

GREAT PLACES, GREAT DEBATES

CENTER FOR ARCHITECTURE

NEW YORK, NY

APRIL 1 & 2, 2004

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 9:00-10:00

Opening Keynote: “Harnessing the Power of History”

Ruth J. Abram, Founder and President, Lower East Side Tenement Museum

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, CONCURRENT SESSIONS 10:00-1:00

Dialogue Skills Training (Reservation required, space is limited. Training repeated Thursday afternoon.)

An introduction to the techniques and possibilities of dialogue facilitation by a professional facilitator and trainer. Work in a small group to learn by doing, engaging in different types of dialogue formats and techniques. Explore different ways to use these techniques in your own work, whether with visitors, community stakeholders, or even your own staff. Sessions include:

- exploring differences between dialogue and other common communication processes, such as conversation and debate;
- experimenting with techniques for generating meaningful exchange among diverse people, including on sensitive issues;
- exploring particular strategies for using historic sites as centers for dialogue;
- addressing general concerns and questions about dialogue, such as how to deal with sensitive issues, what kind of environment is required, how to train staff, and other issues.

Shaped by Site: Three Communities’ Dialogues on the Legacies of Lynching

Three different museums, responding to different racial contexts and events in their communities, hosted *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*. As the exhibit traveled from North to South, each institution developed a different strategy for fostering public dialogue around the exhibit. How did the meaning of the exhibit change at each host site? What community issues did each feel the exhibit would help raise? What different strategies did each use to engage visitors around these sensitive issues – and why was each strategy the most appropriate for each local context? Which strategies would be most appropriate in your community?

- Kathleen Hulser, Public Historian, New-York Historical Society, New York, NY
- Jessica Arcand, Assistant Director for Education and Interpretation, Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA
- Saudia Muwakkil, Public Information Officer, Martin Luther King National Historical Park, Atlanta, GA

Getting Visitors to Do More than Listen: Training Docents to Foster Dialogue

Civic engagement at historic sites depends on front line docents and educators. Only they can help connect the past to visitors’ lives today, and inspire dialogue about the

larger issues that concern them. How do we equip our docents to foster effective dialogue? Participants present their experiences training docents to present multiple perspectives on histories they interpret, raise open ended questions about the past and the present, and facilitate dialogue among visitors on sometimes sensitive issues. Work with your peers to share challenges and develop strategies for training docents at your own sites.

- Walter Rybka, Director and Senior Captain, Erie Maritime Program, Erie, PA
- Jon West-Bey, Education Coordinator, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2:00-5:00

Dialogue Skills Training (Reservations required, space is limited. See description above.)

Whose History Is It? Collaborating with Communities to Tell a Site's Story

The process of developing exhibits or deciding which sites should be preserved can be as important a catalyst for civic engagement as the sites themselves. Further, involving communities in this process lays the groundwork for effective community dialogue in the future life of the site. Panelists present examples of community collaborations in site selection or interpretation, and how that collaboration contributed to their ability to inspire civic engagement in the long term.

- Steve Long, Vice President for Education and Collections, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY
- Marci Reaven, Managing Director, Place Matters, New York, NY
- Heather Koop, Northern District Manager, Historic Sites, Minnesota Historical Society, Minneapolis, MN

Passing on the Passion: Connecting Past and Present at Sites of Struggles for Justice

How can sites that evoke powerful and painful memories of one generation's -- or community's -- past struggles over civil rights and freedom inspire those who did not experience it first hand? Panelists explore how to use the site of one group's experience to engage youth and other ethnicities in defining and promoting those rights today.

- Marianne A. Cocchini, co-founder/director of Voices and Visions of Village Life: The Pawtuxet Village Project, Pawtuxet Village, RI
- Eileen Kurahashi, Vice President, National Center for the Preservation of Democracy at the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- Beverly Robertson, Executive Director, National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, TN

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 9:00-1:00

Mobile workshops (Reservation required, pace is limited.)

Gain first-hand experience identifying opportunities for civic engagement at some of New York City's most exciting historic sites. Choose to visit ONE of the following:

1. The Lower East Side Tenement Museum preserves a landmarked tenement building that was home to over 7000 immigrants from 20 different nations from 1863 to 1935. Visitors tour the recreated homes of immigrants who actually lived in the building, and hear stories about their personal encounters with issues we are still grappling with today: who is American? Who gets to decide? What is a sweatshop? What is acceptable housing? Workshop participants will learn about the Museum's diverse efforts to use history to inspire different forms of civic dialogue, and will imagine how to apply these strategies in their own work. They will also brainstorm about possibilities for civic engagement in the Museum's next exhibit of an Irish bartender's family in 1869.

2. **Governors Island**—the former Army base in New York Harbor—is a remarkable place that has hosted pivotal events in United States military history. The newly created Governors Island National Monument is now developing its interpretive program, programs that will be grounded by visits to Castle Williams and Fort Jay, massive stone fortifications built to defend the City during the War of 1812. A five minute ferry ride will bring workshop participants to New York's newest National Park and a one mile walking tour of the National Monument and surrounding National Historic Landmark District. The Monument Superintendent and NPS planning consultants will be on hand to discuss how to incorporate civic engagement principles into the visitor experience.

3. **The Pieter Claesen Wyckoff House** is New York City's oldest structure (c. 1652) and first designated Landmark (1968); it is also a National Historic Landmark. The Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum's mission is to educate visitors about the diverse peoples of Brooklyn's Colonial farms. The non-profit organization that runs the museum, the Wyckoff House & Association, Inc., has sought to transform the site by recognizing that civic engagement is fundamental to the success and meaningfulness of any site, but especially urgent for urban sites where the surrounding community does not have a history of involvement with the site. Among others, participants will discuss a range of issues including the role of the community Advisory Board; political contact and involvement; educational and public programming as central to engagement; and navigating complex management structures.

4. **The Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims** is a National Historic Landmark recognized for its role in the debate over the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The church was a center for leaders of the abolitionist movement who believed that citizens needed to take action in opposition to the law, a dilemma that deeply divided local communities and the nation. Following a tour of the site introducing the social/political climate of the 1850s, participants will have a chance to consider how Americans responded to the conflicting demands of law and conscience and how this dilemma manifests today. Participants will be encouraged to reconsider the scope of stories that sites have the capacity to tell and how programming can connect history with a community's contemporary issues.

5. St. Augustine's Episcopal Church was built in 1828 for the city's patrician elite; today, it houses the largest African American congregation on the Lower East Side. The congregation worships in the shadow of two "Slave Galleries": haunting, box-like rooms above the balcony where African Americans were once forced to sit. The Slave Galleries Project brought together more than thirty Community Preservationists - leaders representing African American, Asian, Latino, Jewish and other groups - with scholars and preservationists in an integrated process of restoration, interpretation, and civic dialogue on freedom, exclusion, and other issues. Learn about the Project's experience using the process of preservation as a catalyst for new kinds of cross-cultural community dialogue on sensitive issues. Discuss how their experience could be adapted to other projects.

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 8:45-10:15

Evoking Legacies: Using Art to Raise Contemporary Issues at Historic Sites

Take a visual tour of powerful installations and performances that have evoked the contemporary legacies and issues of historic sites. Participants explore the potential of artistic media to animate historic sites and serve as a catalyst for discussion about relationships between community history and current issues.

- Joanna Haigood, Artistic Director, Zaccho Dance Theater, San Francisco, CA
- Sean Kelley, Program Director, Eastern State Penitentiary, Philadelphia, PA
- Donna Graves, Project Director, Rosie the Riveter Memorial, Richmond, CA

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, CONCURRENT SESSIONS 10:15-1:00

Class Action: Inspiring Civic Engagement in Youth

Explore school programs that move beyond helping youth understand history – to provide innovative strategies for using the past to inspire students to be aware and involved with issues of labor, immigration, and human rights today.

- Peter S. O'Connell, Director, Tsongas Industrial History Center, Lowell, MA
- Angelica Santomauro, Executive Director, American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark, Haledon, NJ
- Allan Dailey, Supervisory Park Ranger, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site and Elayne Seaman, President, Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val Kill, Hyde Park, NY

Civic Engagement on a Shoestring

Serving as an active, effective center for civic engagement does not require legions of staff or expensive multimedia exhibits. Three moderate-budget projects present examples of linking past and present, involving communities in interpretation, and inspiring civic participation that can be achieved with limited means.

- Pamela Green, Executive Director, the Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford Stuyvesant History, Brooklyn, NY
- Damon Rich, President, Center for Urban Pedagogy, New York, NY
- Susie Symes, Chair, 19 Princelet Street, London

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 1:00-2:00

Lunch provided (Friday only)

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2:00-3:00

Funders' Roundtable

Hear from funders who support civic engagement work at museums and historic sites. Discuss what aspects of the work they find most promising, ideas for sources of support and strategies for accessing it.

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 3:00-4:00

Closing Keynote

David Thelen, Professor of History, Indiana University at Bloomington

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 4:00-5:30

Wine & Cheese Reception

Marie Rust, Northeast Regional Director, National Park Service