

The Museum Group Museum

Conversations at AAM 2015

Leslie **Bedford**

Carol **Bossert**

Daryl **Fischer**

Darcie **Fohrman**

Gretchen **Jennings**

Tom **Krakauer**

Rob **Kret**

Kathleen **McLean**

Mary Ellen **Munley**

Lew **Myers**

Paul **Orselli**

Barbara **Punt**

Laura **Roberts**

Eumie Imm **Stroukoff**



A CASE FOR MUSEUM RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

In establishing its first Research Fellowship in Museum Studies, the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum aimed to make its Research Center more integral to the rest of the museum and to create opportunities for extended conversation with a thought leader in the field about how to advance the strategic priority of becoming a stronger community partner. Together with TMG members and friends, they are eager to reflect on factors that contribute to a successful fellowship for the fellow, the host institution, the local museum community, and to set an even bigger table by sharing findings with the profession at large.

How can the institution's goals and resources best align with the goals and talents of the fellow? How do you balance the benefits of freedom to investigate with the challenges of open-ended fellowships and still meet the expectations of staff, board members, and colleagues in sister institutions? What leadership skills are needed to maximize an experience that is, by its nature, experimental?

Research fellowships are a time-honored practice in academia and in some professions, but what is their place in the museum field? What are the indicators of success for individual institutions, and how might lessons learned lead to broader conversations among colleagues? If more museums provided this kind of opportunity and disseminated findings widely could we build a bigger knowledge base for the profession at large?

MONDAY

APRIL 27

8:15 – 9:30 AM

TMG Conversation host
Daryl Fischer

Conversation co-hosts
Rob Kret, Director,
Georgia O'Keeffe Museum;

Eumie Imm Stroukoff,
Emily Fischer Landau Director,
Research Center,
Georgia O'Keeffe Museum.

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MONDAY
APRIL 27
12:15 AM – 1:30 PM

TMG Conversation hosts
Darcie Fohrman and **Laura Roberts**

Conversation Co-hosts
Tom Krakauer, President Emeritus
Museum of Life and Science and Founding
Chair of the Museum of Durham History;

Lew Myers, Principal Perkins+Will,
Immediate Past Chair Museum of Durham
History

Katie Spencer, Executive Director,
History Hub, Museum of Durham History.

THE HISTORY HUB: A SUSTAINABLE NEW MODEL FOR COMMUNITY-BASED MUSEUMS?

The Museum of Durham History (MoDH) is a young (6 year-old) museum with an unusual model: a small space (the History Hub), and projects, exhibits, and programs happening off-site, throughout the community. Adding to the uniqueness of the model, is a conscious decision to be a non-collecting history museum. The museum values its role as a “connector,” bridging different sectors of the community.

This Conversation invites participants to consider these questions: Has this start-up stumbled on a networked model that can work long term for local history museums (and others)? Or is their start-up small space and community networking simply the early stage in inevitable growth toward a larger, more centralized museum home? Can they be financially sustainable under this model? How can they communicate the value of this model to funders and stakeholders who are accustomed to a facility- and collection-based model? Is their impact on the community strengthened or diluted?



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WRITING AND RESPONDING TO RFPS: THE DANCE EVERYONE CAN DO BETTER

Requests for proposals are common in architecture and building trades, and they are becoming commonplace in the museum industry. But are they always the best practice? Do they always help museum leaders make sound decisions? Has the practice gotten out of hand? What are the alternatives? How is social media changing things? This conversation will include RFP writers and responders. Let's move beyond the horror stories and talk about ways we can improve our practices. By the end of the conversation, we will identify actionable steps.

MONDAY

APRIL 27

2:00 – 3:15 PM

TMG Conversation host
Carol Bossert, also host of
Museum Life on VoiceAmerica™
talk radio

Conversation Co-hosts
Paul Orselli, Museum Exhibit Designer,
Exhibit Developer, Project Manager and
Exhibit Doctor;

Barbara Punt, President and Chief
Project Manager/Owner's Representative
@Punt Consulting Group

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MONDAY
APRIL 27
3:35 – 5:00 PM

TMG Conversation host
Leslie Bedford, author of *The Art of Museum Exhibitions: How Story and Imagination Create Aesthetic Experiences*

Conversation co-host
Kathleen McLean, museum expert and author of *The Art of Museum Exhibitions* book review for *Exhibitionist* as well as other publications about exhibition design and evaluation.

EXHIBITION AS ART FORM: AN IDEA WORTH TESTING — IMAGINATION, AESTHETICS AND EDUCATION

What is distinctive about exhibition as a medium of presentation? If we were to see exhibitions as an art form, what would be the implications for practice and training? What would be the benefits and changes for museums and for audiences?

The recently published book, *The Art of Museum Exhibitions: How Story and Imagination Create Aesthetic Experiences* based on dissertation research by Leslie Bedford, calls into question some of the assumptions that guide exhibition planning and design.

The Conversation hosts present a challenge to the field: In designing exhibitions, slide the needle further away from educational goals and more into the zone of imagination, embodied cognition, and aesthetic experience.

Why make such a shift? What does it look and feel like? Where is there resistance and why? Where are there good examples of this approach to exhibitions? There is plenty to share and discuss.

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#MUSEUMSRESPONDTOFERGUSON: HOW CAN THIS CONVERSATION BE EXPANDED AND SUSTAINED?

In December 2014 a group of museum bloggers and colleagues issued a joint statement on museums' roles and responsibilities with regard to the events of Ferguson and related issues. See, <http://www.museumcommons.com/2014/12/joint-statement-museum-bloggers-colleagues-ferguson-related-events.html>

The statement resulted in museum organizations such as the American Association for State and Local History and the New England Museums Association joining the Association of African American Museums and the Midwest Association of Museums in issuing statements of concern and solidarity. The blog posts generated widespread discussion sustained by Twitter chats at #museumsrespondtoFerguson every third Wednesday since December. Join a conversation about how the discussion can be expanded and what its impact might be on museum practice and thinking.

TUESDAY
APRIL 28
1:30 – 3:00 PM

TMG Conversation host
Mary Ellen Munley

Conversation co-host
Gretchen Jennings, museum consultant
and blogger at Museum Commons

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