

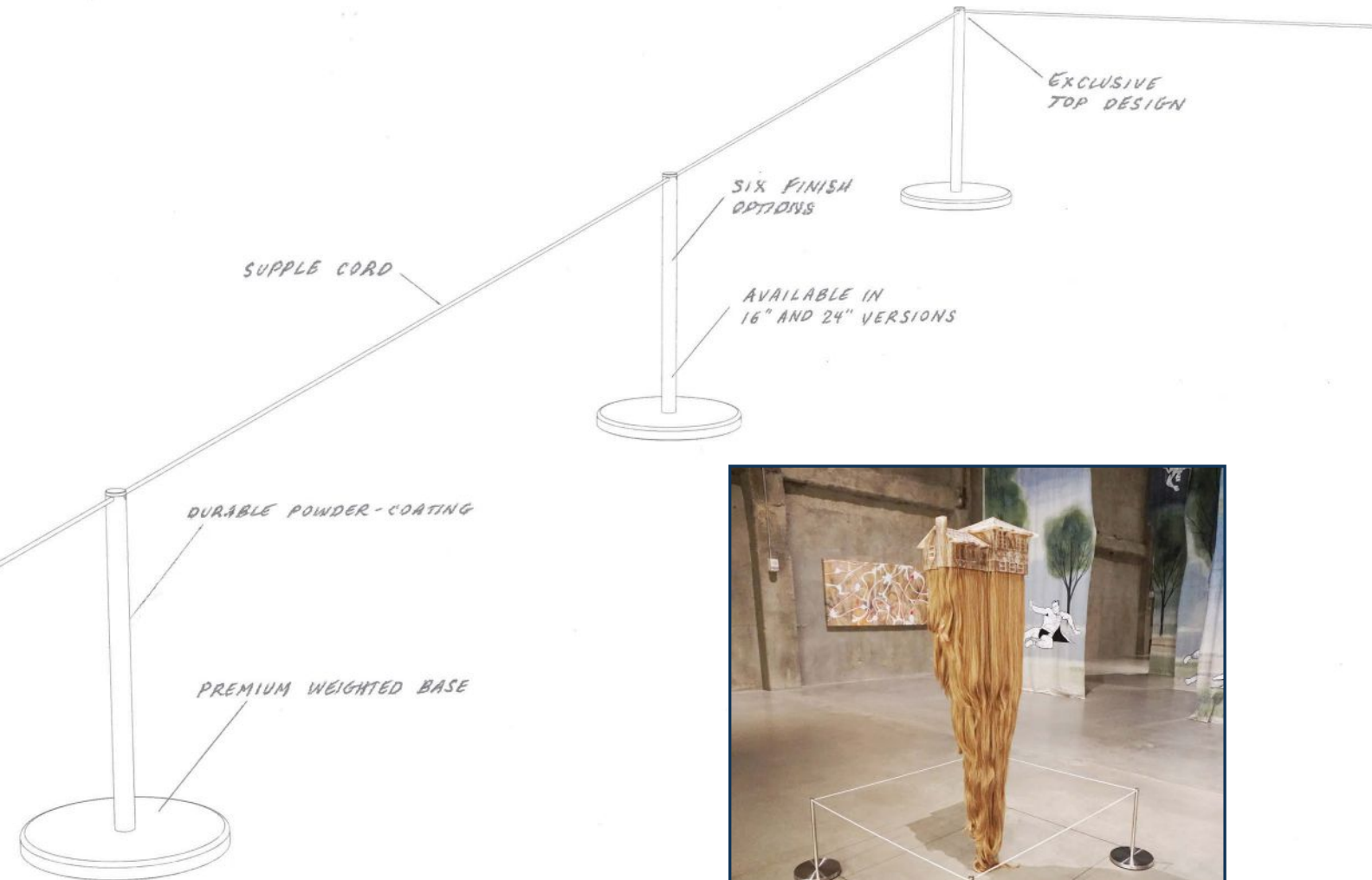
ACTION
CARE
SOLIDARITY +
CO-CREATION

MUSEUM

Reflections on
COMMUNITY



PROTECT. SURROUND. KEEP A LOW PROFILE.



NOW AVAILABLE IN BRONZE FINISH AND 24" VERSIONS

Maurice and Paul Marciano Art Foundation | Los Angeles, CA

Q-Cord™ Art Stanchion barriers have the same clean, architectural look and feel as the Q-Cord Retractable line, but in a smaller form for discreet use in galleries and exhibitions. The exclusive **Twist & Lock Tops** prevent loss of component parts and ensures the system retains its sleekly designed look over time. Q-Cord Art Stanchions create a clear division between what they surround and separate without disturbing sightlines to the exhibit.

Q-CORD.COM

800.862.9869





Design and Production Incorporated

EXHIBITS, GRAPHICS, SCENIC ENVIRONMENTS,
CASEWORK, MEDIA HARDWARE, AND LIGHTING

www.d-and-p.com

EXHIBITION DESIGN BY
RALPH APPELBAUM ASSOCIATES



Kyanite
Natural color: Blue,
Reddish-brown, Pinkish
to purple
© 2008 Design and Production

A form of kyanite, this individual comes from the
Buckley Mountains in Washington. The gem is a
combination of the blue and green colors of kyanite
and is a form of kyanite. The color is a
blue-green at light angles across the surface.



**ALFIE NORVILLE GEM
& MINERAL MUSEUM**

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, TUCSON, AZ

MARCH
APRIL
2022
ISSUE

CONTENTS



FEATURES

- 16** A Time of Transformation
A special edition of the Culture Track research initiative provides an update on how audiences are doing now.
By Arthur Cohen
- 22** Building a New Future Together
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is taking its arts programs into the community to tackle longstanding issues of inequity and meet critical needs.
By Marissa Reyes
- 28** The Greatest Work of Art
The community is always the focus of San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts.
By Howard Taylor
- 34** Beyond the Walls
Demonstrating the social impact of museums is critical to their success.
By Carol A. Scott
- 40** Measuring Up
A new national study is quantifying the social impact of US museums.
By Michelle Mileham, Emily Johnson, and Stephen Ashton

Cover:
Randy Duchaine/
Alamy Stock Photo



DEPARTMENTS

- 5** From the President and CEO
- 6** By the Numbers
- 8** First Look
- 12** Point of View
The Relational Museum
- 46** Tributes and Transitions
- 48** Reflection



INLine Linear

INLine Linear is a luminous section of track that integrates seamlessly into any LSI CONTROLTrack or POWERTrack run, providing diffused, wide angle light distribution.

Patented 20 Amp Power or Data Pass Thru

2 FT or 4 FT Lengths

0-10V, DMX or ELV Dimming Protocols

**1250 Lumens/FT
90 CRI with 90° Beam**

Lighting Services Inc The premier specialty lighting manufacturer.



Scan QR Code
to watch the
INLine Linear YouTube Video



MUSEUM

A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dean Phelus

MANAGING EDITOR

Gayle Bennett

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bob Beatty, Ember Farber, Julie Hart, Natanya Khashan, Megan Lantz, Barry Szczesny, Cecelia Walls

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Team of Creatives, LLC

ADVERTISING

Carol Nettles
aamad@adboomadvertising.com
404-347-1755

ALLIANCE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Laura L. Lott

ALLIANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Chair (2020–2022)

Chevy Humphrey, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago

Treasurer (2021–2022)

Jorge Zamanillo, HistoryMiami Museum

Immediate Past Chair (2020–2022)

Kippen de Alba Chu, Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

Frederic Bertley, Center of Science and Industry

Alison Rempel Brown, Science Museum of Minnesota

Christine A. Donovan, Northern Trust Company

Charles L. Katzenmeyer, Field Museum

TERM OF OFFICE 2021–2024

Dina Bailey, Mountain Top Vision

Carole Charnow, Boston Children's Museum

Ann Friedman, Planet Word

Linda Harrison, The Newark Museum of Art

Julissa Marengo, Smithsonian Institution

Nathan Richie, Golden History Museum & Park

Karol Wight, Corning Museum of Glass

TERM OF OFFICE 2019–2022

Robert M. Davis, America's Black Holocaust Museum

Marcia DeWitt, Hillwood Estate, Museum and Garden

Kelly McKinley, Bay Area Discovery Museum

James Pepper Henry, First Americans Museum

Julie Stein, Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture

TERM OF OFFICE 2020–2023

Devon Akmon, Michigan State University Museum and Science Gallery

Carrie Rebora Barratt, Crystal Bridges Museum of Art

MUSEUM (ISSN 0027-4089)

MARCH/APRIL 2022, VOLUME 102, NO. 2

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. Copyright 2022, American Alliance of Museums. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine or its cover may be reproduced without written consent of the copyright proprietor. 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



HUNTINGTON T. BLOCK
INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.

AAM is grateful to the Wallace Foundation for their generous support of the March/April 2022 issue of Museum and their unwavering commitment to fostering thriving arts organizations.





Museums Matter

We just concluded one of my favorite events of the year—Museums Advocacy Day! During this critical annual event, and throughout each year, our Alliance comes together to make the case to legislators that the data is clear: museums' contributions to our nation's economy, education, and the preservation of our cultural heritage are vast. I am proud of the growing data and powerful statistics we can share. But what about the impact we haven't been able to quantify and capture yet? The past two years have made it clear that the impact of museums is continuing to grow and broaden to many other parts of our society.

The pandemic created crises among many of our most important systems—health, education, housing, child care, and elder care, among others. It revealed the deep disparities that exist within many of the structures that make up our country's core infrastructure.

During this time, many museums stepped up to fill the gaps in these systems—from addressing mental health to bolstering voter registration. They did not turn away from their missions but rather took advantage of the wealth of knowledge and experience that exists among their staff to directly address the needs of their communities. The people behind these efforts made each of their museums a critical part of their community's ability to manage through the pandemic and begin to recover from it.

How can we use these examples to rebuild our museums, communities, and systems to be stronger, more resilient, and more equitable beyond the current crisis? Your museum can have substantial impact on some of the largest issues facing our world today—from addressing climate change and the mental health crisis to building civic engagement for a stronger democracy and creating a more empathic, equitable, and connected society. The work you do in partnership with your communities and the decisions you make within your

own institutions will have lasting impact in these areas.

Our recently released 2022–2025 Strategic Framework includes our commitment to helping you learn from one another, better track and communicate your museum's impact as an essential part of the community infrastructure, and use these findings and new skills to further embed your museum

into your community. We're working to provide you with the tools and resources you need to explore how to grow your museum's impact, measure that impact, and communicate it to those who can help your museum become even stronger—from legislators to funders and local leaders. These decision makers need to experience your museum's impact and hear directly from you about why it matters. They need to know how you're contributing to the resiliency and equity of your communities and working toward a more just and sustainable world. By doing so, we will all build a thriving museum field, together.

January 21, 2022



Our Vision: A just and sustainable world informed and enriched by thriving museums that contribute to the resiliency and equity of their communities.

Our Mission: Champion equitable and impactful museums by connecting people, fostering learning and community, and nurturing museum excellence.

Laura L. Lott is the Alliance's president and CEO. Follow Laura on Twitter at [@LottLaura](#).

Community Engagement

51%
Percentage of frequent museum-goers who think their local museums contribute to the quality of life in their community.

42%
Percentage of frequent museum-goers who say engaging with informal learning has made them more engaged in their community.

36%
Percentage of frequent museum-goers who are concerned about the torn social fabric in their communities; **20%** of non-visitors feel likewise.

Sources: From top to bottom: 2021 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers; 2019 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers; 2021 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers

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



American
Alliance of
Museums

2022-2025 Strategic Framework

Our recently released 2022-2025 Strategic Framework aims to support transformative fieldwide work in partnership with our members, partners, and allies.



PRIORITIES:

**Social &
Community
Impact**

**DEAI &
Anti-racism**

**The Museum
Community**

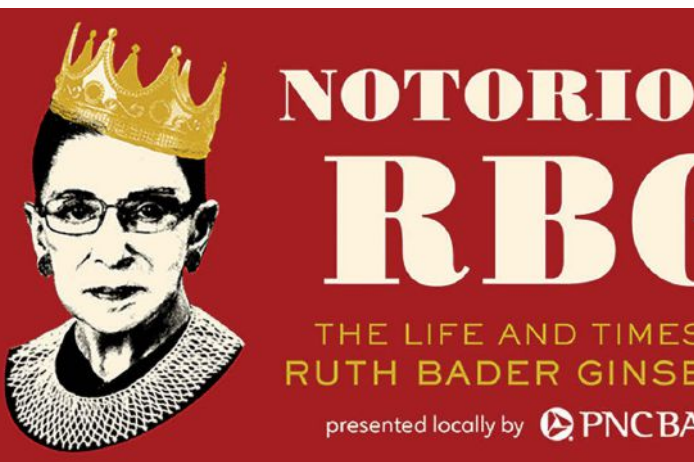
**The Way
We Work**

The 2022-2025 Strategic Framework aims to:

- Celebrate, strengthen, and connect the museum professional community in all its diversity.
- Support museum professionals in learning from each other, managing through crisis, and rebuilding strong, relevant, and sustainable institutions.
- Lead the museum field in building support for museums as essential community infrastructure and becoming more equitable, inclusive, and impactful institutions and community partners.
- Critically examine AAM's programs and operations to ensure we model our values.

Learn more about the framework and how you can join us in advancing this critical work.

➔ Visit aam-us.org/about



Holocaust Museum Houston

“Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg” explores the American judicial system through one of its sharpest legal minds, the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Through archival photographs and documents, contemporary art, media stations, and playful interactives, the exhibition tells the parallel stories of RBG’s remarkable career and the efforts she joined to expand “We the People” to include those long left out of the Constitution’s promises.

Location: Houston, TX

Dates: March 11–July 31

Partner: Skirball Cultural Center

Learn more: hnh.org/exhibitions/notorious-rbg-the-life-and-times-of-ruth-bader-ginsburg-2022-03-11

The Wolfsonian–Florida International University

“Aerial Vision” will explore how early 20th-century inventions—airplanes and skyscrapers, each considered the embodiment of human achievement and a harbinger of a better tomorrow—sparked an era of remarkable creativity and new systems of seeing the world. This exhibition of paintings, posters, furniture, and more will draw from the Wolfsonian collection to examine these heightened positions of power and privilege, revealing connections between newly available viewpoints and their impact on the artistic imagination.

Location: Miami Beach, FL

Dates: through April 24

Learn more: wolfsonian.org/whats-on/exhibitions+installations/2021/11/aerial-vision.html

The Barnes Foundation

“Water, Wind, Breath: Southwest Native Art in Community” is the first show of the Barnes Foundation’s centennial year and features historic and contemporary Southwest Native art, including Pueblo and Navajo pottery, textiles, and jewelry. The exhibition includes objects that Albert C. Barnes collected in New Mexico in 1930 and 1931 as well as works by 26 contemporary Native American artists—including Cara Romero, Melissa Cody, Virgil Ortiz, and Charles Loloma—that highlight the connections between historic pieces and modern practices.

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Dates: through May 15

Learn more: barnesfoundation.org/whats-on/exhibition/water-wind-breath-southwest-native-art-in-community

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.

Crown © by Hurst Photo/Shutterstock and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, collection of the Supreme Court of the United States; The Wolfsonian–Florida International University, The Mitchell Wolfson Jr. Collection; Cara Romero, *Water Memory*, 2015 © Cara Romero

Jules Tavernier; *Indian Village*, late 19th century, courtesy of Gilcrease Museum; Meret Oppenheim; *Ma gouvernante – My Nurse – Mein Kindermädchen*, 1936/1967, Moderna Museet, Stockholm © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/Pro Litteris, Zurich

Gilcrease Museum

Gilcrease Museum is bringing key works from its collection to new audiences across the country. While its physical doors are closed for construction of a new building, Gilcrease has partnered with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, de Young Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum to continue expanding access to and understanding of the rich cultural heritage of the Americas.

Location: NY, CA, AR, OK

Dates: through 2024

Learn more: newsroom.resnicow.com/key-works-from-gilcrease-collection-on-view-at-museums-around-the-us/



The Menil Collection

“Meret Oppenheim: My Exhibition” encompasses the work Oppenheim created throughout her five-decade-long career, much of which is largely unknown in the United States. Featuring uncanny object constructions, geometric abstractions, painted narratives, jewelry designs, public sculpture commissions, and poetry, the exhibition will address Oppenheim’s thematic interests, ranging from the natural world and mythology to gender and selfhood.

Location: Houston, TX

Dates: March 25–Sept. 18

Learn more: menil.org/exhibitions/357-meret-oppenheim-my-exhibition

M&LF[®]

No company crafts museum furniture like we do.

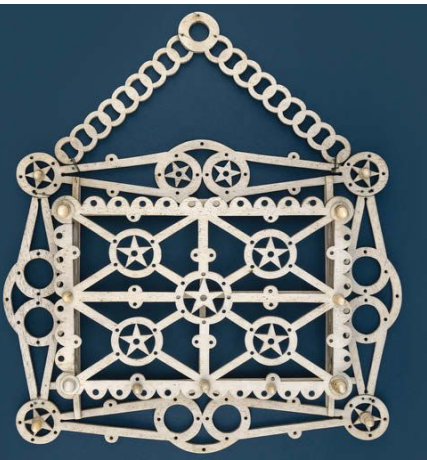
Talk with an architect about your needs for seating, tables, displays, and millwork.



COMFORTABLE | DURABLE | ACCESSIBLE | SUSTAINABLE | CLASSIC

M&LF[®] MONTICELLO PLANK *indoor and outdoor versions available*
DESIGN: Tom Shiner, FAIA

MandLF.com



Cahoon Museum of American Art

“Scrimshaw: The Whaler’s Art” presents the art and history of scrimshaw, a nautical folk art form created by whalers during the international whaling trade of the 19th century. The history of this unique art form is brought to life through the stories of the makers and recipients of these intricately detailed keepsakes. A wide range of decorative and utilitarian objects evoke connections to historic life on Cape Cod, Nantucket, and New Bedford.

Location: Cotuit, MA
Dates: June 29–Oct. 30
Learn more: cahoonmuseum.org/scrimshaw-the-whalers-art/

Clyfford Still Museum

“Clyfford Still, Art, and the Young Mind” is a community-wide collaborative exhibition that examines the aesthetic preferences of early learners using Still’s artworks as a basis for study. Based on current research and fieldwork, this exhibition investigates five significant themes in the visual development of infants through early childhood: high contrast, pattern, scale, recognizable imagery, and bright, highly saturated colors.

Location: Denver, CO
Dates: through Aug. 7
Learn more: clyffordstillmuseum.org/exhibitions/clyfford-still-art-and-the-young-mind/

Filoli Historic House & Garden

The Gentlemen’s Lounge, where the men of the house and their guests would retire after dinner to drink whiskey, smoke cigars, and indulge in games of chance, has been restored. The room’s original purpose reflected the gendered spaces common to Victorian-era homes. With its pastel-hued, floral-pattern wallpaper, it is a great reminder to check our modern assumptions about gendered style, as this type of pattern was considered very masculine in the 1920s.

Location: Woodside, CA
Learn more: filoli.org

Scrimshaw wall pocket, whale bone, private collection; Clyfford Still Museum; Jeff Bartee Photography



overcrowding • dilapidated • race tax • Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka • integration • neighborhood attitudinal boundaries • school segregation • urban spaces • racial steering • property values • east of Troost • urban renewal • slum clearance • highway construction • blighted areas • bulldozer's path • public housing projects • Shelly v. Kansas • Civil Rights Movement • demonstrations • grassroots • filibuster • Civil Rights Act • Voting Rights Act • the Great Society • War on Poverty • Model Cities • systemic • disinvestment • uprisings • Fair Housing Act • racial mission • ghetto system • Proposition 13 • freedom of choice • Good Neighbor Pledge • straw buyers • panic selling • Jenkins v. Missouri • Section 235 • HUD • rehabilitate • predatory inclusion • foreclosure • Urban Crisis • triage • empty lots • subprime mortgages • loan denial • Gentrification • affordability • public transportation • not welcome • racialization • isolation • War on Drugs • inequity • tree cover • temperatures • green spaces • pollution

REDLINED

Underwriting Manual • special hazard • adverse influence • White Flight • racial turnover • invisible lines • block busting • decentralization • expendable income • American Dream • suburbanites • postwar • large-scale • G. O. P. • Black veterans • exploitative terms • installment contracts • overcrowding • dilapidated • race ta • location of Topeka • integration • neighborhood attendance zones • school boundaries • school segregation • steering • property values • east of Troost • urban renewal • demolition • slum clearance • highway construction • bulldozer's path • **CITIES • SUBURBS • SEGREGATION** • Shelly v. Kraemer • all deliberate speed • Civil Rights Act • demonstrations • grassroots • filibuster • Civil Rights Act • Voting Rights Act • the Great Society • War on Poverty • disinvestment • uprisings • Fair Housing Act • racial equality • Kerner Commission • ghetto system • Prop • choice • Good Neighbor Pledge • straw buyers • panic selling • property taxes • Jenkins v. Missouri • Section 2 • predatory inclusion • foreclosure • Urban Crisis • triage • planned shrinkage • empty lots • subprime mortgage • affordability • public transportation • commutes • not welcome • racialization • isolation • War on • cover • temperatures • green spaces • pollution • food deserts • social vulnerability • life expectancy • generational wealth • Investment Zone • citizen-led • reparations • Community Involvement



Mary Proctor, *Coming to Supper*, courtesy Gadsden Arts, Inc.; Johnson County Museum; Emma Amos, *Three Figures*, 1966, courtesy of RYAN LEE Gallery, New York © Emma Amos

Gadsden Arts Center & Museum

“Mary Proctor: I am Just the Messenger” presents the work of “missionary” Mary Proctor, a Southern Black female artist. After a fire in 1994 took the lives of her grandmother, aunt, and uncle, Proctor found comfort in her Christian faith, and in 1995, she had a vision that told her to get a door and paint. From that day forward, Proctor has used her mixed-media doors as passageways to freedom, peace, and comfort and instilled her paintings with passages from scripture and glittering angels.

Location: Quincy, FL
Dates: through Dec. 23
Partner: Tallahassee Museum
Learn more: gadsdenarts.org/exhibitions/Current

Johnson County Museum

“Redlined: Cities, Suburbs, and Segregation” explores the history of the practice and policy of redlining, from its foundations after the Civil War through postwar suburbanization, the successes and failures in dismantling the system during the civil rights era, and legacies that continue to impact communities around the nation. In addition to a full slate of its own programming, the museum has partnered with more than a dozen cultural organizations and institutions across the Kansas City metro area to offer related programming at their sites over the year.

Location: Overland Park, KS
Dates: through Jan. 7, 2023
Learn more: jcprd.com/museum

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

“Women Painting Women” is a thematic exhibition featuring 46 female artists who chose women as subject matter in their evocative portraits that span the late 1960s to the present. International in scope, the exhibition recognizes female perspectives that have been underrepresented in the history of postwar figuration. The artists—who include early trailblazers like Alice Neel and Emma Amos and emerging artists such as Jordan Casteel and Apolonia Sokol—use painting and women subjects as vehicles for change.

Location: Fort Worth, TX
Dates: May 15–Sept. 25
Learn more: themodern.org/exhibition/women-painting-women



The Relational Museum

Museums have potential as placemakers to support and strengthen their communities.

By Cara Courage

In my work in and with museums across the years and world, I have seen the museum as both a space and place that can have a transformative impact on those it welcomes and that it lives among. Such museums construct meaning in connection with others, aligned with a more radical practice of placemaking.

This observation has led me to bring my social arts, placemaking,

and museum research together to ask: Is the museum a relational object through which we can understand our lived experience?

To begin to answer this, we must unpack “placemaking.” There are many different types of placemaking, depending on intent, who is doing it, and the scale at which it is operating. It can include anything from a mixed-use urban development backed by global

finance to a volunteer-led, organic, street-level project. Placemaking uses the existing aspects of a place to their best effect and facilitates creative patterns of activities and connections—cultural, economic, social, environmental—that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

For me, whatever the scale, the project’s intent makes it one of placemaking, or not. Placemaking



A citizen-led lesson at Tania Bruguera’s School of Integration at Manchester Art Gallery, a program commissioned by Manchester International Festival and Manchester Art Gallery.

Michael Pollard

is an approach and a set of tools that put the community front and center in determining what the place looks like and how it functions. If the community is not both spearheading this process and an equal stakeholder in it, then the process is not placemaking, and its radical potential is completely lost.

Museums as Placemaker

Many museums have a visible economic and political impact on the places where they reside, and through their education and public programs, they interact with the public. This much we already know. Yet, more recently, we also know that museums are being called on, and are stepping into, more nuanced and embedded roles to serve their communities' interests and more deeply hear the multitude of voices necessary for their radical change.

Museums work with communities of interest (shared concern), of impact (collective influence), and of place (a near or far locale). By taking a placemaking approach, as defined above, in its community, the museum can drive an agenda for change, growth, and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place.

Viewing this through a museum practice lens, museums that host intentional dialogue-led spaces create a "social interstice": a space of individual and collective encounter that facilitates individual and social interaction and can lead to other

exchanges within and without the museum. Questions, provocations, hypotheses, solutions, and actions of the contemporary lived experience are co-created through relational exploration. The education spaces in museums are common ground for this interaction as too are intentional programs such as MASS Action or Tania Bruguera's School of Integration at Manchester Art Gallery in the UK.

I call such an approach a "cultural learning pedagogy," which I believe is the core of the museum as placemaker. We have seen this in the roles museums have taken on through the 2020 syndemic and since; as spaces that provide sanctuary and mutual aid, the museum aesthetic has been reimaged as a system of transformation in response to current social crises.

Commoning and Relational Aesthetics

Placemaking is often placed in the realm of "the civic role of museums." I wish to poke at this colloquial use of the term "civic" by offering the notion of "commons" and the museum as a common space.

Civic is of government as much as it is about citizen engagement—the connection one feels with the larger community—or of being a building that could act as a community focal point. Not all museums can take on a civic role, and indeed, when we consider the museum as community connection and center, we know that this is not always achieved.

Yet, the notion of the museum as commons space suggests that it is a cultural resource to all members of society, the museum

HOW COMMUNITY-ORIENTED IS YOUR MUSEUM?

1. What do you mean by co-creation in your museum? Does it stand up to scrutiny and accountability by the community?
2. Who are your communities of impact, interest, and place? Do you have a relationship with them? If not, why not?
3. Can your museum objects become relational objects that prompt conversation on community challenges and action? Could a historic street image prompt a conversation on the politics of urban development? Or could a painting of food prompt consideration of the climate emergency?
4. What is your museum learning pedagogy? Your museum community pedagogy? If you don't have one, who needs to be in the conversation to create one?
5. What of your museum resources—space, people, collections, knowledge—can you put in service of your communities? Mutual aid is not just for 2020.



ownership held “in common.” I contend that this speaks more to the museum’s site-specific role in contemporary life than to the notion of the civic.

Relational aesthetics, more commonly referred to as relational art, is a concept-to-art practice observed and then theorized by art critic Nicolas Bourriaud: “a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.” From this vantage, the artist is the catalyst,

rather than the author, of such art, and the artwork creates a social environment.

In my own social practice placemaking research, I saw the objects co-created by socially engaged artists working with community participants take on this relational role. In one instance, children and elders made go-karts through the drawing shed, a London-based contemporary arts organization that employs a range of art forms to engage with issues and provoke conversation related to social/contested space. The art object—the go-kart—became

the “relational object,” a means through which to talk about issues of place in the past, present, and future.

We know that the museum can be this same catalyst, creating a liminal social environment that can help us navigate our world by using museum objects and exhibitions to talk through our contemporary lived experiences. I further propose, however, that we see the museum as the relational object made large. As a relational object, the museum manifests itself as a commons space of plural and diverse knowledges. It becomes a cluster for and of practices and learning pedagogies that, via convivial modes of social exchange with their communities, is concerned with human interactions, collective meaning-making, and place-based change—placemaking.

In practice, this could look like anything from hosting citizen assemblies or town hall events to working with those with expert vocational knowledge to change museum practice—think community gardeners to improve the museum landscape. Long-term community group partnerships could not only collaborate on programs in the museum space but become part of the team through governance and decision-making roles.

Museum as Radical Placemaker

Museums can offer our publics a way to navigate through their lived experience. This goes beyond the museum as a site of co-creation of knowledge, making

FOOD FOR PLACEMAKING THOUGHT

Museums interested in placemaking at their institutions might consider the following.

- Start from the purview that the community is the expert in its own lives. The museum has its own expert knowledge, as does the community.
- Not all artists are equipped to work in a relational way; those who are can synthesize diverse facts, goals, and references and are trained to initiate and advance the creative community project plan and consider their own intentionality, as well as that of the museum.
- Consider the call to action in your relational work. When a participant leaves the relational encounter, what skills or signposts do they have to apply what they have experienced to their own lives and communities?
- Relational work is based on trust. Why should a community trust you? How can you earn its trust?
- A museum relational space for the group-making activity may “just” be a room with chairs in a circle for people to talk, or it may be loud and messy and seemingly haphazard. Regardless, the work is informed by a long artistic heritage, deep creative knowledge, and intellectual rigor. As a museum professional, take your cue from the artists of that practice.



the drawing shed artists with residents of the Nine Elms estate in Wandsworth, London, create go-karts as part of its co-created *some[w]here* socially engaged art project.

it an embodied experience. The museum is the site where meaning is navigated and made in a pluralistic way. The museum is a site for developing empathy and democracy and figuring out one's place in the world.

The barriers to inclusion that many communities of place, impact, or interest face do not exist in isolation from each other, and we can't collectively address complex place-based issues—such as discrimination, social inequity, or uneven access to quality public

spaces—with a singular agenda. Therefore, we must be cognizant of, and actively support, the museum in offering common spaces and practices of everyday creativity.

The museum has to be permeable to its surrounding population, learning from and adapting to its local community. As a commons space, the museum can be a place of deep exploration of collective relation and action. As a radical placemaker, the museum can boost local economies and increase levels of social connection

and civic engagement, as well as intersect and advance missions in transportation, housing, employment, health care, environmental sustainability, and education.

If an issue is important to a museum's neighborhood, then it should be important to the museum—the museum is, after all, a neighbor.

Cara Courage, Ph.D., is a museum academic and practitioner specializing in placemaking and arts and activism. She was recently appointed executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and is the editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*, co-editor of *Creative Placemaking and Beyond*, and author of *Arts in Place: The Arts, the Urban and Social Practice*.

RESOURCES

Tania Bruguera and Tate Neighbours, "The Art of Social Change," Tate Exchange, 2018
bit.ly/3HjqBRw

Dr. Cara Courage Linktree
linktr.ee/CaraCourage

Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 1998

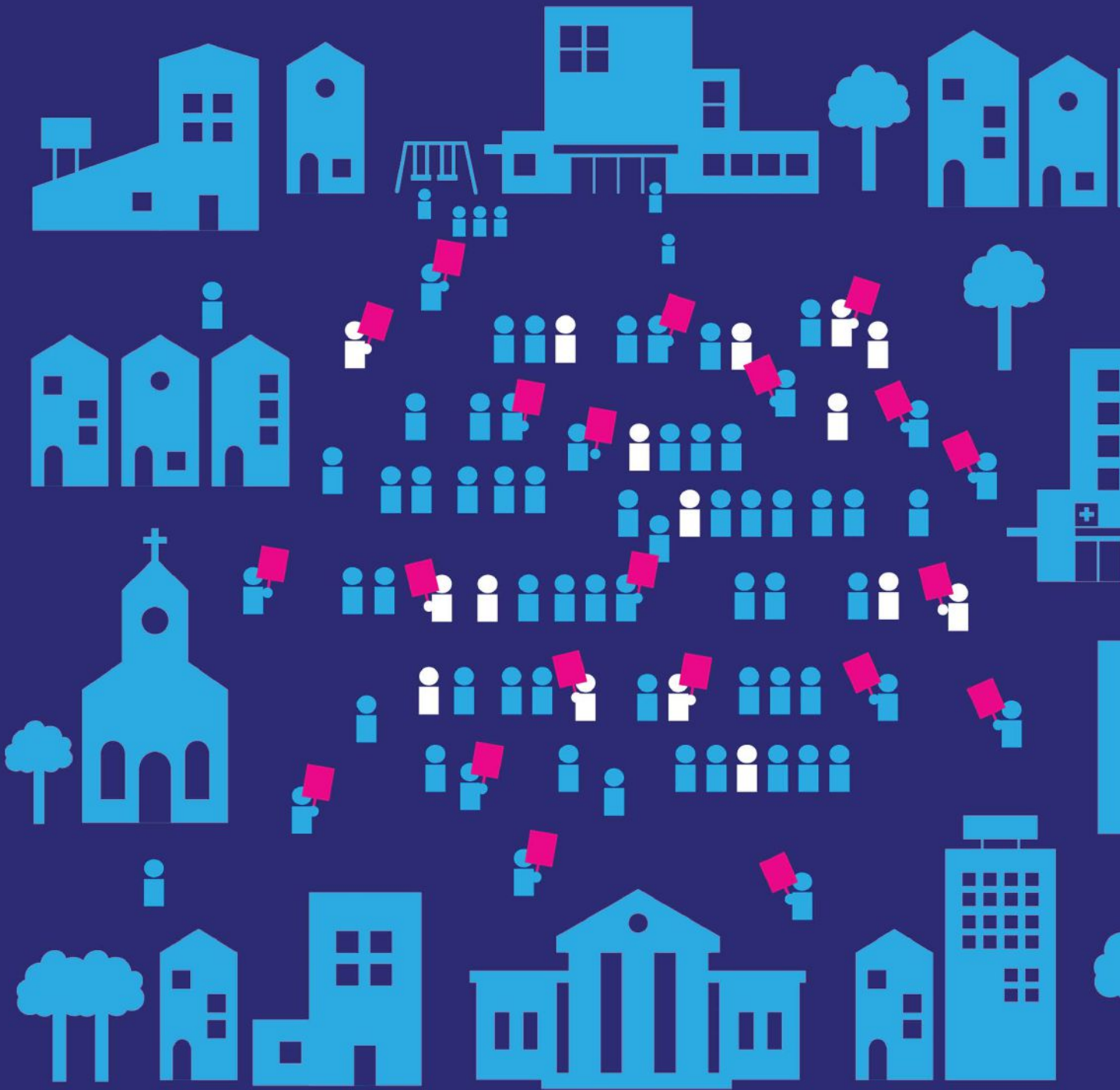
Relational aesthetics
tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/r/relational-aesthetics

Grant Kester, "Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art," *Variant*, issue 9, Winter 1999–2000
variant.org.uk/9texts/KesterSupplement.html

the drawing shed
thedrawingshed.org

MASS Action
museumaction.org/

School of Integration
manchesterartgallery.org/exhibitions-and-events/exhibition/school-of-integration/



A Time of Transformation

By Arthur Cohen

A special edition of the Culture Track research initiative provides an update on how audiences are doing now.



*CORRECTION FROM THE EDITORS

The original article stated: “What can we conclude from the findings of the Wave 2 Culture Track survey? Audiences are still hurting and are looking to cultural organizations to help them feel better and connect them to one another. Given this, cultural institutions may be entering a new phase of identity that we call the “empathetic museum,” which is characterized as a place of respite, comfort, and connection. The welcome extended to all groups is at the core of this construct; inclusion and authentic community representation and participation are essential components for the empathetic museum to foster meaningful connections.”

The author’s reference to the “empathetic museum” and a lack of corresponding citations suggest the term is original to the author of this article. This was not the author’s intent, and we recognize and apologize for AAM’s oversight in the editing process. The Empathetic Museum, with its downloadable Maturity Model, was established and has been in practice since 2013. The model is widely known and used in the field.

The editors and author submit this rewritten text in consultation with The Empathetic Museum:

“What can we conclude from the findings of the Wave 2 Culture Track survey? Audiences are still hurting and are looking to cultural organizations to help them feel better and connect them to one another. Given this, cultural institutions may be employing new techniques and models of practice to become more empathetic, characterized by respite, comfort, and connection. The welcome extended to all groups is at the core of this practice; inclusion and authentic community representation and participation are essential components for a museum or other cultural organization to foster meaningful connections. An example of this approach can be found in the Maturity Model and accompanying resources of The Empathetic Museum.”

After the outbreak of COVID-19

and subsequent lockdown in 2020, LaPlaca Cohen, in partnership with Slover Linett Audience Research, embarked on Wave 1 of our special edition of *Culture Track, Culture + Community in a Time of Crisis*, to provide a nationwide research tool to help the cultural sector navigate this unprecedented health crisis. Soon after this wave of the study was fielded, from April 29 to May 19, 2020, the country experienced the murder of George Floyd; a quarantine period unlike anything experienced in the modern era; the ultimate development and distribution (and politicization) of vaccines; and gradual, unsteady reentry into public life.

In response to these huge shifts in physical and emotional context, we—along with Slover Linett and Yancey Consulting—fielded an updated and expanded second survey, *Culture + Community in a Time of Transformation*, about a year later, from April 5–30, 2021. A team of enlightened funders and supporters—including the Wallace Foundation, Knight Foundation, Barr Foundation, Art Bridges, William Penn Foundation, Terra Foundation, Aroha Philanthropies, and the Institute of Museums and Library Services—came together, along with an advisory group of industry experts, to support this in-depth assessment of the “hearts and minds” of audiences around the United States.

What we learned, highlighted in the following overview, was not necessarily what we expected yet provides a robust foundation for the development of audience-focused strategies and programming for the months and years ahead as museums embark on a post-COVID reality.

Who Participated?

Building upon and refining our experience in the Wave 1 survey, for Wave 2 we invited cultural organizations of all types and sizes throughout the US to distribute the survey to their mailing lists of members, subscribers, ticket buyers, and others, and 532 organizations participated. Of these, 192 were museums and collections. We also worked with NORC’s AmeriSpeak panel to add 3,600 respondents who were representative of the broad demographic diversity of the US population but not necessarily arts participants. And we partnered with an equity consultant and invited the participation of culturally specific organizations serving communities that might otherwise be underrepresented in cultural lists.

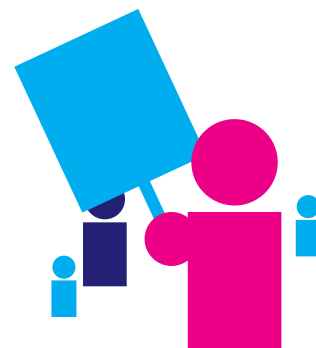
Finally, we made the survey available in 10 languages. Nearly 78,000 people responded to Wave 2, ensuring a wide range of demographic, racial, educational, and geographic representation.

How Are We Doing?

Social isolation. Political divide. Economic uncertainty. Environmental crisis. Racial and social reckoning. On top of a public health emergency of unimaginable scope and duration, these challenges facing US audiences—many of which continue to this day—created feelings of anxiety and instability that manifested themselves



“Our study revealed that while the majority of respondents expect to prefer in-person to online cultural activities when they are able to engage in person again, 1 in 10 people expect to ‘almost always or usually prefer’ online activities.”



throughout the responses to our 2021 survey, even after some isolation restrictions had lifted and vaccines became widely available to some groups.

Three out of every 10 people surveyed reported a reduction in income, and almost half reported that they themselves, a family member, or close friend had been sick due to COVID-19, more than a three-fold increase from the previous year. Further, income recovery was unevenly distributed across the racial and ethnic divide: while only 24 percent of white respondents reported a continued loss in income in Wave 2, the numbers were much more troubling for some people of color: 36 percent of self-identified Black/African Americans, 39 percent of Hispanic/Latinx, and 45 percent of Native Americans continued to report lost income due to COVID-19 in Wave 2.

Just as disconcerting was the continued emotional toll evident across the audiences we surveyed. In 2021, a greater percentage of people told us they felt “more disconnected” than they had the previous year (60 percent in Wave 2 versus 44 percent in Wave 1). We also encountered a significant increase in those who said they were feeling “more sad or depressed” (41 percent in Wave 2 versus 29 percent in Wave 1). Feelings of boredom, anger, and fear/worry persisted essentially unabated. Overall, the US public revealed itself to be in a state of continued, and often greater, distress despite improved health and social conditions from 2020 to 2021.

Given these feelings and fears, what did respondents tell us they were missing most from their daily lives that could help them recover and feel better? Topping the list of “things I want more of in my life right now” was “fun” (54 percent overall), which we interpret simply as positive, enjoyable, and uplifting experiences that offer a sense of relief from the worries of daily life. Among the other top responses were “calm,” “adventure,” “connection with others,” and “humor.” While some of these desires may seem incongruous (e.g., calm and adventure), they are unified by the promise of escape, ability to refocus, and potential to reengage.

The New Hybrid Reality

After spending the previous year using digital resources as a primary form of contact and connection with the world, society has experienced a “fast-forwarding” of technological reliance and adaptation. How will this recently increased digital dependency fare as audiences can once again choose between analog and digital engagement and in-person activity more fully resumes?

Our study revealed that while the majority of respondents expect to prefer in-person to online



To access both Wave 1 and Wave 2 data from *Culture + Community: A Special Edition of Culture Track*, visit culturetrack.com.

cultural activities when they are able to engage in person again, 1 in 10 people expect to “almost always or usually prefer” online activities. And a sizable portion—approximately one quarter of those surveyed—are “agnostic,” meaning they either “will make decisions based on content” or “prefer online and in-person activities about equally.” This represents a significant and growing proportion of museum audiences who will look to your organization to provide more and better digital experiences in the future.

What are the desired characteristics of these digital experiences? Our study identifies three types of access that museum audiences are looking for in online cultural experiences.

- Free access: over two-thirds of respondents believe that it is important that digital activities are free.
- Global access: 62 percent feel it is important that digital resources provide access to organizations or artists located in other places.
- Social access: 45 percent believe it is important that online activities provide a social component to connect people to other participants.

Increased or enhanced access, defined in both literal/physical and social/inclusionary terms, was one of the resounding themes in respondents’ interest and enthusiasm for digital resources. Among the comments shared in the survey were the following:

“Online has greatly improved, and I get a sense of community through art classes.”

“Online activities make me feel safe, and more importantly, there is no other discrimination and criticism.”

“Having online content during the pandemic has been amazing because I’ve been able to attend events regardless of how ill I’m feeling, and it’s been very easy to adapt my environment and physical positioning to allow me to enjoy with less pain/distraction/discomfort.”

When asked what benefit was derived from these online experiences, the most cited responses included “fun,” “learn something new,” “relaxation,” and “connection with others.” The most popular online activities were fairly evenly split across “artist livestream events,” “podcasts,” “online classes or workshops,”

MOVING FORWARD

Culture + Community in a Time of Transformation: A Special Edition of Culture Track found that audiences want arts and cultural institutions to take action in four areas.

1. Prioritize well-being.
2. Embrace the possibilities of hybrid experiences.
3. Identify what matters most to the community to co-create new programming.
4. Take a holistic approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion.



“pre-recorded performances,” and “livestream performances.”

Notably, the providers that respondents looked to for this content shifted over time, migrating away from museums (19 percent in Wave 2 versus 27 percent in Wave 1) and toward individual artists and performers (42 percent in Wave 2 versus 38 percent in Wave 1) and performing arts organizations (17 percent in Wave 2 versus 7 percent in Wave 1). These findings align with anecdotal accounts of a greater degree of digital innovation emanating from artists, performers, and performing arts organizations (compared to visual arts organizations) throughout the pandemic.

Recovery and Transformation

While Americans overall, and art museum respondents in particular, believe that arts and cultural organizations are important in their lives, they also want such organizations to grow and improve. The vast majority of respondents (89 percent) cited at least one way in which they hope arts organizations will change to be more relevant to more people. The change they want to see most focused on four key areas:

Access = providing affordable entry, less formality

Equity = treating employees fairly and bringing in a variety of (new) perspectives

Belonging = being more connected with, and welcoming to, all types of people

Community rootedness = supporting local artists and organizations; working with local nonprofits

Finally, audiences today strongly believe that arts and cultural organizations have a key role to play in addressing social inequities. Three-quarters identified one or more social issues they feel arts organizations need to address, with “systemic racial injustice” the most cited issue.

Perhaps most revealing were the different perceptions of systemic racism across art and cultural categories based on self-identified racial or ethnic identity. For example, while only 23 percent of white/Caucasian respondents believe that systemic racism is present in art museums, more than 35 percent of Hispanic/Latinx, over 50 percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 54 percent of Black/African Americans believe that

systemic racism is present in art museums.

The implications of these findings are clear: to effectively address social inequities, cultural organizations must first ensure that a representative and inclusive range of voices are involved in identifying and framing the problem fairly. In the absence of such a representative group, be they board members, curators, or empowered frontline staff, many issues important to audiences may be overlooked or ignored because they do not impact the people in power who set the agenda. To put it more directly: how, and even if, you frame the problem depends on whom you ask to define it.

Where Are We Now?

What can we conclude from the findings of the Wave 2 Culture Track survey? Audiences are still hurting and are looking to cultural organizations to help them feel better and connect them to one another. Given this, cultural institutions may be employing new techniques and models of practice to become more empathetic, characterized by respite, comfort, and connection. The welcome extended to all groups is at the core of this practice; inclusion and authentic community representation and participation are essential components for a museum or other cultural organization to foster meaningful connections. An example of this approach can be found in the Maturity Model and accompanying resources of The Empathetic Museum.

This need for empathetic inclusion in arts and cultural spaces is particularly pressing given the troubling gaps in perceptions of systemic racism across different races and ethnicities. The social divides our society is experiencing do not stop at the museum’s door; in fact, many of these tensions may be at the root of ongoing conflicts between boards and senior leadership and (lower paid) frontline and junior staff. This “empathy gap” has emerged as one of the greatest challenges cultural leaders must confront in addressing the needs of their various internal and external constituents.

Arthur Cohen is CEO and co-founder of LaPlaca Cohen, a thought partner to cultural organizations that creates holistic and insight-driven strategic and marketing solutions to forge meaningful connections with audiences everywhere.



Building a New Future Together



Visitors look up
at *Plexus No. 27*
by Gabriel Dawe.
After a three-month
closure due to
COVID-19, Crystal
Bridges Museum
reopened on June
10, 2020, with
enhanced safety
measures.



Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is taking its arts programs into the community to tackle longstanding issues of inequity and meet critical needs.

By Marissa Reyes

Photo by Ironside Photography/Stephen Ironside for Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

As museums continue to struggle

with COVID-19 and the enduring impacts of racial and economic inequity that have excluded some communities from cultural participation, many institutions are heeding the call for deep reflection and change. At Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, located in Northwest Arkansas, our ongoing journey toward transformation began on March 17, 2020, when we closed our doors because of the pandemic.

This was a destabilizing moment, one that could have easily caused the museum to retreat and lie dormant as the virus wreaked havoc on our region's economic, health, and cultural infrastructures. Instead, we chose to mobilize.

We knew that the pandemic was exacerbating the existing inequity that the vulnerable communities in our region were experiencing. We were committed to supporting Northwest Arkansans during this crisis and had resources such as museum space, staff members, and culinary expertise that we could leverage to help.

We turned to our community partners—an assortment of regionally based organizations from a variety of industries, including NWA Food Bank, Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education, and Fayetteville Housing Authority—to give us insight into what our communities needed. In collaboration with them, we identified key areas of support: food,

housing, artist relief, internet and information access, and a campaign for fostering social connections with vulnerable, isolated groups (see “Helping Our Community in Crisis” sidebar on p. 25 for more information on some of our pandemic-related efforts).

The museum's pandemic response was not only helpful in the moment but also showed us a new world of community engagement possibilities that focus on equity and critical needs. What COVID-19 forced into action, we have now expanded and evolved, moving our arts programming into the community to tackle longstanding issues.

Using the Arts for Social Impact

In the early part of 2021, we unveiled a community engagement pilot initiative called the Arts and Social Impact Accelerator Program (ASAP) to activate the museum's resources and staff in an effort to build trust, welcome diverse perspectives, and nurture authentic relationships with the communities we serve. The program is very much a work in progress but is nonetheless critical to the continued relevance and future of Crystal Bridges. Elizabeth Crooke, author and professor of heritage and museum studies at Ulster University, summed up the urgency we feel: “To be of value, museums need to find significance within these communities—without those connections, the museum and its collections will be of little importance. It is people who bring the value and consequence to objects and collections; as a result, if a museum cannot forge associations with people, it will have no meaning.”

ASAP cultivates multiyear partnerships with social service agencies and local artists in Northwest Arkansas. The partnerships will incubate ideas that creatively address social issues through collaboration, arts-based solutions, and socially engaged experiences. For the pilot, we paired three local artists—Octavio Logo, Kalyrn Fay Barnoski, and Kholoud Sawaf—with three local agencies—Ozark Regional Transit Authority, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese.

At the beginning of the year, the three artist-agency pairs held listening sessions and community events to better understand the needs of their audiences. This research has informed the following arts-based projects that each pair is pursuing.

Artist Octavio Logo puts the finishing touches on a temporary mural painted on the side of a bus, which traveled to local festivals and served as a catalyst for public dialogue about accessible transportation as a community need.





As part of the museum's COVID-19 relief efforts, staff packed art kits for distribution to community organizations serving children and families in Northwest Arkansas.



HELPING OUR COMMUNITY IN CRISIS

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art closed its doors on March 17, 2020, and reopened on June 10, 2020. During closure and beyond, our focus on our Northwest Arkansas community remained strong. In 2020, our efforts to help our pandemic-stricken communities included the following.

The Social Connecting Campaign. We created this effort to help those especially vulnerable to the negative effects of isolation, including patients in hospitals and residents in assisted living facilities. We hired nine local artists to design postcards inspired by the word “together.” The postcards were distributed to community members who were encouraged to color in the drawings, write supportive notes, and return the postcards to the museum for distribution to those at risk of feeling isolated during social distancing efforts. Each artist also created a large mural of their design. The murals traveled around Northwest Arkansas medical facilities, assisted living facilities, social service organizations, and apartment complexes as an outdoor, socially distanced exhibition. At the conclusion of the campaign, the murals were displayed at the museum.

Food Distribution. We partnered with the Northwest Arkansas Food Bank to distribute boxes of food to area food pantries and provided meals to nearby schools for distribution to their students. Every food box also included a Creativity Kit that contained high-quality art supplies for children and families.

Household and Personal Care Supply Distribution. We collaborated with the Northwest Arkansas Continuum of Care to connect with social service organizations throughout Northwest Arkansas to provide personal hygiene and house cleaning supply kits to individuals experiencing housing insecurity. A Creativity Kit was included in every box.

Reimagining Public Transit

Northwest Arkansas is a mecca for mountain bike enthusiasts, with over 250 miles of trails crisscrossing the region; however, the lack of accessible public transportation remains a critical community issue that leads to road congestion, increased energy consumption, and lack of mobility for lower-income communities. Through ASAP, artist Octavio Logo and Ozark Regional Transit Authority (ORT) Executive Director Joel Gardner have been working together to learn how community members use the limited existing public transit system. The partnership aims to advance the public conversation about transportation in the region by shedding light on community needs and barriers and facilitating dialogue with bus drivers, community members, and civic leaders.

As part of the discovery process, Logo spent time at ORT attending bus safety training sessions with staff and getting to know the bus drivers. This past summer, the museum hosted a program called “Where To,” a pop-up art experience that invited visitors to share their thoughts and experiences about local public transit. At a public housing facility in Fayetteville, Arkansas, visitors joined Logo and ORT bus drivers in creating a temporary mural on the side of an ORT bus. We also organized “Discuss the Bus,” a roving community conversation held inside an ORT bus in which community members and civic and cultural leaders could discuss the future of public transit in Northwest Arkansas. More listening sessions, community conversations, and artist activations are planned for 2022, leading up to a multiday transit festival.

ASAP facilitates creative engagements and public dialogue through art, and this approach has significantly informed ORT’s process for public input sessions. “By embracing this nontraditional approach to meeting people where they are at, ORT has learned that we can gather real suggestions for improvement from real people in spaces where they are comfortable,” Gardner says.

Art and Empathy in Health Care

Multiple studies confirm that exposure to the arts can help medical professionals develop empathy skills. Recognizing this critical community need, artist Kalyn Barnoski, in partnership with Lauren

OUR PILLARS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Arts and Social Impact Accelerator Program is one of four pillars that enable Crystal Bridges to support and deepen community engagement through art, both inside and outside the museum. The other three pillars are:

Access and Inclusion. Programs under this pillar focus on engaging disability communities and seniors and include experiences in the museum for individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia, individuals with blindness and low vision, and youth with autism. We are also committed to raising the level of accommodation, training, and operations across our campus to create an accessible museum environment for guests of all abilities.

Welcoming Communities. Programs and initiatives in this pillar are geared toward transforming the museum into an inclusive space by providing responsive programming and exhibitions that are relevant to local communities and reflect their contributions. In addition, we are developing an internal framework consisting of standards, best practices, and resources to help staff use ethical and culturally sensitive approaches when working with communities.

Art in Communities. This pillar meets people where they are, enhancing arts participation and improving quality of life by providing experiences that promote creativity, social connection, and belonging. A key program is CB to You: Mobile Art Lab, which partners with libraries, festivals, and community centers in underserved areas to bring workshops, performances, and public art featuring local and regional artists.

Haggard-Duff, director of the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), has created "Woven Together," a community weaving



Artist Kalyn Fay Barnoski hosts a weaving event with faculty, medical students, and staff at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS).

and conversation project to help faculty, staff, and medical students at UAMS develop empathetic understanding.

Barnoski spent weeks on the UAMS campus to observe and interact with UAMS personnel and students during interprofessional events. The medical school also held listening sessions where personnel and students viewed and contributed to an art installation while interacting with Barnoski. For Haggard-Duff, these listening sessions revealed that faculty and staff desire more connection with one another and between departments.

The museum also hosted a virtual panel discussion on empathy and health care. Designed for the general public, the talk invited counselors, clinicians, and artists to offer different perspectives on the role of empathy in the healing process.

The project's outcomes include a massive paper and textile weaving project featuring text reflections from staff and faculty about aspects of empathy, belonging, and connection. The project will culminate in a celebration on campus that will include the unveiling of the weaving along with an additional text-based public artwork that Barnoski created. Inspired by her conversations with UAMS personnel, the public artwork will wrap around the medical building's exterior. An art zine, similarly inspired, will be published later in the year.

Reflecting on the partnership, Barnoski describes its potential effect of "platforming decentered narratives within the medical field and helping facilitate relationship building between UAMS faculty, staff, students, and administration."

Amplifying Community Stories

Theater artist Kholoud Sawaf and the Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese (ACOM) Executive Director Melisa Laelan have been working together through ASAP to raise awareness about the Marshallese story

in Northwest Arkansas. Years of US nuclear testing on the Marshall Islands, which sit between Hawaii and the Philippines, have forced many Marshallese to leave. This diaspora has spread to Springdale, Arkansas, which is now home to the largest Marshallese community in the US, as many have found employment in the region's poultry industry. This partnership aims to preserve the culture and wisdom of the community's elders, empower and engage Marshallese youth, and discuss policies affecting the community.

The creative output of the partnership is a multipronged canoe-building project called "Wa Kuk Wa Jimor," or "Canoe of One Community." For four weeks, master boat builder Liton Beasa and his team of youth apprentices were on-site at Crystal Bridges constructing a *kōrkōr*, a traditional Marshallese wooden outrigger canoe, made from the wood of a dead tree from the museum's North Forest. The canoe was later launched in the waters surrounding the museum during a powerful and moving ceremony and celebration of Marshallese culture.

The canoe is now installed in the museum to help tell Marshallese stories and explore the depth of the Marshallese journey and culture. A digital component of the project will document the canoe-building process and shed light on the positive stories and social issues within the Marshallese community.

For Laelan, the project represents an opportunity

for cultural understanding. "If you want to know about the Marshallese culture, you should learn the parts of the canoe," she says. "This canoe is something that we are proud of because it was made here [locally] by the people of this town." For Sawaf, ASAP is an example of how museums can do better by their communities. "Art is not meant to be transactional," she says. "It should be transformational."

Continuing the Work

Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, echoes Sawaf's calls for transformation. "We are in a moment of reckoning, a moment of transformation. This is the time to be bold and ambitious and to challenge the ways things have been done in the past," he said on September 23, 2020, during the State of the Art Summit organized by Crystal Bridges.

For the museum, ASAP represents just one effort of many in our continuing journey toward transformation. We have learned a lot during these challenging times, and we are carrying these lessons forward. This truly is a time to "challenge the ways things have been done in the past." The communities we serve expect nothing less.

Marissa Reyes is chief learning and engagement officer at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas.

The completed *korkor*, or Marshallese outrigger canoe, on display at the museum. For four weeks, master boat builder Liton Beasa and his team of youth apprentices were on-site at Crystal Bridges constructing the canoe from a tree from the surrounding forest.



The start of a Día de los Muertos celebration on the steps of the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. Throughout the day and evening hundreds of people continued to bring memorials to loved ones for one of the largest Día de los Muertos altars ever.



The Greatest Work of Art

By Howard Taylor /

The community is always the focus
of San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts.

At a recent exhibition opening at my institution, San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, I was talking with a founder of our museum and a colleague from a major museum. My museum friend commented on the turnout—nearly 600 people—and the diversity of the audience in terms of age, culture, race, and the presence of students and military people. He also observed that, despite the festive and noisy atmosphere, people were “actually looking at the art!”

Our founder replied, “Yes, when we were planning this museum, we never thought it would be like this ... and it’s wonderful!” This was one of those magic moments when the efforts of many years were apparent to both a distinguished outsider and a key individual within our community.

We have endeavored to create a welcoming environment, marketing our programs, including exhibition openings, to all segments of the community. Openness pervades everything at the museum, from

publicly accessible offices and work areas to visible and open collections storage. There are no “staff only” signs posted, and yet we maintain the highest levels of protection for our people, collections, and exhibitions. As an accredited museum, we carefully follow the

of core values that reflect a commitment to equity, justice, and human rights. When we put people first—above collections, above endowments, above budget spreadsheets—we are making a commitment to advance compassion, care, human potential, and collective well-being as integral elements to our institution’s values and culture.”



The San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts opened its new building in 2000, seen here from across the Concho River.

Building True Community

When I was interviewed by the founding board before our museum opened, I said that if we define the museum by the size of the four walls, we will never be larger. But if we define it as the size of our community, we will be one of the largest museums in the country. As institutions devoted to engaging the people in our communities, museums cannot turn a blind eye to either their organizational built and social environments or those that exist beyond our doorsteps. From that day forward, we have used a phrase that perfectly expresses our vision: “We are not just about art on the walls but art in our lives, and the community is the greatest work of art.”

The board’s enthusiastic response to the ideas I discussed in that interview prompted my move to this small (population 100,000) city in West Texas. I intended it to be an experiment that would last two years. It has turned into a 37-year detour! Today, the museum has a \$2 million budget, 14 full-time and 40 part-time employees, and average annual attendance of 65,000.

Over the years, our initiatives have focused on engaging with both the social and built environment. For the social environment, we have always tried to bring together people of different backgrounds. On our board, for example, we have a broader mix than most museums, which includes individuals who are stay-at-home moms and teachers, in addition to people with significant financial resources. There is an atmosphere of respect for the different perspectives that emerge at our board and committee meetings.

For the built environment, the challenge is to create spaces and places, with genuine input from the

AAM standards for our field. In our quest to be a transformative organization, however, many of our activities depart from the usual museum practices.

Mike Murawski perfectly summed up the intentions behind our efforts in his article in the November/December 2021 issue of *Museum*: “At its foundation, being a more human-centered museum involves shaping and productively debating a set

RESOURCES

Mike Murawski, *Museums as Agents of Change: A Guide to Becoming a Changemaker*, 2021

Peter C. Bishop and Andy Hines, *Teaching about the Future*, 2012

Charles Murray, *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960–2010*, 2012

Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People*, 2011

Brooke Mulkey

various populations of the community, where people can converge, share, and get to know each other. One of the first things we did as a museum was a series of exhibitions called “Visions and Choices” in which community members submitted ideas for creating a better place.

No two of these exhibitions—held every five or so years over a 25-year period—looked alike. We had drawing boards with markers and materials for people to write down or illustrate ideas, and we would then post them on the walls. There were also more formal presentations, such as one by an architectural firm that featured a large kiosk with beautiful renderings of a variety of concepts. The museum built a detailed model of the historic city center that we used to stimulate ideas about how to revive that area, which today is vibrant and utterly transformed. The exhibits were colorful and messy and continuously changing throughout their duration.

We spent a lot of time soliciting the input of people from different racial, ethnic, and occupational backgrounds to get the level of participation we sought in “Visions and Choices,” and we worked hard to consolidate the ideas and advocate for their implementation. For example, many participants were advocating for historic preservation projects. At that time there was no active preservation group here, so the museum helped create such a group. It has gone on to save and restore numerous structures and reinvest in important historical assets, including a park that had long been a community meeting place in a traditionally African-American neighborhood. Our youth participants advocated for many projects as well, including a skateboard park. In a panel review of a grant application to the Texas Commission on the Arts for this project, a panelist remarked, “This is not art!” Happily, the other panelists disagreed.

Another significant outcome of “Visions and Choices” was a project through the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and its Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) that brought to fruition many of the ideas from the exhibitions. AIA sent a group of eight volunteer architects, planners, and landscape designers and nine architectural students from Texas Tech University to meet over three intensive days with our local community team. The R/UDAT team and our local committee set up dozens of interviews with community leaders and citizens; looked at the range of ideas presented through our “Visions and Choices” exhibitions; and developed a plan for project implementation, which was published in our local newspaper.

We used the momentum behind this work to bring our city council and city manager’s team to the table, and after an initial lack of interest by city government, we were able to get significant buy-in and enthusiasm. This led to \$70 million in funding for a wide range of projects, with resources coming from a city bond



The fourth “Visions and Choices” exhibition in 2013. Community members submit their ideas for the future of the city and region, and many of them are pursued.

issue, multiple private fundraising initiatives, individual entrepreneurs spurred by the R/UDAT project, and individual and foundation funding.

A notable R/UDAT project was the creation of a 30-acre public event space that includes a farmers market, restoration of a historic railroad depot and warehouse for use as a transportation center and museum, a senior citizens center, pavilion structures for public events, and ultimately the construction of the new San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts.

Our museum also acquired a block of historic buildings that were in a state of collapse, and we restored and adapted them for a range of community activities. The buildings now house two galleries that we have dedicated for community use, including by high school students and church and other community groups.

Currently, in our 18-county educational service region (which is the size of West Virginia), we are working on several projects that will connect, celebrate, and engage the people in this vast and sparsely populated area. For example, we are working with a leading folklorist to seek out artisans, folk artists, and other creative people in the area. The results of this undertaking include two exhibitions featuring the individuals identified in this study and related publications and programs. With this initiative, we hope to

develop a combination of amenities for visitors and marketing plans for what would be the first “Artisan’s Trail” in Texas.

And, in a daily example of our community focus, we provide free access to our 300-person meeting room for up to 100 groups a year. For many museums that might represent an unacceptable loss of potential income, but by doing this we have become a place where groups can converge on common ground that has become difficult to find today.

Despite our intensive commitment to the community and helping others, traditional museum functions have not suffered. In fact, we have built significant collections, created widely recognized exhibitions, and won numerous national awards for our exhibitions and programs.

Representing Our Community

Cultural diversity is central to our agenda.

Approximately a third of our education programs, exhibitions, and collecting efforts are about and for the people of our community. And our board of trustees, staff, volunteers, and sponsors parallel the demographics of our community, which in San Angelo is about 45 percent Hispanic, 3 percent African American, about 3 percent Asian American and other, and approximately 48 percent white.

The San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts acquired an entire block of buildings that were in a state of collapse and has restored them for a broad range of community uses.



HOW TO BE A BETTER COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Know your community. Every grant asks for a description of your demographics, which you can find in your census study. In addition to data gathering, engage with your community to assess how you can better serve it.

Never forget that you are a human being leading a human institution. Don't just work on networks and relationships; form real personal friendships within your underrepresented communities.

Recognize that we all possess inherent biases. Dig deep and engage with others to help you see the bigger picture of the various communities and people that comprise them.

Engage your board members in AAM Museums Advocacy Day and other advocacy efforts. Museum trustees are leaders in their community and are often politically active and sometimes significant donors to politicians. In our lobbying efforts, their voices stand out. Conversely, it is helpful for our trustees to be aware of the issues we face as a field. Our immediate past and current board chairs have participated in AAM Museums Advocacy Day in Washington, DC.

Buy ads in local media. Our museum newsletter, which is on newsprint and has articles in Spanish and English, is inserted into our regional English-language and Spanish-language newspapers. Rather than going to members only, it reaches over 50,000 people.

Just do it! Learning what your community needs doesn't need to be expensive or complicated, but it does require sustained outreach and listening.

The museum has purchased display cases to be used in several libraries 90-plus miles away and has sent our educators and director to hold programs in these communities—even though the audiences are generally very small. We have online programming, but we believe it is also important to have one-on-one and face-to-face engagement.


Like most museums, we must continuously seek the funding and resources we need to carry out our programs. Nevertheless, we have worked with other organizations on their own development efforts. For example, we helped our public library raise funds for the construction of an award-winning facility, and we are currently helping a local group that is working to establish a Hispanic Heritage Museum and Cultural Center. Through a collaborative fundraiser, we were able to provide substantial funding for their efforts.

Several years ago, I was the last speaker on a museum panel about diversity. As the panelists who preceded me talked about their studies and outcomes, I began to shrink in my seat. The other panelists were from major institutions operating at a level of sophistication that my museum could not match.

However, as I listened to their outcomes, I could also see that our museum had significantly exceeded

their results. One speaker noted that on their 50-person board of trustees, they had added three people from underrepresented backgrounds. On our board of 20 people, about one-third were non-white, and we had a similar pattern with our staff, closely paralleling our regional demographics. We have always prioritized being as representative of the community as possible.

When it was my turn, I offered this advice: even without consultants and studies, you can engage your community by getting to know it personally and overcoming your inherent biases. At San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, we are far from achieving perfection in our attempts to be as inclusive and transformative as we wish to be, but we will persist in our vision.

 **Howard Taylor** is the president and CEO of the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts in Texas. He served on the AAM Board of Directors from 2006 to 2011 and formerly served as president of the Museum Council of Greater Philadelphia, president of the Texas Association of Museums, and president of the National Association for Museum Exhibition.

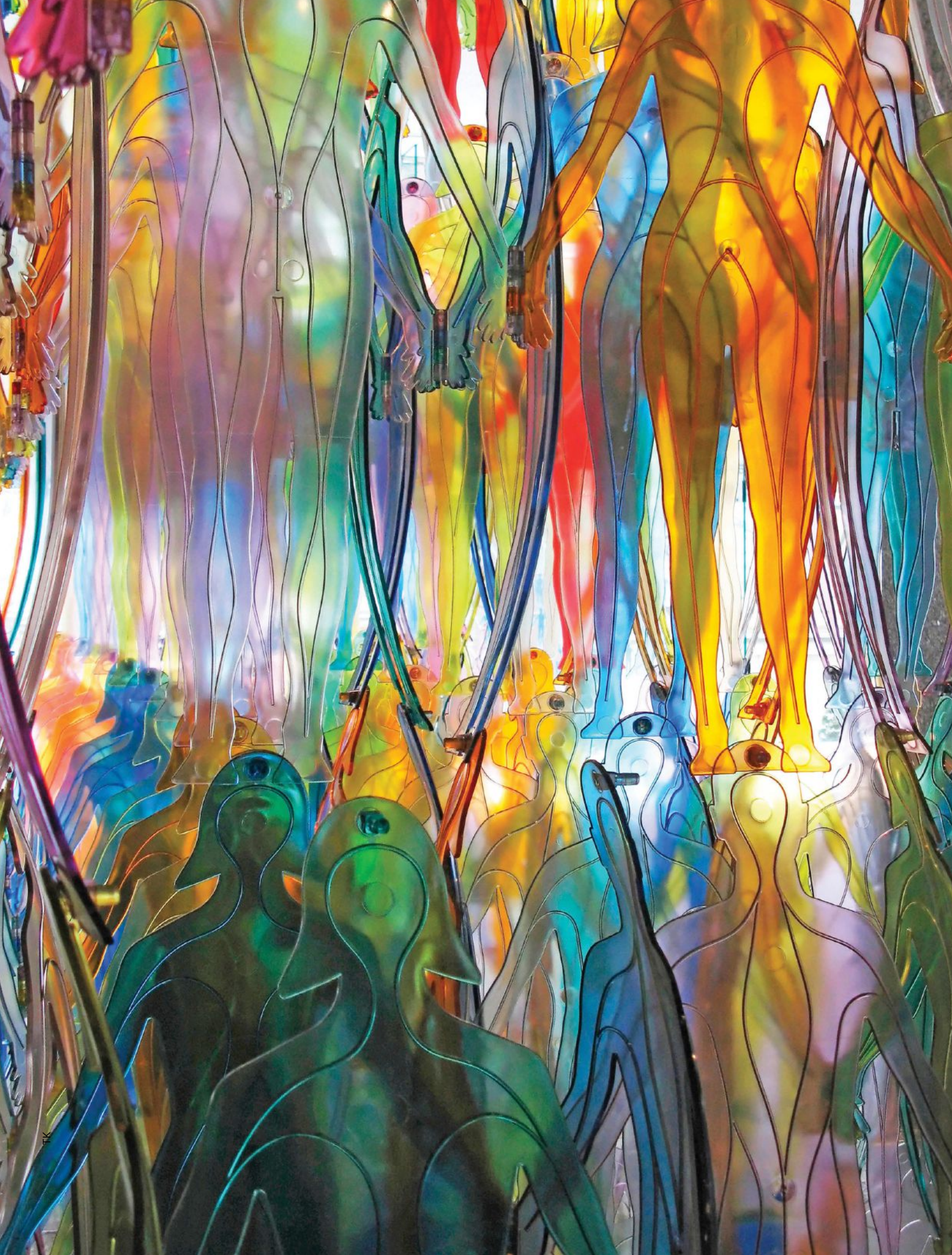
Beyond the WALLS

Demonstrating the social impact of museums is critical to their success.

By Carol A. Scott

There is a widely held view within the museum sector that visitors' personal experiences with museums make a positive difference to society. But, overall, the evidence to support this view is limited. And that needs to change.

Randy Duchaine/Alamy Stock Photo



In 2014, I worked on a project to discover how members of the public described their experiences visiting museums. In collaboration with Richard Sandell and Jocelyn Dodd at the University of Leicester's Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, I analyzed 20 years of UK visitor studies spanning all types of collections, all ages, and all regions.

From a vast data set of UK visitors' descriptions of how they experience museums, I distilled three major findings:

- **Active engagement.** Museums stimulate critical thinking. The thought processes that visitors describe are at the highest levels of the cognitive scale—not just recall and recognition but analyzing, evaluating, and judging.
- **Well-being.** The museum experience can be both inspiring and affirming, and these experiences contribute to a sense of personal well-being.
- **Making connections.** Museums help visitors make connections with others and understand life from another's point of view.

The conclusions were both tantalizing and frustrating. Ideally, we need large population studies, control groups, and rigorous analysis to prove the case for museums' social impact. For example, using a longitudinal data set of leisure, cultural, and sport participation in the UK, research from the educational charity Demos found a positive correlation between people who engage in cultural and sporting activities and the norms of "trust" fundamental to building social capital in communities. But there are no large-scale population studies specific to the social impact of museums.

However, the impetus to demonstrate museums' social impact is increasing exponentially. One of the reasons for this focus on impact is that museums are changing. Within the sector, a major conversation is taking place about museums' role as citizens and social actors with a responsibility to be part of the wider discourse on social change. This conversation is occurring as COVID-19 has accelerated our focus on community. Museums are working alongside communities to address a shared crisis while, concurrently, constraints on international tourism have demonstrated that local community engagement is

“Evidence that museums play an essential role in creating well-being, civic participation, and social cohesiveness is crucial to obtaining or maintaining funding at sustainable levels.”

In the conclusion to the study, I addressed the question of whether these personal experiences of museums accrue to the public realm and make a positive difference to society. For example, does the critical thinking encouraged by the museum experience result in a more informed and discerning citizenry? Does the well-being inspired by museum visits have an impact on public health? Does a sense of connectedness promote social cohesion and mutual understanding?

critical to their ongoing sustainability.

At the same time, funders increasingly expect a social return on their investment. On the public investment side, museums' capacity to enrich, uplift, and connect both during and in the aftermath of the pandemic has never been more important. Evidence that museums play an essential role in creating well-being, civic participation, and social cohesiveness is crucial to obtaining or maintaining funding at sustainable levels.



Planning for and Developing Social Impact

“Impact” addresses the question “What difference did it make?” and is defined as an effect, change, or benefit resulting from an intervention. “Social” tends to refer to “society at large.” For the purposes of this article, “social impact” means effects that are evident in the civic domain as the result of museums’ specific intentions.

In the absence of large-scale population studies focusing on museum impact, much can be accomplished at an institutional level where a culture for planning and measuring social impact can be embedded. Planning for impact encourages museums to use limited resources in targeted ways to

produce maximum value. It links museums with the wider world and provides a pathway for meaningful engagement and co-production with communities and other partners. And it begins the process of developing an evidence base that can be used to argue for ongoing public investment.

So how do we develop social impact? While there is an emerging literature on planning for and measuring impact, in my opinion, whichever model is used, the following four principles are fundamental.

Look outward. Adopting an orientation that looks beyond the walls of the museum and monitors the pulse of change can lead to conversations about how the museum might reimagine existing collections

“Understanding communities’ preferences and involving them in value creation is essential. Failure to do so can result in a program that communities do not view as legitimate.”

and/or programs in relation to contemporary issues and how it might meaningfully respond to change. The Natural History Museum in London put this approach into practice with its succinct assessment of the global crisis and the position the museum has adopted in relation to it:

We face a planetary emergency. Humanity’s future depends on the natural world, but we are not taking effective action to combat our destructive impact on the planet’s survival systems. ... We must act now, we must act on scientific evidence and we must act together. Our vision is of a future where both people and planet thrive.

Our mission is to create advocates for the planet.

Know thyself. We can make the biggest impact when we work outward from a position of authenticity, knowledge, and strength. Planning for impact is an opportunity to revisit missions, visions, and values; to discuss what we stand for; to identify what we do best; and to deploy our resources to make a difference within our scope. We can create value when we harness our strengths and direct them intentionally to achieve change.

When Chesapeake Maritime Museum in Maryland decided to eliminate single-use plastics from its campus, leaders were activating their value of “stewardship” of the Chesapeake Bay, its waterways, and the land. In 2019, their leadership in this area was recognized with an award from the Maryland Green Registry, which helps organizations become more sustainable.

Work with partners. I use the term “partner” for two reasons. It is an overarching term that

encompasses both local communities and other like-minded agencies, and it implies an equal relationship where contributors engage in exchanges aimed at jointly identifying important social needs and the most meaningful and relevant ways to address them.

Understanding communities’ preferences and involving them in value creation is essential. Failure to do so can result in a program that communities do not view as legitimate. Equal engagement based on a shared understanding of the need for change has a greater likelihood of success and the potential to extend the breadth and depth of impact.

Holocaust Museum Houston (HMH) formed a partnership with a local school board to create a curriculum to combat school bullying. Individual responsibility in a civic context is at the foreground of HMH’s vision and public value statements. The museum encourages people to be “upstanders” instead of “bystanders” when faced with aggression and injustice. Delivered through schools, the curriculum empowers students to “call out” bullying behavior when they observe or experience it.

Focus on results. The best way to plan an intervention is to think about what change will look like. Whether the model used is results-based planning, logic modeling, intentionality, or “theory of change,” focusing on the end result and working backward to consider what strategies, activities, and measures are necessary to achieve the desired impact creates an iterative structure that helps manage and monitor change as the project moves forward.

The Happy Museum Project (HMP) in the UK, which provides a leadership framework for museums to develop a holistic approach to well-being and sustainability, has developed a Story of Change approach that models results-focused planning and measurement. Based on the premise that fundamental social change has altered the context within which society and museums operate, the HMP believes that museums need to recast themselves as stewards “of people, place and planet, supporting institutional and community well-being and resilience in the face of global financial and environmental challenges.”

Measuring the impact of change is embedded in the Happy Museum approach. The group’s Story of Change model starts with the why and the what—the rationale for change and a description of what change will look like. For example, the Natural History Museum lists six indicators for what change will look like, which include increasing and sharing the body of scientific knowledge to protect the planet, empowering people to act on behalf of the planet, and people trusting the role of the museum to be a “voice for nature.”


Envisaging the intended impact makes it much easier to identify what measures are needed to determine whether the goal has been reached and to choose the appropriate methods to collect evidence of change. In some cases, comparisons can be made using baseline data, while in others pre- and post-testing can reveal changes in attitudes, knowledge, and actions as the result of an intervention.

Museums’ New Roles

If each museum adopts these four principles for creating and measuring social impact, we can create a culture oriented toward our growing role as citizens and build on our intellectual and cultural capital to direct our efforts toward social purposes.

But along with this institutional orientation to creating impact, I end with a call to action. Long-term population studies on the social impact of museums are necessary to prove to governments that museums are essential to the fabric of healthy societies. Implementing population studies is generally the role of government agencies, but national museum associations could lead this work in partnership with like-minded organizations such as universities and independent research providers.

Addressing our role as citizens and social actors is one of the most significant issues facing the sector today. Demonstrating that our actions have impact beyond museum walls is vital to our future.

 **Carol Scott** is a strategist, researcher, and evaluator who has published widely on museum value, impact, and leadership. A member of the ICOM Executive Board since 2016, she is chair of the Academic and Programming Board of ICOM-IMREC (the International Museum Research and Exchange Centre) and founding director of Carol Scott Associates, a consultancy based in London.

RESOURCES

Jocelyn A. Dodd, Richard Sandell, and Carol Scott, *Cultural Value. User value of museums and galleries: A critical review of the literature*, Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester, 2014

leicester.figshare.com/articles/report/Cultural_Value_User_value_of_museums_and_galleries_a_critical_view_of_the_literature/10142456

The Happy Museum Project, “Happy Museum Story of Change”
happymuseum.gn.apc.org/story-of-change/

Natural History Museum (London), “A Planetary Emergency: Our Response, Strategy to 2031,” 2019
nhm.ac.uk/about-us/our-vision-strategy.html



Measuring Up

A new national study is quantifying the social impact of US museums.

By Michelle Mileham, Emily Johnson, and Stephen Ashton



As a museum professional, have you ever wondered how you can demonstrate the impact your museum has on the lives of your visitors? Perhaps, like us, you have intrinsically felt that your museum is making a difference but have lacked the evidence to demonstrate it. These were the thoughts going through our minds when we conducted the social impact studies in Utah that we discussed in our “Brace for Impact” article in the May/June 2019 issue of *Museum*.

Science Photo Library/Alamy Stock Photo



The Montshire Museum of Science in Vermont is a participant in the Measurement of Museum Social Impact (MOMSI).

In that article we outlined two social impact studies. The first study was conducted internally at Thanksgiving Point, a multi-museum complex based 20 miles south of Salt Lake City in Lehi, Utah. For the second, Thanksgiving Point and Utah Division of Arts & Museums (UA&M) scaled up the study to measure social impact at eight museums throughout Utah. Both studies found that museum-goers were positively impacted by their visits, meaning their museum

experience improved their perspective on lifelong learning, relationships, and personal well-being.

With our Thanksgiving Point and Utah study results in hand, along with an extensive document of “lessons learned,” our team wanted to expand this project and work with museums across the country. So we sought out the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and applied for a National Leadership Grant for Museums.

Now, thanks to funding from IMLS, Thanksgiving Point and UA&M are scaling up again, from the Utah study to a national social impact project: Measurement of Museum Social Impact (MOMSI). Working with 38 museums across the United States, we are testing the study methods, further validating the social impact survey, and developing a toolkit so that other museums can measure social impact.

What Our Previous Research Found

For the first study, families were invited to visit Thanksgiving Point for free four different times over a multi-month period. The results showed that families were indeed being impacted positively. The most meaningful aspect of participants’ experiences was spending quality time with their family, and participants were surprised by the quality, size, and variety of experiences Thanksgiving Point offered.

WHY MEASURE MUSEUM SOCIAL IMPACT?

Here are a few ways you could use social impact data:

- Share findings with funders, stakeholders, or legislators.
- Use the data when applying for grants, to support new and existing programs or exhibitions at your museum, and to recruit board members.
- Allow the data to inform strategic, master, and interpretive planning.
- Share the findings internally, allowing them to shape marketing and public relations.

The national study is helping our team better understand how museums can successfully recruit visitors to participate in such studies. While some host museums are relying on regular visitors or lapsed members as study participants, other host museums are recruiting first-time visitors through a myriad of recruitment methods. We, and the host museums, are reflecting on not only how this type of study can be used to recruit new visitors to the museum, but also how to turn those new visitors into regular visitors or even members. We are hopeful that the toolkit will include strategies for audience outreach and development.

We shared the results with our colleagues throughout the state of Utah, including with our peers at UA&M, which led to the second study, a partnership between UA&M and Thanksgiving Point. Rather than focusing on a single institution, the Utah social impact study included eight museums throughout Utah. As a team and with the participating Utah museums, we rewrote the logic model originally governing the Thanksgiving Point study, expanding the long-term outcome of “strengthened families” to “strengthened relationships,” changing “higher educational attainment” to “continued learning and engagement,” and adding a long-term outcome of “intercultural competence.” We also addressed and reworked some of the social impact survey indicators to align with the new and edited long-term outcomes and developed marketing strategies for recruiting participants and retaining them through the visit and survey process.

The Utah study collected surveys from nearly 400 museum-goers, whose responses demonstrated a statistically significant positive change in 96 percent of the social impact indicators after visiting a museum. Indicators that showed the greatest difference include: “I can see how exploration leads to learning” (continued learning and engagement outcome), “I take time to relax” (health and well-being outcome), “I learn new things from people who

RESOURCES

To learn more, follow updates, and see the 38 participating host museums, visit museumsocialimpact.org.

Kari Ross Nelson, Jennifer Ortiz, Stephen Ashton, and Emily Johnson, “Two Approaches to Measuring Social Impact in Utah Museums,” *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 2021

<https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12457>

are different than me” (intercultural competence outcome), and “I regularly participate in bonding activities with my friends and/or family” (strengthened relationships outcome).

Representing the Field

The process of selecting our 38 host museums for the national social impact study involved multiple spreadsheets, numerous Zoom meetings, a healthy amount of compromise, and maybe a dash of magic. We recruited museums through national professional organizations like AAM, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the American Public Gardens Association; regional museum associations; blogs; and direct outreach. We ended up with a wonderful pool of prospective museum participants.



The Carter County Museum in Montana, a MOMSI participant, is the first museum in the state to display dinosaurs.



In selecting museums, we focused on representing as wide a geographic swath of the United States as possible. We are pleased to report that participating host museums span the country, from Norwich, Vermont, to San Diego, California, and from Bellevue, Washington, to Miami, Florida.

Additionally, we wanted our cohort to represent a diversity of budget and staff sizes, allowing us to tell an accurate story about US museum impact. We want the toolkit we will build from this project to be useful to museums large and small, those with an all-volunteer staff and those with research and evaluation teams. We also felt that having participation and feedback from rural museums, or those whose communities are small but engaged, is key to understanding how small museums handle conducting this kind of research and what support is needed.

In selecting host museums, we also considered types of museums. We wanted to represent the broadest possible definition of museum and have included public gardens, zoos, and aquariums in addition to art museums, history museums, and children's museums. In the end, this consideration may allow us to sort and parse our data along several different dimensions to explore subsets of museums in the US.

Creating the Survey

Our team recognizes the multitude of ways to define social impact, but through each iteration of our research, we worked from the definition that social impact is *the effect of an activity on the social fabric of the community and the well-being of the individuals and families who live there*. Building on the work of the Thanksgiving Point study and Utah study, MOMSI is measuring social impact through four long-term outcomes: continued learning and engagement, health and well-being, strengthened relationships, and valuing diverse communities.

Through a logic model, we outlined direct connections from the long-term outcomes to short- and intermediate-term outcomes. Short- and intermediate-term outcomes were informed by a rigorous literature review and influence the indicator statements visitors respond to on the social impact survey. (See sample indicators for each outcome at left.)

As mentioned above, Utah museums added the "intercultural competence" long-term outcome, but as we were facilitating host museum training for MOMSI nearly four years later, museum staff felt that terminology was outdated and may not align to what we were really measuring. After discussions

CONTINUED LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

- I experiment to create new ways of doing things.
- I can see how exploration leads to learning.
- I challenge the way things are currently done.

INCREASED HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- I am motivated to maintain my physical health.
- I often compare myself to others.
- I often feel the stress of life.

VALUING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

- I enjoy meeting people who are different from me.
- I am open to multiple perspectives.
- When interacting with others, I recognize their deeply held beliefs.

STRENGTHENED RELATIONSHIPS

- I keep my commitments to others.
- I turn to my friends and/or family when I face challenges.
- I recognize the importance of my friends and/or family members in my life.

with host museums and the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, we reworded the outcome to “valuing diverse communities.”

At the conclusion of the Utah study, the social impact survey was found to be reliable and valid. However, it was also very long. We use a retrospective post- then pre-survey design, meaning participants respond twice to each statement in a single survey: once describing how they felt before their visits and once for how they felt after their visits. The Utah study survey included 104 statements. Based on feedback from survey respondents, we knew survey fatigue was a real issue, and we needed to resolve it for the national study. Using psychometric scale analysis, we ultimately reduced the survey to 48 indicator statements.

Where Are We Now?

At the time of this publication, MOMSI host museums are in the midst of welcoming their participating visitors to their museums. Visitors have through May 2022 to complete three visits to their respective museum. After completing their required visits, participants will take the social impact survey, which is administered by our project team. Preliminary results are expected in May 2022, with final results in August 2022.

After their findings are analyzed, each MOMSI host museum will receive a report of its social impact and will have time with our team to discuss how best to use the report and its findings. Through national conferences and publications, we will share aggregate data from all 38 host museums so that we as a museum field can begin to understand our collective impact.

Using data from the national study, the social impact survey again will be tested for reliability and validity. The survey will then become the foundation for a free and accessible social impact toolkit (expected in early 2023) for museums that will include guidelines for participant recruitment, sharing the survey with participants, and how to use the results; resources, including the survey and how to analyze the survey data; and tips for success. To create the toolkit, our team will work with staff from the host museums and reflect on our own lessons learned.



Although MOMSI has closed applications for host museums, we encourage you to follow the project’s progress at museumsocialimpact.org, chat with our team, and watch for presentations and workshops at national and regional conferences. We believe that all museums, big and small, should have the opportunity to measure their impact, and this research and subsequent toolkit can help museums to do this work.

Molly Brown House Museum in Colorado, a MOMSI participant, tells the story of Margaret “Molly” Brown, philanthropist, activist, and Titanic survivor.

Michelle Mileham, Ph.D., is a project manager of the Utah Division of Arts & Museums (UA&M); **Emily Johnson** is field services manager of UA&M; and **Stephen Ashton**, Ph.D., is director of audience research and evaluation at Thanksgiving Point in Lehi, Utah. The authors would like to thank Dr. Skyller Walkes of the Calaboose African American History Museum, who initiated their conversation about intercultural competence, and Nubia Peña, director of the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, who helped them improve the “valuing diverse communities” section of the survey.

TRIBUTES AND TRANSITIONS

New Jobs



Kathryn Wysocki Gunsch, Deputy Director, MIT Museum, Cambridge, MA



Erin McGough, Executive Director, Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA



Danielle T. Smereczynski, Chief Philanthropy Officer, Museum of the American Revolution, Philadelphia, PA



Joe Imholte, Executive Vice President, The Bakken Museum, Minneapolis, MN



Sam Moore, Executive Director, Moonshot Museum, Pittsburgh, PA



Casey Steadman, Director, The Wolfsonian—FIU, Miami, FL



Andrea Karnes, Chief Curator, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX



Emily Neff, The Kelso Director, San Antonio Museum of Art, TX



Jova Lynne, Director, Temple Contemporary at the Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Philadelphia, PA



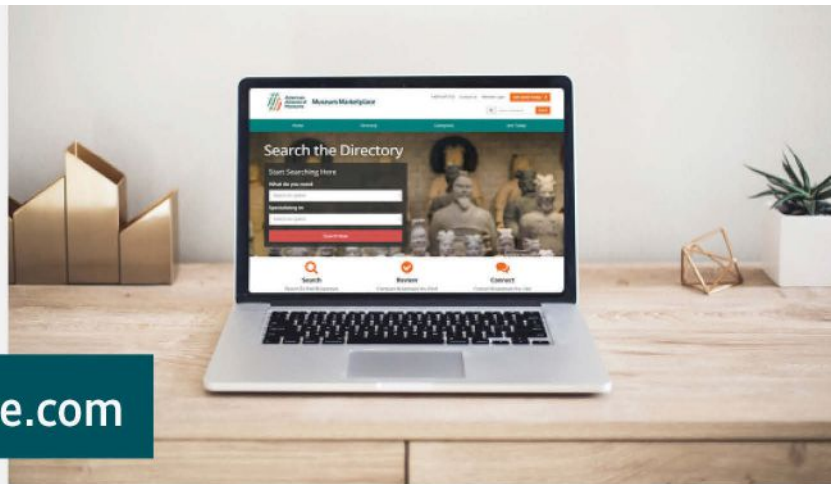
Brad Pritchett, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Dallas Museum of Art, TX

WHAT'S YOUR CAREER NEWS?

Tell us your news at bit.ly/CareerNewsAAM.

Choose from over 100 providers on

» MuseumMarketplace.com

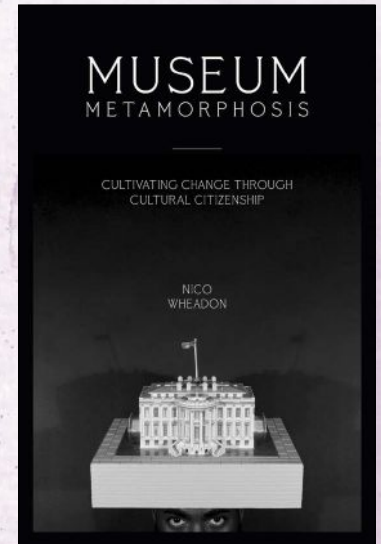
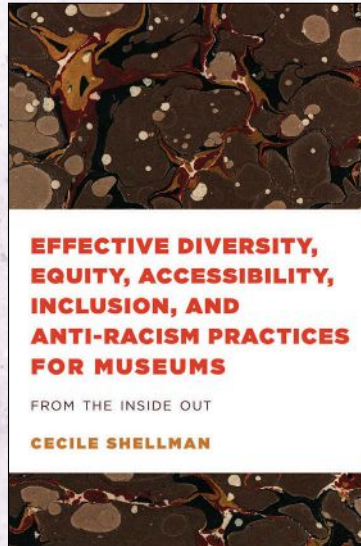
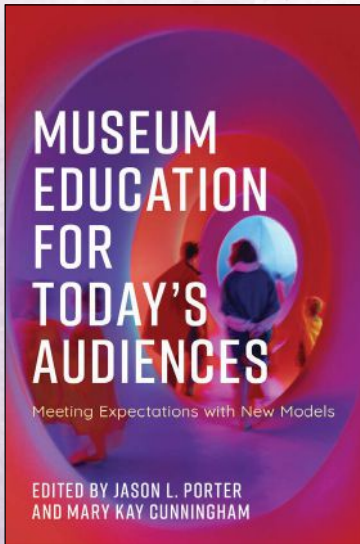


Head to a **one-stop-shop** to search companies that offer products and services to help museums operate smoothly. Search by location, or by dozens of categories—from design to displays, from sanitization to construction.



American Alliance of Museums

2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 1005
Arlington, VA 22202 | aam-us.org



NEW

MUSEUM EDUCATION FOR TODAY'S AUDIENCES

Meeting Expectations with New Models

Edited by Jason L. Porter and Mary Kay Cunningham

"This book lands at a critical moment in the history of museums in the United States. It is equal parts manifesto on the power and potential of museums who center community needs and interests, and handbook for the education staff who have championed and led this work for decades, and are now uniquely equipped to help reshape their organizations' relationship and value to communities." —*Kelly McKinley, CEO, Bay Area Discovery Museum*

Helps museum educators meet visitors' changing expectations, train and prepare responsive educators, and develop models for the future.

February 2022 • 336 pages
978-1-5381-4860-0 • \$49.00 • Paper
978-1-5381-4859-4 • \$115.00 • Cloth
978-1-5381-4861-7 • \$46.50 • eBook

NEW

EFFECTIVE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, AND ANTI-RACISM PRACTICES FOR MUSEUMS

From the Inside Out

By Cecile Shellman

"This book is a phenomenal resource for organizations working on DEI initiatives. Cecile highlights complex issues by sharing her deep experience from her work in the field while also providing a practical guide for institutions to work towards their goals. This is a wonderful pairing of knowledge and practice to create awareness and movement for institutions that desire to change." —*Chris Taylor, chief inclusion officer, Minnesota Historical Society*

Provides strategies for implementing change.

February 2022 • 130 pages
978-1-5381-5600-1 • \$34.00 • Paper
978-1-5381-5599-8 • \$80.00 • Cloth
978-1-5381-5601-8 • \$32.00 • eBook

NEW

MUSEUM METAMORPHOSIS

Cultivating Change Through Cultural Citizenship

By nico wheadon

"Written with intimacy and care, *Museum Metamorphosis* asks us to thoroughly consider all the aspects of change needed for museums to truly thrive. wheadon is a much-needed voice in efforts to reconstitute the museum for the future."

—*Miki Garcia, Director and Professor of Practice, Arizona State University Art Museum*

Offers tools to dismantle institutional hierarchies and reshape museums into more vital and relevant forms.

February 2022 • 260 pages
978-1-5381-3043-8 • \$41.00 • Paper
978-1-5381-3042-1 • \$105.00 • Cloth
978-1-5381-3044-5 • \$39.00 • eBook

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

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD



www.rowman.com | 800-462-6420

REFLECTION



Some live by *love thy neighbor as thyself*,
others by *first do no harm* or *take no more
than you need*. What if the mightiest word is love?

Love beyond martial, filial, national,
love that casts a widening pool of light,
love with no need to pre-empt grievance.

In today's sharp sparkle, ...
any thing can be made, any sentence begun.
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,

praise song for walking forward in that light.

Excerpted from the poem *Praise Song for the Day* by Elizabeth Alexander

© Brett Cook

smARTpower/Sharing Culture Collaborative Project was a series of workshops that included the collaborative creation of artifacts, celebrations, public art installations, and digital documentation to foster new connections and build community. Participants reflected on personal identity within their diverse and overlapping communities and created public artworks and community celebrations that expressed a variety of cultural and aesthetic positions.

Registration is open!
Save your place and
join us in Boston.

#AAM2022 STARTS WITH YOU



American
Alliance of
Museums

2022 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo

May 19–22 | Boston

Customize an #AAM2022 experience that's right for you by diving into the four key focus areas, getting hands-on with new session formats, reconnecting with colleagues at NeighborHubs, and more. **Register today!**

► annualmeeting.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

MUSEUM DISPLAY CASES

PRECISE GERMAN ENGINEERING - MADE IN USA



FRANK
SHOWCASE SYSTEMS