

MUSEUMS & RACE: Transformation and Justice museumsandrace.org
GATHERING @ 2016 AAM Annual Meeting
Marriott Marquis Conference Hotel, Washington DC
Friday 5/27 - noon-5pm

July 22, 2016
Report for M&R Website
M&R GATHERING OUTCOMES

More than 400 people registered for the Gathering in advance; about 300 people participated in activities in the Transformation Lounge and 200 people participated in sessions. The interest from diverse races and ethnicities shows the vital role Museums & Race can play in creating a cross-race platform for honest dialogue.

The best way to understand how closely the Museums & Race Gathering addressed its goals, listed below, is to click on the link to the summarized survey results [here](#) and to photos from the Gathering [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Notes left on [Post-its](#) in the Transformation Lounge are also very revealing.

As the first event of this magnitude to occur at a museum conference, the Gathering was an experiment, and it was a significant learning experience for those who participated, planned and facilitated it. The survey results show that participants had positive experiences at sessions and in the Transformation Lounge, and that there was a great turnout for this important topic. There were significant issues with registration, check-in, and with one of the sessions (Session 2: *Constructing Spaces for Honest Conversations About Race*). A [blogpost](#) following up on the Gathering, taking responsibility for the issues, was posted on this [Website](#).

Museums & Race is continuing under a new Steering Committee that includes Omar Eaton-Martinez, Joanne Jones-Rizzi, Gina Diaz, and Margaret Kadoyama, with TMG president Darcie Fohrman serving as ex-officio. The Steering Committee is supported by two contract employees: Lanae Spruce, social media coordinator, and Jada Wright-Greene, BaseCamp administrator. TMG is providing their salaries for six months. Several TMG members are involved in future planning but this is no longer a special project of TMG.

The new Steering Committee is currently developing ways to engage all individuals and organizations who want to be involved going forward.

GATHERING GOALS

1. **Share** the outcomes and vision for the convening with a broader community of supporters in a way that experiments with multiple formats for engagement and open up the process to more people to build the Museums and Race network of action.
2. **Catalyze** dialogue about race and museums amongst Annual Meeting attendees at varying places in their understandings of racism, oppression and privilege to build capacity to transform

the field.

3. **Connect** with individuals not attending the Annual Meeting but interested in connecting with Museums and Race 2016 and find other means of bridging member and non-members around racial justice in museums.

4. **Support** the needs and/or interests of participants; whether self-care for POC, safe-space for working toward and discussing anti-oppression goals for museums, or the responsibilities and roles for white folks in dismantling racism and oppression.

BACKGROUND:

The Museums & Race 2016 Gathering at AAM was one initiative of the Museums & Race Convening held in Chicago in January 2016. The Gathering offered AAM Annual Meeting attendees and those not registered for the meeting a friendly and welcoming environment where participants engaged in dialogue about race and museums and found a safe space to recharge and engage in self-reflection.

The Gathering tackled difficult topics with the goal to support those working in museums to understand their role in dismantling racism as it manifests in hiring policies, institutional language, collections, exhibitions strategies, external community relationships and workplace culture.

Museums & Race acknowledges that individuals come to these conversations with different sets of experiences and we responded to this by making space at the Gathering to address intersectionality, white privilege, and self-care for People of Color.

WHO WAS THIS FOR?

The intended audience for the Gathering was both white people and people of color attending AAM's Annual Meeting as well as non-attendees who are professionals in the DC area who were motivated to connect with others addressing museums and race across the field.

Sessions were designed to meet people where they are, whether seeking an introduction or continuing to develop, in their awareness of how racism and oppressions function in museums and how to interrupt it and dismantle it.

WHY UNBADGED ACCESS?

Museums & Race acknowledges the financial barriers that exist for museum professionals, particularly emerging professionals, to attend AAM's Annual Meeting. One of Museum & Race's tenets is intersectionality. Classism (economic oppression) intersects with and has characterized racism in the US with economic opportunities systematically and institutionally denied to people of color throughout our nation's history. We acknowledge how other oppressions, such as sexism, also intersect with and predict experiences of economic oppression.

TRANSFORMATION LOUNGE

The lounge did not require timed access and was intended to be an active learning and conversation space. It included:

- Story Kiosk - Volunteer Brad Larsen recorded participant stories and thoughts on three questions chosen by the planning team. Responses will be posted to YouTube.
- Core Question Kiosks - Three Questions were curated by [Visitors of Color](#), #MuseumsRespondtoFerguson, and the Museums & Race 2016 Convening Participants to catalyze informal dialogue throughout the lounge. Posters at three kiosks announced each question and posed pathways for participants to explore their responses together. Responses can be found [here](#).
- Resource Table - computer with websites, books, handouts, articles, conference lists all related to museums addressing race, oppression and intersectionality.
- Museums & Race 2016 Meet & Greet Table - Participants who came to Chicago for the “Museums & Race 2016: Transformation and Justice” convening in January were on hand to share their experiences, answer questions, and engage in dialogue about future action steps.

FACILITATED SESSIONS

The sessions required pre-registration. Caps for each session were determined by the professional facilitators with the goal of providing a safe environment that fostered honest dialogue.

12:15 -1:30pm (Capacity 35) and 1:45 - 3pm (Capacity 35) | Session #1

Talking Race: The Power, Influence and Responsibility of Museum Professionals

Facilitators: Janeen Bryant and Lisa Junkin Lopez

For many years the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience has utilized the Arc of Dialogue to structure individual learning through four phases of facilitated dialogue. This workshop utilized this model to lead museum professionals through an examination of how their identities may impact their work as it relates to race in museums.

1:45 - 3:00pm (Capacity 60- 65) | Session #2

Constructing Spaces for Honest Conversation About Race

Facilitators: Joanne Jones Rizzi, Joe Imholte, and Josey Balenger

After reviewing critical issues relevant to museums addressing race and racism, participants formed self-identified groups, white people and people of color, for a reflective dialog using Talking Circles, the successful model of participatory programming developed at the Science Museum of Minnesota to support honest dialogue about race, and racism in conjunction with the *RACE: Are We So Different?* exhibition. POC facilitated the dialogue with the POC break-out group and white facilitators lead the dialogue for the white break-out group.

3:15 - 4:30pm (Capacity 65 - 75) | Session #3

Institutional Self-Reflection in Museum Practice

Facilitators: Gretchen Jennings and Alyssa Greenberg

In this workshop, participants engaged in institutional self-reflection by applying the

Empathetic Museum's "Summary Maturity Model: A Model for Inner Transformation of Museum Structures" to their own institution, and then reflected on the model itself. This workshop focused on issues of racial and economic justice as benchmarks for institutional self-reflection and change.

GATHERING PARTNERS

Thanks to promotional partners and session/activity leaders:

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