



GRETCHEN M. JENNINGS

Professional Summary

I offer services in museum education and interpretation, editing, and writing. I have worked in and with art, history, and science museums for over thirty years. My practice is guided by principles of inclusion and accessibility—cultural, racial, and physical.

Work History

Museum Studies Professor

2015-2016: Adjunct professor in Museum Studies program at Johns Hopkins University. Developed and taught two-week intensive on-site course in January, 2016 in Washington, DC. Working with the Martin Luther King head branch of the DC Public Libraries twenty plus students organized, conducted, and evaluated a pop-up museum, "Museums Are Us," at the library. The pop-up displayed objects brought by visitors according to the themes "DC Music" and "Home." The MLK branch is reopening after several years of renovation and would like to host pop-ups again.

2009-present: Museum Studies Instructor. Co-teach every two years a two-week intensive course on interpretive planning, prototyping, and exhibition development. Students are staff or fellows from science museums all over India under the National Council of Science Museums. Kolkata, India.

Regular presenter at local museum studies programs at George Washington University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland.

Editor and Writer

2018: Editor for *Making connections: A practitioner guide*. <https://www.informalscience.org/making-connections-practitioner-guide>

Worked with project staff at Science Museum of Minnesota to edit report on two-year study that re-conceived maker spaces and workshops for diverse audiences. Finding that maker activities are deeply oriented to white and especially male audiences, SMM staff

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Skills

- Editing
- Writing
- Project Management
- Interpretive Planning
- Museum Studies Teaching
- Social Justice Advocacy

Education

1971

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec

Master of Arts: African & European History; Education

1965

St. Mary's College

South Bend, IN

Bachelor of Arts: History & Humanistic Studies

- Magna cum laude graduate

worked with Asian, Latino, and Native American families to create maker workshops that were culturally appropriate and engaging.

2007-2014: Editor of *Exhibitionist*, (now titled *Exhibition*) the journal of NAME, the National Association for Museum Exhibition. Working with Editorial Board of diverse museum professionals, selected themes and authors; edited articles. With graphic designer produced two issues per year. Issue themes included the development of family-friendly exhibitions; the "Unexhibitable;" visitor-generated content and design; museums as memorials; a new look at meaning-making; and museums as intentionally designed spaces.

1996-1999: Editor in Chief, *Journal of Museum Education*, published by the Museum Education Roundtable in Washington, DC

Project Director and Interpretive Planner

2005-2007: Director of Education for Interpretation and Visitor Experience. Smithsonian Museum of American History. Responsible for incorporation of educator staff and interpretive planning process in all exhibitions produced by the museum.

1998-2005: Project Director for *Invention at Play*, an award-winning traveling interactive exhibition developed by the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation at the National Museum of American History. Information can be found at www.exhibitfiles.org.

1989-1998: Senior Educator; Project Director for *Psychology*, an award-winning traveling interactive exhibition created by the American Psychological Association in collaboration with the Ontario Science Centre and the Association of Science-Technology Centers. A description can also be found on www.exhibitfiles.org

Social Justice Advocate

2012-present: Created The Empathetic Museum, initiative, a group of museum colleagues dedicated to training and supporting museums to take iterative steps toward institutional empathy. Tools and resources developed by the group can be found at www.empatheticmuseum.com.

2017-present: Member of MASSAction (Museums as Sites for Social Action) community. <https://www.museumaction.org> With colleagues developed toolkit for examining and addressing museum legacies of colonialism, racism, and white privilege.

2015-2016: Member of Steering Committee for Museums and Race Convening of January, 2016. See www.museumsandrace.org.

2015: Munley, M.E. and G. Jennings. "Museums respond to Ferguson." Session presented at The Museum Group meeting. American Alliance of Museums annual conference. Atlanta, GA. April, 2015. Museums and Race Convening grew out of this session.

2014: Initiated the *Joint Statement from Museum Bloggers and Colleagues on Ferguson and Related Events*, published on my Museum Commons blog and by many colleagues on December 11, 2014.

Publications

Selections from blog *Museum Commons*

www.museumcommons.com published since 2011

Jennings, G. 2012. Where Is Trayvon Martin in our museums and social media? Museum Commons, (blog). March 26, 2012.

<https://www.museumcommons.com/2012/03/where-is-trayvon-martin-in-our-museums.html> Accessed April 12, 2019.

Jennings, G. 2012. Museums and Sandy: More than a power disconnect? Museum Commons, (blog). November 24, 2012. <https://www.museumcommons.com/2012/11/museums-and-sandy-more-than-power.html>. Accessed April 12, 2019.

Jennings, G. 2013. The empathetic museum: Institutional body language. Museum Commons, (blog). June 29, 2013. <http://www.museumcommons.com/2013/06/the-empathetic-museum-institutional.html>. Accessed April 12, 2019.

Jennings, G. 2013. Museums and the Boston Marathon bombings. Museum Commons, (blog). April 23, 2013. <https://www.museumcommons.com/2013/04/museums-and-boston-marathon-bombings.html>. Accessed April 12, 2019.

Jennings, G. 2014. Joint Statement from Museum Bloggers and Colleagues on Ferguson and Related Issues. Museum Commons, (blog). December 11, 2015. <https://www.museumcommons.com/2014/12/joint-statement-museum-bloggers-colleagues-ferguson-related-events.html>

Selected Articles

Bryant, J., Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell, Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, Gretchen Jennings, and Joanne Jones-Rizzi. 2017. Moving toward internal transformation: Awareness, acceptance, action. In *The MASS Action Toolkit*, Elisabeth Callihan, ed., 17-32.

Jennings, G. and J. Jones-Rizzi. 2017. Museums, white privilege, and diversity: A systemic perspective. *Dimensions*, 18 (5), Special Edition: 66-67. Washington, DC: ASTC.
https://nemanet.org/files/9615/0228/7672/Dimensions-Diversity-Special-Edition_JenningsJonesRizzi.pdf. Accessed May 15, 2019.

Jennings, G. 2015. The #museumsrespondtoFerguson initiative, a necessary conversation. *Museums and Social Issues*, 10 (2). 97-105. Leeds: Taylor and Francis.

Jennings, G. 2004. Psychology: Understanding ourselves, understanding each other. In McLean, K. and McEver, C. eds., *Are we there yet? Conversations about best practices in science exhibition development.* (pp.55-59). San Francisco: Exploratorium.

Jennings, G. 2003. Time to listen, *Curator*, 46(4), 371-384.

Jennings, G. 2002. Addressing external change for internal transformation: strategy and Practice. In Hirsh, J.S.and Silverman, L. H.,eds. *Transforming practice* 50-54. Washington, DC: MER.

Jennings, G. ed. 2001. Museums and the aging revolution. *Journal of Museum Education*, 26(1).

Selected Presentations

Since 2015 have presented on The Empathetic Museum initiative (www.empatheticmuseum.com) at the American Alliance of Museums, the Mid-Atlantic Museums Association, the Small Museums Association, and the New York Museum Education Roundtable.