding resources.
- The process for achieving consensus in Kyoto appeared rushed and poorly planned, which did little to assure buy-in and success.

In December 2019, the ICOM Executive Board outlined a timetable and next steps for the MDPP to help alleviate these concerns and build on the work already accomplished. Specifically, the MDPP's membership now includes representatives from ICOM's member groups, and an open, transparent, and consultative process will be developed to work with the National and International Committees over the next two years. To provide more time for discussion, ICOM has set a three-year term, from 2020 to 2022, for the next stages of work. The three-year milestone chart will serve as a reference point for all members on the process, timetable, and progress toward a new definition.

It may be naive to think we can construct a definition that pleases all, but we believe this work will spur deeper thinking about what museums do and are.

To paraphrase Philippe de Montebello, the museum is the memory of mankind. Over the next several years, as we groan over wordsmithing and bristle at differences of opinion, we hope we can agree on a global definition that gives us the means to save our planet, serve our fellow humans, and safeguard their legacy. Equally important, we hope we retain the poetry of our endeavors as we forge the prose.

Kathy Dwyer Southern is president of the Biggs Museum of American Art Board of Trustees and faculty in museum studies at the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, The George Washington University. **William Underwood Eiland** is director of the Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia.

The National Archives altered this photo of the 2017 Women's March on Washington, DC, that was used in promotion of its exhibition on US women's suffrage.

Mario Tama/Getty Images News via Getty Images

FEAR FACTOR

In a contentious cultural climate, museums are wise to recognize the pressures to self-censor.

By Janet Marstine

In January 2020, it came to light that the National Archives had altered a photograph that introduced the exhibition "Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote" celebrating the centenary of women's suffrage in the US. The work, by Getty Images photographer Mario Tama, captured demonstrators at the January 21, 2017, Women's March on Washington, DC, which became a rallying cry for those concerned about the threat to women's rights represented by President Donald Trump, inaugurated the day before.

The modified image obscured several of the protesters' signs, including some with Trump's name and others with terms representing women's genitalia. This altered photo had been shown at the archives for some eight months—since the exhibition opened. On the cusp of the 2020 Women's March on Washington, a *Washington Post* article called out the revision, and a National Archives spokesperson initially justified the institution's actions as an attempt to remain apolitical and family friendly. She also argued that it was defensible to alter the photo because the work was promotional material rather than part of the exhibition.

But within a day of the *Post's* report, facing a barrage of criticism from practitioners, scholars, and the wider public, Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero issued a public apology and, soon afterwards, the altered image was replaced with the original photograph. In his apology, Ferriero acknowledged the National Archives's responsibility to truth and to the stories of women. He also framed the incident as a crisis of credibility that could only be repaired by greater transparency and scrutiny of internal policies and practices, none of which, however, he identified.

He was careful to stress that the photograph was not censored by an outside party; "the decision was made without any external direction whatsoever," he declared. Yet, Ferriero did not admit that the alteration was an act of institutional self-censorship.

Defining Self-Censorship

In contrast to censorship, in which a party outside an organization exerts authority to suppress ideas, including artistic expression, self-censorship is exercised internally. In museums and archives, self-censorship can best be understood as the suppression of ideas, including artistic expression, by an individual practitioner—an artist, a curator, or an educator—or by the institution itself in the development and presentation of content.

Self-censorship is often challenging to recognize because the boundaries between it and the routine processes of responsible editing are often blurred. Self-censorship can be distinguished, however, by the impetus that motivates it—fear.

Acts of self-censorship can usually be traced to fears about possible retribution from the state or private funders, or potential lost visitorship. The growing impetus to become a safe space for exploring difficult issues, given the complex dynamics of diversity politics, has created a museum environment increasingly characterized by the fear of offense. Such fears are bolstered by risk aversion—the drive to lower uncertainty—even when risk assumption will more likely lead to successful outcomes.

Though some amount of risk-averse thinking is fundamental to responsible practice, it becomes detrimental when it clouds decision-making. In the case of the National Archives's self-censorship of Tama's photograph, the alteration was undoubtedly motivated by fears of repercussions from the Trump administration, the political right, and conservative audiences. Its risk-averse course of action created huge reputational damage when a more confident stance was essential to achieving the exhibition's goal of recognizing women's empowerment.

In the fervor to avoid offense, institutional self-censorship often functions as a kind of "othering" that reinforces the marginalized status of disenfranchised groups. Such was the case in the altered Tama photograph; obscuring signs critical of President Trump and those that proclaimed the rights women have over their own bodies was a disempowering act. Celebratory frameworks championing diversity and inclusion in the name of social cohesion, such as the "Rightfully Hers" exhibition, too often exculpate contentious issues and analysis that might have been deployed to transformative effect.

The Ubiquity of Self-Censorship

The fact that Ferriero did not say that the institution had engaged in self-censorship in his apology is not surprising, given that the phenomenon is widely denied and misunderstood. In Western democracies, publicly exercising institutional self-censorship is frequently viewed as a violation of principle. Denial of institutional self-censorship also stems, in part, from the myth that museums are neutral spaces. Sharon Heal, UK Museums Association director, explains this phenomenon:

> The very low level of awareness of self-censorship is partly rooted in the complete misconception that museums are neutral spaces. In this misconception, there is no curatorial voice, no authorship, just a neutral narrative—and thus no censorship. I think that message really persists. If you don't tackle the idea that museums are not neutral spaces, you can't then talk about what you do and don't display, what stories you tell, and which voices you exclude.

Acknowledging the illusory nature of neutrality is particularly challenging terrain for federal institutions such as the National Archives. In his apology, Ferriero insists that the archives must maintain "a commitment to impartiality" despite the fact that this commitment and its underlying assumptions undercut the equality agenda of the exhibition.

While it may be comforting to maintain the illusion that self-censorship occurs "over there" and "not here," it occurs in all kinds of museums in all parts of the world, not just in countries ruled by authoritarian regimes. For instance, at the UK Museums Association's 2016 annual conference, a poll of 63 delegates attending a session on institutional self-censorship revealed that 51 percent had consciously withheld information from audiences due to its controversial nature. Moreover, the limitlessness of self-censorship makes it more dangerous than censorship, which, in its dependence on external apparatus, is necessarily limited.

Today, unlike during the US "culture wars" of the late 1980s and early 1990s, pressures to self-censor come not only from politically conservative camps but, equally, from the left. Even the most progressive institutions find that a certain level of self-censorship is endemic to their work. For example, museum staff writing interpretive texts need to follow the protocols of institutional terminology documents.

And while social media has introduced empowering platforms that allow audiences to shape museum discourse and action, when weaponized with a mob mentality, these platforms can readily induce museums to attempt damage control by self-censoring exhibitions and programs. Such was the case when the Guggenheim Museum in New York pulled two videos and one installation piece featuring animals from its 2017 exhibition "Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World."

An online petition signed by more than 700,000 people gave the false impression that the most transgressive of the video pieces, Peng Yu and Sun Yuan's 2003 *Dogs That Cannot Touch Each Other,* was being performed live at the museum. Nonetheless, the Guggenheim self-censored the pieces, citing threats of violence. Museum leadership did this despite the fact that the curators had conceived the installation piece, Huang Yong Ping's 1993 *Theater of the World*, to be a linchpin of the project, as reflected in the exhibition's title.

Only after the self-censorship occurred did the curators acknowledge the culture clash between contemporary Chinese artists working in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre and animal rights activists speaking from a privileged position today.

The Ethics of Self-Censorship

Self-censorship does not, however, implicitly and inevitably represent an ethical wrong. In fact, self-censorship is sometimes an ethical good.

Sometimes it is performed as a means of unsettling sexist, racist, or classist assumptions and practice. For example, in 2018, the Manchester Art Gallery in England removed John William Waterhouse's 1896 *Hylas and the Nymphs* from the gallery walls for one week as part of a project by artist Sonia Boyce. The artist was interrogating the display and interpretation of historical works that are increasingly seen to objectify their subjects. This act provoked constructive discourse, as evidenced by the comments on sticky notes Boyce invited visitors to leave in the space where the painting had hung.

As part of a project by artist Sonia Boyce, Manchester Art Gallery visitors left sticky notes when John William Waterhouse's *Hylas and the Nymphs* was temporarily removed.

Photograph by Michael Pollard

Of course, in authoritarian states, where censorship is ubiquitous, self-censorship is a necessary part of everyday work. Practitioners must remove potential triggers in order to protect artists, staff, and the museum itself from potentially grave repercussions.

But because self-censorship is often enacted in the name of protection, it is vital to consider who is being protected and for what reasons. Museum professionals must decide if and how to resist the pressures to self-censor by weighing the ethical costs. This is fundamental to museum work today.

In fact, museum practitioners do have agency when confronted with the pressures to self-censor. The binary construction of censor as perpetrator and censored as victim that has dominated censorship discourse in the arts is no longer productive. The goal is not always to eradicate self-censorship but to accept that developing and presenting museum content is often a delicate dance between resisting and exercising self-censorship.

In some parts of the world, practitioners do not have the freedom to speak openly about their experiences of self-censorship. But where we do, we owe it to ourselves and others to be transparent about these issues, or the phenomenon will remain needlessly opaque. Only with robust self-reflective dialogue can museums make ethically informed, deliberative decisions when faced with self-censorship.

SELF-CENSORSHIP: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- **Who am I concerned this project might provoke and why?**
- **What might the reprisal be?**
- **How realistic are these fears?**
- **What risk does the potential self-censorship itself entail?**
- **What are the real ethical costs of resisting versus enacting self-censorship?**
- **Have I put proactive strategies and tactics in place (as identified in the Resources on p. 20) to fully appreciate and confidently navigate the potentially contentious nature of the project?**
- **Have I collaborated both within my organization and with partner organizations for knowledge exchange, mutual support, and joint advocacy?**
- **How should I weigh my pursuit of professional integrity with my respect for diverse cultural contexts, which might be at odds with my vision?**

RESOURCES

Julia Farrington, "Taking the Offensive: Defending Artistic Freedom of Expression in the UK," *Index on Censorship*, May 2013
indexoncensorship.org/takingtheoffensive

Janet Marstine and Svetlana Mintcheva (eds.), *Curating Under Pressure: International Perspectives on Negotiating Conflict and Upholding Integrity* (in press), summer 2020

Farida Shaheed, "Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights: The Right to Freedom of Expression and Creativity," Human Rights Council 23rd Session, United Nations General Assembly, March 2013
digitallibrary.un.org/record/755488?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header

National Coalition Against Censorship, *Guidelines for State Arts Agencies, Museums, University Galleries and Performance Spaces*, 2019
ncac.org/resource/guidelines-for-state-arts-agencies-museums-university-galleries-and-performance-spaces/

What Next?, *Meeting Ethical and Reputational Challenges: Guidance*
whatnextculture.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Meeting-Ethical-and-Reputational-Challenges-Guidance.pdf

Janet Marstine recently retired as associate professor from the School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester. She is now an independent researcher and consultant in the US focusing on museum ethics, including self-censorship.

Going Off-Script

How can museums use their galleries to create more inclusive communities?

By Jason Porter, Theresa Sotto, and Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell

iStock.com/wildpixel; Jim Bennett

A little over a year ago, the Museum of Pop Culture began planning some in-gallery presentations for the museum's celebration of the 75th birthday of Jimi Hendrix, the subject of one of the museum's core galleries and one of Seattle's favorite sons.

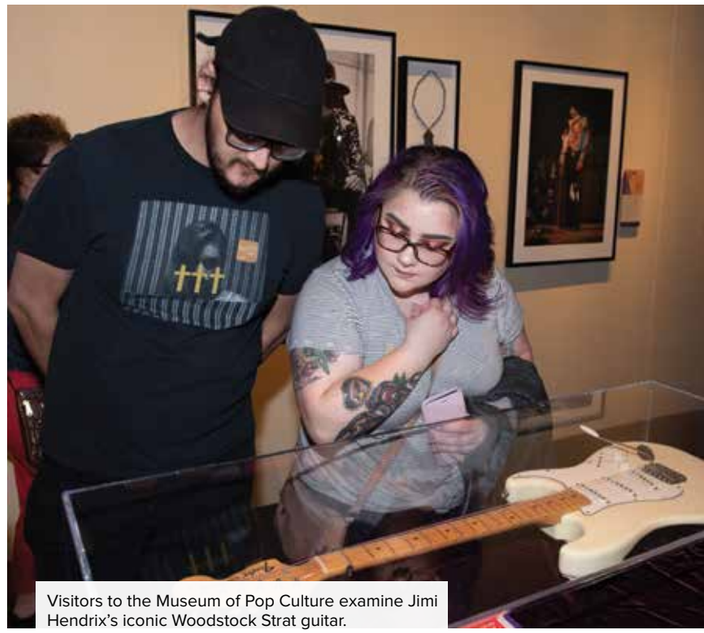
I began with research, diving deep into the content of the exhibition, looking through as much material as our curatorial staff could share with me, and reading a recent and well-regarded biography of the rock icon. The exhibition tells the story of the four most active years of Hendrix's career and his relentless travel around the world in the late 1960s as the most popular and well-paid musician at the time.

One of the resources I encountered examined Hendrix's life and career from a black perspective, a point of view that, in all honesty, I hadn't previously thought much about. Throughout his career, Jimi Hendrix faced a fair amount of discrimination, especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s. At that time, as he played backup for other performers and in his own early bands, he was required to enter night clubs in the Jim Crow South through a back door. Later, when he had established his own innovative rock and blues musical style, he encountered white "gatekeepers" in the music business who tried to box him into musical styles they felt would sell more records.

These examples of Hendrix's experience with race are not overtly addressed in our exhibition, which focuses on Hendrix's travel and creative process on the road, though the first-person accounts in journals and song lyrics nod to his lived experience. But his life as a black man is part of the story that today's visitors—especially younger ones—are interested in. We often bring students and young artists into this gallery and their questions about Hendrix's identity have inspired us to bring his blackness into the conversation via additional photographs and materials, discussion questions, and closely looking at objects such as Hendrix's personal journal, drawings, and draft song lyrics.

Museums of all types the world over are responding to the changing needs of their audiences, a paradigm shift in visitor demographics, and conversations about the purpose and definition of museums. As a result, educators, programmers, and interpreters are thinking differently about museum experiences, upending long-held norms with new practices in dialogue, community engagement, and other informal learning strategies. These new approaches often require educators to go "off-script," pivoting away from the stories addressed in exhibitions and broadening the history, points of view, and interactions to respond to and engage with visitors.

Following are two example strategies—one working with museum staff and with physicians to address bias and the other working with teens to foster civic engagement. — Jason Porter



Visitors to the Museum of Pop Culture examine Jimi Hendrix's iconic Woodstock Strat guitar.

Museum Teaching to Mitigate Bias

By Theresa Sotto

Museum educators are experts in facilitating conversations about art that are grounded in visitors' interpretations. While sharing multiple perspectives is usually a positive experience, conversations can become uncomfortable if a visitor makes a biased or offensive statement. Luckily, many educators are experienced in steering such conversations into productive terrain.

> "The purpose of this training is not to gain a deeper understanding about art, but to learn more about ourselves and our biases."

This is a skill set that museum educators can use to help others in our sector and those outside it to mitigate bias. The need is clearly there. A 2019 Glassdoor survey found that jobs related to diversity and inclusion initiatives have increased by 30 percent year over year in the US workforce, revealing a growing desire among companies across a range of sectors to proactively address discrimination and bias in workplace culture.

At the Hammer Museum at UCLA, I have been leading trainings to mitigate bias for staff and students and for external groups. Trainings take place in the galleries, where I use works of art to facilitate conversations about an individual's subjective response to that art.

The purpose of this training is not to gain a deeper understanding about art, but to learn more about ourselves and our biases. Although some biases are helpful—such as a preference for healthy food—many biases are rooted in stereotypes that skew perspectives, cause microaggressions, and foster discriminatory behavior. Studies reveal that the first step in mitigating our biases is to become aware of them. Participants in this training, which have included UCLA medical students as well as museum staff, walk away with new insights into how aspects of their identities and lived experiences influence their decisions and give rise to biases.

One activity that I lead helps participants uncover their unconscious biases through associations. I invite participants to match a descriptive word to a work of art, and then we compare and contrast our choices and the reasons behind those choices. If someone is given the word "powerful," for example, and selects a towering sculpture over a painting that depicts an act of protest, the individual may unconsciously associate height or physical dominance with power, even if, intellectually, they believe that using one's voice is more powerful.

Museum educators have been using some variation of word association activities with school groups for years; however, going deeper into why we associate certain words with artworks can foster a new level of engagement—one that encourages deep self-reflection and, ultimately, responds to an urgent societal need.

For museum staff, this training can help employees double-check their impulses: *Do I think this visitor might touch the art because I witnessed a specific behavior or because I have a bias that clouds my judgement?*

In the medical field, my hope is that doctors will become more self-reflective about their diagnoses. A multitude of studies over the years have shown that non-white patients get less optimal care. If doctors better understood their biases, obviously it wouldn't undo systemic racism, but it would be a start.

Civics-Inspired Approaches to Working with Teens

By Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell

When we experiment with unconventional approaches in museum programming, such as methods inspired by civic engagement and social justice, we can share authority with our communities. When I came to the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) from the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, I began to ask questions about both the inclusion of communities in program development and how the format of these programs could incorporate social justice.

Were we providing programming opportunities for communities to take the lead? Were our offerings considering a spectrum of engagement strategies? As museums adapt to new expectations of 21st century visitors, we must consider the ways in which we *permit* or *barricade* visitor experiences.

In the fall of 2019, SAAM developed its first-ever, free Teen Arts Workshop series. The goal was to create a more audience-centered program to encourage more "in the moment" discovery and informal interaction with civically engaged ideas and concerns.

In conjunction with our "American Myth & Memory: David Levinthal Photographs" exhibition, which featured enlarged Polaroids of staged miniature dioramas depicting the American West, Barbies, and sports figures, we created a program in which youth explored the idea of "being American."

The program brought 10 teen participants from different backgrounds and schools into dialogue about the exhibition, their experiences of the media, and their own backgrounds. The group led their own discussion about American beauty standards and the idolization of sports figures with limited guidance from our educators.

Building on that success, we planned a second workshop with our "Chiura Obata: American Modern" exhibition that featured works the artist completed while imprisoned in a Japanese incarceration camp during World War II. We partnered with Andrea Kim Neighbors, a colleague at Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, to co-create a civics-inspired space where meaning-making could take root.

Communal flower wreath from the Teen Arts Workshop with Shizu Salamando at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Photo by Wei Wei Chen for SAAM

Instead of guiding teens through the exhibition with called-out works and accompanying questions as we did with the Levinthal exhibition, we encouraged them to explore the artwork on their own, using the "see, think, wonder" model. We also developed a hands-on art-making activity related to the experience of Japanese incarceration in America. Shizu Salamando, teaching artist and descendant of incarceration survivors, found through researching her family heritage and Japanese-American history, archival footage, and artifacts that incarcerated Japanese-Americans crafted paper flower wreaths to use in celebrations and funerals at the camps.

After visiting the gallery, the teens created their own flowers, and upon completion, put their creations together into their own unique depiction of a community wreath. Salamando made the experience even more relevant when she discussed with the participants the act of wreath-laying that happens today along the Mexican border.

As we developed a self-driven space for teens in SAAM's public programming, we intentionally employed civics-inspired strategies. As our public programming priorities are increasingly driven by outreach and audience cultivation, I am particularly curious if civics-inspired programming can be used to shift our internal museum cultures toward less authoritative and more inclusive practice—as well as shift public perception of what a museum experience can be.

Jason Porter is the director of education and programs at the Museum of Pop Culture in Seattle, Washington. **Theresa Sotto** is assistant director of academic programs at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, California. **Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell** is the head of public programs at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC.

Is That Hung White?

By Joanne Jones-Rizzi and Stacey Mann

A conversation on the state of museum exhibitions and race.

In 2016, a group of 24 museum professionals came together in Chicago for a three-day convening on race and racism in museums. The idea for the convening—called Museums & Race: Transformation and Justice—grew out of a conversation about museum response to civil unrest in the wake of a fatal shooting of an African American man by a white police officer that occurred in Ferguson, Missouri. That conversation was hosted by some members of The Museum Group during the AAM Annual Meeting in April 2015.

Since then, the Museums & Race movement has expanded with an intentional mission of shining a light on the role that race and racism play in the museum industry—in both the obvious, visible ways and the smaller but sometimes more insidious, invisible ways. It also provides a space within a predominantly white field for those of us in the industry who don't identify as white. Since that original gathering, Museums & Race has remained a progressive voice for change in the industry, hosting the Museums & Race Unconference at the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting and the Museums & Race Transformation and Justice Lounge at the AAM Annual Meeting since then.

Our aim here is to answer some common questions we see from colleagues and to frame the dialogue we want to continue in the museum field.

What is the origin of "Is That Hung White?"

Joanne Jones-Rizzi (JJR): When I first entered the museum field in 1985, I was struck by the number of conversations we were having at the Boston Children's Museum about attracting and being relevant to "new" audiences and marginalized communities. We had invited a group of community advisors who represented a number of groups we wanted to attract, and one of the advisors who was African descended commented that an exhibition in the museum was "hung white." The phrase has stayed with me and remains relevant in light of how painfully slow change has been in the design and exhibition development sectors of our field.

Stacey Mann (SM): One of the consistent observations made by individuals engaged in these dialogues about museums and race is the absence of exhibit teams. Much of the work up until now has been led by education departments and visitor services staff—the individuals who see firsthand the impact of our design

Maryland Historical Society; Batareykin

"Mining the Museum," a 1992 installation by Fred Wilson at the Maryland Historical Society, illuminated what exhibitions can be when they are designed and interpreted through a lens that is not white. Wilson addressed the pervasive white supremacy culture, which he explored and challenged through objects, their adjacencies, and the labels used to describe them.

and content choices on the visitors we seek to engage. As conversations about decolonization have come to the fore, many curators and collection managers have started to wrestle with the complexities of how we tell different stories. When Joanne and I attended MASS Action a few years ago, we surveyed the room and noted the dearth of exhibition colleagues in attendance. The idea for an "Is That Hung White?" dialogue originated there.

What do you hope to highlight by bringing this question to the broader AAM community?

JJR: Our goal is to call out the glaring disparity within our field, and to call in the challenges experienced by those of us who are brown, black, POC, or indigenous. It's important to acknowledge that there is a problem. People who are in positions of power within our field need to listen and respond by changing the systems currently in place to be more inclusive. This ongoing discussion is about acknowledging and affirming for museum staff who are brown, black, or indigenous, that as staff of color, there is no doorway through which we leave our professional identities behind at the close of a workday, nor do we leave our cultural and community identities behind when we enter the museum each workday.

SM: We want to emphasize the important role that exhibition teams (designers, developers, fabricators) have in not only deconstructing many of the problematic systems and structures that continue to stand in the way of meaningful change, but also in creating room to think differently about what kinds of spaces we create and who is welcomed there, both visitors *and* staff. Issues of race, representation, and inclusion manifest in so many different ways within the exhibition world that we can no longer afford to ignore that facet of the industry most responsible for the visual language of our public-facing spaces.

What are some of the challenges you see for museums in tackling issues of representation and inclusion in the exhibition process?

SM: The obvious answer is addressing issues of implicit bias in how we approach exhibition planning and development—the language we use, the people we hire, the stories we tell, the design choices we make. In 2010, AAM's Center for the Future of Museums published *Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums* and before that, *Museums & Society 2034* (2008) and *Museums & Society 2019* (2009). Each of these reports draws attention to the shifting cultural landscape and the need for museums to get serious about building a more inclusive, and consequently sustainable, future. Generally speaking, I still see a lot of museums holding back, waiting for some cookie-cutter solution to present itself—a straightforward checklist that can be absorbed into an already overcrowded work plan. That's not how it works. There is no silver bullet.

JJR: The landscape is changing within many cultural institutions. It's a slow progression, but change is palpable and visible. Numerous institutions are adapting diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) initiatives and identifying leadership to make change. What is most disturbing to me is that talented, deeply engaged individuals are leaving our field. It's disheartening to see these brilliant individuals leave out of frustration because there are few or no opportunities for growth or advancement in addition to ongoing, insidious, overt racism and overwhelming hostility. Institutions need to pay attention to this dangerous and harmful trend. Sustainability is a key aspect of DEAI work. Understanding the cultural shift that occurs with change from DEAI perspectives and its impact on staff who are not white is critical to the success of ongoing, committed change.

How can we support one another in our collective efforts to build competency and capacity for change across the museum exhibition landscape?

JRR: Take advantage of the outstanding work being

Batareykin

On DEAI Leadership:

"As a museum executive, I realize that I play a part in creating brave spaces at our museum. I am committed to initiating this dialogue within our museum, helping to institutionalize the practice of equity and inclusion and learning alongside my colleagues as we do this enduring work in our field. Be brave and creative as you broach each challenge with gratitude."

—Su Oh, Senior Vice President, Education, Exhibitions, and Community Engagement at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

On Decolonization:

"Traditionally, the museum model uses a curator, or expert, to build content. We decided to utilize exhibit developers a few years ago but realized that we were still not engaging enough (or in ways that felt more than transactional) with our communities. When the opportunity came about to refresh our "Kumeyaay: Native Californians" exhibition, we knew that we could start to address the ways in which we previously had been exclusive in content building. We are still working on how to best go about this process, but for me personally, real, genuine listening to communities has been my starting place. Decolonizing initiatives have come to the forefront for our museum in all departments; our journey is ongoing and we have much to learn."

—Erika Katayama, Senior Director, Audience Engagement at the San Diego Museum of Man

done by colleagues (take advantage, but don't *take advantage*—cite their contributions). The work that is happening across the field is exciting. There are numerous initiatives and efforts that involve people with design, content development, and fabricator roles. The approach with some of these groups has been to use a distributed leadership model that involves and supports collective decision-making and builds on the strengths of a collective. Such models provide ways for multiple voices and perspectives to be included in decision-making and can empower and elevate voices that have been silenced or rendered invisible. Develop and support opportunities within institutions that support growth, invest in professional development for staff, and provide opportunities for mentoring. (See the Resource Guide at right.)

SM: We need to stop making excuses: "That's not how we do things." "That's not their role." "This is too disruptive." Change is hard—anything worth doing usually is. It might feel disruptive or even a bit threatening. Don't panic; that's our "fight or flight" brain talking. It will argue every time for the path of least resistance and retreat. It's the cultivated voice of white supremacy that has dictated our reflexive choices for so very long—but it's within our power to change the way we choose to respond to it. This isn't the work of one person or one department within an institution. It belongs to all of us.

On DEAI work:
"It took me years to shift the DEAI narrative from 'me' to 'we.' If we truly want to have impact and change these bias systems we work within, then DEAI work is everyone's work, not just the person or team that holds the title but ALL."

—Veronica Garcia-Luis, Project Director, Visitor Research & Evaluation and Director of Diversity & Inclusion Initiative, Organizational Development at the Exploratorium

GETTING STARTED: A RESOURCE GUIDE

This list is by no means exhaustive, but if you are looking to jumpstart conversations within your organization, we recommend beginning here.

- **Museums & Race (museumsandrace.org)**
  A movement to challenge and reimagine institutional policies and systems that perpetuate oppression in museums. Spark a conversation with the Museums & Race report card.
- **MASS Action Toolkit (museumaction.org)**
  A compilation of theory, procedures, and best practices to create greater equity within the museum field as well as diagnostic tools to help organizations gauge their readiness for equity work.
- **Empathetic Museum (empatheticmuseum.com)**
  Maturity Model and diagnostic tools for organizational change across five dimensions: civic vision, institutional body language, community resonance, timeliness and sustainability, and performance measures.
- **Museum Hue (museumhue.com)**
  Resources and networking with a focus on community, culture, and careers for museum professionals of color. #MuseumHue
- **Museums Are Not Neutral**
  Global advocacy campaign aimed at exposing the myth of museum neutrality and calling for equity-based transformation across museums. #MuseumsAreNotNeutral
- **Incluseum (incluseum.com)**
  Advancing new ways of being a museum through critical dialogue, community building, and collaborative practice related to inclusion in museums.
- **AAM Facing Change Initiative**
  Framework, training, and resources for museum boards to build diverse and inclusive cultures within their organizations that better reflect and serve their communities.

AAM Annual Meeting 2018 attendees participate in a Community Cypher hosted by the Museums & Race Transformation and Justice Lounge in Phoenix, Arizona.

Stacey Mann ©2018

Batareykin

What comes next?

JJR: None of this is new. These conversations have been happening for decades. There are many voices in the field amplifying and taking action to draw attention to the themes of inclusion and representation. However, there is a comprehensive approach that in some ways was not always present. Emboldened disruptors are taking this work to a new level. There is an understanding and active work to not just focus on the audience, but connect audience attention and engagement to relevant content, and connect relevant content to whoever is developing and designing content. This is not to say that there are no historical models for this approach, but as a field this has not been our practice.

SM: There are a lot of conversations taking place, which is encouraging. More and more institutions are engaging in professional development and institutional assessments to look at their own professional practices. More foundations are earmarking funds to support DEAI initiatives. It remains to be seen if those efforts will result in cosmetic changes—easy to regress and fall back into old habits—or truly transformative changes that address the core institutional cultures that have kept us as we are for so long. We are going to experience growing pains as we continue to move through these issues and define solutions for each of our organizations. We will make mistakes. And we will need to continue the dialogue and make adjustments as we travel this road together.

Joanne Jones-Rizzi is vice president of science, equity, and education at the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul, and **Stacey Mann** is an independent interpretive planner and exhibition developer based in Philadelphia. Special thanks to the authors' colleagues, whose contributions have meant so much to this conversation: **Nafisa Isa, Erika Katayama, Jaron Keener, Su Oh, Veronica Garcia-Luis, Marquette Folley, Elisabeth Callihan,** and the entire **Museums & Race network**.

OF LAW AND ETHICS

What do museums need to know in this new era of cultural property ownership disputes?

By Suzanne Hale

A tension often exists between the law and the ethics of collecting cultural property, and nowhere is that more apparent than in museums today. Museums are coming under increasing scrutiny, both for their leadership choices and for issues of provenance. Perhaps due to this increased focus on social justice and accountability, museum patrons are now asking more questions about where objects came from and how they came into the possession of a given collection.

Collecting and displaying cultural property is a sensitive topic: Who controls culture, and who (if anyone) should have a special claim to cultural objects? Does it matter whether the objects have been out of their original contexts for many years? What if they were acquired in good faith and with reasonable due diligence? And what happens if they've been in the public sphere for so long that they seem to "belong" to the public?

As platforms for displaying humankind's creativity and venues for public dialogue among cultures, museums are no strangers to ownership scandals and disputes. Indeed, museums play a unique role in defining the legal and ethical landscape of collecting and displaying cultural property; therefore, it is not surprising that museums frequently become unwitting battlefields upon which legal and moral controversies concerning ownership are fought.

Understanding the contours of these disputes can help museums minimize risks and encourage more careful thought about their future legacies. AAM and the Association of Art Museum Directors issue ethical and professional guidelines to help museums navigate these potentially treacherous waters. (See Resources on p. 34.)

So what do museums need to know as they house, preserve, display, and interpret cultural property today? The

France promises to return looted artifacts to Benin that are currently held at the Museé du Quai Branly–Jacques Chirac in Paris.

agefotostock / Alamy Stock Photo

> "European museums, particularly those in France, Germany, and the Netherlands, are leading the way in establishing conditions and guidelines for considering the return, permanently or on loan, of objects from public collections."

following, discussed further in this article, scratch the surface of this topic.

- Antiquities are coming under ever-greater scrutiny, and the year 1970 is not an incontestable bright line.
- The landscape for possessing and displaying tribal and colonial-era objects has likewise become more challenging for museums.
- Evolving legal concepts are changing the face of Nazi-era claims.
- Museums should continuously improve and update their due diligence policies and efforts.
- Museums should have a forward-thinking approach to ownership issues.

RESOURCES

Archaeological Material and Ancient Art
aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/archaeological-material-and-ancient-art/

Guidelines on the Acquisition of Archaeological Material and Ancient Art
aamd.org/sites/default/files/document/AAMD%20Guidelines%202013.pdf

Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics*, 2018
restitutionreport2018.com/sarr_savoy_en.pdf

Greater Scrutiny on Antiquities

Many museums are aware of the challenges in displaying global art treasures, especially when they are ancient, archaeologically significant, and have special national, cultural, or ethnographic ties with particular places or peoples. Accordingly, museums should be generally familiar with source nations' efforts to regulate trade and prevent looting, efforts that have produced a proliferation of national cultural heritage laws and international treaties aimed at protecting the movement and marketing of antiquities.

While 1970, the year of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, is generally recognized as the benchmark date for museums acquiring antiquities (an ethical and moral standard first proposed by Association of Art Museum Directors guidelines), museums should know that an object's pre-1970 provenance does not necessarily fully insulate the museum from claims. This is a museum guideline and not embodied in law.

While countries give some respect to the 1970 date, those with patrimony laws pre-dating 1970 may still make claims if they believe that a given artifact was found, or originated, within the modern-day boundaries of their country during a time when local law created ownership rights in the country.

Tribal and Colonial-Era Objects

In recent years, a proliferation of reports, national task forces, and international commissions have offered advice on the repatriation of artifacts to tribes and former colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. These initiatives have coincided with, or perhaps accompanied, a rising number of claims—some based on law, but most largely based on morals or ethics—related to the display, conservation, and storage of objects that have been removed from their tribes or countries of origin.

Particularly in the aftermath of France's ambitious 2018 report *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics*, public outcry over the hundreds of thousands of objects with a colonial-era acquisition in the provenance has reached a fever pitch, with patrons and disgruntled social media users continuously demanding that museums return or retain such objects. Thus, as with antiquities, museums are receiving claims to tribal and colonial-era objects that appear to have been legally removed, gifted, or otherwise are not subject to restrictions and have been in the museum's collection for decades or more.

European museums, particularly those in France, Germany, and the Netherlands, are leading the way in establishing conditions and guidelines for considering the return, permanently or on loan, of objects from public collections. The British government recently announced that it was looking to hire an expert to direct its colonial repatriation efforts.

Julia Faranchuk / Alamy Stock Photo

COLLECTION INSURANCE INSIGHTS

Eric S. Fischer, senior vice president of Willis Towers Watson, offers the following quick review on fine art insurance.

- Almost all fine art insurance policies exclude loss due to defective title or seizure.
- Some policies have a limited amount of defense cost coverage but usually not a lot.
- There is some coverage for loss due to defective title, but coverage is limited with lots of conditions and state law concerns.
- Title insurance is a one-time purchase that covers defense costs as well as the value of the work if the title is defective. Title insurance does not cover false attribution.
- Nazi-era looting claims still are occurring.
- Poor gift paperwork from the 1960s–1980s is a new area of concern.

The status of tribal and colonial-era objects is up for reconsideration in the US as well. The proposed Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony (STOP) Act in Congress seeks to expand protection for sacred or culturally significant objects claimed by Native American tribes and other Indigenous peoples. And the Association of Art Museum Directors has announced plans to create a task force to consider these problems. Given recent proposals to shift the burden of proof regarding legal ownership to current possessors, these new guidelines and standards may open the door for a large wave of repatriation requests.

Evolving Law on Nazi-Era Claims

Ownership disputes concerning Holocaust-era art are nothing new for US museums, and they receive frequent attention in the press and Hollywood. However, recent developments in Nazi-looted art litigation are setting important precedents that will greatly impact museums currently in possession of artworks that may be subject to claims by heirs of Holocaust victims.

The Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery (HEAR) Act of 2016 provides a six-year statute of limitations (SOL) for Nazi-looted art claims. One either has six years from the passage of the HEAR Act for already-known claims, or prospectively a six-year SOL for as-yet unknown claims (the clock starts to run when the claimant has actual knowledge of the location and identity of the artwork or knowledge of the claimant's possessory interest in the artwork). This supersedes state laws on SOLs, which were usually only two to three years for these kinds of claims.

A key issue for courts analyzing Nazi-looted art cases is whether, and to what extent, art transfers during the Nazi era were the result of legally cognizable duress. Some courts, such as the New York state court in *Reif* v. *Nagy*, have embraced an expanded concept of duress. In this case, the court found that the transfer of an art collection pursuant to a power of attorney executed in a concentration camp was the product of duress. However, recent cases in New York federal court, such as the trial court in *Zuckerman* v. *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, have taken a narrower view, setting a higher standard for undoing a wartime transaction based on a claim of duress.

The disparate results of such recent cases make clear that disputes about what constitutes duress resulting in a "forced" sale, particularly when considering transactions that occurred outside the Third Reich, will continue to be hotly litigated in the foreseeable future—with unpredictable results.

Focus on Due Diligence

In today's digital world, it is easy for outsiders to identify ownership issues and then make claims that are well-founded—or not. Therefore, museums need to stay ahead of any potential problems by exercising as much ongoing due diligence as possible, not only with future acquisitions and loans, but also for objects already in their collections.

Research object histories as fully as possible, check lost art databases, consider who sold or donated objects to the museum, learn about the individuals or institutions listed in an object's provenance, and investigate the nature of those transactions to the extent possible. For objects originating outside the US, review import and export certificates and verify their accuracy.

Remember that due diligence is specific to each object, so a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to succeed. Museums cannot simply depend on publicly available information and should reach out to dealers, donors, and other links in an object's provenance chain.

Donor questionnaires can minimize risk and ensure that donations meet your museum's acquisition guidelines. These questionnaires inquire about an object's provenance: "How and when did you acquire the object?" They may prompt donors to provide copies of related documentation for an object, such as an invoice, exhibition catalogue, or other materials that can help museum staff complete further research.

If paperwork is missing from the time of acquisition, act immediately. The longer one waits, the harder it will be to get the necessary documentation. Early diligence will offer museums more options and can save expense and stress if issues are uncovered and dealt with proactively—before someone makes a claim. Detailed and transparent provenance research will also enhance your museum's reputation and add value to the works in your collection.

Think Bigger on Ownership

Even when objects have been in museums for decades or longer and seem to have no red flags on ownership, the public is increasingly demanding transparency regarding objects' origins and manner of acquisition. Museum-goers may become suspicious when museum labels or websites fail to include provenance information.

If your museum spots a potential issue with an object in its collection, do not assume that the museum will lose the piece or that outsiders will view your museum as "bad" or "caught in the act." Consider this a starting point for conversations with other museums, collectors, source countries, or cultural groups that will open the door for future opportunities with loans and other kinds of educational exchanges for your museum.

If your museum receives a complaint about an object, thoroughly investigate the claim and verify the object's provenance information. Regardless of your museum's view of the claim's strength, seek legal guidance in responding to it; even challenges with little legal merit can be very difficult, expensive, and time-consuming to defend.

Remember that these are often emotional issues, and, frequently, strong feelings of social justice are at play. Rather than thinking about how to slice the pie, think about creative solutions to make the pie bigger.

Suzanne Hale is registrar/collections manager at the Gregory Allicar Museum of Art, Colorado State University. She thanks **Dr. Jennifer A. Morris**, attorney at Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC, a global law and policy firm that serves clients who seek to preserve and share history and culture, for her assistance with this article. This article does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Any opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of Hale or Morris or any of the organizations they are affiliated with.

Change that Matters

How can leaders—and emerging leaders—confront the core contradictions facing museums today?

By Cindy Meyers Foley and Regan Pro

In June 2019, 35 museum leaders made their way to Claremont, California, for the Getty Leadership Institute (GLI). For 40 years, GLI has sought to enhance the leadership of experienced museum professionals and strengthen institutional capacities by helping current and future museum leaders navigate the field's most pressing challenges and opportunities.

As part of the 2019 cohort, we spent two weeks discussing, debating, unpacking, and questioning the core beliefs of our field. These conversations happened in classrooms and around lunch tables, in the early

mornings and late into the nights. We discussed the new challenges facing emerging leaders and what may be scaring them away.

As we talked about the future of the field and our roles, we fixated on our responsibility to drive, promote, and support systemic change. We were learning about shared leadership and practicing it in real time.

One evening, nearly the entire GLI cohort came together for a self-organized discussion about key issues and how to move them forward in our institutions. What emerged was a list of leadership-specific challenges that reflect our current times and come up against discrepancies embedded in historical structures. We determined that change would not come from directives and box checking but from active listening, opportunities for various stakeholders to grapple with the complexities, and work cultures that have a higher tolerance for ambiguity.

As the night stretched on, our conversations kept returning to eight fundamental tensions facing museums today. These core contradictions were a litmus test for where we stand individually and as a field. Below, the paired statements speak to the groups' collective experience while providing individual examples of how these ideas play out in practice. At the core of these ideas is our hope that a museum leader can be both a change agent and a steward.

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>
> — Chantal Drake

Cindy Meyers Foley asking peers to reflect on the gnarly issues facing museum leaders today.

We proclaim to be open to all.

YET

We prioritize our knowledge over all others.

"Something we're trying to do at the DePaul Art Museum (DPAM) is be transparent and self-critical about how museums create and convey knowledge," says DPAM Director and Chief Curator Julie Rodrigues Widholm. "Many of our exhibitions begin with a question and are presented as propositions for dialogue rather than matters of authoritative fact. We want visitors to join us on a journey of questioning. Of course, we're still responsible for accuracy within our content, but we're also interested in what happens when we transparently open areas where we might be lacking knowledge or lift the veil on museum traditions and conventions. For example, we invited Brendan Fernandes to have an exhibition with us in fall 2018 as a way to explore our holdings of African objects. We had a lot of questions about how this work fits into the systems of a modern and contemporary art museum, and Brendan's work explores the complexities of African objects being collected by Western art museums. This resulted in a beautiful collaboration that not only gave Chicago audiences an introduction to this facet of Brendan's work, but opened up questions about authorship, provenance, classifications of art vs. artifact, and the colonial roots of museum collections."

We say we want to be a champion for social justice.

YET

We are built on a foundation that isolates wealth and power within an exclusive group.

Will Cary recently became the chief of business strategy and analytics at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This newly created position oversees all of the museum's earned revenue and associated departments, including ticketing, retail, special events, AV, marketing, and analytics, in hopes of growing new funding opportunities to support the museum's core mission. "It will be essential for the field that we have several streams of funding and that they are balanced so that over time institutions aren't relying on boards and a few major funders for their survival," Cary says. "We need revenue models that aren't only philanthropy-based, but can also be sustainable and focused on a broad public rather than a privileged few."

We say we want to be more audience-focused.

YET

We constantly make assumptions around what our audiences want.

"Audience is always mentioned as the 'why' to the museum project, but the discussions around the groups we serve can do more to change the 'how' at the institution's foundation," says Chantal Drake, director of development and communications at Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis, Tennessee. "Museums recognize audience when they create relevant education programs and events and identify certain groups as marketing targets. But artwork safety and visitor comfort should both be prioritized, scholarship acceptance and community relatability should be considered simultaneously, and assessment of individual experiences can increase visitor numbers. When the museum's core beliefs continue to shift to include, and value, the audience's voice—beyond surveys and committees—and engage the community in our process, content, and products, there is much more opportunity to attract new audiences and encourage ownership of the museum among those whom we aim to uplift, encourage, and inspire."

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHORS

We are sharing a conversation that originally included the voices of more than 30 people representing diverse identities. While we have tried our best to represent all the perspectives of participants, we also recognize that our privileges and biases as two white, cis-gendered women working in art museums shape what we remember and report. We hope this article acknowledges that influence and recognition must be shared, both with the GLI cohort and the many others making change.

We proclaim the need to break down hierarchies.

YET

We maintain our internal and exclusive power structures.

Linda Harrison, a black LGBTQ woman, was appointed director and CEO of The Newark Museum of Art (TNMA) in New Jersey to transform it into a relevant museum for art and culture. "Challenging internal and exclusive power structures is something I negotiate every day," Harrison says. "Breaking down hierarchies requires a radical internal culture shift that must be navigated with both the board of

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>
> — Cyra Levenson

Participants in the summer 2019 Getty Leadership Institute met after hours to work on catalyzing change and holding each other accountable.

RESOURCES

The Museum Leadership Institute (MLI) is now the Museum Leadership Institute at Claremont Graduate University (MLI@CGU). Find out more at **mli.cgu.edu.**

trustees and staff simultaneously. In developing my vision for TNMA, my first priority was to develop a culture of caring. My job is to make a serious investment in the staff, break down the silos, provide transparency, and develop a continuous training environment that is centered on compassionate communication, inclusiveness, access, design thinking, and trust. Spending at least 65 percent of my time on the culture was a calculated risk that I embraced in order for us to become an organization that exudes best practices and is a great place to work. We're becoming a transparent/vibrant/interactive/progressive organization by getting out of our comfort zones; putting culture first; and hiring bold, nontraditional voices."

We promote and protect creativity.
YET
We don't support innovation internally.

"Our organizational culture had evolved to mandate success at all costs," says Amy Horst, associate director at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. "This resulted in unsustainable pressure on the arts center's creative staff and fear of failure, which actually inhibited us from reaching the full potential of our projects. We realized we had to change our internal culture and how we engaged with risk taking, whether planning smaller program initiatives or a massive project like the August opening of our second facility, the Art Preserve. Now, when faced with the uncertainty of success, our mandate is to go all in. If we fail, we will fail creatively."

We claim to honor human culture.
YET
We dehumanize people and prioritize objects.

"From their beginnings, museums have commodified, quantified, and categorized Indigenous bodies and belongings," says Ben Garcia, deputy executive director and chief learning officer at the Ohio History Connection in Columbus. "The curators and scholars who did this were seeking to understand these cultures within a larger sweep of human history. But museums were built on 19th and 20th century assumptions of Western cultural superiority, and many today hesitate to reexamine core values of acquisition, authority, and the application of Western scholarly assumptions to Indigenous cultures. We dehumanize people and prioritize objects when we exclude descendant communities from co-creating practices and policies related to their ancestors and ancestral belongings. The San Diego Museum of Man and the Ohio History Connection have passed policies in the past three years that situate decision-making about Indigenous cultural resources within contemporary Indigenous communities. These policies, once fully implemented, will help both institutions rehumanize themselves and rebalance the relationship of people and objects."

Cindy Meyers Foley

We say we hold the keys to better education and thinking.
YET
We are not proactive in leading the change or disrupting the current system.

"The definitions of both learning and knowledge are changing rapidly," says Cyra Levenson, deputy director and Gail Engelberg director of education and public engagement at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City. "We now understand through neuroscience research that cognition takes place through our sensory experiences and the way we store them in our memories and in our bodies. Yet school is designed to isolate knowing as a set of skills, often divorced from the content of students' own lived experience. Museums are the perfect laboratory to connect skills and experience. We need to work with our colleagues who are educators to help them advocate for the fundamental importance of experience in educating students of all ages. Art history is only one of the many ways of knowing that we can share, and we need to be receptive to the place where our students' ideas and knowledge meet the objects in our galleries. That is where the new frontiers of understanding works of art will emerge."

We proclaim to value multiple perspectives and champion inclusivity.
YET
We don't try to learn from those leading on change outside of the West.

"The question of how we might believe we have more to learn than to teach is especially significant within an academic museum," says Sylvia Rohr, director and curator at the University Art Gallery at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania. "Academic museums are uniquely poised to perform the necessary work of investigating and dismantling institutional racism and serve as incubators for future practice. This is especially important in academic museums that are tied to undergraduate and graduate museum studies and art history departments. In this context, we are tasked with teaching best practices to future museum professionals. But what if some of these practices are not in fact the best? What other practices can we emulate instead? These are the questions we ask students to consider as they curate exhibitions, plan programming, and engage audiences in the context of our museum. By requiring future museum professionals to question the very basis of best practices and to explore and adopt practices that fall outside of the realm, we begin to challenge fundamental assumptions in museum structures."

One of the presenters at GLI, Dr. Arvind Bhambri, shared that "you can't think your way into a new way of acting, you must act your way into a new way of thinking." Our colleagues are already acting their way into new thinking. No one has all the answers, but we can and should leverage our collective progress. Museum leaders need to fail together, learn together, and change together.

Cindy Meyers Foley is the executive deputy director of learning and experience at the Columbus Museum of Art in Ohio, and **Regan Pro** is the Kayla Skinner deputy director of education and public engagement at the Seattle Art Museum in Washington.

2020 Museums Advocacy Efforts Get a Head Start at Museums Advocacy Day

Museums Advocacy Day, February 24–25, 2020, brought together 375 museum advocates from across the country who made 425 visits to congressional offices, including more than 50 visits with the legislators themselves. We took Capitol Hill and social media by storm, sharing information about key legislative priorities, critical data about the economic impact of museums, and the deep public support for them. We heard from legislators, a congressional chief of staff, federal agency leaders, and partner policy experts about the unique value of museums and the importance of advocating for museums and the federal programs that support them.

Between Museums Advocacy Day and the time at which we write this on March 24, the impacts of COVID-19 on the museum field have become dire. Continued advocacy efforts will be critical throughout the rest of the year as museums not only recover from the impacts of the pandemic on their operations, but also play a vital role in our society's recovery as a whole. Visit our website at **bit.ly/AdvocacyAAM** to join the cause today by:

- Getting informed with Alliance Advocacy Alerts
- Using our brand-new Speaking Up: Museum Advocacy in Action toolkit
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Thank you to all of our 2020 supporters, partners, and advocates who helped make Museums Advocacy Day 2020 a successful and transformational event.

Oregon advocates meet with Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley.

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1 National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman Jon Parrish Peede

2 Charity Counts, Executive Director, Association of Midwest Museums

3 Kimberly Rudolph, Chief of Staff for Indiana Representative André D. Carson

4 Pennsylvania Museum Advocate Xuanyu Li

5 Della Hall, Executive Director, Museums Alaska (2020 Advocacy Leadership Awardee); Cynthia Sweet, Executive Director, Iowa Museum Association (2020 Advocacy Leadership Awardee); and Ruth Ann Rugg, Managing Director, Coalition of State Museum Associations (COSMA)

6 Maryland advocates with Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen

7 New York Senator Charles Schumer with New York museum advocates

8 Kelly Paras of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America and Blackbaud advocates Dale Strange, Kevin Russell, and Piper Browne meet with staff from Louisiana Senator Bill Cassidy's office.

9 DC Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton meets with museum advocates.

10 Advocates (Barry Szczesny, Director, Government Relations and Public Policy, AAM; Brandy Vause, Deputy Director, Bay Area Discovery Museum; Kalie Sacco, Lawrence Hall of Science, UC Berkeley; and Kelly McKinley, CEO, Bay Area Discovery Museum) present the staff of California Congresswoman Barbara Lee with her Museums Advocacy Day 2020 Congressional Award.

11 Christine Anagnos, Executive Director, Association of Art Museum Directors; Laura Huerta Migus, Executive Director, Association of Children's Museums; and Vedet Coleman-Robinson, Executive Director, Association of African American Museums

12 Museums Advocacy Day buttons

13 Crosby Kemper III, director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, addresses advocates.

14 State Historical Society of North Dakota Director Claudia Berg and American Alliance of Museums President and CEO Laura Lott present North Dakota Senator John Hoeven with his Museums Advocacy Day 2020 Congressional Award.

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In Memoriam

IN FOND MEMORY OF A LEGACY

Kim Igoe served as AAM's vice president for policy and programs from 2001–2011 and interim president/CEO during that time from 2006–2007. She began her career with AAM in the early 1980s as director of the accreditation program and technical information service, overseeing the landmark publications *Excellence and Equity* and *Mastering Civic Engagement*. She later progressed to oversee the Museum Advancement & Excellence programs of MAP and Accreditation, and in 2001 assumed the role of vice president. Kim had a profound impact on the museum field as well as her many colleagues. During her time at AAM, she mentored, coached, and formed lifelong friendships with many staff members.

Pat Williams served as AAM's vice president for policy and programs from 1991-2001. She had previously served as director of accreditation and professional standards at AAM from 1983–1991. From 2001–2007, she was chief operating officer and director of citizen membership at Americans for the Arts. Throughout her distinguished career, Pat worked at the highest levels of the museum, arts, and cultural fields, directing high-profile national initiatives, leading the day-to-day operations of national organizations, and developing relationships with leaders in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. She also had an impressive leadership record as a board member and community activist dedicated to heritage and cultural preservation issues.

Irene Hirano Inouye served on the AAM Board of Directors from 2005–2010, and as its chair from 2006–2008, she advanced the policy of diversity and inclusion as well as AAM's first strategic plan. Since 2008, she served as president of the U.S.-Japan Council. Previously, she was the founding CEO and president of the Japanese American National Museum, a position she held for 20 years. Throughout her distinguished career, she served on the boards of many organizations, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Smithsonian Institution and chaired the boards of the Ford Foundation and Kresge Foundation. Irene received the AAM Distinguished Service Award in 2016, which honors an individual with exemplary accomplishments and sustained service in the museum field.

This bridge will only take you halfway there
To those mysterious lands you long to see:
Through gypsy camps and swirling Arab fairs
And moonlit woods where unicorns run free.
So come and walk a while with me and share
The twisting trails and wondrous worlds I've known.
But this bridge will only take you halfway there—
The last few steps you'll have to take alone.

This Bridge by Shel Silverstein

Album/Alamy Stock Photo Miyanokoshi, from the series "Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaido (Kisokaido rokujukyu tsugi no uchi)." Utagawa Hiroshige; Japanese, 1797–1858. Date: 1830–1843. Dimensions: 24 x 36.3 cm (9 7/16 x 14 1/4 in.). Color woodblock print; oban. Origin: Japan. Museum: The Art Institute of Chicago.

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