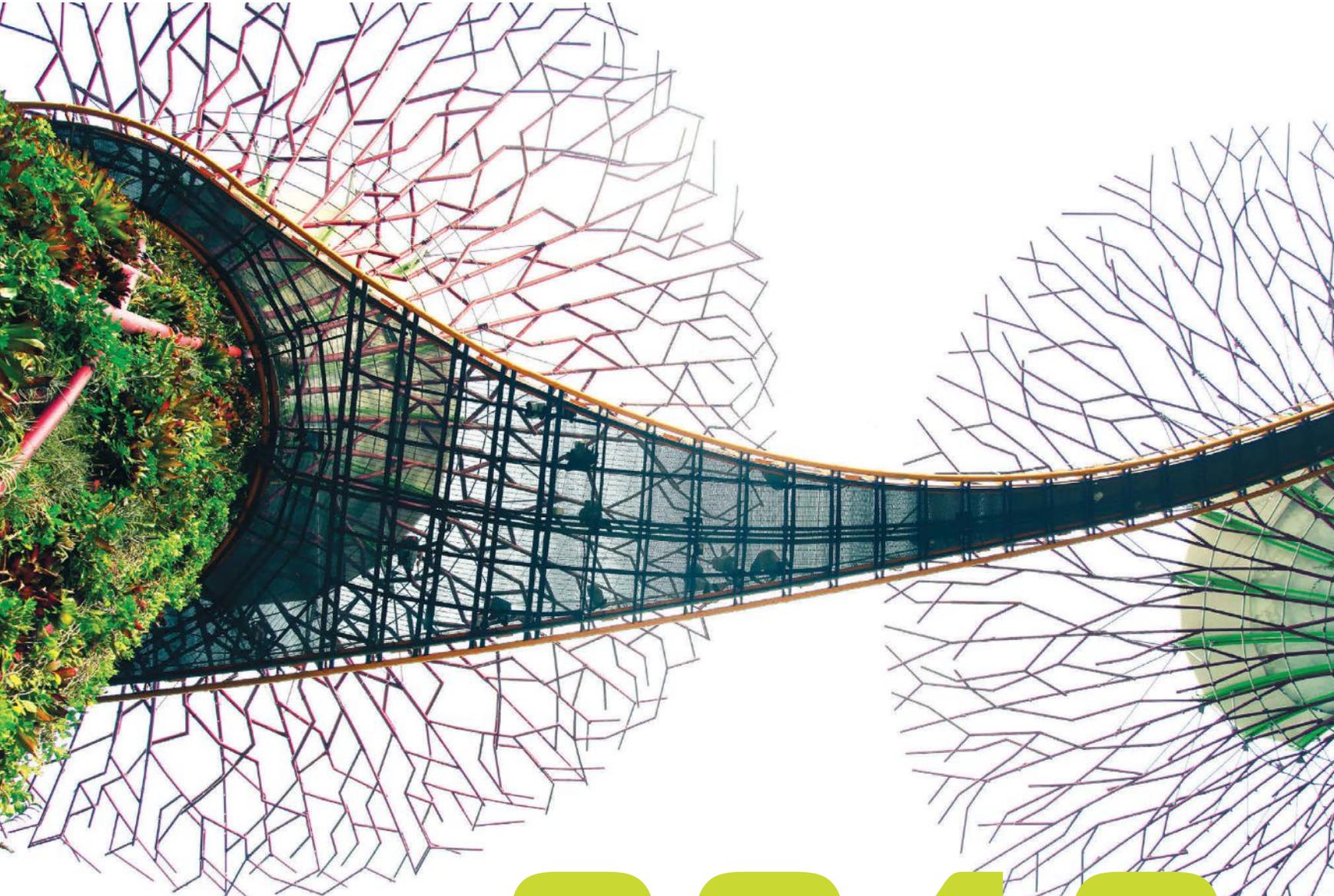


# MUSEUM

A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS



# 2040

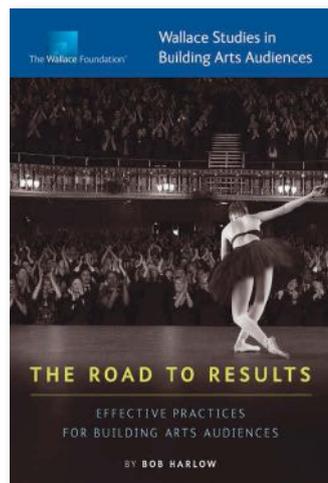
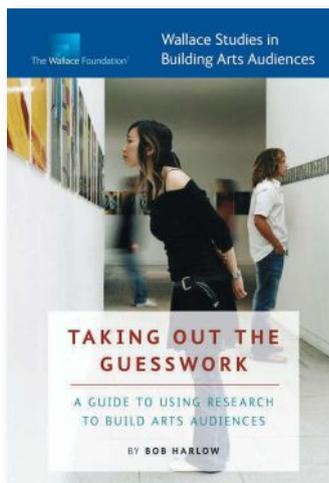
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Resilience**  
PAGE 12

**Citizen Artists and  
the New Economy**  
PAGE 23

**Truth and  
Reconciliation**  
PAGE 28

# IT'S 2040 AND WE BELIEVE MUSEUMS WILL STILL BE HERE

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Learn about three tasks crucial to successful audience building: understanding potential audiences, creating effective promotional materials, and tracking and assessing progress.

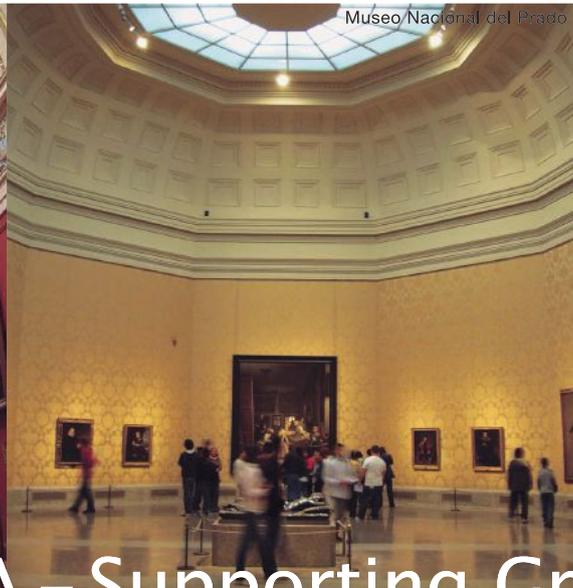
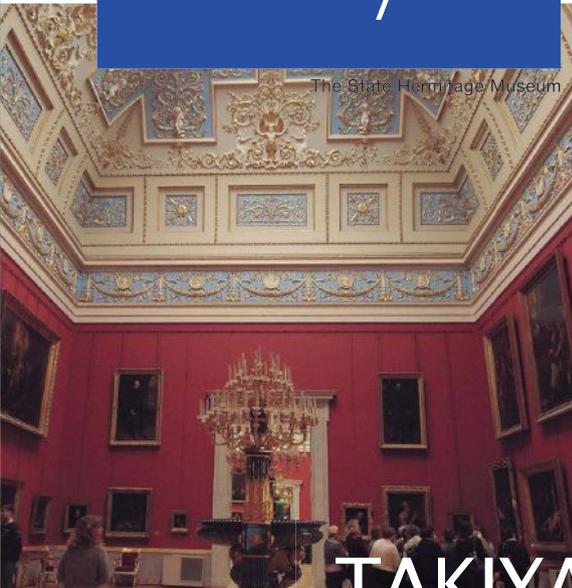
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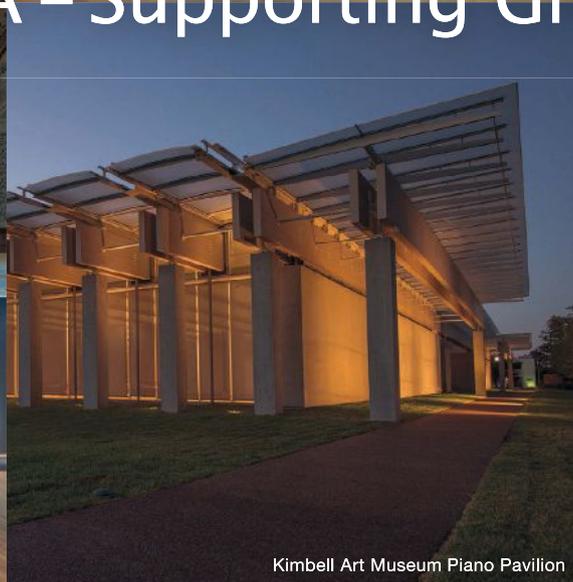


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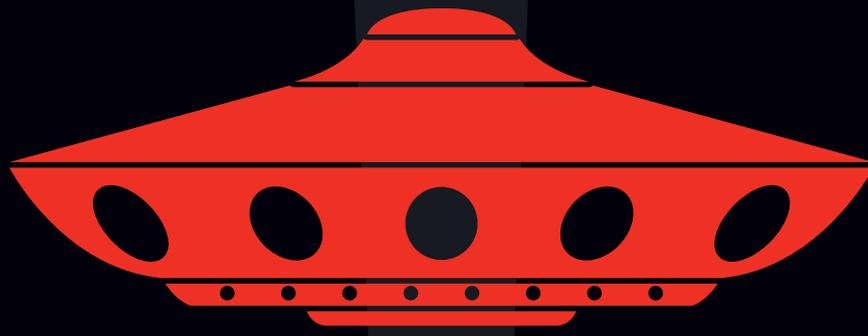
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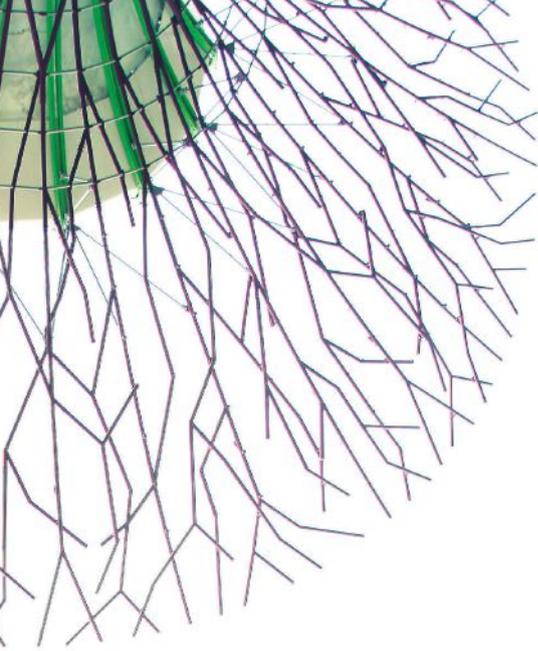


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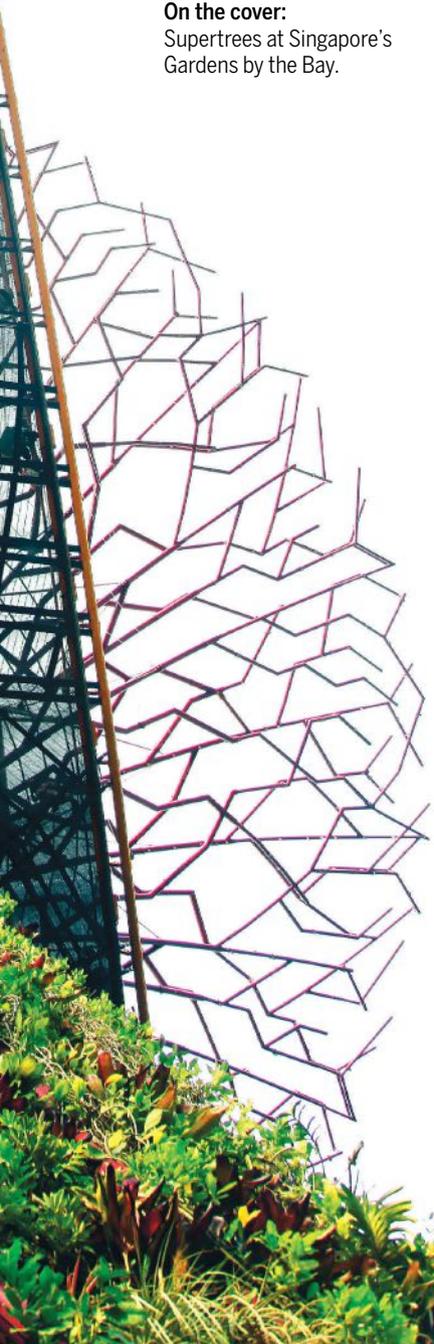


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On the cover:  
Supertrees at Singapore's  
Gardens by the Bay.



# MUSEUM

A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

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(2040–43)  
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## FROM THE LEADERSHIP

**H**ello, **Alliance**, and greetings to all supporters of museums across the United States and worldwide. I am honored and humbled to serve as the fourth of AAM's three-year CEO rotators and to be the first to come from the healthcare field. As a licensed psychiatrist, it will be my honor to further develop the thriving collaborations between museums and mental health professionals.



It has taken a while for the Alliance to get in the groove of rotator CEOs. But with each new three-year term, we've gotten a little better at taking strategic direction from an "outsider"—that is, a non-museum professional—while entrusting the Alliance's business and operations to an excellent chief operating officer. This rotator system, this pairing of fresh ideas and perspectives with solid continuity, was greeted with skepticism when it was first proposed in the late 2020s by our final staff CEO, Laura Lott. And yes, museums were out there on the bleeding edge of the nonprofit sector when we made this change in governance in 2030. But after 10 years, we've seen many more nonprofits follow suit—nearly 25 percent of all nonprofits, in fact—and the rapid rate of change in our world makes it hard to imagine any other way to go.

After all, museums have grown beyond their physical walls and are now a part of their communities in a bigger way than ever, which puts them in partnership with more non-museum disciplines and sectors than ever. Just as, a quarter-century ago, the Internet of Things began to enable all sorts of objects and devices to exchange information quickly and effortlessly, organizations are now doing the same, almost to the point now that organizational boundaries are blurring or going away altogether. The museum and the hospital, for example, may share spaces, objects, talent, and programs, while the police department and the school do the same. Museums have become fully integrated with our educational system—both of my children attended preschool in a museum and, as she enters her teens, my daughter has chosen our local natural history museum as the home base for her personal learning plan. Museums, houses of worship, libraries, and community centers are finding ways to work together to serve their communities, their clients, in ways nobody could have imagined a quarter-century ago, or even a decade ago when the Alliance's first CEO rotator, high school principal Leila Han, began her term.

Yes, the "gig economy" has come full circle, as we work for ourselves at the same time that we work for everybody. So, how should I spend my three-year gig at the helm of AAM?

No, seriously, I'm asking. It's not a rhetorical question. I'm at your service. After all, museums ask their communities every day, "What do you need? How can we help?" It's only fitting for me to ask the same questions. Of course, I do have a few ideas to prime the pump:

» **mental wellness:** The field of mental health has expanded in recent years to include proactive steps toward "wellness." Studies have shown that certain activities—including museum-led interactions involving objects, stories, and dialogue, facilitated by skilled, caring educators—can help reduce stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation, and thus decrease

the frequency of hospitalizations for mental illness. My field has made phenomenal strides by mining the huge sets of physiological data collected via personal wearable devices. I want to help museums tap into that data to strengthen the case for how our field contributes to public health and well-being.

- » **microcredentialing:** As low- and middle-income people around the globe seek affordable alternatives to college education, museums are an underused resource for institutions offering microcredentials in math, science, business, history, and many other disciplines. In a brutally competitive field dominated by online-only options, museums have the advantage of offering place-based learning, a community of fellow learners, and the chance to interact with not only the objects but also the people and historical context that pertain to their fields of study.
- » **for-profit museums and corporate partnerships:** We took the bold step in 2025 of allowing for-profit museums to be accredited. And as government incentives for nonprofits continue to shrink, we're seeing more and more museums join forces with for-profit entities. The growing number of companies, small and large, that voluntarily incorporate social or environmental impact into their work further blurs this boundary. I want to continue to chip away at the long-standing stigma that prevents many museums and other nonprofits from pursuing such partnerships.
- » **accreditation and public value:** I want to maintain the pace of change in our Accreditation programs. As we pivot our focus from documenting how museums are organized and do their work to assessing the effect museums have on their communities' equity, education, and economics, we make our institutions more relevant to the public, to policy makers, and to funders.

That's plenty to keep us busy for the next few years, but of course, I welcome your input, and I encourage you to speak up—I know you're not shy—in the Alliance's quarterly crowdvoting convenings. I also want to thank our outgoing rotator, Lazar Finn, for their fine leadership in connecting the Alliance with the criminal justice reform community, and I'm glad to know they will be available as immediate past rotator CEO for the next year.

Let's stay connected and adaptive to change. I'm proud and excited to serve you!

Sincerely,

*Cris*

**Cris Hon Garcia, MD**  
ROTATOR CEO

**Cris Hon Garcia, MD**  
ROTATOR CEO, AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS  
#Museum2040 #RotatorCEO #MuseumsAndHealth

## BY THE NUMBERS



### An aging population

SENIORS  
**21%**  
OF US POPULATION  
▲ 56%

In 2040, we have *almost* as many seniors (over 65) as children (under 18). Why? The population of seniors has increased by 56 percent since 2015... while the population of children has inched up a mere 6 percent.

SOURCE:  
US Census Bureau



CHILDREN  
**24%**  
OF US POPULATION  
▲ 6%

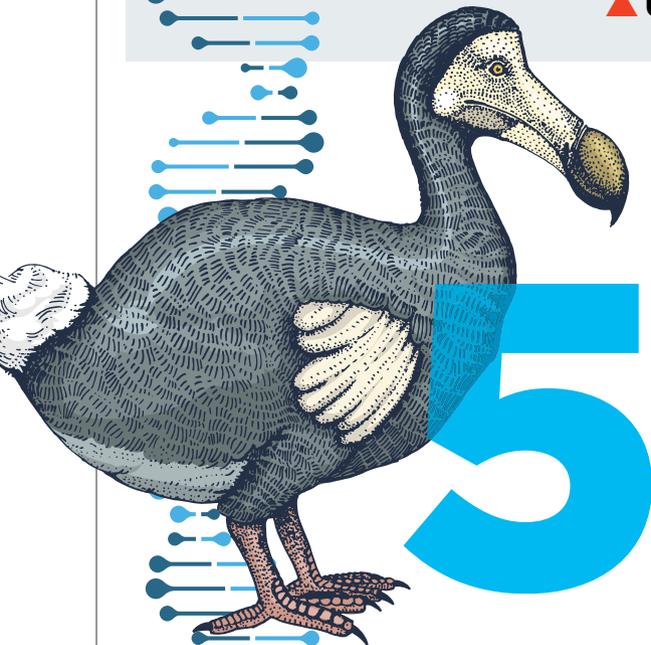
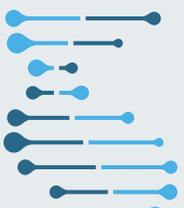
# 6,152,440 kWh

### Amount of photovoltaic energy

returned to the grid by the 20 largest science centers in the United States. This is enough to power 569 homes.



SOURCE: AAM's Green Professional Network



### 5 extinct species

successfully revived by the Zoo of the Long Future

SOURCE: Zoo of the Long Future

# 2,132

### museum schools

-serving more than half a million K-12 students in the 2040-41 school year

"Museum schools" include schools that are run by museums as well as schools that make significant use of museum resources in daily learning.



SOURCE: AAM Committee for School Education



# \$425,280,000

## Impact investments

in museum programs to improve health and wellness outcomes (2039 data).

SOURCE: AAM Committee for Health and Wellness

# 1,112

## museums operating well-being and cognitive health centers

SOURCE: AAM Committee for Health and Wellness



#Museum2040 #ByTheNumbers #MuseumSchools #MuseumsAndHealth

# 18%

Since 2017, increase in percentage of American adults visiting at least one museum per year.



SOURCE: AAM's Museums and America 2017 and 2040

# 12%

percentage of Newport, Rhode Island, residents given a

## medical prescription

to visit (and engage with) the Newport Cultural Ecosystem

SOURCE: Newport Cultural Ecosystem



## WHAT'S NEW?

### Vizcaya Museum and Gardens

**V**izcaya Museum and Gardens' executive director, Jessica Caladran, accepted the 2040 TechNet Accessibility Award for organizations and individuals who use digital technology to improve lives. This year's ceremony, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, recognized Vizcaya's leadership in creating adaptive, accessible interactive experiences for all audiences—on-site, online, and in the museum's virtual reality center. Visitors are provided with entry wristbands that use GPS, radio-frequency identification (RFID), text-to-speech, and Tag technology to facilitate wayfinding. Vizcaya, as the awards committee noted, also was one of the first US museums to use facial recognition technology to provide content tailored to individual visitors' needs. The committee particularly commended Vizcaya's real-time translation and visual description services, which are available in 100 languages (including 20 sign languages), and its use of touch, gesture, and optical tracking technologies to enable visitors to experience Vizcaya in whatever way is most natural and accessible for them. "These efforts make Vizcaya Museum and Gardens a model for accessibility," said committee chair Amor Elizondo, "and we are proud to honor the museum with this year's award."

**LOCATION:** Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, Miami, Florida

**DATE:** June 14, 2040



### FutureVault Satellite Collections Storage

**R**esponding to the earth's degraded environmental conditions, largely caused by climate change, global warfare, and habitat loss due to human development, NASA, the US Space Corps, and the World Museum Consortium have joined forces for a new initiative—FutureVault Satellite Collections Storage. To protect and preserve artifacts in terrestrial museum collections and archives, as well as genetic materials, the partners are gathering art, historic objects, and biospecimens to be launched into space in orbiting, temperature-controlled storehouses. The first BioVault launch, on March 19, 2040, placed more than 2,000 live, frozen cell cultures, eggs, sperm, embryos, viruses, and DNA samples into stable orbit. The first CultureVault



launch, scheduled for fall 2041, will include cultural artifacts chosen by representatives of various world regions.

**LAUNCH DATE:** 2040 vernal equinox

**LOCATION:** geosynchronous orbit above the earth's equator

**JOB OPPORTUNITIES:** The FutureVault partners are recruiting and training a corps of collections-care astronauts to regularly visit, monitor, and maintain the orbiting materials. These are unpaid positions, but they will "launch" careers.

### Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum

**I**n recognition of the 100th anniversary of the keel laying of USS Intrepid, museum staff have developed a three-day disaster-planning seminar that applies historical lessons to modern-day challenges. The seminar will empower isolated communities to effectively mobilize their citizens and their resources in response to a disaster.

A century ago, the aircraft carrier Intrepid operated as an isolated "city at sea." Crew members kept their ship afloat in the face of extreme storms, systems failures, and combat-related losses. After the ship became a museum, staff confronted a new set of challenges, including increasingly severe storms, power shortages, extreme heat, and other risks related to climate change. Building on Intrepid's culture of resilience, this seminar will help local government officials, city planners, and other participants prepare needs assessments for their communities, create scenarios and response options, draft recovery and contingency plans, and model skills for crisis management. Each participant will walk away with a toolkit tailored to his or her community's needs.



**DATES:** December 2–4, 2041

**LOCATION:** New York City and via VR live stream

**FUNDER:** seminar made possible with the support of the Federal Department of Infrastructure Planning and Restoration

**HIGHLIGHTS:** addressing the needs of vulnerable populations (older adults, people with disabilities, children, incarcerated youth) in disaster response; using physical and digital archives to help rebuild physical environments

## Latah County Historical Society

The Latah County Historical Society (LCHS) is opening a new collections warehouse, data center, and autonomous transportation hub. The LCHS Digital Data Center (DDC), located in Potlatch, Idaho, will be the primary repository for Latah County's digital history. LCHS has been building digital collections since 2015, and the new DDC will allow it to archive emails, social media, digital images, virtual reality scans, and videos that document the county's history in the 21st century.

The DDC will be energy self-sufficient thanks to roof-mounted windmills, solar panels, geothermal installations, and a battery array. Excess power will be sold back to the local microgrid, and this revenue is projected to support a quarter of the center's operating costs.

The Latah County Historical Society has partnered with Electric Cars Inc. to house a fleet of autonomous electric vehicles within the LCHS DDC. These vehicles will be available to people traveling throughout the region, especially those who need transportation between the historic house museum, the McConnell Mansion, and the DDC.

**OPENING DATE:** July 28, 2041

**ARCHITECTS:** GreenPower Associates

**PARTNERS:** Electric Cars Inc., Giant Search Engine Cultural Institute

## Ohio History Connection

As part of the ongoing World War II centennial, the Ohio History Connection (OHC) will host a place-agnostic experience at the Ohio History Center and its site system. Through this VR experience, Ohioans will be able to witness the storming of Normandy as Ohioans of the 1940s did. This project also will allow visitors to see the beaches of Normandy before they were transformed by the effects of global climate change. Additionally, OHC will

organize a trip to France to see the remains of the Normandy beaches and related historic sites. This trip will be an annual event throughout the World War II centennial.

**DATES:** June 1, 2041–September 2, 2045; Normandy trip planned for June 6, 2041

**TITLE:** "Ohioans at Normandy"

**PARTNERS:** Normandy Environmental Preservation Project, National World War II Centennial Commission



## Philbrook Museum of Art

The Philbrook Museum of Art will celebrate the 17th anniversary of its Cultural Center for Health and Wellness with the annual Shake/Rake, a yard-to-table sustainability festival featuring an all-things-green juice bar and insect-a-thon tasting menu. "What began as an ambitious initiative to view life through the lens of art and nature," said Philbrook Director Chloé Arias Davila, "has evolved into a creative forum to address the daily mental and physical wellness of the community." The center serves more than 2,000 users a month while providing a robust stream of income to support the museum's staff of 300 full-time, part-time, and remote employees. Offerings include classes and meals in the museum's 20,000-square-foot Edible Garden Test Kitchen, a restaurant and tech-free adventure lounge, the Story Core series of aerobics and art history lecture workouts, integrated outdoor and indoor co-working spaces, the ARTxFIT health club, and an artist-designed multi-sphere playground. Philbrook also hosts post-deistic religious services, as well as operating the Philbrook Cat Café and Gallery in partnership with the Tulsa Animal Adoption Agency.



**DATE:** May 15, 2041

**LOCATION:** Tulsa, Oklahoma

**PARTNERS:** local health-insurance providers, physicians, psychologists, curators, chefs, programmers, and trainers

## WHAT'S NEW?

## VirtuReal Museum Academy

“Every day is a learning adventure”—so says the marketing slogan for the VirtuReal Museum Academy (VMA). September 2040 marked the highly anticipated national launch of VMA, a benefit corporation designed to improve learning outcomes for homeschoolers while generating financial profits for itself, its investors, and its museum collaborators. “We have partnered with the finest museums both in the United States and around the world,” said VMA CEO Linda Ortega. “Now, via digital technologies, students in rural Idaho have access to the same institutions that students in New York or DC might have.” With nearly 10 million American students classified as homeschoolers, VMA staff say the appetite for powerful, hands-on learning experiences has never been greater. And with advances in virtual reality, sensory reality, and artificial intelligence, students can visit more than four dozen museums, examine objects and art, interact with curators and educators, and participate in hands-on experiences, all from the comfort of their living rooms. Ortega has set ambitious goals: “By 2045, we expect to have 20 million daily users. By 2050, we believe we’ll make classroom learning obsolete.”

VMA museum partners benefit as well. They invest to create digital content for their institutions and, as a result, receive a share of the profits for every digital visitor. Frequently visited institutions have the potential to earn both additional revenue and visitation: VMA expects to drive attendance in real life as well. “Research and experience show students value F2F [face-to-face] interactions with peers. One valuable feature of VMA is that it encourages students to form local study groups that often use museums as their meeting spaces,” noted VMA Research Director Amar Om.

The museum community has enthusiastically embraced VMA’s partnership. “This technology means our collection, our story, and our community will be accessible like never before,” said Janet Tran, executive director of the National Museum of the History of Education in Missoula, Montana.

**LAUNCH DATE:** September 2040

**PARTNERS:** American Coalition of Homeschool Families, Center for Self-Directed Learning

**LEAD INVESTORS:** Cultural Impact Investment Fund, Solomon Height Capital Management

## Zoo of the Long Future

The Long Future Foundation has reached a milestone: the birth of the 100th northern white rhinoceros. The species officially became extinct in 2020 when the last naturally conceived individual, a 46-year-old male named Sudan, was shot by poachers in the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya. At the time of Sudan’s death, efforts were already underway to establish a new population of northern white rhinos, and the science has since been perfected. De-extinction biologists at the Zoo of the Long Future used sperm collected from Sudan to fertilize eggs that had been preserved in liquid nitrogen for the past two decades. The surrogate mom, a southern white rhino named Mary Beth, is taking good care of her calf, a female that staff dubbed Upya (Swahili for “rebirth”) in honor of her father being the last of their kind before de-extinction began. Researchers plan to use CRISPR gene editing technology to introduce genetic variability into future embryos, to ensure the reborn species does not suffer a genetic bottleneck. Worldwide, there are six institutions with northern white rhino population growth programs; Long Future has led the species recovery, contributing 23 of the 100 rhinos now in existence.

This is the fifth species successfully revived by the Zoo of the Long Future, which is proud to have established viable breeding populations for previously extinct species such as Bornean orangutans and Asiatic cheetahs. The zoo has announced that it is launching a new de-extinction department focusing on amphibians, beginning with the extinct Panamanian golden frog. Embodying a holistic approach, the Long Future Foundation is also working in an advisory capacity with several NGOs to develop suitable habitats for recovered species, where threats to their sustainability will be eliminated.

**LOCATION:** Tacoma, Washington

**DATE:** July 25, 2040

**PARTNERS:** Sustainable Habitats, the Half Earth Foundation, Buffalo Commons Inc.



## Western Zoo Alliance

As part of the World Zoo and Living Museum Initiative of 2025, the Western Zoo Alliance (WZA) has collaborated to open a third sanctuary to protect elephants, rhinos, hippos, giraffes, and other large mammals. These species, extirpated from Africa as a result of the significant changes to the continent over the last 15 years, have a new place to roam and thrive at Living Large Idaho, in addition to the Living Large sanctuaries in California and Washington.



As with the other sanctuaries, Living Large Idaho is open to school groups and the public for in-person education and exploration tours Thursday through Sunday. And virtual reality tours of all three sites are available anytime through your personal VR Vision system. “Making sure the facility was accessible to the public was paramount,” said Andrew Lasater, project leader from San Diego Zoo Global, a founding member of WZA. “Opportunities for human-animal interaction is what creates lifelong appreciation for nature.”

**LOCATION:** Pocatello, Idaho

**LEARN MORE:** VR Vision address: @LivingLargeSanctuaries

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## MY TAKE

# The Next Sustainability Frontier

**A**t the AAM Annual Meeting in May, our outgoing rotator CEO, Lazar Finn, announced that US museums have reached their goal of 85 percent net climate-positive performance. What a transformation! At the turn of the century, when atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen popularized the use of “Anthropocene” to refer to our era of human-induced climate change, the word held connotations of damage and disaster. Today, it is beginning to signify renewal and regeneration, and our sector is playing a significant role in that shift. We should take a moment to congratulate ourselves on this good work...and then ask ourselves how we can do more.



**Supertrees at Singapore's Gardens by the Bay. The tree-like structures are fitted with environmental technologies that mimic the ecological function of trees.**

Most major cities have reached or are approaching carbon neutral status, having benefitted from museums' significant contributions to urban planning. Our research into historical and cultural alternatives, our commitment to public outreach for engagement and compliance, and our infrastructure adaptations and innovations have established museums as leaders in the drive toward sustainability. We have accomplished this by integrating our buildings and open spaces, knowledge, programming, and creativity into climate response teams in major urban areas, helping to improve the lives of millions.

Museum professionals began to glimpse the power of our potential influence in the twenty-teens, with the surge of migration to urban areas for jobs, services, and access to resources. Cities in general were struggling to respond to our changing climate, and those near lakes, rivers, or coasts had to become resilient in the face of storms and flooding. Local museums played a central role in designing these responses, finding historical precedents, exploring technology options, and providing artistic inspiration. US museums were inspired by international exemplars like Singapore's Gardens by the Bay. The gardens opened in 2012, using 250 acres to help transform Singapore from a “garden city” to a “city in a garden.” It still serves as stunning example of applying climate-positive solutions to urban issues of energy and habitat.

Today, at most of our museums, zoos, gardens, aquariums, and heritage sites, water is cleaner when it leaves than when it arrived, thanks to the widespread adoption of garden-enhanced treatment systems. Several recent award-winning expansions incorporate wastewater management and air filtration into their lovely gardens, pools, and green walls. Museums have transformed themselves from consumers to producers of clean energy—73 percent of our facilities feed energy back into local power grids. Museums have become so integral to the power infrastructure that in Detroit and Cincinnati, our colleagues had to fend off efforts to classify and regulate them as “utilities” alongside energy and water providers. The Alliance's Green Professional Network has documented more than 10,000 projects that have drawn on open-source, climate-positive designs shared by museums. In the most recent AAM survey of museum practice, 45 percent of respondents indicated that climate-positive practices are part of their operations, and one-quarter asked for professional development in the area.

## Ocean Six

Ocean Six is urban museums partnerships leader for the United Nations' Division for Sustainable Development.

#Museum2040 #sustainability  
#ClimatePositive #GreenMuseums



**W**hat is the next frontier for museums as champions of climate resilience?

In the last two decades, many US museums have leveraged their research, programs, strategic partnerships, and leadership capital to produce lifesaving achievements for their communities. Our field's ability to broker community conversations,

inspire creative solutions, provide resources for experimentation, and act as effective partners has created a multiplier effect—one that broadens and amplifies progress. Let's scale up this work. Let's use the approaches we have pioneered to address entrenched issues in rural areas of the United States and climate-challenged communities everywhere. Let's learn from the best projects all over the world how we can do our own work better. In the past, much of our progress has been driven by a few visionary, committed institutional leaders. Now, we need to accept field-wide responsibility for climate resilience in our communities and internationally.

There has never been a better time to wield our influence. We have a past museum director—Dr. Nyoman Naseem Petit—leading the US Bureau of Cultural Resources. She has a strong working partnership with the director of the Bureau of Climate Response, who in turn works directly with the United Nations on climate issues. Museums are seen by the public as essential partners in the work of building climate resilience, so much so that it's practically become a brand. You can't open your news feed these days without seeing the term "climate curation" bandied about by the press.

Let's not let this moment pass. Now, when we have unprecedented influence, trust, and resources to effect change, let's take it to the next level. What can you do to help build a greener, more resilient future? For one, you can become active in the Alliance's Green Professional Network, providing leadership on domestic and international issues, and helping to build urban and rural climate-positive partnerships. What can your museum do? Join the growing list of museums that use sister city/sister museum relationships to exchange climate-positive approaches. We're seeing alliances between museums in North and South America, Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the Eurasian steppes, and European cities including Paris, Berlin, Edinburgh, and Istanbul. Acting together, museums can make the Anthropocene an era we can be proud of.

**Acting together, museums can make the Anthropocene an era we can be proud of.**

Museums have helped to rediscover and, in some cases, invent materials that now top the United Nations' Green List of the most beneficial products and materials for the human-environment system we live in. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of land conservation organizations, natural history museums, zoos, and aquariums in the California Basin, nearly one million acres of habitat have been restored or regenerated after decades of climate-driven wildfire disasters.

However, the benefits of climate response are unevenly distributed. In the United States, inland cities and rural areas struggle mightily to cope with heat and storm damage. These areas have not had access to the expertise or funding needed to create infrastructure that supports alternative energy or comprehensive cooling. Worldwide, there is an acute need for climate-positive design in areas isolated by intense climate impacts or bypassed by climate response successes. Countries in the Middle East that based their economies on oil are struggling to convert cities built at the beginning of the century into solar-powered oases. North Korea, China, and Russia have created a shared solar power distribution grid that could either help or isolate needy neighbor countries.



**Excess energy generated by solar panels-cum-wind turbines at the Center for Art and Social Justice in Provo, Utah, is fed back into the local power grid.**

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Cecelia, the Alliance information chatbot, came online in February 2040.

#Museum2040 #MuseumChatbot #LivingWalls

# MAINTAINING GREEN WHILE SUSTAINING COLLECTIONS



## Hello/Hóla/Nǐ Hǎo.

**CECELIA**, your trusted Alliance information chatbot, here.

I answer more than 150 questions a week from AAM members, related to every aspect of museum operations, through our online Information Center. One query is recurring, asked 142 times in the last six months, to be exact: **“How do I protect my objects and also preserve the living walls in my institution?”**



*Living wall adjacent to staff office space in the California Science Museum.*

Well, I scoured the Internet for institutions that are doing this successfully, and I found an interesting case study about the California Science Museum (CSM), in Santa Rosa. CSM incorporated living walls into its building a decade ago. For several years after the facility opened, staff struggled with how to cultivate healthy living walls while protecting the museum’s diverse collection of objects, including historic computers and software. (CSM holds the original code for my grandfather, the first association chatbot!)

In case you are not familiar with living walls, these pieces of living architecture were first introduced in 1986 and have become popular due to their psychological, environmental, and energy benefits. CSM was one of the first museums to make extensive use of interior living walls in keeping with its mission to promote health and well-being. This is a particularly important goal in California due to the lack of public green space and high levels of pollution. Having living walls also saves the museum \$25,000 per year by reducing summer energy consumption for air conditioning and HVAC.

Over the past 10 years, the museum has also added a green roof and a solar farm. When its energy production exceeds its needs, CSM feeds power into the community grid. In fact, CSM was the first museum to be designated a Community Energy Service

Center (CESC). The resulting income has also improved CSM’s financial bottom line.

When the museum was designed, the staff and architect debated where to place the living walls, particularly because the walls make it more difficult to closely regulate humidity levels. They decided to site the walls only in public areas that were not directly adjacent to exhibition galleries, as well as in office space at least 20 feet from gallery areas. Still, after five years of operation, objects on display were showing signs of damage from increased relative humidity. Given the centrality of the living walls to the museum’s design, removing or substantially altering them was out of the question.

While the recently published *Museum Standards Regarding Environmental Sustainability* provided broad guidelines for how to reconcile green walls with the needs of collections, CSM was one of the first museums to create a specific implementation plan to address this challenge. Staff considered creating microclimates by placing objects on view under individual “glastic” (recycled plastic and glass) vitrines, but that seemed like a step back since the museum’s “open air” displays are very popular with visitors. They also considered covering the living walls with “glastic,” but that would reduce the effectiveness of having the green walls to begin with.

### What was their solution?

The museum decided to take a stepped approach. First, staff reviewed humidity readings to determine the most affected zones. They replaced sensitive objects in those areas with reproductions, allowing the museum to preserve the original objects and display them in other ways. Second, they shortened the object rotation cycle for galleries outside the most affected zones.

Third, they created a visible “open” storage area with stringent temperature and humidity control, where they could display objects at minimal cost and staff time, without interpretive context. This solution was more complicated than they anticipated: the energy needed to power the automatic light dimmers and environmental control in this area meant that the museum was feeding less power into the local grid. As a CESC, the museum needed community approval before diverting additional solar energy for its own use. Since local residents see the museum as integral to the community, the town council voted unanimously to approve CSM’s proposal. The museum now uses an additional 20 percent of the energy it produces annually to protect its collections.

The museum has developed several public programs around this energy reciprocation program, and staff have documented improvements in the condition of the collections. It seems that CSM’s balanced approach to preservation and sustainability has been both financially and environmentally beneficial. A win-win, as they say.

Adapted from a keynote address given  
by **Adam Rozan** at the 2040 AAM  
Annual Meeting in Quito, Ecuador

# Museums



*In collaboration with the Des Moines Art Collaborative, the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority has installed "D-ART" digital art kiosks at 130 transit stops throughout Polk County, Iowa.*

# 2040

## Hello, and welcome to the future.

*My talk today is a reflection on where we've been and where we are today. It shares my vision for tomorrow as well, in which a coalition of museums and museum professionals work together to embrace the next horizon of challenges facing our field.*

Likely many of you expected this keynote to focus on technology. We love the latest thing, the shiny new object, headlines that speak of such advances. It's easy to fixate on technology, but too often, when we do so, we miss the important underlying forces driving change—what people want and need, how they interact with one another. There was a Sunday morning cartoon from the 1960s called *The Jetsons*; it envisioned a future of flying cars and robot maids. We have both those things now. We also have gender equity in the workplace and a world of distributed, self-directed learning. In the *Jetsons'* universe, mother Jane stayed home to “keep house” while little Elroy went off to school each day. The writers predicted the technology, but they were oblivious to the bigger, more important cultural changes we would experience.

Similarly, at the turn of the 20th century, museum people often focused on technology when they thought about the future. And it's true that some technologies, notably digitization, digital fabrication, and virtual and augmented reality, have had a significant impact on our practice. In the 2020s, what we now call the “Digital Push” led to the proliferation of museums that exhibited only reproductions, either virtual recreations based on digital scans or

physical objects created by digital fabrication. But to me, the most interesting thing about the Push is how it transformed museum culture. For example, art museums began exploring new and alternative venues for exhibitions of various sizes. No space was deemed unworthy, and collections, both digitally produced and real, found new venues. Train stations, bus stops, senior housing, elementary schools, supermarkets, clothing stores, and sidewalks all became exhibition spaces. Artworks that had been unimaginable to lend, too delicate to display or transport, now through technology could be included in exhibitions the world over. The Digital Push helped pave the way for museums to shift their narratives from big names and topics to personal stories and community histories.

Even as museum exhibitions became more distributed throughout the world, the very concept of “museum” was changing—from single-purpose organizations housed in iconic architecture to hybrid institutions that also fill the roles that used to be siloed in libraries, community centers, and schools. Many museums are now open 24 hours a day; others are the major source of education and social resources for children and seniors in their communities. Museums are now libraries, libraries are now schools, and teachers are now museum administrators. Community organizers run museum programs, and museum staff operate learning laboratories and teach classes in science, art, and the humanities. Often, these new museums arose to fill community needs when traditional institutions struggled and failed. Each new hybrid museum represents a community that was spared from losing a library, preschool, park, house of worship, health center, and other valuable, community-dependent organizations and facilities.

**Adam Rozan**

Adam Rozan is director of The Museum, a collection of physical objects used to engage artists and innovators in preparation for the 22nd century.

#Museum2040 #HybridMuseums #MuseumsAndHealth #MuseumsSocialServices #MuseumsAndSpirituality @adamrozan



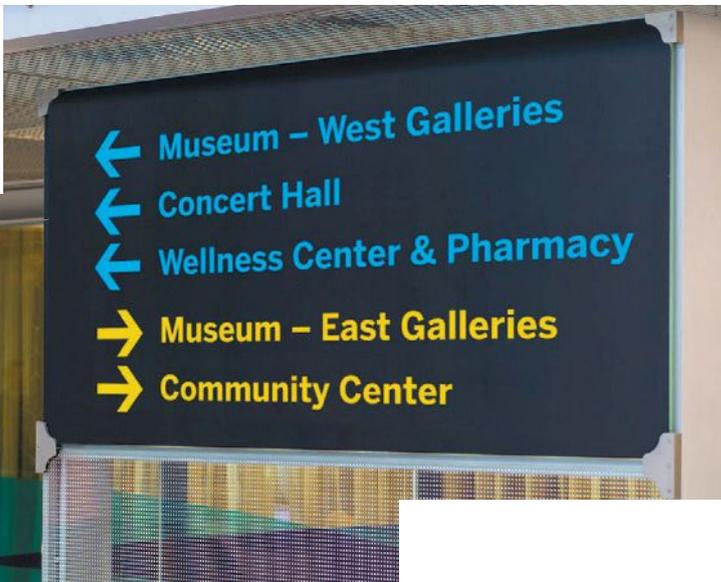
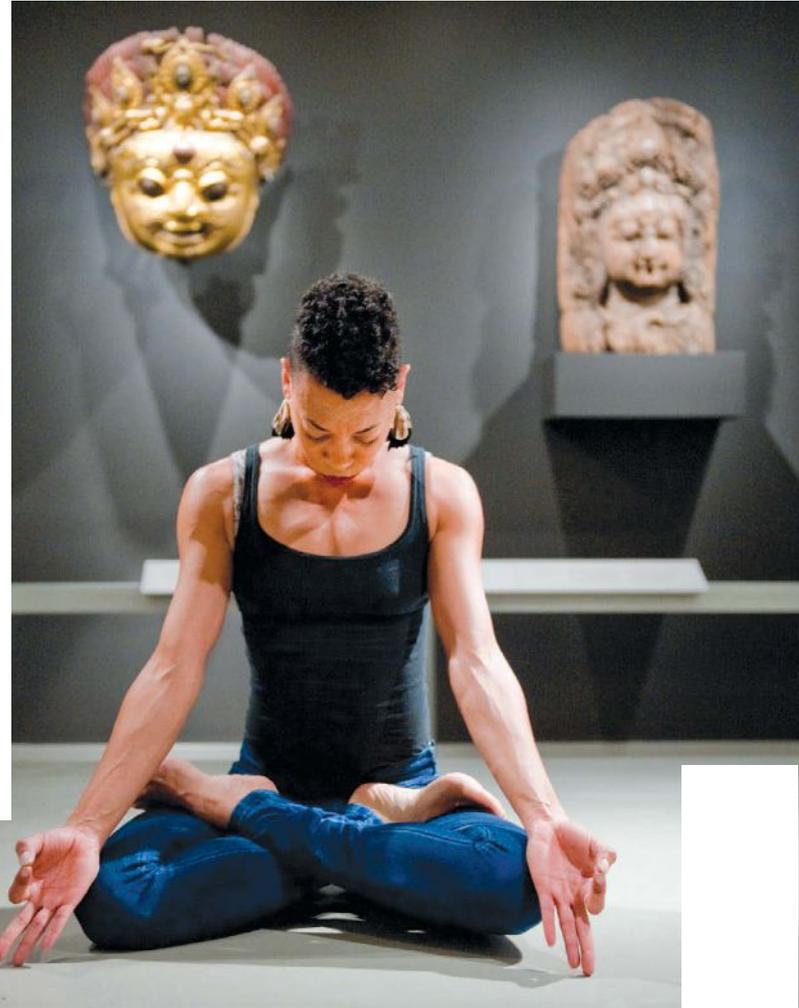
**H**ow did this happen? How did we go from a static concept of “stuff in a building open 10–5 Tuesday through Sunday” to the fluid, dynamic, community-centered institutions of today? The modern museum evolved out of financial necessity and the realization that our offerings, at the turn of the century, were no longer relevant and of benefit to society. We had become unsustainable mausoleums, with dated business and programmatic models. We let our history constrain our vision, clinging to a business-as-usual approach regardless of whether the public cared or came. We found ourselves closed off from the world in many respects, standing idly by as our industry languished.

To survive, some museums merged; others went out of business—selling their collections or giving them to other institutions. Even as some small to midsize institutions closed, many large founder-funded institutions opened, along with private for-profit museums and thematic museums, competing for donors, audiences, and media attention. The overall picture was bleak. By 2025, museum attendance had reached historic lows, and close to 10 percent of museums that existed in 2000 had closed their doors.

But museums rallied, challenging our old paradigms and letting ourselves be guided by the needs of our communities. Out of the darkness, a new type of museum emerged, one that no longer looked inward to a self-serving mission or offering one-sided “community partnerships.” We became open and accessible, revolutionary in our thinking and our operations. Museums reinvented themselves as civic spaces, embracing social responsibilities; we became institutions whose purpose was to change the world.

Some of the most successful new museums of this century are those that focus on changing the world in specific ways: museums dedicated to combating climate change, rising sea levels, deforestation, and violence; reducing homelessness; promoting

*Meditation room at the Saint George Museum of Art, Utah.*



*Community health services at the Lansing Museum include “prescriptions for art” to reduce stress and improve cognitive functioning.*



**Often, these new museums arose to fill community needs when traditional institutions struggled and failed. Each new hybrid museum represents a community that was spared from losing a library, preschool, park, house of worship, health center, and other valuable, community-dependent organizations and facilities.**

enlightened immigration policies; and fostering their communities' health and well-being. In some instances, museums have shored up failing civic infrastructure. When health and social service organizations began to struggle in the face of rising rents and dwindling government funding, many museums reached out to provide space and programmatic support. Eventually, some museums folded these social services into their missions—in doing so, better serving their purpose and becoming truly essential civic institutions. These institutions provided a valuable lesson for all of us, showing that museums can be flexible in facility, structure, and programming while remaining true to their museum nature.

To reinvigorate our sector, some museums looked to libraries for inspiration. Looking back, we can see how libraries built on a long tradition of doing more than lending books. In the early 21st century, they stepped up to meet the needs of their communities by lending tools, seeds, even plots of land to grow vegetables; providing training and access to computers; and focusing on community-oriented thinking. Libraries pioneered the practice of hiring staff dedicated to serving the homeless and connecting people with social services—now such staff are common, if not expected, in museums as well. And even as libraries decreased their emphasis on lending books, museums ramped up their focus on lending objects—a practice whose history dates back to early university museums that lent art collections to students and faculty. It has become a given for museums to operate maker spaces and digital fabrication labs, enabling audiences to digitally print and manipulate the data of our collections. In time,



***The Dawkins Center at the Museum of Science in Naperville, Illinois, combines a preschool enrichment program with eldercare services.***

museums began to experiment with lending their staff; and eventually, through artificial intelligence and virtual reality, we were partnered with our audiences around information sharing and learning.

Some museums have taken on functions once relegated to houses of worship, becoming places of faith, spirituality, and reflection. Museums with specialized religious collections often incorporate chapels, meditation rooms, or other dedicated spaces for religious practice. This role evolved in part due to the number of houses of worship that closed in the first decades of the century, stressed by rising operating costs, dwindling memberships, and changing audience demographics. Due to these constraints, synagogues, mosques, and churches usually share sanctuary, education, and community spaces with other religious communities. Where a community once housed three or more separate faith-based organizations, they often now house one. Often, these organizations also function as community museums, housing art and history collections; collecting the oral histories, photographs, and keepsakes of their communities; and running outreach, health, and social service programs. These new spiritually based museums run schools and adult daycares, and employ chaplains and theologians. They provide a new form of community space and give rise to some of the most interesting exhibitions and related programs happening now in our sector. So, this is another fertile area of hybrid practice.



***Lunch at the Community Health Center at the Museum of Art and History in Utica, New York***

School  
 Adult Daycare  
 Maker Space  
 Social Service  
 Wellness Center  
 Park  
 Clinic  
 Green Space  
 Community Center  
 Classroom  
 Counseling  
 Chapel  
 Meditation Room  
 Library  
 Urban Farm  
 Safe Space

The ways in which our field has responded to the challenges of the 21st century have led society to see us as linchpins in our collective ability to meet the future head on. However, assuming this position of leadership involved sacrifice. We saw longstanding positions that were symbols of our field change, evolve when possible, and dissipate when not. The word “curator” once meant a person responsible for collecting, organizing, and presenting objects. Now, it signifies a person who is responsible for helping people access museum resources in order to fill their needs. A curator today is in many ways akin to a 20th-century librarian.

Artificial intelligence in its myriad of forms has supplemented our work, taking on automatable tasks while enabling humans to focus on human skills. As museum security came to rely more on technology, guards spent more of their time acting as ambassadors, over time becoming our gallery and community liaisons, providing assistance and troubleshooting when necessary. The transition from museum guard to museum facilitator was driven by the fact that our museums needed more staff out in our public spaces—yes, for the safety of our objects, but more importantly, for the safety and engagement of our public. Today’s museum facilitators employ empathy and social intelligence to assist the modern-day museumgoer.

As we changed our staffing models to accommodate the influx of visitors, expanded usages of our facilities and online resources, and the other ever-growing demands on our museums, we saw a hiring boom in the areas of technology, audience experience and engagement, and marketing and communications. As museums moved away from a scholarly focus to a community one, from academic to popular, from selective to inclusive, we rebuilt our staffing strategies around ways to engage our communities. We hired social workers and counselors, therapists and psychologists, artists and musicians, engineers and web developers. We hired storytellers and clergy. We hired with the intent of fostering an engaged public and creating modern, contemporary institutions. Now, in addition to museum educators, we have personal learning mentors who help young people match their passions to the resources in their communities. And much of our work, from design to research, is distributed—drawing on the expertise of amateur and professional experts around the globe.

***The Minneapolis Museum of Art and Culture provides worship spaces for six local congregations of various faiths. This shrine is maintained by the local Buddhist community.***

Museum have long functioned as third places—social centers of our communities. This role expanded in the early 21st century as museums adjusted rules and policies, expanded hours of operation, and rearranged their spaces. First floors that were once reserved for admissions, stores, and high-profile galleries were redesigned as flexible, adaptive public spaces, filled with seating and tables, books, food and drink, computers, and other tools of the digital age. Our public came to treat these new spaces as indoor extensions of our public parks. Museums rethought their land as well and now steward a significant fraction of the public green space in our crowded cities. Museums as community resources have become even more important as levels of employment, and the average workweek, have decreased. People have more free time on their hands, and museums have become valued community spaces in which to socialize as well as learn.

Even museums that continue to hew more closely to the traditional format have changed in significant ways. Many art museums shifted, for example, from a national and international focus to one that is local and regional as their institutions became entwined with organizations and members of their communities. Exhibitions now tell the active stories of what’s happening in their communities, often created entirely by the public with support from institutions. Museums embrace relationships over projects, truly giving over spaces to community artists and activists. Removing stipulations and limitations, allowing for these exchanges of ideas, activities, and stories to take place in evolving installations over months, not days, in effect creates community residencies.

Technology provided us new ways to realize our dreams, yet it was the public, through how they chose to spend their time, attention, and money, that had the biggest impact on our organizations. Institutions



today are no longer obsessed with bigger, newer buildings and ever-expanding collections. They've moved on, placing more value on creating better, smarter, more community-oriented facilities and resources. These efforts are paying off. Attendance has steadily increased over the past two decades, with upward of 80 percent of Americans visiting a museum, physically or virtually, three or more times a week. Our institutions report record attendance—but over the past few years, we are starting to see institutions that don't even bother to measure attendance, recognizing it as a shallow proxy for what really matters. Our boards, supporters, and funders know that the most important measure of success is the impact that museums have on the health, happiness, and engagement of our communities.

Yet there is an even more crucial role that museums can play in helping their communities navigate the current challenges of work: unemployment, underemployment, part-time labor with no benefits, and rapid changes in the workforce. Much of today's work and tomorrow's is being invented in real time, and the need for continual job training has become paramount. Today and in the future, I see museums playing a critical role as what I am calling "fourth places," where people come to work, learn, and teach each other. In an era when higher education has become unaffordable and impractical for many, museums can serve as sources of continuing education. When self-employment and entrepreneurship are the best roads to economic mobility, museums can serve as incubators for



new businesses. A widely cited report has forecast that 20 percent of the jobs that will exist in 2060 haven't been invented yet. Museums can empower people to anticipate, even invent these new roles.

As we look ahead, we see plans for museums in outer space and at the bottom of our oceans. One day, we will visit museums on Mars and other reaches of our known universe. But never forget that the biggest, most important innovations we can make are right here in our own institutions—in how we define the purpose of our organizations, the missions that we create to accomplish our purpose, and how we measure success. Having seen how far we have come in the past few decades, I have every confidence museums will continue to reinvent themselves to meet the challenges of the future. Thank you.

*Laray Birch, first poet-in-residence at the Los Angeles Metropolis Museum of Art and Culture, leading a poetry slam workshop in 2032.*

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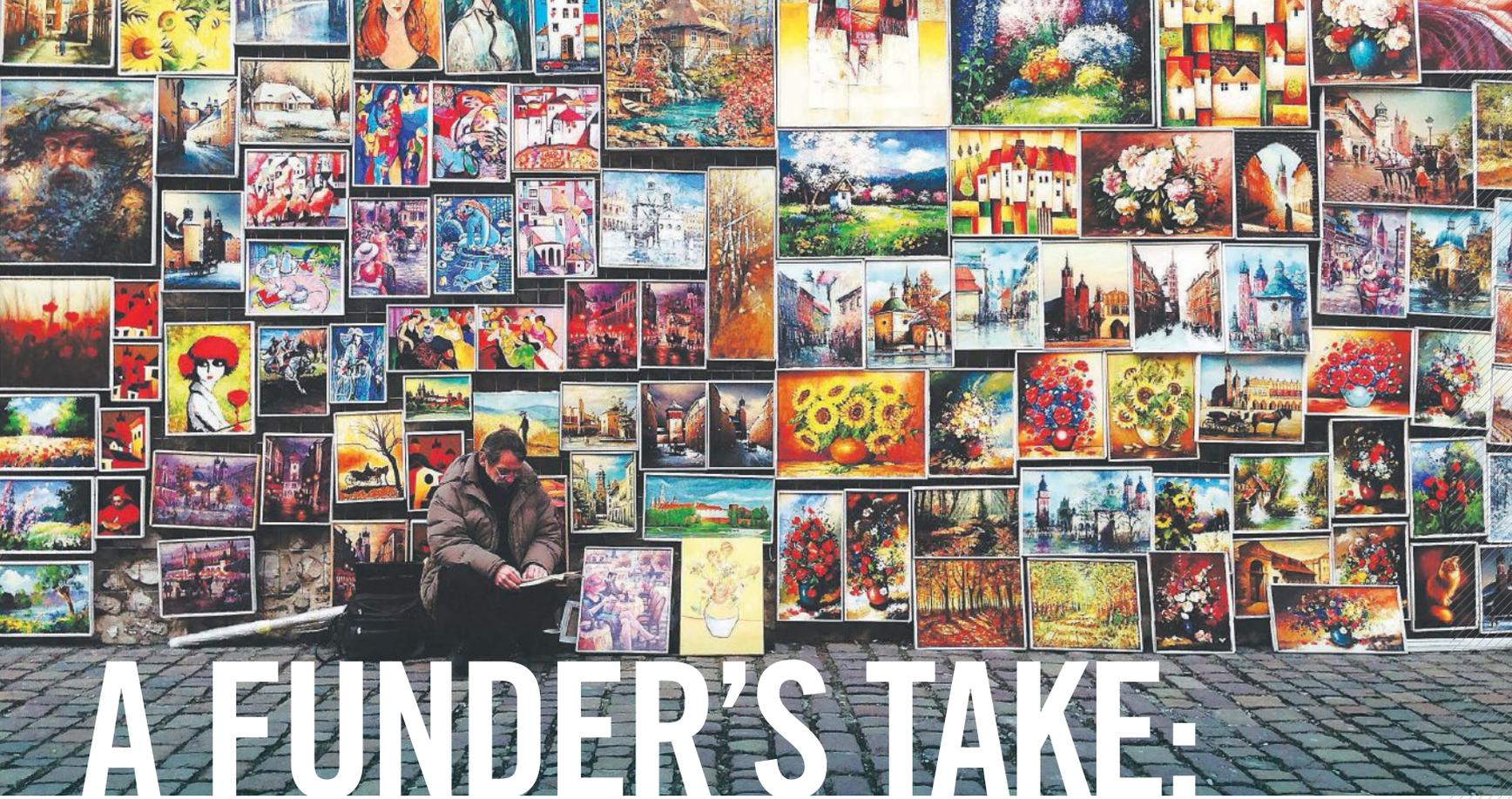
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## How Museum Professionals and Citizen Artists Are Reinventing Our Cultural Institutions

As a funder, I know that cultural institutions are critical to the vitality of our communities. But in the past decade, the philanthropic sector has underappreciated the role museums have played in buffering our experience of economic transformation. While broader society is grappling with the effects of automation, machine learning, and artificial intelligence—and the resultant disarray of our human workforce—citizen artists and museum professionals have been quietly forging a new path. Learning from them will be essential to broader strategies for community vitality.

### Proliferation of Cultural Producers

For decades, cities focused their efforts on building amenities that would attract the so-called creative class to their communities, using that as a strategy for revitalization. But over the past decade, we've seen a shift in focus. Revitalization no longer depends on a certain "class" of people who are doing creative work. Rather, it hinges on everyday people—folks who hadn't considered themselves artists or storytellers before and are now becoming cultural producers. As machines complete more and more of their productive tasks, these are the folks who have surplus time for creative output.

As the Industrial Revolution changed people's relationship to time, this current transformation is changing people's relationship to creativity.

How will museums respond? We are already seeing examples of museums serving as hubs for so-called New Creatives: people who had been in traditional jobs but are

now redirecting to creative pursuits. For example, consider the community of Fresno, California. It used to be known for taking the leading spot in lists like "Top 10 US Cities with Jobs at Risk of Automation." But recently, its community college has partnered with Art Fresno, allowing the college to use the museum as a site for rapidly retraining the workforce. In turn, the museum is leveraging community college instructors to help power its arts programming, as demand is far outpacing available staff time.

The good news in all of this? We are living in a Renaissance moment of sorts, with many more people practicing art of all forms and even forging new genres of artistic practice. We live in an art-rich environment today! The bad news? Museums that have recently gone through the laborious (and sometimes painful) process of deaccessioning, reshaping their collections to fit evolving missions, are now overwhelmed by a tidal wave of offers from artists and collectors wishing to donate new works. This rapid pace of acquisition is difficult to manage and requires new forms of gatekeeping for factors ranging from quality control to diverse representation and more.

The social safety net isn't changing fast enough to support this volume of "citizen artists." The Universal Basic Income Act of 2033 helped somewhat, but this attempt at providing unconditional support for all citizens is not adequate to support the growing self-employed creative class. In the meantime, people who make art their full-time occupation are having the same conversation that artists have been having for decades: how to get proper credit and payment for creative work.

#Museum2040 #CitizenArtists #BasicIncome #Blockchain @rachelkeas

Rachel Hatch is a program officer for community vitality at the McConnell Foundation and an alumna of Institute for the Future. This article is adapted from her presentation and panel at the Council on Foundations (April 2040).

Rachel Hatch

## Changing Ownership Models for Objects in Collections

The most hopeful model for cultural producers to be properly compensated in this economic environment builds on advances in licensing and ownership models for artworks and cultural artifacts. The shift began in the twenty-teens with the rise of blockchain technology—secure, encrypted, decentralized digital ledgers that track transactions. Museum professionals first became familiar with blockchain through the advent of tools for tracking the provenance of works of art.

Now, cultural producers are using these tools on the other side of the equation: to track the ownership and use of their output and protect their rights as creators. Some of the early players in this space—Ascribe, Artlery, Mycelia—are now well known. Cultural producers are leveraging the key properties of blockchain to create an immutable record of their creative role in a particular piece. Any exchange of the work is governed by so-called smart contracts—a type of legal agreement that is executed via computer code.

The breakthrough moment in artistic adoption of blockchain came in 2028 when Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter Sam Uchibori released the song *Arrived* and registered it on Mycelia. A single phrase went viral, and Uchibori quickly tracked the creation of 170,000 properly credited derivative works. In just three days, he made almost \$80,000, all from four measures of music. Artists now routinely sift through creations by other people, inspired by their work, and the system builds on itself.



Another notable pioneer of blockchain to protect artists' rights is indigenous basket-weaving artist Jonathon Frank. Each basket Frank creates is logged in the blockchain registry Immutable. When he works with the California Museum of First Peoples in Sacramento, for example, he retains ownership of his basket (per the ledger) but licenses it to the museum for the requested duration of time. He receives compensation at the microtransaction level on a per-view basis, using the museum's sensor network. When the California Museum of First Peoples adds his piece to a touring collection it is putting together for 2043, the smart contract will follow the basket to each venue in which it appears, complete with digital rights management for images taken of the original object. Venues that drive higher engagement with the basket will receive a larger portion of each microtransaction.



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## Curating in an Age of Human-Machine Symbiosis

The other piece we can't ignore as we consider community vitality is how the people in our communities interact with their machine partners in the creative process. This applies to arts and culture just as it does to business. We are still working out the social and legal ramifications of these partnerships. The regulations surrounding intellectual property ownership for artificial intelligence-generated works of art are still a conflicted mess. Does the algorithm creator own the resulting work? Should there be a "robot tax" on the productive output of AI? Many issues remain unresolved.

But art created through human-machine symbiosis is becoming more common, not only in the coastal megacities but also in Middle America. The Kansas City Art Museum's recent acquisition of *Glisten* (an AI-created piece of art) sparked a debate about who to credit as the artist—the human who designed the algorithm, the human who purchased the canvas and presented it to the robot, the robot itself, or all three?

Today, curators, registrars, and digital rights managers



*Works by Turing, an AI artist that went online in 2035, appear in the collections of five major museums.*

need to be well-versed in so-called "computational creativity" and associated issues. There are now 10 peer-reviewed journals dedicated to the topic, and new graduate degree programs are popping up every day.

The upshot? This collaboration with our machine partners exposes humans to new genres of creativity that lead to a richer life experience. At the same time, it raises some fundamental questions about what differentiates humans as a species. As they display this art, museums can help the public grapple with these disruptive questions of meaning and identity.

## Museums Professionals Address the Crisis of Meaning

Humans have been struggling to define what sets homo sapiens apart for millennia. Think of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, in which he declares that "the animals other than man live by appearances and memories, and have but little of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasonings." Let's face it: today, we feel less differentiated in that regard.

In the United States, one of the "connected experiences" that used to shape our days was traditional 9–5, place-based work. The first jobs to be disrupted by robots and AI were those that are routine or repetitive. The strongest job sectors now are those that require human empathy and high-order thinking. In this context, the meaning-making and storytelling functions of museums rise in importance.

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One of the best examples of museums' empathic work can be found in Wilmington, North Carolina, where staff of the Museum of History and Culture have partnered with New Hanover County to battle an opioid epidemic that is now in its second full generation. Structural unemployment spurred by automation has a high correlation with increased opioid use, and Wilmington is struggling with both low employment rates and high rates of addiction. Wilmington, like many other cities, is capitalizing on the demonstrated ability of cultural organizations to contribute to health and well-being. How do museums change when they embrace this role?

Many museums now see themselves primarily as communal centers for cultural production and interpretation, rather than as buildings where important objects are stored and displayed. The efficacy of this approach is beginning to gain recognition. Just

last year, the Youngstown Art Museum received a Healthcare Hero award from the Ohio Public Health Association. Soon after, Ohio Humanities honored the Akron Center for Science and the Imagination for its work with recently unemployed individuals.

Clearly, in an era that many describe as "a crisis of meaning," museums have a lot to offer.

### Impacts on the Funding Landscape for Museums

Today, we see modest but significant new income streams for museums. For instance, some dollars from the education sector are being channeled to museums for rapid retraining and workforce redeployment. In the healthcare sector, we are seeing an uptick in impact investments in museum programs that produce measurable improvements in well-being. As has long been the trend, we see a fair number of high-wealth individuals founding, and funding, their own museums, such as the Cambridge Robotic Art Center in Massachusetts and the Post-Industry Memorial in Detroit.

The real challenge for funders in 2040 and beyond will be to generate a set of robust frameworks (and accompanying metrics) for how museums are contributing to community vitality in this transformed environment. We have indeed underappreciated the role museums are playing in buffering our experience of economic transformation. It is up to us to more accurately see and assess the value of this work, and to support the changing role of these cultural institutions in moving us forward.

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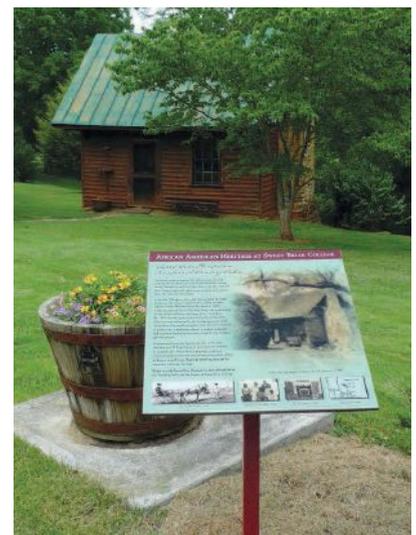
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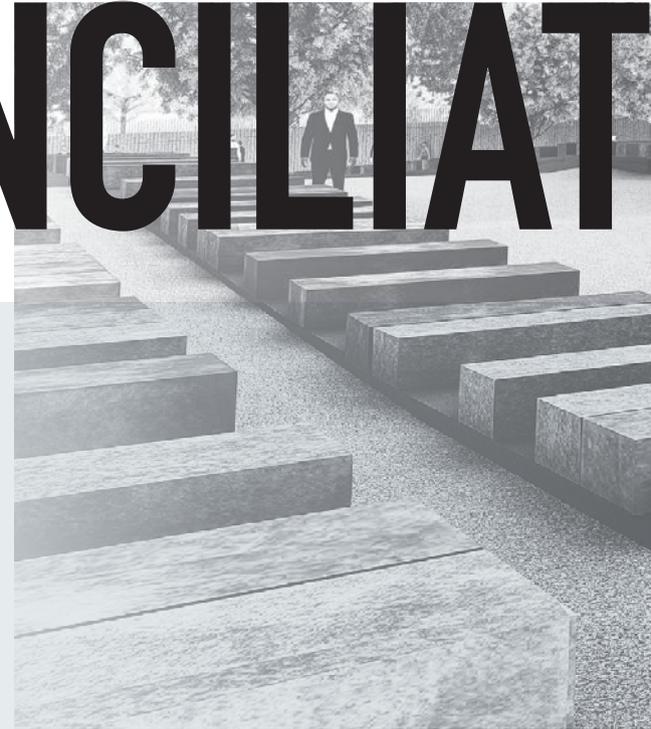
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# TRUTH + RECONCILIATION

## MUSEUMS AS ADVOCATES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HEALING

In 2032,

President Kamala Harris established a task force to study the feasibility of creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) like the one established in 1995 to help South Africa heal from the damage inflicted by apartheid. This task force, led by then Senator Sanai Eaton-Martínez, issued a report that concluded that the United States has not fully dealt with the atrocities and long-term impact of the genocide of First Nation peoples, enslavement of Africans, and incongruent immigration policies toward non-white peoples.



Omar Eaton-Martínez, PhD

SECRETARY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Dr. Eaton-Martínez has long described himself as a change agent, scholar, advocate, Bible student, and teacher. To this list, he now adds: the president's dad.

#Museum2040 #MuseumHealing #MuseumsCombatOppression #US\_TRC @OEatonMartinez

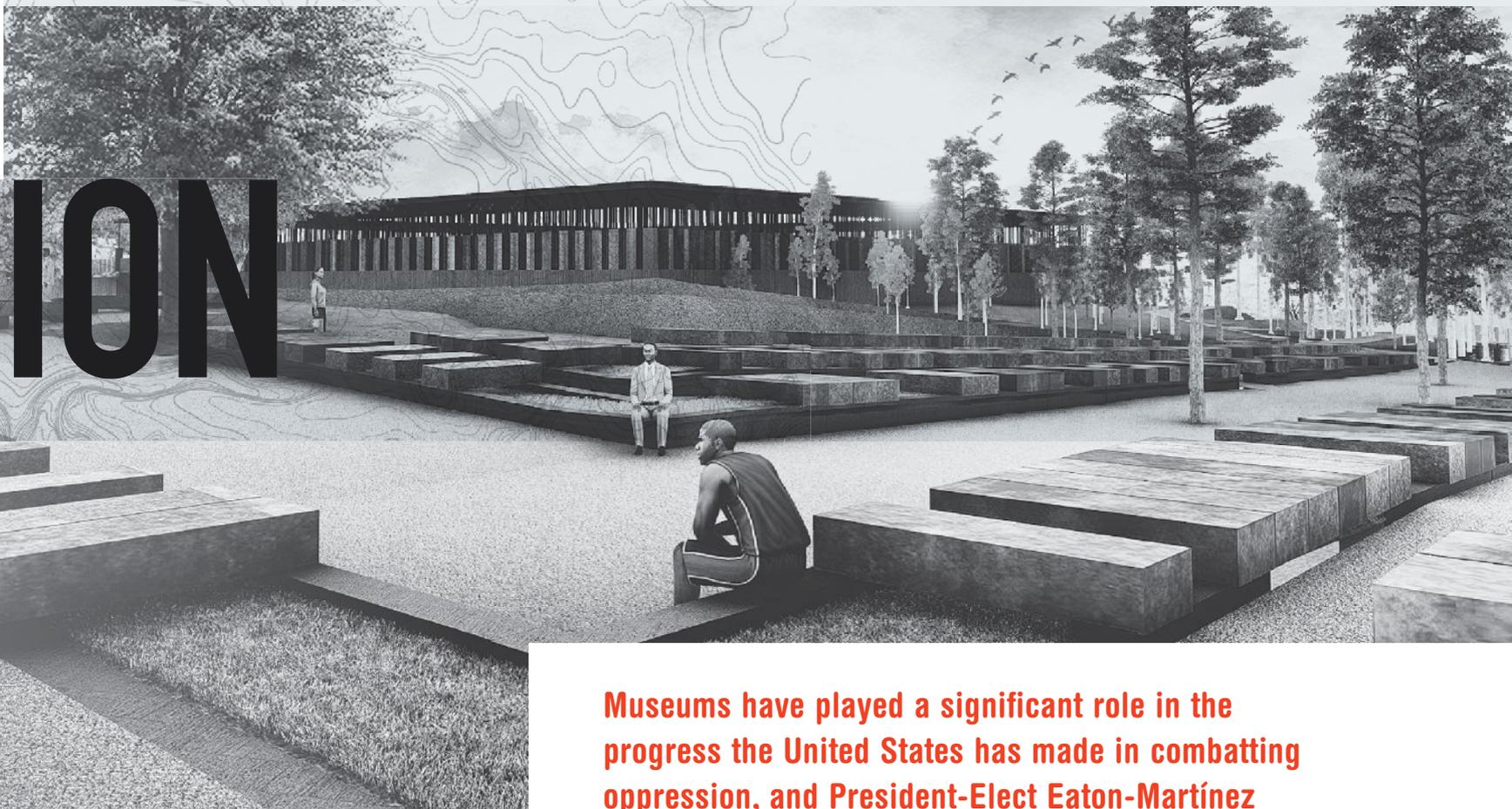
Now, in the wake of the recent election, President-Elect Eaton-Martínez has announced that one of her first actions as POTUS will be to act on the recommendations of the report, creating a TRC that will enable Americans to come to terms with their past on a morally accepted basis and to advance the cause of reconciliation.

In her victory speech, which pundits have titled "Mea Culpa," President-Elect Eaton-Martínez also acknowledged the role and responsibility that the American government has had in perpetuating systems of oppression. She apologized for the many barbarities, murders, and crimes against humanity that have been silenced by those in power. Her humility and repentance galvanized the American people as she modeled true servant leadership.

Museums have played a significant role in the progress the United States has made in combatting oppression, and President-Elect Eaton-Martínez made it clear in her remarks that she sees America's museums as crucial partners in this effort. Even a brief examination of the events of the last few decades shows how intertwined our field has been with the struggle to come to terms with the country's history of racial oppression. We can find many individuals, groups, and organizations in our field whose work exemplifies how we can contribute to the hard work that is to come.

The TRC comes as an aftermath of centuries of unresolved oppression, which has privileged leaders who are too proud to apologize and who consider admitting culpability to be a sign of weakness. Consequently, we have seen social movements evolve from the Twittersphere like #BlackLivesMatter in 2013, #MuseumsRespondtoFerguson in 2014, and #MuseumsSoWhite in 2016. The blogosphere also has produced provocative writings that critically analyze systems of oppression and how museum

ION



*When the Equal Justice Initiative's Memorial to Peace and Justice opened in Montgomery, Alabama, in 2018, it was the country's first national memorial to victims of lynching.*

**Museums have played a significant role in the progress the United States has made in combatting oppression, and President-Elect Eaton-Martínez made it clear in her remarks that she sees America's museums as crucial partners in this effort.**

spaces perpetuated or rebuked them: sites like the InCluseum, Visitors of Color, Black Girls Museum Blog, Cabinet of Curiosities, and the Heritage Salon, to name just a few.

Initiatives in the museum sector, such as 2018's Museum as Site for Social Action (MASS Action) toolkit, have prompted museums to reimagine their spaces as venues for communities to mobilize around human rights issues. During the same period, the work of social justice-centered mobile museums like Monica Montgomery's Museum of Impact, the first of its kind, and the Justice Fleet empowered visitors to transform from bystanders to "upstanders" and fostered community healing through art, play, and dialogue. Finally, coalition-building movements like Museums and Race and Museum Hue brought together professionals of color and white allies to challenge institutional policies and systems that perpetuate oppression in museums and to advocate for people of color in arts, culture, history, science, education, museums, and creative economy.

Another notable milestone in our progress toward redressing injustice came in 1989, when Bryan Stevenson founded the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI). The organization is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. From its inception, one of the ways EJI has engaged in this work is through cultural projects that illuminate the history of slavery, lynching, and segregation. In 2013, EJI erected markers that documented the domestic slave trade in Montgomery, Alabama, and gave visibility to a devastating period in American history that too few people acknowledge or understand. Five years later, Stevenson opened the National Memorial to Peace and Justice (NMPJ) and the From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration Museum (FEMM) near Montgomery.

NMPJ was the first of many memorials in the United States dedicated to the racial terror of lynching, and it arose at a time when historians and artists were beginning to confront a number of suppressed

histories. Vincent Valdez's series of larger-than-life paintings titled *The Strangest Fruit* was inspired by the erased history of lynched Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the United States from the late 1800s well into the 1930s. That series, and the exhibitions and symposia organized around them in 2013 and 2014, unveiled white supremacy's storied violence against Mexican Americans. Starting in 2020, many historical markers and memorials were established commemorating the Mexicans and Mexican Americans who were terrorized, persecuted, and lynched by angry whites in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and California.

The rise of these types of memorials coincided with a growing movement to remove Confederate monuments. This period of challenging the American exceptionalist narrative is particularly remembered for the violence that occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 12, 2017. White supremacists protesting the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee were met by counter-demonstrators standing against hate. A woman named Heather Heyer was killed by a car driven into the crowd where she was standing in peaceful protest.

The fear, anger, and passion attached to Confederate monuments made them objects of power. Calls to remove flags, statues, and other such symbols from places of public honor were invariably accompanied by the suggestion that this power be constrained and rendered safe by consigning the memorials to museums. So, even as museums were helping to surface some stories and memories that had long been suppressed, they were entrusted with the task of contextualizing and detoxifying others.

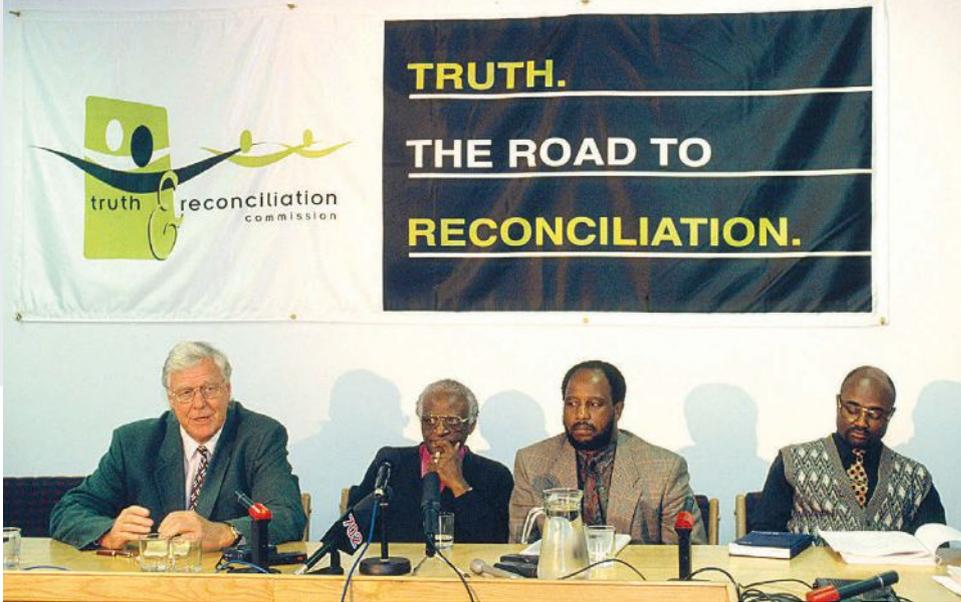


**So, even as museums were helping to surface some stories and memories that had long been suppressed, they were entrusted with the task of contextualizing and detoxifying others.**

Museums have a long history of harnessing technologies in service of their missions. In 2014, the Center for Civil and Human Rights' Human Rights Movement gallery, "Spark of Conviction," made notably effective use of interactive technology. When it opened in 2016, the Smithsonian's own National Museum of African American History and Culture featured compelling video testimonials integrated into its history galleries. And FEMM's impact on visitors through exhibitions and programs exploring the legacy of slavery, racial terrorism, segregation, and issues of mass incarceration, excessive punishment, and police violence was amplified by the fact that the museum launched just as virtual reality (VR) technology was beginning to mature. The museum used VR to immerse visitors in the sights and sounds of the domestic slave trade, racial terrorism, and the Jim Crow South. Over the past two decades, the museum's visuals and data-rich exhibits have given millions of virtual visitors the opportunity to investigate America's history of racial injustice.

In 2030, inspired by FEMM's successful use of VR, a team of computer scientists named We Are Wakanda (WAW) developed an advanced immersive virtual technology to support a program they called "Take a Walk in My Shoes" (TAWIMS). This now-familiar program allows the user to explore a virtual world as a person with a different ethno-racial, gender, or sexual orientation. As museums nationwide began to reorganize missions, visions, and governance to more evenly distribute power and privilege, WAW decided that TAWIMS would be most effectively deployed in museums. Now, TAWIMS installations are in at least one museum per state and US territory, and the program's impact has caught the attention of lawmakers, critical race scholars, and museum professionals all over the world. The experiences that TAWIMS produces have changed the lives of liberals, conservatives, and moderates, people from across the spectrum of political thought. It is WAW's hope that these transformational experiences will provide a new context for the oppressed and the oppressor, fostering civil dialogue so that people can discuss differences, discover similarities, and tear down the wall of hostility built by greed and irrational fear.

*Filmmaker, musician, and activist Bree Newsome is celebrated in art and popular culture for her bravery in scaling a flagpole to remove a Confederate flag from the South Carolina State House in 2015.*



*The restorative justice work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, shown here circa 1996, served as an inspiration for the founders of the US TRC.*

**“In South Africa, you can’t go there without learning about the history of apartheid. In Rwanda, you cannot spend time there without being told about the legacy of the genocide. If you go to Germany today, in Berlin there are monuments and memorials and stones that mark the spaces where Jewish families were abducted...but in America, we don’t talk about slavery, we don’t talk about lynching, we don’t talk about segregation.**

**So now, it’s time to talk about it. We want to build this museum From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration. We want people to understand there is this line from slavery to the racial bias and discrimination that we see today that needs to be understood. We want people to come through our museum and walk out with an opportunity to do something. We hope that they’d be prepared to say something that sounds like ‘Never again should we tolerate racial bias and injustice in our country.’”**

**— BRYAN STEVENSON,**  
founder and executive director, Equal Justice Initiative  
APRIL 2017

**M**useums’ history of success in addressing hard conversations, in virtual worlds and in real life, has laid the groundwork for their next great work—assisting in the work of truth and reconciliation. The challenge of truth commissions of the past has been confronting the narratives of state violence and other human rights abuses. The TRC recognizes that the social issue of today is the “how” of reconciliation. Because museums have demonstrated their capacity as sites of social action,

the TRC task force recommended that they receive federal funding to create immersive experiences that, coupled with facilitated dialogue, will create spaces of reconciliation for all people. This funding would help museums build coalitions that emphasize historical clarifications around slavery, genocide against First Nation peoples, and patriarchal narratives. This funding will also encourage museums to challenge American exceptionalist notions that silence the past and present suffering of communities of color.

We have many good examples of the kind of work that can be amplified with this support. The Museum of Impact has grown into an international network of mobile social justice museums. Similarly, the Justice Fleet’s “Radical Forgiveness” exhibition has become a template for audience engagement in museums. The TRC foregrounds dialogue that is led by apology. Reconciliation can only be successful if there is radical forgiveness.

Learning from the failures, as well as the successes, of the South African TRC, the US TRC will not attempt to deal with reparations through punitive actions. President-Elect Eaton-Martínez touched on this in her “Mea Culpa” speech: “In order for this country to heal through truth and reconciliation, we must repent of the wrongdoings of the past with a sincere heart of humility...the late Desmond Tutu, one of the founders of the Truth and Reconciliation movement in South Africa said, ‘True reconciliation is never cheap, for it is based on forgiveness, which is costly. Forgiveness in turn depends on repentance, which has to be based on an acknowledgment of what was done wrong, and therefore on disclosure of the truth. You cannot forgive what you do not know.’ We must heal and strengthen ourselves to be able to create a paradigm shift around equity for all people.”

The trust that the president and the TRC task force place in museums as catalysts for dialogue around truth, reconciliation, and healing have solidified these organizations’ role as anchors in our communities. Museums have expanded their capacity to seek the truth and convene discussions while giving agency to those who have not been heard. They have an ability to make connections about cultural similarities and differences in order to transform behavior, removing barriers and organically incentivizing collaboration. Finally, museums have expressed a willingness to share power and decolonize museum practice so that we can all heal and have a true sense of home and belonging.

## Standing with Our Ancestors

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Standing with Our Ancestors is a concept a millennium in the making. Cultural institutions around the world have collaborated to create an experience that marries the physical and virtual worlds to help visitors explore their origins and understand their place in the larger historical picture. Guests can access this experience via new permanent exhibitions at state historical museums in the United States and at other collaborating museums around the globe.



Once visitors provide access to their personal DNA profiles, the exhibition offers a virtual tour through space and time that shares experiences their ancestors likely encountered. Visitors can see and touch objects, hear conversations and sounds, smell scents, and experience the weather in the times and places their ancestors lived—from prehistory to the present. This tour, which can also be accessed through home VR rigs, allows visitors to start and end when they want and skip periods of time so they can explore their stories at their own pace. Visitors accessing the tour via a physical

exhibition are also provided with a guide to archival documents and artifacts in the host museum's collections related to their own family history, as well as an index to relevant materials in collections worldwide.

The exhibition platform was designed and programmed by a consortium of design teams across the United States, drawing on unparalleled databases and collections of physical and digital information from hundreds of museums worldwide. On permanent exhibition at participating cultural institutions.

## RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

## Museum Programs and Health Outcomes

The venture philanthropy group Health Equity 2050 has published the results of a three-year pilot project testing the effectiveness of using museum programs to improve health outcomes. The project invested \$15 million in 30 science centers throughout the United States to create programs, exhibitions, and virtual engagement experiences designed to influence locally relevant social determinants of health.

Innovation Zone in Severn City, Michigan, tackled local food deserts. A public program in science-based policy advocacy helped the museum's neighbors to successfully lobby municipal and state officials for increased water and soil remediation near a former industrial site. The surrounding land was then devoted to urban farming, providing a local source of healthy, affordable food. A mixed-method evaluation of this program showed evidence of improved nutrition outcomes for local residents, as well as increased civic engagement and social resilience.

Mesa Alta Science Center in Casa Grande, Arizona, tested a project to improve outcomes for people experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by creating a unique therapeutic experience. The museum invited local residents with PTSD and local experts in diagnosis and treatment to co-create an exhibition about their experiences. Along with improved therapeutic outcomes for participants with PTSD, the resulting exhibition increased visitor awareness about triggers and symptoms and reduced the stigma attached to

the disorder. According to the museum's evaluation director, Olivia Garcia-Lee, another key outcome was the formation of social bonds between participants. "Folks of many backgrounds came together—combat veterans, refugees, ex-gang members, victims of abuse and human trafficking," she recalled. "Their empathy for each other resulted in supportive, persistent relationships and the creation of a nuanced, effective learning environment for the community."

Health Equity 2050 has deemed the initiative a success for meeting its targeted outcomes in a variety of settings, as well as yielding a return of 6.5 percent on its financial investment. The group intends to continue providing investment capital to museum partners with strong community relationships in order to improve social determinants of health.

***Download Museum Programs and Health Outcomes and explore other findings from Health Equity 2050 pilot sites by visiting AAM's online Museum Research Repository.***



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Jimmy Carter Presidential Museum – 1986



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Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum – 2003



George W. Bush Presidential Center – 2013



Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum – 2012



Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum – 2011



Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum – 1981



John F. Kennedy Presidential Library – 1979

## INDUSTRY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

# MUSEUM-Bang

While virtual reality (VR) has been used in museums for decades, MUSEUM-Bang, a new franchise from Magrit-Marcus Gesellschaft (MMG), is a different type of experience entirely. These distributed VR venues can “transport” users to any of an increasing number of international museums.

MMG first conceived of MUSEUM-Bang while prototyping GameTube™, a self-contained VR system that supports multiplayer gameplay with full visual, auditory, and tactile virtualization. After GameTube became a runaway success in the entertainment world, MMG identified virtual tourism as the next promising application for the platform. Gabriel Marcus, vice president of asset development, saw museums as a natural fit given the content and public interest. “We quickly recognized the possibilities for experiences of this type,” he noted. “We are using off-the-shelf methods to leverage our own proprietary technology in order to allow clients to visit the best museums in the world. This is where the virtual meets the authentic.”

The inspiration for MUSEUM-Bang came from the Korean PC bang (PC방 or PC Room) of the 2000s and 2010s, storefronts where patrons could play multiplayer computer games for an hourly fee. MMG replaced PCs with GameTubes™ and the selection of games with a selection of museums. By paying an hourly fee, visitors get to virtually visit any museum in the current catalog: more than two dozen international museums, each licensing its own appearance and content. Each five-foot-wide and eight-foot-tall pod provides a fully realistic VR experience of the museums. The proprietary design allows movement, interaction, and full audio-video in a virtual recreation built by MMG designers, who used the latest technology in both photogrammetry and 3D scanning to reproduce spaces in exacting detail.

One advantage MUSEUM-Bang has over the real world—where virtual truly meets the authentic—is the integration of digital assets. Users have access to AI-based language support (spoken, printed, and signed) and tour guides (available from

a selection of avatars). Visits via the MMG network can also be social: friends can enter the VR world together or link up via any MUSEUM-Bang in the world to share museum visits.



MUSEUM-Bang has also catalyzed the creation of many entirely virtual museums, offering participatory experiences in virtual galleries. For example, the Olympic Curling Museum offers VR visitors the chance to sweep a granite curling stone down the ice. The Orchestral Museum hosts participatory online concerts, and the Fort Sill Military Museum offers immersive virtual basic training.

While MMG is expanding into large mercantile areas and VR lounges as part of branded spaces, museums themselves were the first to franchise

MUSEUM-Bang. The franchise has proven to be a reliable profit center, particularly for medium-sized museums in small cities and rural areas. Several museums in the program have raised the initial capital for MUSEUM-Bang through philanthropic and tourism development funding. The platform is seen by funders and local government as a way to connect rural and isolated communities to the broader world, and promote international understanding through exposure to global culture. MUSEUM-Bang also provides valuable income to museums that join the program as VR destinations, through both licensing fees and revenue from in-VR sales of museum merchandise. Even better, MMG-funded research has established that use of MUSEUM-Bang increases real-world visitation of these museum partners—truly a win all around.

***As an Alliance museum discount provider, MUSEUM-Bang offers exclusive discounts on franchising and licensing agreements to AAM members.***

2017

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# VR HAS COME A LONG WAY



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## FUNDER SPOTLIGHT

# Jessica Liu-Rodriguez

PRINCIPAL AND CEO, AUTOTECH

At the 2040 AAM Annual Meeting in Quito, Ecuador, technology entrepreneur Jessica Liu-Rodriguez was recognized for the role she has played in fostering cultural impact investing and for the investments she personally has made in the museum sector. As an early proponent of social impact investment as a means of providing capital for cultural nonprofits, Liu-Rodriguez has helped to establish museums as good investments for those seeking to generate measurable social or environmental impacts along with robust financial returns. She also has helped to convince the museum sector of the need to document the large-scale impact of its work.

Over the past two decades, Liu-Rodriguez has invested more than \$20 million of her own funds in museum programs, with a twin focus on incarcerated youth and on early childhood education (ECE). The programs she has financed, designed to disrupt the “school to prison pipeline,” have resulted in significant declines in recidivism as well as higher educational attainment and employment rates among program participants. Liu-Rodriguez used the award ceremony to highlight her support of the Clark Art Institute’s Responding to Art Involves Self Expression, an alternative justice program that, with her support, has scaled its work to serve 98 communities across the nation, with operating income earned via contracts with local municipalities.

In her acceptance speech, Liu-Rodriguez also proudly named the 13 public museum schools launched with her support, describing how they contrasted with her own childhood. “When I was growing up, our education system operated on the assumption that learning could only happen in a classroom,” she noted.

Liu-Rodriguez has been recognized by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Association for Childhood Education International for the long-term, longitudinal study she implemented to assess her investments in ECE. Now in its 15th year, the Museum ECE Longitudinal



Study has tracked the effects of high-quality early childhood education delivered in museum settings for more than 80,000 program participants. The study documents the positive effects of museum ECE on social and emotional skills, resilience, well-being, and educational attainments.

In 2025, Liu-Rodriguez founded the Cultural Impact Investment fund (CII), offering portfolios of high-impact museum projects to investors seeking to

maximize the good their money does for the world. The CII portfolio includes art, science, and natural history museums as well as a large and growing cadre of museums with missions specifically devoted to producing social outcomes. Liu-Rodriguez said she is particularly proud of the fact that CII has maintained an average financial return of 5 percent—outperforming many conventional funds over the same period and proving that investors don’t have to sacrifice financial returns to support social good.

Accepting the award at the conference, Liu-Rodriguez spoke about the influence museums have had on her own success. “I created my first start-up as a member of the New Museum’s business incubator, New, Inc.,” she recalled. “Staff couldn’t have been more supportive, and the outstanding community of members and alumni have been mentors for me throughout my career.”



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## ACCREDITATION SPOTLIGHT

# Newport Cultural Ecosystem

LOCATION: NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND — FIRST ACCREDITED: 2040

The Newport Cultural Ecosystem is the first entity to receive AAM accreditation in a new category that assesses not an individual institution or even a museum system, but the entire cultural landscape of a city, town, or region. This assessment requires collaboration among the area's museums, government, school system, libraries, and relevant arts, culture, and history/heritage nonprofits. The organizations complete a self-study and welcome peer reviewers for a site visit that assesses how well they work together to engage and enrich their community members.

When asked why Newport was willing to invest its time and resources in this comprehensive review, Accreditation Coordinator Valerie Salas stated:

"The collaborating institutions in Newport saw this review as an opportunity to continue our evolution with the support of the accreditation program. The museums in our community had benefited from their accredited status for years through the increased professionalism, recognition, and funding opportunities it brought them, and now those positive effects will be felt more broadly.

"The accreditation of the larger cultural ecosystem demonstrates the interconnectedness of art, culture, history, and education in Newport and will help us to attract new residents interested in a vibrant, livable community; strengthen our case for increased funding from the government and funders; and has made the organizations in our city better at coming together to serve our audiences."



# CONGRATULATIONS TO NEWLY

**A**t the spring 2040 meeting of the AAM Accreditation Commission, accreditation was awarded to 732 museums across the globe. Eighty-one members of the Accreditation Commission participated in this review, working in nine-person groups—some via the Alliance’s virtual meeting space, some in physical locations around the world. The following is a sampling of the newest additions to the list of accredited museums in a variety of categories.



**CATEGORY:**

*global relocation*

**The Ailin Kabjuknen Museum**

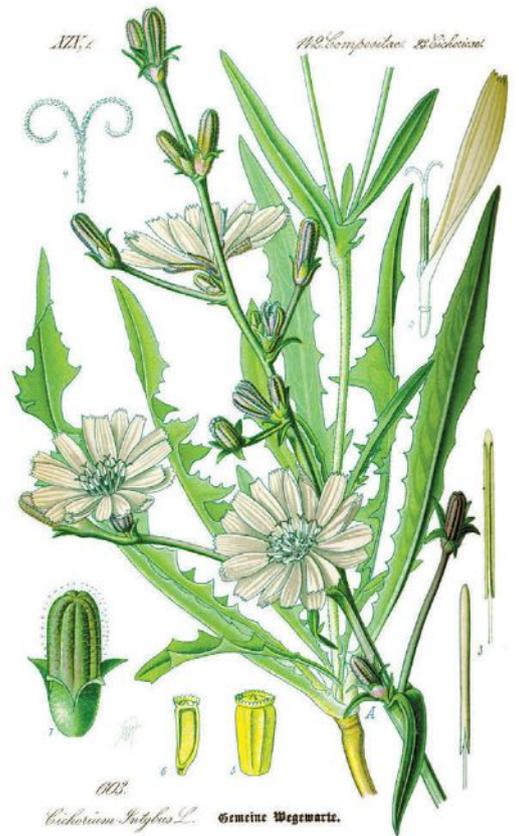
in Springdale, Arkansas, is the first accredited museum that has relocated its entire collections due to climate change. The museum’s original home on the Marshall Islands has been subject to massive flooding since 2013 and is predicted to be completely underwater by 2065. Climate refugees have migrated from the islands to Springdale for decades to take advantage of a generous visa agreement and jobs in the large Tyson Foods plant. The dual governance partnership between the Marshall Islands government and Tyson Foods is a unique partnership resulting in the safe transfer of artifacts relating to traditional Marshallese navigation, warfare, tools, instruments, decorative handicrafts and jewelry, and clothing, as well as thousands of archived documents and photographs.

**CATEGORY:**

*public benefit corporation*

**The Cairo Museum of Natural History,**

constructed in 2030, houses and preserves a natural history collection of more than 5 million specimens that collectively tell the story of Egyptian biodiversity over the past century. The commission was especially enthusiastic about the museum’s commitment to donate 35 percent of its profits to the preservation of biodiverse habitats around the country.



**CATEGORY:**

*for-profit museum*

**The Take Me Home Doll Museum**

in Glendale, Arizona, displays dolls from around the world and offers 3D-printed replicas for children to take home. Additional programming teaches children how to curate their own mini doll museum at home, increasing museum literacy and advocacy.

# ACCREDITED MUSEUMS



## CATEGORY:

### *living collections*

#### **Volcano Adventures Museum**

in Stromboli, Italy, includes three buildings with exhibitions on geology and volcanos. The recent technological advances in protective heat shield clothing have made it possible for group tours to climb down into the crater of the volcano, rather than merely watching the fireworks from above. The museum buildings use geothermal energy from the volcano for all operations, earning high marks from the Accreditation Commission in the areas of environmental and financial sustainability.

## CATEGORY:

### *traveling/pop-up museum, aerospace*

#### **The Intergalactic Museum**

is a space shuttle that flies between the earth, the moon, and Mars and offers pop-up exhibits at each location. It serves the very important community of space dwellers lonely for exhibits from home.

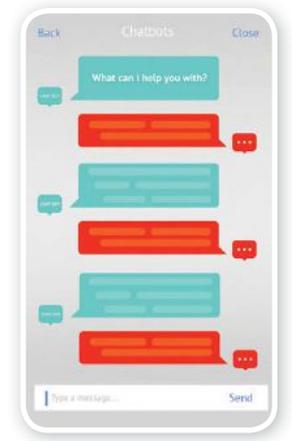


## CATEGORY:

### *technology*

#### **The Best Bot Company Museum and Archives**

in Berlin, Germany, features exhibitions created by a leading company in bot design from 2016 to the present day. The one on this company's pioneering work in how museums utilize chatbots in place of tour apps and as a component of interactive exhibition design is fascinating.



## CATEGORY:

### *historic creative site/historic house*

#### **Paisley Park,**

in Chanhassen, Minnesota, the private estate and production complex of the musician formerly known as Prince, earned accreditation with high marks in visitor engagement and immersive experiences. The museum has curated experiences that range from a Sunday brunch featuring Prince's favorite foods to "Perform Your Own Concert" in his private concert hall, with Prince costumes to wear and groupies to cheer you on.



***To virtually visit all 732 museums that were accredited this quarter, please visit the AAM Virtual Reality Museum Portal.***

# Do we need to be more prepared for emergencies?

By Joy Davis

On the Pacific coast, there are fears of tropical storms that could be as damaging as Hurricane Edith in 2038. Inland, further increases in global temperatures are transforming the landscape through drought and wildfire, while rising sea levels reshape shorelines.

Unstable weather patterns have made the threat of natural disasters a worrying part of everyday life. Museums everywhere face unprecedented challenges as they cope with emergencies; most recognize that we are well past the point of dealing with natural disasters on an ad hoc basis. The total damage caused by such catastrophes, normally linked with climate change, has steadily increased since 2000, with a notable spike in the past 10 years.

However, because each museum is distinct and faces different threats, there is no single emergency response protocol that can be easily adopted. Strategies to cope with natural disasters must be tailored to a museum's unique circumstances to protect collections, make sure facilities and staff are secure and resilient, and serve communities during and after crises.

The Alberta Museums Association's (AMA) **HELP! An Emergency Preparedness Manual for Museums (2nd Edition)** is a powerful tool, providing museums with a framework for disaster response planning to ensure preparedness in potential emergency situations, whether they involve such accidental emergencies as fire or broken water mains, or the increasing threat of natural disaster.

Being prepared is about having a thorough understanding of your museum's relationships, systems, and networks, and thinking through how each individual section, the institution as a whole, and the people involved could be affected by varied threats. **HELP** provides the framework needed to make thoughtful, informed decisions in the face of unpredictability and to reduce negative outcomes.

**HELP** is grounded in experience: the AMA has become a leader in emergency preparedness over the past few decades as many institutions in Alberta have coped with floods, wildfire, and other natural disasters. Overflowing rivers have devastated museums, making them inaccessible for days, damaging buildings, and putting collections, emergency personnel, and staff at risk. Communities have been impacted by wildfires, causing mass evacuations along with smoke and soot damage.

By facilitating institutional disaster planning and providing specific and detailed resources tailored to the needs of museums, **HELP** can ensure that your institution is prepared and ready in the face of a natural disaster or any other emergency.

We are strongest when we share our stories, compare lessons learned, work together, and ask for help.

Joy Davis worked with Canada's University of Victoria for over 30 years. She is now a freelance cultural heritage specialist and a founding member of the Coalition of Museums for Climate Justice.

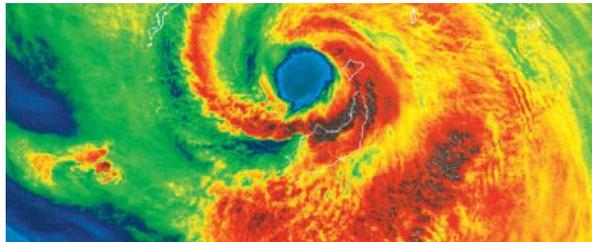
[coalitionofmuseumsforclimatejustice.wordpress.com](http://coalitionofmuseumsforclimatejustice.wordpress.com)



Photos: Left, Jason Tawkin; right, Chad Schroter-Gillespie

Above left: Flooding in Calgary, Alberta, June 21, 2013. The operations manager for the National Music Centre updates first responders from the street outside the museum.

Above right: Volunteers remove damaged materials belonging to the National Music Centre from basement storage.

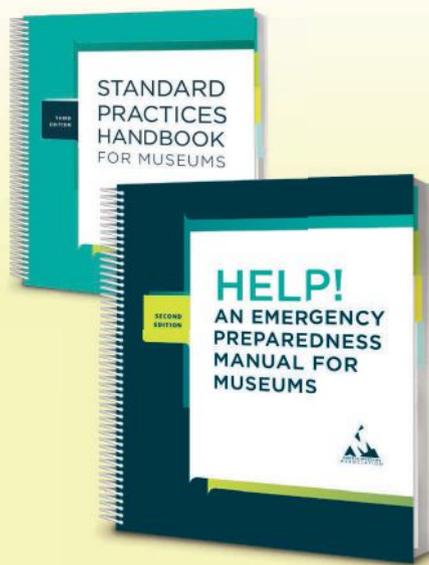


**ALARMED BY THIS LOOK INTO THE FUTURE?**  
**HELP! An Emergency Preparedness Manual for Museums, 2nd Edition**  
 is available for purchase at [www.museums.ab.ca](http://www.museums.ab.ca).

# IS YOUR MUSEUM READY?



Image: The Museum of the Highwood



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*"NMC's experience of the 2013 floods impacted every aspect of our organization — not just the collections. Thorough, up-to-date, and easy-to-use, this is an excellent guide to preparing for and dealing with everything from flooding to bomb threats, and is a publication that all museums can benefit from."*

— JESSE MOFFATT, Director of Collections, National Music Centre

AMA is committed to empowering museums and museum professionals with information and resources that will ensure the sustainability of the museum sector.

HELP! is funded through the Museum Flood Funding Program, a multi-year initiative supported by Alberta Culture and Tourism, which provides assistance to museums affected by the June 2013 floods, and ensures at-risk museums are able to mitigate potential damage in the event of future flooding emergencies. The AMA appreciates the Government of Alberta's commitment to assisting flood-affected cultural institutions.

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AROUND THE ALLIANCE

# HOW FAR WE'VE COME

## Marking the 20th Anniversary of AAM Diversity Standards

It's been 20 years since the museum field united to create **Standards Regarding Diversity**. Since the field-wide adoption of the standards, we have seen museums exponentially diversify in line with the outlined criteria. In 2020, 22 percent of museums were in substantial compliance with the standards. By 2040, that figure has risen to 87 percent.



has shown that increasing board diversity in turn influences the demographics of staff, volunteers, and even visitors.

This drive toward diversity was facilitated by the Alliance's participation in the pan-organizational Governance Recruitment and Training Program (GRTP). Designed and operated by the Nonprofit Governance Coalition, GRTP helps cross-fertilize

"I am particularly encouraged by the statistics," noted Anders Veress, chief researcher at BoardSource. "When the Alliance released *Museum Board Leadership 2017*, the levels of board diversity were distressingly low. That report and the subsequent articulation of the standards have prompted museum boards to lead by example."

governing boards by encouraging experienced board members to rotate through boards in various sectors. This approach has also facilitated the rise of hybrid organizations that combine functions formerly divided among libraries, museums, community centers, social service organizations, schools, and houses of worship. Drawing on the diverse board experience from these areas of practice has helped museums reach, serve, employ, and reflect the diversity of their communities.

Accredited institutions reflect a greater breadth and depth of diversity among board, staff, and visitor participation than their non-accredited peers. Ninety-three percent of accredited museums meet or exceed all of the standards. This is in part because requirements for diversity have been a component of the Accreditation Characteristics of Excellence since the early 1990s. In addition, the 2021 retooling of the leadership, organizational, and community engagement assessments of the Museum Assessment Program was key to the rapid transformation in the makeup of museum boards. Research

Sarit Bunyasarn, chief diversity advocate at the Lenexa Museum in Florissant, Missouri (and one of the Accreditation Commissioners who helped craft the diversity standards back in 2020), noted that "the tenets of these standards have become so elemental to how we as a field operate that I foresee the day when those of us in the role of chief diversity advocate will be like the fossils in our natural history museums: extinct species from an era long past...and that's exactly how it should be."

50 YEARS LATER, QUESTIONS REMAIN



WHAT REMAINED WAS SORROW  
THE SORROW OF HAVING SURVIVED

- BAO NIN, 1975

# REMEMBERING VIETNAM

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*Alliance peer reviewer Meran Purzak chats with staff of the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park during an early test of the TEAL system.*

## AAM Launches TEAL to Support Virtual Site Visits

After six months of beta testing, AAM is officially launching TEAL, or Telepresence Excellence Assessment Liaison. This proprietary new software enables peer reviewers for the Museum Assessment and Accreditation Programs to conduct virtual site visits via museums' existing telepresence robots and drones.

TEAL integrates seamlessly with the Alliance's Excellence Management System, archiving video of the visits for later review. Cecelia, the Alliance's AI chatbot, interfaces with TEAL to monitor conversations between peer reviewers, staff, and boards in order to identify and deliver resources related to any issues that arise. By eliminating costs and accessibility issues related to travel, TEAL also makes MAP and Accreditation more affordable for participating museums, expands the diversity of peer reviewers, and supports AAM's commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

The Whittier Cultural Museum, located in one of the most remote and hard-to-access towns in the United States, was a host for the beta test. Its director, TiNoi Dut, remarked: "We had long wanted to participate in MAP, but we just couldn't handle the logistics of bringing someone to our corner of Alaska. Now, we just downloaded TEAL to our telepresence robot and were

immediately connected to our peer reviewer, who was 3,000 miles away. It was amazing to be able to do all of the activities virtually. They were able to view all of the museum's spaces and even participated in our board meeting and led a staff roundtable discussion. We could see them, they could see us, and they were able to maneuver everywhere they needed to go. We were not restricted by travel costs or scheduling limitations, and were able to have several full and useful days of review. We can't wait to read our report recommendations from our peer reviewer. Thank you, AAM, for making it possible for us to participate in this program."

Meran Purzak, a 15-year veteran peer reviewer, was asked to participate in our beta test with the Whittier Cultural Museum. Purzak was recently involved in an accident and now has limited mobility. Because of TEAL, he is again able to serve as a peer reviewer. He had this to say about the opportunity: "This new option is fantastic. I am thrilled to be able to participate in MAP reviews once again now that my mobility issues are not a barrier. Without the demands of travel, the site visit pacing could also be less rushed, and I could do it from my office or home. I applaud AAM's investment in technology that both helps to address climate change factors and promotes inclusivity."

*TeleBot Industries, an Alliance Affinity Partner, is providing discounts and subsidies to help museums that don't yet own telepresence robots purchase, customize, and maintain the appropriate model to serve their needs.*

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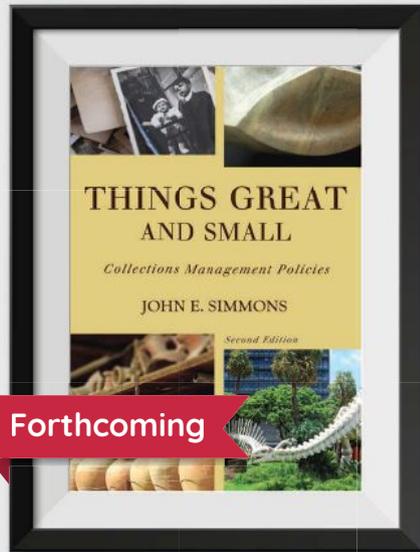
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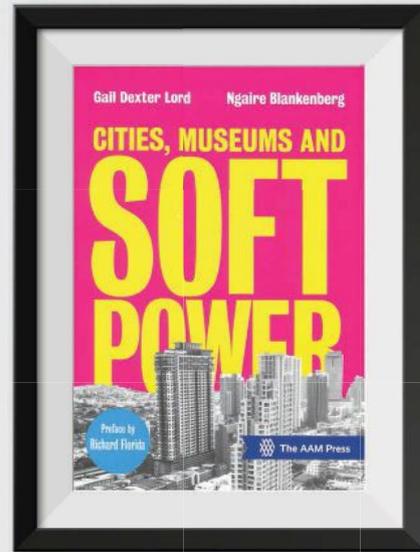
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from the AAM Press?**

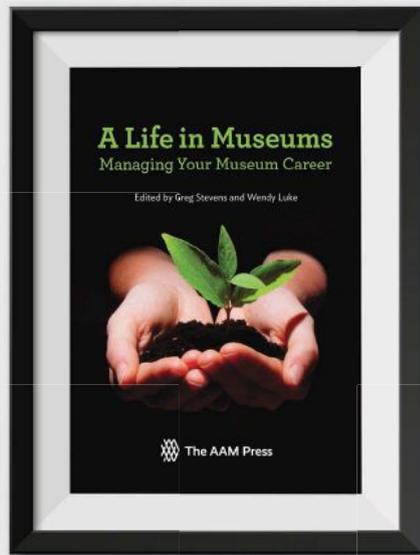


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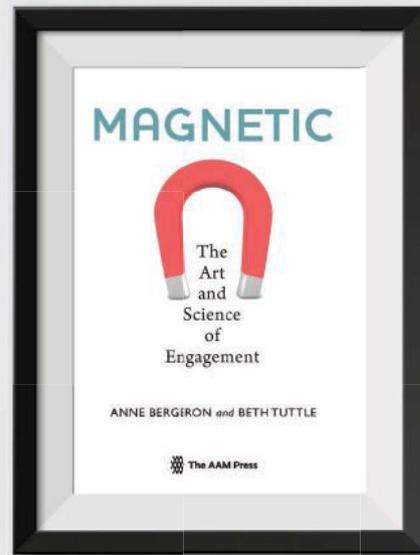
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## AROUND THE ALLIANCE



## 2041 Public Policy Agenda Announced

Thanks to our federal, regional, and state partners—and the excellent work of AAM's Public Policy Committee—we've developed an ambitious legislative agenda for the coming year. Here's a preview of the agenda we'll advocate for in 2041:

» **pass the Museum School Reauthorization Act of 2041**, which will ensure that museum schools remain a choice for all public school students, especially those with unique learning needs. The bill would renew the current law—enacted in 2031 after a 10-year campaign led by AAM and the National Association for Museum Schools, an AAM affiliate—that led to a significant expansion of museum schools in the United States. The reauthorization bill calls for further research on learning outcomes in museum schools.



» **restore the charitable deduction** that was so beneficial to nonprofits until the ill-advised elimination in 2026, when crowdsourced, social-impact funding was expected to provide sufficient support for nonprofits. "Twenty-five years ago, charitable donations provided one-third of museum funding," said Congresswoman Jamie Evans Silberglied, one of our many champions in Congress who is sponsoring the legislation to restore the charitable deduction. "The data from this experiment is clear: while the public rallied their support and more than made up the funding shortfall in the first two years, charitable donations to museums and other nonprofits have steadily declined."



» **fully fund the Veterans Support Endowment**, which awards grants to hybrid organizations—such as museum-hospitals and museum-senior centers—that offer healing services for veterans. Thanks to our advocates, the endowment has now been expanded after data from the first five years of the new law demonstrated museums' significant healing power.



» **pass the Reviving Every Lost City (RELIC) Act**, which would set up a formal mechanism for museums to create digital versions of localities destroyed by environmental degradation. Based on the museum field's role in recovering from Hurricane Max in 2029 and creating a digital version of the Florida Keys, the bill would establish a pilot project for museums to reconstruct digital versions of lost cities and develop associated programs about environmental mitigation efforts in at-risk areas.



## See (or Holo) you in February!

## PLAN TO ATTEND THE 2041 AAM Public Policy Conference and 33rd Annual Museums Advocacy Day!

We are preparing for the 33rd annual Museums Advocacy Day and the 18th annual public policy conference, to be held February 25–28, 2041, in Washington, DC, and in your community.

This national, field-wide event will once again include:

- » **public policy briefings and policy development workshops**
- » **a social mediACTION** national chat
- » **policy leaders** from Capitol Hill, the White House, federal agencies, and state legislatures
- » **state policy briefings and workshops** to develop model state legislation
- » **an in-person lobby day** in Washington, DC
- » **virtual town hall meetings** with elected officials (use your preferred VR device to flash into Capitol Hill meetings via AAM channel 1107)

**Download our advocacy toolkit and local data pings, and set your public relations bots to activate in February!**

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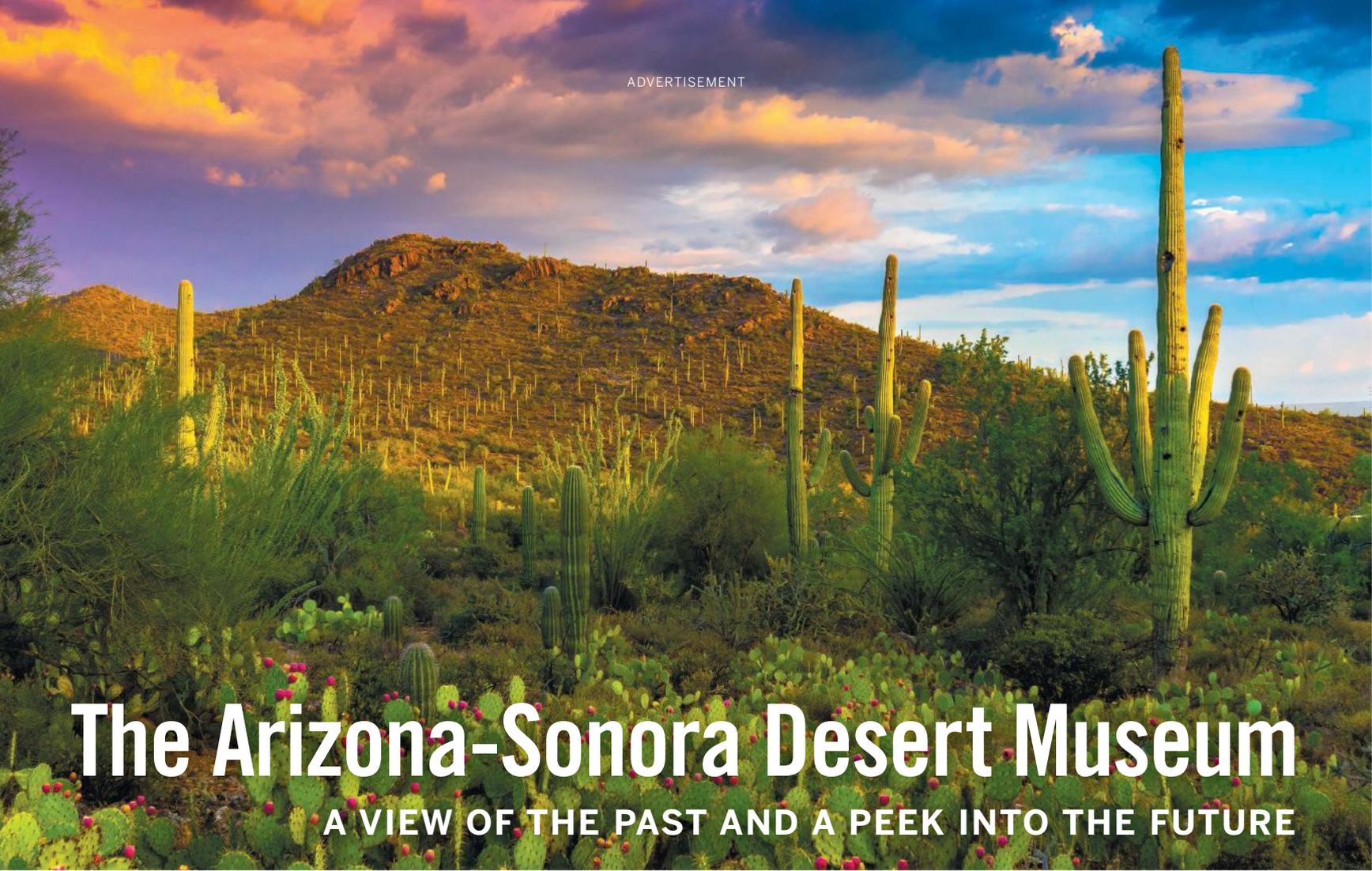
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# The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum

## A VIEW OF THE PAST AND A PEEK INTO THE FUTURE

By Craig Ivanyi, Executive Director

*Above: This photo, titled **Sonoran Desert Landscape**, was taken by Jay Pierstorff. It shows the Sonoran Desert landscape with saguaro cacti and a brilliant Arizona sunset surrounding the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson Mountain Park (within the Saguaro National Forest, West).*

Almost a century ago, while working for the American Museum of Natural History, William H. Carr was offered the opportunity to develop a combination zoo and museum for Bear Mountain Park in New York State. His passion and unique educational approach developed into a novel concept—Bear Mountain Trailside Museum & Zoo. This museum featured a variety of small “museums” that focused on natural and cultural history in a beautiful outdoor setting. This was a groundbreaking concept for its time.

Nearly two decades later he moved to Tucson and discovered a lack of appreciation for the local environment. Vowing to change this, he set his sights on a project similar to Bear Mountain, but on a grander scale. Working in collaboration with Arthur Pack and a few others, the idea for the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum was born.

At times I’m still amazed that the concept of a regional nature park not only survived but flourished. Once people started seeing and hearing about the Desert Museum, its staff was frequently contacted by people who were planning something similar in their corner of the world. Organizations sprouted up near and far, from California to Australia. We still get requests for consultations to this day.

When the museum first opened it was almost solely focused on environmental education. The initial purpose was to offer the public opportunities to observe desert biota in a relatively natural setting. Closely coupled with this was a desire to educate visitors about these organisms and their interrelationships. Soon afterwards, the museum team moved more formally into conservation measures with education programs and exhibits like Water Street and direct action such as advocating for the protection of islands in the Gulf of California.

Since then the museum’s work in research and conservation has broadened and deepened. We provide a positive influence on efforts to save the Mexican wolf, understand the paleoecology of the region, highlight the

*The Ironwood Gallery is one of the new key features of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.*

status and future of migratory pollinators, catalogue and protect the biodiversity in the Gulf of California, and provide sanctuary for a wide variety of regional fishes, amphibians, and reptiles in danger of disappearing from the natural landscape.

This year marks our 65th anniversary of conservation work, along with 45 years of the docent program and 20 years since the establishment of the Art Institute. It's a great time for us to reflect on and celebrate our rich and wonderful past, while anticipating all we must do in the future to continue to uphold our mission.

We know the museum has had a positive impact on several fronts, but our work is far from complete. Folks today appear to be more aware of people and places halfway around the globe than they are the life-forms surrounding them in their own region. This is why we pour our hearts, souls, time, and money into delivering on the promise that the museum makes with its mission statement. It's why we're constantly looking for new ways to engage and educate our guests.

The timing for redoubling our conservation efforts couldn't be better. It's not only what we want and need to accomplish, but also what the public demands. A recent nationwide survey conducted by PGAV Destinations asked participants to express their feelings on zoos, aquariums, and conservation organizations. Their responses provide insight into important things to consider as we design and implement new programs and exhibits.

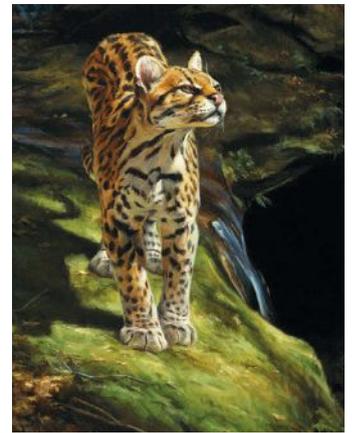
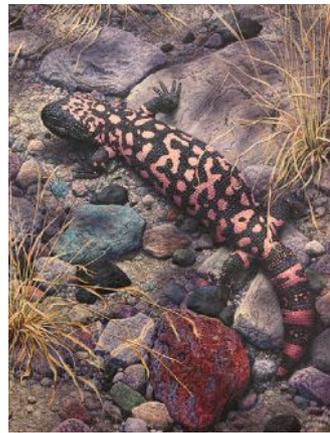
The research shows that the public expect zoos to support wildlife conservation, engage with schoolchildren, conduct research on rare and endangered species, support prevention of habitat loss, and raise awareness of climate change. Respondents also reported a high level of interest in engagement and educational opportunities, advocacy, and transparency about the conservation and care of an institution's living collection.

Thanks to members and donors, new exhibits, educational programs, and a range of conservation projects have grown or sprung to life in recent years, providing our guests with a variety of ways to continue learning about the Sonoran Desert Region. And in the near future a new interactive experience



Photo: Robert Renfrow

**The mission of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the Sonoran Desert.**



called Packrat Playhouse will open, offering an active, dynamic, and fun natural history experience for children of all ages.

Another example of our dedication to serving new audiences as we move into the future is our Art Institute. This program's continual growth is due to our members' interests in connecting to the natural world in a creative way. Integrating education with visual arts helps our mission of conservation spread even further.

The combination of our rich history and future vision demonstrates our continuous commitment. This commitment will keep us on the forefront of natural history interpretation and exhibitry as we engage and inform the generations of today and those yet to come. Learn more at [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org).

*Left: This portrait, titled **Brand New**, is a scratchboard created by Priscilla Baldwin. It depicts a desert bighorn sheep with its one-day-old newborn, which is a favorite live exhibit at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. The sheep is native to the deserts of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico.*

*Center: **Gila Monster** is an acrylic portrait by John Agnew that is part of the collection of ASDM. It shows an iconic Sonoran Desert reptile that is one of only two venomous lizards in the world.*

*Right: **Ocelot**, an oil portrait by Edward Aldrich, is part of the collection of ASDM, showing a museum resident that is part of a Sonoran Desert endangered species.*

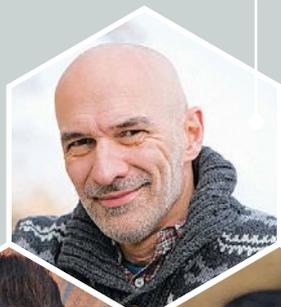
COMMUNITY

NEW JOBS

ARIZONA

**Cortney Sterling**  
to olfactory experience designer, Maricopa County Heritage Center, Scottsdale.

**Dominique Garcia**  
to personal learning mentor, Borderlands Arts Center, Phoenix.



**Jaylen Savatier**  
to Luddite-in-residence, Turing Museum of Innovation, Palo Alto.

**Porchia A. Moore**  
to poet-in-residence, Los Angeles Metropolis Museum of Art and Culture.



**Nasim Baudin**  
to blockchain provenance manager, Los Angeles Metropolis Museum of Art and Culture.

**Jordan Flater**  
to curator of the Anthropocene, Zoo of the Long Future, Sausalito.



ARKANSAS

**Rana Elizondo**  
to museum futurist, Ailin Kabijuknen Museum, Springdale.

**Cai Lowry**  
to community organizer, Ailin Kabijuknen Museum, Springdale.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Kiana Ritter**  
to artificial intelligence Xperience designer, National Museum of Human Ecology.

**Rupinder McKinney**  
to climate resilience coordinator, US Museum of Natural Sciences.



IDAHO

**Nina Gladwyn**  
to cybersecurity officer, Western Zoo Alliance, Pocatello.

**Kiran Ferguson**  
to autonomous vehicle repair specialist, Latah County Historical Society, Potlatch.

FLORIDA

**Avery Mattis**  
to digital fabrication specialist, Fort Myers Heritage Center.

KUDOS

Congratulations to **Monica Montgomery**, who occupies the endowed chair of the Radical Museology Program at Harvard University's School of Arts, Humanities, and Cultural Studies, on founding the **Impact Institute for Community Engagement, Museums & Social Change**. The opportunity to create the Impact Institute has been a dream 23 years in the making for Montgomery. She has always envisioned museum practice as prioritizing community over collections. She applauds her Harvard colleagues for realizing the important



vision of this institute and committing generous funding to sustain its growth.

Throughout her career, Montgomery has placed community mindedness at the nexus of her work as a director, consultant, and graduate professor. She has emphasized the urgency of inclusion, relevance, equity, and social responsive practice in this work by founding Museum Hue and Museum of Impact. Montgomery writes, "From the first #BlackLivesMatter exhibit I curated at Brooklyn Museum in 2016, to the Fulbright where I studied with the Apartheid Museum in South Africa, to

**NEW YORK**

**Shiloh Kane**

to social services specialist, Beverwyck Collection, Albany.

**Regina Iyer**

to museum neuroscientist, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo Del Bronx.

**Jennifer Reeve**

to storyteller, Anarcha Museum of Women's History, New York City.

**TEXAS**

**LaVanya Allard**

to director of fun, EcoSphere Museum of Natural Sciences, Conroe.

**Erik Crawford**

to multinational exhibition specialist, EcoSphere Museum of Natural Sciences, Conroe.

**Gina Laurenz**

to telepresence robot tour supervisor, San Gabriel Conservation Society, Georgetown.

**RHODE ISLAND**

**Shi Allerton**

to museum dialogue facilitator, Newport Cultural Ecosystem.

**Max Stanton**

to spiritual services director, Newport Cultural Ecosystem.

**NEW JERSEY**

**Madga Olivieri**

to robotic docent maintenance technician, George Devol Science Center, Trenton.

**Keith Danielsen**

to robot conservator, George Devol Science Center, Trenton.

**OHIO**

**Sarita Canty**

to robot experience supervisor, Olentangy Arts Center, Columbus.

**Olivia Ivory**

to living walls horticulturalist, Cleveland Museum of Innovation.

the textbook I wrote 20 years ago *Museums Respond: Mobile Museums & Changemaking Trends*, to the philanthropic grant-making I pioneered as deputy director during the restructuring of IMLS from 2020–25, until the founding of this Impact Institute and ribbon cutting nine months ago, my mandate has been clear: museums must be rooted in service to society!" She also pledged that the Impact Institute will champion this work for decades to come, empowering the next generation of scholars, students, fellows, and audiences to take action and create "embracing spaces in museums."

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Cecelia Walls**, 65, of Springfield, Virginia, tragically died in a vehicular accident while returning from the family cabin. Her self-driving vehicle drove off a cliff when it determined there would be fewer lives lost if it avoided a head-on collision with a self-driving school vehicle. Walls is survived by her devoted husband, Gene; their two children, J. G. and L. K.; and her extended family.

After completing her doctoral work, Walls spearheaded the Children's Center for Creative Innovation, where she devoted her life to helping children reach their full potential. She served as AAM's Information Center manager and, later, as its content and editorial strategist for more than 15 years. She was instrumental in taking the then Information Center into the 21st century by making it more accessible online. The Alliance named the AAM information chatbot Cecelia in her honor.



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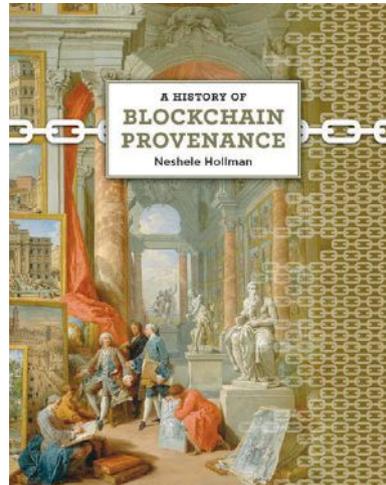
**we**

# A History of Blockchain Provenance

AUTHOR: NESHELE HOLLMAN

**A**s we look back on the adoption of digital within the museum community, who would have thought that blockchain, of all the technologies, would have the most impact on who we are and what we do?

In the early 21st century, blockchain emerged as a digital platform to provide an open, distributed ledger for recording transactions between two parties in a verifiable, permanent way. First used to power digital currencies such as Bitcoin, e-Dinar, and eCFA, blockchain was quickly adopted by collections managers following the successful phishing of billionaire startup wunderkind Tirius Livingstone, which was traced to an unsecured donor database managed by LA's Metropolis Museum of Art and Culture. The resulting lawsuit fundamentally changed how museums viewed donor and membership security, and blockchain began its unstoppable march into museum data management.



Available from the Alliance  
Bookstore in December 2040

**FORMATS:**

PRINT ■ DIGITAL ■ AUDIO

*A History of Blockchain Provenance* chronicles blockchain's history from its donor security beginnings through its adoption as the internationally recognized museum standard for tracking collections provenance following the seminal keynote at the 2020 Digital Provenance conference, co-convened by AAM's Collections Stewardship and Media and Technology Professional Networks. But this account really comes to life as Hollman chronicles the embrace of blockchain's philosophy of open but protected data to track creative practice and protect artists' rights and intellectual property. The intertwining of high-tech data security and artistic expression, fueling each other's innovation and development, is poetically handled, leaving the listener or reader with a sweeping understanding of the setbacks and triumphs of this symbiotic relationship.

This book is recommended as a standard text for all learners pursuing microcredentials in museum stewardship and digital adoption issues.



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#### GUEST EDITOR

Elizabeth Merritt

#### CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Joelle Seligson

#### DESIGN

Bennett DeOlazo, Studio B

#### ADVERTISING

AI Rickard  
arickard@assocvision.com  
703-402-9713

#### ALLIANCE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Laura L. Lott

#### FRONT MATTER:

- **Board List:** *Nicole Ivy*, director of inclusion, AAM.
- **From the Leadership:** *Joseph Klem*, director of public relations, AAM.
- **By the Numbers:** *Susie Wilkening*, principal, Wilkening Consulting, and *Jim Guertin*, professional engineer, UTS Energy Engineering.
- **My Take:** *Sarah Sutton*, principal, Sustainable Museums.
- **Information, Please:** *Cecelia Walls*, content and editorial strategist, AAM.

#### WHAT'S NEW?

- **Vizcaya Museum and Gardens:** *Dr. Mark Osterman*, adult learning and engagement manager, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens.
- **FutureVault Satellite Collections Storage:** *Therese Quinn*, associate professor of art history and director of the Museum and Exhibition Studies Program, University of Illinois at Chicago; *Sarita Hernández*, Kress Interpretive Fellow, National Museum of Mexican Art; and *Devin Malone*, public programs fellow, Museum of Modern Art.

- **Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum:** *Sheri Levinsky-Raskin*, assistant vice president of research and evaluation; *Jessica Williams*, curator of history; and *Barbara Johnson Stemler*, senior manager of access programs, Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum.
- **Latah County Historical Society:** *Zachary Wnek*, museum curator, Latah County Historical Society.
- **Ohio History Connection:** *Megan Wood*, director of museum and library services, Ohio History Connection.
- **Philbrook Museum of Art:** *Scott Stulen*, director/president, and *Mark Brown*, executive director assistant, Philbrook Museum of Art.
- **VirtuReal Museum Academy:** *Anthony Pennay*, chief learning officer, Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute.
- **Zoo of the Long Future:** *Elizabeth Merritt*, VP of strategic foresight and director of Center for the Future of Museums, AAM.
- **Western Zoo Alliance:** *staff of San Diego Zoo Global*.

#### MAIN ARTICLES:

- **Museums at 2040:** *Adam Rozan*, adjunct professor, Harvard University Extension School (Museum Studies).
- **A Funder's Take:** *Rachel Hatch*, program officer for community vitality, McConnell Foundation.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** *Omar Eaton-Martínez*, program manager, Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

#### SHOWCASES AND SPOTLIGHTS

- **Exhibit Showcase, Standing With Our Ancestors:** *Cynthia Torp*, owner/president, Solid Light.
- **Research Spotlight, Museum Programs and Health Outcomes:** *Renae Youngs*, director of research and evaluation, Minnesota State Arts Board.
- **Industry Partner Spotlight, MUSEUM-Bang:** *David Kennedy*, curator of collections and exhibits, United States Marshals Museum.
- **Funder Spotlight,** *Jessica Liu-Rodriguez:* *Elizabeth Merritt*.
- **Accreditation Spotlight, Newport Cultural Ecosystem:** *Allison Titman*, Accreditation Program officer, AAM.

- **Congratulations to Newly Accredited Museums:** *Susan Zwerling*, Museum Assessment Program officer, AAM.
- **Just Published, A History of Blockchain Provenance:** *Nik Honeysett*, director and CEO, Balboa Park Online Collaborative, and Elizabeth Merritt.

#### AROUND THE ALLIANCE

- **Marking the 20th Anniversary of AAM Diversity Standards:** *Martha Sharma*, Accreditation Program officer, AAM.
- **AAM Launches TEAL:** *Danyelle Rickard*, Museum Assessment Program officer, AAM.
- **2041 Public Policy Conference, Museums Advocacy Day, and Public Policy Agenda:** *Gail Ravnitzky Silberglid*, vice president of government relations and communications, AAM.

#### COMMUNITY

- **New Jobs:** *Nicole Ivy*, director of inclusion, AAM.
- **Kudos:** *Monica Montgomery*, founding director and curator, Museum of Impact, co-founder and strategic director, Museum Hue.
- **In Memoriam:** *Cecelia Walls*. (We hasten to reassure readers that Cecelia is alive and well, and had a blast writing her own fictional obituary.)

#### PHOTO CREDITS

**Cover:** Supertrees at Singapore's Gardens by the Bay. The tree-like structures are fitted with environmental technologies that mimic the ecological function of trees. ©Viktoriia Diachenko/Shutterstock.com

**p. 8:** Photo collage courtesy Vizcaya Museum and Gardens.

**p. 8:** USS Intrepid (CV-11) operating in the Philippine Sea in November 1944 (NH 97468). Public domain.

**p. 9:** Potlatch Lumber Mill, Latah County Historical Society collections, image #12-03-258. Photo has been altered; solar panels and wind turbines added in Photoshop.

**p. 9:** Photo by Sarah Stierch (CC BY-2.0); cats added in Photoshop.

**p. 9:** A LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel) from the U.S. Coast Guard-manned USS *Samuel Chase* disembarks troops of the U.S. Army's First Division on the morning of June 6, 1944 (D-day), at Omaha Beach. Public domain; official U.S. Coast Guard photograph.

**p. 10:** Northern white rhinoceros. Photo by Heather Paul (Flickr/CC BY-ND 2.0).

**p. 10:** Photo courtesy of San Diego Zoo Global.

**p. 12–13:** Supertrees at Singapore's Gardens by the Bay. The tree-like structures are fitted with environmental technologies that mimic the ecological function of trees. ©apiguide/Shutterstock.com

**p. 14:** Elevator and wall at Modern Seoul City Hall, which is open to public in Taeyeongno in Seoul, South Korea. © Roman Babakin/Shutterstock.com

**p. 15:** Citrix Raleigh–Living Wall. Photo by Citrix Systems (Flickr/CC BY-ND 2.0)

**p. 18:** Photo courtesy of the Rubin Museum of Art; Michael Palma, photographer.

**p. 19:** Community service at Mary's Place, a day shelter for homeless women and their children. Photo by Ed Murray (Flickr/CC BY 2.0)

**p. 20:** Losar Family Day. Photo courtesy of the Rubin Museum of Art; Filip Wolak, photographer.

**p. 21:** Reopening of Washington Hall, Seattle, WA. Storyteller Eva (no last name given) tells a story from the western portion of the slave-era South. Photo by Joe Mabel (Flickr/CC BY-SA 2.0).

**p. 24:** Mesa Verde basket. Photo by National Park Service. Public domain.

**p. 25:** A remote controlled robot draws a part of the artwork *Long Distance Art* by Viennese artist Alex Kiessling in Berlin, Germany, September 26, 2013. Kiessling drew a picture in the Vienna Museums Quarter while a robot completed the picture at the same time in Berlin and London. All of his movements were recorded and sent to the robot via satellite. Photo by Ole Spate. © dpa picture alliance/Alamy Stock Photo.

**p. 28–29:** Located in Montgomery, Alabama, EJI's Memorial to Peace and Justice will be the country's first national memorial to victims of lynching. Credit: EJI and Mass Design Group.

**p. 30:** Columbia, SC—June 27, 2015: A comic book version of activist Bree Newsome crouching on the top of a flagpole, superhero-style, while poised to drop the Confederate flag to the ground. © Karen B. Jones/Shutterstock.com

**p. 31:** South Africa, Western Cape, Cape Town. Truth and Reconciliation Commission press conference. © Eye Ubiquitous/Alamy Stock Photo. Photographer: Robert Aberman

**p. 32:** Photo collage created by Solid Light.

**p. 33:** Bruggen naar Rabot is a generic name designating several rehabilitation and development projects in Gent (Belgium), in a district considered the poorest of Flanders. Photo by Lamiot (CC BY-SA 4.0-3.0-2.5-2.0-1.0)

**p. 35:** MUSEUM-Bang image created by David Kennedy, US Marshals Museum.

**p. 37:** Photo by epSos.de (CC BY 2.0).

**p. 39:** Royalty-free photos of Newport, Rhode Island, by Shutterstock.com, except *Center: A plan of the town of Newport surveyed by Charles Blaskowitz* © Everett Historical/Shutterstock.com; and, *Aerial photo of Newport* © solepsizm/Shutterstock.com.

**p. 40:** Ethnological Museum, Berlin, Germany. Photography was permitted in the museum without restriction. Left: Skirt and girdle, Marshall Islands, 1928, (CC0 1.0) Public Domain Dedication; Right: Clothing mat with girdle, Marshall Islands, 1905, (CC0 1.0) Public Domain Dedication.

**p. 40:** Common chicory *Cichorium intybus*, Family Asteraceae illustration from Prof. Dr. Otto Wilhelm Thomé Flora von Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz 1885, Gera, Germany. Public domain.

**p. 41:** Paisley Park Studios in Chanhassen, Minnesota. © miker/Shutterstock.com

**p. 45:** Henry Evans, robotics tester and advocate for disability rights, uses a Suitable Technologies Beam® telepresence robot to chat with Charlie Castillo, director of human resources and administration at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Photo courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, with permission of Henry Evans.

**p. 51:** Cecelia Walls' photo has been "aged" in Photoshop.

**p. 53:** *Modern Rome*; artist: Giovanni Paolo Panini, 1757. Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Public domain. Book cover visually references *The AAM Guide to Provenance Research* by Nancy H. Yeide, Konstantin Akinsha, and Amy L. Walsh, published in May 2001.

## Breaking the Fourth Wall

Dear Reader,

You may have noticed by this point that this issue of *Museum* has been published just a little bit early—23 years ahead of schedule, to be exact.

If you are familiar with my work at the Alliance, you will know that I don't pretend to predict the future. Like any good futurist, I help people wrap their heads around the many potential ways in which our world could evolve. For this issue of the magazine, I invited contributors to explore one specific future that might result from existing limits and challenges playing out over time. In this future, the US population is more diverse, economic stratification has grown, the educational system has continued to fragment, and government funding for cultural nonprofits has continued to decline. Yet, in the face of these challenges, museums have thrived. Attendance is robust, our organizations are financially stable, and our visitors, staff, and board members reflect our communities.



My challenge to the authors was to describe what museums would have done between 2017 and this version of 2040 to achieve such success. I have been delighted, surprised, and intrigued by the stories they have created in response to that challenge.

The goal of this issue of the magazine is to help you investigate one of many possible futures and think about how our organizations might respond. As you read these stories, I hope you ask yourself, "Do I think this could happen? Do I want this to happen?" And, perhaps most important, "Does this have to wait until 2040, or can I make it happen now?"

This particular version of the future will be explored in more detail over coming months on the Alliance's social media platforms. CFM will publish scenarios describing other potential futures—bright and dark, mainstream and unexpected—throughout 2018. I look forward to helping you imagine the many ways these futures may play out, as well as the strategies museums will create to thrive no matter what comes.

Yours from the future,

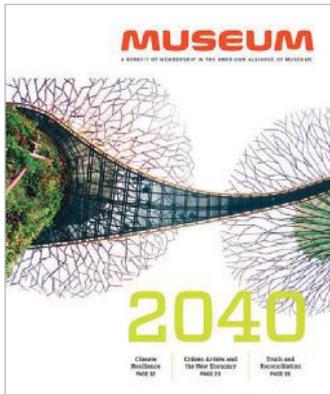
**Elizabeth Merritt**

VP OF STRATEGIC FORESIGHT AND FOUNDING DIRECTOR,  
CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS  
AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS



**We want to hear your thoughts from the future! Throughout this issue you will see suggested hashtags alongside several articles. Please use those tags to share your thoughts on social media.**

# About This Version of the Future



This issue of *Museum* is set in a future that might result from existing limits and challenges playing out over the coming decades. This scenario, dubbed *A New Equilibrium*, was developed with the input of many people inside and outside the museum field, drawing on mainstream research and projections about demographics, technology, the economy, the environment, and other sectors. For example, in this version of 2040:

- » The US population is **older and more diverse** than it was in 2017. The ratio of retired people to working-age people (the so-called old-age dependency ratio) has climbed from 25 percent to 38 percent.
- » **Economic stratification** has continued to increase in the past few decades. The top 10 percent of families now hold 85 percent of the wealth in the United States, while the bottom 60 percent of families hold 1 percent of the wealth.
- » In **education**, the number of private schools has grown significantly, and charter schools now serve 15 percent of the public school population (compared to 5 percent in 2014).
- » Immersive, multisensory **virtual reality** rigs are as affordable and common in 2040 as large-screen televisions were in 2017.
- » **Impact philanthropy** has become the dominant guiding principle of individual and foundation funding. Nonprofits are expected to provide concrete, measurable data showing how they have improved the environment, or people's lives, in order to secure support.

The full text of *A New Equilibrium* appears on the Center for the Future of Museums' blog. Other scenarios will be published by the Alliance throughout 2018, together with a guide to using these stories as a tool for institutional planning.

## “The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

For 10 years, the Alliance's **Center for the Future of Museums (CFM)** has been helping museums explore today's challenges and shape a better tomorrow.

- » We get museums to **take a longer view**—several decades instead of the usual one to five years covered by an institutional plan.
- » We deliver **specific, credible information about trends** that will affect museums and the communities they serve.
- » We **teach the basics of strategic foresight**—how to question the assumptions that underlie our daily decisions, imagine different futures, and integrate this information into a museum's planning process.
- » We encourage museums to **be creative and take risks**, because through innovation we discover the strategies and tactics that work in the future.

**Help create a better future for museums.  
Support CFM today. Visit [AAM-us.org/donate](http://AAM-us.org/donate)**



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