

## The Lawyer and the Priest

Before he became Director of the Brooklyn Museum, Arnold Lehman headed the Baltimore Museum of Art. When you're in charge, he reflected, you don't get to spend a lot of time in the galleries. But he tried because that's how you keep your finger on the pulse of an institution. One day, he recalled, with some emotion, he was walking through what were then called the African and Non-western Cultures Gallery. An older woman, who he assumed to be a grandmother, and what looked to be her twelve-year-old granddaughter, were stopped in front of a case of Inuit art. "I overheard the grandmother say to her granddaughter, in reasonably good American English, that those objects were made by people from where we are from. What would be better than that? You look at them (the materials) and you understand that you have a culture, it's important enough to be in a museum, you may not see it often, they may not refer to it a lot, they might not use all those words, but here it is. I stood there and I was shocked and delighted. We must have had just one case of those materials, and she happened to find it. She transferred it to her granddaughter who will hopefully pass it on to her daughter. That was a momentous moment for me. I never saw the power of what we do demonstrated quite as tangibly. And it wasn't a teacher talking to a class. It was a grandmother talking to granddaughter, talking to her in a way that instilled pride."

Mr. Lehman's statement foreshadows some of the themes that emerge for museums on this side of the pond, specifically in Boston and New York. At the core of the chapter is a comparison of how the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston reinstalled their American collections. Compared to institutions in Sweden and Denmark, both museums are more comfortable with and more committed to showcasing the immigrant experience. In that sense, they teach cosmopolitan competencies by engaging with diversity next door. To varying degrees, they also tell stories about how outside influences affected American cultural production—about how trends and taste in Latin America, Europe, and Asia shaped the kinds of paintings and decorative arts that American artists created and American collectors coveted.

But how the global is highlighted in relation to the national is where Boston and New York part company. Just as museums in Denmark and Sweden told very different stories with their archeological treasures, the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) use their American collections to spin different yarns. In Boston, rewriting the history of American art does not translate into rethinking the nation's place in the world. It is primarily about how outside influences changed what is within, not about what that means for looking out. In contrast, the Brooklyn Museum uses some of the same materials with a keen eye for telling an immigrant story as well as a story about the nation in the world. The chapter is about how place, culture, and demography help explain why.

This discussion takes place in conversation with several other museums in New York and Boston that are in some ways comparable and, in some ways, very different. The Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), in Salem, Mass, was founded by some of the same regional luminaries as the MFA. It also has an outstanding collection of American decorative arts. Yet Director Dan Monroe sees the PEM as "creating art experiences, ideas, and information that transform people's lives by expanding their perspective and their sense of the world." At the Queens Museum, and at El Museo del Barrio, which I briefly touch on, the idea that people live

transnational lives and that museums must represent and support them is as taken-for-granted as the air we breathe.

None of these institutions, though, are likely to mount exhibits about human trafficking or eco-fashion anytime soon. That is because, among other reasons, they are located in the United States, which is a different kind of global leader than Sweden. While Sweden embraces the role of moral exemplar, the U.S. cares more about its economic and political stature than ethical leadership. Because of its size, wealth and power, it leads without always obeying its own rules, sometimes engaging with the world and, at others, simply expecting others to follow.

### **The City on the Hill**

John Winthrop, the governor of the Association of the Massachusetts Bay Company, led a ragged yet determined group of disgruntled believers across the Atlantic Ocean to found what would become the city of Boston. They left in search of a moral community they could not find in Europe. Since saved souls were also wealthy souls, these Puritans stressed hard work, thrift, sobriety, and frugality. They valued education, intellectual achievement, and responsibility to the community at large. The institutions they created in response laid the foundation for Boston's cultural landscape. While only a small group was what we might call hardcore Puritans, their actions and ideology had far-reaching consequences for America as a whole. As early as the city's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, wrote Thomas O'Connor, the "town of Boston, had developed certain basic themes that were not only characteristic of its colonial origins, but which also may be considered an essential part of its present-day distinctiveness."<sup>1</sup>

Foreshadowing Olof Palme in Sweden, Boston's founders believed they were creating a city that would be a model to the rest of the world.<sup>2</sup> Their "city on the hill" would become the "hub" of the universe and inspire all of mankind, a veritable shining beacon that would attract "the eyes of all people" upon them."<sup>3</sup> Although times might change, Boston would never be just any city but a place distinguished by its origins, history and dedication to excellence—accomplishments achieved in God's name for the benefit of mankind. And because colonial Bostonians never liked throwing things away, they would grow prosperous not by abandoning their moral values but by building on their solid puritan past.

Not all of the city's original settlers were so pious. In fact, according to Samuel Eliot Morrison, unlike the Mayflower voyage which landed a little further south at Plymouth Rock, the 120 patentees of the original Dorchester Company were largely landed gentry, merchant adventurers, and "representatives of a thinking class"<sup>4</sup> – in short, a generally well off and well educated group. But they were no democrats.<sup>5</sup> They understood social stratification as a necessary and normal part of God's plan, as Winthrop told his fellow travelers: "God almightie in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the Condiçion of man kinde, as in all times some must be rich, some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjection."<sup>6</sup> They clearly enforced class distinctions—a man had to be worth a thousand dollars for his wife to wear a silk scarf.<sup>7</sup> Colonial residents were expected to know their place and accept the status quo as legitimate and natural.

But as early as the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the strait jacket of Puritan ideals began to fray.<sup>8</sup> During the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, long-distance trade bloomed.<sup>9</sup> As the port towns of Boston and Salem grew, so did the influx of different cultures and, more importantly, different *ideas*.<sup>10</sup> Sailors speaking foreign tongues and worshipping alien gods became parts of the landscape.<sup>11</sup> Much of Massachusetts, and Boston, began to take on a cosmopolitan identity. A growing distance between church and state and a growing acceptance of the pursuit of individual wealth helped create a distinct *Yankee* culture.<sup>12</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, men who previously made money at sea turned to other industries, like textile manufacturing. By the late 1820s, a strikingly interconnected group, known as the Boston Associates, of about forty Boston families emerged, which slowly assumed control of the quickly modernizing city. During the years leading up to the Civil War, the Associates invested in real estate, insurance, railroads and banking. By 1845, the group consisted of about 80 men, and their interests controlled about one-fifth of the total capacity of American industry in 1850. In 1848, seventeen of the Boston Associates directed seven Boston banks, thereby controlling over 40 percent of the city's authorized banking capital.<sup>13</sup>

Like their Puritan forefathers, this group stressed public service. They created institutions not as individuals but as a cohesive community that shared economic interests as well as last names.<sup>14</sup> "On the basis of surnames alone," wrote Robert Dalzell, "31 members of the group belonged to only 11 families, with the Appleton, Lowell, and Lawrence clans boasting the largest representation ... Only slightly less numerous were the Cabots, Jacksons, and Brookses."<sup>15</sup> The Boston elite were so interconnected it was almost impossible to distinguish between family and business partner, student and teacher, friend and first cousin.<sup>16</sup> By 1861, Oliver Wendell Holmes coined the term the "Brahmin Caste of New England" to describe what by then was the city's well-developed upper class, if not a full-blown aristocracy.

During the antebellum period, people sometimes called Boston the Athens of America.<sup>17</sup> Residents felt the region represented and communicated the best of what the country had to offer the rest of the world. In August 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered a commencement address, entitled "The American Scholar," to Harvard College's Phi Beta Kappa Society in which he challenged American listeners to look beyond dusty archives, ancient lands, or foreign sources for inspiration and turn instead to the familiar and natural sources of beauty right around them. "Perhaps the time is already come," he said, "...when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids, and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close"<sup>18</sup> Author and Harvard professor Oliver Wendell Holmes, born six years after Emerson spoke, later called the speech America's "Intellectual Declaration of Independence."<sup>19</sup>

The year 1845 stands out as a watershed: until then, poor Irish immigrants had just trickled into Boston, numbering only about 4,000 in 1840. But by 1849, more than a quarter of Boston's residents—at least 35,000—were Irish. The city's elite created hospitals and dispensaries to provide for these often impoverished newcomers but also tried to keep them at bay.<sup>20</sup> "The Irish," according to Dalzell, "were not just strangers, they were outsiders."<sup>21</sup>

The cultural structures first put in place by the Puritans, though stretched and worn, have endured and are still felt today, although sometimes just barely. After the Civil War, Boston's elite not only began to make clear distinctions between the U.S. and Europe but also to draw lines in the sand between themselves and the increasing numbers of strangers in their midst. The institutions they created reflected the conflicting legacies at the city's core elitism and its embrace of high culture versus the impulse to bring culture to the masses, an interest in and begrudging respect for cosmopolitanism, and the firm belief that America needed to chart its own way.

### **The Birth of the Museum of Fine Arts**

Opening its doors in 1795, the Columbian Museum, Boston's first, contained wax figures of John Adams, George Washington, and Ben Franklin, 123 paintings with titles such as "Mr. Garrick Speaking the Ode to Shakespeare" and "Scene in the Third Act of King Lear," and live rattlesnakes, alligators, and eagles.<sup>22</sup> Moses Kimball's Boston Museum, which opened in 1841, looked a lot like the European curiosity cabinets containing Albert Eckhout's paintings of the "Brazilian Beasts." Founded as a commercial venture, paintings by early Republic portraitists Thomas Sully and Charles Willson Peale were displayed alongside Chinese curiosities, stuffed animals, dwarves, and mermaids. For the same price, people could visit the Boston Museum Theatre, where performances by gymnasts and contortionists followed works by Dickens and Shakespeare.<sup>23</sup>

A sea change was underway in 19<sup>th</sup> century America. The middle class emerged as an independent, self-reliant bunch with money to spare. People embraced the idea that White men, born equal, were equally capable of earning a living or being elected to office. Museums could help by educating and morally uplifting the public. After the end of the War of 1812, which gave rise to a burst of cultural nationalism, at least some Americans heeded Emerson's call to reject European cultural supremacy and find their own way. A reverence for professionalism followed. Science and scholarly research trumped popular education. By the 1870s, the two had fused and set the tone for a modern American museum that would simultaneously discover truths and educate the public about them.<sup>24</sup>

By the end of the Civil War, Boston's residents numbered close to a quarter of a million. In 1900, 30 percent of the city's residents were foreign born and 70 percent claimed foreign ancestry. The city's increased size, wealth, and cultural production went hand and hand with more poverty, infant mortality, and Catholicism.<sup>25</sup> The elite established charitable institutions with two somewhat conflicting goals in mind. On the one hand, they were benevolent benefactors who granted art to the people, as Puritan ministers had 'granted' understanding of the Bible to their followers. On the other hand, fears of losing the culture they held dear—and, along with it, their status—motivated them to create organizations that preserved high art and social prestige. The city's middle class was only too eager to follow, thereby clearly marking the distance between themselves and those right below them on the social ladder.<sup>26</sup>

In February of 1870, the Massachusetts General Court passed a bill incorporating the Trustees of the Museum of Art for the purpose of "erecting a museum for the preservation and

exhibition of works of art, of making, maintaining, and exhibiting collections of such works, and of affording instructions in Fine Arts...”

The textile and shipping magnates who founded the institution wanted to create visually literate men and women who would go on to design, produce, and consume goods that could compete with Europe. “The designer needs a museum of Art,” said Martin Brimmer, former Mayor and, for 26 years, the President of the MFA, “as the man of letters needs a library or the botanist a herbarium.”<sup>27</sup>

The best way to teach people about western culture, most early trustees believed, was to put casts and molds of original masterpieces on display. The bulk of the collection remained in basement rooms and special alcoves reserved for visiting scholars and experts.<sup>28</sup> But some trustees believed the museum should collect original art—exposing the public to a few beautiful objects would do far more to educate and elevate taste than looking at replicas of great works. Eventually, “Monet won,” and still wins today. The MFA’s populist roots took a back seat to collecting, preserving, and displaying great masterpieces.<sup>29</sup>

From the outset, the Museum also had strong ties to places around the world, which greatly influenced its collection. It boasts one of the largest collections of Japanese art outside Japan, for example, courtesy of a group of forward-thinking Japanophiles living in Boston.<sup>30</sup> Their interests and connections grew out of the city’s long history of trade with Japan and China. Artist John LaFarge funded his visits to the East by taking photos and doing watercolors and illustrations. Edward Morse went to Japan to study brachiopods, but fell instantly in love with the country’s art, architecture, and culture. Once there, the Imperial University hired him as a scientist after he effectively sparked the study of Japanese pre-history when he noticed a shell mound next to the railway between Yokohama and Tokyo and later returned to excavate it. At Morse’s invitation, Ernest Fenellosa traveled to Japan in 1878 and taught at Tokyo University until 1886. He immersed himself in the region’s art, religion, and philosophy, later returning to tutor prominent intellectuals and collectors such as Isabella Stewart Gardner and Arthur Wesley Dow. In fact, Fenellosa moved back to Boston in 1890 to become the Museum’s first Asian Art curator and to oversee the creation of what became its widely acclaimed Japanese collection. He lectured frequently to public audiences, and along with Morse and William Sturgis Bigelow, created a “buzz” about Japan and extending the social imaginary of the city’s elite far beyond New England.<sup>31</sup> The Museum’s Japan connection remains strong today. Its sister museum, the Nagoya Museum of Fine Arts, which opened in 1999, regularly features important works from Boston’s permanent collection.<sup>32</sup>

Japan was not the only place outside the U.S. where the MFA had strong ties. Ananda Coomaraswamy, an eminent art historian and theorist, was another key figure who expanded its reach—this time to India. Coomaraswamy’s birth and childhood left him uniquely positioned to translate India to the West. He was the son of a Sri Lankan legislator,<sup>33</sup> the first from his country to be knighted by Queen Victoria<sup>34</sup> for being “one of the most successful ‘Westernizers’ in the Empire.”<sup>35</sup> The honors didn’t end there: The Archbishop of Canterbury married his father and English mother.<sup>36</sup> But by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Empire looked down on intercultural marriages. The couple returned to Sri Lanka, then called Ceylon, where Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy was born in 1877, his middle name in honor of his mother’s home country.<sup>37</sup>

Ananda did not grow up on the subcontinent, but in England. When he was only two, his mother brought him back to await his father, who hoped to return triumphantly to the metropole and stand for Parliament.<sup>38</sup> But Muthu never came. On the day of his departure, he died in Ceylon, at age 46.<sup>39</sup> Although Ananda grew up with his widowed mother, aunt, and grandmother in England, he never severed his ties to India. His mother's love for Indian culture equaled his father's enthusiasm for westernization.

After completing his graduate studies, Coomaraswamy returned to South Asia to work as a geologist. As he traveled deeper into the remote reaches of Sri Lanka, he became more and more enamored with the vanishing life and culture of the people. So began his fierce and lifelong indignation at the impact of Westernization.<sup>40</sup> With the help of his first wife Ethel, an accomplished photographer, Coomaraswamy switched from documenting Sri Lanka's mountains and plains to recording its traditional arts and crafts.<sup>41</sup> By 1908, his first art historical book—*Medieval Sinhalese Art*—had been published in England. Between 1910 and 1915, Coomaraswamy traveled across northern India searching for a kind of art he believed existed but no one had studied: Rajput painting.<sup>42</sup> His project, a great success, singlehandedly put this work on the map.<sup>43</sup>

Ten years later came another personal turning point and turning point for the world as well. By then, Coomaraswamy was thirty-nine, a full-fledged art historian, distinguished collector, and public intellectual. But his public stance against forcing Indians to fight for the British Empire left him vulnerable.<sup>44</sup> Coomaraswamy had also become disillusioned with India, especially when leaders rejected his proposal to create a national art museum that would, among other things, house his outstanding collection.<sup>45</sup> In 1917, when the Museum of Fine Arts offered to buy his acquisitions and make him the first curator of the Indian Art Department, he jumped at the chance.<sup>46</sup> He stayed in the position, and in Massachusetts, for the rest of his life.<sup>47</sup>

### **Art of the Americas**

“The first thing you see when you walk into the new Art of the America's Wing,” Elliot Bostwick Davis, the John Moors Cabot Chair of the Art of the Americas Department told me, “are five spectacular K'iché burial urns, produced by the Maya in the southern highlands of Guatemala in about 750 AD.” On one earthenware vessel, which stands nearly four feet high and reaches more than two feet across, an impish deity, with T-shaped teeth and uneven bangs, sits astride a large, round lid. The human heads that stare ferociously out at viewers seem like they are trying to keep predators away. In another even taller and wider urn, a female cat-shaped lid sits atop what looks like babies in a mother's belly. “These were produced,” said Bostwick Davis, “by a highly sophisticated culture, with its own court rituals and portraiture. We wanted people to see ancient American art and Native American art on their own terms.” The museum also wants people to see that American art never took shape in a vacuum. From the very outset, cultural connections to other parts of the world influenced what the nation created. American art, visitors learn, did not start with John Singleton Copley, nor with New England furniture and paintings.

Next up, on Level One, displayed in all its glory, is Paul Revere's iconic Sons of Liberty Bowl from 1768.<sup>48</sup> Revere created this silver masterpiece to honor the ninety-two members of

the Massachusetts House of Representatives who “hosted” the Boston Tea Party by emptying their teacups and wine glasses into the Boston Harbor to protest higher taxes. Along with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the Liberty Bowl is one of the country’s most important treasures. Over seven hundred Boston schoolchildren donated their pennies to help fund its purchase.

What few people know is that the Liberty Bowl is modeled after a Chinese punch bowl. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as North American colonists grew rich from international trade, they also acquired art and artifacts from the East, including Chinese silks, porcelains, and wallpapers. These status symbols found their way into the portraits of prominent colonists. In one portrait of Benjamin Franklin, for example, he wears a fashionable dressing gown called a banyan, reflecting Persian and Arabic influences and meant to impress viewers with his intelligence and gentility. While Paul Revere did not wear a banyan when John Singleton Copley painted him in 1768, he is holding a teapot also influenced by China.<sup>49</sup> In fact, said Dennis Carr, Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture, almost any piece of silver in the last half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century would have been Chinese inspired: “There are very few objects that are purely American or purely Chinese. We are trying to tell a complex story. Great nationalistic objects actually tell a very global story.”

Another radical change for the museum is its Spanish Colonial gallery. Boston is, after all, located in New England. Many of the museum’s most important donors are from the region, and the paintings and living room furniture they donated overwhelmingly reflect the New England experience. So, how does the MFA gently break it to Paul Revere fans that accomplished silversmiths also lived south of the border? How can it realistically beef up its Spanish Colonial holdings so they are not overshadowed by its stellar New England colonial collection?

The curatorial term “adjacencies” is key to the answer. Objects are placed near each other so visitors can grasp the connections between them. After Revere’s Liberty Bowl come exquisite, intricately decorated silver chalices and liturgical objects, made in 16<sup>th</sup> century Bolivia and Peru, giving him a run for his money. Just as the Philadelphia lawyer’s Timothy Matlack stares out powerfully and majestically from the canvas, so does Don Manuel José Rubio y Salinas, the Archbishop of Mexico, painted by the mestizo Miguel Cabrera in 1754—the “lawyer” and the “priest” in my title. The Archbishop’s frank, don’t-mess-with-me gaze; his regal posture in his throne-like chair; and his elaborate red robes worn over a finely embroidered white gown resonate with Charles Willson Peale’s painting of Thomas Matlack—radical Whig and letterer of the Declaration of Independence—that hangs in the neighboring gallery. Displays of colonial power and authority, whether symbolized by crucifixes and communion wafers, law books and legal briefs, have a lot in common.

A row of chairs, which graced 18<sup>th</sup> century homes from Boston to Venezuela, also drives the same story forward. “During the 1700s,” the wall text reads, “artistic styles crossed political borders and jumped oceans like never before.” This gallery, the viewer is told, puts these places and styles side-by-side. Can you tell the difference between Boston and Philadelphia, New York and Barbados, the wall text asks. “The point is,” said Dennis Carr, “that all of the Americas was going through a colonial experience at this time. It could be Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, French,

German... Their governments might differ radically, their cultures might be different, but there were also lots of similarities, they were all participating in a new kind of globalized market for goods for the first time... I think there is a lot more connection throughout the Americas than the average person realizes or fully understands.”

“What is interesting to me,” said Erica Hirshler, Senior Curator of American Paintings, who has worked at the museum for nearly 30 years, “is to see what kinds of real estate is being given to different kinds of art. When I first came here in the 1980s, when we talked about Colonial Art, we were talking about New England and Anglo culture. We were talking about Copley and his relationship with England... In the new wing, for the first time, we have a Spanish colonial gallery and that is a huge change for us. It sounds like it shouldn’t be, but it is for Boston, a kind of bastion of Anglo culture, to acknowledge that there was a huge colonial presence somewhere else.”

The story of American art’s porous boundaries continues on the third floor. John Singer Sargent, who most people consider a quintessential American painter, greets visitors. But Sargent, born to American expatriates in Florence in 1856 spent his childhood traveling throughout Europe and did not even visit the U.S. until 1876 when he was twenty. European art strongly shaped his *oeuvre*.<sup>50</sup>

Even the layout of the next main gallery, hung like a Salon, hints at America’s connections to the outside world. It tips its hat at the style, popular in elegant European homes of the day, of hanging paintings from floor to ceiling. All of the works are by painters who were, in some way, influenced by European art. “It is a very outward looking space,” said Hirshler. “It is about America at that time having almost as much of a cosmopolitan culture as we think we do now.” It’s not that the omnipresent Hudson River School is not represented. It’s just not center stage like it would have been in American galleries of the past. “This is huge,” she says. “We are looking for connections with other places and more and more willing to acknowledge them. We are more willing to see how American art fits within the context of European art instead of only talking about what is American about it.”

People looking for “the immigrant gallery” will be disappointed, although the Museum did acquire some new works to broaden its scope. There is a painting by Argentine avant-gardist Cesar Paternosto, entitled *Staccato*.<sup>51</sup> There is the 1943 painting, “Untitled,” by the Cuban artist Wilfredo Lam.<sup>52</sup> Curators decided not to ghettoize minority artists. “There is no gallery of African American art or of women artists,” said Hirshler. “We wanted to put the paintings where they would naturally go. Women artists should be in the same gallery as male artists. It’s not helpful to set them apart in a different room. You cannot change the canon unless you integrate the canon.”

“One of the messages of the new wing,” summed up Bostwick Davis, is that American art is intimately connected to its neighbors to the north and south. The wing is very different than every other wing of American art in the country because it includes the ancient cultures as far as we can go back, plus what we have from where we happened to land on this planet. So we are going north, central, and south to work with that as a continuum. We will walk people through so



they get a sense of this layering and richness, and I hope for each individual there is an opening of the mind of what is American.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Why Here, Why Now?**

Part of the idea of telling an “Art of the Americas” story grew out of an institutional restructuring organized by Director Malcolm Rogers when he arrived at the MFA in 1992. To promote communication across mediums and between the people in charge of them, Rogers combined American Paintings and Decorative Arts and incorporated some of the Latin American materials previously “included” in Europe. He also folded in a collection of Ancient American materials that never had a home of its own. Staff slowly came to see these holdings as the basis for their retelling of the American art story because they lie at the root of connections and conversations with people and places far away and because they speak to the experiences of indigenous populations. These shifts also resonated with the changing demographics of the Museum’s visitors. It behooved the MFA to showcase minorities, and Latinos in particular, given their growing numbers in the city and the country as a whole.

The MFA is not alone in seeing demographic shifts on the horizon. In 2008, the American Association of Museums launched its Center for the Future of Museum’s Project. Its first report, “Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures” included a striking graphic. Between 1900 -1970, minorities made up between 10-13 percent of the U.S. population. By 2008, the figure rose to 34 percent and was predicted to reach 46 percent by 2033. At the bottom of the chart, a stark line stopped short—only 9 percent of museums’ core visitors were minorities.<sup>54</sup> The report, according to founding Director Elizabeth E. Merritt, “went viral.” It “painted 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.”<sup>55</sup> Findings from the 2008 National Endowment for the Arts Survey of Public Participation in the Arts also produced a collective gasp.<sup>56</sup> It revealed a persistent overall decline in participation at traditional “high culture” activities and a strong connection between attendance, ethnicity, and race. Art museums (the only kind on which data were collected) fared only slightly better than the symphony or ballet.<sup>57</sup>

Not surprisingly, the AAM report came chock full of recommendations. It called for more data and research and for museum professionals to use it. It stressed the need for museum professionals to become as diverse as their visitors—that curators, educators, and staff should look more like the people who come through the door. It encouraged museums to broaden how they define their mission and who their constituencies are.

This was certainly on the minds of the Art of the Americas Department staff when they planned their reinstallation. They knew that to attract a new, more diverse generation of donors and visitors, people of color needed to see themselves inside their walls. They wanted to tell stories that helped the cause. One story was that what is made in America is not just made in the U.S.A.

Encyclopedic museums, curators told me, have a different set of tools with which to do this than museums solely devoted to American art. If people see a painting they like that is influenced by Japanese art, you can direct them to the Japanese collection. That, in-and-of-itself, helps people see American art in a broader context. In fact, the MFA now actively helps visitors make those connections by putting special texts next to objects that direct them to related works. Hand-held multi-media guides even show visitors pictures of the works and help them find them—a precursor to what may someday become a customized museum GPS system.

But the MFA is in the United States and in a particular region of the country. Because it has such a strong Colonial New England collection, and because people come to Boston to learn about American history, they expect the objects in the Art of the Americas wing to tell a particular story. “European art,” said Erica Hirshler, “is not being asked to tell a story about European history in this context.” Where the MFA is located, who its donors were and what they collected, and its unique role in the national and urban institutional distribution of labor means that there is only so much retelling the MFA, like the Danish National Museum, can do. “The MFA,” said Hao Sheng, Wu Tung Curator of Chinese Art, “is as global as a museum in New England can be. It still has to meet the expectations of Euro-American visitors.”

The take away message for visitors to the Art of the Americas Wing, then, is that American art was always influenced by outside forces, be they ancient Mesoamerican, Native American, European or Asia. The foundations of American art lie in what indigenous artists created, be they pre-Columbian burial urns or Southwestern pottery. The colonial era took place in Spanish America as well as New England. The new country’s artistic and cultural production grew in active conversation with Europe, Asia, and the Americas. International influences strongly shaped national art, although European influences clearly predominate.

But the nation-state still plays the starring role in this story. Visitors understand what constitutes America more clearly, a more nuanced view looking inward, but they don’t learn much about how that changes things when they look out— about how these influences shaped the country’s place in the world. The global is not, as in Sweden, a valid goal in and of itself.

Even the architecture of the Museum reflects the story line. The sheer mass of the new wing makes a very nationalistic statement. It telecasts to visitors through its bricks and mortar what the institutional priorities are. “The Art of Americas,” said one museum professional, “is a peculiar thing to do in thinking about the future. While it may sound trite, the community we live in now is not bounded by space and time, cultural boundaries are all merging together. There is little homogeneity but much more cross over and exchange and the creating of new kinds of cultures everywhere. So such a nationalistic push is interesting at a time when the world is really, truly global. They could have done a much more interpretive approach that would have connected America to the world.” The old categories still hold, said one museum professional. There is no fundamental reconsideration of what “America” meant socially or spatially at different moments. “To claim that all art created within a changing set of national boundaries is ‘American,’” he said, “overlooks the very real and substantial cultural differences that characterize Native American, which encompasses no less than 500 distinct cultures, and other forms of art. Geography does not map onto culture in neat ways.”

## Cosmopolitan Cowboys

The Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) proves that museums in New England are not inherently provincial. It has always been, in part, open to the world at the same time that it has been strongly regionally focused. Readers might recognize Salem as the home of the 1692 Witch Trials. Nowadays, modern-day witches, New Age devotees, and vendors of macabre kitsch support a robust tourist industry built around the myths and realities of three-century-old horrors. This appeal detracts attention from the swashbuckling triumphs of Salem's golden age almost one hundred years later. During the early years of the newly United States, Salem was a crucial seaport and the sixth largest city in the Republic. After making their fortunes privateering during the Revolutionary War,<sup>58</sup> Salem's sea captains and merchants settled into respectability—and often great wealth—as participants in the Old China Trade. Because the British blocked their access to the Atlantic, even after the War ended, Salem's elite set their sites on the more distant but more welcoming shores of China, India, and other parts of Asia. American consumers, as Paul Revere's portrait reveals, soon coveted the goods they brought back in the holds of their ships.<sup>59</sup>

These merchants returned not just with Asian luxury goods—porcelain, indigo, tea, lacquered fans, cinnamon, and exotic furniture—but also unusual objects from all over the world that some believed were better preserved and displayed than sold. In 1799, a number of likeminded sea captains, all of whom had sailed around the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn, joined together to establish the East India Marine Society. Its charter provided for a “cabinet of natural and artificial curiosities,” souvenirs from all those trips to the East. This cabinet of wonders developed into the more professionalized and less adventurous-sounding Peabody Academy of Science and eventually became the Peabody Museum of Salem in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The East India Marine Society was a membership only organization. Wealthy ship owners and sea captains, who paid to belong, had to bring back treasures to stock the Hall's display cases. Their vision was to change American's sense of themselves and their place in the world. “They were, in essence, cowboys,” said Monroe. “They would get on a ship a block away from where the museum stands today and risk their lives and families. If they hit it big by sailing around Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, they could become extraordinarily rich or they could lose it all, their lives and their fortunes.”

At that time, these men belonged to a very small group of Americans who had first-hand experience with other cultures. Herman Melville, whose great novel, *Moby Dick* begins in nearby New Bedford, MA, also recognized how cosmopolitan these spaces were. At one point, Melville casually compares the streets of New Bedford, New England's whaling capital, to those of similar cities across the globe: “In thoroughfares nigh the docks, any considerable seaport will frequently offer to view the queerest looking non-descripts from foreign parts. Even in Broadway and Chestnut Street, Mediterranean mariners will sometimes jostle with affrighted ladies. Regent Street is not unknown to Lascars and Malays: and at Bombay, in the Apollo Green, live Yankees who have often scared the natives.”<sup>60</sup>

“These guys,” remarked Monroe, “had a global perspective. They were more familiar with Canton or Calcutta than they were with Philadelphia or New York.” That experience

changed them—they were not colonials. They did business on equal terms with people around the world. When they arrived in China, they didn't ask for the ancient bronzes. They didn't get to Africa and say, "Where are the Benin sculptures?" Instead, they collected the art and culture of the time during a period when there were few distinctions between art, history, and science. Their overflowing trunks, stacked high in the holds of returning ships, were jam-packed with anything from extraordinary works of art to chipped teacups.

Meanwhile, the Salem-based Essex Institute, created by a merger between the Essex Historical Society and the Essex Natural History Society in 1848, gathered together artifacts from the region's historical and natural environment.<sup>61</sup> While the travels of Salem's distinguished residents were an important part of its story, the Institute was primarily concerned with what these men did at home—a provincial celebration of self and identity. It was a kind of athenaeum, with a library and the occasional exhibit, said Dean Kahikainen, Carolyn and Peter Lynch Curator of American Decorative Art, which expanded its focus to include decorative arts and historic houses in the late 1800s. Since social history trumped art, the collection grew large with portraits of historical figures, no matter what their quality.<sup>62</sup>

The region's leading luminaries and gentlemen scholars sustained the two institutions for more than a century by sheer force of their collecting, education, and research. They lived across the street from each other but barely spoke. By the time Monroe arrived in 1992, both institutions needed major overhauls. Marriage was the only way forward and he was hired to tie the knot. He wanted, he said, to create a new kind of art museum, which went beyond the standard mission of collecting, preserving, interpreting, and acquiring. Instead, the new PEM would create artistic and cultural experiences, ideas, and information that would transform people's lives. The transformation might come with a big or a small "T." It might not happen on site but over time, in a cumulative way, and through a variety of activities that went way beyond what was on display.

Art, Monroe believes, has the capacity to bridge time, space, and cultural boundaries by helping people imagine themselves and their place in the world differently. But art is best understood, and has its greatest impact and meaning, if it is connected to the world in which it is made. For most museums that means putting up large photographs of something being created or piping in dance music—a type of contextualization Monroe rejects. He wants visitors to recognize that in different cultures, people have different relationships with objects. All societies create art, but not all art was created to be related to in the same way; each piece needs to be taken on its own terms.

One way to reinvent the PEM was to go back to the museum's actual history, not its mythical one. Most visitors thought of the Peabody as a maritime museum. But while the Museum's collection of Maritime Arts is outstanding, scrimshaw and ship models represent only 8 percent of its holdings. Its founders were much more interested in celebrating contemporary art from around the world than in paying attention to what happened at sea, which was part of their daily lives. Instead, they collected the art of their times with an eye toward enabling Americans to learn about the world.

“We want,” said Lynda Hartigan, the James B. and Mary Lou Hawkes Chief Curator, “to show the commonality across fields, to create experiences that suggest the art of connectivity rather than separateness.” In essence, that means creating cosmopolitan capabilities by showcasing objects, ideas, or feelings we can all relate to—the shared stuff of human experience. It’s a challenge, Hartigan admitted, because art history is so nationalistic. For so long, western viewers glossed over all non-western art as equally exotic and enticing. Curators had to fight to get people to recognize that Chinese, Korean, or Japanese art are not the same. Right now, she said, there are fans from different countries in every gallery, but someday she hopes they can all be displayed in one room. “All of these cultures made fans, but people don’t want to acknowledge how they influenced each other because the Japanese conquered, the Koreans hate the Chinese, etc. The curators say they’ve worked so hard to make the differences between Korean, Chinese, and Japanese art clear that stressing their similarities seems like a step backwards.”

The PEM, said Monroe, is not really an institution that is particularly about America. “A large part of the collection is American because Americans made the objects and they were incredibly important for the evolution of American art and industry. A lot of the objects were used in America but made elsewhere. Some parts of the collection were created well before there was an America.” But the museums use them not to tell an American story but to help visitors grasp their connection to people near and far away. No one expected the PEM to attract large numbers. “Everything we do,” said Dan Monroe, “brings in less people than it would in Boston simply because the PEM is in Salem. That is liberating.”

Monroe is keenly aware of the nearby institutions he competes with. But, when he thinks strategically about the future, he doesn’t just think about the region but about the nation and the world beyond. His audience, he says, is not just the 260,000 visitors who come through the door but the 500,000 or so who visit exhibitions organized by the PEM at major art museums around the world or who visit the website. However, he says, “we are not going to do an exhibit about the horrors of immigrant policy. We are not driving that kind of explicit, immediate agenda. Hammering people over the head about climate change or immigration is not the role we are trying to play. But globally, we are interested in helping people understand that every group creates its own art and culture, blended work, every group manifests elements of humanity that we all share and basic desires that tie us all together as human beings. We have a lot of trouble remembering and acting upon that on a day-by-day basis. We are in a constant battle with our own kind of tribalism. What I want to do is brain flexing, to encourage people to be more exploratory, to take accepted ideas and test them, to learn to think creatively and outside the box and to accept that there are lots of values around the world other than one’s own. No one has a corner on the market. We can’t go to ethical relativism. You have to draw the line somewhere. We’re not going to say it’s okay to mutilate women’s bodies in Africa. But the number of things that are actually not okay are not that many.” The Monroe Doctrine of Cosmopolitanism.

### **Meanwhile, Back in Boston**

Creating citizens of any kind has not been high on the MFA’s agenda. Rather museums are about preserving, collecting, and conserving, and about teaching visitors visual and aesthetic literacy. “I do not think that museums create citizens,” Elliot Bostwick Davis told me, “I hope that

universities do that.” It is not that this will never happen, said Erica Hirshler, “One might hope that a discussion of world citizenship could happen. But we have been thinking more about helping everyone from every kind of background feel comfortable in an institution that has always been upper class, white, and WASP. So we are still in that phase of wanting a broader community to feel that this is their museum. If they do, then I think you will create global citizens. Because they will find things about themselves and find things about the other people who are here too.” In other words, right now, if the MFA inspires openness and a willingness to engage with difference, it does so by helping people get comfortable with the diversity next door.

*Fresh Ink*, an exhibit mounted in 2010 by Hao Sheng, Wu Tung Curator of Chinese Art, linked the immigrant experience to the world. He asked five artists in China and five artists of Chinese ancestry in the United States to make a work in response to something from the MFA’s collection. Meanwhile, Laura Weinstein, the Ananda Coomaraswamy Curator of South Asian and Islamic Art, recently reinstalled the MFA’s South Asian galleries. The new installation, bringing together materials from South and Southeast Asia, is filled with references to trade and connection. “Covering an area of more than 3 million square miles, South and Southeast Asia have been home to innumerable societies throughout history,” the wall text reads. “This gallery explores how, over the course of 2000 years, those societies were brought into contact with one another—a story told through the remarkable art they made. Trade, culture, and politics fueled interaction and exchange between South and Southeast Asia...” The physical clustering of materials is meant to reflect contact—about how power and money traveled as well as ideas and iconography. “I’m coming out of a generation that is interested in talking about exchange and intercultural contacts,” Weinstein said, “so it is natural for me to tell a more global story.”

The MFA is also changing how it communicates with visitors. Instead of speaking in an anonymous curatorial voice, emanating somewhere from the bowels of the institution, many galleries now include a statement by and photos of the curator. “When you start exhibits with these personal statements,” says Chris Geary, Teel Senior Curator of African and Oceanic Art “it’s not the anonymous voice of the museum speaking but people who have ideas that not everyone agrees with. Doing exhibitions are interpretive acts. That is important. They don’t come out of nowhere.”<sup>63</sup>

Staff also felt that people want to learn more about how curators make choices about what to collect, conserve, and put on display. The new wing includes two “Behind the Scenes” galleries where visitors can watch videos about topics such as the pros and cons of different conservation approaches. Important collectors are showcased. And, perhaps most importantly, for the purposes of this book, there’s a mea culpa reflection on why the museum’s Native American collection is so weak—for which the new Wing has been criticized.

“In terms of collecting Native American art,” Gerald W. R. Ward, Katharine Lane Weems Senior Curator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture tells visitors in a video on display in the gallery, “this institution was interested in those materials from the time of our founding in 1870 until about 1900 or 1905 in which we amassed a collection, particularly of ceramics but also of other things as well... Then we lapsed into the hiatus of well over fifty years in which there was relatively little interest in Native American or Indian materials. And, really for the better part of fifty years, the emphasis was on Colonial American art, European art from France, Britain, Italy

and that was the way the museum tried to acculturate its visitors over the years, [until] there began to be an expansion of the canon of what is ‘beautiful.’ Beginning in 1985, or 84, we began to be much more interested, pursued objects with much more vigor since and now five different curatorial departments collect Native American materials.”

But when it comes to showcasing Boston’s diversity, one curator admits, “the museum is still behind the curve.” How much progress gets made often depends on how vocal a particular immigrant community is and how much money it has. Some complain, for example, that the MFA does more on contemporary South Asian than about work from other regions because the community is wealthier and more organized. In November 2011, however, the Museum took an important step toward filling one of its most conspicuous gaps by acquiring 67 works by African-American and Afro-Brazilian artists.<sup>64</sup> According to Bostwick Davis, such works “greatly enhance the MFA’s Art of the Americas holdings, allowing us to tell the broader story of American art.”

And what about creating global citizens? According to Curator of Education Barbara Martin, the museum is changing and, taken together, these changes add up over time. “If we effectively communicate the human dimension of the art from each culture and that then cumulatively leads you to those clicks—‘oh, that’s what I do,’ or ‘that’s what my grandfather used to say’—that leads you to a resonance across cultures.”

### **Brooklyn and Beyond: Helping People Make Sense of the World through Art**

In 1823, a group of civic-minded Brooklyn residents established the Apprentices’ Library Association so that working men and boys could learn trade skills, be exposed to the broader intellectual currents of the day, and stay out of trouble. As Brooklyn’s population grew from 15,000 in 1830 to 267,000 by 1860, they worried that the Irish, English, and German immigrants pouring into their city would be a bad influence. By the mid 1800s, immigrants made up nearly 50 percent of the borough’s population.<sup>65</sup> The Library’s art collection, which included just 17 paintings, would later become the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Augustus Graham, a prominent philanthropist, purchased some of its first holdings. Born in 1776, Graham emigrated from England to Baltimore as a young man. In the early 1800s, Graham met John Bell, a young Scot from Northern Ireland. The two decided to “unite their capital, adopt a kindred name and relation,”—to masquerade as brothers—“and proceed further north in quest of better fortunes.” Graham left his wife and two children behind, although he continued to provide for them, and eventually started the brewery that made them rich. Some believe that Graham and Bell were romantically involved, living together as a loving couple under the guise of brotherhood for many decades.<sup>66</sup>

In 1822, the now wealthy Graham retired from the alcohol industry—but not from business or public life. He and Bell decided to devote their fortune to public service, in what also proved to be a good business venture. While Graham opened a paint factory because he wanted to give jobs to out-of-work Brooklynites, the business took off, enabling him to become an even more active philanthropist. Because he disapproved of his young workers’ devotion to grog and gambling, the former liquor producer joined the nascent radical temperance movement

and in 1824 founded the Apprentices' Library as an alternative to saloons and other dens of vice. Over the next two decades, the Library grew into an Institute, even offering evening art classes, not an opportunity young workers in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century usually enjoyed. The Institute also laid the cornerstone for the gallery Graham, endowed in his will, which was to become the Brooklyn Museum.<sup>67</sup>

By 1890, the Brooklyn Institute of Art and Sciences was the parent organization of the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Botanical Garden, and the Brooklyn Children's Museum. When fire destroyed its original building, the trustees built a great, new museum next to Prospect Park. The Museum of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences was to be a "Museum for Everything for Everybody."<sup>68</sup> None, according to Augustus Healey, the President of the Board of Trustees, were "to be more welcome than the tired mechanic or the laboring man or domestic of our household who comes to the Museum for recreation or enjoyment, or to gain a little knowledge that is elsewhere inaccessible to him of the secrets of nature or the triumphs of art."<sup>69</sup>

When the first wing of the new building opened in 1893, Brooklyn was still an independent city—in fact one of the largest and wealthiest in the world. The plans for the museum, like the borough where it was located, were quite ambitious and competed with neighboring Manhattan. The proposed building was to be six times its current size and to include a children's museum, a natural history collection, and a botanical garden all under one roof.

But the world had other plans. Brooklyn became part of New York City in 1898. The Great Depression came. The Trustees felt the Museum needed to sharpen its focus and do what it did best. In 1934, they de-accessioned its natural history collections, finally abandoning science for art. Most of the planned expansion went uncompleted. Still, visitors came in droves. At its height, the Museum welcomed over a million people each year. In the 1930s and 40s, Curator Herbert Spinden even became somewhat of a radio celebrity, broadcasting popular segments about the Museum's collection to rapt audiences.<sup>70</sup> In 1934, the Board approved the removal of the grand staircase that led up to the Museum's Eastern Parkway entrance, a widely criticized decision meant to make the museum more accessible and welcoming to visitors.<sup>71</sup> Their efforts reflected the Museum's populist past and institutionalized its populist future, foreshadowing the words, written in big block letters that currently greet visitors in the main entrance hall: "EVERYONE WELCOME HERE."

Right through the 1950s, the Board of Trustees still consisted of people from Brooklyn's "royal" families—Pratt, Voorhees, and other illustrious names. But by the time Chief Curator Kevin Stayton arrived in 1980, Brooklyn had seen better days. Racial unrest during the 1960s destroyed many homes and businesses. Unemployment soared. White residents fled the borough and poorer minorities moved in. The Museum not only lost many of its traditional donors but also much of its visitor base.

Back then, the mission statement resembled that of most museums from the 19<sup>th</sup> century: "collect, preserve, and present in that order." By the time Mr. Lehman arrived, everyone recognized that things had to change. The museum had to rethink its relationship to its



community. It redefined its constituencies, in descending order of importance, as the neighborhood surrounding the museum, the Borough of Brooklyn, New York City, and the art community of the world. A new mission statement, approved about 10 years ago, says that the Museum “provides a bridge between the art we hold and the community we serve.” Mr. Lehman describes this as the sweet spot on the tennis racket, where the collection, the interested communities, and vibrant major project meet. “The sweet spot is when they all overlap, and they are all served, and we do it in such a fashion that people are pulled into the museum.”

In the past, the Brooklyn Museum suffered from a full-blown inferiority complex. “We traditionally viewed ourselves as a poor sister of the Met,”<sup>72</sup> said Kevin Stayton. But when Mr. Lehman arrived, he put an end to that no-win contest. Getting tourists to come to Brooklyn was a losing battle. But it was more than that. To survive and thrive, Mr. Stayton said, Brooklyn needed to think differently and reorder its priorities. “I had a very traditional museum education and art history background. I came to the Museum loving great design, aesthetics. I am, by nature, deeply acquisitive. I love collecting and amassing things. But then I began to think, why are we collecting 50 teapots when we can only show three? What is the meaning, as this institution marches into the future, of having all this stuff, as much as I love it? Arnold Lehman came along with a better answer. He said let's start asking these questions out loud and think about what it is we really need to do, where our place is in the future, what is it that we need to do for the community?”

The answer is as simple as “Everyone Welcome Here.” And just as Brooklyn is seeing better days, so the Brooklyn Museum is also enjoying better fortunes.<sup>73</sup> These shifts in the winds are also reflected in the exhibit *American Identities: A New Look*, Brooklyn’s equivalent of the MFA’s Art of the America’s Wing. In many ways, the two exhibits have similar goals. They both want to tell a different story about American art, to show how it has been influenced by a more diverse cast of characters and by forces beyond its borders. They both mixed mediums, combining paintings and decorative arts, to drive the narrative forward. But there are also real aesthetic and ideological differences that reflect variations in each institution’s historical relationship to its community, the role each city plays in the national cultural performance, and in how New York and Boston relate to the world.

### **American identities: A New Look**

A quote from Booker T. Washington, from a 1986 speech to the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, greets visitors entering the *American Identities* exhibit, “The study of Art that does not result in making the strong less willing to oppress the weak means little.” Walt Whitman, from his 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, follows, “Here is not a nation but a teeming nation of nations.” This is the story of America through a Brooklyn lens. But it is also a larger story. “In an effort to broaden conventional notions of what constitutes ‘American’ art,” the wall text reads, “we have also included Native American objects, as well as fine and decorative arts of the Spanish colonial era in Mexico and South America from the Museum's equally stellar collections in those areas.” “We are defining ‘America’ as broadly as possible,” said Kevin Stayton, “North and South America, indigenous, immigrants, Europeans, and Americans, and we are hoping to show how diverse it is now but [also] how diverse it has always been.” An old photo of bathers at Coney Island, Georgia O’Keefe’s 1949 painting of the Brooklyn Bridge, Ray Komai’s molded plywood

chair made in Brooklyn using the latest technology, and an Alice Neel portrait of Jack Baur, the head of the Museum's Department of Paintings and Sculpture from 1936-1952, are just some of the items featured in this introductory section. "This section is about Brooklyn," Mr. Stayton said, "things that were made here or sometimes about this institution. We are trying to say that we are local and in Brooklyn but that this is a world-class collection and our vision is the world. *American Identities* is about America, but we also tried to connect with ideas about what communities make up that mix."

The new *American Identities* exhibit opened in 2001. "We were," said Terry Carbone, Andrew W. Mellon Curator of American Art, "departing from the notion that there was a linear history in American art. We were bringing the objects together in new ways in order to show the multiplicity of narratives." The staff, she said, saw themselves as breaking down barriers between mediums, time periods, groups, and between self-taught and academically trained artists in order to tell many different stories. Contemporary and older works stand side-by-side. Important objects from the American collection are displayed alongside major works of Native American and Spanish Colonial art. "We weave native American throughout the exhibit to create dialogue and juxtapositions that compel people to think differently," said Ms. Carbone. "When we have a Zuni water jar from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century next to a kast<sup>74</sup> from Dutch New York, you can read the exhibit as a conversation about indigenous cultures versus outside cultures. There is a much more fluid mixing of genres, media, and chronology, and that was very deliberate."

Curators also felt these kinds of displays would be more accessible to less experienced museum visitors. They believed that people who rarely visit museums would not feel at home in very formal galleries which required some background to understand what is going on. That's why the galleries are lively, offering many different entrance points, and they focus on Brooklyn. That's why all the walls are painted deep blues and greens rather than white. It's also why there are four places in the galleries— where visitors can relax in comfortable chairs and simply gaze at the art.

So both the MFA and the Brooklyn Museum have rewritten the story of American art. But the narratives each institution constructed and how they tell them reflect their unique histories. While the MFA's founders began with populist intentions, the institution soon became part of the arsenal of tools city leaders used to reinforce social distinctions. The MFA's collection is so dominated by colonial New England masterpieces that even when it tells a more diverse story, the deck is stacked. What's more, the Museum has to tell the colonial American story because that is what people come to hear.

The Brooklyn Museum had a different set of tools with which to do its rewrite. In the 1600s, it was the Dutch, not the British, who colonized Manhattan's shores. So the museum's collections include objects that allow it to tell the story of multiple colonial experiences more easily. Thanks to two curators, R. Stewart Culin and Herbert Spinden, Brooklyn also boasts much stronger holdings in Native American and Spanish Colonial materials. "The other thing we do," says Nancy Rosoff, Curator of the Arts of the Americas, "is include works by young artists. You don't have to be dead or old or famous to be here." Its visitors do not expect to hear the same story as in Boston. In fact, curators feel, Brooklyn has to be about diversity and connectivity because that is what its primary constituents want (and need) to see.

Stewart Culin came to the Brooklyn Museum in 1903 as the first Director of the new Department of Ethnology. He was one of “the first curators to recognize the museum installation as an art form in itself and to display ethnological collections as art objects, not as mere specimens.” He saw the museum “not as a place of antiquities and relics, but as preserving the seed of things which may blossom and fruit again.”<sup>75</sup> Like many of his contemporaries, Culin worried that Native American cultures were disappearing and believed the museum should collect these materials before it was too late. By 1911, he had amassed over 9,000 objects from the Southwest, the Northwest Coast, California and Oklahoma—the core of the Museum’s Native American collection.<sup>76</sup> In 1925, Culin created the “Rainbow House,” in which “the art of different peoples [were] distinguished” by differently painted cases, with, for example, reds and pinks signifying Native American objects.<sup>77</sup> The gallery’s vibrant colors and stunning objects are remembered by generations of visitors.

While Culin was responsible for the Museum’s impressive Native American holdings, his successor, Herbert Joseph Spinden, gets credit for amassing its pre-Columbian and Spanish colonial cache.<sup>78</sup> Spinden came on as Curator of Ethnology in 1929 and stayed at the helm until 1950. He also served as Director of Education until 1935. The U.S. Government Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA), set up to encourage cultural exchange throughout the region, sent Spinden on six speaking tours during which he acquired Mayan ceramics from Honduras, textiles from Paracas, Peru, and ceramics and gold from Panama.<sup>79</sup> Spinden then used these materials to organize traveling exhibits that toured schools and public institutions all over the U.S. “It’s not an accident that we sent an expedition in 1941,” remarked Kevin Stayton. “This was a last ditch effort to weave together the Americas and ignore Europe during World War II at a time we thought we could still get away with that.” Exploiting the geo-political moment, Spinden took time out from delivering speeches to acquire hundreds of Spanish Colonial artifacts and folk art objects for the Museum. “And it is also no accident,” Stayton reflected, “that the collection disappeared into our storerooms when achieving hemispheric unity receded in importance.”

What Spinden also cemented was the Museum’s commitment to the masses. As Director of Education, he made the building more welcoming not only through his radio broadcasts but also by organizing Native American craft demonstrations and art workshops for local designers and manufacturers. On Saturdays, the Ethnological Hall filled with visitors who came to watch basket weaving but who also, admits Stayton, really liked the hot dogs. Spinden created the Brooklyn Museum School Service, which welcomed school groups free of charge. The program aimed to teach students about distant cultures but also to make Brooklyn’s ever increasing immigrant population into Americans.<sup>80</sup>

So, let’s take a walk through the *American Identities* exhibit and see what there is to see. In the “Colony to Nation” gallery, Copley portraits of important New Englanders and objects from the Anglo-Dutch era hang side by side with a table from Argentina and a Zuni water jug. These pairings are meant to show the connections between the art and objects produced at the time throughout the region. The Zuni water jug, “created at the same moment as many of the European-derived portraits and furnishings in the gallery, serves as a reminder of the independent continuity of Indian artistic traditions in North America throughout the colonial

period.” The Chippendale-inspired table that sits barely a foot off the floor, Mr. Stayton said, “was made for an English tea ceremony, which is itself an import from Asia to the West. But much more mixing occurred in South America.” The table is low because the Spanish who traveled to the New World brought with them their memories of Moorish times. In those days, men sat on chairs and women sat on cushions placed on low tables. In Argentina, though, the drawing room drink of choice was mate, an infusion of dried yerba mate leaves—served in a hollow calabash gourd with a silver straw—acquired from indigenous societies based in Paraguay. “So right here, you have English, Spanish, Moorish and Native traditions combined,” noted Stayton.

Another “colonial pairing” showcases William Willam’s portrait of Deborah Hall, daughter of the printer David Hall (Benjamin Franklin’s business partner), next to a portrait of Doña Mariana Belsunse y Salasar, a member of the *criollo*<sup>81</sup> elite, whose painter is unknown. Both paintings were completed in the 1760s, one in colonial Philadelphia and the other in colonial Lima, Peru. The paintings broadcast the elite status of their subjects in much the same way as the European portraits of the day: both women stand in front of (probably fanciful) formal gardens. They are dressed to the nines, gazing out elegantly from the frame. The iconography is also familiar. The flowers, which symbolize love and beauty, may tell viewers they are ready to marry. The timepieces probably indicate that time is ticking away.<sup>82</sup>

Next up is a Pizarro commemorative plate, made in Peru in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably created in response to Peruvian’s renewed interest in their colonial history, which coincided with a growing North American fascination with the indigenous cultures of Central and South America. Framed like a formal coat of arms are portraits of the last Inca emperor Atahualpa and the Spaniard Don Francisco Pizarro, his vanquisher. The inscription only honors the conqueror, however, suggesting that, even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Peruvians still viewed the Spanish invasion as an illustrious period in their history.<sup>83</sup>

Pizarro and Atahualpa hang next to a silver tray first shown at the Tiffany’s exhibition at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. It is modeled after the Aztec’s famous sun calendar, an icon of Mexico’s Pre-Columbian past. It reflects “the nineteenth-century search for America’s roots in its pre-European cultures.”<sup>84</sup> This, said Mr. Stayton, is the United States spreading out and becoming more international. After the Civil War, people wanted to connect to an American past that did not just involve Europe. After the Exposition, magnate William Randolph Hearst purchased the tray for his palatial home, San Simeon.

If you look closely, *American Identities* also calls out to the immigrant and African American experience. There is a richly carved staff commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation that ended slavery in 1863. In a section on the Centennial Era, which explores the creation of a unique national iconography, there is a tea set from around 1876, modeled after 18<sup>th</sup> century rococo style tea sets but decorated with flora and fauna. The handles of the teapot and the sugar bowl, in the shape of an Asian male and a Black sugar cane picker respectively, “would probably strike most contemporary viewers as racist, but the 19<sup>th</sup> century consumer probably considered them benign, clever shorthand for the content of each vessel.”<sup>85</sup> Further down the showcase are a late 19<sup>th</sup> century kachina doll made by a Zuni Pueblo artisan, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century shirt crafted by a Sioux needle, and a pipe bowl from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Plains.

A final, new acquisition speaks to Brooklyn's current collecting priorities. Richard Aste, the Curator of European Art, recently purchased Agostino Brunias' "Free Women of Color with their Children and Servants in a Landscape." Just as the Dutch sent Albert Eckhout to Brazil, the British government sent the Italian painter Brunias to the West Indies around 1764, to document one of its newest colonies, Dominica. The painting shows two elegantly dressed mulatto sisters, members of the islands elite, out strolling with their aging mother, two small children, and three dainty lapdogs. Accompanying the well-appointed family are no fewer than eight African servants, children and mature men and women alike. "We have a large West Indian community," said Mr. Aste. "When I first saw the painting it, it just screamed Brooklyn. We were looking for something from the 18th century, and we didn't have anything like this."<sup>86</sup> Another selling point was that the painting speaks to so many collecting areas—not just European but the American and African galleries. And what probably appealed to Mr. Lehman is the possibility that some grandmother from Dominica would bring her granddaughter to see the painting, just like the grandmother in Baltimore.

"The American gallery," says Joan Cummins, the Lisa and Bernard Selz Curator of Asian Art, "positions our country in a global perspective." And when it first reopened, many people strongly disapproved. Art critics, curators, and academics accused Museum staff of "over-programming" visitors by including such explicit narratives. The "inelegant" installations, with their bright blue and green walls, offended them. But most of all, Mr. Lehman recalled, colleagues complained the Museum was shaking up categories. "They wanted to know what we were doing this for? Why are you breaking established norms? Why show Native American with Dutch influences? Why bring Spanish American into the American galleries? Why are you making trouble?"

But to serve the neighborhood and bring in younger and first time visitors, that was exactly what curators felt they needed to do. The public loved it. In fact, over the next decade, the entire collection will be reinstalled along similar lines. "Our idea," said Mr. Lehman, "is to look at all our collecting areas from a truly 21<sup>st</sup> century point of view, bringing to bear the knowledge we now have which is vastly different than the knowledge we had 100 years ago when most museums were established. Most of the methodologies, the hierarchies, the paradigms of presentation we still use were put in place about 75 years ago and have pretty much not changed since."

Part of this work has already begun. A new installation called *Connecting Cultures: A World in Brooklyn* opened in the Great Hall in April 2012. It is designed as an introduction to the Museum—a sort of meditation on how the Museum collected, interpreted, and grouped objects as well as a general roadmap to its exhibits. In some ways, it is Brooklyn's response to the same questions posed in the MFA's "Behind the Scenes" galleries.

According to Kevin Stayton, who spoke during the planning stages, "The new introductory gallery will combine things from all of the Museum's collections. By framing things that way, we want to encourage people to go beyond their borders, whether it be the borders of their own interests or the borders of their national identity." This is part of the Museum's effort to be more welcoming. "We want to introduce people right away to a range of collections that they might not understand are here if they just walked into the first floor. We

will frame it in a way that explains that our primary modus operandi is showing the connections between cultures.”

This time, at least one critic was more than satisfied. Remembering the many Saturdays he spent wandering around the galleries of Boston’s MFA as a young man, *New York Times* critic Holland Cotter wrote that the Brooklyn Museum now offers visitors an immersion experience of their own. According to Cotter, the eclectic and first-rate 300 or so objects on display purposely shake up visitors’ expectations of “one-culture-per-gallery” and “get you shopping, with your magpie eye sharpened for odd and tasty things.” He sees *Connecting Cultures* as encouraging viewers to “play with art, with meanings and values and cultural interconnections, which also means to play with the museum itself, to move its contents around mentally, to make friends where you ordinarily wouldn’t think to find them: to be at home in a large world.”<sup>87</sup> Score one for cosmopolitan competencies.

But is the museum creating global citizens or just showcasing the country’s internal diversity? How do those things coincide? Right now, said Mr. Lehman, “they exist in parallel, but when you are really successful, they should collide. We are in the midst of a professionally led rethinking process, a rebranding, although I hate to call it that. And one of the things that has evolved after many months of talking is that Brooklyn should be the (or a) place where we can help people through art make sense of the world. That is a big, big goal and it helps to take on these two sometimes parallel [goals]—showing diversity and showing global—together. Right now, we are creating better New Yorkers, better Americans, but not yet global citizens.”

“It is not a question,” said Kevin Stayton, “of whether museums are the right place to [create citizens]. Museums have to do it because we won’t survive for the next 100 years doing what we have always done, which is collecting things together and sorting them into library-like categories for a handful of scholars to look at. We still have to play that role, but we also have to present the arts in a way that our mission is possible, to find that connection with art that makes some of us devote our lives to it, the fact that these human expressions are moving, that we want to share that pleasure with people who might otherwise not find it.”

### **Culturally Specific and Community-based Museums**

The Queens Museum, located on the edge of the 897-acre Flushing Meadows-Corona Park is right in the middle of a major renovation. It’s building, first constructed as the New York City Pavilion for the 1939 World’s Fair, which also briefly housed the United Nations’ between 1946-1950, used to have galleries on one side and ice and roller skating rinks on the other. By September 2013, when the renovated wing is scheduled to open, the museum will have doubled its capacity, with new galleries, studios, and classrooms in its former ice palace.

Staff members want the renovated building to make a strong statement about the museum’s relationship to its community. The new bathrooms, they said, will be located right inside the door, before visitors have to pay. Anyone using the park that, on warm days, is filled with immigrant soccer, baseball, and cricket players, can come in and use the facilities. In Queens, “Everyone welcome here” is signaled through the plumbing.

The Queens Museum of Art first opened its doors in 1972. In contrast to Brooklyn's encyclopedic range, its permanent collection includes about 10,000 items, over 6,000 of which are memorabilia from the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs. Also in its collection are over 40 years of crime scene photographs from *The New York Daily News*, over 1,000 drawings by court reporter and political cartoonist William Sharp, and since 1995, the Neustadt collection of Tiffany glass, once manufactured just down the street at the Tiffany Studios and Furnaces in Corona. The Queens Museum is probably most famous for its panorama—an enormous model of New York City, commissioned by City Planner Robert Moses for the 1964 World's Fair—a 9,335-square-foot replica of 895,000 individual buildings in the five boroughs up through 1992. Staff see it, said Jason Yoon, the Director of Education, “as a metaphor for where we are and our relationship to the communities around us.” It took nearly 100 people working for Raymond Lester Associates, an architectural model maker, to create the original replica. In March 2009, the museum announced it would allow individuals and developers to refurbish or add new buildings for a small (or not so small) fee. It costs \$50 to “purchase” an apartment; \$250 to adopt a private home; \$500 to purchase a school, library or firehouse; and \$2,500 for neighborhood maintenance. Donors even receive a title deed.

Director Tom Finkelppearl, staff say, takes context seriously. Queens is the most diverse borough in New York City. It also has many middle-class residents. The Museum's surrounding neighborhood, Corona, teems with new and not so new migrants from Latin America and Asia. As in Brooklyn, staff members firmly believe that the relationship between museums and communities needs a major overhaul and they want Queens to lead the way. “We have done way more for immigrants than any other museum in America,” Finkelppearl claimed. Museums should be catalysts for social and political engagement, which eventually also gets people in the door. In other words, after mobilizing the community, “we also let them know,” said Community Organizer Jose Serrano, “that there is a lovely free institution with open doors and great free art classes and exhibitions created with them in mind.”

Yes, Community Organizer. This new model of museum work includes two community organizers on staff who work closely with local immigrant artists, event producers, and community groups. In fact, Serrano said, he calls himself a “cultural organizer who uses art strategies in service of community organizing efforts that are already in the community... We lend our creative services to help social campaigns in the community that we do not lead but participate in.” How exactly? By supporting the community's artists and social and cultural institutions, by creating art installations in neighborhood venues, and by inviting community members to use the museum as a place to hold their own events, celebrations, and political meetings. The New New Yorkers Program, for example, a partnership with the Queens Public Library, offers language and skill-based classes. The introductory levels are conducted in Korean, Spanish or Taiwanese, but the more advanced classes are in English so that students from diverse backgrounds have to study together. The Museum Explorers' Club, for families affected by autism, is part art class and part class in the social skills needed to complete a successful museum visit. *Cinemarosa* is the borough's first and only independent LGBTQ video and film series.

What unites all these activities is the belief in the transformative power of art and in the artist's role as translator and bridge-builder between immigrants and the broader community.

When an art historian teaches English-as-a-Second Language classes by having her students discuss female portraiture, she also teaches them about the creative spirit. “I think the programming we do,” said Nung-Hsin Hu, Associate Coordinator of the New New Yorkers program, “is serving to create the community and its capacity to create.” To consistently capture new audiences in the “new Queens,” outreach takes a back seat to partnership and collaboration. “Reciprocity,” said Jason Yoon, “is the key paradigm shift.”

Using art and culture to engage the community is a natural outgrowth of the museum’s curatorial priorities. According to Director of Exhibitions, Hitomi Iwasaki, the Queens Museum was one of the first in New York to give space to non-American, non-white artists. They did this not by visiting artists’ studios and selecting the work they liked best but by welcoming artists into the museum, talking to them about its history and community, and inviting them to “suck in and digest all of that and see what came out in response.”

The idea, said Ms. Iwasaki, was not to try to compete with the Guggenheim or the Whitney but for Queens to be a cutting edge contemporary art museum in its own right. It was also to broaden the definition of American art by doing “cultural shows” that paired work by Korean-, Indian-, or Columbian-American artists with work by artists from their ancestral homelands. In 2002, the Museum mounted its first *Queens International*, a biennial exhibition of artists from around the world who live and/or work in Queens. The show, now in its sixth iteration, “examines the boundaries of culture, tradition, heritage and nationality” and “addresses the relationship between ‘internationalism’ and ‘multiculturalism’ from a local standpoint... Culture is the logic by which we give order to the world. No one stands outside of it. In Queens, one comes to recognize that nations are not walled fortresses but rather permeable containers for the fluid shifts of culture. Here, multiculturalism does not imply a static representation of international identities but rather an ever-changing shift amongst multiple cultures that blurs ethnic, racial, gendered and ideological boundaries.”<sup>88</sup> Again, cosmopolitanism from a Queens vantage point.

Helping people feel committed and comfortable enough to be socially engaged with their community and beyond is the overarching goal, whether the activities take place inside the museum or out. Participating in cultural practices makes people feel more creative, a greater sense of leadership and self-confidence, and a lot more connected to life in New York and the world. We try to ease people’s access to “weird things,” said Organizer Serrano, “so if there is an out-there dance performance, it is paired with music that reminds people of home right away. At a festival, there is a tent where artists are doing something cool, but you also recognize where you are. We use familiarity as a bridge to get people in and then expose them to artwork too.”

Because the museum’s policy is to open its doors to any group that asks, different kinds of people run into each other. When people attending the monthly LGBTQ film series and the proud Taiwanese parent attending her child’s dance recital bump into each other in the bathroom, “it is like a little kiss,” said Iwasaki. The encounter plants the seeds of transformation. “We have a Tower of Babel problem,” said Tom Finkelpearl. “When people from different groups are in the same audience, it doesn’t mean they can speak to each other. We have to proactively facilitate the translation.” Just as libraries have users who come into find resources and make connections, museums should too. In fact, the renovated building will



house a branch of the Queens Public Library.

Staff members see themselves as creating citizens who are active in their local neighborhoods **and** their communities back home. Just as the sea was part of the every day lives of Salem's residents, they recognize that traveling back and forth is second nature to many immigrants. Just take the case of Ecuador. In 2009, the Ecuadoran Ministry of Culture hired someone to map its emigrant community in New York who approached staff for help, knowing of the Museum's strong community connections. Thus began a series of artistic and curatorial exchanges between Queens and Ecuador. To serve more diverse audiences you need more diverse curators, so two curatorial fellows come from Ecuador each year to work at the museum. Even artwork crosses borders. One of the first installations the Museum supported was by an Ecuadoran artist living in New York who created a piece with the truck drivers who park their moving vans nearby. Since many are undocumented and cannot visit their families, she helped them write "video letters" to send back home, which the Museum then showed in public screenings. "I always joke," said Prerana Reddy, Director of Public Programs, "that there might be more people in Ecuador who know about this museum than there are in Brooklyn."

People's involvement in the places where they live and in those from where they come is definitely not a zero sum game. "We can't just wait for cultural change to happen," said Reddy. "We have to actively combat the idea of assimilation or that the only way is either/or, or that if you don't speak English, you are not a loyal American... The world is a much more complicated place. We are at the limits of what a 250 year old idea of liberal democracy looks like, and I don't know what is coming in the future. Basically globalization means that money and companies can move freely, but we have not accepted that people can too." Queens, said Serrano, represents the whole world we live in. "There is a constant dialogue between here and home. We do not have an agenda for political engagement in a strict, narrow sense, but more generally, we are about helping people find their voice in a civil and international dialogue. We want to create a more creative and capable user of this institution and the world."

The exhibit on display for much of 2012, *Caribbean: Crossroads of the World*, grew out of collaboration between the Queens Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and El Museo del Barrio, which was the lead institution. In essence, writes Elvis Fuentes, the Curator, the Caribbean has always been a crossroads. "The sense of trans-territoriality, the crossing of roads and boundaries, and the constant movements of people and traditions have led to a blending of beliefs, realities, and aspects that typify many Caribbean aspects."<sup>89</sup> New York City, staff repeatedly informed me, is the largest Caribbean city in the world. Staff members see the confluence and mixing of cultures that is the Caribbean as the historical double of Queens, and what the rest of the world is fast becoming.<sup>90</sup>

For El Museo del Barrio, the cultural convergence exemplified by the region is also a metaphor for its institutional journey. Raphael Montañez Ortiz created El Museo in 1969 to celebrate the Puerto Rican diáspora and to fill what he saw as a gaping cultural hole. "The cultural disenfranchisement I experience as a Puerto Rican," he wrote, "has prompted me to seek a practical alternative to the orthodox museum, which fails to meet my needs for an authentic ethnic experience."<sup>91</sup> The Studio Museum of Harlem had just created educational materials for African American students for the New York City Board of Education. When the Board asked artist and teacher Ortiz to do the same for the Puerto Rican community, he proposed creating a

museum instead. According to Deborah Cullen, former Chief Curator, “It started in a classroom, actually. He collected a box of materials on a trip to Puerto Rico and sort of dragged it around.”

The Queens Museum and El Museo, in fact, have a lot in common. They both grew out of civil rights struggles of the 1960s and 1970s to win equal access for people of color to all kinds of institutions, including cultural ones. Their founders felt underrepresented in traditional museums and convinced by art’s transformative power. As the communities they serve have grown more diverse, socioeconomically and ethnically, they have had to reinvent themselves and their relationship to their neighbors.

Institutions like these are part and parcel of the U.S. diversity management regime. One way that groups take their place at the multicultural table, and the broader community is told they belong there, is to set up a culturally specific institution. These also function to right past wrongs, publically acknowledging the discrimination and marginalization groups have suffered. On the Washington Mall alone, the National Museum of the American Indian, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the proposed National Museum of African American History and Culture, scheduled to open in 2015, reflect this approach. While many greet these developments as major steps forward others, much like the Swedes and Danes, fear they force individuals into essentialized racial or ethnic boxes.<sup>92</sup> They worry that institutions will not be able to keep pace with the inevitable changes taking place in communities that were never so monolithic or unified to begin with.

El Museo’s history exemplifies these tensions. El Museo began its life as a culturally specific, or constituency, museum, located in what was an overwhelmingly Puerto Rican neighborhood but is now home to people from all over North and South America, as well as increasing numbers of U.S.-born Whites. As early as 1978, Director Jack Agüeros stated that the museum was not just about Puerto Ricans. “We are too culturally rich to force ourselves into ghettos of narrow nationalism. El Museo now wants to embody the culture of all of Latin America.”<sup>93</sup> By 1994, the Museum’s mission statement read, “El Museo del Barrio’s mission is to establish a forum that will preserve and project the dynamic cultural heritage of Puerto Ricans and all Latin Americans in the United States.” Including “all Latin Americans” reflected a tremendous and controversial shift. Critics argued that the Puerto Rican community, and the community at large, still needed an institution devoted solely to the cultural accomplishments of Puerto Ricans, while supporters believed that adopting a more pan-Latino stance would fill an important cultural hole and was a necessary step forward for the institution’s survival. Today, reads the website, “The mission of El Museo del Barrio is to present and preserve the art and culture of Puerto Ricans and all Latin Americans in the United States.”<sup>94</sup>

*Caribbean: Crossroads of the Worlds* broadened the museum’s frame even wider, not just from Puerto Ricans to Latinos and Latin Americans but to their Dutch, French, and English-speaking neighbors. Just as the Catholic Church created native language parishes to help first generation immigrants adjust to the United States but eventually expected them to pray in English, so El Museo needs to honor its roots while responding to its changing neighborhood, which now includes people from all over the continent.

To do that, the Museum must tell an ethnic story that it links clearly to larger experiences, said Curator Rocio Aranda-Alvarado, a narrative that is culturally specific and global at the same time. The objects themselves do that work. You might have a photograph of a beautiful idyllic beach with garbage in the foreground, she said. The photo might be from Puerto Rico or from Thailand. Modern and post-modern paintings by Latino or Latin American artists are part of larger artistic movements.

Former Director Margarita Aguilar took this even further. For her, the message was, “Be engaged with us. This is about New York. This is a Latino story. This is an American story. I want people to be members, whether their name is Paul Smith or Paul Schmidt or Pablo Lopez.” If she had the budget, the tag line for the ad campaign she would plaster on the city’s bus stops would read, “El Museo es Tu Museo.” Think of the German immigrants in a city like Milwaukee, she said. They are not Germans anymore. In one hundred years, given the changing demographics of this country, we will all be American. “There is a history that needs to be told, but don’t call yourself Puerto Rican or Caribbean because people don’t know what to expect and they won’t go near you. You are an artist who happens to be from the Caribbean.” El Museo has to have the confidence to open up its borders and it has to do so in order to survive.<sup>95</sup>

El Museo also sees itself as creating engaged citizens, although it does not particularly matter where they claim their rights or fulfill their responsibilities. “I guess the end goal of our programming,” said Deborah Cullen, “is to make you a more active and empowered citizen, whatever kind of citizen you want to be.”

### **Boston Versus the Boroughs**

The museums profiled here provide a snapshot of the ideologies, resources, and constraints different kinds of institutions bring to bear on the task of developing cosmopolitan competencies. Location makes a difference. Boston’s founding fathers’ belief that they resided in the center of their own moral universe, that they were charting a unique intellectual and artistic path different from Europe’s, and that they needed to establish clear class and ethnic boundaries, set the stage for some of what the MFA does today. In contrast, Salem’s historical role as a center of international trade, and its founder’s cosmopolitan outlook, is part of what drives the PEM’s commitment to use art to make people feel at home in the world. All of the museums in New York, though in different ways, promote this kind of openness and curiosity, in part because they live next door to so many people who come from its distant shores.

Unlike museums in Sweden and Denmark, the majority of museums in the United States are privately funded. Although the government gives grants to support certain kinds of activities or create exhibits about particular topics, it does not, as in Sweden, explicitly use cultural institutions as social engineering tools. The MFA, the Brooklyn Museum and the PEM, in that it grows out of a marriage between two long-standing institutions, have clear historic roles in the institutional distribution of labor that their visitors expect them to continue to fulfill. The Queens Museum and El Museo are community based museums, emerging from the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, and intended to bring art to previously underserved, underrepresented communities. Art and encyclopedic museums, with deep collections and pockets, clearly have more tools at their disposal than newer museums with slimmer wallets and less in their storerooms. But they

also face greater constraints. Museums at the cultural periphery, like El Museo or the Queens Museum, have more flexibility and can take more risks. Even the PEM when Monroe first took over or the Brooklyn Museum before “Brooklyn came back” enjoyed more degrees of freedom than the MFA because they were somewhat out of the limelight.

All of these museums operate against the backdrop of a particular understanding of the nation and its role in the world. They do not mount exhibits about universal challenges like climate change or human trafficking, which develop cosmopolitan competencies by stressing the problems we all share. That Sweden created global citizens by addressing their rights and responsibilities directly comes as no surprise. It flows logically from the histories and collections of its cultural institutions but also from Sweden’s desire to be a moral leader in the world.

In New York and Boston, if and when museums saw themselves as creating cosmopolitan competencies, they began from a different starting point. Sometimes, they showcased internal diversity, something they are more committed to and convinced of than the Swedes or the Danes. Or they showcased common human experiences—by exploring the themes, objects, emotions we all share or by showing how much artistic and decorative objects or artistic movements that took shape on opposite sides of the world have in common. Here, art and culture facilitate an encounter with difference, and help visitors become more comfortable and curious about it, but there is no action plan or agenda. What you do about how “the other” differs from you socioeconomically is not part of the package. This is in part because museums in the U.S. are private institutions, not responsible for achieving state goals. It is because the institutions discussed here are primarily art or encyclopedic museums, not museums of history or material culture. But it also reflects the United States’ desire to lead, without a particularly consistent or strong commitment to moral leadership. It reflects a tendency to lead without engaging, a sense that when you are wealthy and powerful enough, you can just lead and others will follow.

Both the MFA and the Brooklyn Museum rewrote the American art story, but they did it using different syntaxes and with different goals in mind.<sup>96</sup> The Brooklyn narrative, told with comfortable chairs, bright blue and green walls, and 80 word text limits, is directed toward new or inexperienced museum goers who need a special welcome to come in. “Stunning” takes a back seat to “accessible.” That’s not to say that the objects on display are not beautiful. It is to say that they are chosen, grouped, and exhibited with the neighborhood in mind. There is a strong purposeful message about America’s internal diversity and about how that connects us to the world. Deborah Hall and Doña Mariana Belsunse y Salazar hang next to one another, while Timothy Matlack, the lawyer in this chapter’s title, and Don Manuel José Rubio y Salinas, the priest, are in neighboring rooms. And all this from an institution that hosts the extremely popular Target First Saturdays program, when the museum remains open for free on the first Saturday night of the month until 11 pm, sometimes attracting over 20,000 people to its dance parties, lectures, and musical performances.

The MFA also tells a subtler story of connection but with longer texts and more subdued walls. It is a story about how the nation changed as a result of these ties, not about what Americans need to do in response. It is pitched higher and more elegantly; one has to look and listen harder to hear the stories of minorities, which are fewer and farther between and, in the

case of Native Americans, stand alone in a separate, basement gallery. The MFA also opens its doors on the first Friday of each month, inviting visitors to come “for fine art, music, cash bars featuring signature cocktails, and delicious tapas available for purchase”—in essence a mixer for cultured twenty and thirty-somethings, not a multicultural community celebration.<sup>97</sup>

Many, although certainly not all, the curators I spoke to at both institutions want to tell a more global story. They strongly believe museums need to do something different. So, it’s not for lack of trying or good will on their part. But each institution is constrained by its history and holdings and the urban cultural armature. The Cabots and Saltonstalls created a different kind of city than the Grahams and Voorheeses and a different demographic mix came to live in each city.

Let’s talk about institutional differences before moving on to the city and beyond.

The mission statements of each institution reflect their different sensibilities and social commitments. Brooklyn’s current mission “is to act as a bridge between the rich artistic heritage of world cultures, as embodied in its collections, and the unique experience of each visitor. Dedicated to the primacy of the visitor experience, committed to excellence in every aspect of its collections and programs, and drawing on both new and traditional tools of communication, interpretation, and presentation, the Museum aims to serve its diverse public as a dynamic, innovative, and welcoming center for learning through the visual arts.” Art is clearly a tool for helping people understand and find their place in the world.

In contrast, the MFA’s mission, adopted by its Board of Trustees in 1991, states that the museum “houses and preserves preeminent collections and aspires to serve a wide variety of people through direct encounters with works of art...The Museum has obligations to the people of Boston and New England, across the nation and abroad. It celebrates diverse cultures and welcomes new and broader constituencies... The Museum’s ultimate aim is to encourage inquiry and to heighten public understanding and appreciation of the visual world.” The visual world—not the social or political world. The diversity within, not the world without.

New York City, according to Nancy Foner, is an exceptional American immigrant city. The composition and diversity of the immigrant groups who live there, and its unique institutional response, created a melting pot that differs from the Latinization of other immigrant gateways like Los Angeles, Miami, and Houston. What makes NY so special? Throughout most of the twentieth century, the foreign-born made up at least one fifth of New York City’s residents, reaching as high as 41 percent in 1910 and 36 percent in 2000. Large numbers of African Americans also came to live there between World War I and the 1960s, followed by large numbers of Puerto Ricans after World War II. The result is that the vast majority of residents have immigrant roots and that no one group dominates. Between 1990 and 1996 alone, as many as twenty countries sent more than 5,000 immigrants to the city.<sup>98</sup> In 2000, the top three groups—Dominicans, Chinese, and Jamaicans—made up just shy of 30 percent of all the foreign-born population. These individuals also varied by class and occupation, nearly equally divided between high and low-skilled workers.<sup>99</sup> “Multiculturalism,” Foner writes, “and by this I simply mean the coexistence of plural cultures or cultural diversity, has evolved there in what one might call a particular New York way....As a major cultural capital of America, what

happens in New York has the potential to affect the shape of change elsewhere in the nation.”<sup>100</sup>

**KIT PLEASE ADD IN A COUPLE OF PARAGRAPHS ON BOSTON HERE USING DATA THAT HERISSA GENERATED TO SHOW THAT BOSTON HAS BEEN LESS DIVERSE, MORE DOMINATED BY A COUPLE OF GROUPS, ETC. THE DATA COMPARE BOSTON WITH BROOKLYN (KINGS COUNTY) SO JUST USE THE SUFFOLK COUNTY DATA TO MAKE THIS COUNTERARGUMENT AS BEST YOU CAN. LET ME KNOW IF THIS IS NOT CLEAR. THANKS, PL**

Differences in how culture gets supported also explain what happens in Boston and New York. In New York, thirty-three organizations form the Cultural Institutions Group, which is part of the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). The city owns the land they are built on, the buildings they are housed in, and helps members with basic security, maintenance, administration, and energy costs. In return, the institutions are considered publicly owned facilities that provide cultural services to all New Yorkers. Staff from DCA periodically attend their board meetings, monitor their operations, provide technical assistance, and connect CIG members to other city agencies.<sup>101</sup>

For the Brooklyn Museum, CIG membership means that the rent and electric bills are paid. It also means that the institution is accountable to the city and to taxpayers in a way that the MFA is not. While the City cannot tell the Museum what to do, it can weigh in when it doesn't like what it is doing. The Museum is less dependent on outside funds but more vulnerable to fluctuations in the city budget and to the whims of mayoral support. “It matters very much to us whether the city supports what we are doing. Even though the amount of money has declined over the years, it is still the tipping point in our budget,” said Kevin Stayton. “We are so close to the bone.”<sup>102</sup>

What's more, New York City supports the arts and artists more than Boston. In 1982, Mayor Ed Koch signed a “Percent for Art” law mandating that one percent of the budget for all city-funded construction projects support art in city facilities. Since it began, more than 228 projects have been completed. The DCA gives out grants to non-profit arts groups to support programs and projects, sometimes funding as many as 900 organizations per year, with a budget of nearly \$140 million.<sup>103</sup>

One-percent funds, to which developers must contribute, are how many cities in the U.S. support public art, but Boston is not among them. In fact, many people characterize Boston as having no cultural policy. Mayor Thomas Menino, in office for over 20 years, is said to be uncomfortable with the arts, so he has not made them a high priority. While he supported affordable housing for artists, promoted open studios, and organized art fairs in the early 1980s, the fiscal crisis later that decade, and the current recession, decimated what little support there was. A small public trust, the Edward Ingersoll Brown Fund, is the only consistent funding stream. The Boston Cultural Council (BCC) gives out grants of up to \$5,000 for cultural programming and subsidizes tickets to cultural events for students; in 2010, the BCC distributed \$133,320, which pales in comparison to New York's numbers.<sup>104</sup> A 2010 Citizen's Committee report warned that the city's support for the arts comes up short. It stressed the need for Boston's cultural institutions to offer more innovative programs, initiatives and services,

concluding, “For Boston to become a world-class transformative city, its public spaces, venues, restaurants, and other important places must be welcoming to an increasingly diverse populace and workforce.”<sup>105</sup>

While the MFA is not accountable to the Mayor’s office, it is to its donors, which strongly influences what it can and cannot do. According to Brooklyn’s Terry Carbone, the American story gets told differently in Boston and New York because “you have different masters. You have different funders. The people who funded Boston’s galleries funded something very important. There is a level of tradition embedded in those galleries that was important to those funders, and to the Director, I’m sure. I think because we weren’t doing something so grand and public, we had a little more flexibility. I think there are a lot of funders that wouldn’t be interested in underwriting what we did. Most funders of American art are very conservative. Yes, Brooklyn’s role in the division of labor in telling the American story is different. We are expected to tell a story that is more indicative of the community in which we reside. We have embraced our situation and our location and we are responsive to our audience in the way we frame our collection. This is not the chronological history of great White men.”

Differences in museum practice also reflect how each city has traditionally seen itself in relation to the rest of the world. Some things come into focus from the banks of the Hudson that are not always clear from the banks of the Charles. Even in the 1600s, wrote Louise Mirrer and David Halle, when Dutch settlers established the trading post that would become New York City, residents saw themselves as part of a cultural “mixing bowl,” attracting people and goods from across the globe.<sup>106</sup> Contrast this to how Boston’s Protestant leadership welcomed the city’s first great wave of Irish immigrants. When the Catholic community grew rich and powerful enough to build its own cathedral in the South End, the Protestant powers-that-were routed the new elevated subway line right past its door. New York, and Brooklyn in particular, could not help but be a city of immigrants. Boston, despite its founder’s origins, wanted to be a city of a certain kind of immigrant.

According to Mirrer and Halle, these early beginnings set a precedent for a particularly New York definition of culture, which to this day often means the public expression and display of the customs and artifacts of others. It also meant that from the outset, culture has been regulated, constrained, and promoted through official policies. In the nineteenth century, they write, New York’s leaders believed that transforming their city into the world’s cultural center was as much a part of its manifest destiny as westward expansion was for the nation. The city would equal, if not surpass, the cultural centers of Europe.<sup>107</sup> The unique public-private partnership exemplified by the CIG model “was driven by the desire to promote institutions displaying prized artifacts from selected foreign cultures. In so doing, it combined American values of independence and enterprise with European traditions of public support for the arts.”<sup>108</sup>

By the 1960s, a new kind of diversity influenced the city’s cultural institutions: the foreign-born origins of New York’s newest residents. As more and more people from Latin America and Asia arrived, the cultural institutional panorama looked more and more one-sided, representing the cultures of the privileged few. One result, as we have seen, was the emergence of culturally-specific museums, like El Museo or the Studio Museum in Harlem, which were no longer seen as ‘selfish’ or as having ‘interested’ motives but as reflecting the increasing power and visibility of the city’s newest residents.<sup>109</sup> Politicians jockeyed to get credit for establishing

these new institutions, hoping to be rewarded at election time. They also made it possible to see the world without ever leaving the city.<sup>110</sup>

Boston too has its own foundational myths, reflecting deep cultural roots that continue to bear fruit at the MFA. As Curator of Education Barbara Martin so eloquently put it, from early on, the city saw itself as an intellectual city led by universities, thinkers, and writers who were thoughtful and discriminating. She remembers, she said, a story in a 1980s membership brochure from the Art Institute of Chicago. Chicagoans, the brochure read, decided theirs would be the biggest, richest new city, and they went to Europe and brought back the best art. “That is Chicago’s myth. We bellied up to the bar, we slapped down our money, and we brought back our Seurats. That is so not Boston’s myth. Ours is, we studied at Harvard, we got interested in Eastern Philosophy, we went and lived in Japan for 3 years, and we brought back huge collections of paintings and prints that everyone knows we have even if we can’t put them on our walls that often. We don’t just collect objects, we study and think and learn from them...one of our top myths is that Martha Codman, who descended from generations of Boston Brahmins, marries upstart Russian Jew Karolik and together they collect the art of America—the founding generation and the immigrant story coming together, the old Boston blood line and the new force. You could say that informs the Art of the Americas wing at this point in time, that we feel it is absolutely intellectually, morally, and politically correct to expand the definition of what is American.<sup>111</sup> That might be part of the Boston character. But we have also been conservative artistically and that plays into what we collected in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We were not at the forefront of collecting African art, for example.”

## **America and the World**

What museums do in New York and Boston also says something about how the United States sees itself in the world. Long ago, Gunnar Myrdal described Americans as clinging tightly to what they think of as the American creed or the American ideal—which he defined as “the cement in the structure of this great and disparate nation.”<sup>112</sup> These deeply rooted assumptions about the nation and its global role are also a piece in my puzzle.

Michael Ignatieff wrote that people interpret and take responsibility for the global through the lens of their national experiences. Would we care about universal human rights, he asks, if they were only expressed as universal, or do “our attachments to these universals depends critically on our prior attachment to rights that are national, rooted in the traditions of a flag, a constitution, a set of founders, and a set of national narratives, religious and secular, that give point and meaning to rights?”<sup>113</sup> So how might a closer look at Americanness and American values help explain how the nation and its place in the world is represented by these two cities?

Exploring the “American ideal” was one of the central goals behind the founding of *The Atlantic Monthly*, a journal of politics, business, and culture that celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007. In fact, some of the same Boston superstars who founded the MFA also created the magazine. Picture the aftermath of a five-hour, multi-course dinner at Boston’s still famous Parker House Hotel. Brandy spills and breadcrumbs litter the tablecloth and cigar smoke clings to the air. The luminaries who gathered included Ralph Waldo Emerson, the same celebrated philosopher and poet who delivered the 1837 address at Harvard which Oliver Wendell Holmes



later called America's intellectual Declaration of Independence; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, one of America's most popular poets at the time; and James Russell Lowell, poet, editor, and diplomat.<sup>114</sup>

The term "the American Idea" comes from *The Atlantic's* inaugural issue.<sup>115</sup> Its first back cover included an unsigned Declaration of Purpose proclaiming its objectives in a few simple sentences, "*The Atlantic*," its editors wrote, "will be an organ of no party or clique... It will not rank itself with any sect of antis: but with a body of men which is in favor of Freedom, National Progress, and Honor, whether public or private." Its founders committed themselves to exploring, monitoring, and promoting "the American idea," which they left fairly undefined. They wrote at a time of heated debates about national identity. Westward expansion, growing tensions between the centralized federal government and its unruly decentralized states, and bad blood between the North and South thwarted attempts to arrive at a national consensus.

To celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Atlantic compiled a volume of its "best"—"a 150<sup>th</sup> years of writers and thinkers who shaped our history." Editor Robert Vare selected poems, short stories, and some of the long-form pieces the magazine became famous for. He also inadvertently helped me with my homework. What better place to get a handle on the American idea than in the last section of his volume bearing that name?

What runs throughout these excerpts is a tension between seemingly competing imperatives: the desire to be a world leader and to preserve the country's isolated, insular stance; to put the group before the individual and to deify the rugged, self-reliant pioneer; embracing cosmopolitanism versus celebrating American exceptionalism. These tensions have not gone away. They are still at the heart of the country's electoral choices, its domestic and international policy debates, and its museums.

What does Mr. Vare include? Among other things, "The Ideals of America," which Woodrow Wilson wrote in 1902 in response to the Spanish-American war. In it, he urges leaders to abandon George Washington's call to stay out of other countries' business and take on a more prominent international role instead. Until then, the country had been too busy expanding westward and warding off continental competitors and external threats. Now, said Wilson, Asia was ripe for the economic picking, Cuba was boiling over just to the south, and the United States' self-confidence soared after its easy victory over Spain in the Philippines. Why not build an empire? A decade later, though, Wilson did an about face from his presidential seat in the White House. Unrepentant Filipino insurgents and Mexican revolutionaries and the human cost of World War I convinced him that imperialism impeded democracy, converting him into a die-hard internationalist.

Then comes the idea of westward expansion—that the wide-open, uninhabited spaces of the American west evoked a frontier mentality and fiercely independent personality that still marks the country today. In his 1893 speech at the Chicago World's Fair, University of Wisconsin History Professor Frederick Jackson Turner told listeners that taming those inhospitable, lonely expanses required staunch individualists who could only rely on themselves. Achieving the American dream became an individual rather than a collective accomplishment.

Randolph Bourne put his finger on the multi-national roots of America. Writing in 1916, at a time of large-scale immigration and heightened xenophobia, he railed against calls to transform America into a homogenous bastion of Anglo-Saxon culture, proposing instead a “cosmopolitan vision” that allowed each group to retain its customs and character because they added up to a richer whole. Americans were all foreign-born or the children of immigrants, so why make social distinctions based on nativity? The United States was in a unique position to model cosmopolitanism to the rest of the world because “only the American—and in this category I include the migratory alien who has lived with us and caught the pioneer spirit and a sense of new social vistas—has the chance to become that citizen of the world. American is coming to be, not a nationality but a trans-nationality, a weaving back and forth, with the other land, of many threads of all sizes and colors.”<sup>116</sup>

Nearly twenty years later, theologian Reinhold Niebuhr chastised his fellow citizens as anything but. In his essay, *The Perils of American Power*, he warned that America had become too powerful too quickly and that, as a result, it did not exercise its influence effectively or ethically. “America is at once the most powerful and politically ignorant of modern nations.”<sup>117</sup> Despite its achievements, he said, it was still made up of powerful businessmen and engineers who have wealth and position but lack a moral compass.

The last piece Vare includes is also emblematic of one thread of Americanness—the country’s optimism and its abiding, sometimes naïve, belief in progress. Writing about September 11<sup>th</sup>, essayist William Langewiesche wrote “Despite the apocalyptic nature of the scene, the response was unhesitant and almost childishly optimistic: it was simply understood that you would find survivors, and then that you would find the dead... and that you would work night and day to clean up the mess, and that this would allow the world’s greatest city to rebuild quickly, and maybe even to make itself into something better than before.”<sup>118</sup> It was, in essence, Winthrop’s 1617 City on the Hill all over again.

To this cultural knapsack, as Anders Björklund would call it, I would add the idea of civil religion. Robert Bellah defined civil religion not as a real religion or simple patriotism but as “an institutionalized collection of sacred beliefs about the American nation,” including a belief in a transcendent being called God, the idea that America is subject to God’s laws, and that God guides and protects the United States. These ideas, Bellah believed, underlay national values of liberty, justice, charity, and personal virtue.<sup>119</sup> They also underlay a sense of special calling, of being chosen to carry forth God’s plan and to be judged accordingly.

I also add the idea of American exceptionalism, a term which arose in 1906, when Werner Sombart was asked to explain why one of the largest, wealthiest industrialized nations devoted so little money to the welfare of its citizens? Why was the government so “hands-off” when it came to managing the economy and why were trade unions so weak? The answer, Sombart and others later argued, was that because America never had a landed aristocracy or an established church, there was never any need to rebel against them. The country’s vast open spaces allowed potential class antagonists to walk away from each other rather than fight it out. The same people who sought their fortunes in isolated areas became strong-minded independent farmers, not collectively organized workers. Americans became successful by being independent, autonomous, sovereign, and rational actors in a free market.<sup>120</sup>

American exceptionalism, some argue, explains all kinds of things: what Ignatieff and colleague John Ruggie call American “schizophrenism”—that no other country spends so much time promoting human rights and democracy while also supporting rights abusing regimes, opting out of treaties, and insisting that domestic law always trumps international agreements.<sup>121</sup> Andrei S. Markovits and Steven Hellerman even say it explains why soccer is the sport of choice all over the world but only recently became popular in the United States.<sup>122</sup>

Taken together, these values add up to a messianic charge, of a nation destined to spread democracy and be a role model to other nations. Boston’s self-image as the “hub of the universe” that would inspire mankind has the same genealogy as the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny, Woodrow Wilson’s call to make the world safe for democracy, and Franklin Roosevelt’s crusade for the “four freedoms” during World War II.<sup>123</sup> “It is something more than the ordinary narcissism and nationalism that all powerful states display,” writes Ignatieff, “It is rooted in the particular achievements of a successful history of liberty that U.S. leaders have believed is of universal significance, even the work of Providential design. For most Americans, human rights are American values writ large, the export version of its own Bill of Rights” and America is “the last imperial ideology left standing in the world, the sole survivor of imperial claims to universal significance.”<sup>124</sup>

Even when creating cosmopolitan competencies, then, there was little discussion about what kind of world they would create or how to achieve it. Nor did the conversation turn to who decides what attitudes and skills are needed, who gets to embrace them and, more importantly, what would have to change to make that possible for greater numbers. This is global engagement when you are so far out in front, no one else can really hold you accountable. It is leading without staying true to your own rules.

## Works Cited

- Amory, Cleveland. *The Proper Bostonians*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1947.
- Avedon, E.M. "Stewart Culin, Ethnographer." *Elliott Avedon Virtual Museum of Games*. Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, University of Waterloo, January 11, 2010. <http://www.gamesmuseum.uwaterloo.ca/Archives/Culin/index.html>.
- Bailyn, Bernard. *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- "Brooklyn Museum: reOrder: An Architectural Environment by Situ Studio." *Brooklyn Museum*, 2011. <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/exhibitions/3230/>.
- Brown, Richard D., and Jack Tager. *Massachusetts: a Concise History*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000.
- Caglar, Ayse. "Hyphenated Identities and the Limits of 'Culture'." In *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe: Racism, Identity and Community*, edited by Tariq Modood and Pnina Werbner. London: Zed Books, 1997.
- Carbonell, Bettina Messias. *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*. New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- Cheever, Susan. *American Bloomsbury: Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry David Thoreau; Their Lives, Their Loves, Their Work*. Detroit: Thorndike Press, 2006.
- Cotter, Holland. "Art of the Americas Wing at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Seating All the Americas at the Same Table." *New York Times*. November 18, 2010, New York edition.
- . "'Connecting Cultures' at the Brooklyn Museum." *New York Times*. April 19, 2012.
- Cullen, Deborah, ed. *Caribbean: Art at the Crossroads of the World*. New York, NY: El Museo del Barrio in association with Yale University Press, 2012.
- Dalzell, Robert F. *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Davis, Elliot Bostwick, ed. *A New World Imagined: Art of the Americas*. 1st ed. Boston: MFA Publications, D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2010.
- Duncan, Carol, and Alan Wallach. "The Universal Survey Museum." In *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, edited by Bettina Messias Carbonell, 51–80. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The American Scholar." Phi Beta Kappa Society, Cambridge, MA, August 31, 1837. <http://www.emersoncentral.com/amscholar.htm>.
- Fane, Diana, ed. *Converging Cultures: Art & Identity in Spanish America*. New York: Brooklyn Museum and Harry N. Abrams, 1996.
- Fane, Diana. "The Language of Things: Stewart Culin as Collector." In *Objects of Myth and Memory: American Indian Art at the Brooklyn Museum*, edited by Diana Fane, 13–27. New York: The Brooklyn Museum in Association with University of Washington Press, 1991.
- Farrell, Betty, and Maria Medvedeva. *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures*. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, Center for the Future of Museums (CFM), December 2008. <http://www.aam-us.org/docs/center-for-the-future-of-museums/museumssociety2034.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.
- Foner, Nancy. "How Exceptional Is New York? Migration and Multiculturalism in the Empire City." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 6 (2007): 999–1023.

- Foner, Nancy, ed. *New Immigrants in New York*. Completely rev. and updated ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Frayler, John. "Privateers in the American Revolution." *The American Revolution: Lighting Freedom's Flame*, 2008.  
[http://www.nps.gov/revwar/about\\_the\\_revolution/privateers.html](http://www.nps.gov/revwar/about_the_revolution/privateers.html).
- Gallati, Barbara, and Dominic Carter. "5020: William Williams, Deborah Hall and Unknown, Doña Mariana Belsunse y Salasar." *Brooklyn Museum*, 2012.  
[http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/assets/uploads/5020\\_ColonialPairing.pdf](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/assets/uploads/5020_ColonialPairing.pdf).
- Garrett, Wendell. "Garrett's Attic." *Artnet.com*, February 14, 2000.  
<http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/garrett/garrett2-14-00.asp>.
- Glaser, Edward L. *Citizen's Committee on Boston's Future: Chairman's Final Report*. Boston: Citizens' Committee on Boston's Future, December 14, 2010.  
[http://www.cityofboston.gov/cityclerk/hearing/upload\\_pdfs/docket\\_pdfs/168612122010.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/cityclerk/hearing/upload_pdfs/docket_pdfs/168612122010.pdf).
- Halle, David, and Louise Mirrer. "New York City: City Culture as Public Display." In *Cultures and Globalization: Cities, Cultural Policy and Governance*, edited by Helmut K. Anheier and Yudhishthir Raj Isar, 258. SAGE, 2012.
- Hartley, Cody. "Untitled, by Wifredo Lam, 1943, Cuban." *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 2013.  
[http://educators.mfa.org/objects/detail/336406?related\\_people\\_text=Wifredo+Lam](http://educators.mfa.org/objects/detail/336406?related_people_text=Wifredo+Lam).
- Hoogenboom, Olive. "Augustus Graham." *Dictionary of Unitarian & Universalist Biography*. Unitarian Universalist History & Heritage Society, 1999.  
<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/augustusgraham.html>.
- Ignatieff, Michael. *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Kotkin, Joel. "The Hollow Boom Of Brooklyn: Behind Veneer Of Gentrification, Life Gets Worse For Many - Forbes." *Forbes*, September 25, 2012.  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/joelkotkin/2012/09/25/the-hollow-boom-of-brooklyn-behind-veneer-of-gentrification-life-gets-worse-for-many/>.
- Kraly, Ellen Percy, and Ines Miyares. "Immigration to New York: Policy, Population and Patterns." In *New Immigrants in New York*, edited by Nancy Foner. Completely rev. and updated ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Lawrence, Diedre E. "Guide to Culin Archival Collection." Accessed November 14, 2012.  
<http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/research/culin/culin.php>.
- Lee, Felicia R. "Amid Turmoil at Museo Del Barrio, Its Director Steps Down." *New York Times*, February 16, 2013, New York edition.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the emergence of cultural hierarchy in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Lopate, Carol. *Education and Culture in Brooklyn: a History of Ten Institutions*. Brooklyn: Brooklyn Rediscovery, Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1979.
- Macdonald, Sharon. "Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities." In *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, edited by Bettina Messias Carbonell. New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- . "Reassembling Nuremberg, Reassembling Heritage." *Journal of Cultural Economy* 2, no. 1–2 (2009): 117–24.
- Markovits, Andrei S., and Steven L. Hellerman. *Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001.

- Melton, Maureen. *Invitation to Art: a History of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*. 1st ed. Boston: MFA Publications, Museum of Fine Arts, 2009.
- Ment, David. *The Shaping of a City: a Brief History of Brooklyn*. Brooklyn: Brooklyn Rediscovery, Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1979.
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. "The New MFA." *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 2012. <http://www.mfa.org/about/new-mfa>.
- Myrdal, Gunnar. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, 1944.
- National Park Service. "Salem's International Trade." *Salem Maritime National Historic Site*, 2012. <http://www.nps.gov/sama/historyculture/trade.htm>.
- O'Connor, Thomas H. *The Athens of America: Boston, 1825-1845*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006.
- . *The Hub: Boston Past and Present*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001.
- Petrilli, Michael J. "The Fastest-gentrifying Neighborhoods in the United States." *Flypaper*, June 11, 2012. <http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/flypaper/2012/the-fastest-gentrifying-neighborhoods-in-the-united-states.html>.
- "Pizarro Commemorative Plate." *Brooklyn Museum*, 2012. [http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/689/Pizarro\\_Commemorative\\_Plate](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/689/Pizarro_Commemorative_Plate).
- Rawson, Philip. "A Professional Sage." *New York Review of Books*, 1979. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1979/feb/22/a-professional-sage/?pagination=false>.
- Rosoff, Nancy B. "As Revealed by Art: Herbert Spinden and the Brooklyn Museum." *Museum Anthropology* 28, no. 1 (2005): 47–56. doi:10.1525/mua.2005.28.1.47.
- . *Native American Art at the Brooklyn Museum*. Brooklyn Museum, October 22, 2009.
- Rutman, Darrett Bruce. *Winthrop's Boston: Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649*. New York: Norton, 1972.
- Sorensen, Lee. "Ananda Coomaraswamy." *Dictionary of Art Historians*. Accessed January 22, 2013. <http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/coomaraswamy.htm>.
- Sorkhabi, Rasoul. "Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: From Geology to Philosophia Perennis." *Current Science* 94, no. 3 (2008): 394–401.
- Staloff, Darren. *The Making of an American Thinking Class: Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in Puritan Massachusetts*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- "Tray or Waiter." *Brooklyn Museum*, 2012. [www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/1849/Tray\\_or\\_Waiter](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/1849/Tray_or_Waiter).
- Troyen, Carol. "The Incomparable Max: Maxim Karolik and the Taste for American Art." *American Art* 7, no. 3 (1993): 64–87.
- Vogel, Carol. "Charles Ryskamp Bequeaths Work to Frick and Morgan." *New York Times*. January 13, 2011. [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/14/arts/design/14vogel.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/14/arts/design/14vogel.html?_r=1&).
- Waldinger, Roger David, ed. *Strangers at the Gates: New Immigrants in Urban America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Waldinger, Roger David, and Jennifer Lee. "New Immigrants in Urban America." In *Strangers at the Gates: New Immigrants in Urban America*, edited by Roger David Waldinger, 30–79. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Werbner, Pnina. "Introduction: The Dialectics of Cultural Hybridity." In *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-racism*, edited by Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, 1–26. London: Zed Books, 1997.

- Whitehill, Walter Muir. *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: a Centennial History*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1970.
- Williams, Kevin, and David Keen. *2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, November 2009.  
<http://www.nea.gov/research/2008-sppa.pdf>.
- Winthrop, John. "A Modell of Christian Charity (1630)." *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*. 37, 1838. <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>.
- Wong, Venessa. "Boston's 'Innovation District' Eagerly Awaits More Innovators - Businessweek." *Bloomberg Businessweek*, March 21, 2012.  
<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-03-21/bostons-so-called-innovation-district-eagerly-awaits-more-innovators>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas H. O'Connor, *The Athens of America: Boston, 1825-1845* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006): 18.

<sup>2</sup> Darren Staloff, *The Making of an American Thinking Class: Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in Puritan Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

<sup>3</sup> Hence, Boston's nickname today.

Darrett Bruce Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston: Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649* (New York: Norton, 1972): 4.

O'Connor, *The Athens of America*.

<sup>4</sup> Staloff, *The Making of an American Thinking Class*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> According to Cleveland Amory (*The Proper Bostonians* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1947): 36), "Contrary to the general impression they are never loath to give outsiders, the First Families of Boston are not those whose forebears came over on the Mayflower.... Plymouth, settled in 1620, was made up of people who were proud of the fact that hardly a one of them had more than a few drops of old English blue blood in his veins. Boston, settled in 1630, was in comparison a definitely Aristocratic undertaking, financed to the extent of a sum equal to five million dollars, and made up largely of upper-crust merchant adventurers."

<sup>6</sup> Robert F. Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987): 125.

Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Amory, *The Proper Bostonians*, 37.

<sup>8</sup> According to historians Brown and Tager (*Massachusetts: a Concise History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000): 52) “As the 18<sup>th</sup> century progressed ... the intense devotion to the Puritan past waned among ordinary farmers as well as wealthier, more cosmopolitan people. In the port towns, Boston, Salem, Newbury, and in a handful of others, commercial prosperity encouraged more and more involvement with the Atlantic trading world.”

<sup>9</sup> Brown and Tager, *Massachusetts*, 36.

Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

<sup>10</sup> Brown and Tager, *Massachusetts*, 47.

<sup>11</sup> Brown and Tager, *Massachusetts*, 52.

<sup>12</sup> Brown and Tager, *Massachusetts*, 57

<sup>13</sup> Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite*, 79-80.

<sup>14</sup> Amory (*The Proper Bostonians*, 20): “First families in Boston have tended toward marrying each other in a way that would do justice to the planned marriages of European royalty... Old colonel Henry Lee, an impeccable First Family man, phrased the matter gently: “Lees, Cabots, Jacksons, and Higginsons knew each other well... and had a satisfying belief that new England morality and intellectuality had produced nothing better than they were; so they very contentedly made a little clique of themselves, and intermarried very much, with a sure and cheerful faith that in such alliances there can be no blunder.”

<sup>15</sup> Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite*, **PAGE**.

<sup>16</sup> Cohesive in more than family and business connections, this illustrious upper class also shared a common culture, bolstered by their common connection to one (in)famous educational institution: Harvard. Indeed, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Harvard would become a stronghold of the Boston “Aristocracy”. During this time, the university would experience unprecedented growth, due to the generosity of private benefactors, and would largely be governed, staffed, and attended by members of the growing elite. From 1779 to 1789, the Harvard Corporation had gone from being made up of teaching faculty to becoming a much largely external Board of Trustees; from 1810 to 1828, 6 of the 18 men were members of Associate families. Funding, much of which came originally from the state, gradually increasingly from Brahmin donors. Furthermore, the Harvard endowment, like many charitable organizations of the time, was often invested in the very businesses run by the trustees themselves, creating a continuous flow of capital which was then fed back to enhance the holdings of their companies (Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite*, 8).

<sup>17</sup> **Renella -----**.

<sup>18</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The American Scholar” (Phi Beta Kappa Society, Cambridge, MA, August 31, 1837), <http://www.emersoncentral.com/amscholar.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Susan Cheever, *American Bloomsbury: Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry David Thoreau; Their Lives, Their Loves, Their Work* (Detroit: Thorndike Press, 2006): 80.

<sup>20</sup> Turner echoes these sentiments, noting complaints of Bostonians at the time: “Unlike earlier immigrants, they could neither “rapidly amalgamate with our native population” nor “speedily adapt themselves to our institutions.” **WE NEED CITE, PERHAPS IN EARLIER DRAFTS?**

<sup>21</sup> Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite*, 140.



<sup>22</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the emergence of cultural hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

<sup>23</sup> **Dimaggio 1982, Orosz 1990**. Nineteenth Century America boasted few museums. Those that existed grew out of the enlightenment model in which art, humanities, and the sciences were intertwined. They often displayed “curiosities,” which referred to wondrous objects that gave people perspectives on the world that helped them transcend their narrow and provincial views and experiences. By the end of the century, however, knowledge became more specialized which was also reflected in museum practice. Whereas the “scientific” and the spectacular had been displayed side-by-side, they were increasingly relegated to separate venues.

<sup>24</sup> **Orosz 1990:3**

<sup>25</sup> **(Harris ----, Handlin 1972).**

<sup>26</sup> The city’s movers and shakers wanted a museum long before they got one; a happy convergence of events brought their dreams to fruition. Colonel Timothy Bigelow Lawrence had an armor collection that could not fit in the Boston Athenaeum. Harvard had a collection of prints that needed a fireproof home. And MIT and the American Social Science Association could not house all of the architectural casts in their collection. City leaders set out to raise money for a suitable home for these treasures in the city’s Back Bay **(Harris: 555-556)**

<sup>27</sup> **Harris P. 555**. Check if this is where quote about herbarium comes from.

<sup>28</sup> Walter Muir Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: a Centennial History* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1970).

<sup>29</sup> The Museum’s declining populism also reflected broader cultural trends. More and more, there was a bright line in the sand between high art displayed in not-for-profit settings, managed by artistic professionals and governed by prosperous and influential trustees and popular entertainment, sponsored by profit-seeking entrepreneurs on display for anyone who could afford a ticket. The “cultural capitalists,” who accomplished this, according to Paul DiMaggio, did so by creating the nonprofit corporation, a distinctly American invention, which later became the standard mode of governing and distributing high culture. The same kind of interconnected, semi-incestuous group of elites that ran institutions like Harvard also stood at the helm while professional artists and art historians ran things day to day. In short, a cast of Brahmins, and a microcosm of elites, each with a special skill, set of connections, or large bank account.

**(Dimaggio ----).**

<sup>30</sup> Including Edward Sylvester Morse, Ernest Francisco Fenollosa, William Sturgis Bigelow, Charles Goddard Weld, and Denman Waldo Ross—and the leading Japanese art-historian and cultural commentator Okakura Kakuzô, who worked for the Museum from 1904 until his death in 1913 ([www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org), accessed July 14, 2012.)

<sup>31</sup> **(Dobrzynski 1999).**

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.nagoya-boston.or.jp/english/>. Accessed 1 September 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Rasoul Sorkhabi, “Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: From Geology to Philosophia Perennis,” *Current Science* 94, no. 3 (2008): 396.

<sup>34</sup> Sorkhabi, “Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,” 396.

<sup>35</sup> Philip Rawson, “A Professional Sage,” *New York Review of Books*, 1979, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1979/feb/22/a-professional-sage/?pagination=false>.

<sup>36</sup> Philip Rawson, “A Professional Sage.”

<sup>37</sup> Sorkhabi, “Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,” 394, 396.

<sup>38</sup> Philip Rawson, “A Professional Sage.”

---

<sup>39</sup> Sorkhabi, “Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,” 396.

<sup>40</sup> Philip Rawson, “A Professional Sage.”

<sup>41</sup> Philip Rawson, “A Professional Sage.”

<sup>42</sup> Philip Rawson, “A Professional Sage.”

<sup>43</sup> **This is from wall text. How to cite?**

<sup>44</sup> Philip Rawson, “A Professional Sage.”

<sup>45</sup> Lee Sorensen, “Ananda Coomaraswamy,” Dictionary of Art Historians, accessed January 22, 2013, <http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/coomaraswamy.htm>.

Sorkhabi, “Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,” 398.

<sup>46</sup> Sorkhabi, “Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,” 398.

Philip Rawson, “A Professional Sage.”

Sorensen, “Ananda Coomaraswamy.”

<sup>47</sup> Sorkhabi, “Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,” 398.

<sup>48</sup> According to Curator of Education Barbara Martin, the MFA was, in fact, trying to accomplish two goals, using space to retell a national and international story at the same time. The art moves chronologically from the lowest level, where the Ancient Americas are, and where visitors exit into a major special exhibition gallery, establishing the beginning with the Mayan urns. At the same time, there is a “grand entrance” on the ground level taking visitors directly to Boston’s strongest story—Paul Revere and the Liberty Bowl.

<sup>49</sup> According to Dan Monroe, Director and CEO of the Peabody Essex Museum, the China trade started in 1785 in American. Prior to that, China’s influence on American art would have traveled through Europe.

<sup>50</sup> According to Hirshler, his teacher Carolus-Duran constantly repeated to his students, “Velázquez, Velázquez, Velázquez, ceaselessly study Velázquez” and Sargent did just that. In the late 1800s, all serious aspiring artists had to at least give a nod to Spanish artistic styles that by then were an integral part of the artistic vocabulary. Sargent made the requisite pilgrimage to Madrid’s Museo del Prado and copied Velázquez’s *Las Meninas* that, according to Hirshler, served as a model for his *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit*.

<sup>51</sup> In fact, he thought that modern art was not that modern because, from his perspective, he found similar forms in Ancient Andean Art. From Museum website on painting.

<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/staccato-522747>. Accessed 1 September 2013.

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.educators.mfa.org/objects/detail/336406?related\\_people\\_text=Wifredo+Lam](http://www.educators.mfa.org/objects/detail/336406?related_people_text=Wifredo+Lam). Accessed July 27, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> In the accompanying catalogue, Bostwick Davis describes this as follows, “Over time, the indigenous peoples, their descendants, and later waves of immigrants to the Americas would encounter other cultures from around the world. How those encounters influenced the works of art they created is the main theme of this book” (Elliot Bostwick Davis, ed., *A New World Imagined: Art of the Americas*, 1st ed (Boston: MFA Publications, D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2010): 12). In other words, newcomers brought their artistic traditions with them and these artistic traditions played a central role in how the newly established nation defined itself. It was not a single indigenous or national culture. “As peoples from different traditions came into contact with each other, artists adopted, adapted, borrowed, and put new or unfamiliar forms to old uses and new ends. The book is an exploration not a definition of the “American,” because no attempt at definition could do justice to anything as rich and complex as a nation’s artistic

culture, let alone a culture—or rather, cultures—as mixed and varied as those of the Americas.” (Davis, *A New World Imagined*, 12). However, only two chapters deal with the Native American and Pre-Columbian materials, followed by seven chapters about European influences, and four chapters on Africa, the Near East, and Asia

<sup>54</sup> Betty Farrell and Maria Medvedeva, the AAM report’s authors, conducted focus groups among younger visitors between 16 and 25 years of age. They found that participants never spontaneously mentioned museums as the kind of place where they would choose to spend their leisure time. In fact, they generally described museums as static places, places that exhibit things, didactic places (but not necessarily places where the learning was fun or engaging), and places where you had to be quiet and stand outside looking in.

Betty Farrell and Maria Medvedeva, *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, Center for the Future of Museums (CFM), December 2008), <http://www.aam-us.org/docs/center-for-the-future-of-museums/museumssociety2034.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.

<sup>55</sup> Farrell and Maria Medvedeva, *Museums & Society 2034*.

<sup>56</sup> Kevin Williams and David Keen, *2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, November 2009), <http://www.nea.gov/research/2008-sppa.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> In general, according to the AAM, art museum and gallery attendance remained steady during the 25 years that the NEA collected data, although the core audience, adults between 45-54 dropped from 33 percent to 23 percent between 2002 and 2008. Still, blaring disparities persisted in cultural participation among racial and ethnic groups. While Non-Hispanic whites represented 69 percent of the country’s population, they made up nearly 79 percent of all museums visitors. In contrast, Hispanics made up 9 percent of all museum visitors and 14 percent of the country’s residents. African American comprise 6 percent of all museum visits and they make up 11 percent of all Americans. While 23 percent of all adults in the U.S. visit museums, only 15 percent of Hispanic adults and 12 percent of African American adults do so respectively. Another troubling demographic is the decline in museum visits among young people (Farrell and Medvedeva, , *Museums & Society 2034*).

<sup>58</sup> John Frayler, “Privateers in the American Revolution,” *The American Revolution: Lighting Freedom’s Flame*, 2008, [http://www.nps.gov/revwar/about\\_the\\_revolution/privateers.html](http://www.nps.gov/revwar/about_the_revolution/privateers.html).

<sup>59</sup> National Park Service, “Salem’s International Trade,” *Salem Maritime National Historic Site*, 2012, <http://www.nps.gov/sama/historyculture/trade.htm>.

<sup>60</sup> **Melville 1986:125 in Gilroy in Beck.**

<sup>61</sup> The Institute and the East India Marine Society developed in tandem. The Institute traded its natural history and archaeology collections with the Museum in the 1860s in exchange for the Museum’s local history collection.

<sup>62</sup> In fact, the Institute became a leader in the historic preservation movement, displaying some of the country’s earliest period rooms or what were then called “type rooms.” Locals bequeathed them on their deathbeds and they were then crated up and reassembled inside the Museum’s walls.

<sup>63</sup> These are often quite personal, including anecdotes about how the curator got interested in a particular topic or question. Chris Geary, for example, introduced *Global Patterns*, a show about African textiles she mounted in 2011 by describing the moment in her field work when she realized the importance of dress in the African context. That exhibit was also an example of how

connection and interaction is being stressed. According to Ms. Geary, the exhibit looked “at the way artists and craftspeople appropriated ideas from other parts of world” and adopted them to fit their their own cultural patterns and expressions. One of the first items on view was a commemorative cloth from Mozambique that used Coca Cola bottle caps as a design element.

**REVIEW:**

[http://www.boston.com/ae/theater\\_arts/articles/2011/05/06/global\\_patterns\\_features\\_african\\_textiles\\_that\\_reveal\\_at\\_the\\_same\\_time\\_they\\_cover/](http://www.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2011/05/06/global_patterns_features_african_textiles_that_reveal_at_the_same_time_they_cover/)

<sup>64</sup> Over 15 years, long-time MFA benefactor John Axelrod amassed a collection including paintings, sculptures, carvings, and drawings by many of the most renowned African-American artists of the last 150 years, most of whom, the MFA’s press release admitted, had never before been represented in the MFA’s holdings.

<sup>65</sup> **Ment** in Rosoff, “As Revealed by Art.”

Carol Lopate, *Education and Culture in Brooklyn*.

<sup>66</sup> Olive Hoogenboom, “Augustus Graham,” Dictionary of Unitarian & Universalist Biography (Unitarian Universalist History & Heritage Society, 1999),

<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/augustusgraham.html>.

<sup>67</sup> Hoogenboom, “Augustus Graham.”

<sup>68</sup> Rosoff, “As Revealed by Art.”

<sup>69</sup> As cited in Rosoff, “As Revealed by Art.”, 48

<sup>70</sup> Rosoff, “As Revealed by Art.”

<sup>71</sup> By some estimates, twice as big as the stairs leading up to the Metropolitan Museum today.

**(Ferber 1997).**

<sup>72</sup> The Metropolitan Museum in Manhattan.

<sup>73</sup> In June 2012, Michael Petrilli of the Fordham Institute shocked blog readers when he posted that four of the top 25 fastest-gentrifying zip codes in the nation were in Brooklyn ( “The Fastest-gentrifying Neighborhoods in the United States,” *Flypaper*, June 11, 2012, <http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/flypaper/2012/the-fastest-gentrifying-neighborhoods-in-the-united-states.html>). In the same month, *The New York Times* summarized Brooklyn’s transformation as follows, “For much of the past century, Brooklyn was the Rodney Dangerfield of boroughs, known for its blue-collar style, for its funny accent and, of course, for getting no respect. Then came the brownstone homesteaders and the bohemian pioneers. They turned lunch-bucket warrens in Park Slope, Dumbo and Williamsburg into glamorous destinations, drawing a flood of well-schooled young men and women who were attracted by quaint yet affordable homes, outdoor cafes, bicycle lanes and the neighborhoods’ sometimes self-parodying artisanal, sustainable and locavore ethos. Brooklyn somehow, against all odds, became an internationally recognized icon of cool.”

Joseph Berger, “As Brooklyn Gentrifies, Some Neighborhoods Are Being Left Behind,” *New York Times*, July 8, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/09/nyregion/as-brooklyn-gentrifies-some-neighborhoods-are-being-left-behind.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/09/nyregion/as-brooklyn-gentrifies-some-neighborhoods-are-being-left-behind.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0&pagewanted=print).

<sup>74</sup> Wendell Garrett, “Garrett’s Attic,” *Artnet.com*, February 14, 2000, <http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/garrett/garrett2-14-00.asp>.

<sup>75</sup> Diedre E. Lawrence, “Guide to Culin Archival Collection,” accessed November 14, 2012, <http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/research/culin/culin.php>.

<sup>76</sup> Nancy B. Rosoff, *Native American Art at the Brooklyn Museum* (Brooklyn Museum, October 22, 2009).

---

<sup>77</sup> “Brooklyn Museum: reOrder: An Architectural Environment by Situ Studio,” *Brooklyn Museum*, 2011, <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/exhibitions/3230/>.

<sup>78</sup> As Dan Monroe of the PEM expressed to me in a personal communication, “Culin and Spinden stand among many American curators who acquired major collections of Native American and Meso-American art. The means by which they acquired these collections involve a story that is not so uplifting. Not that they were exceptions, the history of collecting Native American and Meso-American art is not often a happy one from the standpoint of the people whose art was being collected. Museums, mostly Natural History museums, began collecting Native American art based on the “Vanishing Redman” theory—all these people and cultures were destined to become extinct as victims of ‘progress.’ Therefore, museums must collect their material culture and record their cultural practices before they disappear. The means by which these collections were formed were not ideal in many instances. Tombs were robbed. People who were starving were forced to sell. Gravers were exhumed without permission. One can hardly characterize these efforts as ‘cultural exchange.’ The interpretations of indigenous cultures remains a vexing problem today and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 came into existence to help remedy some of the ethical problems associated with the building of collections of indigenous art.”

<sup>79</sup> Diana Fane, ed., *Converging Cultures: Art & Identity in Spanish America* (New York: Brooklyn Museum and Harry N. Abrams, 1996).

<sup>80</sup> Between 1900 and 1940, schools, libraries, and museums all over the country were recruited to help acculturate newcomers. At the same time, collectors and museum professionals were bent on “Americanizing” their collections, in part, out of nostalgia for a pre-industrial past but also out of concerns about these seemingly un-assimilable immigrants. Spinden, according to Nancy Rosoff, went a step further. He wanted to celebrate American history and art from the point of view of the indigenous cultures that inspired it. A truly national art, he believed, would also “take its inspiration from the materials, designs, and craftsmanship of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, and with which Americans could identify and be proud.” (Rosoff, “As Revealed by Art,” 52).

<sup>81</sup> A term, equivalent to creole, describing whites born in the Americas rather than in Europe.

<sup>82</sup> Barbara Gallati and Dominic Carter, “5020: William Williams, Deborah Hall and Unknown, Doña Mariana Belsunse y Salasar,” *Brooklyn Museum*, 2012, [http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/assets/uploads/5020\\_ColonialPairing.pdf](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/assets/uploads/5020_ColonialPairing.pdf).  
Fane, *Converging Cultures*.

<sup>83</sup> “Pizarro Commemorative Plate,” *Brooklyn Museum*, 2012, [http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/689/Pizarro\\_Commemorative\\_Plate](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/689/Pizarro_Commemorative_Plate), accessed July 24, 2012.

<sup>84</sup> “Tray or Waiter,” Brooklyn Museum, 2012, [www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/1849/Tray\\_or\\_Waiter](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/1849/Tray_or_Waiter), accessed July 24, 2012.

<sup>85</sup> Exhibit text, accessed April 21, 2011.

<sup>86</sup> Carol Vogel, “Charles Ryskamp Bequeaths Work to Frick and Morgan,” *New York Times*, January 13, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/14/arts/design/14vogel.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/14/arts/design/14vogel.html?_r=1&).

<sup>87</sup> Holland Cotter, “‘Connecting Cultures’ at the Brooklyn Museum,” *New York Times*, April 19, 2012.

<sup>88</sup> [www.queensmuseum.org/1139/queens-international-4](http://www.queensmuseum.org/1139/queens-international-4), accessed January 21, 2013.

<sup>89</sup> Elvis Fuentes, in Deborah Cullen, ed., *Caribbean: Art at the Crossroads of the World* (New York, NY: El Museo del Barrio in association with Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>90</sup> Cullen, *Caribbean*, 1. “The work on view,” states the exhibit catalogue, “reflects Caribbean perspectives and external perceptions of the region through a wide range of subjects and artistic practices,” including portraits, paintings with spiritual and religious themes, depictions of labor and historical events, abstraction, and contemporary video and installations.

<sup>91</sup> (Ortiz, 1971).

<sup>92</sup> Ayse Caglar, “Hyphenated Identities and the Limits of ‘Culture.’” Werbner, “Introduction.”

Sharon Macdonald, “Reassembling Nuremberg, Reassembling Heritage,” *Journal of Cultural Economy* 2, no. 1–2 (2009): 117–24.

<sup>93</sup> (Agüeros, April 1978)

<sup>94</sup> [www.elmuseo.org/en/content/about-us/our-history](http://www.elmuseo.org/en/content/about-us/our-history), accessed January 23, 2012.

<sup>95</sup> For an overview of the controversies surrounding El Museo, see Ramirez, 2003, Davila (---) and Felicia R. Lee, “Amid Turmoil at Museo Del Barrio, Its Director Steps Down,” *New York Times*, February 16, 2013, New York edition.

<sup>96</sup> Brooklyn and Boston brought very different resources to bear on their rewrites. The MFA added a new wing, increasing its square footage from 483,447 to 616,937 at a cost of \$504 million, including an approximately \$164 million endowment. The MFA’s Director began fundraising in 2001 and the new wing finally opened nine years later (<http://www.mfa.org/about/new-mfa>). It’s role in the museological distribution of labor in New England and in the country as a whole makes change, as one respondent put it, “like turning a natural gas tanker in the Boston harbor. It takes a really long time and you have to take it really slow.” The Brooklyn Museum retold its story in 15 months at a budget of just under \$100,000. It did not restructure or expand its galleries but simply reinstalled what it had in a new way.

<sup>97</sup> [www.mfa.org/programs/special-event/mfa-first-fridays](http://www.mfa.org/programs/special-event/mfa-first-fridays), accessed Feb. 21, 2013. The MFA is also open free every Wednesday evening and hosts at least three free Community Open Houses each year which, according to one staff member, “have more of the quality of a multicultural celebration.”

<sup>98</sup> In 2000, no other foreign-born group accounted for more than five per cent of all the foreign-born. (Kraly and Miyares, “Immigration to New York”).

<sup>99</sup> These are figures for the New York urban region (Waldinger and Lee, “New Immigrants in Urban America,” 50, 52, 63).

<sup>100</sup> By U.S. standards, the city and its politicians respond generously, providing a variety of social, health, and educational services, including the City University of New York, one of the largest urban public universities in the nation. Officials and social service agencies actively foster ethnic pride by supporting ethnic festivals and/or parades. Foner 2006:1000-1001.

<sup>101</sup> This model of public-private partnership dates back to 1869 when the State legislature authorized the City to build the Museum of Natural History, amass a collection, and oversee its exhibits and programs. Members of the CIG include many of the city’s oldest institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York Botanical Garden, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the now independent pieces of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and

Sciences, including the Brooklyn Museum, The Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Interestingly, the website tells, the 1960s and 70s, the CIG expanded exponentially “as the City recognized that its increasingly diverse population required a diverse and dynamic pool of institutions to serve it.” Many of these new groups were located outside Manhattan and serve traditionally underserved constituencies, including the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and El Museo del Barrio ([www.nyc.gov/html/dcla/html/funding/institutions.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcla/html/funding/institutions.shtml), accessed July 31, 2012).

<sup>102</sup> These tensions became particularly apparent in the 1999 *Sensation* fiasco, when a touring exhibition of works by members of the Young British Artists movement offended Mayor Rudy Giuliani so much that he ordered the Museum to cancel its upcoming show or lose its annual \$7 million grant. Giuliani was particularly incensed by Chris Ofili’s mixed media work *The Holy Virgin Mary*, which included a lump of varnished elephant dung (a trademark of the artist) and cutout pornographic images of female genitalia. The Museum, he said, did not “have the right to a government subsidy for desecrating somebody else’s religion,” which Ofili’s spokesman countered as “totalitarian and fascistic.” Giuliani not only cut off funding, he also filed an eviction suit, which the Museum contested on First Amendment grounds. Ultimately, Giuliani lost and the show went on.

<sup>103</sup> **Interview Katie Davis, find out her title, March 2010.**

<sup>104</sup> The Mayor’s ----, ---- said that Boston’s cultural policy is the many neighborhood concerts and festivals the city sponsors each summer. The mayor wants to make culture accessible to everyone not to use it to achieve a specific goal. These activities fall under the purview of the Mayor’s Office of Arts, Tourism & Special Events which “fosters the growth of the cultural community; promotes public participation in the arts and public celebrations; and advances cultural tourism in Boston.

<sup>105</sup> [www.cityofboston.gov/arts/bcc](http://www.cityofboston.gov/arts/bcc), 2010, 7, accessed July 31, 2012.

<sup>106</sup> David Halle and Louise Mirrer, “New York City: City Culture as Public Display,” in *Cultures and Globalization: Cities, Cultural Policy and Governance*, ed. Helmut K. Anheier and Yudhishtur Raj Isar (SAGE, 2012), 258.

<sup>107</sup> (see also Ferber 2011: 95).

<sup>108</sup> Halle and Mirrer, “New York City: City Culture as Public Display.”

<sup>109</sup> **(Wallach, 305).**

<sup>110</sup> **Berger, 2003.**

<sup>111</sup> The romance between Maxim Karolik and Martha Catherine Codman was unconventional, to say the least. Heiress Martha possessed impeccable Brahmin breeding—she was the great granddaughter of Elias Hasket Derby, one of the richest of the very rich post-revolutionary Salem merchants—and allegedly one of the wealthiest women in America. In 1928, spinster Martha, then 72, led a quiet but busy life as a philanthropist, patron of music, and socialite in Newport and Washington, D.C. Otherwise, the epitome of decorous behavior, the modest Miss Codman seemed to wait her whole life to make one outrageous decision: to marry Maxim Karolik, a 35-year-old Russian-Jewish tenor, while the two vacationed in Nice.

Although the scandal of their marriage persisted, Boston’ elite and the press eventually warmed to Karolik, at first cautiously, then ever more effusively, as he embarked on a second act as a generous and influential art patron. His growing admirers praised him as one of the first to

recognize and advocate for 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century American art, then denigrated as uninteresting, derivative, and not worthy of serious museological or scholarly attention. “Gifted with a vivid turn of phrase,” the gallery text reads, “Maxim Karolik was always happy to hold forth. He had strong, frequently stated beliefs in the power of art and the importance of museums.” As he put it, “What is the purpose of a museum? You come to a museum to feel finer, not better. To feel better, we need only a good steak, to feel finer we need more than that.”

Carol Troyen, “The Incomparable Max: Maxim Karolik and the Taste for American Art,” *American Art* 7, no. 3 (1993): 64–87.

<sup>112</sup> **(American Dilemma, p. 3).**

<sup>113</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005): 25.

<sup>114</sup> While these dinner companions did not always see eye to eye, they all firmly believed in the power of writing to instruct and inspire (xviii): “The men seated around the table tended to view their prospective magazine as part of a revolution that was taking place in American literature. In an explosion of artistic innovation, American writers were breaking free of the old ties that had bound them for decades to Europe and creating works with a distinctly American voice, a distinctly American point of view, and distinctly American themes. Emerson himself has first sounded the call to arms for a liberated, indigenous literature in his celebrated 1837 address “The American Scholar,” which Holmes would later call “our intellectual Declaration of Independence.” 1805’s saw outpouring of literary brilliance – *Scarlet Letter* (1850) Hawthorne, *Moby-Dick* (1851) Herman Melville, *Thoreau Walden* (1854) and *Walt Whitman Leaves of Grass* (1855). The epicenter of this new movement was in New England, particularly in the fertile literary soil in and around Boston.”

<sup>115</sup> **Anniversary issue (p. xxvii).**

<sup>116</sup> **Atlantic anniversary book P. 583.**

<sup>117</sup> **Atlantic Anniversary book. P 584.**

<sup>118</sup> **Atlantic Anniversary book p. 633**

<sup>119</sup> **(Bellah 1970:168, 1974:255).**

<sup>120</sup> **(Sombart----, Grattan ----).**

<sup>121</sup> **Ruggie and Ignatieff.**

<sup>122</sup> Andrei S. Markovits and Steven L. Hellerman, *Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>123</sup> Roosevelt introduced the four freedoms in his January 6, 1941 State of the Union address, a time when much of Europe had fallen to advancing German armies but US entry into the war was almost a year into the future. He hoped to convince a wary American people of abandoning isolationism and heeding the moral necessity of continuing to aid Britain, casting such support as part of a universal struggle to create a world that respected the freedoms to which all people had right.<sup>123</sup> Roosevelt argued that this struggle was at the heart of nation’s past and future: “Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged in change -- in a perpetual peaceful revolution—a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions—without the concentration camp or the quick-lime in the ditch. The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.”



---

<sup>124</sup> Ignatieff, *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, 13-16.