JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

RACE
EQUITY
JUSTICE +
IDENTITY

MUSEUM

PASSAGES

HELPING MUSEUMS OPEN. RESPONSIBLY.

MuseumSigns, MuseumRails, and Q-Cord products are found in museums around the world to guide and engage visitors. The new Hand Sanitizer Stations blend seamlessly with other 10-31 products, using the same superior quality, USA-made manufacturing processes. Everything from Art Display Essentials can be easily modified to meet your specific needs. And with over 35 years of experience partnering with museums and institutions on their spaces and exhibitions, we're here to help with your opening or re-opening plans.

Q-Cord™ RETRACTABLES

Art Display ESSENTIALS™

Q-Cord™ ART STANCHIONS

10-31 A FAMILY COMPANY

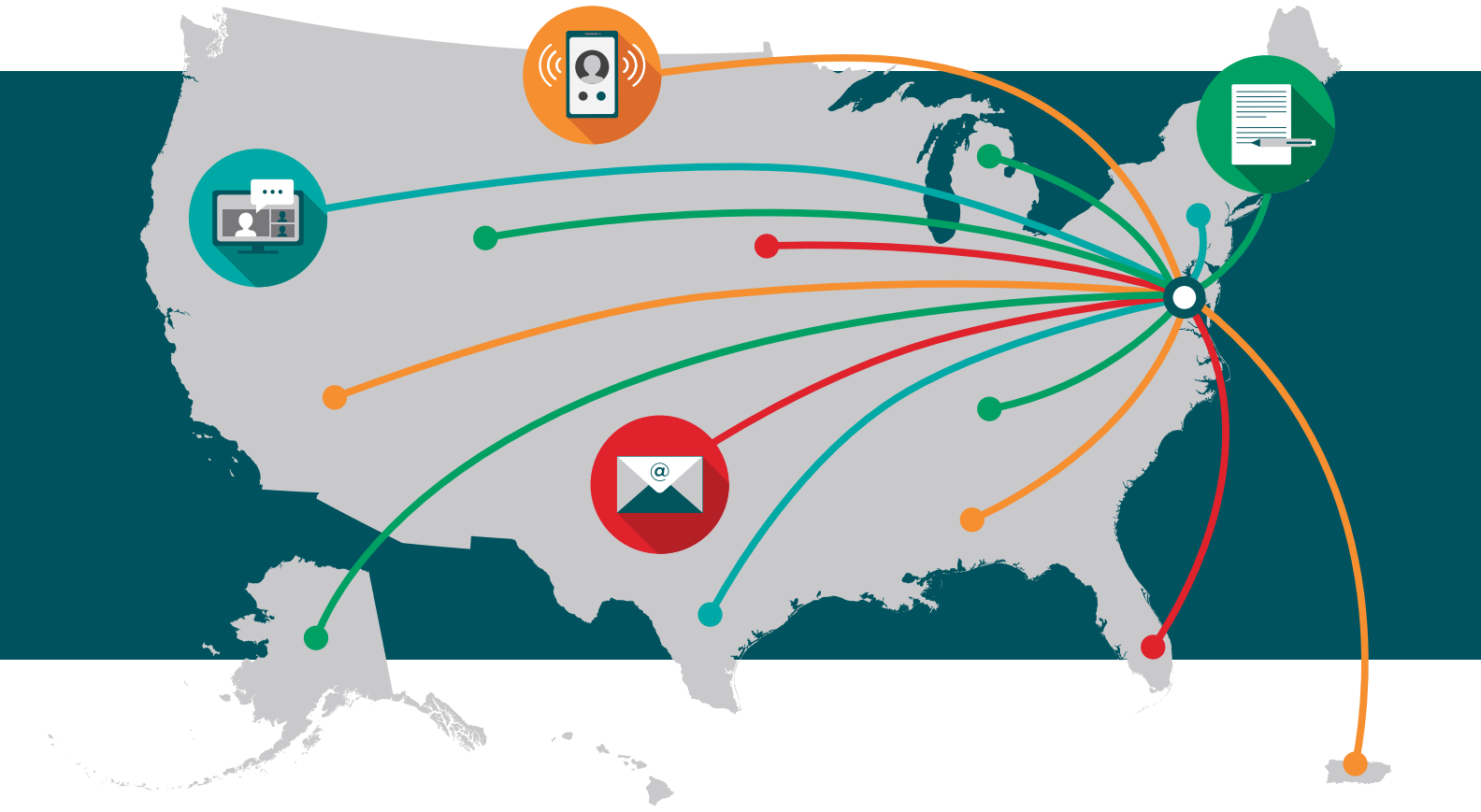
MUSEUMRAILS™

MUSEUMSIGNS

10-31.COM

800.862.9869

MUSEUMS ADVOCACY DAY 2021



Museums Advocacy Day 2021 is going virtual! Register today.

With museums in dire situations across the country, now is a critical time to join forces with fellow museum supporters and professionals to make our voices heard with Congressional legislators and their staff. Museums Advocacy Day will take place virtually this year on **February 22-23**. Advocating in support of museums with colleagues and peers across the country in February will look different than in past years, but it will be more important and impactful than ever before. Check for updates, and register by **January 19** to participate, at:

aam-us.org/museums-advocacy

American Alliance of Museums

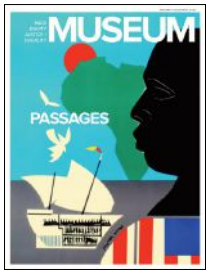
JANUARY
FEBRUARY
2021
ISSUE

CONTENTS

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

Cover:
Romare Bearden, *Roots*, 1977 © 2020 Romare Bearden Foundation/ licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



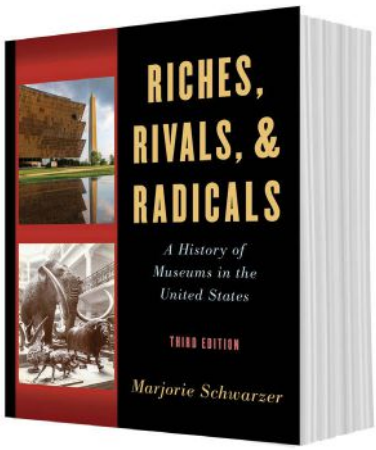
AM&P EXCEL
BRONZE WINNER
2020

American Alliance of Museums

American Alliance of Museums

NEW RESOURCES FOR

MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS



RICHES, RIVALS, AND RADICALS

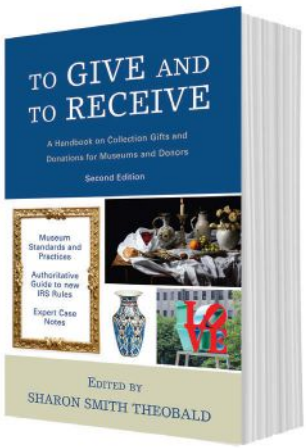
A History of Museums in the United States

Third Edition

By Marjorie Schwarzer

This beautiful full-color book tells the stories behind the people and events that have transformed America's museums from their beginnings into today's vibrant cultural institutions. Updates include material on digital curation, emergent exhibitions about civil rights, immersive museum environments, and more.

October 2020 • 296 pages
978-1-5381-2807-7 • $65.00 • Paper
978-1-5381-2806-0 • $125.00 • Cloth
978-1-5381-2808-4 • $61.50 • eBook



TO GIVE AND TO RECEIVE

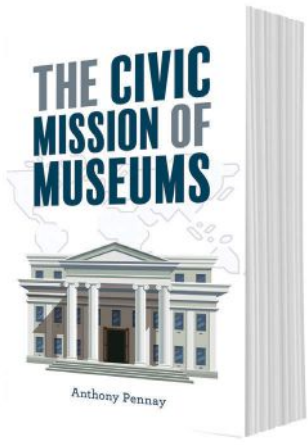
A Handbook on Collection Gifts and Donations for Museums and Donors

Second Edition

Edited by Sharon Smith Theobald

"This is a smart practical guide to navigating museum donations. It provides a comprehensive summary of collections gift management, as well as highlights best practices for museum professionals. I look forward to this addition to my resource library."
—Kate Brueggemann, Vice President, Development, Adler Planetarium

October 2020 • 120 pages
978-1-5381-2884-8 • $39.00 • Paper
978-1-5381-2883-1 • $84.00 • Cloth
978-1-5381-2885-5 • $37.00 • eBook



THE CIVIC MISSION OF MUSEUMS

By Anthony Pennay

"Pennay's timely writing reminds us that we, as museum workers and leaders, have a duty to support a civil society through our educational efforts and the sharing of our museum spaces for the civic process. We can all benefit from this refresher course on civics which also serves to enable museums and their staffs to do better for society."
—Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, director, Illinois State Museum

December 2020 • 152 pages
978-1-5381-3185-5 • $40.00 • Paper
978-1-5381-3184-8 • $80.00 • Cloth
978-1-5381-3186-2 • $38.00 • eBook

SAVE 20% when you order at www.rowman.com with promo code **AAMPRESS20**

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD

MUSEUM

A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

MUSEUM (ISSN 0027-4089)
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021, VOLUME 100, NO. 1
PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY (J/F, M/A, M/J, J/A, S/O, N/D)
BY THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS
2451 CRYSTAL DRIVE, SUITE 1005, ARLINGTON, VA 22202; 202-289-1818; FAX 202-289-6578; WWW.AAM-US.ORG.

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

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

twitter.com/aamers

facebook.com/americanmuseums

linkedin.com/groups/American-Alliance-Museums-2965314

instagram.com/aamersofficial

Thanks to our Member Discount Providers

Museums and Racial Equality

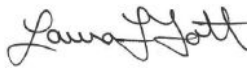
For most of us, 2020 was an emotionally unforgettable year, knit together by months of anxiety, distress, panic, grief, and, where it could be found, gratitude. In addition to the global pandemic, which shuttered museums and left many of our colleagues out of work, we experienced a national reckoning around racial equity. The effects of these events will linger far into this new year and will forever change us, our society, and our museums.

Organizations across all sectors are being evaluated through a racial equity and social justice lens—their practices, language, and policies all under intense scrutiny. Museums are no exception. We are being challenged in a whole new way to take stances on social justice issues and commit ourselves to striving for greater equity within our institutions and across society. Communities across the country expect the institutions they support to reflect their values in a way that is open and transparent. This is a challenge we all need to embrace in this new year.

It may be intimidating—and it is guaranteed to be difficult—but you are not alone in this work. As your Alliance, we too are taking on this challenge. We are committed to increasing the visibility and transparency of our ongoing internal racial equity work. We hope that sharing data, resources and best practices, and AAM's own multiyear journey (complete with missteps and course corrections) will inspire you to do the same.

Taking a more active stance on social justice issues is a new process for many organizations. For those unsure of where to start, consider the data. The 2020 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers conducted by Wilkening Consulting found that nearly 70 percent of museum-goers felt that museums could take a position on social justice issues. The report provides a framework for museums to consider when doing so.

The framework calls on museums to use evidence and show their work, make the link to their mission explicit, explain why objectivity or neutrality is impossible, and display an openness to dialogue and mutual respect. This framework can help us structure our responses to social justice issues and help us ask critical questions about our missions, audiences, and abilities to host healthy dialogue. It also guides us to frame social issues in a way that can help broaden worldviews, promote inclusion, and foster empathy and belonging, thereby increasing our positive social impact.



Continually learning from others is also critical. If you're looking for guidance in your equity work, our website has dozens of member resources, tools, and sample documents related to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI). Our blog features more than 200 posts on DEAI-related topics authored by colleagues in the field who are doing the work and sharing their experiences for you to learn from; we are contributing our own AAM experiences to that library as well.

Museums are cornerstones in our communities and among the most trusted sources of information by the public. We have a duty to respond to our nation's reckoning with racism and other forms of injustice. It's critical to note, though, that the internal organization-wide work is some of the most difficult. Undoing structures and systems that contribute to inequity takes substantial energy, resources, and time—and it is never complete. There is no finish line in equity work. How each of us tackles these issues may look different, but there is no contesting that it must be done now—and far into our future.

11/11/2020

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

Race and Social Justice

44% of white Americans think discrimination against whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against Black Americans and other minorities.

36% of white people think it is a lot more difficult to be a Black person than a white person in the US.

34% of registered voters in the US think white people benefit "a great deal" from advantages in society that Black people do not have.

71% of Black people believe race relations in the US are generally bad.

Sources: Top: PRRI (Public Religion Research Institute); all others: Pew Research Center

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

iStock.com/rarrarorro

A Few More Miles

Mother, mother there's too many of you crying. Brother, brother there are too many of you dying. Oh, tell me what's going on?

So, come you who prophesize with your pens, keep your eyes open, the chance won't come again. And don't speak too soon, cause the wheel's still in spin, for the times they are a changin'.

But today let your hands tie a knot across the table. Come and touch the things you cannot feel. And close your fingertips and fly where I can hold you. And maybe one day you can sing to me the words I have told you.

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds. And help to sing songs of freedom: because all I ever have are redemption songs. Redemption songs.

Then, oh child, someday we'll walk in the rays of a beautiful sun when the world is much lighter.

Until then, as prophets have all prophesied, we have a few more miles to go. Press to the end. Don't give up. You can't give in.

And look deep in your soul for a sweet chariot comin' for to carry you home. If you get there before I do, tell all my friends I am coming to. Carry me home… Home.

Let the words from these songs and on these pages live in us and chart our path and promise.

4Zevar-Freepik.com

Credits: "What's Going On" written by Renaldo "Obie" Benson, Al Cleveland, and Marvin Gaye; "The Times They are a-Changin'" written by Bob Dylan; "Redemption Song" written by Bob Marley; "Follow" written by Jerry Merrick; "Ooh Child" written by Stan Vincent; "A Few More Miles" written by Claude Vernell McKnight III, Hallerin H. Hill, and Joey Kibble; "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" written by Wallace Willis

Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, is expanding its Art + Research Center, South Florida's only museum-based research department, and renaming it the Knight Foundation Art + Research Center (A+RC). An in-progress five-year strategic plan will expand the A+RC's scope and establish the future of the department through a range of major initiatives, including the launch of a new academic partnership and the debut of additional public programming.

Location: Miami, FL

Learn more: icamiami.org/research/arc/

National WWI Museum and Memorial

"Silk and Steel: French Fashion, Women and WWI" features original dresses, coats, capes, hats, shoes, and accessories from period French designers, including Madeleine Vionnet, House of Worth, and Hermès. From the evolution of the war-time silhouette, the influence of military uniforms and post-war emancipation, this exhibition provides a new chapter of the history of the war at the museum.

Location: Kansas City, MO

Dates: through April 11

Learn more: theworldwar.org/explore/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/silk-and-steel

Pulitzer Arts Foundation

"Terry Adkins: Resounding" brings together more than 40 works spanning the artist's career, from rarely exhibited examples of Adkins's early practice to some of his most celebrated works. The exhibition also includes selections from the artist's personal collection, including books, musical instruments, and objects from a diversity of artistic traditions, offering new insight into the breadth of Adkins's literary, musical, and visual influences.

Location: St. Louis, MO

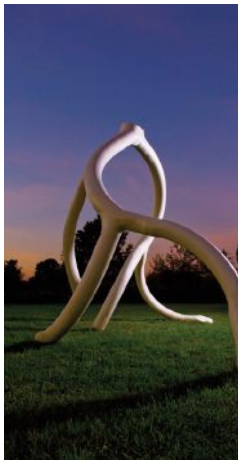
Dates: through Feb. 7

Learn more: pulitzerarts.org/exhibition/terry-adkins/

Courtesy of ICA, Miami; National WWI Museum and Memorial; © Pulitzer Arts Foundation and Alise O'Brien Photography

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.



Naples Botanical Garden

To launch its 2020–21 season, themed "Roots: Power of the Unseen," the Naples Botanical Garden is exhibiting "Steve Tobin: Nature Underground." Tobin, renowned for his massive and intricate depictions of tree roots, celebrates the foundation of our ecosystem, inspiring a deeper appreciation of plants and greater commitment to protecting them.

Location: Naples, FL

Dates: through Sept. 6

Learn more: naplesgarden.org

Barnes Foundation

"Soutine/de Kooning: Conversations in Paint," organized by the Barnes and the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, explores the affinities between the work of Chaïm Soutine and Willem de Kooning. This focused exhibition considers how Soutine's paintings, with their built-up surfaces and energetic brushwork, served the art of de Kooning, shaping his groundbreaking figurative/abstract works in the late 1940s and beyond.

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Dates: March 7–Aug. 8

Partner: Musée de l'Orangerie

Learn more: barnesfoundation.org/whats-on/exhibition/soutine-de-kooning

Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College

"PIVOT: Skateboard Deck Art," curated by Duane Koyawena (Hopi) and Landis Bahe (Dine), features original works on a unique canvas. The show includes more than 114 skateboard decks by Native American/Indigenous artists and provides insight into the contemporary Native art landscape while acknowledging the traditional cultures that help shape the identities of the artists who create the works.

Location: Durango, CO

Dates: through March 12

Learn more: swcenter.fortlewis.edu/exhibitions/gallery-exhibits/pivot-skateboard-deck-art-exhibit

Photo courtesy of Steve Tobin; Chaïm Soutine, *Winding Road, Near Gréolières*, Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia; Tom Alexander Photography

The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art

A year after it seemed to rise from the ashes of Louis Comfort Tiffany's razed Long Island estate, Tiffany's unique iron fireplace hood was permanently installed in the Laurelton Hall wing of The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art. The massive masterwork, measuring 66 1/2 inches tall by 55 1/2 inches wide, was thought to have been destroyed when Tiffany's estate burned down in 1957.

Location: Winter Park, FL

Learn more: morsemuseum.org/on-exhibit/fireplace-hood

Frist Art Museum

"Albrecht Dürer: The Age of Reformation and Renaissance" features more than 100 engravings, etchings, and woodcuts, ranging from some of his earliest work as a young master to his treatise on human proportions published shortly after his death. Works by Dürer's predecessors and followers contextualize his career and show how he revolutionized Renaissance printmaking.

Location: Nashville, TN

Dates: through Feb. 7

Partner: Cincinnati Art Museum

Learn more: fristartmuseum.org/exhibition/albrecht-durer-the-age-of-reformation-and-renaissance/

Harvard Art Museums

"A History of Color: An Audio Tour of the Forbes Pigment Collection" is a digital resource that showcases the stories and science behind some of history's most fascinating colors, all contained within one of the world's largest collections of historical pigments. The tool takes viewers on a guided tour of 27 pigments, dyes, and raw materials—from ochres and charcoal, the oldest pigments known to have been used by humans, to YInMn blue, which was discovered by accident at Oregon State University in 2009.

Location: Cambridge, MA

Learn more: harvardartmuseums.org/tour/a-history-of-color-an-audio-tour-of-the-forbes-pigment-collection

The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art; Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1504, Cincinnati Art Museum; Caitlin Cunningham Photography

Leonardo Drew, *City in the Grass*, photo by Rashmi Gill; Martin Wong, *Canal Street*, New-York Historical Society; Dallas Museum of Art

Mississippi Museum of Art

"Leonardo Drew: City in the Grass" is a participatory, public art sculpture that invites viewers to engage directly with the work, the space it occupies, and one another while maintaining a social distance. The Brooklyn, New York–based artist considers the work complete when people interact by sitting, standing, and walking on or around it, disrupting the "do not touch" directive at most public art installations and sculpture parks.

Location: Jackson, MS

Dates: through Feb. 21

Learn more: msmuseumart.org/exhibitions

New-York Historical Society

As part of the Asia Society Triennial: We Do Not Dream Alone—a multi-venue festival of art, ideas, and innovation—the New-York Historical Society and Asia Society Museum open their first-ever collaborative exhibition, "Dreaming Together." More than 35 interwoven works drawn from both art collections generate dialogue about the urban and natural environments, protest and rebellion, individuals and identities, borders and crossings.

Location: New York, NY

Dates: through July 25

Partner: Asia Society Museum

Learn more: nyhistory.org/exhibitions/dreaming-together-asia-society-museum

Dallas Museum of Art

The Dallas Museum of Art received a $1.42 million gift from the O'Donnell Foundation in support of the museum's digital transformation initiatives. These new innovations will address essential infrastructure and systems upgrades to meet the current state of digitalization demands and drive a revamp of the museum's visitor-experience strategy, both online and on-site. The projected completion is winter 2022.

Location: Dallas, TX

Learn more: dma.org/press-release/dallas-museum-art-announces-142-million-gift-o-donnell-foundation-audience-centered

POINT
OF VIEW

Movements, Moments, and Museums

How Black Lives Matter can liberate museums.

By Melanie Adams and Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell

A demonstration in Baltimore, Maryland, after the death of Freddie Gray in 2015.

The Movement for Black Lives demands justice, opportunity, access, freedom, and liberation for Black, Brown, queer, and people of other persecuted identities. Recognizing the disproportionate harm experienced by people of color, the movement centers racial equity as a means for collective liberation.

In essence, the movement seeks solutions for a nonviolent, prosperous, and more equitable future. But even early on, the words "Black Lives Matter" have triggered knee-jerk repulsion, suspicion, misunderstanding, cynicism, and opposition.

The media frenzy and politicization around Black Lives Matter (BLM) has confused the spirit of the movement not only for museums, but across the culture. But BLM as a theory of change is a powerful tool for visioning a more equitable society and moving toward it. Here we utilize BLM co-founder Patrisse Khan-Cullors' memoir *When They Call You a Terrorist* as a primary source for understanding BLM as a theory of change, to discuss how museums can rethink their work to become inherently change-making.

First Internal, then External Work

The politicization of Black Lives Matter as a movement isn't a partisan issue. In her memoir, Khan-Cullors describes how coordinated resistance to BLM furthers an enduring legacy of disparaging, undermining, and demonizing Black liberation efforts in the US. Demanding justice for Black lives is only as political as the propaganda against it claims. As engaged, critically thinking, just citizens, we can detect the truth and spirit of the movement as a theory of change for a more equitable future.

BLM asks that the organizations that created and maintained the systems of oppression take public accountability for their actions (and inactions) and act with a sense of urgency toward equitable change. While many people look at organizations and want to point to a few "bad apples," this placement of blame disregards the system through which those people have been trained and rewarded for their behavior. In order for real change to begin, organizations must recognize the symmetry that must exist between their internal culture and their external-facing work.

To truly begin transforming, museums must be willing to take responsibility for their role in maintaining a culture founded upon the hierarchy of race. They must start looking at not only their founding documents, but policies and procedures that create barriers to the inclusive internal culture they strive to create. This internal process should be transparent to staff and community stakeholders to allow for critical examination and shared ownership of the outcomes. Until museums do this work internally, they should not even consider developing external products because they will be viewed as inauthentic and performative.

Many museums understand the need to expand their narratives in order to provide more holistic interpretation and better reflect the experiences of their audiences. This is more than a reimagining; it is a realigning of the source of power that usually rests within the white perspective. Instead of showing the complexity of our democracy, stories in museums have focused on celebration by conquest and unearned meritocracy. The stories of the people who lost their

"The seemingly simple phrase 'Black Lives Matter' has disrupted undisputed assumptions about the logic of equality, justice, and human freedom in the United States and all over the world."
—Angela Davis

Alejandro Orengo Photograph Collection, Anacostia Community Museum, Smithsonian Institution

land and those forced to work the land for the benefit of others were excluded.

The expansion of the narrative is not a nod toward "political correctness," but an acknowledgement of an incomplete story. By providing interpretation through multiple lenses, museums can begin to challenge the US educational system, which arguably is designed to maintain, not upend, the status quo.

Dismantling the Status Quo

BLM's change theory demonstrates that external reform must be met with internal shifts against the status quo. It embraces social justice as an ongoing journey of responsibility rather than a fixed destination. BLM teaches us that museums should always be actively working to change the culture of their work.

Access to museum careers is riddled with rigid and unnecessary barriers. From the criteria we consider mandatory in staff—professional degrees, decades of experience in a field with limited job opportunity and mobility—to the costly price tag of postgraduate studies, the field is designed for privilege. Rethinking our principles to reflect a field committed to dismantling systems of oppression opens new opportunities to engage in greater relevance.

Where outdated models value expertise focused on the narrowest of content, new models value the needs of audience and community as prominent areas of focus. Embracing liberation principles brings us closer to the communities we aim to serve. If we can move past the fear of change, we can begin to reorient our institutions to liberation and justice.

As organizations within the public trust, we are accountable, not separate, in creating the future. Khan-Cullors discusses an early action in the Movement for Black Lives when she organized a peaceful disruption of a Beverly Hills brunch and asked bystanders to pause their diversion for a moment of silence for the killing of Trayvon Martin, which they willingly obliged.

The annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Peace Walk and Parade in historic Anacostia in Washington, DC, on January 16, 2018.

Community Documentation Photographs, Anacostia Community Museum, Smithsonian Institution, photo by Susana Raab

BLM's theory of change asks us to stop falsely compartmentalizing lived experiences. Museums are not detached from the brutal realities of systemic racism in our country. BLM gives us a framework to understand that continuing with the way things are perpetuates the status quo, which is at the very least comfortable with the expendability of Black lives. Only in changing our practices so that we are purposefully dismantling the status quo can we transform our violent and discriminating social structures into ones that promote liberation and equity.

The bottom line is this: museums are complicit in the status quo, reaping benefits from discriminatory social structures. Therefore, museums have a responsibility to actively dismantle oppression.

Becoming a BLM Museum

BLM theorizes other worlds, other ways of being in community and in society, and invites us to contribute to these other worlds in thought and action. Holding space to recognize injustice is the first step in fighting for justice. A BLM museum cherishes humanity and devotion to community because they are keys to liberated worlds. This is a future built with intention and in collaboration, especially with those whose identities are most often met with harm in our current oppressive systems.

Recognizing the harm of enduring patriarchal models of leadership and community building, BLM is intentional about developing communities of power within marginalized identity groups. Rather than *diversifying* existing circles of power, BLM *originates* among people of color, queer people, women, and disenfranchised groups. Community power then becomes liberation for those most affected by the status quo.

BLM is more than a moment; it is a movement. Museums need to recognize that the fight for equality that is taking place on our streets continues a historical movement centuries in the making. Instead of looking for quick solutions to solve deeply systemic problems, museums should take the time to live within and work through their discomfort and not search for shortcuts around it.

In a post-pandemic world, museums must do their work through an equity lens or risk becoming irrelevant to the communities they claim to serve. This includes taking a hard look at who our funders are, whose collections we accept, and what role privilege plays in access to the field.

For change to be sustained, there must be an organizational commitment beyond a few passionate staff and a consultant. The change must take place at the very core of the organization. Museums must eliminate white supremacy culture in order to rebuild a culture centered on racial equity.

SELF-EDUCATION ON RACE AND INEQUALITY

The country continues to struggle with how to address social justice issues through sustained and meaningful action. The books listed below are not meant to be an end point, but the start of a journey toward recognizing and reconciling the racial issues that perpetuate inequality and injustice for all.

- *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir* by Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha bandele
- *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown
- *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine
- *Kindred* by Octavia Butler
- *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin
- *What Truth Sounds Like* by Michael Eric Dyson
- *Eloquent Rage* by Brittney Cooper

Melanie Adams, PhD, is the director of the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum in Washington, DC. **Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell** is a temporary project manager with the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum and the head of public programs with the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC.

POINT
OF VIEW

Playground for the 1%

Make museum boards more inclusive and expertise-focused by disentangling giving and governance.

By John Wetenhall

One of the flimsiest charges lodged against museums is that they are "elitist." Out-of-context images of red-carpet museum fundraisers, or reports of millions paid for a precious painting or rare historical artifact, or merely a recitation of A-list contributors suggest that museums exclude everyday people so that they can cater to the whims of the wealthy.

No, museums acquire objects of value from the private sector to make them accessible to the general public—be it for learning, cultural enrichment, or just plain enjoyment. They offer educational and cultural programs to schoolchildren, families, seniors, disadvantaged individuals, and the general public. Even when museums charge small fees, their programs and exhibitions normally operate at a financial loss unless a corporation, foundation, governmental agency, or generous patron underwrites the cost. Museums are voluntary versions of Robin Hood—converting resources of

the rich to treasures for the poor, or middle class, or anyone else who chooses to participate.

But there is one place in our museums where inclusiveness seems an afterthought and where money has become more and more of an exclusionary barrier: the museum boardroom. Struggling for scarce resources to balance the annual budget and achieve the lofty milestones of a strategic plan—aspirational goals often stretched by ambitions of audience growth, collection expansion, and capital additions—museum leaders broaden the size of their governing boards and raise expectations for giving such that the overwhelming qualification for any member seems to have become the capacity to donate. This has implications.

A Look at Museum Boards

Museum boardrooms tend to be big. In a recent survey by the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), 64 museums averaged 28.5 board members. The range varies widely, from a low of nine to a high of 98. While small museums tend to have fewer trustees, look up the boards of major art, history, or natural history museums, as well as many zoos, aquariums, and arboretums, and you might find 40, 50, 75, or even 100 members. After all, it must take many people to oversee such complex organizations. Or does it?

What about the largest corporations in the United States? Among the companies in the Dow Jones Industrial Average, it takes 12 board members to run Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, and 3M; 13 for ExxonMobil and Boeing; 10 for UnitedHealth and Visa. The largest board is Microsoft's at 14; the smallest is Apple's at seven. The average number of board members for all 30 Dow Jones companies is 11.36 at the time of this writing. The average board size of companies in the S&P 500 in 2019 was 10.7, and going back a full 10 years, it was 10.8. So the most efficient, profitable, and long-standing corporations in America govern themselves with a fraction of the board members seemingly required for a major museum.

> "So where are the active or retired directors, museum CFOs, development directors, curators, and educators? Not on most museum boards, for sure."

Who populates a board of directors in the for-profit world? In a word, experts. According to executive search and leadership consulting firm Spencer Stuart, active corporate leaders plus retirees make up 35 percent of S&P 500 boards, with another 27 percent representing the financial sector. Why? Because a corporate board requires expertise in order to maximize shareholder value, the absence of which could form the basis of a lawsuit for breach of fiduciary duty.

So where are the active or retired directors, museum CFOs, development directors, curators, and educators? Not on most museum boards, for sure. A few boards might have a retired museum professional—likely a former curator to advise on collections. Contemporary art museums, to their credit, offer seats to practicing artists. Normally, though, museum or collection expertise accounts for nowhere near the significant percentage of board seats allocated to experience in the for-profit world.

Corporate boards often struggle with issues of inclusion and diversity. Spencer Stuart's survey indicates that only one in four corporate directors are women (26 percent), and minority representation averages only 19 percent for the 200 largest companies in the S&P 500. Museums practice better gender balance, with women representing 45 percent of board members, according to AAM's comprehensive survey, *Museum Board Leadership 2017: A National Report*. The report revealed racial representation to be worse, as 89 percent of board members were identified as Caucasian with only

iStock.com/wildpixel

5 percent Black/African American and small percentages of Asians, Native Americans, and others. As for ethnicity, only 3.4 percent of museum board members were identified as Hispanic or Latino. And, disturbingly, in a nation where racial and ethnic minorities constitute 40 percent of the population, according to the United States Census Bureau, 46 percent of museum boards in the AAM survey self-identified as 100 percent white.

So why does it take two, three, or four times as many board members to govern a museum as an S&P 500 company? Why is expertise in running a museum not a significant requirement for a board that governs a museum?

The Confluence of Giving and Governance

Museum boards are big because they conjoin the functions of giving and governance. This is not a cynical sacrifice of governance for giving, but a well-intentioned decision to benefit both. The executive is recruited for organizational expertise and for the prospect of a corporate gift. The banker and financier are valued for their fiscal savvy as well as for their access to programmatic underwriting. Legal experts and advertising executives bring valued experience and contribute essential pro bono services as well. Collectors offer

> "More board seats generate more giving, as each museum's ambitions cause it to seek incremental funding wherever it can be found."

How in the public interest can a board represent its community when its members do not resemble the community? We know the answer, but it hides behind a façade of a fiduciary claim: that large museum boards have evolved to ensure the financial health of their organizations—so that boards may run their museums "more like a business." The numbers suggest, however, that such boards do not run anything like a business and, for this reason, weaken the institutions they were organized to serve.

content knowledge and the potential to donate their collections. Yes, philanthropists earn their places on nonprofit boards through their charitable giving, but I know from experience that they can be among the most sage advisers to the governing body, lending wisdom, purpose, encouragement, and long-term vision to the museum's aspirational plans. These are good, caring, accomplished, bright, thoughtful, generous people.

More board seats generate more giving, as each museum's ambitions cause it to seek incremental funding wherever it can be found. As the size of boards grows beyond corporate norms, however, the ability of any one person to influence real governance decreases because the number of people in the room exceeds the time available for every person to speak meaningfully on any topic, never mind debate the nuances of a contentious issue. This dilution means that expertise matters less as well, as do differing opinions pressed up against the constraints of timed agendas and the implied desire for consensus among the well-mannered majority.

Donors are entitled to direct their philanthropy to the programs and purposes they choose, even with conditions or requirements for recognition. Collection objects may come with restrictions. In exchange for their generosity, some donors expect a seat on the board and many museums are happy to offer one. A significant contribution earns the donor a vote on museum policies, budgets and operations. Donors parlay their legitimate rights to direct the purpose and expenditure of *their* gifts—conditions that museums have every right to accept or deny—into the ability to influence and direct how *other people's* gifts may be spent—funds possibly aggregated over decades through endowments and amassed collectively each year through smaller contributions, memberships, grants, and earned revenues. This is how gifts are leveraged, extending the influence

of a donation beyond the contribution itself. The notion that board seats belong to the largest donors is hardly ever challenged.

Except it is not true. The largest donor to the vast majority of museums in America is not considered automatically entitled to board representation. Who might that be? You and me: the American taxpayer. To encourage charitable giving to all qualified 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations, the US tax code allows contributors in the higher tax brackets to deduct somewhere between 32 percent and 37 percent of a gift's value from their taxable income (percentages may be higher when state and local taxes apply). This means that a substantial portion of their gifts—from the value of collection objects, to cash donations, to gala tickets—comes from the coffers of the American public. Where are their seats on the board? What is their rightful representation in allocating the earnings of endowments accrued over generations, as well as revenues earned from payments by average people who visit the museum? Does it matter?

A Clash of Values

The governance model of American museums, in its current form, tends to favor growth and expansion. The businesspersons we recruit to our boards come from a world of competition. They increase sales and market share, competing to expand their commercial enterprises to ever more buying customers in the interest of enhancing shareholder value. This unchallenged assumption that museums must grow has placed oppressive pressure on museum leadership to make money: earn more net profits at the store; rent the facility; raise fees for services; "monetize" the collection via traveling exhibitions or through loan fees; recruit celebrity chefs to operate high-ticket restaurants; charge for special exhibitions; and raise general admission prices. In the world of business, this just makes sense, as corporate values equate success with increased visitation, program expansion, and earned revenues that rise quarter over quarter, fiscal year by fiscal year.

We who devote our careers to museums have come to live with corporate priorities in furtherance of our own values that prioritize community service, scholarship, learning, scientific knowledge, aesthetic excellence, empathy, fairness, inclusivity, and a sense of wonder. We see our museums as welcoming havens for those who might not otherwise come: people with disabilities, financial limitations, or other challenging circumstances. We provide exceptional services—classes, special tours, even outreach to group homes or school classrooms—and see ourselves, first and foremost, as caring, dedicated, and generous. We rely upon the fiduciary management of our boards to sustain our organizations in good times and bad. We accept salaries well below those in the for-profit sector for the privilege of working on behalf of our ideals, preserving our public treasures to educate, enlighten, and inspire communities year by year, generation by generation.

This coexistence of values is showing signs of strain. Probably the most talked-about issue for museums over recent years has been the urgent aspiration for them to become more diverse: places where people of differing races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, and all other manifestations of how people may be different can all feel welcome, in recognition of the way that all people are, fundamentally, the same. This has been an issue of fairness, shining a revealing light on the representational narrowness of collections and exhibitions; exclusionary nature of certain programs; uniformity in age and race of docents and volunteers; restricted opportunities for advancement and leadership on museum staffs; and, quite prominently, the lack of diversity on museum boards.

Frustration has spilt over into outrage when certain privileged members of the museum board are discovered to have amassed their wealth, and thus the source of their philanthropic gifts, by selling weapons of war, addictive pain killers, or fossil fuels. Staff protests, petitions, and the amplifying attention of the cultural media exposes such "toxic philanthropy," providing cathartic relief each time a targeted culprit is outed and removed. But is the problem really corporate villains or the system that recruits them?

One of the most discouraging aspects of our governing status quo is that it places so many caring, generous, thoughtful, civically engaged volunteers in

vulnerable positions of authority. To attain the recognition that their giving justifiably merits, we all but require donors to serve on museum boards. They should not be splattered by someone else's "toxic" gift. Museums will always need the support of philanthropists, the underwriting of corporations, and the contributions of charitable foundations. The addictive reliance on trustee giving, however, has crowded our boardrooms with people from a narrow range of backgrounds because admission is restricted by the expectations of member gifts (a few exceptions notwithstanding). Fairness, access, and inclusivity are not aspirations that individual board members undervalue or overlook, but trustee means-testing leaves collective boards, in so many instances, lacking sufficient expertise and community-based perspective even to begin to meet the challenge that these ideals impose.

Reforms for Needed Change

To untangle the roles of giving and governance, museums must first establish and promote prestigious patron groups that rival the status of museum boards, bestowing generous donors with the accolades, camaraderie, access, and social stature that they deserve. Yes, such groups are exclusive by their cost of participation, but no more so than the annual gala or so many other museum events with fees attached. Universities regularly honor generous alumni by inviting them to a dean's advisory council without any promise of a seat on the board of trustees.

We must also rethink the structure and composition of museum boards by adopting reforms that are rooted in the best practices of corporate governance, the tradition of American museums to honor patronage, and the fiduciary obligation of museums to serve their community constituents.

Downsize large museum boards to numbers conducive to participatory governance and in alignment with the best practices of the for-profit world. If 10 or 12 people can govern a major corporation, they can certainly conduct the fiduciary responsibilities of a museum.

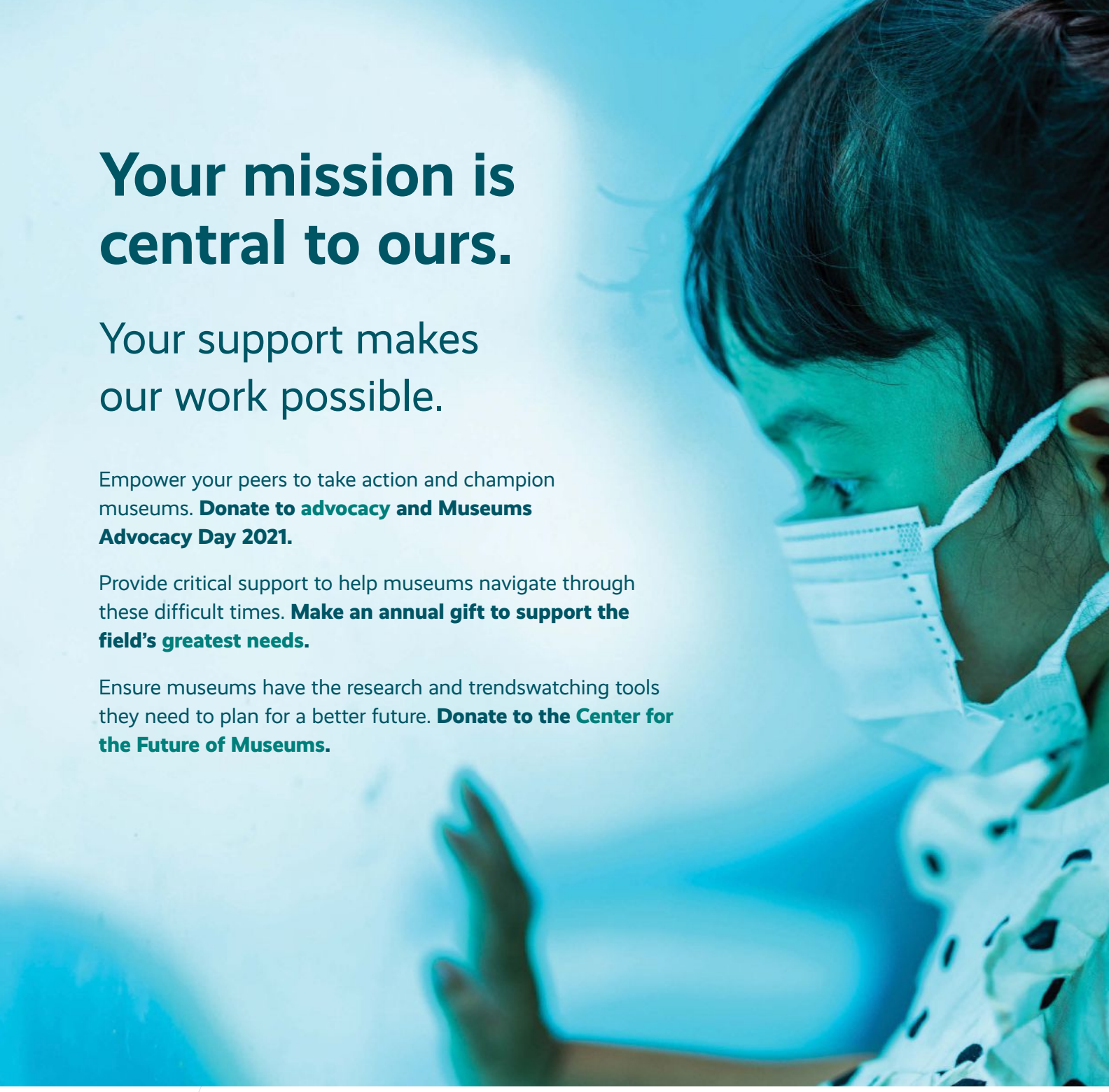
Eliminate mandatory giving from the requirements of board service. What if we selected members on a wealth-blind basis? How might this group better reflect our population and the interests and aspirations of the people our museums were founded to serve?

Place museum professionals on museum boards. If corporate America relies on enterprise-specific expertise for half of its board membership, then a museum board without professional museum expertise cannot be exercising best practices.

Strengthen boards with local leaders who are truly qualified to speak on behalf of the diverse communities from which they come. Museums can enrich their governance with the wisdom of community leaders, such as educators and school administrators, academics, religious leaders, social service professionals, civil servants, nonprofit executives, and, yes, museum professionals. It can profit from the perspectives of racial and ethnic diversity, class differences, the LGBTQ+ community, and even a person or two from younger generations.

Nobody is banishing businesspersons, bankers, attorneys and philanthropists from service, but merely balancing them with people whose social connections, life experiences, and professional achievements more comprehensively represent the varied segments of their local communities—the corporate equivalent of consumer expertise. I hope that this helps us rebalance, as well, what we value as success, moving beyond the metrics of attendance and budget size to a broader embrace of sustainability, employee welfare, learning, cultural understanding, and inclusive welcome that may, over time, expand and grow the impact our museums make on people's lives.

John Wetenhall is director of The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum in Washington, DC. This article was adapted from a presentation written for Dumbarton Oaks' symposium "Cultural Capital: Philanthropy in the Arts and Humanities Today," postponed due to the pandemic.



Your mission is central to ours.

Your support makes our work possible.

Empower your peers to take action and champion museums. **Donate to advocacy and Museums Advocacy Day 2021.**

Provide critical support to help museums navigate through these difficult times. **Make an annual gift to support the field's greatest needs.**

Ensure museums have the research and trendswatching tools they need to plan for a better future. **Donate to the Center for the Future of Museums.**

As we continue the fight for recovery together, our mission is more important than ever before.

Give today to strengthen the museum field

aam-us.org/donate

American Alliance of Museums

MASS Action attendees in discussion at the 2017 Convening.

A Watershed Moment

Lessons from #MuseumsRespondtoFerguson and MASS Action.

By Adrianne Russell, Anniessa Antar, and Elisabeth Callihan

Courtesy of Minneapolis Institute of Art; Freepik.com

In December 2014, a group of museum thought leaders gathered to write a joint statement urging museums to speak out and respond to the police brutality and subsequent uprising in Ferguson, Missouri, and other cities across the country. They made the case that the country was at a pivotal moment for discussions about race—and museums, which are an important piece of the cultural and educational fabric of the nation, had a responsibility to be a part of that conversation.

Very few museums publicly responded to the statement. Some museums actively discouraged their staff from discussing the topic at all, assured that it was not their role to wade into issues of injustice in society. The urgency for a real, honest conversation about race, this watershed moment, began to recede. Many white-bodied museum staff were content, perhaps relieved, to set it aside.

Recognizing the need to continue to push for critical engagement on the topics of race and the history of racism in museums, Aleia Brown and Adrianne Russell began hosting online discussions using the hashtag #MuseumsRespondtoFerguson. These monthly Twitter chats offered museum staff a platform to express their frustration, to learn from one another, and, most importantly, to develop consensus that it is, indeed, museums' role, as institutions created for the public benefit, to respond to societal injustices.

Mirroring, perhaps, the divide in our nation's political landscape, the juxtaposition exposed by these conversations, between those calling for racial justice in museums and those content with the status quo, seemed like an immense chasm. However, there was also a group of people standing in the middle; they acknowledged the need for critical discourse about race but did not know where to begin.

This was the spark for MASS Action (Museum As Site for Social Action), the realization that museums need to, as adrienne maree brown detailed in *Emergent Strategy*, apply a "fractal conception" to this work, understanding that the characteristics of the smallest part of an organization will determine its larger function. In a museum application, if predominately white-bodied museum staff, unaccustomed to having to think or talk about race because of their own racial privilege, feel ill-equipped to talk about race on the individual level, how can museums do so at the institutional level? If museum staff who identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) are continually harmed by their institutions' internal culture, policies, and practices, how can museums avoid harming BIPOC audiences at the institutional level?

Neutrality Is Complicity

MASS Action created a community of learning and practice to build a shared language and understanding, provide tools to support critical self-reflection and honest conversations, and shift museums toward more equitable, racially just practices. The collective efforts also provided a support network for BIPOC museum staff and white allies who are often the few people who take on the responsibility of centering racial equity when it might not be an institutional priority, and who are therefore at risk of being tokenized or harmed in these emergent discussions.

While MASS Action started with eight people on a fall day in 2015 in Minneapolis, it is now a movement, a network of hundreds of people, representing more than 100 museums across the country. In the intervening years, the conversation in the field has grown, too. There are hundreds of publications on the topic of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility and millions of hours of thought-work by colleagues across the country. There have been conversations, convenings, conferences, protests, and interventions. Praxes have been established, toolkits created, and multimillion-dollar diversity grants awarded. "We have maps for days," as Porchia Moore put it recently in a post on The Incluseum.

As a result of sustained conversations through #MuseumsRespondtoFerguson, MASS Action, Museums & Race, and #MuseumsAreNotNeutral, to name a few, **more institutions are beginning to understand that their assumed neutrality is, in fact, complicity**. In the wake of George Floyd's murder, MASS Action began to catalogue and analyze museum responses and found that of the 1,088 AAM-accredited museums in the US, *572 posted a statement on their websites or social media expressing solidarity with Black Lives Matter*.

In the years between #MuseumsRespondtoFerguson and the current moment, museum

MASS Action project advisors after the first planning meeting in 2015 at the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

positioning has shifted enough that more institutions felt called to step forward in solidarity. But many visitors, staff, and former staff members pushed back on these statements as acts of performance with no substantive commitment or follow-through. And many questioned if these museums were still engaged in the anti-racism solidarity work that they signaled on social media.

There is a growing concern that, despite this field-wide interest and purported commitment to equity, little progress is being made. For all the efforts, museum staff of color continue to feel erased, marginalized, or otherwise harmed by their institutions. Recently, large numbers of former and current BIPOC museum staff mobilized to share personal accounts of racism in their institutions via a series of open letters and petitions. Several museum workers of color publicly resigned from their posts citing oppressive work environments, choosing personal financial strain over continued harm in their profession. Together, these testimonials paint a picture of a pervasive culture of white supremacy within our institutions.

Accountability to Change

The very model that museums were built upon supports the perpetuation of this white supremacy culture. The museum model prioritizes the acquisition and preservation of the object over the human: the people who create and inspire material culture, the workers, and the visitors. Upholding this object-centered approach manifests in practices across the museum—extracting free labor from interns, union busting, gross wage inequity, discriminatory hiring practices, and operating under scarcity models in service to capitalist markets—which indicate what museums value. During the pandemic, most museums are steadfastly clinging to the status quo, showing no signs of changing the model.

So the essential question remains: *What needs to happen to effect substantive change in our field?* Most museums have committed to racial equity seriously enough to impact structural change, so what will it take to make it happen? **If museums treated racial justice with the same seriousness, budgetary support, care, and follow-through as an exhibition or a catalogue, would we still be having this same conversation in another five years?**

The missing piece seems to be accountability. Museums, even small ones, operate within big, unwieldy systems of bureaucracy and, on an even larger scale, white supremacy. To shift direction, to push against the momentum of white supremacy created over hundreds of years, physics would tell us, will require consistent, intentional pressure. It is easy to get distracted, to pause, or to give up when results aren't immediate or initial steps are unsuccessful. It is easy to sideline conversations when any conflict or disagreement arises, especially with white-bodied folks who hold positions of power. However, to hold ourselves and our institutions accountable for this work, we need to dig into this conversation and do so with transparency, vulnerability, and consistency. Here are some thoughts on how to do that.

Courtesy of Minneapolis Institute of Art

RESOURCES

Kami Fletcher, "#MuseumsRespondtoFerguson: An Interview with Aleia Brown and Adrianne Russell," *Black Perspectives*, September 29, 2016

MASS Action Toolkit & Readiness Assessment
museumaction.org

Incluseum.com, including: nikhil trivedi, "Towards an Anti-Oppression Museum Manifesto," November 9, 2015; and Porchia Moore, "Cartography: A Black Woman's Response to Museums in the Time of Racial Uprising," June 10, 2020

Death to Museums, *A crowdsourced list of anti-racist action in museums* [Google form]
tinyurl.com/yaobzg98

Yesomi Umolu, "On the Limits of Care and Knowledge: 15 Points Museums Must Understand to Dismantle Structural Injustice," *ArtNet News*, June 25, 2020

Get uncomfortable. This work cannot be done without discomfort. One of the primary characteristics of white supremacy culture is fear of open conflict, so many of us tend to avoid it. Conflict can be generative and is absolutely necessary in the pursuit of racial justice. Productive conflict surfaces outdated notions of how we relate to one another in our work; it can expose the structural, uncomfortable truths about oppression and ultimately lead us to new, more equitable ways of working. In addition to having these courageous conversations, being accountable in this work requires vulnerability and humility. Racial justice is a human rights issue that requires humanity at the center.

Be transparent. In order to narrow the gap between institutional positioning and institutional action, museums need an open and ongoing self-examination mechanism through the lens of anti-racism. And museums need to make their learning visible to their publics. Without this, it is far too easy to stop and start this work on a timeline that benefits the museum, forgetting that racial injustice is urgent work all the time.

Think horizontally. This work is ongoing and generational. It will take time to undo systems of power that took hundreds of years to establish—and it will take *everyone* working on it. Your leadership models for this work need to look different. There is no equitable outcome without an equitable process.

Don't reinvent the wheel. Racial justice in museums cannot happen by following a checklist. There is no one-size-fits-all roadmap; you must audit and individually address each one of your systems to impact the whole. But museums do not have to reinvent the wheel either. There are so many resources available, so many "maps" to choose from. (See the Resources at left for a select few.)

Remember who benefits. The only thing you cannot do is nothing. Not doing this internal work will continue to harm BIPOC staff and visitors. It will push out BIPOC staff talent, not to mention harm your institution's relevancy and public reputation. And living in a racially unjust society hurts the white-bodied, too.

As we push against white supremacy culture and harmful legacies of colonization and oppression, we build liberation together for everyone. When we collectively set the bar for social justice in museums and other cultural institutions, everyone wins.

PUT YOUR ACTION WHERE YOUR WORDS ARE

Whether you are in a structural leadership position, a board member, a volunteer, or a casual/part-time worker, racial equity is part of everyone's work. Below are some actions you can take today.

- Take MASS Action's **Readiness Assessment** and compare results with your colleagues—where do you align, where do you differ, and why?
- Host a group reading of the **MASS Action Toolkit.**
- **Identify your core values** as an institution. If anti-racism isn't one of them, discuss why or why not. If it is, make your commitments actionable and transparent to your public.
- **Center racial equity**. At what stage does racial equity come into play during internal decision-making processes? If it isn't the central lens in how decisions are made, work with BIPOC staff, trustees, visitors, and other stakeholders to make it so. If you get stuck, ask yourselves, ***"What are we choosing over equity?"*** There is no equitable outcome without an equitable process.
- **Center BIPOC staff.** If your institution is focusing on diversity and equity without centering the care and retention of BIPOC staff, ***pause***. Consider how you are authentically listening to staff of color's needs.
- Apply a **budget equity tool** to assess how funds are being allocated in your institution. Create an actionable plan to address areas of funding inequity.

Adrianne Russell is a museum educator, writer, consultant, and co-founder of #MuseumsRespondtoFerguson. **Anniessa Antar** is the activation specialist at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. **Elisabeth Callihan** is head of multigenerational learning at Minneapolis Institute of Art and co-founder of MASS Action.

A **Liberatory** Framework

Critical race theory can help museums commit to anti-racism and combat anti-blackness.

By Porchia Moore

We are a profession of some of the most brilliant thinkers, scholars, educators, artists, scientists, and revolutionaries from almost every background and way of life. Most of us working in and with museums approach the work with passion, acquired skill sets, and determination to change our communities through the history and culture of humankind.

Rarely, however, do we think about theories. And on the occasions that we do, we usually consider them the luxuries of academia. Yet, theories can offer solutions for informing our best practices. Theories are developed from a set of principles based on observation and research. They explicate and predict conditions and phenomena and help us 1) augment our knowledge and 2) achieve a base unit of understanding.

I began writing about and using theory in 2010 as a mechanism for interrogating legacies of exclusion in museums. I wanted to challenge the statements that were accepted as truths about why Black people and people of color did or did not visit museums. I wanted to challenge assumptions accepted as truth about leisure-time activities and museum-going in correlation to what I understood about race and racism. Specifically, I have employed critical race theory as a method of inquiry to interrogate the role and function of race in museums.

iStock.com/Zuki

Why Theories Matter for Museums

When I started investigating race within the museum context, I found that all of the research on visitors recognized that Black people and people of color were overwhelmingly not attending museums at the same rates as their white counterparts. However, no studies accounted for or articulated race, racism, or historical oppression in their research. It was as if there was no existing knowledge of race or racism.

How could we not account for institutional and systemic racism when we know for a fact that there were museums that would not allow Black visitors? How could we not account for the pseudo-science of eugenics in our natural history museums and its impact on collections and taxonomies of knowledge? How could we continue to argue that implicit bias was not a factor when white artists are glaringly over-represented in the permanent collections of our most beloved art museums?

As an activist-scholar, I was acutely aware that existing knowledge was being egregiously bypassed, and the existing museum-going data was missing vital information. How could our internal and external behaviors be labeled best practices, codes of conduct, or standards when the field was overwhelmingly white and did not account for Black and Indigenous ways of knowing? What have our standards been based on? What theories prove that the ways in which we are working in museums are the best ways for the times that we live in?

I began to search for a theory that could offer reasonable and inquiry-based answers to these questions. While many scoff at theory as merely an intellectual exercise or academic jargon, I recognized that theory informs praxis and vice versa. Theory and application are gradients of the same hue. Praxis is literally defined as shape-making and world-changing. That is, praxis is informed, committed engagement toward problem-solving a situation as intentional thinking and acting.

Theory provides meaning to what we see in our daily application and work practices. It is a framework for taking what we know and applying principles for relevance, fine-tuning, new applications, and installing new modes of conduct. We can use theory to make predictions, develop best practices, and guide new territories of exploration from research and observation. The systematic set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and explorations help us uncover *how* and *why* things work as they do.

Theories are used across disciplines to advance conversations, illuminate cross-disciplinary dialogue, and provide a conceptual framework for resolving a conundrum through shared language. In the museum field, we tend to focus purely on accepted codes of conduct created through professionalization, established best practices, and hit-or-miss risk-taking.

What are the advantages of applying theory to assist us in solving some of our most complex and challenging issues in museums? How can we apply theory as an informative framework to address issues such as social injustice and systemic and institutional racism? How can theories help us think about the ways in which code words, such as "community," "diversity," and "invitation," signal exclusion to our visitors even as our intended outcome is participation and welcome? These were the key questions that I

The practical — **making judgments**

People begin with a situation or question which they consider in relation to what they think makes for human flourishing.

the good

They are guided by a moral disposition to act truly and rightly.

phronēsis

This enables them to engage with the situation as committed thinkers and actors.

praxis

The outcome is a process.

interaction

Source: Mark Smith, *Local Education: Community, Conversation, Action*, 1994

"The core credo of CRT is that racism is pervasive, and even with legal preventions in place racism will never be fully eradicated because of the ubiquity of Whiteness."

used to approach the topics of diversity and inclusion in our field.

What Is Critical Race Theory?

Critical race theory (CRT) was developed in the 1970s from the writings of legal scholar Derrick Bell to respond to legal reversals of key legislation passed during the Civil Rights Movement. CRT was a way to trace the roots of racist legislation going back to the harsh Black Codes that restricted Black Americans' freedom after the Civil War while providing a legal and political framework for challenging racial inequality within the law. Other scholars, such as Alan Freeman and Richard Delgado, augmented CRT by implementing cross-disciplinary theories with fields such as cultural studies, critical legal studies, postmodernism, and feminism.

The core credo of CRT is that racism is pervasive, and even with legal preventions in place, racism will never be fully eradicated because of the ubiquity of **Whiteness**. Originating in the 17th century, Whiteness was created by white Christian and English settlers to distinguish colonists from African and Indigenous peoples. Whiteness became a recognized legal term that also distinguished class. Within the context of the United States, Whiteness was specifically designed to establish legal and social hierarchy and to utilize skin color as a legalized privilege.

In our contemporary times, critical race scholars have identified additional tenets of the theory to better define Whiteness and how it functions in today's society. Whiteness includes the proximity to the rights, values, beliefs, and experiences of Whiteness in relation to the impact of racism that elevates and distinguishes white people over people of color. Whiteness, like race, is a social construct.

CRT—now used in disciplines such as education, women and gender studies, American studies, queer studies, critical white studies, and more—critically examines constructs of race, specifically, as it relates to eradicating racism and restoring justice. CRT is a set of inquiry-based principles designed to:

- illuminate inequality,
- name the inequality,
- establish new protocols for creating/restoring justice, and
- eradicate engineered privileges experienced as racism.

Advocates of CRT utilize it to practice activism and scholarship. CRT activist-scholars, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term "intersectionality," employ CRT as a mechanism for addressing systemic inequality and advocating for justice. In addition to the notion that racism is pervasive and unable to be fully eradicated, CRT encompasses the following three key tenets:

1. Counternarrative or storytelling—using the narratives of people of color to illuminate racialized experience to counter a dominant narrative of white norms. Storytelling is viewed as an accepted and legitimate way of knowing.
2. Interest convergence—that white people will

DO I NEED TO INCORPORATE CRT INTO MY MUSEUM WORK?

1. Do you understand the basic language tools for racial equity? (Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that this language is not being co-opted by the values being employed?)
2. Do you apply trauma-informed and healing-informed care to your daily museum work?
3. Do you know your museum's racial history?
4. Is your board still predominately white?
5. Are your collections still predominately lacking complex, multilayered narratives/representation?
6. Is your social media still only speaking to your "base/core"?
7. Is your development department still only targeting Black, Indigenous, and other people of color as beneficiaries of donations instead of donors/philanthropists themselves?
8. Do you understand what anti-blackness is and what it looks like in your decision-making approach?
9. Do you believe that race and/or racism has nothing to do with museums or museum-going and doesn't impact the work that you do?
10. Has your museum created spaces, opportunities, advisory capacities, and more to elevate the presence, power, and voices of historically marginalized communities in your institution in a tangible, visible way that shares authority and ways of knowing?

eschew racism only until their interests no longer converge with those of people of color.

3. Critique of liberalism—that social transformation is only possible when "Band-Aid approaches," such as affirmative action, color blindness, and merit principles such as respectability, are rejected. Liberalism as an ideology destabilizes conscious effort and language that centers on race and race-consciousness.

It is important to note that CRT is not:

- a political agenda;
- a scheme to make white people feel guilt or shame;
- a mechanism for revising history such that one race is pitted against another or demonized; or
- something that can be "taken down," needs to be "fought," creates harm, or disturbs the fabric of society.

Combating Racism and Anti-Blackness in Museums

Museums are rooted in colonialism and imperialism. As such, CRT is a necessary tool for evaluating the ways in which white supremacy culture exists in our cultural heritage institutions. In our field, Stephen Weil notably shifted our attention from the object-centered museum to the human-centered museum when he wrote "museums should be about people, not objects." Yet, which people? Whose culture? Whose cultural heritage objects?

In museums, our attention has been focused on "diversity" and "diversity initiatives" as a means to hegemonically continue our "best practices" and status quo allegiance to Whiteness as opposed to practicing inclusion and intentionally destabilizing and de-centering Whiteness. CRT allows us to focus on structures of power and privilege, thereby transforming our communities in new ways. It is a tool for identifying the impacts of our collective implicit bias that is rendered as professionalization.

The Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping—issued on September 22, 2020, to end so-called "divisive concepts" covered in federal workplace trainings—is a key example of the ways in which Whiteness is allowed to determine what is harmful, and whether or not one is able to claim that harm and demand reparations for being harmed. It is a deepening of the white master narrative that there is a single American history.

Our American history is complex, riddled with heroic feats, savage instances of oppression, social and cultural behaviors that demand sameness and not diversity, and more. It is reductive to think that individuals with the most power and the least ability

> "CRT allows us to focus on structures of power and privilege, thereby transforming our communities in new ways."

to experience harm are the same entities that can emphatically declare that implicit bias does not exist, racism is imagined, and white privilege is false.

CRT is a liberatory framework for providing the language tools, theoretical frameworks, history, and legal contexts to organize our thinking so that we can address access, diversity, inclusion, and equity in museums. In addition, it augments our commitment to sharing the full depth and breadth of information that material culture affords us. Furthermore, it allows us to use research, rubrics, toolkits, and other tools to eradicate systemic racism in our practices as we continue to adhere to standards of excellence, thereby redefining and transforming our field by committing to anti-racism and combating anti-blackness.

Museums are the most trusted institutions in our nation. If we adhere to standards set upon us by those who do not invest in scientific and academic rigor, reason, and standards, we forfeit that trust.

Porchia Moore, PhD, is an assistant professor at the School of Art + Art History at the University of Florida and co-creator of the Visitors of Color Project.

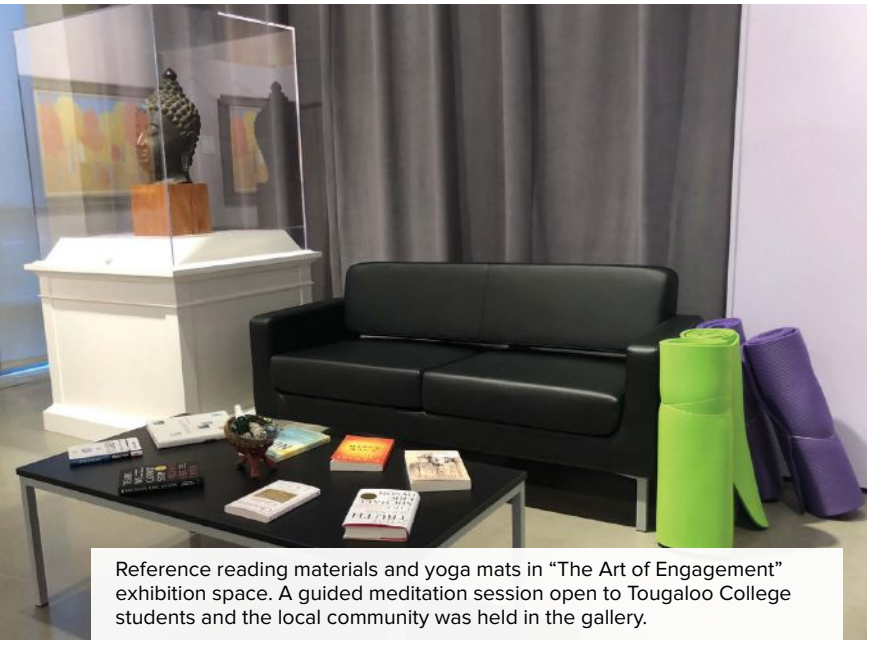
The main entrance into “The Art of Engagement” revisited March 1961 when the Tougaloo Nine became the first Mississippi students to stage a sit-in against segregation, which occurred at the public library in downtown Jackson.

Re-Engaging the Past to Re-Envision the Future

The Mississippi Museum of Art and Tougaloo College joined creative forces to spotlight civil rights issues, past and present.

By Redell R. Hearn

In the latest iteration of visible fights for civil rights and social equity centered on race, the tendency to judge the "other" for what has not been done can distort the power that comes from individuals connecting with one another to create a more impactful and meaningful change. Looking to institutionalize a decades-long relationship centered on the sharing of their art collections, the Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) and Tougaloo College joined creative forces in 2017 to form the two-year Art & Civil Rights Initiative (ACRI).



Reference reading materials and yoga mats in "The Art of Engagement" exhibition space. A guided meditation session open to Tougaloo College students and the local community was held in the gallery.

Redell Hearn

Founded in 1869 by the American Missionary Association, Tougaloo College has a rich history of civil rights activism and an art collection born of the era. MMA, which began as an art association in 1911, is an accredited art museum that has operated in Jackson, Mississippi, since 1978. In the past 15 years, MMA has produced public programs and exhibitions that explore the seminal events of the Civil Rights Movement through the lens of visual artists.

During the 1960s, when Black citizens in Mississippi could not enter public libraries or art galleries, 51 New York activists formed the New York Art Committee for Tougaloo College. Between 1963 and 1967, they shipped works by important modern US and European artists to Tougaloo College, effectively establishing the first collection of modern art in Mississippi. According to Betsy Bradley, director of MMA, "the stories of the two art collections … contain the truths of Mississippi's story. In a segregated city at the same time, two groups of people, largely separated by race, aspired to create cultural centers and artistic repositories that would benefit their constituencies. In addition, they each held the long-term view that the art would catalyze their communities coming together."

A decade later, major works from the college's collection were displayed as part of MMA's inaugural 1978 exhibition, establishing a relationship of sharing art collections that has now, through the ACRI, expanded to include internships, curriculum, exhibitions, and staff. Components of the ACRI, which was underwritten by the Henry Luce Foundation, included a shared curator of art and civil rights, Tougaloo student paid internship program, curriculum development for a course on art and civil rights, digitization of Tougaloo's American art collection, and a series of exhibitions and corresponding lectures at MMA and the college that focused on works from both collections.

According to Turry M. Flucker, director of Tougaloo College Art Collections, "The Art & Civil Rights Initiative was a catalyst for critical examination of the events of the 1960s and how artists were responding to those times."

Creating an initiative centered on civil rights may have seemed historically reflective just three years ago. But it was then—and remains—intrinsically relevant in the present moment in which we witness the ongoing demand for civil rights, social justice, and racial equity.

The Exhibition and Lecture Series

The ACRI exhibition series consisted of five exhibitions between February 2018 and February 2020: the first two at Tougaloo, the third at MMA, the fourth at Tougaloo, and the fifth at MMA. Each exhibition included works from both collections in dialogue and had a companion public lecture and private student discussion forum. Because the exhibitions and programming rotated venues, stakeholders and visitors

from each institution were encouraged to visit the other. For example, a "progressive opening reception" was held for one of the exhibitions in which visitors attended the reception at MMA and then went to the Tougaloo art gallery to view the exhibition.

The five exhibitions that were part of the ACRI are as follows:

- Setting the tone of the entire series, the first exhibition, "NOW: The Call and Look of Freedom," inspired by the 1960s rally cry "Freedom Now" and the #BlackLivesMatter movement, focused on the various modes of ongoing activism by African Americans and the persistence of urgency, Black self-determination, and Black love in their quest for civil rights.
- "The Art of Engagement: Meditation on a Movement" positioned artwork created or acquired by a group of art enthusiasts and Tougaloo College during the 1960s and 1970s. It asked viewers to contemplate the fact that a small, private, predominately Black college was quietly establishing the first modern art collection in Mississippi and hosting people to talk about its aesthetic and political relevance, during a time of profound racial turmoil and civic unrest.
- "A Modernist Vision: The Tradition of Modern Art at Tougaloo College" exhibited some of the most significant work by modern visual artists in the college's collection, highlighting the profound role that Tougaloo College played in shaping Mississippi's cultural landscape.
- "A Tale of Two Collections" highlighted the similarities of the two institutions' collections and the ongoing mutual commitment to collection-sharing to foster greater social unity. The exhibition focused on artists who are part of both institutions' collections, displaying their work side by side.
- The final exhibition of the series, "The Prize: Seven Decades of Lyrical Response to the Call for Civil Rights," focused on a selection of artwork that captures specific images of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and how the quest for social justice inspired greater artistic expression as an act of liberation. Images were then paired with the verbal history provided by songs that spanned the decades and brought the movement—visually and vocally—to the present moment, the summer of 2020.

While the exhibitions provided visual reference to the past, the lecture series sparked dialogue about how the 1960s Civil Rights Movement planted seeds of resistance that have blossomed into civil society today. The lectures also offered a collective understanding of the influence of social causes on artists and of artists on historical events.

For example, the lecture "Black Bodies in Public Space Now," presented by artist Nona Faustine,

In a lecture associated with "The Art of Engagement," Dr. Kheli Willetts invited the audience to view the art on display within a framework of meditation to experience a personalized understanding of the modern civil rights era.

Redell Hearn

The four other exhibitions that were part of the ACRI, from left to right: "NOW: The Call and Look of Freedom," "A Modernist Vision," "The Prize," and "A Tale of Two Collections."

discussed the disconnect often associated with Black people as human beings during civic discourse. "Reflections on Creative Activism: Living a Civil Life during the Quest for Civil Rights," presented by Dr. Kheli R. Willetts, senior program officer of the Mid-America Arts Alliance, discussed nontraditional representations of civil rights imagery, and a vibrant cultural life lived against a backdrop of protest, violence, and aggression, which was a revolutionary act within itself. The lecture "Telling the Tale of Two Collections," presented by Turry M. Flucker, director of the Tougaloo College Art Collections, provided historic context for the art collection at Tougaloo College and how art brought a variety of people onto the campus to discuss beauty and brutality. In the lecture "Shooting the Enemy: My Life in Pictures with the People Who Became Public Enemy," hip-hop activist and photojournalist Harry Allen addressed the direct connections between verbal protest in 1980s hip-hop, particularly the rap lyrics of Public Enemy, referred to at the time as the Black CNN, and the creative activism of their parents and other civil rights activists.

RESOURCES

Art & Civil Rights Initiative Catalogue
msmuseumart.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MMA1015K-ACRI-Cat-FINAL-web-single-edited.pdf

Curriculum and Internship Inspired by the Collections

The ACRI also brought the museum and the college together for other collaborations. MMA and Tougaloo created the college course "The Art of Civic Engagement" to explore the cultural context and creative activism in works of art acquired by both Tougaloo and MMA during the Civil Rights Movement.

And the two institutions worked together on a paid internship program. Six semester-long internships were awarded from fall 2018 to spring 2020 to students at Tougaloo. The interns participated in collections management training; staffed the art gallery and conducted gallery tours; assisted with the digitization project for the college's collection; attended public program activities at MMA; conducted "small talks," in which interns chose a piece of art, researched the work, and made a 15-minute public presentation in the college's art gallery; and completed academic modules designed to summarize information and review skills gained each month. The interns were exceptional students and ambassadors to their peers, which has boosted attendance to the campus gallery and student interest in internships working with the art collections.

Moving Forward

As a result of the ACRI, Tougaloo digitized its American art collection, creating opportunities for

All photos by Mark Geil

cross-institutional and public access to its collection for research, exhibition loans, and publications. The college also received a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that will enable expanded on-campus internships for collections management and art gallery work. And the director of Tougaloo College Art Collections, Turry M. Flucker, was selected as a 2020 Center for Curatorial Leadership fellow, an intensive program that trains curators to become visionary leaders of art museums.

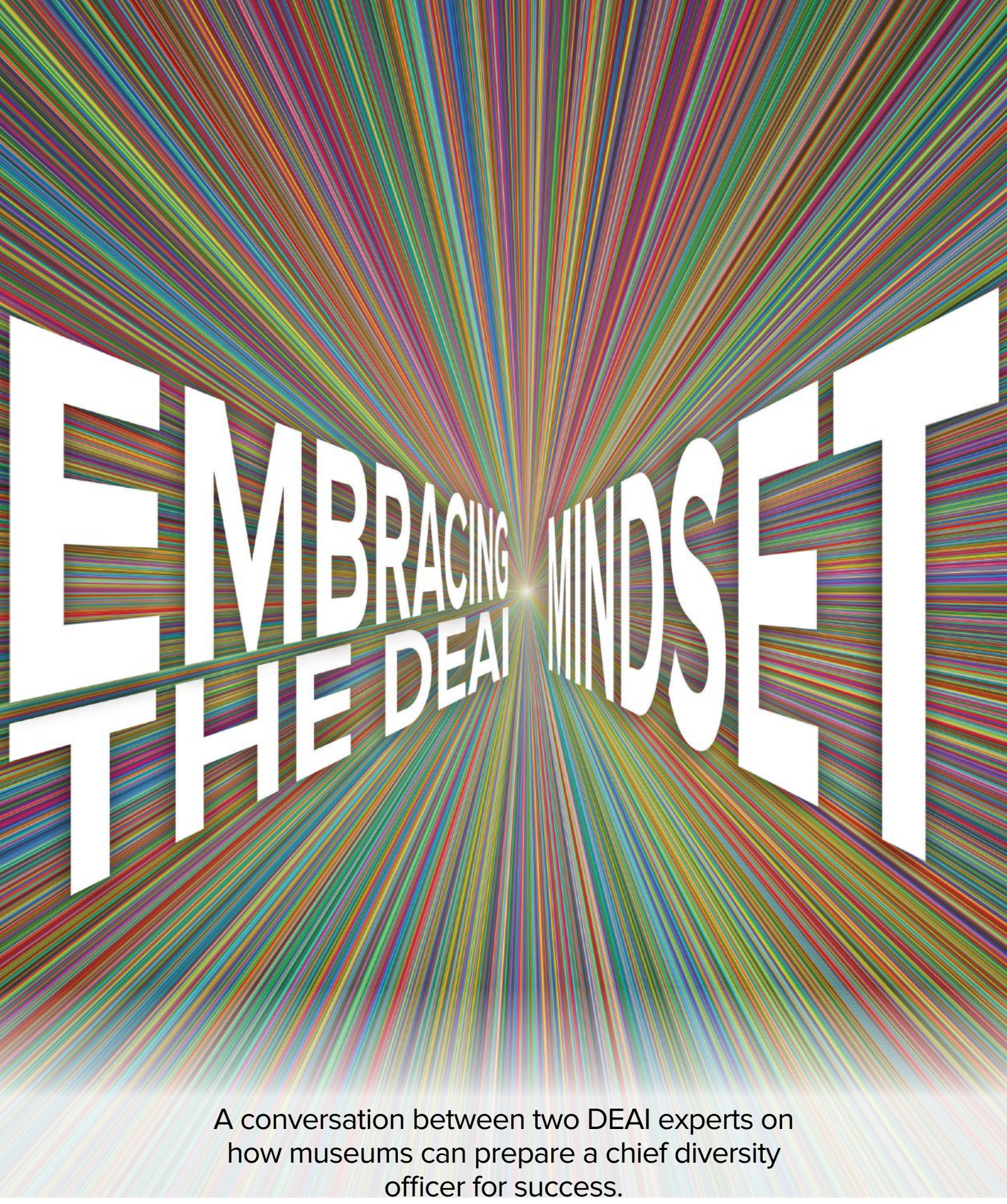
At MMA, a new Department of Academic Affairs launched in January 2020. This new initiative, intended to increase opportunities for local graduates to pursue museum industry jobs here in Mississippi, is funded by the Mellon Foundation for three years—and came about in no small part due to the success of the ACRI. In observing ACRI, Mellon found that MMA and Tougaloo's longtime partnership has proved greater than the sum of their institutional parts.

The department will guide the expansion of local academic partnerships in addition to the one with Tougaloo College. The museum will now also offer paid internship opportunities for students at Belhaven University, Jackson State University, and Millsaps College. It will develop individual projects with Belhaven and Jackson State and will create a shared curatorial/professorship position with Millsaps.

These internships will provide specialized academic curriculum with practical museum work experience to recent undergraduates interested in pursuing careers in the arts and museum fields. They will, among other things, fill existing academic and experiential gaps for undergraduates and recent graduates interested in an art museum profession. Additionally, they will create a pipeline of diverse, native museum employees through mentorships and deepened relationships with local undergraduate students preparing for graduate studies. This partnership model bridges the gap between those who gain experience by interning and then taking a series of positions in museums with progressive responsibility and those who select a primarily academic route, which includes academic training through a museum studies or an art history program.

Partnerships are relationships that require regular assessment and recommitment. The Mississippi Museum of Art and Tougaloo College have built on their collective strengths in sharing artwork from the past to foster community understanding about the importance of civil rights in the present. Moving forward, both institutions and their communities will continue to reap the rewards of this transformative collaboration.

Redell R. Hearn, PhD, is director of academic affairs for the Mississippi Museum of Art, a lecturer for the M.A. in museum studies program at Johns Hopkins University, and a Fulbright specialist in museum studies.



A conversation between two DEAI experts on how museums can prepare a chief diversity officer for success.

In 2018, when Makeba Clay was hired as the inaugural chief diversity officer (CDO) at The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC—the first in an American art museum—she called Cecile Shellman, then the diversity catalyst at the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, for an informational interview about how she had made diversity, equity, access, and inclusion (DEAI) a reality at her institution. Shellman knew what it was like to lack role models, benchmarks, or patterns for progress in this work. In the ensuing years, both Clay and Shellman have, in various capacities, helped cultural institutions confront the systemic inequities in their operations.

Here, Clay and Shellman weigh in on what museums need to do before hiring a CDO, how they can hire the best person for the role, and how they can support that person in their work.

As more museums become interested in hiring a CDO, are there things they should have in place or work they should already have done before they start the hiring process?

Cecile Shellman: Every museum is different, and their needs relative to DEAI concerns will be unique to their organizational culture. The task at hand is immense: leading efforts to diversify staff, programs, and exhibitions; striving for equity among all internal communities; providing access and accommodations for people with disabilities and people whose first language is not English; and creating more welcoming cultures. Each institution must do extensive diagnostic work to identify and analyze their own challenges—understanding where they are, what cultural changes need to happen, and whether their organizational structure is malleable enough to support cultural transformation in an authentic way. Until that happens, they should not seek a CDO.

Makeba Clay: I couldn't agree with you more, Cecile. I can't tell you how often I have been approached by institutions that believe they are ready for organizational culture change, yet they are unwilling to face the truth about where they are on their journey. When I encounter this type of cognitive dissonance, I'm reminded of one of my favorite quotes by James Baldwin, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

Who is an ideal candidate for this role?

Clay: The role of the chief diversity officer is multidimensional and complex, with a focus on leading strategic change, building capacity for training and thought leadership, coordinating and convening community members, serving as an advocate and ambassador, establishing metrics and systems of accountability, and communicating regularly about DEAI to internal and external stakeholders.

The ideal candidate for the CDO role is someone who not only demonstrates a deep commitment to the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion, but also possesses intellectual and ethical leadership as a strategic leader, adviser, and catalyst for institutional and cultural change across the organization. The individual must be able to lead from the middle, possess an equity mindset, be adept at fostering dialogue with multiple constituencies and building coalitions, and be able to achieve results through influence and

Science Photo Library/Alamy Stock Photo

collaboration. Further, the ideal candidate will have demonstrated capabilities as an administrator, convener, and community builder who has a record of success advancing DEAI in arts and culture, nonprofit, and/or education fields at the executive level.

What I've also come to realize is that whatever isn't measured doesn't get done. Therefore, increasingly, institutions that rely on financial support from foundations and other grant-funded sources are asked to demonstrate the impact/ROI of their DEAI efforts. Consequently, a CDO must have demonstrated the ability to utilize data and analytics as important tools in establishing goals and measuring progress. This person must work toward institutional change by proactively approaching challenges with systems-level thinking rather than reacting to challenges or constantly fixing problems.

Shellman: The ideal chief diversity officer should have a profound understanding of civics, social justice, critical race theory, and intersectionality, both in an academic context and through their lived experience. A capacity for building and maintaining trusting, confidential, respectful relationships is key. Additionally, the CDO should be a skilled communicator and mediator who has demonstrated success in forging consensus between individuals and communities with divergent views. A high EQ (emotional IQ) is essential.

What are some of the questions museums should ask during the hiring process, and what factors might inform their decision-making?

Shellman: Equitable interviews should assess for skill. The interview process for the role should model this principle. As such, the questions should focus on assessing candidates' proficiency in complex problem-solving, knowledge of relevant laws and regulations, and ability to strategize. The ideal candidate should have excellent communication and presentation skills as well as a capacity to convey complex information as an ambassador and advocate.

Clay: When an institution has finally arrived at the point of hiring someone for the CDO role, they may still have a limited understanding of what the key responsibilities should be for the position. Also, institutional leaders may have unrealistic expectations about what the arc of change looks like in action. Because the path of institutional change is not linear, nor is there a one-size-fits-all approach to the work, those who are hiring for this position might ask candidates about their philosophy and methodology for achieving goals associated with the work.

Typically, the initial work with any institution involves a discovery period to understand the institutional context, build personal relationships, and determine (with colleagues) the opportunities and challenges facing the institution. Following this initial assessment period (usually within the first 90 days), the CDO will then shift to working across the institution to determine strategic priorities, articulate specific goals, outline the fiscal and human resources needed to achieve them, establish metrics, and set benchmarks and accountability measures. This initial planning process can take up to 18–36 months, depending on the collective decision-making and actions that are taken across the organization.

What responsibilities need to be part of the CDO's portfolio to achieve success? And what are some of the challenges in achieving success?

Clay: I've seen countless organizational models that situate DEAI work exclusively on public programs and community engagement or within the context of compliance and training; both of these models will fall short of achieving systemic and sustained change in an organization.

In order to achieve transformation, it's important for the CDO to take a systems-change approach to this work that applies a DEAI lens throughout *all* aspects of the museum. Based on my experience and leading practice in the field, ideally, the role would center around three critical and mutually reinforcing areas of responsibility: 1) serving as a strategist and DEAI thought partner with the leadership team in ways that cut across the institutions' programs, people, policies, processes, and culture, 2) managing the internal change process with an intentional lens on bridging internal efforts with the external (e.g., considering how creating a more accessible museum impacts the

broader community outside the organization), and 3) being a champion and model for DEAI values and, in so doing, holding the organization accountable for consistent engagement with DEAI from the CEO and leadership, the board, staff, and volunteers.

Further, during a time when there is so much public scrutiny at the governance level, in order to be taken seriously as a transformative leader, a CDO's portfolio must include working closely with members of the board of trustees to implement strategic priorities that create far greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in governance by focusing more intentionally on the nominations process, board culture, training, and evaluation. It's been my experience that in order for an organization to advance systemic and sustained change, the stated values and vision must be in alignment with what is being experienced on the ground. Liaising with and guiding the board in this way enables the CDO to ensure that the voices and needs of other institutional stakeholders are reflected in the broader strategy to best align intent with impact.

Shellman: In the event that training, learning, and development opportunities are not embedded in the human resources function of the organization, the CDO may also coordinate or provide workshops and skill-based training.

What is the ideal reporting structure for this position, and what needs to be in place within the organization to support this work?

Shellman: This position should ideally be at the director level, reporting to the chief executive officer. The CDO should be appropriately compensated, with an additional percentage added for emotional and psychological labor.

The organization should also ensure that there are sufficient financial resources allocated to support the CDO and other staff contributing to this work. Program coordinators, workshop facilitators, researchers, and disability rights advocates should have supporting roles.

Clay: Additionally, all organizational leaders must be committed to, and held accountable for, advancing the DEAI strategic priorities in substantive and measurable ways. For example, each department should develop specific DEAI goals for their department, and each employee within their respective department should create goals that are tied to their performance and measured on an annual basis.

What advice or words of wisdom would you give to a new CDO?

Shellman: This is difficult, emotional work that will require you to shoulder the burdens and challenges of individuals who have historically been excluded or prevented from self-advocating due to a lack of power. You may need additional encouragement and support, such as executive coaching, mentorship, or peer counseling.

Self-care is a must!

Clay: I would urge people to pace themselves; this work is akin to running a marathon, not a sprint. Change takes time and will require a balanced perspective, endurance, resilience, and support from trusted mentors and colleagues. It's also wise to manage expectations—yours and others—every step of the way.

The civil rights activist and writer Audre Lorde once said, "I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal, and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood." I, too, believe that it is critical for someone in the role of a chief diversity officer to lead with authenticity, to be bold, to be vulnerable, to be courageous, and to simply tell it like it is—with grace, humor, and love.

Makeba Clay (makebaclay.com) and **Cecile Shellman** (cecileshellmanconsulting.com) are both consultants focusing on DEAI in the museum and nonprofit fields. They are currently senior diversity fellows for AAM's Facing Change initiative (aam-us.org/programs/facing-change1/). Clay is also the chief diversity officer at The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC.

iStock.com/syolacan

The White Supremacy Elephant in the Room

How museum professionals can see it, name it, and change it.

By Museums and Race contributors Janeen Bryant, Barbara Cohen-Stratyner, Stacey Mann, and Levon Williams

Museums and other cultural institutions have been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the national racial justice reckoning. These dual crises have drawn the curtain back on a field rife with systemic inequities.

While many within the field have been pushing these inequities to the forefront for decades, their concerns have not been systematically heard, acknowledged, and addressed. Why is it so difficult to see, understand, and actively and effectively dismantle systems of oppression in the museum field?

Despite our espoused desire to be fair, just, and equitable, we actively and passively resist making the

"To dismantle white supremacy in cultural spaces, we must unflinchingly name these harmful practices."

changes that precipitate that outcome. We advocate on the national stage for museums to be seen as essential to the communities we serve, but we often seem oblivious of how to meaningfully connect with those same communities. Internally, we struggle to attract diverse professionals to the field *and* struggle to leverage and empower historically marginalized voices currently in the field.

Why? Because museums operate within a white supremacy culture, which informs the norms and practices of the museum field at large. This culture comes from museums' historic ties to the Atlantic slave trade and has remained embedded in institutional and individual practices. However, there are field-wide efforts to dismantle white supremacy culture, and there are ways that individuals can begin to see and disrupt this culture in their respective organizations.

The Origins of White Supremacy Culture

When American museums were first established, they followed models of European royalist traditions and were enabled by a systemically racist financial system founded with the colonial slave trade. The European nations established trade triangles by enslaving people from Africa to work the land in the Americas. To accommodate the Atlantic slave trade, economic supports were established at both ends to manage the shipping, internal transportation, and banking.

This infrastructure, and the wealth acquired through it, withstood the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, but could it lose the stain of its origin? The harbors became the major communities of the East Coast as the banking, trade, and transportation industries thrived with expansion. The wealthy founded the encyclopedic museums of art and science to educate and enlighten their cities' residents and workers.

American museums and related institutions acquired the European hierarchy of culture. Greece and Rome, seen as civilizations not as centers of trade, were followed chronologically and conceptually by Western Europe and eventually by Asia, the Western Hemisphere, and Africa. This hierarchy can still be seen in the order of galleries in many museums and in classification systems, such as the Dewey Decimal System that is used in most libraries.

While most museums are not encyclopedic, they have been mired in the practices of display and interpretation that developed in the late 19th century. Provenance, the widespread practice of including the names of donors on captioning, is a clear statement of the importance of direct and indirect funding on the field. Does that financial trail lead back to the Atlantic slave trade?

White Supremacy Culture Today

White supremacy in organizational culture today is insidious, invisible, and pervasive. Naming white supremacy in the workplace is most often met with resistance, with leaders refusing to call it anything other than a "normal" expression of workplace relationships.

As Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun note in *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups* (2001), "The characteristics [of white supremacy culture] ... are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the group." Jones and Okun list 14 characteristics, including perfectionism, ungrounded urgency, worship of the written word, and paternalism. They note that these characteristics are so embedded in work spaces that calling them out incites defensiveness and disbelief rather than curiosity about the potential harm they cause.

To dismantle white supremacy in cultural spaces, we must unflinchingly name these harmful practices. Only then can we address them. Efforts to dismantle white supremacy and institute accountability for leadership start with an insistence on data, research, and

mutual understanding of the problem, all of which are, unfortunately, in short supply in the field.

White supremacist norms are prevalent in hiring, compliance, and programming in museums and other cultural institutions. For more diverse voices to even enter the field, we must address this first hurdle. The museum field is rife with anecdotal accounts of subjective hiring and promotion barriers linked to educational requirements. For example, a BIPOC woman became the youngest member of a small history museum's senior staff after completing her master's degree. She was told an advanced degree was a requirement for senior leadership team members. She then realized that another member of the leadership team had only a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field and had been in senior leadership for at least three years.

In her 2019 Medium post "Barriers to Entry: An Infrastructure of Exclusion in the Museum," museum professional Elise Couture-Stone notes her own complicity in creating barriers to access for people of color. Couture-Stone highlights a reliance on unpaid internships, internal promotion practices, lack of pay equity, and the concept of "fit" as ongoing barriers to addressing supremacist structures in pay, hiring, and promotion. Couture-Stone acknowledges what few people in leadership roles will: the concept of fit is particularly troubling in the museum hiring process because it focuses on whether or not one's personality fits into current office culture rather than the skill set for the open position. "Those doing the interviewing tend to hire those that are most reflective of themselves and the rest of the team," she writes in the post.

These barriers are in large part individual supremacist choices and behaviors that are codified as standard practices. Individual behaviors can create inequitable outcomes for the field when left unchecked and unacknowledged by institutional leadership of any racial or ethnic background.

How We Change the Culture

Across the museum field, individuals and groups are not only bringing attention to the problematic histories and practices of our institutions, but also taking action to dismantle the systems of cultural violence that our institutions and, by extension, we as museum practitioners have upheld for so long. Field-wide conversations about "relevance," "community engagement," "neutrality," and "decolonization," among others, have pushed us to rethink assumptions about our work. But, until recently, we often dodged the broader discussion of *systemic* white supremacy and how it intersects with every facet of museums. If there's a silver lining from the racial reckoning of 2020, it may be that we can now push more effectively through this coded language to get at the root source.

This work, which encompasses collections, exhibitions, programs, operations, funding, and governance, belongs to every one of us. And the field has a variety of tools that practitioners can use to get started (see Resources below). Compiled by dedicated colleagues, these resources are freely available to the field. Claims from individuals that they don't know where or how to start ring hollow for those of us actively working to dismantle oppressive systems.

With that in mind, here are 10 things you can do right now to disrupt white supremacy culture.

RESOURCES

MASS Action Toolkit provides examples of how white supremacy culture shows up in our organizations and offers practical steps to combat it. **museumaction.org/resources**

The Empathetic Museum Maturity Model allows organizations to reflect on their current practices and measure organizational change. **empatheticmuseum.weebly.com/maturity-model.html**

Museum Hue shines a light on hiring practices and debunks the "pipeline" myth that the field lacks a diverse pool of qualified talent. **museumhue.com/blog**

Virtual conferences, like Museums & Race, Death to Museums, and Illinois State Museum's Social Justice in Museums Series, convene thought leaders and practitioners to explore the changes we need to make moving forward.

Individual Level

1. **Do your research.** Follow colleagues in the field who have been engaged with and leading this work (social media, articles, books). Make use of the many reading and resource lists out there. DO the legwork. DON'T ask others to do it for you. #letmegooglethatforyou
2. **Practice self-reflection.** Over the past months, the Change the Museum Instagram account has collected testimonies from museum practitioners about how and where white supremacy culture has shown up in museum spaces. Review these and consider Okun and Jones' traits of white supremacy in organizational culture. Do they look or sound familiar? How do they show up in your personal and professional life?
3. **Find an accountability partner.** When building new knowledge and skills, creating a local community of practice can be invaluable. Find a trusted person, or persons, with whom you can explore and examine new ideas.

Institutional Level

4. **Learn your institution's history.** Examine the historic origins of your museum's funding and its cultural hierarchy. Build a timeline and do some digging about the role of your institution within the local civic and cultural landscape.
5. **Build awareness.** Critically examine who is consistently served or benefits from the choices made about which stories are told, which objects are collected, whose comfort is centered, and what artifacts and programming are presented. For example, conduct an exhibition and program audit from the past 5–10 years. What patterns do you notice?
6. **Review, assess, and change.** Develop equity-focused mechanisms for review and feedback on job descriptions, the employee handbook, salary transparency, and hiring practices. Examine funding models, board structure, and other decision-making and governance models with a race equity lens. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work cannot be siloed; it must be embedded in all of the organization's policies. Where it is not, leaders should be accountable for facilitating this positive change.
7. **Create a group of champions for DEI work.** Push efforts further and faster by designating a committee, working group, or task force to take the lead on efforts to embed equity and inclusion work in all aspects of the organization. Build in accountability measures for this group.
8. **Create or revisit your organization's values statement.** A values statement that includes direct language regarding DEI as an institutional core value is an invaluable resource. It can be particularly helpful in decision-making, prompting the question, "Does this decision align with our core values?"
9. **Allocate significant support funds for internal DEI initiatives.** You can tell an organization's priorities by its budget. Does your organizational budget reflect its espoused commitment to DEI? Does that financial commitment include internal initiatives that will aid the organization's shift away from white supremacy culture?

Field Level

10. **See it, name it, change it.** If you can't see it, you can't name it. If you can't name it, you can't change it. Many museum practitioners see themselves as proponents of diversity and inclusion, yet they do not recognize how white supremacy culture permeates their own work and their institution. That must change. Seeing white supremacy culture allows you to name it and actively work to dismantle it.

Museums and Race is a group of museum professionals who want to effect radical change in our field. We believe that persistent and pervasive structural racism in our institutions is at the heart of the museum field's failure to diversify its boards, staffs, collections, members, and visitors. We also believe that understanding and recognizing entrenched racism is a difficult and potentially contentious undertaking—but also necessary if America's museums are to serve their diverse citizenry. Follow us on Twitter **@museumsandrace** and at **museumsandrace.org.**

In turbulent times, museums need timely audience research they can count on.

We're here to help.

Find our latest data releases at:

wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories

American Alliance of Museums

WilkeningConsulting
audience research | knowledge curation

For custom research results about your audience, enroll in the 2021 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers.
More information can be found at **wilkeningconsulting.com.**

A Roadmap for Equity

The Tucson Museum of Art is seeking institutional change through its IDEA plan.

By Marianna Pegno and Jeremy Mikolajczak

In 2024, the Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block (TMA) in Arizona will celebrate its centennial anniversary. From its humble beginnings as a community gallery and lecture space to the museum's formation in 1975, TMA has served Southern Arizona through engaging exhibitions and educational opportunities.

In preparing for this important milestone, TMA is affirming its commitment to relevance and equity by fostering connections to its audiences and local communities. In envisioning the next

A TRUSTEE'S *Perspective*

John-Peter Wilhite, a Tucson Museum of Art (TMA) trustee, shares why he saw IDEA as an institutional priority.

When I became a TMA trustee in 2018, it was due to the changes I saw happening at TMA. I knew the board was predominately white and I'd be the only Black member, but I saw it as an opportunity; I wanted to support the museum in becoming more inclusive of communities in Southern Arizona. Once I was officially on the board, I listened to how programs were developed in the past while simultaneously seeing where the board was in terms of understanding inclusion and equity.

The process of working with the IDEA strategic planning team, comprised of board members and staff, was tough at times. We had difficult conversations about the importance of the IDEA concepts being woven through all aspects of the plan, and some on the team did not understand why that was important. We leaned into those conversations and made it happen. Using my skills in communication, we found common language and built a collective understanding in order to commit to these practices holistically. Next, a small team of us (the community initiatives committee) had to create the actual IDEA work plan, which detailed the ways we were going to implement the concepts from the strategic plan and begin creating change in the programming and makeup of staff and board.

Finally, with the strategic plan approved by the board of trustees in December 2019 and the IDEA work plan completed, we put the final IDEA Plan before the board for approval in July 2020. I was concerned there would be some pushback, but to my surprise, the full board unanimously agreed to the document.

Now we have the hard work to do—we have to constantly check in and continuously assess ourselves. If we just have the plan but aren't doing the work to move forward, then we aren't truly committed to prioritizing IDEA.

100 years through the lens of a global pandemic and calls for racial equity, TMA is confronting urgent, existential questions: How can we sustain and enhance services to our audiences? How can the museum more proactively and fervently support community partnerships? How can we facilitate community-driven initiatives? How can TMA reimagine its structure and practices to achieve equity and inclusion and foster sustainable and systemic change?

Along with the region's diverse demographics, including Latinx, immigrant, refugee, and Indigenous communities, TMA is situated on the original territories of the O'odham and an hour's drive north of the US-Mexico border. This unique context pushes the museum to build access creatively and collaboratively for its communities, which it is doing through the institution-wide Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Plan.

A Timeline of Change

TMA's focus on inclusion, diversity, equity, and access didn't start with the creation of the IDEA Plan, however. First, the museum assessed its community engagement history. Beginning in 2016, after leadership changes, it evaluated its outreach to traditionally underserved communities; identified disparities in exhibition development and artworks in the collection; and addressed internal challenges, such as diversifying the museum's board.

In 2017, the museum created a Department of Community Engagement to integrate a broad range of community stakeholders within TMA's collections, exhibitions, and programs through bidirectional collaborations and community partnerships. One example, "Museum as Sanctuary," founded in 2010, works with organizations serving immigrants and refugees to highlight the benefits of creative expression and language acquisition through art-making and in-gallery activities. "Museum as Sanctuary" participants have authored labels, exhibited artwork, participated in focus groups about the future of the museum, and supported program development and expansion.

"In order to represent, activate, and advocate for all Southern Arizona communities, the IDEA process requires ongoing reflection, training, and discussion."

Challenging traditional internal power dichotomies, the department has had a profound impact on curatorial practices while reinforcing the principles of IDEA decision-making in programmatic endeavors and community-based practices. The department has leveraged partnerships and conducted facilitated conversations and convenings that have led to prioritizing interpretation and exhibition development that is reflective and inclusive of our local community.

Simultaneously, the CEO worked with the board's committee on trustees to expand its criteria and rationale to include the important role trustees play in helping the museum become inclusive, diverse, and community-centered. To avoid the historical challenges of "tokenism" on museum boards, TMA established new committees, including the community initiatives committee, which serves as a bridge between the institution and local Indigenous tribes, Latinx, and communities of color.

Beginning in early 2018, TMA drafted a new three-year strategic plan, which was adopted in December 2019. The Strategic Plan commits to IDEA across all its strategic priorities, including economic stability, programmatic focus, audience experience, and messaging.

Although TMA was focusing on programs and exhibitions that were culturally relevant and rooted in equitable access, it was clear that in order to realize systemic change, TMA needed to ensure a shared baseline understanding of and framework for IDEA, including definitions, principles, strategies, and metrics. So in the fall of 2019, TMA began creating an IDEA Plan, with help from the board's community initiatives committee and community representatives recommended by the curator of community engagement. TMA's board of trustees approved the IDEA Plan in July 2020. (See the "A Trustee's Perspective" sidebar at left for more on the board's role.)

Developing and Implementing the Plan

In order to represent, activate, and advocate for all Southern Arizona communities, the IDEA process requires ongoing reflection, training, and discussion. To achieve the plan's principles of *relevancy*, *community*, *respect,* and *multivocality,* they had to be instilled within the museum's collection, exhibitions, programs, and people, including the board of trustees, staff, and volunteer groups. The plan also had to be uniquely tailored to address both the internal and external challenges we faced. Internal challenges included a lack of cultural competencies across the institution; a lack of diversity in the museum workforce, volunteers, and trustees; and a history of interdepartmental silos. Externally, TMA sought to become more relevant to audiences and bridge the historical disconnect between the museum and its communities.

The IDEA Plan defines the four foundational principles as follows:

- **We stand for RELEVANCY**
  All individuals have the right to access art

and the museum, including its collection, programs, and exhibitions, in a relevant and meaningful way.

- **We stand for COMMUNITY**
  The museum will listen and respond to the needs of the communities it serves and strive to be an asset to them, existing as a vital community anchor. As a space for civic dialogue and social and cultural participation, TMA aims to improve the well-being of its audiences.
- **We stand for RESPECT**
  The museum will be a source of lifelong learning by ensuring that all visitors have access to a relevant, engaging experience that connects them to the artwork in ways that are respectful of the visitor's expertise, references, and experiences.
- **We stand for MULTIVOCALITY**
  Programs and interpretation will honor and amplify the inherent value of multiple points of view, and the museum will encourage open-ended experiences and inquiry-based dialogue.

These principles guide TMA in representing regional identity, building collaborations with communities, increasing cultural competencies, and broadening access so that all visitors can connect art to their lives. Additionally, they provided museum staff with IDEA philosophies to drive decision-making and reinforce an inclusive and equitable work culture.

TMA's IDEA Plan was developed by the museum's community initiatives committee, led by John-Peter Wilhite, trustee and committee chair; and Marianna Pegno, curator of community engagement, with guidance and recommendations from Jeremy Mikolajczak, the Jon and Linda Ender Director and chief executive officer; Robert Alpaugh, strategic planning consultant; and Patricia Lannes, diversity and inclusion consultant, as well as TMA staff recommendations.

Moving Toward Community-Based Exhibition Development

To break the traditional cycle of exhibition development and instead become a responsive and collaborative institution, we needed to incorporate IDEA philosophies into curatorial practices and, more broadly, the permanent collection. Staff strengthened long-term systemic and systematic community engagement approaches in which stakeholders identify relatable issues, which then inform the museum's approach to its programs, exhibitions, and collections. These include strategies to connect or bridge the museum more intentionally to its local communities/audiences and reinforce the museum's commitment to IDEA through community-based programs, multivocal approaches to exhibition development and interpretation, and regular and sustained conversations beyond the institutional walls.

With the support of a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, TMA is exploring innovative approaches to exhibition development that are rooted in local communities and that amplify the complex and unique cultural diversity of Southern Arizona. For example, the development of the Kasser Family Wing of Latin American Art, which connects contemporary and ancient visual traditions from over 3,000 years of

RESOURCES

Facing Change: Insights from the American Alliance of Museums' Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Working Group, AAM, 2018 **aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/AAM-DEAI-Working-Group-Full-Report-2018.pdf**

CCLI National Landscape Study: The State of DEAI Practices in Museums, Cecilia Garibay and Jeanne Marie Olson, Cultural Competence Learning Institute, 2020 **community.astc.org/ccli/about-us/landscape-study**

Tucson Museum of Art IDEA Plan, 2020 **tucsonmuseumofart.org/inclusion-diversity-equity-access/**

Tucson Museum of Art 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, 2019 **tucsonmuseumofart.org/strategic-planning/**

WHAT WE LEARNED

- **Focus on your community.** Determine principles and strategies that are rooted in your local community.
- **Balance internal and external stakeholders in development and execution.** Listen to and honor multiple perspectives to develop a plan that is relevant and achievable.
- **Work top-down and bottom-up.** Involve all levels of stakeholders, from trustees to c-suite to volunteers, to ensure ownership and agency in plan development and implementation.
- **Lean into difficult, uncomfortable conversations.** Be responsive, not reactive, in addressing the most pressing issues and topics.
- **Understand that it's a marathon, not a sprint.** Outcomes will evolve as the development process and implementation occur.
- **Consider success in relation to trust and impact, not just numbers.**

Latin American history, involved sustained conversations with community members who offered feedback on themes, wrote exhibit labels, and supported outreach.

And we are expanding this approach in an exhibition of the museum's Indigenous Arts collection by involving community expertise from inception to implementation and beyond. Together, curators, cultural liaisons, and tribal representatives from across the region are selecting artworks, identifying themes, and developing multivocal approaches to recontextualize the Indigenous Arts collection.

The Future of IDEA at TMA

The next phase of implementation will focus on the application of IDEA principles and strategies in developing department-specific action items—ensuring that each department has ownership and agency in the implementation process. Additional short-term projects, to be accomplished over the next six to 12 months, include:

- Developing a collection plan that reflects, integrates, and upholds IDEA while defining core collecting areas and affirming a commitment to regionally significant works.
- Conducting trainings, discussions, and presentations for support organizations and volunteers that build cultural competencies and expand beyond the Euro-American canon of art history.
- Increasing Spanish-language communications, including launching a bilingual website.

We believe a commitment to IDEA will enable TMA to build internal capacities, create financial sustainability, and set the foundation for an institution that can meet its own, and the community's, needs for the next 100 years.

Real systemic change means proactively addressing reactionary situations, setbacks, and evolving needs. The work is tough and never-ending, and it will entail no shortage of difficult conversations and decisions. However, now more than ever museums must be nimble, responsive, and inclusive to meet the needs of our local communities, address injustice and inequality, and build a more relevant future.

Marianna Pegno, PhD, is the curator of community engagement and **Jeremy Mikolajczak** is the Jon and Linda Ender Director and chief executive officer at the Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block in Arizona.

Alliance Advisors Offer Insight on Timely Museum Issues

The Alliance has expanded its offerings through Alliance Advisors and Speakers Bureau to address the challenges facing museums in the coming year. AAM staff are available for keynotes, presentations, workshops, and consulting related to:

- DEAI
- financial sustainability
- accreditation and standards
- governance and nonprofit leadership
- strategic foresight and strategic planning

AAM speakers and advisors include Laura Lott, president and CEO; Andrew Plumley, director of inclusion; Julie Hart, senior director of standards and excellence; Barry Szczesny, director of government relations and public policy; Ember Faber, director of advocacy; and Elizabeth Merritt, vice president of strategic foresight and founding director of the Center for the Future of Museums.

MAP Now Accepting Applications for Five Assessment Types

AAM's Museum Assessment Program (MAP) has helped more than 5,000 museums of all types strengthen operations, plan for the future, and meet standards. Participating museums go through a one-year process of self-assessment, institutional activities, and consultative peer review that includes a site visit and recommendations. MAP has been refreshed with program updates and the creation of two new assessments: Education & Interpretation and Board Leadership. Find out how your museum can go to the next level! Visit **aam-us.org/programs/accreditation-excellence-programs/museum-assessment-program-map/. The application deadline is February 1.**

For case studies, impact statements, and blog posts from a variety of museums, visit **aam-us.org/programs/accreditation-excellence-programs/impact/.**

The New Congress Needs to Hear from You!

What's your plan for connecting with Congress in 2021? For more than 10 years, Museums Advocacy Day has been providing the essential training and support advocates need to effectively make the case for museums. This year, following the recent elections and with so many museums across the country still in dire situations, our collective advocacy is more urgent than ever. With the convening of the 117th Congress, we must join forces with fellow museum supporters and make our voices heard with our US congressional legislators and their staff.

There's still time to register for Museums Advocacy Day 2021, taking place virtually, and participate from wherever you are. Register today to access the full program of timely information from policy leaders, build your own advocacy skills, and get the tools you need to be a successful advocate for museums in 2021. Whether you are a new

Evans Richardson IV
New chair of the AAM Accreditation Commission

Todd Smith
Outgoing Accreditation commissioner

Amy Bartow-Melia
Outgoing chair of the AAM Accreditation Commission

James Gibson
Outgoing Accreditation commissioner

or an experienced advocate, don't miss this powerful opportunity to unite with museum supporters and colleagues from across the country as one voice to reaffirm our essential value and critical contributions to our communities.

Learn more and **register now** on the Alliance website.

Accreditation Commission News

Evans Richardson IV, chief of staff at The Studio Museum in Harlem, takes over as the new chair of the AAM Accreditation Commission. He has served on the commission since 2019 and began his three-year term as chair on January 1, succeeding Amy Bartow-Melia. He is also the first African American to lead the commission and assumes his role as the program reaches its 50th anniversary.

"The Accreditation Commission's mission, to nurture and celebrate the excellence of our country's museums, was immeasurably strengthened under Amy's leadership, and I have been deeply grateful to serve on the commission during her tenure," Richardson says. "As chair, I look forward to working with my colleagues on the commission to support a diverse and growing coalition of museums taking bold steps to become the inclusive and accessible institutions our communities deserve. In this new capacity, I am also honored to represent The Studio Museum in Harlem, as it was the nation's first Black institution to receive accreditation in 1987."

"I am proud of the work that the commission has done to support AAM's diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion (DEAI) efforts by building DEAI values into all aspects of the Accreditation process, from institutional self-study, to site visits, to the commission's decision-making," says Bartow-Melia, outgoing chair and executive director of the South Carolina State Museum. "I look forward to seeing these efforts continue under Evans's strong leadership and AAM's continued commitment to this important work."

In other commissioner transition news, Todd Smith and James Gilson also completed their terms at the end of 2020. They, like all of the commissioners, volunteered many hundreds of hours over their five-year term in service to the program, AAM, and the field as a whole to promote and advance museum excellence. AAM is eternally grateful for their enormous contribution to the Accreditation Program. In these five years, over the course of 15 meetings, the commissioners reviewed 485 museums for accreditation!

***Battleground*, 2018, oil, acrylic and ink on canvas in wood frame, 34" x 27" by David Shrobe © courtesy of the artist. Collection of the Brooklyn Museum, New York City.**

NEW TOOLKIT AVAILABLE

Speaking Up:

Museum Advocacy in Action

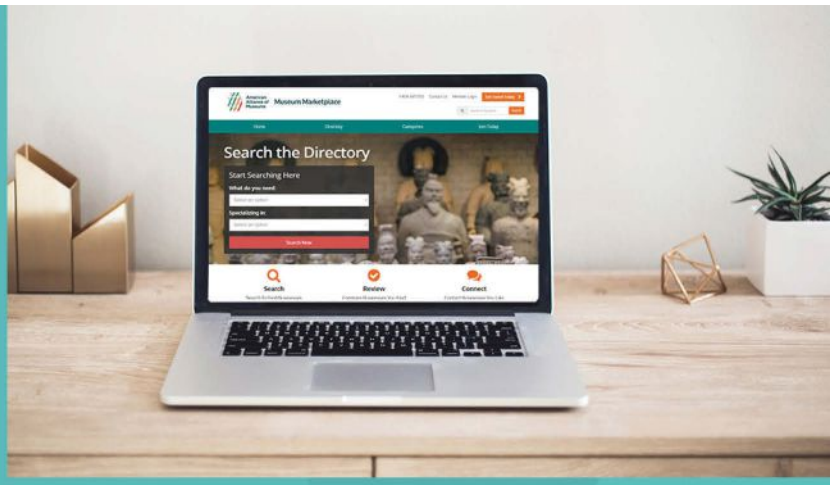
This year has proven that museums advocacy has never been more critical.

No matter your skill level, this all-in-one toolkit—with comprehensive fact sheets, workbooks, policy information, and more—is the resource you need. Learn more and get yours today:

aam-us.org/toolkits

American Alliance of Museums **Bookstore**

In need of hand-sanitizer stations, or translation services? Head to Museum Marketplace, the one-stop-shop for products and services that help museums run smoothly at any time. Search by dozens of categories, including location and type of service. Many providers are offering free or discounted pricing to ease the impacts of the pandemic on museums.



Browse the new **Museum Marketplace!**

» museummarketplace.com

If your company is offering free or discounted pricing on products or services, you can purchase a listing and select the free COVID-19 category to be added. Terms and conditions of posting your listing apply.

American Alliance of Museums
2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 1005
Arlington, VA 22202 | **aam-us.org**

American Alliance of Museums
2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 1005
Arlington, VA 22202

A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

MAY 9-12 • CHICAGO
MAY 24 + JUNE 7-9 • VIRTUAL

Resilient, Together

ANNUAL MEETING & MUSEUMEXPO 2021

American Alliance of Museums

Registration Opens Soon!

Join thousands of museum professionals from around the world at the 2021 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo. Stay up-to-date on new developments by visiting our website **annualmeeting.aam-us.org** or following the hashtag **#AAM2021** on social media.