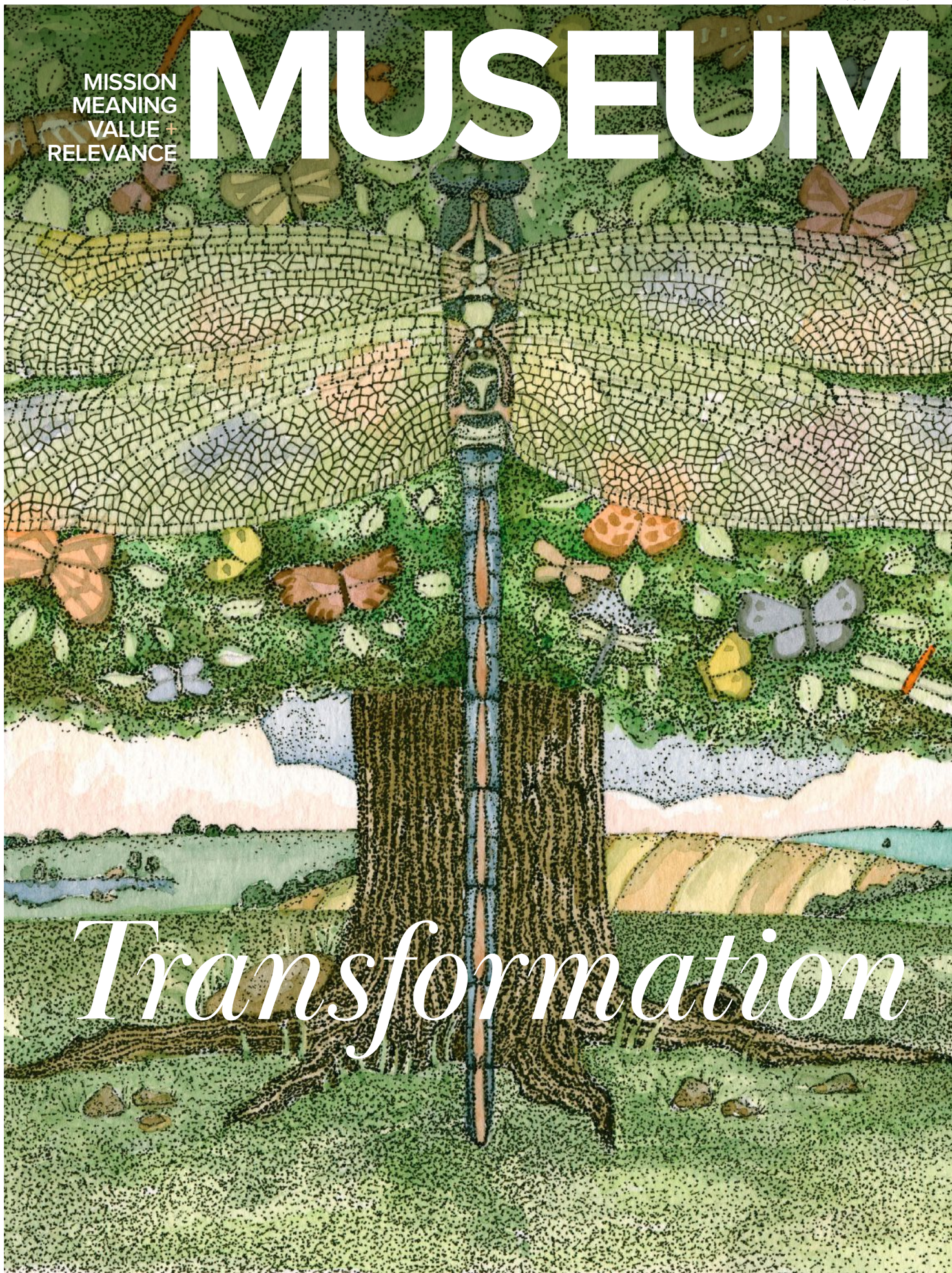


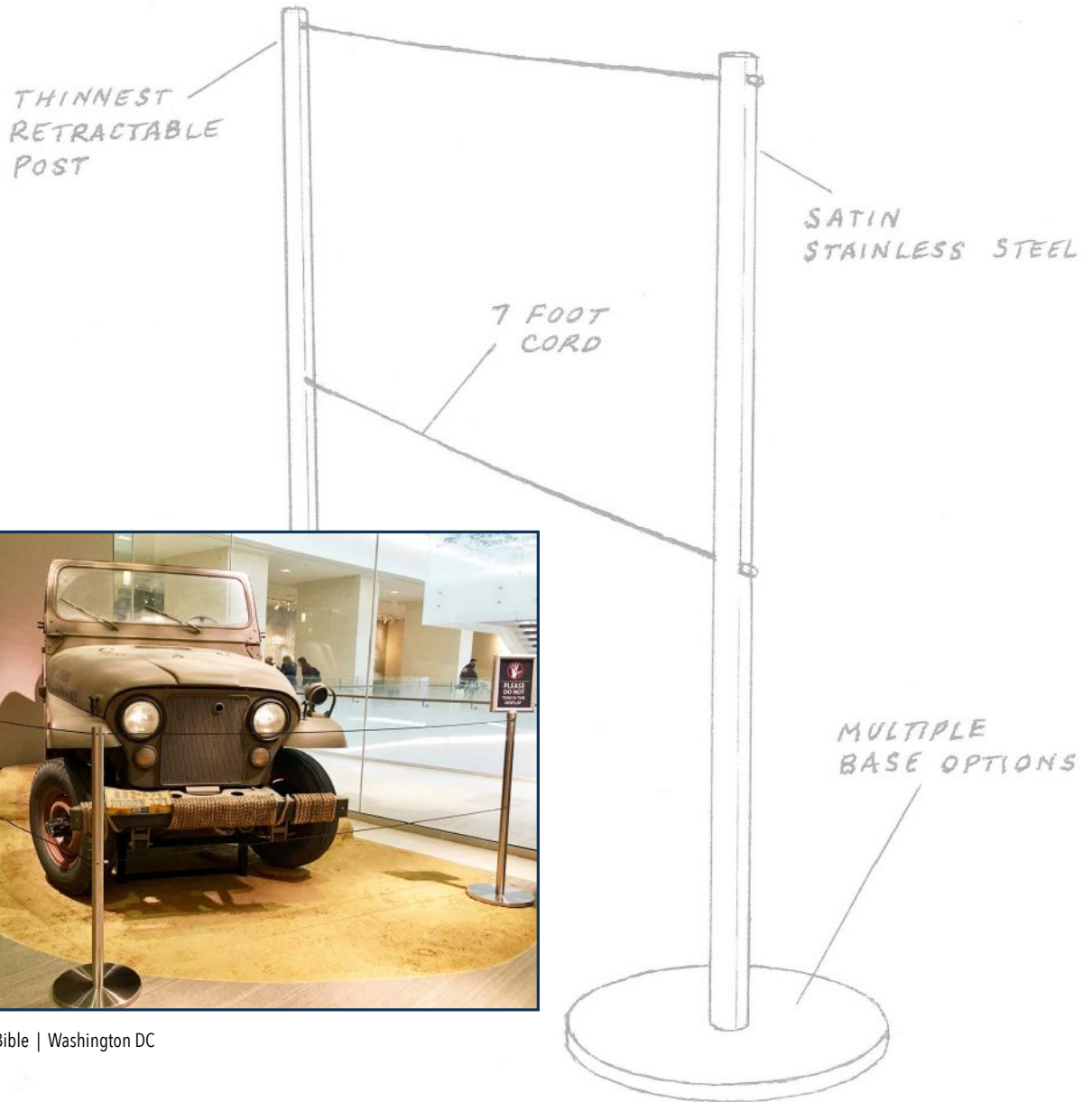
MISSION
MEANING
VALUE +
RELEVANCE

MUSEUM



Transformation

SEPARATING. SECURING. SHOWCASING.



The Museum of the Bible | Washington DC

Q-Cord™ retractable barriers have a clean, architectural look and feel that enhances whatever it showcases. Designed to exceed ADA requirements, the world's thinnest retractable system is easy to set up and arrange.

Flexible design options, handmade in the USA with stainless steel components, allow for positioning with either a freestanding or magnetic base, floor socket or screw-fixed floor plate.

ERCO



Light for artwork, indoors and outdoors.

Design exhibits with unparalleled power and flexibility from the gallery to the sculpture garden with ERCOs' Eclipse and Beamer^{New}. See for yourself the difference that our darklight lenses offer in making engaging visitors experiences with light by visiting us in booth 737 to learn more. Or join us for 'Accessibility and Light' on the ExpoFloor, Friday at 3:00p.

ERCO is a proud corporate sponsor of AAM 2022 and Friday's Keynote Presentation 'Big Global Trends' by Thomas Friedman.



Sponsor



MAY
JUNE
2022
ISSUE

CONTENTS



FEATURES

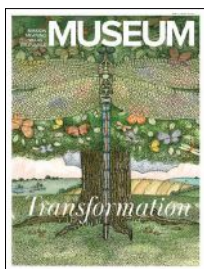
- 24** ENACTing New Voices
The Ohio History Connection is helping empower new Americans in their communities.
By Ben Anthony
- 30** Tearing Down Barriers
The Museum of Science, Boston is becoming more inclusive by pushing the boundaries of theater, technology, and art.
By James Monroe
- 36** Changing How They See
The Brooklyn Children's Museum is decolonizing its collection with the help of local teenagers.
By Kate Mirand Calleri
- 42** Bolstering Vaccine Confidence
Pensacola MESS Hall met the community where it was to demonstrate the power of herd immunity.
By Vida Mikalcus
- 48** Enriching Connections
The Smith Center is uncovering African American family stories and capturing community histories.
By Doretha K. Williams

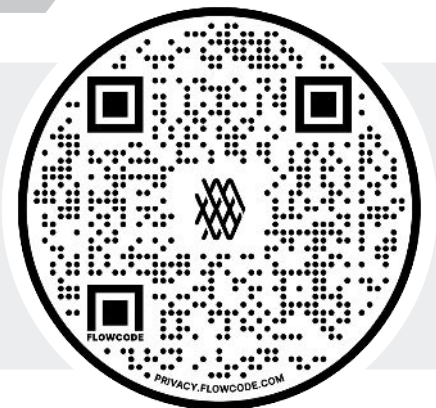
DEPARTMENTS

- 5** From the President and CEO
- 6** By the Numbers
- 8** First Look
- 12** Point of View
Understanding Next-Gen Funders
- 16** Resource Guide
- 54** Alliance in Action

Museum magazine serves as a forum for the museum community to share its ideas, perspectives, and experiences related to magazine themes. A call for submissions is held throughout the year. **For more information, visit** bit.ly/museumeditorial.

Cover:
© "Carrie Wild – Wildworks"





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

annualmeeting.aam-us.org

#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!**



MUSEUM

A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dean Phelus

MANAGING EDITOR

Gayle Bennett

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Ember Farber, Megan Lantz, Rachel Lee, Cecelia Walls

ALLIANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Chair (2020–2022)

Chevy Humphrey, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago

Treasurer (2021–2022)

Jorge Zamanillo, National Museum of the American Latino

Immediate Past Chair (2020–2022)

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

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 Reborra Barratt, Crystal Bridges Museum of Art

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Team of Creatives, LLC

ADVERTISING

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

ALLIANCE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Laura L. Lott

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

MUSEUM (ISSN 0027-4089)

MAY/JUNE 2022, VOLUME 101, NO. 3

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.



Coming Together Again

I recently boarded a plane to Seattle to do something I hadn't done for almost two years: attend an in-person museum conference.

Before the pandemic, I was on the road regularly visiting members and attending conferences every few weeks. For this one, though, I was as nervous as if it were my first. After such a long time of hunkering down, staying close to home, and (usually) enjoying the extra time with family, it felt like a huge step to be going across the country for a large gathering.

How would I handle the already nerve-inducing parts of conferences, which come less naturally to the introverted among us, on top of staying safe in the pandemic?

Once I made it to the meeting and started talking with people, I was more than glad I made the trip. For one thing, I realized I was far from alone in my anxiety. We had all been in our pandemic bubbles, enduring the pain and isolation of our historic times, not realizing how desperate we were to reconnect. Now that we could be together again, we could see just how shared this experience was and begin to talk optimistically about the future and what we had learned and hoped to gain from our challenges. We also got to rediscover the thrill of visiting a museum with other museum people, taking in all kinds of new sights, from a tour of the new Burke Museum and its inspiring decolonization efforts to dinner under the M-21 Blackbird in the Museum of Flight (a particular delight for a pilot like myself).

All in all, it turned out to be a rejuvenating experience, one that reminded me of how nice—and necessary—it can be to immerse yourself in in-person experiences and dialogues. It left me incredibly excited about AAM's own Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo in Boston on May 19-22. The AAM Annual Meeting will be a big Alliance reunion. For most of the thousands of people who will make the trip to Boston, the conference will be their first in-person industry event in two

years. I hope you will leave feeling as I did after Seattle: resilient, hopeful, and reenergized after a long period of isolation.

The AAM team has been working hard to design a thoughtfully planned meeting that takes full advantage of this pivotal moment. Museums are at a turning point where we must make foundational decisions for the next era of our field, both to navigate ongoing challenges with our operations and to seize on opportunities for reinvention to build a better future.

In that light, we've restructured this year's meeting into four thematic tracks representing the greatest priorities of the field in this moment: Museums in Society, Financial Wellness, Organizational Culture, and Innovation. To help the insights stick, we're emphasizing opportunities for interactive, collaborative experiences that will allow you to engage more deeply and reconnect with your peers. Also, recognizing that many people may be a little shaky in returning to an event, like I was, we're building a gentle on-ramp, with touches like longer breaks between sessions for processing and connecting.

One of the best parts of attending a conference, and one many of us have been sorely missing, is getting out of our everyday surroundings and seeing new and inspiring places. We're in Boston this year, a city with outstanding museums and vibrant and diverse neighborhoods. The Alliance members in Boston are generously opening their doors to host the field this year, as we rejoice in finally being able to come together again. I hope to see you there!

4/5/22



Laura Lott

Laura L. Lott is the Alliance's president and CEO. Follow Laura on Twitter at [@LottLaura](https://twitter.com/LottLaura).



Insuring the world's *Museums*

There is no substitute for experience when safeguarding your institution.

At Huntington T. Block Insurance Agency, we share your passion for art, culture, science, and history. For over 60 years, we have offered specialized products and services designed to insure your museum's collections, directors, employees, property, and liability exposures.

Visit Booth 1149

for a personal consultation
call 855.219.3189 or visit
HTBInsuresArt.com

Recognized by:



AON

Huntington T. Block Insurance Agency, Inc. is a licensed insurance producer in all states; Texas License # 17489; operating in CA under License # 0825502.

E-12013-0422

HTB

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA

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

EXHIBITION DESIGN:
CHRISTOPHER CHADBOURNE & ASSOCIATES
/ EISTERHOLD ASSOCIATES, INC.



Design and Production Incorporated

www.d-and-p.com

FIRST LOOK



Illinois State Museum

“Edgewise: Finding a Voice in a World Made for Men” amplifies the voices of formidable women and queer and nonbinary people who have found ways to get a word in edgewise in a male-centric society. The exhibition tells the stories of those Illinoisans who have made waves: artists, scientists, designers, teachers, homemakers, mothers, authors, performers, and dreamers.

Location: Springfield, IL

Dates: through Sept. 3

Learn more: illinoisstatemuseum.org/content/edgewise



Peabody Essex Museum

“On This Ground: Being and Belonging in America” brings together two collections of Native American and American art to celebrate artistic achievements across time, space, and worldviews. The 250 artworks on display, from 10,000 years ago to the present, demonstrate a range of voices, modes of expression, cultures, and media, including sculpture, paintings, textiles and costumes, furniture, decorative arts, works on paper, installations, video, and a re-envisioned period room.

Location: Salem, MA

Dates: through Jan. 3, 2027

Learn more: pem.org/exhibitions/on-this-ground-being-and-belonging-in-america

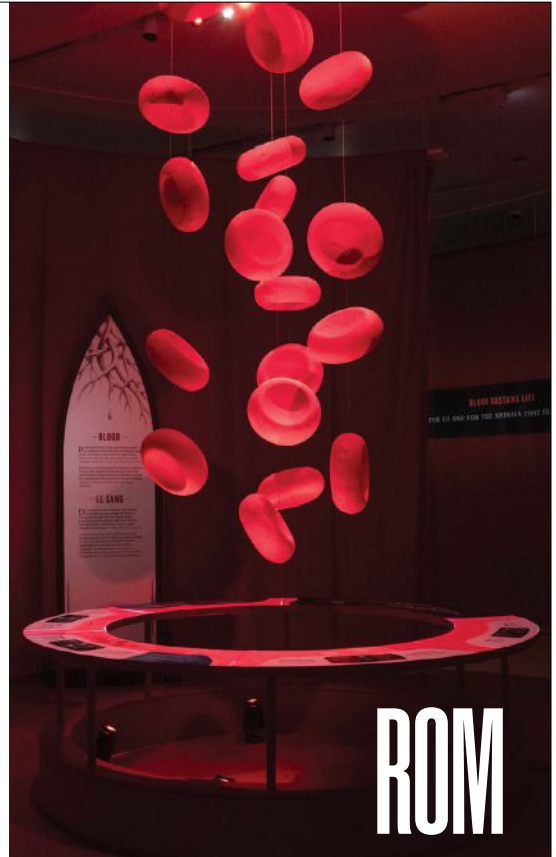
Sky Cubacub, Rebirth Garments, photo by Grace DuVal; Alan Michelson (Mohawk), Hanödagaryas (Town Destroyer), 2018 © Alan Michelson, courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum

Bloody fun for the whole family.

ROM's family-friendly,
award-winning exhibition
*Bloodsuckers: Legends
to Leeches* is now touring.

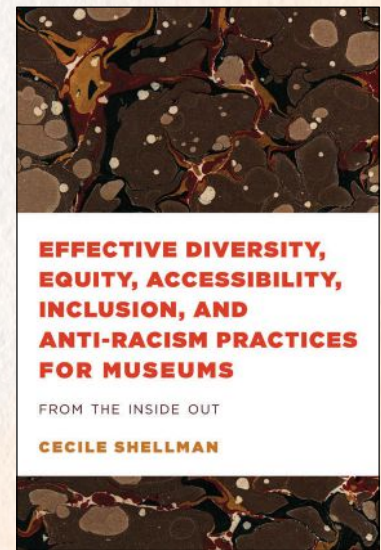
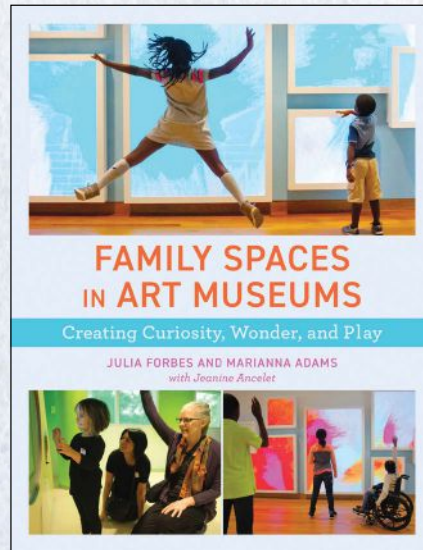
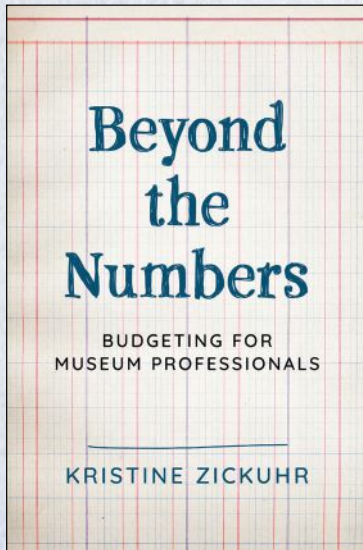
To learn more, email
travellingexh@rom.on.ca

ROM is an agency of the Government of Ontario.



ROM

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES FOR TODAY'S MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS



NEW

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Budgeting for Museum Professionals

By Kristine Zickuhr

"*Beyond the Numbers* offers a detailed and practical guide to the serious business of operational budgeting for museums with thoughtfulness and humor."

—*Ted Silberberg, Senior Principal, Market and Financial Planning, Lord Cultural Resources*

This book helps to make budgeting more approachable and is designed for individuals without a background in financial management.

April 2022 • 142 pages
978-1-5381-5639-1 • \$45.00 • Paper
978-1-5381-5638-4 • \$99.00 • Cloth
978-1-5381-5640-7 • \$42.50 • eBook

NEW

FAMILY SPACES IN ART MUSEUMS

Creating Curiosity, Wonder, and Play

By Julia Forbes and Marianna Adams
With Jeanine Ancelet

"This is not only an excellent roadmap for the design of art museums family spaces, but also provides a valuable perspective in general on how to think about and serve families in art museums. Furthermore some of the book's research findings help remind us that our presumptions about audience needs, behaviors, and motivations can sometimes be incorrect."

—*Kenneth R. Morris, Director, Department of Evaluation and Research, Detroit Institute of Arts*

2022 • 112 pages
978-1-5381-4885-3 • \$38.00 • Paper
978-1-5381-4884-6 • \$95.00 • Cloth
978-1-5381-4886-0 • \$36.00 • 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*

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

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

ROWMAN &
LITTLEFIELD



www.rowman.com | 800-462-6420

FIRST LOOK



Indiana State Museum

Half a century before Jackie Robinson integrated baseball, cyclist Marshall “Major” Taylor was breaking records and barriers. The interactive exhibition “Major Taylor: Fastest Cyclist in the World” takes visitors into the training room to learn how Taylor developed his speed and agility through a regimen of exercise and diet, reveals the pervasive racism that Taylor battled on and off the track, and shares how Taylor’s story has inspired a new generation of Black riders.

Location: Indianapolis, IN

Dates: through Oct. 23

Learn more: indianamuseum.org/experiences/major-taylor-fastest-cyclist-in-the-world/



Andalusia Farm

Andalusia Farm, home of American author Mary “Flannery” O’Connor, is now a National Historic Landmark, a designation carried by less than 3 percent of America’s historic sites. From 1946 to 1964, O’Connor was a novelist, essayist, and short-story writer and completed the bulk of her work at Andalusia from 1951 until her death in 1964. In August 2017, the site was gifted to O’Connor’s alma mater, Georgia College.

Location: Milledgeville, GA

Learn more: gcsu.edu/andalusia

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.

Courtesy of Indiana State Museum; Georgia College

RELATIVE SCALE

We create digital products and experiences.

relativescale.com





ZE3	NARROWEST SPOTLIGHT	120/277V
	4° Fixed Beam Angle	Up To 70,000 CBCP
	4 5/16" Diameter, 10 5/16" Length	COB, 15 Watts, 810 Lumens
<p>The latest expansion of the wildly versatile LX2044 Series is the ZE3 version. We've combined three powerful 4 degree spotlights into one clean, crisp package for unsurpassed optical performance, unleashing 70,000 CBCP of power. With the addition of various accessories, changing the beam from 4 degrees to wider distributions is as simple as adding a lens, making the LX2044 / COB / ZE3 Spotlight the most powerful tool in your gallery.</p>		
<p>Lighting Services Inc The premier specialty lighting manufacturer</p>		





Understanding Next-Gen Funders

How can museums thrive in the next era of private cultural philanthropy?

By Melissa Cowley Wolf



We are living in the era of impact. Amid a profound reckoning in society, we are reexamining what we value, whom we trust, and how we collaborate. The next era of philanthropy is being shaped by the individuals and organizations

spearheading new models for sustainable impact.

In this new landscape, we are seeing household giving decrease, student debt balloon, and trust in nonprofits—and institutions in general—dwindle. Studies by IMPACTS Experience show that the cultural sector is experiencing *negative substitution*, a globally occurring phenomenon wherein the number of people who profile as active visitors *leaving* the market outpaces the number of people who profile as active visitors *entering* the market. The need to grow our cultural audiences was critical even before the pandemic further changed earned-income and attendance patterns.

Simultaneously, we are experiencing the largest intergenerational wealth transfer in history: it is estimated that about \$60 trillion will be transferred over the next few decades. According to *A Look at Millennial Wealth* by WealthEngine and Coldwell Banker Global Luxury, there are over 600,000 millennial millionaires in the United States, and their wealth is expected to increase by almost 5 percent by

the end of this decade.

These heirs and new wealth creators represent a significant portion of the next era of cultural funders. This philosophically aligned cohort, a psychographic stretching across several age brackets and demographics, aims to create more equity and immense social impact through transformational giving. They are asking big questions: How can I drive progress in communities? How can I use my giving to solve global challenges? How can I create deeper and broader impact? How can I create more equitable and democratic systems?

It is more critical than ever to update our models to align with this next era of philanthropy. The arts sector must be open to fundamental change, and it must prove its social value and impact, meaning, and relevance. How the industry responds will determine if we survive and thrive.

The Trend Lines

When we launched Arts Funders Forum (AFF) in 2019, we were three months away from the largest global pandemic in a century.

However, as a media, research, convening, and advocacy platform dedicated to expanding private giving for the arts, we were already aware of three cultural truths that would have consequences during this period:

1. Arts giving is stagnant or decreasing, representing only 4 percent of total charitable giving.
2. In the midst of this massive wealth transfer, those inheriting the wealth do not consider the arts essential, and they prioritize giving to other sectors that better demonstrate their impact in driving social progress.
3. These heirs and new wealth creators increasingly see

philanthropy through a social justice lens—they prioritize advancing social, racial, and environmental justice; equity; and democracy.

Throughout the pandemic, citizens around the globe turned to art, music, and creativity to stay sane and safe. Some assumed that this renewed appreciation of the arts would turn into financial support. But there was obviously a disconnect, and the proof is in the numbers.

According to the 2021 edition of *Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy*, overall charitable giving in the US in 2020 broke records. In a year when every industry needed to make its case for survival, gifts from individuals,

corporations, bequests, and foundations totaled \$471.44 billion. But, while seven of the nine charitable sectors saw growth, giving to the arts, culture, and humanities sector (at \$19.47 billion in 2020) had an estimated year-over-year, inflation-adjusted decline of 8.6 percent. For another year, giving to the arts—a more than \$800 billion industry, representing over 4 percent of America's GDP—yet again remained stagnant at 4 percent of total American giving. This is staggering when you consider that arts and culture represent a greater portion of the economy than transportation, tourism, and agriculture.

AFF has found consensus among surveyed funders and cultural leaders alike that the sector

M&LF®

THE MUSEUM STOOL® A classic, in use in dozens of esteemed institutions

MandLF.com

Photo © Alan Karchmer



has not done a good job of articulating its social value to society. Arts and culture are considered, as one interviewee said, a “nice to have, not a must have”—a status thing, not a necessary thing. A slow-moving crisis for decades, the events of the past two years have obviously accelerated these trends. We are now confronting a rapidly increasing threat to the traditional cultural funding model.

During my 20 years as an arts fundraiser and a cultural philanthropy advisor, I have watched this generational change unfold. Heirs to the families that built or sustained arts institutions for decades express disinterest in continuing the legacy in a significant way. New wealth creators across age brackets tell me they do not think giving to the arts sector is a good investment. Why? They do not see how arts organizations are contributing to a better world, making a profound impact on their communities, or serving anyone but the elite.

New Ways of Working

This next era of donors and audiences wants to see profound change in the sector. It’s time to listen more deeply and collaborate to put their ideas into action. They want to give their treasure and their time by rolling up their sleeves and being involved in program creation. They want to use their professional, personal, and entrepreneurial skills to help institutions drive change in their communities. They largely do not care about lavish galas or seeing their names on the walls of

museum galleries or concert halls. This differentiates them from their predecessors and therefore changes how the sector must define its impact, tell its story, and engage new audiences to cultivate a more democratic base of support. Following are some best practices for making those changes.

Acutely listen to audiences.

Relationships do not work if they are one-sided. Listen to what your audiences are telling you about how to best serve them and drive impact. Meet the community where it is. Younger generations are used to their opinions being solicited, so create an atmosphere of co-authorship and collective visioning. Recognize that an institution is responsible to its largest group of stakeholders—its community.

Clarify the narrative by articulating the need and impact.

Younger audiences engage with organizations that represent their values and serve as drivers, catalysts, and resources to solve challenges. It is vital to position the arts institution as a *conduit to the cause*, clearly defining the need it is addressing. The mission *must* be authentically carried out by the program, and the program should have a measurable impact on communities. Evaluate, articulate, and demonstrate how you are driving change.

Redefine storytelling and tell stories honestly.

Who is telling the story is just as important as what the story is. Your audiences, ambassadors, and advocates can best describe how the organization makes an impact in the

community. Institutions need to empower communities and provide them with the tools to share their narratives.

Diversify your funding streams and cultivation practices.

Next-era philanthropists want alternatives to the traditional nonprofit model. Embrace practices such as impact investing; direct artist support pipelines; peer giving collectives; and social enterprise, which maximizes a museum’s social impact to more effectively partner with private (and public) investors. As funders think about gifts of real estate, time, and other forms of capital, offer them hands-on experiences with programs and communities to clarify what is needed to successfully drive long-term sustainability and impact.

Invest in community building.

Relevance in the 21st century is about driving impact and building communities. Period. Investing in communities, local arts ecosystems, and cultural practitioners through an interdisciplinary approach of cultural practice and social justice efforts will rally the cultural ecosystem and next-era donors alike and broaden support beyond traditionally engaged constituencies.

Double down on transparency.

We must make the industry more accessible and permeable. The art world is opaque and intimidating, and there is a perception that it is only for the elite. Nonprofits should communicate openly about funding models, programming decisions, board governance, and much more in order to solidify trust.

Foster holistic diversity and access. It is imperative that organizations engage in self-reflection and self-learning, required processes for change. Admit that you are striving to be better, even as you have setbacks. Be accountable to equity and diversity practices across the organization, from budget to programming to staffing. Take inventory of your endowed funds and prioritize ESG (environmental, social, and governance) values; next-era funders want to invest in organizations that themselves invest consciously with an eye to social and environmental justice.

Create more—and more effective—partnerships and collaborations across industries.

Partnerships across institutions, funding entities, and community networks leverage philanthropic possibilities and democratize the traditional base of supporters. Look outside the traditional models, apply for funding as a collective, create collective boards and ambassadorships, and leverage other institutions' strengths, communities, and audiences to drive greater impact.

As emerging philanthropic leaders begin to make era-defining decisions, bringing an increased focus on impact-driven models of investment, they can co-create a sustainable, equitable cultural sector that expands economic opportunity, heals communities,

strengthens democracy, and inspires creative solutions to global challenges. Work with them to do so.

Melissa Cowley Wolf is the founder of MCW Projects LLC, a consulting firm dedicated to expanding the next generation of cultural philanthropists, audiences, and advocates, and the director of the Arts Funders Forum (AFF), an advocacy, media, convening, and research platform designed to increase private support for the arts and develop new models of impact-driven financial support for the cultural sector.

LEE ALEXANDER McQUEEN RENDEZ-VOUS ANN RAY

Coming Soon

Barrett Barrera Projects to present a multi-city tour of our newest fashion and photography exhibition, **Lee Alexander McQueen & Ann Ray: Rendez-Vous**, featuring objects from one of the world's largest private collections of Alexander McQueen.

Barrett Barrera Projects

barrettbarrera.com



ERCO



Light for artwork, indoors and outdoors.

Design exhibits with unparalleled power and flexibility from the gallery to the sculpture garden with ERCOs' Eclipse and Beamer^{New}. See for yourself the difference that our darklight lenses offer in making engaging visitors experiences with light by visiting us in booth 737 to learn more. Or join us for 'Accessibility and Light' on the ExpoFloor, Friday at 3:00p.

ERCO is a proud corporate sponsor of AAM 2022 and Friday's Keynote Presentation 'Big Global Trends' by Thomas Friedman.



Sponsor





◀ National Museum of Military Vehicles, Puller Gallery

We build genuine human connections.

Museum master planning

Exhibit and graphic design

Interpretive planning and development

Visitor studies and evaluation

Interactive engineering and media

Fabrication and turnkey installation

roto.com

roto

MUSEUM QUALITY AIR



Clean+Green™
Dynamic®
V8
**AIR CLEANING
SYSTEM**

**ASHRAE guidelines for COVID-19 suggesting
MERV 13 or better air filtration makes the
Dynamic V8 Air Cleaning System an ideal
choice for existing buildings**

- Better IAQ with MERV 15 performance.
- Removes ultrafine particles, odors and VOCs, without ionizing or Ozone generation.
- Very low pressure drop enables retrofitting into HVAC systems not designed for high-efficiency air filtration.
- Highest dust holding capacity on the market (10 times higher than standard cartridge and bag filters).
- Extend filter change-out intervals from months to YEARS.
- 2/3 less fan energy than MERV 14 filters.



Dynamic®
Air Quality Solutions

The Science of Clean Air™

Visit DynamicAQS.com or ask us about a free Life Cycle Cost Analysis to find out how much you can save on fan energy and maintenance costs while improving the overall air quality in your building.

BEACON

DESIGN

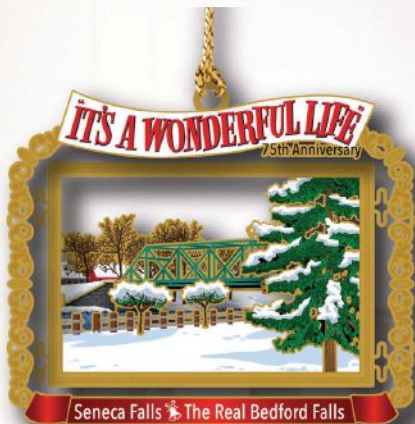
By ChemArt

The Finest Ornaments
Made in the U.S.A.

Let your visitors take a piece of the exhibit home with them!

Looking to increase fundraising efforts or drive revenue?
Create a custom keepsake that *honors your exhibit* or
museum, builds *annual collectors*, and *increases revenue*.

Come visit us at Booth #920 for 10% off!



"The White House Christmas ornament is a unique product of our Association. The ornament is itself historic, having been created and offered to the nation by us, in partnership with Beacon Design by ChemArt, for over 36 years.

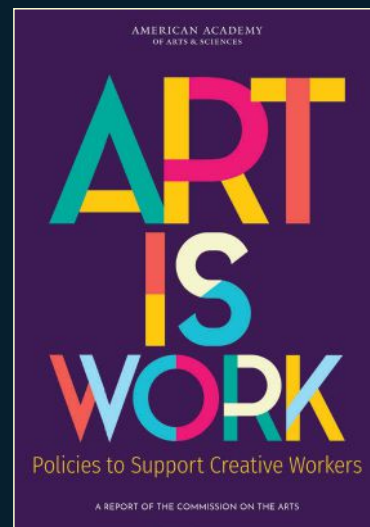
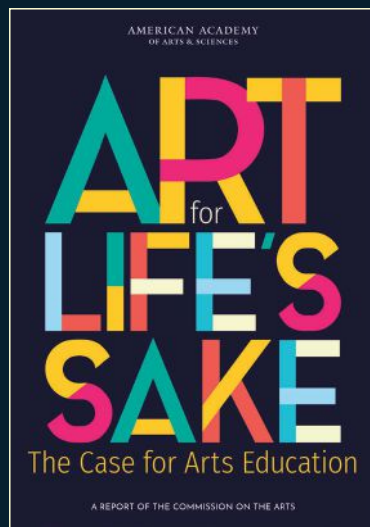
Over those years, the collectors of these beautiful ornaments have significantly contributed to the educational mission of this Association and helped fund the preservation of the interior of the White House and its fine and decorative arts – something all Americans can be proud to support."

- **Stewart McLaurin, President**
The White House Historical Association

ARTS

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCES

THE Academy's Commission on the Arts – led by John Lithgow, Deborah Rutter, and Natasha Trethewey, and in collaboration with **museum leaders** across the country – worked to understand, recognize, and support the essential role of the arts in America. The project resulted in policy reports with recommendations – one on **arts education**, one on the **creative workforce**. The Commission also developed a **multimedia art gallery** with contributions highlighting dance, music, storytelling, and more.



MIXTAPE

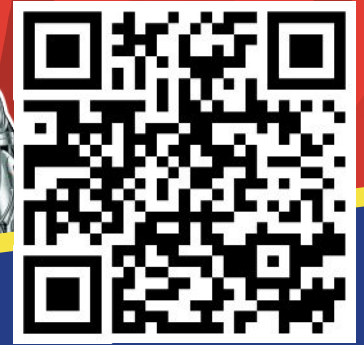
download reports | order free copies | explore the gallery

amacad.org/arts

STEP INTO OUR EXHIBITS

DC SUPER HEROES

DISCOVER YOUR SUPERPOWERS



Tour this exhibit!



JUSTICE LEAGUE and all related characters and elements
© &™ DC WB SHIELD. © &™ WBGL (S22)

Barbie

YOU CAN BE ANYTHING
THE EXPERIENCE

©2022 Mattel, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Tour this exhibit!

Disney Junior

DOC McStuffins

The Exhibit

© Disney



Tour this exhibit!

For rental information, visit Booth #954 or
contact: Sarah Myers, Director of Traveling Exhibits,
sarahm@childrensmuseum.org
childrensmuseum.org/about/traveling-exhibits

CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM
INDIANAPOLIS®

Men of Change-Power: Triumph, Truth, Shaunte Gates (b. 1979), [Dick Gregory]
Light/State Part 1: State, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.



Coming to AAM?
Visit us at Booth 755!

INSPIRATION

As only the Smithsonian can deliver, right to your community.

Visit sites.si.edu/historyandculture & sites.si.edu/science



Life in One Cubic Foot. Composite photo by David Littschwager, Steve Haddock, Karen Osborn and Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute



Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service
Smithsonian Affiliations

Download the Brochure



Has your museum changed a life today?

Traveling tactile exhibits created to serve blind, disabled, and sighted visitors with equality.

- Museum partnerships designed to enhance your traveling exhibits, increase revenue, and control upfront costs.
- 45 million historic and contemporary images available as tactile displays from the Getty Images collection.

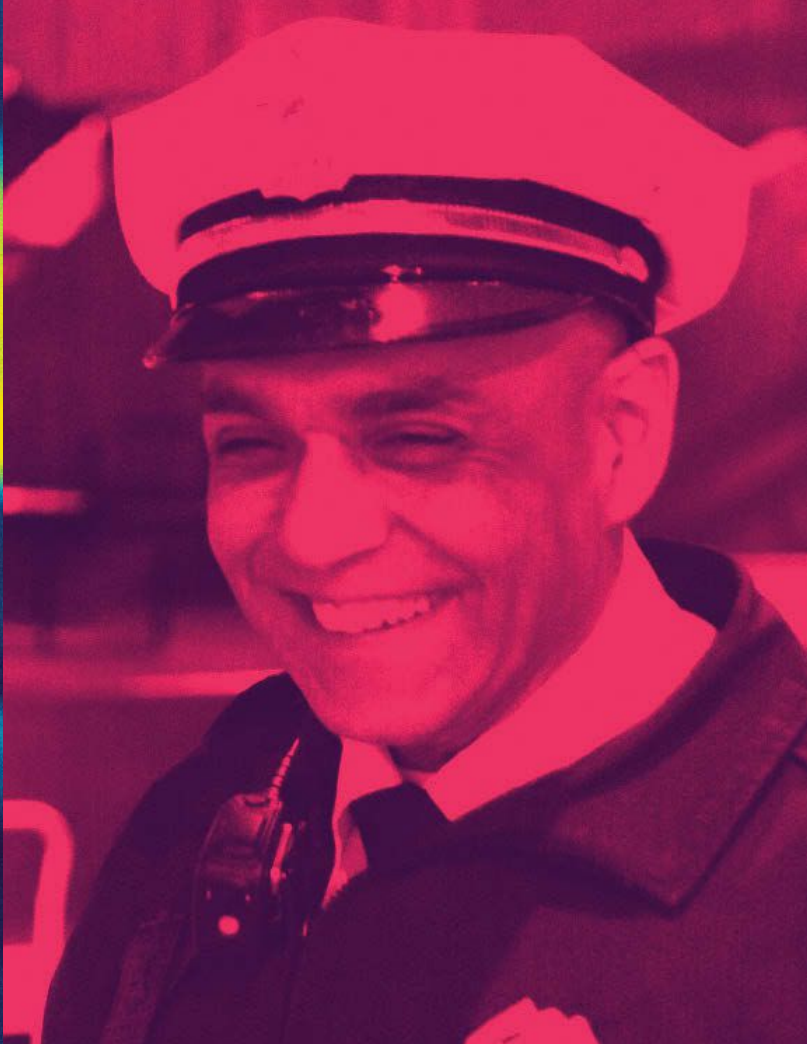
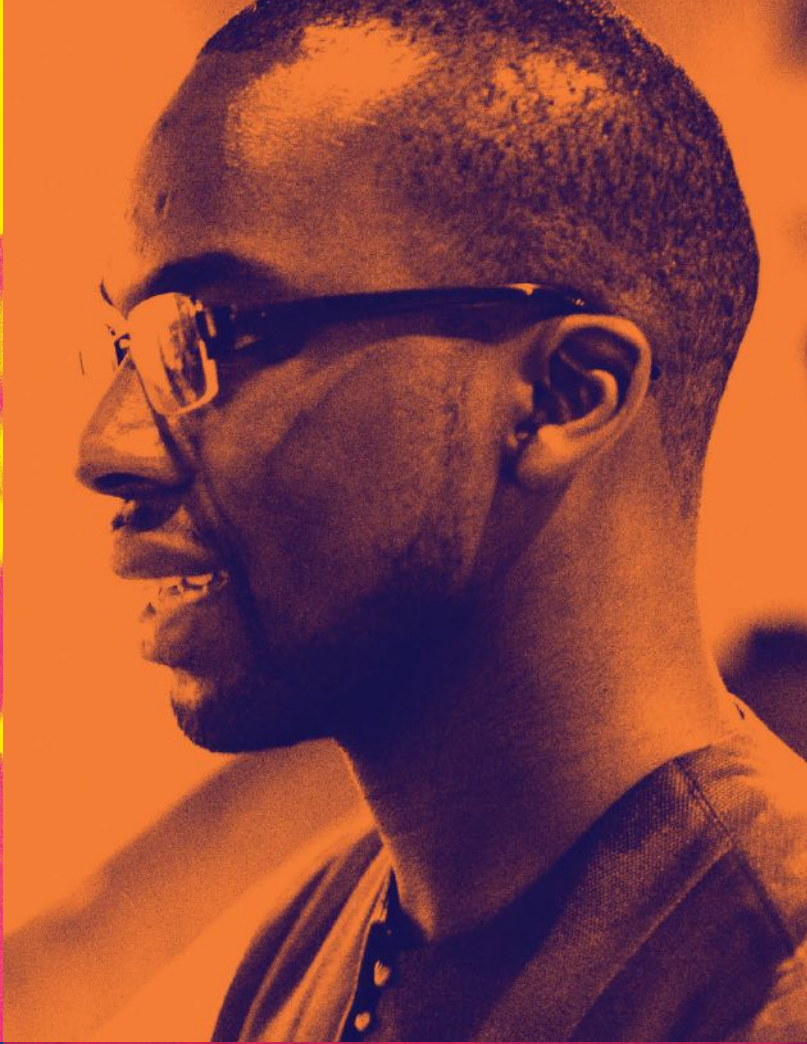
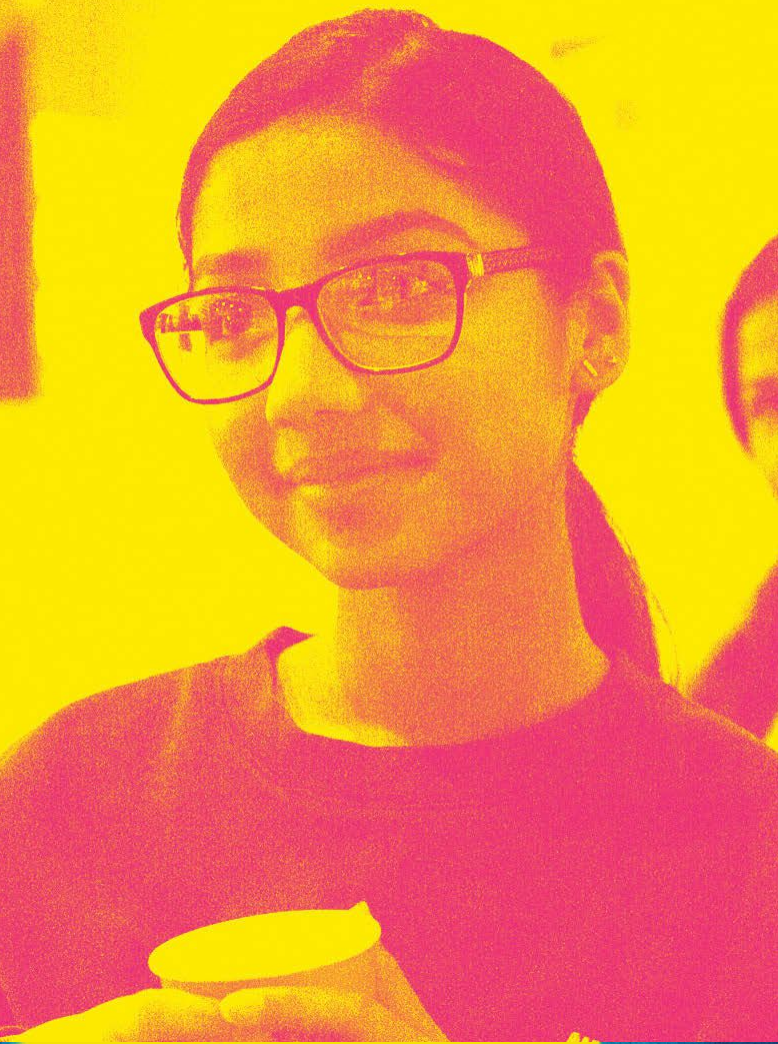


3DPHOTOWORKS

 tactileimages

 NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND
Live the life you want.

gettyimages®



Clockwise from top left: A proud ENACT Fellow's younger sibling; former ENACT Project Director Ibrahima Sow; Columbus Police Officer Khaled Bahgat; and ENACT Fellow Fardoos Mohamed.



ENACTing New Voices

The Ohio History Connection is linking emerging new American leaders with community resources, networks, and civic education to empower their communities.

By Ben Anthony

“Two community organizers walk into a museum ...” could be the opening to a pretty lame joke. But the “punchline” in this case was a new opportunity for the Ohio History Connection to serve immigrant and refugee Ohioans.

When the Ohio History Connection hired me and my former colleague, Ibrahima Sow, in 2017, we didn't have a background in museums or history. We came from the world of community organizing and politics. We both had experience building coalitions of everyday Ohioans, but we didn't know what lay before

us at a state history organization that includes the state historic preservation office, the official state archives, state history museum, and more than 55 sites and museums across Ohio. But we did know what brought us to the organization—a love of history and the power it has to uplift the stories of historically excluded people.

When Ibrahima and I arrived, the Ohio History Connection was already informally weaving community trust building into the museum's long-standing work. We simply brought new techniques and best practices from our previous roles. That new blend of

“I felt a sense of belonging talking with the other fellows during the events. ... It was interesting to see how many of us had identified similar needs within the communities we were working with. And that we all had similar experiences as new Americans/immigrants.”

—ENACT participant

ENACT Fellow Suja Khatiwada (foreground), with other supporting ENACT Fellows, at her and Khadendra Kadariya's WOKE Women's Leadership Advocacy Project, which is now a permanent social program at Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio.

perspective and passion would become the Emerging New American Community Team, or ENACT.

ENACT connects emerging new American leaders—including immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and first-generation Americans—with community resources, networks, and civic education so that they can build a base of knowledge that empowers them to become community advocates, increasing their sense of belonging in the larger metropolitan community.

How ENACT Started

Around the time that Ibrahima and I joined the Ohio History Connection staff, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) launched its Community Catalyst Initiative, which challenged libraries and museums to innovate in how they anchor the communities they serve. The Ohio History Connection team before us had begun to build connections with two new American service organizations in Columbus: Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS) and the Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio (BCCO). We had candid conversations with members of both organizations, and they each brought up how new American communities needed a voice in larger Columbus decision making.

Central Ohio and the city of Columbus are home to the largest population of immigrants and refugees in the state. Yet, at the time, they didn't have any elected representatives at the state, county, or city level. Central Ohio new Americans are chronically under-represented in the community thought-leader space as well, which includes nonprofit boards, neighborhood commissions, and other systems that make daily decisions on behalf of citizens. If you don't have a say in how your larger community operates, how can it ever feel like home?

Working with ETSS and BCCO, we created ENACT, a yearlong cohort of 15–20 emerging immigrant and refugee leaders—the ENACT Fellows. The



Suja Khatiwada/Ohio History Connection

first six months of the program focus on knowledge exchange workshops and networking, which inform the next six months of designing and implementing community advocacy projects. Examples of previous projects include a Bhutanese girls youth soccer team, art therapy and yoga for Eritrean youth, a financial literacy class for the Hispanic community, and active-play care packages for Congolese youth, to name a few of the nearly 20 projects launched in the first two ENACT cohorts.

Before you say it: I know, another leadership cohort. But ENACT is uniquely built for and by the immigrant and refugee community. Existing programs in the Columbus area had geographic, cost, or cultural barriers to participation. With ENACT, our community partners had an outsized influence in building something relevant, while Ibrahima and I brought our experience with community organizing; collective impact; and asset-based community development (ABCD), which inverts traditional community development practices focused on what is “missing” from historically underserved and excluded communities, and instead embraces the many strengths and assets already existing in a community. (See “Principles of ABCD” sidebar on p. 28.)

How ENACT Works

Ensuring that ENACT Fellows have access to the full breadth of Central Ohio community institutions and resources requires intentional coordination with partners across the region. That is why each ENACT cohort begins by building the planning committee. These are our closest core partners that oversee the cohort from start to finish. We have been honored to have ETSS, the BCCO, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Columbus Public Health, the Ohio State University College of Social Work, YMCA of Central Ohio, and Welcoming Cities serve as planning committee members across the first two cohorts.

For each yearlong cohort, the Ohio History Connection assembles partners for the planning committee, and the planning committee recruits and oversees the cohort. Since it is essential to center the voices of the new American community, we include two to three grassroots, immigrant, and refugee service organizations on the planning committee.



From left to right: Ohio History Connection leaders Anthony Gibbs and Ben Garcia speak with ENACT Planning Committee members Andrea Villanueva and Sharon Ware.

From there, we will add two to three larger community-serving institutions as well. That mix of both large community institutions (e.g., Columbus Metropolitan Library, Columbus Public Health, YMCA, Ohio State University College of Social Work, etc.) and smaller, on-the-ground immigrant and refugee organizations (e.g., BCCO, ETSS, Latinos Unidos, etc.) provides stability given ever-changing community landscapes while still centering the voices of new Americans in decision making.

Many of the program’s best evolutions have come from the planning committees, including making the entire ENACT program trauma informed. The immigration, refugee, and asylum process can be incredibly traumatic, and we would never want to retraumatize those we hope to empower.

Once the planning committee is established, the members outline the topics for six knowledge exchange and networking workshops. The only required topic is

RESOURCES

Interested in running your own ENACT program or want to know more? Check out ohiohistory.org/ENACT for the original logic model, an ABCD Resident Power Ladder, videos of fellows, and ways to connect with the program.

“ENACT changed my life. It changed the way I view the world, and it taught me to speak up for what I believe in. It has been super impactful, and I will never forget what I learned at ENACT.”

—ENACT participant

civic engagement. Otherwise, we want the community leaders on the planning committee to define the focus areas for each new cohort. This allows ENACT to remain adaptive and receptive to an individual community’s needs and challenges at any particular moment.

PRINCIPLES OF ABCD

Asset-based community development (ABCD) challenges those who want to improve a community (whether geographically, identity, or affinity based) to “start with what’s strong, not what’s wrong.” Too often, we view historically excluded or underserved communities from a lens of what they don’t have without recognizing the incredible existing assets that if connected, equipped, and empowered can overcome challenges that those in traditional community development would say only an outside actor could take on.

There are six kinds of community assets:

Individuals

Associations (informal groups, such as book or garden clubs)

Institutions (formal community organizations, such as nonprofits, religious organizations, or government)

Physical space

Exchange (local businesses)

Culture/stories/history (museums, storytellers, artists, etc.)

Workshop topics have included public health, libraries/information navigation, parks and recreation, public safety, housing, transportation, and education.

Once those topics are outlined, collective impact again becomes crucial. We connect with community institutions and organizations that have subject matter expertise in the topic area to lead the workshops. However, these are not traditional one-way workshops but interactions that include time for dialogue.

The fellows come into the program with incredible community knowledge and insight, which can help these civic institutions better serve Central Ohio new Americans. Additionally, to deliver as much of a “whole community” perspective as possible, each workshop typically utilizes two different partners: the “big” community institution with broad oversight for the topic area in the community as well as a smaller organization that assists at the grassroots level. For example, a housing workshop included the participation of the city attorney’s Code Enforcement Office as well as Habitat for Humanity.

As the partners begin building the workshops, the planning committee starts recruiting fellows. Rather than doing a public solicitation, the planning committee organizations nominate 15 to 20 ENACT Fellows. We trust our partners to elevate those in their communities who are actively engaged in service or leadership—the Ohioans who are already trying to make their communities a better place.

ABCD teaches us that the community is home to the vast majority of assets needed for a community to flourish, we just need to trust and uplift those people. I am continually humbled and impressed by the fellows’ talent, skill, and passion.

Feedback from the fellows also helps continually improve ENACT. We send out short, “pulse check” surveys after each monthly workshop to ensure that the fellows are gaining relevant knowledge that helps support their advocacy projects. Based on such feedback, we’ve worked with our partners to include more dialogue with the fellows in the workshops.

Fellows are allowed to team up if they want to build an advocacy project addressing similar community needs. We work with them on project planning, basic tenets of ABCD, and budgeting to help them build their projects for impact either in the short or long term. A great example is Tika Adhikari’s advocacy project, Empowering Women without Blaming the Past. Women in the Bhutanese refugee community can feel isolated, which the COVID-19 pandemic made even worse. Tika utilized her assets as a trusted convener and created a virtual women’s group where participants could share about their families, jobs, successes, or challenges. The group heard from mental health professionals and representatives of other community resources, but most importantly, they built their own informal network of refugee women with similar lived experiences to connect, share, and build resiliency.

Looking Ahead

As ENACT matures, we continue to direct as many resources to the fellows as possible. They receive stipends for participation and to help implement their advocacy projects. If we aren’t handing off as much power and dollars as possible to the people and communities we hope to impact, then what’s the point? The Resident Power Ladder, an ABCD evaluative tool, demonstrates how we try to shift that power to fellows throughout each cohort’s year, tracking fellows’ movement from recipients of information to information sources, advisors to community partners, and, ultimately, leaders.

Hosting the closing ceremony is always a bittersweet moment for me. Seeing a cohort of fellows depart ready to take on the next challenge is exactly what we hope for, but we miss their passion and dedication. The closing ceremony gathers ENACT’s entire community of families, partners, and community leaders. We want the community to share



ENACT Fellows, their family members, and community partners listen as former ENACT Project Director Ibrahimia Sow welcomes the new cohort.

in the fellows’ incredible work, but the event is also one last chance for the fellows to strengthen their network and hopefully find their seat at a decision-making table.

The ENACT model is designed to be iterative. For ENACT to succeed, it needs to build coalitions of different partners who discuss different topics and recruit different fellows so that the program can shift and flex with ever-changing communities. We are currently running a cohort in Dayton, Ohio, and are planning on launching another in Central Ohio focused on more intentionally addressing social determinants of health in new American communities. I am immensely proud that a former ENACT Fellow, Sofialyn Durusan, now runs those programs.

We believe ENACT is a tool for museums, libraries, and community institutions to more equitably serve their communities. When we empower immigrant and refugee voices in Ohio and across the country, we build more inclusive, resilient, empathic, and successful communities. Trust me, I’ve seen it firsthand.

Ben Anthony is the manager of the Community Engagement Department at the Ohio History Connection.

Genie Santiago
headlining her
Inner Space album
release in the
Charles Hayden
Planetarium at the
Museum of Science,
Boston.



Tearing Down Barriers

With “SubSpace,” the Museum of Science, Boston is creating a more inclusive environment by pushing the boundaries of theater, technology, and art.

By James Monroe

“What does this have to do with science?”

“This has nothing to do with STEM. Why is a science museum hosting this event?”

“I’m disgusted by the museum in hosting events like this; my child should not be subjected to ‘woke’ programming—we’ll be ending our membership.”

It is not uncommon for the Adult Programs and Theater Experiences team at the Museum of Science, Boston to field such responses to “SubSpace,” its award-winning, after-hours public programming series. Expressing themselves through post-program surveys, negative commentary on social media ads, or responses to our email campaigns, these detractors find the tone of these events “provocative.” They say “SubSpace” is inappropriate informal science education.

Such outcries drive us to continue this work, go against the conventional science programming, and open our building and platforms to more diverse and dynamic partnerships. This work makes some traditional audiences uncomfortable; however, it's vital in designing an inclusive future for our museum.

Historically, only a select few have been invited to participate in conversations around science and technology at science museums like ours. Our institution was founded on traditional viewpoints and strategies that left behind, left out, and often erased the contributions of most marginalized adult communities and voices. By limiting our focus to traditional hard science fields, leaving out social science conversations, refusing to acknowledge the systemic racism that permeates the scientific and medical fields, and consistently reinforcing a divide between arts and sciences, we have built barriers around our institutions that have discouraged, ignored, and intimidated too many of our local communities from seeing us as the communal, convening spaces we intend to be.

The Museum of Science, Boston is one of the world's largest science centers and one of New England's most attended cultural institutions, reaching nearly 5 million users a year on-site, in classrooms, and through virtual exhibits, programs, and curricula. Our mission is to inspire a lifelong love of science in everyone by making science accessible, engaging, and relevant. But to accomplish this, we must vigilantly establish an inclusive environment that allows everyone to feel seen, welcome, and valued. "SubSpace," after-hours programming for adults that has included headlining symposiums, live podcast tapings, performance art installations, and more, is one way we are attempting to do that.

RESOURCES

"Recapping the View from Inside—Pandemic as Portal: Exploring the In-between" by Angela Perrone, Katherine Miller, and Rachel Ginsberg
bit.ly/2Gsmh8F

"Designing for Now: The Implications of 'Going Online'" by Rachel Ginsberg
bit.ly/3jJUD5e

Creating the (Sub)Space

The "SubSpace" brand, launched in 2017, was developed to utilize the museum's immersive theater spaces as accessible, live performance venues for artists in Boston. Once daytime programming ended, these spaces would sit dormant, so our team proposed using them as safe spaces for local artistic communities to experiment, elevating their performances and pushing the boundaries of theater, technology, and art.

In the beginning, every Thursday evening new artists and their audiences walked through the doors of the museum for experiences they were guaranteed not to get anywhere else in the city. Hip-hop artists, theater-makers, eGamers, and drag performers drew sold-out audiences and transformed the planetarium into an exciting nightlife venue in the unexpected form of a science museum.

This experimental ethos began to filter out to "SubSpace" programming across the museum. Large-scale gaming installations inspired by the immigration process took over our halls; live podcast tapings ingrained in the queer experience in America were staged in our auditorium; and dance, comedy, and performance art were used to explore astrophysics, engineering, and more. The faces and voices on our stages were changing to reflect the diversity of our city, creating new access points for marginalized audiences to participate in, shape, and lead conversations.

However, questions remained: How committed were we to opening the proverbial table at the Museum of Science? Was this entertainment-based work just a fleeting PR opportunity to increase attendance and revenue? These were valid inquiries given our selective history as a 192-year-old organization.

Strengthening Relationships

"SubSpace" programs are built on two main pillars: consistently welcoming new communities of adult audiences to the museum and, perhaps more significantly, reshaping the perception of how a science institution can play a relevant role in the lives of every adult in every community.

In this work, it has been vital for us to let go of the notion that a museum's role is to be the "experts," instead embracing our role as "conveners." Our

programming provides opportunities to bring together diverse populations to share their work in ways that are relevant and authentic to their own communities.

The museum then takes an intentional backseat, helping to facilitate these conversations, performances, and experiences so they resonate with the audiences they are intended and designed to engage. How could we assume to speak authentically to communities we have never specifically designed programming for in the past?

Therefore, community partnerships and collaborations are the crux of our work. Any success the Museum of Science has achieved thus far in engaging “nontraditional” audiences is ultimately due to these partners, who have listened to our long-term intentions, agreed to work with us, and trusted us with their message. They have held us accountable along the way, challenging us to look inward at how we have perpetuated these barriers and acknowledge the triggers that still exist within our institution. Before we could begin to create an inclusive space, we needed to understand the internal work we needed, and continue, to do.

Working side-by-side with our community partners, we have slowly started breaking down decades of barriers. We are now opening our building and resources to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+, and non-science-minded audiences, among others, changing the landscape of who can and should engage with science today.

Understanding Differences


In the summer of 2020, we could no longer ignore the need to start dismantling the systemic racism that exists within our industry and history. We launched an ongoing series of antiracism programming that aimed to amplify luminaries and local antiracist voices and work, convene celebrations of BIPOC joy and shared experience, and offer opportunities for our white audiences to educate themselves on the need to end racism and understand the vital role we all play in that work. To do this authentically, we let go of the programmatic reins and made room for community partners to steer this work with us; as an all-white-identifying team, these are not our stories to tell.



Featured performer
Algo in the Charles
Hayden Planetarium.

Professor Ibram X. Kendi joined us for a conversation centered on his groundbreaking book, *How to Be an Antiracist*. We welcomed Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson for a keynote on her bestselling book, *Caste*. Science reporter Angela Saini and Professor Osagie Obasogie discussed and dissected the insidious history of race science. Author Pragma Agarwal took audiences on a deep dive into our unconscious biases.

However, it is our local community partners who have truly led in reshaping the future of the museum.



Coleslaw, a Boston drag performer and Coleslaw's Corner series co-producer, performing in the Charles Hayden Planetarium.

Zakiyyah, a classically trained singer, actor, and political activist, brought her recent production *Shades of Black* to the stages of the Museum of Science as a call to decolonize not only ourselves but our peer institutions and explored the role museums play in deconstructing systemic racism. Keith Mascoll, actor, founder of the Triggered Project, and co-creator and co-host of *Living a Triggered Life Podcast*, explored the role trauma and mental health play in our relationships, advocating for self-care within Black communities using art. Genie Santiago, a singer, poet, and visual artist, is elevating the technologically driven, immersive medium of the planetarium through her live performances, drawing upon her experiences as a poor, queer Latina and survivor of sexual abuse. Ana Masacote and Yvette Modestin co-created the multimodal virtual production *ReRooted*, presented by The HairStory Project, a groundbreaking examination of current beauty standards and the importance of hair as more than just a style for Black and Latinx communities. These are just a few of the many local talents we have had the honor of amplifying over recent “SubSpace” seasons.

Looking Ahead

Gone are the days when public programming needed to be one-size-fits-all. We need to design programming that speaks directly to and for those who have been historically marginalized. We should not avoid creating and producing this work because we fear alienating our traditional audiences.

As we challenge the traditions of our institutions, it is inevitable that some will be uncomfortable. We see these moments as opportunities for people to sit in the discomfort, learn and understand their own biases, and hopefully grow and discover how they can promote inclusivity within their own lives. Even though some have stopped engaging with our programming altogether, we have gained more than we have lost by committing to this work and can confidently say we are working toward becoming a museum that represents everyone.

There is no blueprint for us in curating programming lineups, but the most significant piece of advice we can offer is to not be afraid to experiment or push against traditional museum programming. Don't be deterred by adverse reactions from the vocal minority

who may disagree with this redesigned role, purpose, and presence of a science or cultural institution at the intersection of community and society.

While this article opened with some of the push-back we've faced, the positive response and results have far outweighed the negative.

"I am glad to see that our museums are taking the issues of racism seriously and beginning to make some changes. White supremacy affects every part of our society. We need to keep identifying it and realize its pervasiveness at every level."

"This program welcomes communities of color to the institutional space of a museum via action instead of just words. This anti-colonial concert and conversation set the tone for our entry, and followed through with centering our people in the art."

"I found this program to be especially valuable because the speakers were people of color working through trauma while also working hard at their careers and marriages. As married, African-American professionals, my husband and I (both in attendance at this podcast taping) appreciated the Museum of Science's efforts to be inclusive. Please keep this up! We would love to attend future events that are put on by people of color and greatly impact our community."

We have seen tremendous growth in our attendance over the past five years, including a 12 percent increase in those who engaged with the museum for the first time through "SubSpace" programming. And we have more than doubled our BIPOC-identifying audiences from 2017 to 2021. It's clear public awareness is shifting around the social value of the museum's adult programming for Greater Boston.

We believe public programming will continue to be an essential tool for cultural institutions to reach new communities in authentic and meaningful ways; however, we still have a lot of work ahead of us to establish ourselves as an inclusive space that represents all adults. Hopefully, one day the question won't be "What does this have to do with science?" but rather "What took so long?"

HOW TO EXPERIMENT WITH TRADITIONAL SCIENCE PROGRAMMING

The Museum of Science, Boston believes that the role, purpose, and presence of cultural institutions should be redesigned to lie at the intersection of community and society. Here's our advice for starting that journey.

- Let go of traditional notions that a museum's role is to be the "experts" and embrace the more expansive view of our role as "conveners." Take an intentional backseat to community partners.
- Seek out community partners to listen to long-term intentions, hold your institution accountable, and work side-by-side to begin the long work of breaking down decades of barriers.
- Explore new financial models to create accessible and equitable space for community partners and audiences by eliminating fiscal barriers. We are fortunate to have strong funding support for "SubSpace," including Science Sandbox, an initiative of the Simons Foundation, whose support made our antiracism series possible and free for audiences. Another important model has been ticket revenue splits for our performance-based work. We share expenses with artists and split the ticket revenue 50-50.
- Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all programming. Design experiences that speak directly to and for marginalized audiences. Don't be deterred by a fear of alienating traditional audiences.

James Monroe is the producer of Adult Programs and Theater Experiences at the Museum of Science, Boston.



Clara, a teen participant in the Rapid Response Collecting Taskforce (RRCT) initiative, holding one of the signs collected from the March for our Lives Protest, NYC in 2018.



Changing How They See

The Brooklyn Children's Museum is decolonizing its collection with the help of local teenagers.

By Kate Mirand Calleri

You can't use a Snapchat filter on taxidermy. The algorithm doesn't recognize the glass eyes and animal faces. Our teenage collections interns at the Brooklyn Children's Museum learned that the hard way, one of many lessons, from humorous to serious, that they absorbed as they helped the museum rethink its collection.

Brooklyn Children's Museum (BCM) is the world's first children's museum, founded in 1899. Like most museums of its age, the collection was mostly acquired in the pre-internet days as a means to introduce Brooklynite children to other people and places. Objects brought to BCM, mostly by wealthy white donors, were a way to catalog the exotic "other" they saw on their overseas holidays. At times, visitors from our community did not see their own lives or experiences reflected in the objects on display. By 2016, our collection was ripe for reinterpretation and decolonization.

We have done this in two ways: through the Rapid Response Collecting Taskforce (RRCT) initiative of 2017–2019 and our current Teen Curators Program. Both programs, which have included between 10 and 20 teenage participants per semester, have focused on honest discussions based on the following core questions: How is history presented? Who makes the decisions about presentation and representation? Who holds the power?

RRCT grappled with the in-perpetuity nature and the history of the museum collection object, while the Teen Curators Program engages with more temporal questions about curatorial intuition and the power of community members temporarily loaning the museum objects for a show. The Teen Curators Program is about the present and extends the museum into the teens' own lives and communities by empowering them to become their families' own archivists. RRCT was about engaging with the collection and the history that's already at the museum. For both programs, the end goal is decolonizing our collection and the practices that ground it.

Addressing Critical Questions

Launched in 2017, RRCT engaged our interns in rapid-response collecting, which is when curators and members of the collection department actively seek out objects they believe have immediate cultural value or are connected to an event or specific need for the collection. The program was born from a collaboration between our teen program, then overseen by artist and educator Oasa DuVerney, and the collection, which I manage.

This program was an organic response to the teens' discussions about why a museum has objects and why it might value some over others. These critical

questions, combined with our reading of a *New York Times* article about the National Museum of African American History and Culture's own rapid-response collecting initiatives, led to the creation of RRCT.

Teens in the program were empowered to select objects for BCM's collection that would be preserved in perpetuity and to add narratives they deemed important. They identified broad themes that mattered to them and those they found to be underrepresented or nonexistent in the collection, such as criminal justice, immigration, LGBTQ+ rights, racism, gentrification, propaganda/fake news, voting rights, and feminism.

"We went into the community and collected objects with stories that we felt not only held personal importance but also political, social, and economic importance in which to accession into BCM's collection to be preserved and remembered for years to come," says former RRCT intern Clara Youens, now a student at SUNY Stony Brook.

Teens would bring in an object that represented something important to them. Following the points laid out in the manifesto the teens created (see "Words

to Collect By" sidebar on p. 41), the group would decide if the object should be accessioned into the collection. Once the object had been thoroughly discussed and voted on, the teen who brought it in would assign it an accession number and partner with someone else to write down the object's provenance and registrarial information. This information was added to the object database and the collection's historical record.

Teens sometimes reacted to events they saw in the news. For instance, in 2018 they organized museum-wide participation in the NYC March for Our Lives protest related to gun violence. They collected participants' signs and ephemera and interviewed them for the accessioning information. They also accessioned the suit then-City Council Member Jumaane D. Williams wore when he was arrested for peacefully protesting the deportation of immigration lawyer Ravi Ragbir in 2018.

"It was extremely humbling to be asked to share these items with Brooklyn Children's Museum and with the young people of the Brooklyn community," said Williams, who is now New York City's public advocate, in 2018. "This was never my intention, but it's incredibly gratifying to think that the actions that I and other protesters took could educate and inspire future leaders to stand up for what they know to be right in the face of adversity."

Through RRCT, our teen interns learned curation and collection skills as they documented history in real time. Most important, they participated in remodeling an institutional power structure. Their work will make our collection a more relevant and inclusive resource, not only today, but for future generations of children and families.

"Being part of RRCT wasn't just my first exposure to collections work, it was my first major experience working at a museum," says former RRCT teen intern Joshua N. Miller, who went on to graduate from Goucher College and intern at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. "I'd always been passionate about history, but being entrusted to collect objects that speak about the experience of young people around Brooklyn was an immense show of faith. It inspired me to go above and beyond the task then and motivates me to provide a similar opportunity for future historians now."

Teen interns in the BCM collection storeroom pose with RRCT objects.





Developing a Curatorial Voice

In the hot summer months of 2021, BCM's Teen Program Coordinator Omololu Babatunde and I launched the Teen Curators Program. This nine-week program focuses on personal and community narratives as interns record their own oral histories, temporarily loan personal objects to the exhibitions they curate, and develop their own curatorial voices.

The program has two core pedagogical parts. The first offers a historical foundation about how museums came into being. Workshop lessons cover museum terminology and the different roles within a museum, and we invite members of our staff to talk

Seventeen-year-old Jessica, a Teen Curators Program intern, curated and interpreted her personal objects for display at BCM.

about how they approach their jobs. From the start, we ground the conversation in a colonial/decolonization framework.

We use BCM as a case study for larger conversations about collecting—what is meaningful enough to be preserved and why, the history of museums, what

EYE ON THE FUTURE

Over the past few years, our staff has learned a great deal both about how to begin decolonizing a collection and how to bring teenagers directly into our work. Here are a few of the highlights.

- BCM's collection should be educational rather than preservation focused. Our primary goal has always been to serve our community, which is why including teens in the decolonization process has been so successful. A preservation-oriented collection can still take on this work if staff trusts young people to be mature enough to understand the generational implications of collections work, to see themselves as part of this larger process, and to interact with collection spaces with respect and dignity, as a museum professional would.
- The registrarial processes, and even the paperwork that is the foundation for a museum's collection, are incredibly important. These things should be transparent and can be woven into a museum's entire educational approach and outlook. When your audience understands how and why you operate the way you do, their feedback can help change how you view the collection.
- What is important to teens is important to the community. Ask your teens what's important to them. Are their answers currently represented in your collection? Whether they are or aren't, this conversation starter can inform why and what you can do to ensure the teens, and by extension the rest of your community, are represented in your collection.



Former New York City Council Member Jumaane D. Williams's suit, accessioned as part of the RRCT, shows the mud from his arrest during a protest in 2018.

it means to tell stories with objects, and the inherent power dynamics embedded in managing a collection.

For example, in one lesson teens investigate objects from a donor who traveled the world as a Christian missionary, amassing a substantial object collection of mainly West African and South Asian instruments, adornments, textiles, masks, and everyday objects and some 10,000 slide images. In 1984 he donated everything to BCM, and many of these items still have their original donor tags attached, which show how this donor viewed these cultures and their material objects as “other.” No matter the culture, the objects were labeled “Primitive, Exotic”—an explicitly white, Western, colonial view of the world.

When our teens physically explore these objects and their tags, they start to understand larger issues in an accessible and tangible way. They reach their own conclusions about the individual objects and the donor’s intention. They can then consider the life of the object, from its place of origin and the hands that created it to its current home at BCM. We use our collection for hands-on education, exposing what is typically made invisible or edited.

Part two of the curriculum can be summarized as “Where do we go from here?” After the foundational structure of the first part of the program, the teens, through an approach grounded in socio-emotional reflection and their own intuition, create art. In doing so, they position their voices at the center of what it means to create. They decide their own narratives and, most important, how those narratives are shared with others. As opposed to RRCT’s “objects in perpetuity” that were accessioned into BCM’s collection, the Teen Curator Program emphasizes the temporality of the teens’ own experiences. They narrate and analyze what’s happening now rather than preserve an image to look back on.

In this part of the curriculum, the teens learn how to conduct oral histories by interviewing a neighbor

or family member for at least 20 minutes. While this prompt initially elicits groans, many teens find this active collection work empowering. The interviewees—immigrants, younger siblings, grandparents—feel validated by the conversations, not only because they are conducted in the name of BCM’s collection but also because they receive records of their conversations.

We also give the teens a chance to temporarily lend their own to the rotating gallery cases in an exhibit called “BK Voices.” The teens write their own object interpretation, which allows them to hone their curatorial voices while maintaining ownership of their objects and their narratives. They show only what they want to show as opposed to what the museum or the curator wants to show.

Finally, to bring our goal of decolonization beyond the museum’s walls, teens transform words and phrases from the oral recordings they collect into flyers, which they post around the neighborhood on lampposts, at bus stops, and in train stations. This allows them to influence their own communities and serves as a call and response between the museum and the community.

We have measured the success of both programs through their retention rates, each of which reached 95 percent. We also hold one-on-one check-ins with the teens to ask them about how they’re feeling both in the program and generally in their lives, emphasizing that their time at BCM is meant to be socio-emotionally supportive. For the Teen Curators Program, an outside evaluator surveys the teens at the end of each semester, noting any constructive criticism that we can use to improve the next semester’s program. For example, we now focus less on article and text readings and more on hands-on work.

Statistics aside, our strongest measure of success comes from our direct dialogue with the teens. If they tell us that our programs have changed their lives in any way, then we believe they are successful. One fall semester intern, Mathew, age 16, provided this simple feedback: “It has changed how I see.”

Kate Mirand Calleri is curator and manager of collections interpretation at Brooklyn Children’s Museum in New York.



The 36th Annual National Night Out Against Crime flyer, taken off of a street lamp in front of BCM, was added to the collection by the RRCT.

WORDS TO COLLECT BY

The first cohort of Rapid Response Collecting Taskforce (RRCT) teens created the following manifesto, which functioned as collection management policy for all RRCT work.

We are the Rapid Response Collecting Taskforce (RRCT). RRCT is a collective Taskforce by and for the youth. We will venture into our community, engage with it and collect objects we deem important.

We have the power to make these objects permanent artifacts within the BCM collection: not only will these objects remain at BCM, but our impact will remain for future generations to see.

We will enhance people’s lives with knowledge and access.

Our presence does not signify the complete solution to this institution’s biases; more than documenting what present society has deemed important to see, we will decolonize what is taught and learned and shed light on social justice issues that go with and without proper media coverage.

We believe in placing people before objects. While objects are crucial to represent the community and stories of it, above all, we aim to preserve the personal narratives that went into creating said objects. Not only will the objects be researched thoroughly, but the human perspective that sparked their origins will also be recorded.

We demand time to practice our skills of analysis.

We demand funding and visibility for RRCT.

We demand to hold the people in power accountable for their biases.

We have the power.



Bolstering Vaccine Confidence

Pensacola MESS Hall met the community where it was to demonstrate the power of herd immunity.

By Vida Mikalcus

The *Communities for Immunity* initiative launched at a critical moment during the pandemic. With the rollout of the vaccine, the initiative sought to help US museums, libraries, and tribal organizations leverage their role as trusted community partners to build vaccine confidence in their communities.

A total of 91 museums, libraries, and tribal organizations received \$1.6 million in two rounds of funding—with awards ranging from \$1,500 to \$100,000—to bolster vaccine confidence at the local level. From bringing vaccine clinics to underrepresented communities to combating misinformation and explaining the science behind the vaccines, this work showcases the humanity, ingenuity, and heart that exists in these museums, libraries, and tribal organizations.

Pensacola MESS Hall, a hands-on science museum located on the panhandle of Florida, received first-round funding from *Communities for Immunity*. The museum, which has six staff members, ventured beyond their usual outreach events to take the science of herd immunity directly to their community members.

A Different Kind of Event

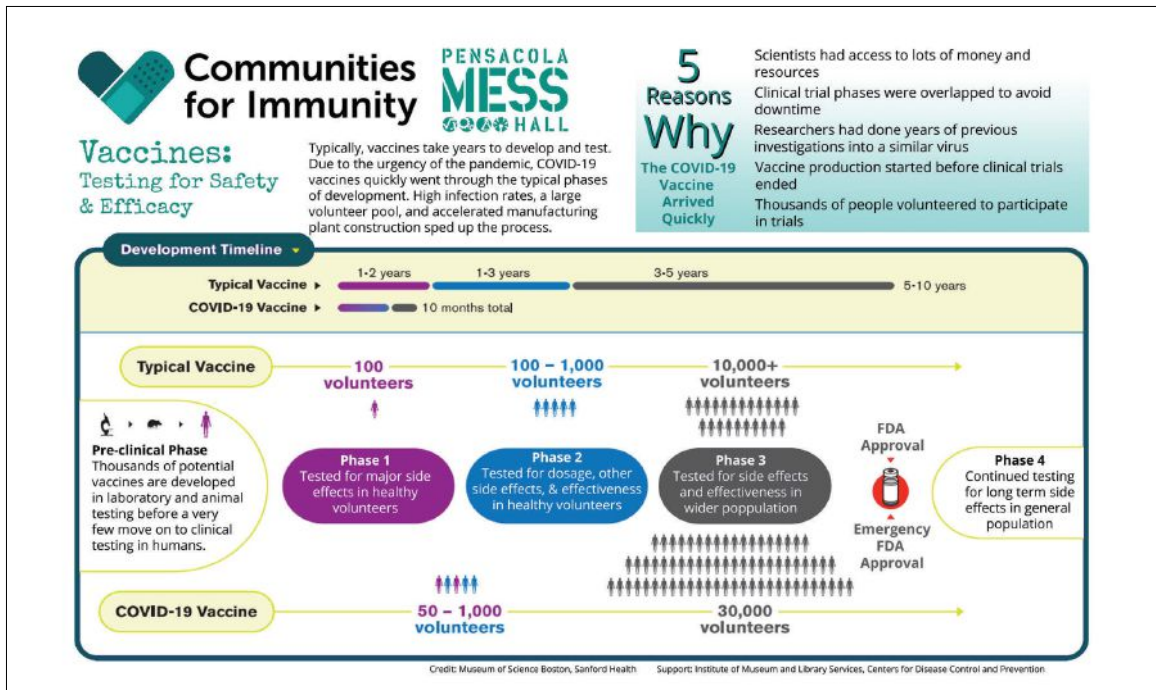
When Megan Pratt, founder and executive director of Pensacola MESS Hall, and Sarabeth Gordon, the

museum's education director, went to their board with the idea of participating in *Communities for Immunity*, they were met with apprehension.

Community outreach was nothing out of the ordinary at MESS Hall. In the busy summer season, two full-time staffers attend around 75 outreach events, delivering science performances to crowds that sometimes exceed a hundred children and adults. They field dozens of questions about MESS (which stands for mathematics, engineering, science, and stuff), answering them with “rapid science,” quick and straightforward explanations to FAQs on topics ranging from probability and gravity to black holes and seashells, in an effort to create a science-literate community.

But this outreach proposal was a bit different. They wanted to set up a booth six times at four venues where people weren't necessarily looking for a science demonstration: a seafood festival; the Soul Bowl, a youth football, soul food, and public safety festival at a local stadium; a health event at the mall; and three times at Gallery Night Pensacola, a popular event where the city closes the main street to motor vehicle traffic and lifts open-container laws.

How would the public respond to talk about COVID-19 and vaccines when all they wanted to do was have a good time and temporarily forget how a



Resources shared through vetted government agencies like IMLS and the CDC enabled the creation of flyers used during events as visual prompts and distributed on social media and throughout the community.



virus upended the world's economy and claimed so many lives? COVID-19 and the vaccines came with emotional baggage, and some people would be drinking alcohol. "What if someone got violent?" the board asked. "Don't worry," Pratt told her board, dismissing their concerns with a wave of the hand, "Sarabeth is a black belt. She's got us covered."

"Truthfully, we never felt physically scared," Pratt says. "But there were nights that were especially exhausting." This outreach wasn't the performance to a crowd they were used to. Instead, they were talking to up to 350 people individually.

When Pratt and Gordon applied for *Communities for Immunity* in August 2021, only 38 percent of the county had received at least one dose of the vaccine. Their target audience would be the 15 percent who identified as vaccine hesitant (not the vaccine resistant). Every sentence they said was tactfully crafted. Comments like, "So you're pro-vaccine?" had a planned response of "We are here to share the science behind the vaccine so that you are better informed and able to make a decision."

PARTNERS IN SCIENCE

Communities for Immunity is an initiative of the Association of Science and Technology Centers; Institute of Museum and Library Services; American Alliance of Museums; and the Network of the National Library of Medicine; with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and in collaboration with the American Library Association; the Association of African American Museums; the Association of Children's Museums; the Association for Rural and Small Libraries; the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums; and the Urban Libraries Council.



During Gallery Night Pensacola, Sarabeth Gordon, education director at Pensacola MESS Hall, leads children through activities that explain how they can help contain the spread of germs through simple things like handwashing.

While their intention was to build vaccine confidence, that’s not what they spoke about, at least not directly. Instead, they explained herd immunity using a kid’s toy as a prop.

The Basics of Science Communication

Like many museums worldwide, MESS Hall was hit hard by the pandemic. In the summer of 2020, to celebrate the 1970 founding of the EPA, they planned an exhibition showcasing 50 years of environmentalism, but the pandemic changed those plans.

MESS Hall had experience addressing controversial topics. They planned to broach the concept of anthropogenic climate change with something every person could agree on: building dams impacts the environment. “You don’t lead with controversy,” Gordon says about the basics of science communication. “You

don’t start with a challenge. You start with something everyone agrees on.

“With public health, *everyone* agrees on handwashing. So that’s how we approached Pop Its.” Pratt and Gordon used Pop Its, a simple fidget toy akin to bubble wrap, as an interactive game to educate people about herd immunity in an innocuous way while showcasing how disease spreads. The “pops” in the Pop Its represented individuals in the general populace. Once “infected,” adjacent pops are infected or spared based on their color (vaccination status).



Find vaccine confidence resources at communitiesforimmunity.org.



Sarabeth Gordon leads guests at a health event at a local mall in Pensacola through the Pop Its, which demonstrate how vaccines impact herd immunity.

Pratt and Gordon knew they had to make these topics as approachable as possible. “It’s cool to have nice and shiny equipment, sleek tech things, but it’s just easier to teach herd immunity with some colored dots on a kid’s fidget toy,” Gordon says. “We’re trying to teach them about the changing nature of science to build a mental model.” Those models are the beginning steps to seeing science as a process rather than a series of facts.

Another rudimentary tool Pratt and Gordon use in aiding scientific thinking in children and adults is an opaque Mystery Tube: a simple PVC pipe with four or five shower loofas wired through it. You pull one loofa and a different one moves—usually the one you wouldn’t have expected. The Mystery Tube helps people define a problem, make observations, form a hypothesis, conduct an experiment, and draw conclusions—the basic steps of the scientific process.

In these demonstrations, Pratt and Gordon waited for those *aha* moments—when a person’s face changes after figuring something out on their own. In that instant, they are *doing* science. Pratt isn’t shy about telling people they aren’t scientists—she openly corrects caregivers and teachers when they congratulate 7-year-olds on becoming a scientist. “We can’t let

people think that anyone who breathes is a scientist. They can think like a scientist and do science, but they are not scientists ... yet.

“I don’t understand immunology. I don’t know how all of it works, but I have learned to put my faith in experts,” continues Pratt, who has a Ph.D. in neurobiology from Harvard University. “People want to understand, but most can’t. This is too big. There are so many moving parts. But with the Pop Its and the Mystery Tube, they get to discover the science themselves. They own that knowledge because they found it.”

Pratt and Gordon can report the number of people they have talked to (approximately 800), but their impact will take a little longer to quantify. With 91 institutions producing qualitative and quantitative reports, the *Communities for Immunity* assessment team is currently working through that data, identifying patterns and strategies that prove effective in building vaccine confidence.

But Pratt and Gordon could see glimmers of their impact in the many detailed conversations they had with community members. For example, they recall a military service member,

who was vaccinated because of a mandate, starting to imagine a virus spreading through a carrier or submarine or at one of the five military bases in the Pensacola, like it did on the Pop Its game he was holding.

They hope they changed some minds, equipped the vaccine confident with talking points to address questions and misinformation from vaccine-hesitant friends and family, and inspired people to be curious, ask questions, and pursue knowledge so that down the road, they can help others make better-informed decisions.

Confronting Controversy

Pratt and Gordon applied for *Communities for Immunity* on behalf of MESS Hall because they felt compelled to. “It’s so hard not to be able to do something when you know there are things that can be done,” Gordon says. “This was our chance to do something for our community that would have a positive effect—and dip our museum toe a little further into dealing with controversial topics.”

While science performances elicit somewhat predictable reactions, having individual conversations with hundreds of people presented so many more variables: impulsive reactions, quotes of misinformation, conflicts between family members visiting the booth. “Those nights were especially exhausting,” Pratt says. “It’s so tiring but so fulfilling at the same time.”

Having at least two people at the events was a requirement, as it is for any MESS Hall outreach event. There’s even an established post-event wind-down process. As Pratt and Gordon packed up the *Communities for Immunity* booths and walked back to their vehicles, they would debrief about what went wrong, what went right, what they should try next time.

It’s important to have somebody you can talk to and just say, ‘That was crap’ or ‘That was good,’” Pratt says, acknowledging that much of their success comes from the trust held among the team.

When children and adults enter the museum, the MESS Hall team greets them with a Mess Kit so visitors can immediately start playing with hands-on activities or experiments. It’s how the museum sparks curiosity and gets its audience to begin to

think critically about the scientific process. These activities and exhibitions build a knowledge base that helps visitors see science and its advancement as an iterative process. That was also the goal during the *Communities for Immunity* demonstrations.

It’s why MESS Hall stepped out from its usual outreach event, targeting audiences that may not necessarily visit their museum. “A lot of people disagreed with us about the science behind the vaccine,” Gordon says, “but a lot of them took our card. Some will come through our doors later. In that case, we’ve done something. We got them curious.”

This public health disaster won’t be the last one humanity faces, but as trusted community partners, museums can create safe spaces to tackle these societal challenges. While the staff at Pensacola MESS Hall may not see their impact on COVID-19 firsthand, they have sown seeds for their community to experience a better, healthier future.

Vida Mikalcus is the marketing and communications coordinator at the American Alliance for Museums.



Communities for Immunity

Museums and Libraries as Trusted Community Partners

communitiesforimmunity.org

Enriching Connections

The Robert F. Smith Center for the Digitization and Curation of African American History is uncovering family stories and capturing community histories.

By Doretha K. Williams

With heavy exhaustion, Mr. Gray gently set down the cloudy plastic tub filled with memories. He gathered the bins and boxes years ago after his parents had passed away and their house sold. When he heard about the Community Curation event at the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library in Denver, he packed everything in his truck and made his way to the Five Points neighborhood.

He reached into the bin of pictures, certificates, and receipts and lifted out a fragile bundle of letters pressed together and bound tightly with twine. After patiently and painstakingly peeling one letter from the

other, he gasped. Recognizing the gem he had found, he smiled and looked at us.

“I found my parents’ love letters. From the war!” he said. With a click of a camera shutter, another memory captured. We were all still and quiet, letting him absorb the moment.

Perfect penmanship graced the envelopes. With his permission, we quickly scanned the letters. The longing radiates from the page. She heavy heartedly awaits his return.

Mr. Gray, now in his 70s, was engrossed in the conversations pressed into paper more than 60 years

Miss Howard Ann Kendrick of Chicago looks over family photographs before her still image digitization appointment in Chicago, where the Robert F. Smith Center for the Digitization and Curation of African American History offered free digitization services in September 2019.



By bringing digitization services to diverse communities across the country and creating a unique online platform, the Community Curation Program supports the preservation and sharing of community history and culture.



ago. I wondered if he was experiencing a piece of his parents lives he never encountered before. Were his mother's descriptions of the rambunctious children accurate, humorous?

This is but one example of the Community Curation Program in action. Operated by the Robert F. Smith Center for the Digitization and Curation of African American History, the program seeks the voices that bring energy to historic places and paths, the joy found in generations of family stories, the aromas of that one dish prepared with the same vegetables and herbs for the past 100 years, an understanding of why and how neighborhoods emerged.

The Smith Center serves as the burgeoning digital humanities and public history forum for the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). Rooted in community collaboration, accessibility of collections and histories, continuing education, and genealogical support for institutional and community partners, the Smith Center is expanding NMAAHC's reach.

RESOURCES

Smith Center
nmaahc.si.edu/explore/museum-centers/center-digitization-and-curation-african-american-history

Community Curation Platform
communitycuration.org/home/defaultLanding

Family History Center
nmaahc.si.edu/explore/museum-centers/digitization-curation-african-american-history/family-history

Capturing Lives and Stories

Over the past four years, the Smith Center's Community Curation Program (CCP) has brought NMAAHC's digitization services to communities and institutions to capture the lives and stories of people representing all regions and walks of life, including those who may not have the opportunity to visit the museum.

The first sites selected for community curation were five cities with historic Black populations: Baltimore, Denver, Chicago, New York City, and St. Louis. So far, the community curation team has gone to Baltimore, Denver, and Chicago, but the Smith team has also collaborated with institutions and communities in the DC metropolitan area, including District of Columbia Archives and DC History, as well as the James Solomon Russell-Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives, and the College of William and Mary. We've also worked with the Ashé Cultural Center in New Orleans and the Nicodemus National Park Service site in Kansas.

When we travel to cities for community curation, we partner with local cultural institutions. For example, in Denver, we collaborated with the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library and the Black American West Museum. In Chicago, we partnered with the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, which included the DuSable Museum of African American History, Chicago State University, and Shorefront Legacy Center.

During a CCP event, the Smith team builds out space at partnering institutions for still and moving

image digitization. Families and individuals arrive with their photographs, VHS tapes, genealogical documents, and 35 mm film for the team to digitize. All participants receive a USB drive with their digitized items and leave with all of their material.

One family in Chicago climbed aboard the Smith Center mobile digitization truck with boxes of film that showcased the joy and happiness at the Roberts Show Lounge, which once stood on the south side of the city. The elder Roberts had established the lounge, and the films captured the essence of the Chicago Black leisure scene in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s.

People often bring tattered and torn photographs, and the team is able to digitally restore the images. One woman arrived at Chicago's DuSable Museum with her young daughter in tow. She handed a torn 19th-century photograph she described as her multi-great grandmother to our photography specialist. As she waited for the digitally repaired image, our genealogy reference assistant worked with her to determine who the stately woman in the photograph was. Once her digitally restored image was prepared, she marveled at the picture on the computer screen, turned to her little girl and said, "This is your great-great-great grandmother!" Beaming, mother and daughter left the museum with a greater sense of connection to the maternal figure in that photograph.

Going Virtual

The Smith team was just exiting New Orleans when the COVID-19 global pandemic postponed in-person community projects for almost two years. However, the Smith Center increased its reach when genealogy sessions and public programs went virtual during the pandemic.

During that time, the Smith Center used the Community Curation Platform, a dynamic digital resource on the NMAAHC website that invites African American families, civic organizations, and cultural institutions to share their histories with our museum community. The site was built in 2017 for use during our travel, but we've been able to use it to gather stories and share experiences while the museum was shuttered and our travel paused. Using their smartphones or desktop computers, participants follow online instructions to create accounts, upload

their digital images, and share their experiences with the world.

As part of the "Voices of Resistance and Hope" story-sharing project on the Community Curation Platform, a woman posted her strongly worded letter from 1965 that rebuked the Aunt Jemima imagery used by the Pearl Milling Company. The response to her letter stated that the caricature rightly represented a historical memory of Black women in America. Over 50 years later, the Pearl Milling Company finally abandoned the racist and sexist imagery it had used for over a century to strategically diminish the intellectual and social power of Black women. The woman's letter captured the history of the resistance to these hateful and harmful images.

Another virtual visitor uploaded his experience at the marches held on the National Mall after the brutal murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers. He captured a generational fight for racial and social justice, a fight he pledged to maintain. And another participant submitted her family's determination to celebrate the elders in her family even while they needed to remain distant due to the deadly virus.

Service to Institutions

In its partnerships with and travel to other museums and cultural institutions, the Smith Center team has recognized a dire lack of up-to-date preservation equipment and affordable, accessible, and secure digital storage. Since the team cannot physically visit each community in need of our preservation and digitization services, the Smith Center will begin supplying selected partners with digitization equipment.

Even before the pandemic, it was clear to the team that supporting institutions and communities by providing technical training and gifting equipment for digitization would be the best use of Smith Center funding. The Smith Center will also purchase cloud storage so that all institutions can host their newly digitized collections. In the end, the triad of equipment, digital space, and training nurtures sustainable professional relationships and creates self-sufficient institutions.

The team also ascertained that in addition to needing equipment and digital storage, partners and



In the Robert F. Smith Explore Your Family History Center at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, guests, like the one here in March 2019, can get assistance with family genealogy research.

communities wanted more training and workshops in order to conduct their own projects. In 2021, the team began implementing Community Archiving Workshops, or CAWs. Offered free of charge, CAWs are perfect for institutions and communities without proper inventories or finding aids for their collections. The workshops bring together community members, advocates, professionals in the field, and institutional leadership to facilitate archiving and encourage collaboration. The workshops also provide digitization stations, equipment tutorials, and media-defining exploration and training.

The Smith Center recently conducted a CAW for the John Solomon Russell-Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives in rural Brunswick County, Virginia, which was struggling to preserve material and capture its unique history. This project united NMAAHC's efforts to engage HBCUs, the Smithsonian's desire to connect with rural communities, and the Smith Center's goal of digitally preserving endangered collections. In turn, NMAAHC can use this information to enhance its own telling of African American experiences in exhibitions, programs, and outreach.


The Roads, Places, and Spaces Ahead

The Smith Center programs now must use what has been preserved and digitized to answer questions that interrogate digital divides, critically expose invisibility, reproach unequal power relations, and uncover hidden historical narratives. We must use these collections to look critically at historical and cultural movements and offer explanations of the current realities of race, gender, class, and sexuality.

How do we use what is collected through this work to take the lead in shifting the historical lens of American history toward recognizing the multiple narratives of Black life? How do we use what we have collected to reimagine cultural tourism and visitor bureaus? How do we center genealogy and local histories to inform larger historical narratives? How do we understand genealogy through the lens of digital humanities? In what ways do we use this digital material to create curriculum for students at every educational level?

Nearly two years after our last project in New Orleans was postponed due to the pandemic, our team is back on the road. We are revisiting communities, including New Orleans, and collaborating and partnering with new people and institutions, such as Xavier and Dillard universities, two historically Black college and universities; the Ashé Cultural Arts Center; and the Amistad Research Center. The impact of the pandemic on families, communities, and institutions has heightened the importance of gathering stories and preserving local histories.

The true assessment of the Smith Center is not solely the numbers of people, communities, or institutions that participate in our programming; it also lies in the enriched connections we make among the museum and visitors, collaborators, and learners. Now more than ever, we must capture the forever-changed landscape of life, memory, history, and family.

 **Doretha K. Williams** is director of the Robert F. Smith Center for the Digitization and Curation of the African American History at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC.

OTHER SMITH CENTER PROGRAMS

In addition to the Community Curation Program, the Smith Center operates the Family History Center and the Internship and Fellowship Program. All three programs aim to broaden the audience base of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), preserve local histories, and provide the next generation of cultural institution leaders.

The **Family History Center** (FHC), on-site at NMAAHC, guides visitors through genealogy research sessions. Visitors both on-site and online can sign up for research sessions led by genealogy reference assistants. Prior to the pandemic, on-site participants could use a bank of computers and databases, including Family Search, Fold3.com, and Ancestry.com, to conduct their research. Often, visitors attend sessions with birthdates and names and leave with a better understanding of their family history. By managing the FHC and providing guided family history research support, the Smith team can nurture deeper and more intimate connections with visitors.

Through the summer **Internship and Fellowship Program**, the Smith Center is diversifying the museum field with Black and brown voices, experiences, and expertise. Interested museums, archives, and cultural centers submit proposals that outline digital humanities internship projects that have ranged from digitization of oral history recordings and photograph collections to creating searchable digital platforms and augmented reality projects. Participating institutions select their interns through the application portal, and the Smith Center provides stipends and housing support for the interns throughout the summer.

The Internship and Fellowship Program has partnered with historically Black colleges and universities, including Tuskegee, Bethune-Cookman, Morgan State, and Fisk universities, to provide them with interns with experience in the digital humanities and museum management. The program has also placed interns with cultural institutions, including Maine Historical Society, Historic Stagville in North Carolina, and the Amistad Research Center in New Orleans. NMAAHC also serves as a site for interns, and the museum has hired three interns as full-time staff to date.



Revisiting MUSEUMS ADVOCACY DAY 2022

On February 28–March 1, **550 museum advocates** joined us, making our voices heard for museums by participating in virtual advocacy programming and **375 virtual meetings** with congressional offices!



We heard from a congressional chief of staff, federal agency leaders, and partner policy experts about the unique value of museums and the importance of advocating for museums and the federal programs that support them. In congressional meetings, we shared critical information on key legislative priorities to support museums, and the lasting impacts of the pandemic on museums and museum professionals' jobs. Advocates shared countless examples of essential and vibrant museums continuing to serve their communities.

Thank you to all of our 2022 supporters, partners, and advocates who helped make Museums Advocacy Day 2022 an impactful event, and for continuing to advocate for museums in the year ahead.

We were also pleased to award three dedicated museum advocates with Advocacy Leadership Awards! Congratulations to **Erika Sanger** (Museum Association of New York), **Lisa Craig Brisson** (Michigan Museums Association), and **Meg Winikates** (New England Museums Association).

Read more about the awardees and about Museums Advocacy Day 2022 in our press release. » aam-us.org/press





MUSEUMS ADVOCACY DAY 2022 SUPPORTERS

CORPORATE SPONSOR

blackbaud[®]
➤ power your passion

CO-CONVENOR



ASMD
Association of Science Museum Directors

LEADERS



PARTNERS



A heartfelt thank you to all the supporters who make Museums Advocacy Day possible!

CONTRIBUTORS

American Institute for Conservation
Americans for the Arts
ALHFAM: Association for Living History,
Farm and Agricultural Museums
Federation of State Humanities Councils
Michigan Museums Association
Mountain-Plains Museums Association
PA Museums
South Carolina Federation of Museums
Southeastern Museums Conference
Western Museums Association
Wisconsin Federation of Museums

SUPPORTERS

American Association of Museum Volunteers
Lori Bettison-Varga
Coalition of State Museum Associations
Sheffield Hale, CEO, Atlanta History Center
Idaho Association of Museums
Iowa Museum Association
Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums
Missouri Association for Museums and Archives
Museum Association of Arizona
Museum Computer Network
Museums Alaska
National Museum of Gospel Music/Antoinette D Wright
New York City Museum Educators Roundtable
(NYCMER)
NEDCC: Northeast Document Conservation Center
North Carolina Museums Council
Ohio Museums Association
Julie Stein
Texas Association of Museums
Virginia Association of Museums
Karol Wight

HONOR ROLL

Gail Arnow
Marion Kahan, Kahan Art Management
Ruth Ann Rugg
Rodney Zerbe



BECK
INTERIORS

WE CREATE
UNFORGETTABLE
MUSEUM
EXPERIENCES
AROUND THE
WORLD.

BUILD NOT FOR NOW, BUT FOR THE FUTURE

Contact us today to find out how we can turn your ideas into something truly outstanding.

Mark Banham: mbanham@beckinteriors.com

Chris Lawrenson: clawrenson@beckinteriors.com

WWW.BECKINTERIORS.COM

 [beckinteriors](https://www.instagram.com/beckinteriors)

 [BECK Interiors](https://www.linkedin.com/company/beckinteriors)





**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

FRANK America Inc. • One Liberty Plaza, 165 Broadway - 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10006 • www.frank-america.com
Phone +1 (646) 759-3640 • info@frank-america.com • production facility: Sterling, VA