

BEYOND THE WALLS: INCLUSION, EQUITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN
MUSEUMS

By

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To Ian and Zarian

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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This study examines issues of racial equity and inclusion in museums. It hopes to provide justification and further inspiration for museums to address and acknowledge the legacies of oppression and privilege that museums operate within. The paper examines the need for museums to increase the diversity of their audience, staff and board members to maintain their relevancy. This study also examines the benefits of community engagement, the resistance to racial diversity in museums and the challenges to museums becoming arbiters of change. Case studies are provided as examples of successful diverse audience development, staff diversity and inclusion education and community engagement initiatives.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Museums are under scrutiny as the call for more racial diversity in visitors and staff has prompted debate about what public do museums serve. This call is not new but has gained prominence because of a resurgence of scholarly articles and presentations on the topic. The demographics of the United States is quickly changing and the Census Bureau projects that the population will be majority nonwhite by 2044.¹ If museums are to remain relevant they will need to reflect these shifting demographics.

Museums are the center of community and as such everyone who enter their doors should feel welcome. In addition, the entire staff should reflect the diversity of the communities they exist in. However, statistics indicate that museum visitors and staff do not reflect the diversity that exists within today's society. Facing budget cuts and the difficulty to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world, museums must take a critical look at themselves and make changes. Most museums in the United States are nonprofits and as such their objective is to serve the communities they operate in. The American Alliance of Museums states that one of the core standards of museums is its commitment to public accountability and transparency in its missions and operations.² What can museums do to reflect and support the communities they serve? Museums can begin to change by forming close and lasting relationships with their

¹ William H. Frey, "New Projections Point to a Majority Minority Nation in 2044," Brookings, July 29, 2016, accessed June 5, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2014/12/12/new-projections-point-to-a-majority-minority-nation-in-2044/>

² American Alliance of Museums, "Public Trust and Accountability Standards," , accessed November 1, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/public-trust-and-accountability-standards/>

communities. Authentic community engagement builds trust in the museum, increases participation and increases the racial diversity of visitors.

This research will explore issues of diversity, inclusion and equity. Secondly, this paper also presents the argument for museums to apply authentic community engagement principles to increase ethnic diversity within their staff and visitors. Case studies of museums doing commendable work with community engagement and racial diversity are also provided.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to analyze how museums handle issues of inclusion and racial equity and justify why they should practice community engagement in all facets of their organization. In order to outline the background of this study, the review of literature provides an outline of the significant areas. These include race and inclusion in museums, and community engagement.

Inclusion and Racial Equity in Museums

In 2014, Porcia Moore wrote a blog for the Inluseum website called “The Danger of the D Word” in which she argues that museums should not focus in the term “diversity” as she finds it to “be a racially coded term which exacts all sorts of confusing sentimentalities and hidden agendas”.¹ Instead museums should focus on internal change throughout the entire organization. It will take more than a temporary exhibit or special program to challenge racial equity in museums. Although inclusion initiatives are important at museums, it is challenging work. The American Alliance of Museums (AAM), formerly the American Association of Museums has developed standards and best practices for museums to follow. In an effort to help museums start the conversation on inclusive practices, the American Alliance of Museums has clear definitions for the following terms:²

- Diversity is all the ways that people are different and the same at the individual and group levels. Even when people appear the same, they are different. Organizational diversity

¹ Porchia Moore, "The Danger of the "D" Word: Museums and Diversity," The Inluseum, March 07, 2016, accessed September 18, 2018, <https://inluseum.com/2014/01/20/the-danger-of-the-d-word-museums-and-diversity/>

² "Definitions of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion," American Alliance of Museums, April 30, 2018, accessed September 18, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/diversity-equity-accessibility-and-inclusion/facing-change-definitions/>

requires examining and questioning the makeup of a group to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented.

- Equity is the fair and just treatment of all members of a community. Equity requires commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specified goals.
- Accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings.
- Inclusion refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes. It also refers to the ways that diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community.

In 1982, The American Association of Museums (AAM) appointed a commission to investigate the role of museums and to reports its findings. The report released in 1984 included seven situations that needed to be addressed including the governance of museums, economic climate and its effect on museums and that all museums' collections must be included in a national inventory. An important finding was that minorities were underrepresented in the work force and that changes were needed if museums were to become “fully representable of the diversity of the society it seeks to serve”.³ Ten years later another report by AAM titled “Excellence and Equity in Museums: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums” was published. One of the key findings of the report states that “museums must become more inclusive places that welcome diverse audiences, but first they should reflect our society’s

³ Museums for a New Century. a Report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century (American Association of Museums, 1984)

pluralism in every aspect of their operations and programs”.⁴ In 2014, the Board of Directors of AAM released a Diversity and Inclusion statement:

The American Alliance of Museums respects, values and celebrates the unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make each person who they are. We believe that our strength lies in our diversity among the broad range of people and museums we represent. We consider diversity and inclusion a driver of institutional excellence and seek out diversity of participation, thought and action. It is our aim, therefore, that our members, partners, key stakeholders reflect and embrace these core values.⁵

In February 2017, AAM appointed Nicole Ivy as the first Director of Inclusion. It is a newly created post and she is expected to “lead the Alliance’s strategic initiatives around diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion”.⁶ Excited about her new position, Dr. Ivy said this when interviewed by AAM for a press release:

I look forward to making inclusion a greater focus of how the Alliance does its work. I suggested the word ‘inclusion’ for the job title based on a survey of multiple professional associations, and of the museum field. Inclusion focuses on an outcome. It’s not only about museums getting an assortment of people, but also making sure that multiple perspectives get a voice, in the collections, in the exhibitions, in the community outreach, and yes, in the staff and boardroom, too.⁷

Despite these public calls from AAM for museum to increase diversity, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. “Museum leaders must analyze their institutional compositions, identifying the gaps, and recruiting board members from local community organizations, businesses, and sectors to ensure that their team reflects the diversity of the communities in

⁴ American Association of Museums, "Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums," 1992, accessed July 23, 2018, <http://ww2.aam-us.org/docs/default-source/resource-library/excellence-and-equity.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

⁵ American Alliance of Museums, "Diversity and Inclusion Policy," 2014, accessed July 23, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/about-us/strategic-plan/diversity-and-inclusion-policy>

⁶ American Alliance of Museums, "American Alliance of Museums Announces 2016 Museums Connect Grants," American Alliance of Museums, October 11, 2017, accessed July 23, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/about-us/media-room/2017/american-%20alliance-of-museums-names-dr-nicole-ivy-as-director-of-inclusion>

⁷ Ibid.,

which they are situated”.⁸ If minority audience see themselves or their culture in exhibitions, or as as part of the staff, they can have a sense of belonging. According to Mariet Westerman, executive vice president of the Mellon Foundation "We know historically underrepresented minorities still lack a clear pathway toward leadership within museums. The great majority of the 28 percent of museum employees from minority backgrounds do not have jobs that typically lead to leadership positions”.⁹ Moreover, Peggy Levitt makes this eye-opening statement “entranced by a museum’s beauty, visitors might not notice that most of the other patrons are probably white, female, and middle-aged, if not older. This lack of diversity is symptomatic of a national problem.”¹⁰ This problem runs deep, and museums must meet it head on as it will continue to impact their work in the future.¹¹ According to Karen Vidángos, founder of the online blog, *A Latina in Museums*,

Brown and Black communities, at least from the studies I’ve seen, are not represented as visitors in museums. I think that’s because they feel it’s unapproachable, they don’t feel like they belong, they don’t feel like this is information that’s meant for them.¹²

⁸ Wendy Ng, Syrus Marcus Ware, and Alyssa Greenberg, "Activating Diversity and Inclusion: A Blueprint for Museum Educators as Allies and Change Makers," *Journal of Museum Education* 42, no. 2 (2017).

⁹ "Mellon Foundation to Fund a Series of Case Studies on Diversity to Guide Art Museum Leadership on Future Inclusivity Efforts," The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, February 22, 2017, accessed July 23, 2018, <https://mellon.org/resources/news/articles/mellon-foundation-fund-series-case-studies-diversity-guide-art-museum-leadership-future-inclusivity-efforts/>.

¹⁰ Peggy Levitt, "Museums Must Attract Diverse Visitors or Risk Irrelevance," *The Atlantic*, November 09, 2015, , accessed July 23, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/museums-must-attract-diverse-visitors-or-risk-irrelevance/433347/>.

¹¹ Esther J. Washington and Anna F. Hindley, "Race Isn’t Just a “Black Thing” – The Role That Museum Professionals Can Play in Inclusive Planning and Programming," *Journal of Museum Education* 42, no. 1 (March 2017).

¹² Telephone interview with Karen Vidángos, founder of *A Latina in Museums*,

Joanne Jones-Rizzi and Gretchen Jennings are adamant that in order for museums to change, there has to be “increased diversity at the top”.¹³ Museum directors and boards believe that having a diverse board is important but still almost half of museum boards (46%) are white.¹⁴ In addition, in his article “From Systemic Exclusion to Systemic Inclusion: A Critical Look at Museums”, Chris Taylor demonstrates “how an organization can create sustainable internal change by providing learning opportunities for museum staff to acquire inclusive skills and develop inclusive attitudes and behaviors that in turn embed inclusion throughout the daily work of museums”.¹⁵ Some Museum directors have stated that there were not any suitable applicants of color for advertised jobs. However according to Karen Chandler, director of the College of Charleston’s arts management program “It is not difficult to find African Americans and people of color for roles in Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric museums, but it requires commitment and it’s got to come from the top”.¹⁶ If museums are to see real change, the directors and board members must make diversity a long-term priority.

¹³ Gretchen Jennings and Joanne Jones-Rizzi, "Museums, White Privilege, and Diversity: A Systemic Perspective," January 2017, accessed March 28, 2018, http://www.museumcommons.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Dimensions-Diversity-Special-Edition_JenningsJonesRizzi.pdf

¹⁴ BoardSource, "Museum Board Leadership 2017: A National Report," 2017, accessed July 23, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/eyizzp-download-the-report.pdf>

¹⁵ Chris Taylor, "From Systemic Exclusion to Systemic Inclusion: A Critical Look at Museums," *Journal of Museum Education* 42, no. 2 (2017). 156

¹⁶ Adam Parker, "How the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston and Other Museums Seek to Represent People of Color," *Post and Courier*, March 26, 2018, accessed March 2, 2018, https://www.postandcourier.com/features/how-the-gibbes-museum-of-art-in-charleston-and-other/article_6e39f0f8-2c80-11e8-9336-5fa0d5fe1fe8.html

Community Engagement

As stated by the American Alliance of Museums, community engagement at museums should compose of “a center where people gather to meet and converse and an active, visible player in civic life, a haven, and a trusted incubator of change”.¹⁷ Different museums attempt to contribute to their communities in different ways. Ultimately, the most difficult aspect of community engagement for museums is understanding their community. The basic definition of a community is a group of people living in the same place or having a characteristic in common. However, in relation to museums, defining a community is complex and is ambiguous in meaning. Elizabeth Crooke states that community is used interchangeably with audience, public or visitor and this is where problems arise.¹⁸ She is adamant that instead of trying to define what a community is, museum staff should determine how the term community can be attributed to their programs. Nina Simon in her museum blog defines a community “by the shared attributes of the people in it, and/or by the strength of the connections among them” (Simon, 2016).¹⁹ Robert Putnam has a simple definition, “Community means different things to different people”.²⁰ Although the definition of a community is not clear, one clear aspect is a sense of belonging and neighborhood cohesion.

¹⁷ Stephen Long, "Practicing Civic Engagement: Making Your Museum into a Community Living Room," *Journal of Museum Education* 38, no. 2 (2013): doi:10.1080/10598650.2013.11510765.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Crooke, "Museums and Community," in *A Companion to Museum Studies* (London, UK: Routledge, 2008).

¹⁹ Nina Simon, "How Do You Define "Community?" *Museum 2.0*, April 2015, accessed April 21, 2018, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2015/04/how-do-you-define-community.html>

²⁰ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2007)

Nonprofits are organizations that embody the best spirit and values of communities. They assist individuals and families daily through feeding programs, shelters, hospitals and schools.²¹ Museums are not in the business to help communities, their main goal is to attract visitors to their exhibits, performances and other events in an effort to raise much needed funds. Consequently, community engagement at museums is an aspect that has to be integrated into all programming.

When museums involve members of their community in projects, they enable these people to have a voice.²² Furthermore, this involvement creates a dialogue that helps these individuals determine how to achieve community goals. According to Viv Golding, museums should engage with their communities as this can set the tone for much needed conversation on societal issues.²³ However, some museums might not want to tackle certain issues, to remain neutral and not bring undesired opinions of their work. Racism is one issue that many museums might want to avoid, however this is an excellent way to address community issues at a local level. According to Mike Murawski many museums are reluctant to change by welcoming the ideas from community members as a result of "...the entrenched behaviors, policies, and practices in museums are based in a whole set of false stories we tell ourselves...".²⁴

It is imperative for Museums to embrace diversity and inclusion in an effort to remain relevant. The notion of exhibitions based on "neutral remains of the past" are slowly evolving

²¹ William Diaz, "For Whom and For What? The Contributions of the Nonprofit Sector," in *The State of Nonprofit America* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2012).

²² Suzie Thomas, "Heritage and Community Engagement: Collaboration or Contestation?" *Curator: The Museum Journal* 54, no. 3 (2011), doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2011.00099.x.

²³ Viv Golding, "Collaborative Museums Curators, Communities, Collections," in *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections, and Collaboration* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

²⁴ Mike Murawski, "Changing the Things We Cannot Accept – Museum Edition," *Art Museum Teaching*, February 18, 2018, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://artmuseumteaching.com/2017/10/11/changing-the-things-we-cannot-accept/>

into exhibitions that reflect new ways to integrate multicultural topics and foster social dialogue. Joanne Jones Rizzi claims that “community engagement is the work of the whole core and is fundamental to the work of the museum. We think about it in our exhibitions, partnerships with outside organizations, audiences, who is coming here, who is not coming here, our leadership and our research.”²⁵

Anila Swarupa ask the question “How can we responsibly serve our communities or unleash our human potential when we realize that people are dehumanized or only considered partially complete by our work in representation?”²⁶ Museums should be for everyone and should mirror contemporary society, not only in policies but in practice. Recently, museums have become aware of the benefits of a deeper relationship with a diverse audiences. These relationships have created new programs and have affected what museums collect and exhibit.²⁷ In 2014, the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC) introduced a toolkit for organizations seeking to engage diverse audiences. RACC believes that

Increased equitable access and engagement begins with creating a solid foundation and internal structure that supports these efforts. Each organization has to determine what equity means and why pursuing it is important. Much of this work involves identifying and removing barriers that limit a community’s full participation.²⁸

²⁵ Telephone interview with Joanne Jones Rizzi, Vice President of STEM Equity and Education, Science Museum of Minnesota "interview by author, April 13, 2018.

²⁶ Swarupa Anila, "Inclusion Requires Fracturing," *Journal of Museum Education* 42, no. 2 (2017): doi:10.1080/10598650.2017.1306996.

²⁷ Jennifer Spitz and M. Thom, *Urban Network: Museums Embracing Communities* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

²⁸ Regional Arts & Culture Council, "An Introduction to Engaging Diverse Audiences - Racc.org," July 2014, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://racc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RACC-Intro-to-Engaging-Diverse-Audiences.pdf>.

After in-depth evaluation of current research, best practices and interviews with community leaders, RACC developed Six Building Blocks for Engaging Diverse Audiences.²⁹ The relationship between the organization and the community is the most important aspect and should be nurtured. The engagement is a process that should be approached with true commitment, the building blocks are a great way to get started.



Figure 1-1. Six Building Blocks for Engaging Diverse Audiences.

In 2002, AAM released a report called *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums*. The report challenged museums to increase their involvement within their communities. The reports states that museums that are fully engaged in communities understand that “there is a deeply internalized belief that community engagement matters; that the rationale for it does not need to be explained repeatedly; and that it should happen on many levels within

²⁹ Ibid.

the institution” (AAM, 2002). Exhibitions and programs should be evaluated on how people were able to enjoy and immerse themselves in the experience.³⁰ Dan Spock believes that the most important thing is learning how to listen and to see the benefits of collaborations, museums will have to change their values if their collaborations are authentic.³¹

Many museums are conflicted with the change in demographics and how to handle issues of diversity and inclusion. The reviewed literature proves that it is important for museums to adopt a culture of ethnic diversity and to engage with their communities. While there are museums who have made the necessary changes, there is still a lot of work that has to be done.

³⁰ Porchia Moore, "The Danger of the "D" Word: Museums and Diversity

³¹ Telephone interview with Dan Spock, Senior Vice President for Audience Engagement, Levine Museum of the New South, interview by author, April 3, 2018.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine issues of racial equity and inclusion in museums. The methodology used to gather this research data was broad research on inclusion, equity and community engagement in museums. Personal interviews with museum professionals and case studies were also used. The criterion for choosing each person was that they had to work, write about or be involved directly with issues of diversity, inclusion, equity, and community engagement. In addition, the museums chosen for case studies are all doing exemplary work with the above-mentioned issues.

Research Questions

The four research questions that guided this research are as follows:

1. How do museums currently approach issues of diversity, equity and inclusion?
2. How can museums overcome issues of diversity, equity and inclusion through community engagement?
3. Why should museums engage with communities?
4. How can communities contribute to museums?

Research

Extensive research was conducted that focused on issues of diversity, inclusion and equity in museums. In addition, I researched the history of museums to develop an understanding of systemic issues of racism and oppression in museums. Resources included scholarly articles, books, conference proceedings, news articles and blogs. It was difficult to find information at my University library because it lacked the material needed to complete this research. This speaks largely to what the library deems as important to purchase for its patrons. I purchased books and relied on inter-library loan for most of my sources. Furthermore, books that should be classified as museum studies libraries were located in other places. For example, books on African

American museums were located in the African American History section. This omission might be an oversight, or institutional preference but its continuance is why this research is important.

As a black woman, I have worked in the museum field for over ten years. After moving to the United States to pursue a master's degree in 2016, I was fortunate to intern, visit and complete projects for museums and other cultural institutions. I have witnessed firsthand, the lack of diversity in staff and visitors and the normalization of racism in these institutions. This research was prompted by a conversation with a senior museum manager who stated that diversity exists in their museum; in the janitorial staff and the lady (who sits out front) who speaks English and Spanish. All museum staff need an awareness of attitudes towards diversity and inclusion.

Personal Interviews

Telephone interviews were made with the purpose of answering the research questions and offering additional insight relevant to the topic. I developed research questions that were open-ended so that there was no restriction on the answers the interviewee could give.¹ I felt that personal interviews would yield better results than surveys because persons would be willing to give more information in an interview than in a volunteered survey. In addition, the interview process is more personal, relaxed and informal and allows persons to express their true feelings. The questions also gave me the flexibility to delve into other related topics I was unaware of. Surveys would not give me the depth of information I required to complete this research. I would not have the opportunity to speak to persons completing the surveys and there is the chance that

¹ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Fourth ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). p.12

no thought was given to the question before asking.² Issues of equity and inclusion are complex issues in museums so semi-structured questions that prompted discussion were determined to be the best method for this research.

Interviewees were chosen based on their reputation in the field and by “snowball” sampling. After the initial interview, the person was asked to recommend someone who would be willing to participate in this study. A list of thirteen questions were asked during the interview and in some cases, questions were emailed in advance. I interviewed the following

1. Joanne Jones Rizzi- Vice President of STEM Equity and Education, Science Museum of Minnesota.
2. Chris Taylor- Chief Inclusion Officer, Minnesota Historical Society
3. Virginia Shearer- Eleanor McDonald Storza Director of Education, High Museum of Atlanta
4. Stacey Mann- Co-Founder Empathetic Museum
5. Amelia Wiggins- Manager of Gallery Learning & Interpretation at the Delaware Art Museum,
6. Dan Spock- Senior Vice President Audience Engagement, Levine Museum of the New South
7. Paul Ortiz- Associate Professor of History, University of Florida
8. Karen Vidangos- Founder of A Latina in Museums

Case Studies

I chose three museums to analyze for case studies. Each of these museums have introduced inclusive principles that have resulted in considerable changes in the institutions. According to Robert Yinn, case studies are an excellent way to gain a deep understanding of a specific phenomenon.³ Consisting of two art museums and one history museums, they demonstrate how an unwavering dedication to systemic changes in a museum can have an effect

² Loraine Blaxter, Christina Hughes, and Malcolm Tight, *How to Research*, Fourth ed. (Berkshire: McGraw-Hill - Open University Press, 2013).

³ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Fourth ed. (London: Sage Publication, 2009).

on the diversity of visitors, the empathy of staff and the development of departments solely focused on diversity and inclusion.

Each case study was researched and developed with interviews T with interviews with various staff members at each institution, strategic plans, programs, policies and institutional goals. The Minnesota Historical Society, The High Museum of Atlanta and the Delaware Art Museum serve as examples that other museums who seek to make institutional changes can follow.

The limitations for this research are the small size of persons interviewed and limited number of museums. However, the study does answer the research questions and provide examples for museums to learn from.

CHAPTER 4 WHO ARE MUSEUMS FOR?

One of the key roles of museums is to serve the public. The American Alliance Museum Code of Ethics for Museums states that “Museums in the United States are grounded in the tradition of public service. They are organized as public trusts, holding their collections and information as a benefit for those they were established to serve.”¹ Without visitors, museums would be empty and have no purpose except to house collections. However, museums must be prepared to effectively serve a diverse audience. If museums are not prepared to create a welcoming atmosphere for all visitors who enter their doors, then they must be prepared to answer tough questions. One of those questions is which public do museums serve? Museums must embrace diversity if they are to survive and thrive. According to Peggy Levitt, chair and professor of sociology at Wellesley College. "If museums don't act now to fulfill a cultural contract that demands they serve audiences beyond their traditional patrons, their continued relevance into the twenty-first century will be seriously at risk- a view that is clearly gaining traction around the country".² It is crucial for museums to redefine their missions and goals to reflect the expectations of a changing world. Moreover, they should strive to play a larger role in their communities and cater to a wide range of audiences.

¹ American Alliance of Museums, "Public Trust and Accountability Standards," , accessed November 1, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/public-trust-and-accountability-standards/>

² Peggy Levitt, "Museums Must Attract Diverse Visitors or Risk Irrelevance," The Atlantic, November 09, 2015, accessed July 23, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/museums-must-attract-diverse-visitors-or-risk-irrelevance/433347/>

Brief History of Museum Patronage and Development

The question of who museums are for has been debated for a long time. The origin of the word museum comes from the Greek word mouseion, which means “place of the muse”.³ The first museum is credited to the Great Museum of Alexandria built in the 3rd century BC.⁴ This museum and other early museums were associated with the aristocratic; the elite members of society who wished to distinguish themselves from the masses.⁵ Hudson goes on to remark:

The argument has been going on for a long time. It is rooted in an old-established belief, the product of an aristocratic and hierarchical society that art and scholarship are for a closed circle. The public may admire in a general way, but it should realize its permanent and unchangeable inferiority and keep its distance. In Europe, museums and galleries began at a time when the people who owned and ran them had a contempt for the masses. Collections were formed by men who wished to display them to others with the same taste and level of knowledge as themselves, for connoisseurs and scholars. Any idea that there might be a duty to make this material attractive or intelligible to a broader range of people would have seemed ludicrous.⁶

The wealthy’s control of the arts continued during the sixteenth and seventeenth century as access was prohibited to the public.⁷ Collections were owned and displayed by persons who wanted them shown to others in high society. In 1759, the British museum opened, and the policies were “as elusive and elitist as their predecessors”.⁸ In order to gain entrance to the museum, persons would have to complete a form, return it and pick up a ticket the following day.

³ John E. Simmons, “Museums: A History” (Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2016).

⁴ Burcu Günay, "Museum Concept from Past to Present and Importance of Museums as Centers of Art Education," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 55 (2012).

⁵ Kenneth Hudson, *Social History of Museums: What the Visitors Thought* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1975) p.3

⁶ *Ibid.* p.4

⁷ Kenneth Hudson, *Museums for the 1980s: A Survey of World Trends* (Paris: UNESCO-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1977). p.12

⁸ Derek James Cash, *Access to Museum Culture: The British Museum from 1753 to 1836* (Great Britain: University of Cambridge, 2002) p.1

This process ensured that only those who could read and write were allowed entrance.⁹ Another discriminatory policy called ‘A Sketch of a Plan for a new method of Shewing the Museum was considered by Sir Joseph Banks in 1801.¹⁰ With this policy, Banks wanted to introduce a fee to “keep the uneducated from entering, because he thought they did not know how to behave in a museum”.¹¹ It was not until 1810 that the ticket system was abolished and “any person of decent appearance” was allowed entry.¹²

As early as 1755, several French nobles hoped to bring the royal collection back to Paris from Versailles to create “the most beautiful temple of the arts the world has ever seen”.¹³ Several proposals were submitted by various noblemen for a library, a renovated salon and a conversion of the Grande Galerie.¹⁴ However, The Louvre Museum was not opened until 1793 by the newly established French legislature, The National Assembly. The museum put confiscated royal collections and art work that was only shown to royalty on public display.¹⁵ The Museum’s purpose was to “symbolize the newborn freedom of the people in which access to what had once been exclusive to aristocracy and clergy would now be universal for every

⁹ Derek James Cash, *Access to Museum Culture: The British Museum from 1753 to 1836* (Great Britain: University of Cambridge, 2002). p.1

¹⁰ Neil Chambers, *Joseph Banks and The British Museum: The World of Collecting 1770-1830* (S.l.: Routledge, 2017). p.103

¹¹ Derek James Cash, *Access to Museum Culture*: p.44

¹²Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). p.59

¹³ Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-century Paris* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009). p.59

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.52

¹⁵ Burcu Günay, "Museum Concept from Past to Present.

citizen”.¹⁶ The general public was allowed access for six hours, three days per week.¹⁷ Artists were allowed in the first six days and had special access during the three public days as well. Moreover, foreigners were allowed in every day.¹⁸ The museum had a superior attitude and was unfair in its treatment of the general public and artists. Hudson pointed out:

Visitors were admitted as a privilege, not as a right, and consequently gratitude and admiration, not criticism, were required of them.¹⁹

Museum development in the eighteenth and nineteenth century culminated with the idea that citizens could benefit morally, socially and politically from visiting.²⁰ Museums became symbols of a nation’s success and were the stimulus to a civilized society.²¹ Stephen Weil states that:

Beyond the capacity to elevate the taste and purify the morals of visitors, the museum was also envisioned by its founders as providing a wholesome alternative to the seamier forms of diversion that might otherwise tempt the working-class inhabitants of those burgeoning nineteenth-century cities where the earliest museums were established.²²

Visitors were allowed access but there was an absence of equality in the policies adapted by the founders of public museums.²³ In the United States, the Smithsonian was established by

¹⁶ Stephen E. Weil, "The Museum and the Public," in *Museums and Their Communities* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007). p.34

¹⁷ Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion*:

¹⁸Edward P. Alexander, *Museum Masters: Their Museums and Their Influence* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002).

¹⁹ Kenneth Hudson, *Social History of Museums*: 6

²⁰ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 2007) 16; Jennifer Barrett, *Museums and the Public Sphere* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) 52;

²¹ Jennifer Barrett, *Museums and the Public Sphere*, 3

²² Stephen E. Weil, "The Museum and the Public, 33

²³ Carol B. Stapp, "The "Public" Museum: A Review of the Literature," *Journal of Museum Education* 15, no. 3 (1990): , doi:10.1080/10598650.1990.11510151. 5

an Act of Congress on August 10, 1846. James Smithson, a wealthy British scientist and philanthropist left his fortune to the United States for “the increase and diffusion of knowledge.”²⁴ Moreover, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts established in 1870 was “embedded in a social class, formal organizations whose official structure was draped around the ongoing life of the group that governed, patronized and staffed them”.²⁵ The Boston Museum although established with a goal to educate its patrons soon abandoned this “mission in favor of aestheticism and an elite clientele”.²⁶ These and other early accounts of museums in the United States were tied to the elite who was important for their financial support. It was a close-knit society of wealthy patrons whose main goal was to exclude the lower social classes. What was also common in these museums is that most of the patrons and staff were white.²⁷ Museums in the U.S. are not a true representation of the democratic nation they exist, in short, they are exclusive.²⁸ In the 21st Century, museums can no longer justify this practice as they will quickly become irrelevant.

The Whiteness of Museums

As a result of their historical beginnings, the legacy of elitism remains rooted in the museum’s organizational structure. In the United States, wealthy individuals still continue to be a

²⁴ Nina Burleigh, *The Stranger and the Statesman: James Smithson, John Quincy Adams, and the Making of Americas Greatest Museum*, the Smithsonian (New World City LLC, 2015). 19

²⁵ Paul Dimaggio, "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America," *Media, Culture & Society* 4, no. 1 (1982):, doi:10.1177/016344378200400104. 390

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 393

²⁷ Stephen E. Weil, "The Museum and the Public, 34

²⁸ Laura-Edythe Coleman, *Understanding and Implementing Inclusion in Museums* (Lanham: Rowman Et Littlefield, 2018).

key source of funding for museums.²⁹ Museums are “reminders of power and privilege”³⁰, that exhibit the history of the conquest of the white male and display the art of the white male artist and the white male scientist.³¹ John H. Falk concludes that African Americans are not regular visitors to museums because they perceive museums to be racist institutions.³² If they do visit, they feel unwelcome as soon as they enter the door. This feeling is a psychological barrier known as a ‘threshold of fear’, where people of color feel uncomfortable in spaces where they are unrepresented.³³ A visit to a museum reveals a racial composition that is strikingly different between the leadership staff and the security staff. For a person of color, the thought of visiting a museum can be a daunting and almost unimaginable experience. In 2013, Nina Simon described how underrepresented groups feel when they enter a museum:

When people walk into a museum, we don’t want them to feel like whoa, I’m entering a totally white place... We want them to feel like there is a place for them in that one of the things they [social psychologists] are finding a lot in their research is that people who are traditionally marginalized feel more confident in an environment where they are overrepresented related to the norm, and then that overrepresentation does not diminish the majority culture's participation ... [If] you're somebody who 's never been in one of those spaces and you walk in and

²⁹ Ben Davis, "How the Rich Are Hurting the Museums They Fund," *The New York Times*, July 22, 2016, , accessed May 01, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/24/opinion/sunday/how-the-rich-are-hurting-the-museums-they-fund.htm>

³⁰ Gretchen Jennings and Joanne Jones-Rizzi, "Museums, White Privilege, and Diversity."

³¹ Nina Simon, "On White Privilege and Museums," *Museum 2.0*, March 2013, accessed March 15, 2018, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2013/03/on-white-privilege-and-museums.html>

³² John H. Falk, "Leisure Decisions Influencing African-American Use of Museums," *Visitor Behavior* 8, no. 2 (1993), accessed July 2, 2018, http://www.informalscience.org/sites/default/files/VSA-a0a1u2-a_5730.pdf

³³ Darby English, "Don't Be Intimidated by Museums. They Belong to Everyone | Darby English," *The Guardian*, May 31, 2015, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/31/museums-not-white-spaces-belong-everyone>

it's all white, who can blame that person for feeling like it's a space that's not for them.³⁴

On April 30, 2015, Michelle Obama gave a speech at the reopening of the Whitney Art Museum in New York City. She spoke openly on issues that have existed in museums for a long time and encouraged museums to become a more welcoming space for children of color. She stated:

You see, there are so many kids in this country who look at places like museums and concert halls and other cultural centers and they think to themselves, well, that's not a place for me, for someone who looks like me, for someone who comes from my neighborhood. In fact, I guarantee you that right now, there are kids living less than a mile from here who would never in a million years dream that they would be welcome in this museum. And growing up on the South Side of Chicago, I was one of those kids myself.³⁵

With these words from the former First Lady who is African American, museum professionals heard about the consequences of discriminatory practices at their institution. John Falk points out that African Americans did not regularly take their children to museums because of historical exclusion.³⁶ Progress can only come with the admittance and exposure of how racism is a prevalent issue in museums.

The question “who are museums for?” is real and important. The mostly white staff and white museum visitorship is not a reflection of the general public. In “Activating Diversity and Inclusion: A Blueprint for Museum Educators as Allies and Change Makers”, the

³⁴ Wendy NG and Syrus Marcus Ware, "Excellence and Equity? A Reflection on The Diversification of Museums," in *Multiculturalism in Art Museums Today* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 20). p. 49

³⁵ "Remarks by The First Lady at Opening of the Whitney Museum," National Archives and Records Administration, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/04/30/remarks-first-lady-opening-whitney-museum>.

³⁶ John H. Falk, "Factors Influencing African American Leisure Time Utilization of Museums," *Journal of Leisure Research* 27, no. 1 (1995): , doi:10.1080/00222216.1995.11969976

authors argue that museums should be for all visitors not only those who benefit from white supremacy.³⁷ The article also emphasizes that

Without an anti-oppressive framework, museum education is at best upholding a vacant notion of diversity and at worst actively re-inscribing and perpetuating privilege by excluding or disempowering visitors with marginalized identities.³⁸

It is important for museums to be transparent and realize the issues at hand. Directors and staff should acknowledge the legacies of oppression and privilege that museums operate within. There are serious issues of racism in museums, and while some institutions have made some strides, progress is still slow. There has to be a real commitment to truly examine the problem and search for solutions. Arthur Lehman, former director of the Brooklyn Museum once stated, “for our museums, diversity is a “critical issue” and “the most important book any museum director should read is the US census.”³⁹

In 2016, 25 multi-ethnic museums professional convened in Chicago to discuss issues of systemic racism in museums. The 3-day intense conference was titled “Museums & Race: Transformation and Justice” and was an extension of conversations related to museums response to Ferguson.⁴⁰ The statement of purpose for the conference was:

The persistent and pervasive presence of structural racism in our institutions... is at the heart of the museum field's failure to diversify its boards, staffs, collections, members, and visitors, despite over a generation of effort in this area.... Coming to understand and recognize entrenched racism is a difficult and potentially

³⁷ Wendy Ng, Syrus Marcus Ware, and Alyssa Greenberg, "Activating Diversity and Inclusion

³⁸ Ibid.,

³⁹ Johnnetta Cole, "Johnnetta Cole: Museums, Diversity, & Social Value," Association of Art Museum Directors, June 2015, accessed September 01, 2018, <https://aamd.org/our-members/from-the-field/johnnetta-cole-museums-diversity-social-value>

⁴⁰ Museums & Race, "History of Museums & Race," Museums & Race, March 11, 2018, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://museumsandrace.org/history-of-museums-race/>.

contentious undertaking—but also a necessary step—if America's museums are to serve its diverse citizenry.⁴¹

What took place over the three days is described in an article titled “Coming Together to Address Systemic Racism in Museums” written by two members of the steering committee and a participant at the conference. The authors argue that despite “diversity statements, task forces, “strategic hiring” of people of color— with few long-term outcomes” the depth of the problem has still not been addressed.⁴² This is a consequence of a disregard to how the experiences, culture, social capacities of disadvantaged groups are so different from privileged groups.⁴³ Racism has spread through the entire institution and as Isaac Kaplan puts it “museums needs change from the front door to the board room”.⁴⁴

Critical race theory (CRT) examines relationships between race, racism and power, and its application to this project assists in highlighting the ways in which race is embedded into the fabric of society and museums. According to Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, "Critical race theory sprang up in the mid-1970s as a number of lawyers, activists, and legal scholars across the country realized... that the heady advances of the civil rights era of the 1960s had stalled and, in many respects, were being rolled back."⁴⁵ CRT can be used as a framework to understand why people of color are marginalized in museums. The whiteness of museums can be explained

⁴¹ Daryl Fischer, Swarupa Anila, and Porchia Moore, "Coming Together to Address Systemic Racism in Museums," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 60, no. 1 (2017), doi:10.1111/cura.12191. 23

⁴² *Ibid.*, 25

⁴³ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference: With a New Foreword by Danielle Allen* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011). 116

⁴⁴ Isaac Kaplan, "What the Art World Must Do to Diversify Museums," *Artsy*, October 03, 2016, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-what-the-art-world-must-do-to-diversify-museums>.

⁴⁵ Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2017). p.4

through four tenants of the CRT framework and simply put, argues that race pervades every aspect of society.

The first tenant of CRT states that racism is a permanent fixture in American life as people with racial privileges are color blind to the effects of racism.⁴⁶ If museums ignore systemic racism, diversity and inclusion initiatives will not be effective. This tenant also seeks to expose racism in its different variations. In March 2018, the Brooklyn Museum hired a white woman as the new curator of African Art. This decision prompted wide criticism from people who believed a person of color should have been hired instead. However, based on reports from AAM and the Mellon Foundation, the hiring of a white woman was normal. African Americans account for just 4% of all curators, conservators, educators, and leadership. Members of the black community wondered why Brooklyn Museum could not have found a qualified curator of color for the job, but the Museum defended its decision.⁴⁷ An activist group, “Decolonize This Place” sent a letter to the museum stating “no matter how one parses it, the appointment is simply not a good look in this day and age, especially on the part of a museum that prides itself on its relationships with the diverse communities of Brooklyn.”⁴⁸ The activists also a protested in the lobby of the museum shouting “decolonize the Brooklyn Museum”.⁴⁹ The hiring of a white woman for this position is questionable no matter what her qualifications. Furthermore, if she is

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.8

⁴⁷ ARTnews, "'Simply Not a Good Look': Activist Group Criticizes Brooklyn Museum's Hiring of White Curator for African Art Department-Museum Responds: 'Unanimously Selected an Extraordinary Candidate' [Updated] -," April 09, 2018, accessed October 29, 2018, <http://www.artnews.com/2018/04/06/simply-not-good-look-activist-group-criticizes-brooklyn-museums-hiring-white-curator-african-art-department-open-letter/>

⁴⁸ Ibid.,

⁴⁹ ARTnews, "'Brooklyn Is Not for Sale': Decolonize This Place Leads Protest at Brooklyn Museum -," April 30, 2018, accessed October 29, 2018, <http://www.artnews.com/2018/04/30/brooklyn-not-sale-decolonize-place-leads-protest-brooklyn-museum/>

the best candidate for the job, “then we should talk about why this is the case and if people of all colors are getting the same access to art education if they want it.”⁵⁰ The actions of Decolonize This Place exposed structural racism at the Brooklyn Museum and made the museum aware that changes were needed.

The second tenant concerns the idea of whiteness as property. This theory culminated with the entrenched racism in American society, where the ideology of whiteness had different variations, such as the right of possession, the right to use and enjoyment, the right to disposition, and the right of exclusion.⁵¹ This tenant also means that art whiteness and therefore it is the property of whites which is why communities of color are not welcomed, promotions and art are not geared towards them, etc.

The third tenant emphasized that racial equity and equality for people of color will only be pursued as long as they coincide with the self-interest of white people.⁵² Early civil rights laws gave African American basic human rights while whites were the primary beneficiaries.

These two tenants speak to the marginalization and omission of African American art and artist from museums. They also highlight the systems of power that contribute to institutional racism. In 2009 the Gibbes Museum of Art presented a provocative installation by Juan Logan and Susan Harbage Page in 2009. The "Prop Master" show included a 20-foot by 40-foot platform covered with 10,000 small boxes, almost all of them white, with just 40 black ones

⁵⁰ Julia Pimentel, "Brooklyn Museum Criticized for Hiring White Woman as African Art Curator in a Post-Killmonger World," *Complex*, June 01, 2018, accessed October 29, 2018, <https://www.complex.com/life/2018/03/brooklyn-museum-criticized-hiring-white-woman-as-african-art-curator>

⁵¹ Melinda Adams, "Deconstructing Systems of Bias in the Museum Field Using Critical Race Theory," *Journal Of Museum Education* 42, no. 3 (2017):

⁵² H. Richard Milner, IV, "Critical Race Theory and Interest Convergence as Analytic Tools in Teacher Education Policies and Practices," *Journal of Teacher Education* 59, no. 4 (September/October 2008): accessed October 29, 2018, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0022487108321884>

scattered throughout. The boxes represented the works in the museum's permanent collection, the vast majority of which were made by white artist. It was undeniable visual evidence of neglect.

Gibbes officials knew of the imbalance and during the last ten years, they have acquired 25 pieces by black artists, six in the past year alone. It may not be a lot, but it is a good start. "There is an emphasis on diversifying the collection better reflect the community and having different voices, and balancing those voices," said curator Sara Arnold.⁵³ The goal was to not only collect art that portrayed a whitewashed, romanticized view of Charleston but to have a collection that reflected the community.⁵⁴ Leo Twiggs, remarks that in the 1970s and '80s, his work was considered an afterthought by art professionals and critics, and he made perhaps \$500 for one of his signature batik paintings. Today, his larger work sells for around \$30,000. He states "What I'm doing today is close to the market value that other artists like me are getting, we've come a long way. When a major museum starts collecting African-American art, then there are other museums who see this and start doing it, perpetuating a cycle of advancement for artists of color."⁵⁵

The fourth tenant concerns the notion of counter narratives or storytelling. People of color have the expertise and knowledge to tell their own unique stories. According to their website, The National Museum of African American History and Culture is:

The only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture. The Museum's nearly 40,000 objects help all

⁵³ Adam Parker, "How the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston and Other Museums Seek to Represent People of Color," Post and Courier, March 26, 2018, accessed November 02, 2018, https://www.postandcourier.com/features/how-the-gibbes-museum-of-art-in-charleston-and-other/article_6e39f0f8-2c80-11e8-9336-5fa0d5fe1fe8.html

⁵⁴ Ibid.,

⁵⁵ Ibid.,

Americans see how their stories, their histories, and their cultures are shaped by a people's journey and a nation's story.⁵⁶

The museum's exhibits, programs and collections help people to understand that the African American story is a part of the American story.⁵⁷ It should not be excluded or whitewashed but shared with all Americans. According to Director, Lonnie Bunch "making our mission a possibility has brought its share of challenges, especially when it comes to presenting the harsh and complex racial history of America in a way that both commemorates and celebrates the past."⁵⁸

Racialized structural inequality influences the internal organization of museums so much that the array of dynamics that accompany this practice have been normalized.⁵⁹ For this reason, it is important for museum professionals to be familiar with the following two levels of racism as defined by the nonprofit research organization Race Forward.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ National Museum of African American History and Culture, "A People's Journey, A Nation's Story," July 02, 2018, accessed November 01, 2018, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/peoples-journey-nations-story>

⁵⁷ "National Museum of African American History and Culture Redefines Museum Experience on Second Anniversary," National Museum of African American History and Culture, September 24, 2018., accessed November 02, 2018, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/about/news/national-museum-african-american-history-and-culture-redefines-museum-experience-second>

⁵⁸ Lonnie G. Bunch, 111, "The National Museum of African American History and Culture: The Vision," *Journal of Museum Education* 2, no. 1 (September 15, 2016)

⁵⁹ Marion Iris Young, "Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference," *Social Justice and Public Policy Seeking Fairness in Diverse Societies*, 2008, doi:10.1332/policypress/9781861349347.003.0005. 16

⁶⁰ Race Forward, "Moving the Race - Color lines," January 2014, accessed March 23, 2018, http://act.colorlines.com/acton/attachment/1069/f-0114/1/-/-/-/-/acial_Discourse_Part_1.PDF



Figure 3-1. Four Levels of Racism

A broad understanding of these terms can stimulate crucial dialogue about racial equity, diversity, privilege, inclusion and power. This dialogue continues to reveal the reasons museums keep denying that race is an issue and that conversations about it are unnecessary.⁶¹ In addition, it is not sufficient to have a one-day workshop on issues of racism, equity and inclusion and not

⁶¹ Inluseum, "Michelle Obama, "Activism", and Museum Employment Part II," The Inluseum, February 15, 2016, accessed March 03, 2018, <https://inluseum.com/2015/06/05/michelle-obama-activism-and-museum-employment-part-ii/>

invest in ongoing training for staff. This training should also culminate with a goal to analyze the problem and seek answers.

Museum Staff, Leadership and Board

Museums also lack diversity in staff, leadership and board. In 2015, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation examined staff diversity and boards in American art museums. Surveys were done in February and March 2015 with 77% of Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) 235 museums and 15 % of American Alliance of Museum (AAM) 643-member organizations.⁶² The results revealed that while the American population is 62% non-Hispanic white; 72% of AAMD staff is non-Hispanic white and 28% of the staff is minorities.⁶³ The study also notes that in terms of leadership positions (director, chief curator and education) 84% is Non- Hispanic white, 6% is Asian, 4% Black, 3% Hispanic white and 3% two or more races.⁶⁴ As noted by Mariët Westermann, Vice President of the Mellon Foundation, “ with the exception of the Asian demographic category, which makes up 5% of the United States population today, these proportions do not come close to representing the diversity of the American population.”⁶⁵

⁶²Roger Schonfeld and Mariët Westermann, "The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey," July 28, 2015, accessed August 22, 2018, https://mellon.org/media/filer_public/ba/99/ba99e53a-48d5-4038-80e1-66f9ba1c020e/awmf_museum_diversity_report_aamd_7-28-15.pdf.

⁶³ Ibid., 3

⁶⁴ Ibid., 3

⁶⁵ Ibid., 3

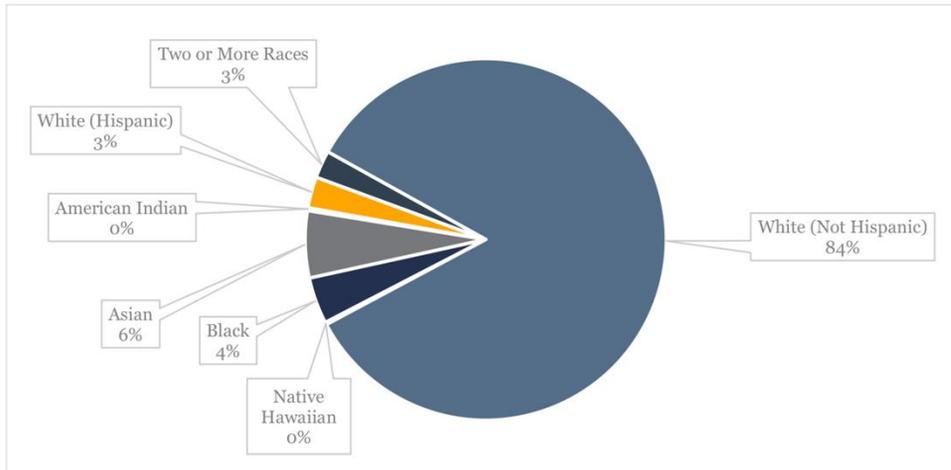


Figure 3-2. Race and Ethnicity (Curators, Conservators, Educators and Leadership Only)

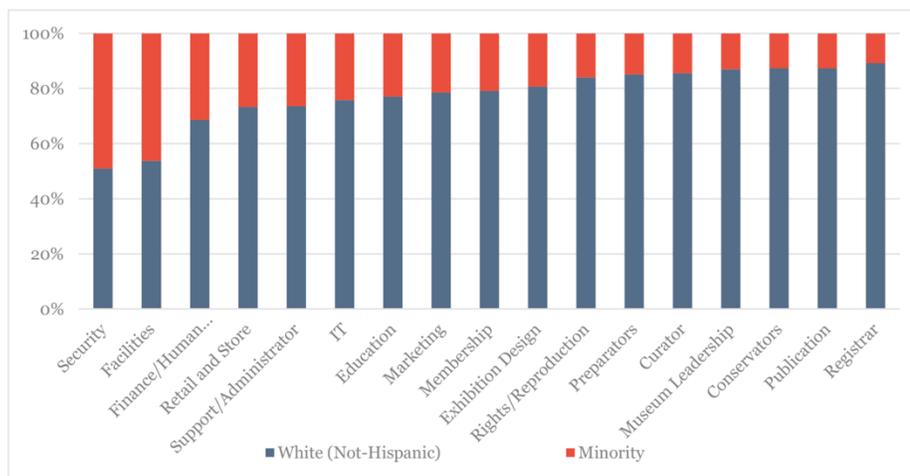


Figure 3-3. White Non-Hispanic and Under Represented Minority, By Job Category

The percentage of young minority staff in is at 27.5% but this shortage of “youth bulge” as the report states, “from historically underrepresented minorities” will not help museums who seek to increase diversity. This suggests that an education pipeline that focuses on minority students is needed in the field of museum studies and art history. According to AAM, museum studies programs are 80% female and 80% white.⁶⁶ The reason for this can be attributed again to

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Merritt, "More on the Future of Museum Studies," American Alliance of Museums, April 11, 2018, accessed August 02, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/2009/08/07/more-on-the-future-of-museum-studies/>

the elitist beginnings of museums and the perception that they are institutions that systematically exclude people of color. If minorities do not feel welcome in museums, they will not be motivated to enter the professional field. In addition to museums adopting inclusive practices, graduate programs should increase awareness of museum careers and aim to recruit students from minority groups. Some programs have begun to look at how they can increase the number of minority students in their programs. The graduate museum and exhibition studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago increased the diversity of their students to 80% underrepresented minority over four years.⁶⁷ This was done through target recruitment and the development of funding programs. The museum and exhibition studies program were also the recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Humanities Access Grant for a proposal titled “Toward Cultural Diversity in Cultural Institutions”. This grant offers Graduate Assistantships, stipends and tuition waivers to two graduate students of color.⁶⁸

In 2017, Lincoln University, an Historically Black College and University (HBCU) launched a museum studies program in collaboration with the Barnes Foundation. Although it is an undergraduate degree, it is unique in that it aims to diversify the nation’s cultural institutions.⁶⁹ According to the University Interim President “This collaboration will capitalize on the legacy of progressive values and innovation shared by Lincoln University and the Barnes

⁶⁷ Therese Quinn, "Chicago's Museums Need More Diversity at the Top," *Chicagotribune.com*, February 28, 2018, accessed August 22, 2018, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-perspec-museums-diversity-segregation-taxpayer-0301-20180226-story.html>

⁶⁸ "Museum & Exhibition Studies Graduate Program Overview," School of Art and Art History UIC, accessed October 04, 2018, http://artandarthistory.uic.edu/uic_masters_muse

⁶⁹ Lincoln University Unveils Historic Academic Partnership with the Barnes Foundation," Lincoln University, April 10, 2017, accessed October 04, 2018, <http://www.lincoln.edu/news-and-events/news/lincoln-university-unveils-historic-academic-partnership-barnes-foundation>

Foundation, combining the resources of these two institutions will make Lincoln a leader in preparing African American students for careers in the museum professions, a field where African Americans have been historically underrepresented.”⁷⁰ The goal is to prepare students for graduate programs in museum studies or begin working in the field. According to the Mellon Foundation only 4% of museum leaders are black, this programs objective is to increase that number.

Similarly, Spellman College received a \$5.4 million grant from the Walton Family Foundation to establish the Atlanta University Center Collective for the Study of Art History and Curatorial Studies.⁷¹ The funding will allow the college to create an Art History Major and Curatorial Minor and also host a summer program for high school students interested in a museum career. The goal of this program is to increase the diversity of art museum curators that is more representative of the American society. According to Spellman College President, Mary Schmidt Campbell, PhD:

The Atlanta University Center has a rich history of excellence in the arts. Atlanta University was the home to the first art department at a historically Black college and university and their Art Annuals event was one of the most prestigious exhibitions for black artists. The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art and Clark Atlanta University Art Museum are national treasures. The Walton Family Foundation grant builds on this history. We applaud the foundation’s commitment to closing the diversity gap to ensure that leadership at the nation’s cultural institutions begins to reflect the shifting demographic profile of the communities they serve.⁷²

⁷⁰Ibid.,

⁷¹ "Spelman College Awarded \$5.4 Million Grant from the Walton Family Foundation for Atlanta University Center Initiative to Increase Diversity in Museum Field," Spelman College, September 20, 2018, , accessed October 05, 2018, [https://www.spelman.edu/about-us/news-and-events/news-releases/2018/09/20/spelman-college-awarded-\\$5.4-million-grant-from-the-walton-family-foundation-for-atlanta-university-center-initiative-to-increase-diversity-in-museum-field](https://www.spelman.edu/about-us/news-and-events/news-releases/2018/09/20/spelman-college-awarded-$5.4-million-grant-from-the-walton-family-foundation-for-atlanta-university-center-initiative-to-increase-diversity-in-museum-field)

⁷² Ibid.,

The five-year grant will welcome its first cohort of students in Fall 2019. Although courses will be taught at Spellman, students from Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University can take classes through cross registration. The grant will also provide paid internships at art museums, archives and cultural centers across the nation.

Other initiatives to create educational pipelines include the Mellon Undergraduate Curatorial Fellowship that was founded in 2013. The two-year paid program was developed for students from diverse and historically underrepresented backgrounds wishing to enter the curatorial field.⁷³ Internships are held at six partnering institutions; the Art Institute of Chicago, the High Museum of Atlanta, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In addition, the Getty Foundation offer Multicultural Undergraduate Internships. Students in this program are not only exposed to art museum but to a myriad of museums and cultural centers. Since 1993, 3,200 college undergraduates have obtained full time paid internships at 161 organizations in Los Angeles.⁷⁴ The objective of this program is to increase staff diversity in museums and visual arts centers in Los Angeles. According to Deborah Marrow, Director of the Getty Foundation:

We knew that the shifting demographics of Los Angeles meant that museums and other cultural institutions would need to attract and serve more diverse audiences, yet the staff members at most Los Angeles organizations were very homogeneous. To address this concern, the Multicultural Undergraduate Internship program was created for students from constituencies typically underrepresented in museums and the visual arts. In order to attract the best and brightest undergraduates and

⁷³ Mariët Westermann, "Art in America: Supporting a New Generation of Curators," The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, June 01, 2018, accessed October 05, 2018, <https://mellon.org/resources/shared-experiences-blog/developing-next-generation-curators/>

⁷⁴ "Multicultural Undergraduate Internship Program (Getty Foundation)," The Getty Foundation, accessed October 05, 2018, <http://www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/mui/>

make sure there would be no barriers to participation, we offered paid internships for students who either lived or went to college in Los Angeles County.⁷⁵

Students are given specialized training in museum education, collections, exhibitions, arts management, registration, archival, marketing, outreach, research and other positions. One hundred students are chosen for the ten-week summer program and are they not required to have any previous experience in the arts or museum field. Twenty-five years after the program started, alumnus are in leadership, curators, and administrator positions at large and small museums.⁷⁶ This is an important step in the right direction, but museums still need to do a better job at hiring, retaining and promoting professionals of color.

These initiatives and others can be the catalysts for a change in the diversity of museum staff and leadership. Some museums claim that there is a lack of qualified applicants of color. However, they are actually not that that hard to find. With a commitment and a proactive approach to identify applicants, museums can find a suitable pool of diverse applicants. Joy Bailey-Bryant developed the following guidelines for museums to recruit and develop a more diverse staff.⁷⁷

1. Partner with educational institutions- As noted, Universities can develop a pipeline of diverse staff for museums and other cultural organizations.
2. Get staff involved- Get your diverse staff to help in the hiring process. Ask them for referrals and to share the job posts on their social media.
3. Maintain access to leadership training- It is crucial to provide ongoing training for each staff member despite their job position. It can not only prepare staff members for

⁷⁵ "25 Years Getty Foundation Multicultural Undergraduate Internships," Getty Foundation, 2017, accessed October 5, 2018, [http://www.getty.edu/foundation/pdfs/_reports/25th Anniversary Report.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/foundation/pdfs/_reports/25th%20Anniversary%20Report.pdf)

⁷⁶ Ibid.,

⁷⁷ Joy Bailey-Bryant, "We're Not That Hard to Find: Hiring Diverse Museum Staff," January/February 2017, accessed October 1, 2018, <https://unitedarts.cc/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/were-not-that-hard-to-find.pdf>

leadership positions, but it increases morale on the job and makes the museum more appealing to potential employees.

4. Learn to read a resume- Learn to recognize social clues that point that point to valuable experience that applicants may have.
5. Prefer paid internships over non-paid- Many museums offer unpaid internships. This lack of compensation makes it difficult for minority students or any student who is not financially stable to take advantage of.⁷⁸ If museums offer paid internships, they would attract a more diverse pool of students.
6. Create an environment for experimentation- A creative environment can encourage staff to instigate change within the workplace. In addition, it is a good idea to hire “outside the box” as these persons could bring new stimulating ideas to the forefront.
7. Create mentorship relationship among staff- A mentoring program can provide support for new staff and create bonds between different levels of staff.
8. Cultivate relationships with the community and partners – It is a good idea to hire staff from the community that you are trying to reach. Cultivate a relationship with the
9. Access existing pools of candidates- Reach out to organizations that have a diverse pool of job seekers.

Bailey-Bryant also points out that when an organization lacks leaders of colors, a diverse board is also a problem.⁷⁹ According to a report by AAM and BoardSource, almost half of museum boards (46%) are white, but museum directors believe that diversity and inclusion are important to “enhancing the organization’s standing with the general public.”⁸⁰ 10% of museum directors surveyed stated that they have a plan to create a more inclusive board of directors and 21% have new policies in place to become more inclusive. However, despite the acknowledgement that a lack of diversity can hinder the advancement of their organizations,

⁷⁸ Liz Wessel, "Unpaid Internships Unfairly Favor the Wealthy," TheHill, May 14, 2018, accessed October 05, 2018, <https://thehill.com/opinion/finance/387537-unpaid-internships-unfairly-favor-the-wealthy>

⁷⁹ Ibid., 29

⁸⁰ BoardSource, "Museum Board Leadership 2017: A National Report," 2017, accessed July 23, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/eyizzp-download-the-report.pdf>

museums still struggle to broaden their board recruitment practices.⁸¹ If critical decisions are made in the boardroom, this group of persons need to diversify. Board recruitment is done through social networks, if almost half of the museum boards are white, and 91% of white American social networks are other white Americans, then the reason for racial homogeneity is obvious.⁸² Another report done by BoardSource in 2017 states that:

Whether intentional or not, the composition of a board is a reflection of organizational values what the organization considers to be relevant and important expertise, experience, and perspective for its top decision-making body.⁸³

Achieving diversity on a museum board is challenging but it can be achieved. According to BoardSource the following strategies can help achieve a more inclusive environment.⁸⁴

1. Communicate- Have regular discussions with the boards about the importance of inclusion and diversity. Ensure they know the meaning of the terms and how the organization can benefit from diversity within the board. Board members should be encouraged to state their opinions and personal biases despite feeling uncomfortable. Ongoing diversity training should also be offered from credible organizations and community partners.
2. Act: Develop a case and plan for change- Develop a case statement that include your commitment to diversity, what you want your board to look like, how a lack of inclusiveness affects your mission and a plan of action.
3. Create a pipeline of candidates- Look outside the usual candidates for board members. Consider using an executive search firm, the local chamber of commerce, community partners, local colleges and universities and organizations representing various racial and ethnic groups. One suggestion is the African American Board Leadership Institute that assist with the placement of African Americans on governing boards.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Ibid., 9

⁸² Tivoni Devor, "The Face of Nonprofit Boards: A Network Problem," Non-Profit News | Nonprofit Quarterly, November 09, 2017, accessed October 03, 2018, <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2015/03/04/the-face-of-nonprofit-boards-a-network-problem/>

⁸³ BoardSource, "Leading With Intent: 2017 National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices," 2017, , accessed October 2, 2018, <https://leadingwithintent.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/LWI-2017.pdf>

⁸⁴ BoardSource, "Beyond Political Correctness: Building a Diverse Board," The Bridgespan Group, accessed October 01, 2018, <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/boards/building-a-diverse-board>

⁸⁵ AABLI - African American Board Leadership Institute, accessed October 04, 2018, <https://www.aabli.org/>

4. Monitor and measure results- If you are recruiting diverse board members it is important to monitor their retention rate. This can be done on a quarterly or semiannual basis through surveys.

Changing Demographics

As the United States population increases it must be noted that the country is also becoming more diverse. Minorities represent 34% of the population and it is projected to increase to just under half of the population by 2050.⁸⁶ This monumental racial shift will force museums to put a greater focus on minority audiences and staff. It will be difficult, but it must be done because why do museums still have issues with racial equality in the 21st century? Carlos Tortolero states that museums need to “stop pussyfooting around its failure to be inclusive and deal with it once and for all.”⁸⁷ Tortolero’s statement may be harsh, but it is the truth. If the demographics are changing, then the demographics need to be reflected in museums. With this change, a diverse staff can develop exhibits with cultural diversity.

⁸⁶ Center for the Future of Museums, *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* (American Association of Museums, 2008).

⁸⁷ Carlos Tortolero, "Museum, Racism, The Inclusiveness Chasm," *Museum News*, December 2000.

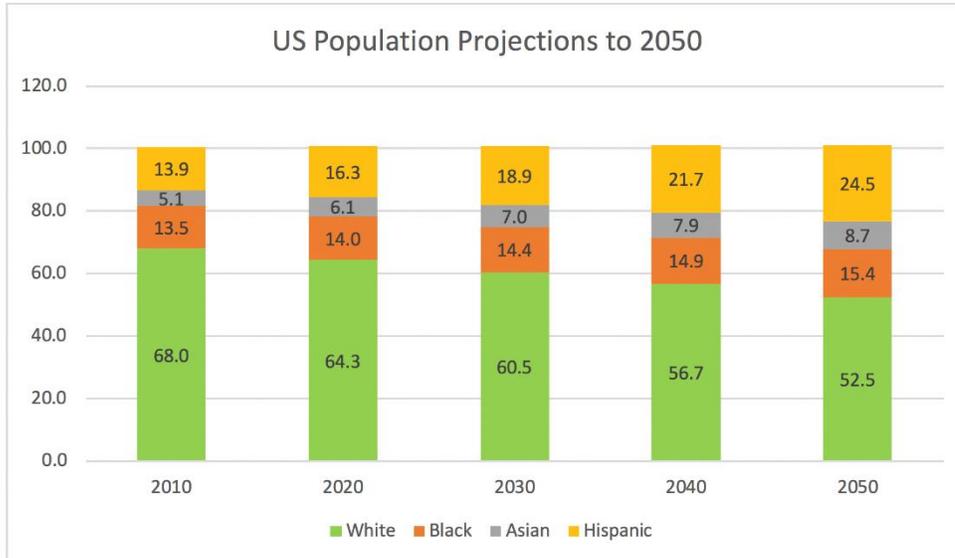


Figure 3-4. US Population Projections

In 2010, The Center for the Future of Museums’ released the report “Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums” that paints a troubling picture of the “probable future”—a future in which, if trends continue in the current grooves, museum audiences are radically less diverse than the American public, and museums serve an ever- shrinking fragment of society.”⁸⁸ Additionally the report emphasizes that the preferred vision for museums is one in which all resources benefit each segment of society. This can only be achieved with an understanding of the current trends. Today minorities account for 9% of museum visitors and 20% museum staff.⁸⁹ By the year 2050, despite the new demographic trend, these numbers are not guaranteed to increase. University of Florida professor Dr. Paul Ortiz states “so we can have 80% minority population in the year 2050 and it won’t make a difference in our institutions, in our culture and politics; if that shrinking group is allowed to continue doing what they are

⁸⁸ Center for The Future of Museums, "Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums," 2010, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Demographic-Change-and-the-Future-of-Museums.pdf>

⁸⁹ Ibid. p.5

doing”.⁹⁰ A changing racial makeup in the United States is imminent and it will affect museums greatly. The task for museums is to develop programs that will target minority populations, make them feel welcome when they arrive and find ways to make them repeat visitors.

⁹⁰ "Interview with Dr. Paul Ortiz, Associate Professor, University of Florida" interview by author, September 7, 2018.

CHAPTER 5 CASE STUDIES

Department of Inclusion and Community Engagement: The Minnesota Historical Society

The Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) is a nonprofit educational and cultural institution that was founded in 1849. The society's mission "Using the Power of History to Transform Lives" is achieved through its 26 historic sites and museums throughout the state, programming for children and adults and preservation of historic landmarks. The Minnesota Historical Society Press also publishes books on the history, art and culture of Minnesota, the Minnesota History journal and a digital encyclopedia called the MNopedia.¹ MNHS is America's largest historical society with an annual budget of over \$60 million, 1,086,126 visitors in 2017 and 350 full-time and 350 part-time employees.²

In 2014, the Department of Inclusion and Community Engagement (DICE) was developed at MNHS as a strategy to make the organization more inclusive. The main role was to "continuously engage communities of color and American Indian nations and to reflect the diversity of Minnesotans in the Society's governing board, staff, collections and programs."³ Chris Taylor, Director of Inclusion & Community Engagement and Chief Inclusion Officer has been employed at MNHS since 2005. His initial position was Diversity Outreach Specialist, and in that capacity he and his staff initiated and delivered educational and outreach programs to minority and underrepresented communities, middle schools, high schools and colleges.

¹ "About the MNHS Press," Minnesota Historical Society, accessed October 2, 2018, <http://www.mnhs.org/mnhspress/about>.

² Minnesota Historical Society, "MNHS Annual Report Fiscal Year 2017," 2017, accessed October 02, 2018, <http://www.mnhs.org/sites/default/files/reports/mnhs-annual-report-fiscal17.pdf>.

³ Chris Taylor, A Systems Approach to Diversity and Inclusion: Developing an Overarching Strategy for the Minnesota Historical Society, Proposal, Minnesota Historical Society (2014). 2

Although diversity programming existed at MNHS, it was not a collaborative process throughout the organization.⁴ According to Chris Taylor, “We focused on parts of the museum system, not the whole system. we lacked an overarching strategy and long-term vision for what sustainable Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) looked like as an institutional initiative.”⁵

The focus of DICE is to incorporate internal change at MNHS and teach the staff how to be more inclusive. Data gathered from a diversity engagement survey revealed that 61% of surveyed staff felt respected on the job, 31% felt that MNHS created a culture of inclusion, 34% consistently collaborated with community partners and 16% believed that MNHS consistently engaged with diverse communities.⁶ The results of this survey and the realization that structural changes had to take place at MNHS prompted Chris Taylor to propose DICE to administration at MNHS. The proposal outlined the following objectives for the department:

1. Develop and implement a plan to achieve success regarding the Society’s strategic priority for Diversity and Inclusion.
2. Strengthen existing connections with diverse communities and develop new relationships with community partners to increase the scope and depth of communication between the Society and target communities.
3. Develop, facilitate and maintain a system of staff development for the Society utilizing external and internal resources.
4. Facilitate existing programs and develop new programming for target communities.
5. Examine existing policies and practices and develop new procedures to ensure representation of target populations within staff, collections, preservation, management and other areas of the Society.

⁴ Chris Taylor, "Announcing the Department of Inclusion and Community Engagement at the Minnesota Historical Society: Part I," The Inluseum, February 15, 2015, accessed October 04, 2018, <https://inluseum.com/2015/04/21/announcing-the-department-of-inclusion-and-community-engagement-at-the-minnesota-historical-society-part-i/>

⁵ Ibid.,

⁶ Taylor, "From Systemic Exclusion to Systemic Inclusion: 158

6. Recruit and coordinate standing advisory committees representing all target communities.

DICE intends for diversity and inclusion to occur naturally at MHNS so that authentic community engagement can occur between target communities and the organization. Taylor advises that “building relationships are not about a particular project, it’s about creating equal partnerships, communities are important to your work.”⁷ Through Community Relationship Building, DICE work within the communities, get their opinions about programming, content and exhibitions, then relay this information to MHNS. In addition, staff who represent minority communities can be the key person for the group and promote the efforts of MHNS within the community.⁸ DICE will also be responsible for recruiting and maintaining small community advisory boards. Regular focus groups will also be held and will work with evaluation staff to analyze why some communities are not regular visitors to the society. Moreover, DICE also offers transparency through open dialogue with all communities. The goal is to build trust with the public because “if large segments of Minnesotans do not see their history included and don’t have a trusting relationship with the society, we are not living up to the original charter of the institution.”⁹

DICE also developed a program called the Diversity Learning Collaborative (DLC) to provide diversity and inclusion education for staff. The cohort-based program runs for 14 weeks and focuses on shared authority, socially conscious museums, public trust and ethics.¹⁰ Staff were taught to use an inclusion lens. This can allow them to become aware and more open to

⁷ "Interview with Chris Taylor," telephone interview by author, April 6, 2018.

⁸ Taylor, *A Systems Approach to Diversity and Inclusion*: 9

⁹ *Ibid.*,10

¹⁰ Taylor, "From Systemic Exclusion to Systemic Inclusion: 158

diversity, create a workplace that is reflective of the community they exist in and address systemic barriers.”¹¹ Over 100 staff members have completed this program from 25 different areas at MHNS, including 5 historic sites and museums. Ongoing assessments have shown how some of the staff have used inclusive practices in their work and have been able to engage more effectively with communities.¹² DICE also has a circulating library and offers workshops throughout the year. With this constant training and readings provided by DICE, MHNS staff have the tools needed to increase their cultural competence. This type of “knowledge will increase the ability of current staff to feel comfortable working with members of diverse communities, allowing for the shared authority relationship ideal for true equity and inclusiveness.”¹³

Moreover, DICE host programs for diverse students that seeks to create an interest and a desire to work in museums. The high school program helps students understand the importance of history and how communities are represented. They meet several times over the semester and work in different aspects of the society. Students are paid \$11.25 an hour and are assigned to a professional mentor. Undergraduate fellowships show the students the different career paths in the field. The students travel to different museums and build relationships with MHNS staff. These internships are usually unpaid, however, there are a few stipends available for students from historically underrepresented communities of color. Finally, there is a Graduate program for Heritage and Public History. According to Chris Taylor “We are really proud of this this. So, we have Masters and PhD students in this program. We’re really working from high school all

¹¹City of Ottawa, "Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook," 2018, accessed October 04, 2018, <http://www.cawivtf.org/sites/default/files/publications/ei-lens-handbook-en-web-2018.pdf>.

¹² Taylor, "From Systemic Exclusion to Systemic Inclusion: 159

¹³ Taylor, A Systems Approach to Diversity and Inclusion:11

the way through Graduate school to help diversify the field, to help create an interest in diverse prospective employees who want to work in the field.”¹⁴

The Mission Statement of DICE is:

THE DEPARTMENT OF INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (DICE) supports the Society's goal of sustained engagement with diverse communities. The DICE will help guide internal and external strategies across all historic sites and museums to embed inclusive practices in our work to ensure the diversity of the state is reflected in all MNHS activities, including collections, programs, staffing, volunteers, historic preservation and governance.¹⁵

Chris Taylor believes that the department still has a long way to go. He states, “I would be very hesitant to say that we have figured anything out other than making progress, making steps, learning from our mistakes.”¹⁶ However, the department is an example of how inclusion and diversity strategies can be implemented within museums.

Confronting Our Whiteness: Delaware Art Museum

The Delaware Art Museum is located on the Kentmere Parkway in Wilmington Delaware. It was founded in 1912 as the Wilmington Society of Fine Arts to display the artwork of celebrated American artist and illustrator Howard Pyle. The vision of the society was “to promote the knowledge and enjoyment of and cultivation in the fine arts in the State of Delaware.”¹⁷ In 1935, Samuel Bancroft his artworks and 11 acres of land to build a museum to

¹⁴ "Interview with Chris Taylor," telephone interview by author, April 6, 2018.

¹⁵ Department of Inclusion and Community Engagement, "DICEMissionVisionValues.pdf," Google Drive, accessed October 04, 2018,

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_gX94bMHobOHZOMldJWWE4cExDYURiQ1k3eGIxR2Y1UIB3/view

¹⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁷ Delaware Art Museum, "Museum History: 100 Years of Art," accessed October 04, 2018, https://www.delart.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Centennial_History2.pdf

house the collection. The Society along with donors raised \$350,000 to build the museum and it was opened in 1938. At the same time, the name was changed to the Delaware Art Museum.

The percentage of Black and Hispanic population in Wilmington are 57.2% 12.2% Hispanic and the white population is 33.8%.¹⁸ In 2015, the percentage of minority staff at the Delaware Art Museum was 7%, museum guides 2.5% and Board of Trustees 11%.¹⁹ The numbers were not reflective of the racial and ethnic makeup of the city of Wilmington and museum staff realized that a change was needed. According to Amelia Wiggins Manager of Gallery Learning & Interpretation, Delaware Art Museum,

Visitors were telling us they were uncomfortable. We are surrounded by large expensive houses that does not look the same as downtown. We don't have a lot of public transportation available around us. So, hearing that they are not comfortable or hearing they were afraid the police might be called on them, hearing they weren't being treated in a welcoming way. We knew we had to change the internal structure of our museum.²⁰

The museum did not have a true connection to communities of color because of the reasons listed above. Visitors of colors might show up for special programming, but they did not become regular visitors to the museum. Delaware Art Museum was experiencing what Porcia Moore summarizes as:

We must be cautious to not send the message that minority visitors are merely niche or annual visitors. Instead, what can we do to ensure that visitors of color are long-term invested stakeholders with a unique set of values whose narratives

¹⁸ "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Wilmington City, Delaware," Census Bureau QuickFacts, 2017, accessed October 15, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/wilmingtoncitydelaware>.

¹⁹ Stacey Mann, Amelia Wiggins, and Saralyn Rosenfield, "Confronting Our Whiteness: Our First Steps Towards Systemic Change," National Art Education Association Museum Education Education Division, June 12, 2018, accessed October 04, 2018, <https://medium.com/viewfinder-reflecting-on-museum-education/confronting-our-whiteness-our-first-steps-towards-systemic-change-bfc62aa43b9d>

²⁰ Amelia Wiggins, Manager of Gallery Learning & Interpretation, Delaware Art Museum, telephone interview by author, September 18, 2018.

are celebrated as equally as important and complimentary to the system of values which permeate the traditional white mainstream museum?²¹

The Museum brought in Stacey Mann and Janeen Bryant from the Empathetic Museum to help staff interact effectively with communities of different cultures. The Empathetic Museum is an organization that “committed to institutional change and open dialog about the challenges facing museums”.²² Members hold workshops for museums, host blogs and present at conferences. The group first met at the AAM conference in 2015 and realized that they had the same interests and goals for museums.²³ The workshop held at the Delaware Art Museum introduced participants to the five goals of an empathetic museum which include:²⁴

1. Build awareness
2. Practice empathy
3. Convert other workers at your museum to empathetic practice
4. Change policy
5. Prepare/plan responses to public needs

The workshop also allowed for staff to have an honest and open conversation about their institution and how to plan for internal and external changes. Empathy is “the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another”²⁵ There are benefits to museums bringing people

²¹ Porchia Moore, "The Danger of the "D" Word: Museums and Diversity,"

²² Empathetic Museum, "About," The Empathetic Museum, accessed October 05, 2018, <http://empatheticmuseum.weebly.com/about.html>.

²³ "Stacey Mann, Learning Experience Designer and Interpretive Strategist, Empathetic Museum," telephone interview by author, September 20, 2018.

²⁴ Janeen Bryant et al., "Empathy in Mission & Practice: Why Should We Care?" Empathetic Museum, 2015, , accessed October 03, 2018, http://empatheticmuseum.weebly.com/uploads/4/4/9/8/44983495/empatheticmuseum_steps_v01.pdf

²⁵ "Empathy," Merriam-Webster, accessed October 05, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/empathy>

together, listening to them and making them feel as they are a part of the museum. In 2017, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation gave a grant of \$750,000 to the Minneapolis Institute of Art to establish Center for Empathy and the Visual Arts.²⁶ This center will be the first in the world and its goal is to build empathy to foster social change in the world.²⁷

The Empathetic Museum Maturity Model is a tool that introduces museum staff to the characteristics of an empathetic museum. According to the Empathy Museum:

Assuming an empathetic institutional stance has little to do with sentimentality or inappropriate emotionalism. Instead, just as empathetic individuals must have a clear sense of their own identities in order to perceive and respond effectively to the experience of others, the empathetic museum must have a clear vision of its role as a public institution within its community. From this vision flow process and policy decisions about every aspect of the museum- audience, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programming, social media, emergency responses - all the ways in which a museum engages with its community(ies).²⁸

However, the Delaware Art Museum does lack diversity in staff so incorporating empathy in a museum that is dominated by a white culture will be difficult. The staff is aware that they need to change, and the museum has a director who supports the change. Sam Sweet was appointed as director of the Delaware Art Museum in 2016. One of his first tasks was to develop a a new strategic plan. Staff were divided into four departmental teams and asked to answer the following questions:²⁹

1. What are the needs of Wilmington's diverse communities and how can we meaningfully connect with them through art?

²⁶ "Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts," The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2017, accessed October 2205, 2018, <https://mellon.org/grants/grants-database/grants/minneapolis-society-of-fine-arts/31700648/.tas>

²⁷ "Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Funds First-Ever Center for Empathy and the Visual Arts," Philanthropy New York, December 15, 2017, accessed October 05, 2018, <https://philanthropynewyork.org/news/andrew-w-mellon-foundation-funds-first-ever-center-empathy-and-visual-arts>

²⁸ Empathetic Museum, "About," The Empathetic Museum

²⁹ "Strategic Plan: 2017-2020," Strategic Plan: 2017-2020: Delaware Art Museum, December 6, 2017, , accessed October 05, 2018, <https://www.delart.org/about/strategic-plan-2017-2020/>

2. How can we provide an exceptional guest experience that inspires visitors and generates value?
3. How can we strengthen relationships with our donors and provide better stewardship? How do we ensure our programs, exhibitions, and collections care are exceptional?
4. In addition, what can we do to make our day-to-day operations more efficient and responsive?

At the end of this exercise, a strategic vision for the museum was developed that included:

1. Committed to excellence – nationally recognized for the quality of our collections and programs and for advancing innovation in all art disciplines.
2. A vital hub – a vibrant, bustling space activated by the collections and programs where artists, educators, and community groups come together on equal terms to engage in cultural and civic discourse around art.
3. Civically engaged – bringing art into the lives of the community in ways that support their interests.
4. Welcoming and inclusive – understanding who our audience is and then meeting their unique needs.
5. Financially sustainable – securing the Museum’s future with a strong endowment and responsible resource management.

Empathy allowed staff to think about inclusion, equity and race in museums. It also allowed them to have a safe space for open dialogue with each other. Margaretta Frederick a Curator at the Museum stated, “through the conversations instigated during the Empathetic Museum Workshop, I was encouraged by Black and Brown fellow staff members to find points of connection in the lives of the various artists in the collection which resonate with broader issues of the present time.”³⁰ Some staff members were uncomfortable talking about certain

³⁰ Stacey Mann, Amelia Wiggins, and Saralyn Rosenfield, "Confronting Our Whiteness: Our First Steps Towards Systemic Change," p. 9

issues such as white supremacy. However, “seeing ourselves as part of a system of racism means making ourselves vulnerable and responsible for disrupting our long-held self-narratives.”³¹

Delaware Art Museum is in its final year of training for staff. They have some dynamic changes in place including hiring more people of color and a board of trustees which reflect more diversity.³² Amelia Higgins goal is for all people to feel comfortable when they enter the doors at Delaware Art Museum and also see themselves reflected in staff from leadership all the way down.³³ “The work of confronting our Whiteness- both individually and institutionally isn’t finished”³⁴, the Delaware Art Museum is an organization to look closely at in the future.

Diversifying Museum Audiences: The High Museum of Atlanta

The High Museum of Art located in Atlanta, is a leading art museum in the Southeastern United States.³⁵ Located in Midtown, Atlanta’s “heart of the arts”³⁶, the High is a division of the Woodruff Arts Center. The High has a collection of over 17,000 works of art, including 19th- and 20th- century American fine and decorative arts; photography and folk and self- taught work, collections of modern and contemporary art, a growing collection of African art and European paintings.³⁷

³¹ Ibid., p. 9

³² Amelia Wiggins, Manager of Gallery Learning & Interpretation, Delaware Art Museum, telephone interview by author, September 18, 2018.

³³ Ibid.,

³⁴ ³⁴ Stacey Mann, Amelia Wiggins, and Saralyn Rosenfield, "Confronting Our Whiteness: Our First Steps Towards Systemic Change," p.11

³⁵ The Woodruff Arts Center, "High Museum of Art," accessed October 04, 2018, <https://www.woodruffcenter.org/high-museum-of-art/>

³⁶ American Planning Association, "Midtown Atlanta: Atlanta, Georgia," American Planning Association, 2017, accessed October 04, 2018, <https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/neighborhoods/2016/midtownatlanta/>

³⁷ High Museum of Art Atlanta, "About the High Museum of Art," accessed October 04, 2018, <https://www.high.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/About-the-High-Museum-of-Art.pdf>

Considering that the core number of minority visitors to museums is 9%, the High Museum has tripled its nonwhite museum visitors from 15% to 45% nonwhite visitors. The museum averaged 15% to 45%.³⁸ That number is still increasing according to Director Rand Suffolk, High Director, nonwhite visitors are now at 48%.³⁹ This number is close to the overall African American population which is 52.4%.⁴⁰ The impressive results were achieved through combined efforts of staff and a Director who wanted to change the organization to become more relevant to the audiences they served.⁴¹

The High adopted several strategies to increase the diversity of its audience. The first was to expand the diversity of its content. In April 2017, The High received 54 artworks from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation. The works included paintings, sculptures and works on paper by 33 contemporary African-American artists from the Southeastern United States.⁴² The High Museum began collecting artwork by self-taught artist in 1975 and is considered one of the richest collections in the country. In addition, “The Jubilant Martyrs of Obsolescence and Ruin (2015) by contemporary African American artist Kara Walker was acquired by the museum in its contemporary art collection. Other notable acquisitions by African Americans include “Love Is

³⁸ Julia Halperin, "How the High Museum in Atlanta Tripled Its Nonwhite Audience in Two Years," Artnet News, December 24, 2017, accessed October 06, 2018, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/high-museum-atlanta-tripled-nonwhite-audience-two-years-1187954>.

³⁹ Headlee, Celeste, and Sean Powers. "High Museum of Art Triples Non-White Visitors." Georgia Public Broadcasting. January 8, 2018. Accessed October 06, 2018. <http://www.gpbnews.org/post/high-museum-art-triples-non-white-visitors>.

⁴⁰ Census Bureau, "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Atlanta City, Georgia; Georgia," Census Bureau QuickFacts, 2017, accessed October 06, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/atlantacitygeorgia.ga/PST045217>

⁴¹ Headlee, Celeste, and Sean Powers. "High Museum of Art Triples Non-White Visitors."

⁴² High Museum of Art Atlanta, "2017 Acquisitions Add Depth and Diversity to High Museum of Art Collection," High Museum of Art, 2017, accessed October 07, 2018, <https://high.org/Press-Release/2017-acquisitions-add-depth-and-diversity-to-high-museum-of-art-collection/>.

the Message, the Message is Death” (2016), a video by Arthur Jafa, a collection of photographs documenting the civil rights movement, ceramic vase by Robert Lugo, an eight-foot-tall bronze tall sculpture by South African artist Nandipha Mntambo and 24 quilts by 20th century Southern African American quilters.⁴³ The acquisition of these works is to inspire other artists and to create a space to discuss issues of race and social justice.⁴⁴

Moreover, The High reduced admission fees in October 2016. The original fees were \$19.50 for adults, \$16 for students and students and \$12 for children. The new fee is \$14.50 for everyone above the age of six. Children five and under are admitted for free. According to High Director Rand Suffolk,

As an organization committed to inclusivity, connectivity and continued growth, our new, reduced admission price supports all of these core goals. We hope it will play a role in encouraging the broadest possible public participation, allow us to reduce a potential barrier to access, and through this increased engagement, encourage more people to become part of the High family as members.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid., 5

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1

⁴⁵ News Room, "High Museum of Art to Launch Reduced Admission Price in October 2016," High Museum of Art, September 21, 2016, accessed October 08, 2018, <https://www.high.org/Press-Release/high-museum-of-art-to-launch-reduced-admission-price-in-october-2016/>

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine issues of racial equity and inclusion in museums. The case studies demonstrate how The Minnesota Historical Society, The Delaware Art Museum and the High Museum of Atlanta each developed their own approach towards inclusion, diversity and equity. The Minnesota Historical Society and the Delaware Art Museum focused on systemic change within their respective institutions. However, although there are commonalities in the processes, some differences might yield distinct results. The Minnesota Historical Society developed a department solely devoted to inclusion and community engagement with communities of color. The Delaware Art Museum brought in outside persons to train staff in cultural competence and there is not a dedicated staff member or department primarily for this work. Inclusive work is long-term and labor intensive if it is to be implemented throughout the organization. According to Stacey Mann, “Delaware is gonna be tricky, their location could not be more white privileged, they will have to find a way to get to people.”¹ The answer could lie in establishing a satellite space in the community. This space can serve as a community center, display exhibitions and host programs. Conversely, the High Museum of Art had success with diversifying its museum through different ways. Perhaps the methods applied can be adapted to the Delaware Art Museum and the Minnesota Historical Society in an effort to gain the same results. However, while a strategy might work well for an institution it might not yield the same results elsewhere. Therefore, each institution has to research their targeted audience, understand their institution’s history of exclusion and find ways to improve their community practices and institutional culture specifically.

¹ Telephone interview with Stacey Mann, co-founder of the Empathetic Museum,

While community engagement is difficult work, the reviewed literature demonstrates that it has benefits for the museum and the community. The first step is for museums to research the community they want to target. One way to do this is to develop a community advisory board. This board consists of persons from the community who can give information on the needs and wants of the community. In addition, since the members are from the community, they may be aware of specialized funds to help with programming. Museums should seek persons from the community who are well respected and represent different views of the community. Community advisors are expected to have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community. Moreover, they must establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving program goals for the museum. Museums should then have meetings focusing on the following questions:²

- What are the community's greatest concerns?
- What are its greatest assets?
- When were plans or initiatives created?
- Who was involved in creating them
- Was it a top-down or bottom-up effort?
- Have the plans been implemented and the initiatives completed? How or why not?
- What are the dynamics and politics of the meetings observed?
- Which resources and perspectives are present?
- Which resources and perspectives are missing?
- Does the museum have a presence in the formulation of community problems or solutions?

Additionally, museums should offer programs for visitors that enable them to become actively engaged with the mission of the museum.³ In some instances, this involves offering special college level classes to local students to help them develop connections between their

² American Association of Museums, *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museum, 2002). p. 31

³ Linda Kelly, "Measuring the Impact of Museums on Their Communities

coursework and these cultural institutions. In other instances, arts and crafts programs and other hands-on activities can be offered for children of certain age groups because this helps foster strong connections between members of the community. These programs also allow children and adults to explore concepts that they would not have otherwise encountered, adding to their breadth of knowledge. However, museums should always get input from the community before planning programs. There should be constant dialogue between the museum and the community so that a relationship can foster between the two. The goal of community engagement should be to encourage diverse visitors to museums and make them frequent visitors.

A popular choice for many modern museums is to invite well-known public speakers to give talks to members of the community.⁴ Many of these discussions are about academic topics, current events, and cultural implications. These talks provide visitors with the opportunity to unite around a common interest. When these people are brought into the same room, they are better able to connect about these ideas and determine how these ideas could enhance their communities or respective well-being. In addition, museums often organize forums for discussion, in which several people will be placed in a group to speak about important popular culture issues. These forums achieve a similar purpose and help people recognize the problems that face their community, and what the relevant solutions to these problems could be.

Museum exhibits themselves have the potential to bring a community together because many of these collections are created about contentious topics.⁵ Consequently, when people view them, they can reflect on their own opinions about these subject matters, and determine how their opinions could coexist with other, differing opinions. This is valuable to a community because

⁴ Thomas, *Rev. of Heritage and Community Engagement*. 373

⁵ Nina Simon. "How Do You Define "Community?""

this ensures that it will continue to have cohesiveness, in spite of the fact that people with many differing opinions live in the same area. Unity and coexistence are important themes because in order for societies to survive, they must be able to agree to disagree. Levine Museum of the New South created a community partnered exhibition that focused on police-involved killings in Charlotte, North Carolina.⁶ After the police killings of several African American men, the museum got several calls and emails asking how the museum was going to respond to the issue.⁷ The museum hosted an open town meeting with the community and then fast tracked the exhibition, K(NO)w Justice, K(NO)w Peace. The exhibition allowed the community to reflect and analyze the incidents. The museum gave them a safe space to talk and support each other through a very painful period in their lives.

Museums should also take the museum's resources to the community. Outreach programs can reach audiences who would not otherwise visit a museum. Museums can attend community events with a small number of objects from the collection. In addition, 3D printing allows museum audiences to handle objects that would usually be in a locked display case. These settings allow for informal conversations and learning. Also, by attending community events, museums demonstrate that they care and support the community. Educators at museums should also partner with schools in the community, find out their needs and create material that can assist them in the classroom.

⁶ "KNOW Justice KNOW Peace," Levine Museum of the New South, accessed October 22, 2018, <http://www.museumofthenewsouth.org/exhibits/know-justice-know-peace>

⁷ Brenda Tindal, "K(NO)W Justice K(NO) Peace: The Making of a Rapid-Response Community Exhibit," *The Public Historian* 40, no. 1 (February 2018).

A pop-up museum is a “temporary exhibit created by the people who show up to participate.”⁸ The idea for a pop up was conceived to reach new audiences that may not visit the museum. Museums can collaborate with other organizations or current events, chooses a theme, a date, and invite people to come. The Museum brings objects related to the theme and participants are invited to bring an object to share. Additionally, paper and pens are provided for visitors to write labels for their objects and for children to be creative. Attendees walk around the booth and talk about the objects with guidance from the museum staff. Pop-Up Museums help the community to share their objects and learn about the museum in an informal and inspiring setting.

Finally, museums should evaluate their community engagement initiatives. This can be done through surveys and questionnaires. Email addresses can be collected at outreach events and at visitor stations inside museums. The surveys can be sent to visitors and collaborators can reveal what they enjoyed about the program and/or how it can improve. Moreover, museum staff can ask visitors to fill out short surveys during the program or special event. The community advisory group should also be evaluated periodically to get ensure that they communicate the community’s challenges and needs.

For inclusion and equity to exist in a museum the staff must reflect the diversity of the community it exists in. As mentioned before, some museums claim that it is hard to find people of color to fill certain roles. However, how hard did they search for candidates? Thanks to foundations such as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Barnes Foundation and the Getty Foundation, young minority students are exposed to the museums and educated at universities.

⁸ "About | Pop Up Museum." *Pop Up Museum About Comments*. Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, n.d. Web. 19 Nov. 2016. <http://popupmuseum.org/about/>

These students are the future of museums, students who are a part of the increasing minority demographics of the United States. Museums do not have to search for them, they are here now. Museums should partner with these foundations and educational institutions to ensure that graduating minority students interview for available positions. It is also important to offer paid internships, as this opens the door to more students who cannot accept unpaid work. Museums who have a staff that reflects the diversity of their community have a greater influence and can serve more effectively.

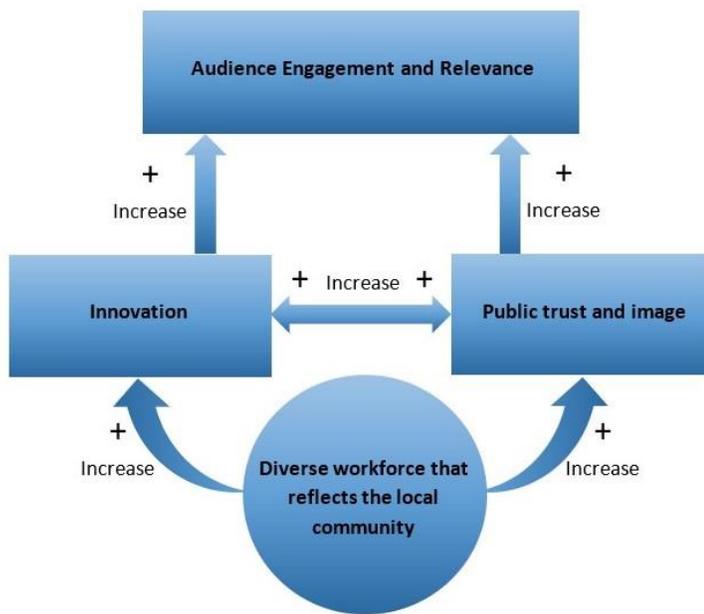


Figure 6-1. The impact of workforce diversity on museum work

Museums should strive to have an equity and inclusion statement. This bold statement shows a commitment and an intent to embrace people of all races. The Science Museum of Minnesota’s commitment to equity and inclusion includes the following statement:

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) are valuable for communities to thrive and live in a global society. Equity, inclusion, and access to STEM are critical to the ongoing work of the museum.

THE SCIENCE MUSEUM OF MINNESOTA is actively working to undo systems of injustice and inequity. We will create an inclusive, equity-based institution that empowers people to change the world through STEM. Aspects of political, cultural, and economic systems maintain injustice and inequity through the control of power and resources. Most museums and scientific practices, including our own, have supported these systems. As a result, access to and engagement with STEM learning and practices has been limited for some.

The museum commits to using STEM as a tool to advocate for justice and equity. We will:

INSPIRE LEARNING by including, collaborating, and lifting up the voices of people who have been overlooked or excluded

INFORM POLICY by illuminating unfairness, inequality, and power imbalances

IMPROVE LIVES with productive dialogue on topics related to equity, inclusion, and public access to STEM

By prioritizing equity and inclusion, we reimagine the scientific enterprise and continue to seek opportunities that support and encourage full participation in the vital work of connecting STEM and society through our areas of impact— our exhibitions, public programs, teaching, research, collections, operations, management, Board of Trustees, policies, and practices.⁹

It is important for museums to remember that inclusion initiatives and community-relationships develop over time.

Suggestions for Further Research

While this research begins to discover the ways in which museums are actively pursuing inclusion, equity and community engagement and recommendations for museums who wish to do so, there are several areas this paper was not able to encompass. I would like to research social inclusion and how to build more socially inclusive museums. While museums serve a range of missions in the United States, including efforts in education, conservation, conservation,

⁹ Science Museum of Minnesota, "Statement on Equity and Inclusion," accessed October 27, 2018, <https://www.smm.org/equity>

and preservation, the museum as an entity should also take on the effort of serving as a place of social inclusion. My research would focus on the following questions:

1. Why should museums engage in social inclusion?
2. What are the largest obstacles to overcome in engaging in socially inclusive programming?
3. What are the benefits of being a socially inclusive museum?
4. How does a museum begin to become socially inclusive?
5. How can museums evaluate social inclusion?

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nameiko Miller was born on the island of Grand Bahama, located in the Bahamas. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from The University of the Bahamas in 2009 with Honors. Soon after she was employed at Antiquities Monuments Museum Corporation, The National Museum of the Bahamas as the Senior Research Officer. In this capacity she had overall responsibility for the Research Department, including direct supervision of four Research Assistants.

In 2016, she decided to pursue higher learning in Museum Studies at the University of Florida. While earning her degree, Nameiko had the opportunity to intern at the Florida Museum of Natural History in the Exhibits and Public Programs Departments and the George A. Smathers Libraries Panama Canal Museum Collection. She works in the School of Art and Art History as the graduate assistant and served as the curator of the Libby Gallery at the School of Art and Art History.

Upon completion of her M.A. program, Nameiko will return to the Bahamas to begin a new career as the Chief Curator of The National Museum of the Bahamas.