INCLUDING ALL OF US: RACE AND ETHNICITY IN PORTLAND, OREGON, MUSEUMS

by

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June 16, 2011

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Dual Degrees of

Master of Arts

&

Master of Business Administration

in

Museum Studies

in the

Graduate School of Professional Studies

at

John F. Kennedy University

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Masters Project Faculty Advisor — Date

I would like to thank the many people without whom this thesis would not have been possible. I appreciate all of the museum workers I spoke with taking the time to discuss inclusion with me, and I am grateful for the assistance of Scott Ewing at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, who made arrangements for my case study. I would also like to thank Adrienne McGraw and Marjorie Schwarzer for their support throughout this project. Finally, I would like to thank Michael Vandenburg for his patience, his invariable willingness to discuss my schoolwork and his tireless editing.

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Executive Summary

I don't often feel excluded in museums. As a well-educated, middle-class white person, I represent museums' typical audience. So I was surprised, then, when visiting a museum on vacation, to find myself excluded from the institution's conception of who their visitors were. The Holocaust exhibition began with Jewish religious imagery, explaining it as "like the cross is a symbol for Christians," and later the exhibit explained that propaganda "taught kids that it was okay to mistreat Jews." The exhibit text constructed one group as normative, and Jews as other—which kids are learning these lessons in the latter panel? This uncomfortable phrasing was in evidence again later when the museum declared, "When we get to know how people in other cultures live . . . we can accept and respect our neighbors." It was clear that the label writers were pursuing an admirable goal in trying to get visitors to see a connection between themselves and persecuted Jews in Germany, but in doing so they subtly constructed one identity as normative and their visitor as part of this dominant group. The museum was trying, but they had missed the mark and left me, as a Jew, feeling as though they were not interested in me visiting.

Among those who do not represent the typical museum demographic, similar experiences are not uncommon (Mesa-Bains, 2004). Like the museum I visited, many museums struggle to find the best way to welcome people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. As Manus Brinkman writes, "Creating a

truly inclusive museum is not easy" (Brinkman in Gurian, 2006, p. xiii). This thesis explores how museums take steps to be more inclusive, focusing on museums in the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area. Museums need to prioritize and institutionalize inclusion in three areas: relevance, accessibility and organizational systems. If museums can do this, they can build stronger connections with their audience and remain a relevant and important part of our society well into the future.

Race and ethnicity are often fraught subjects, not least among museums that have not yet mastered using an inclusive approach, and as this thesis will show, how language is used is extremely important to addressing race and ethnicity issues; a glossary of terms follows and explains the way in which these terms are used in this thesis.

The issue of welcoming historically excluded groups to museums has long been recognized as important in the museum field. The American Association of Museums issued a call to action in its 1992 publication *Excellence and Equity,* and prominent members of the field such as Elaine Gurian and Robert Janes have written about the importance of inclusion. In spite of this long-standing acknowledgement of the issue, museum audiences are still disproportionately white.

The exclusion of people of color and ethnic minorities has been a problem in museums since they began, and the issue continues to gain urgency. Members

of minority groups have published their own calls for inclusion, and the proportion of Americans of color is rising, which, according to the Pew Research Center, will result in a dramatically different demographic landscape before long. If museums are to have a future, they cannot continue to avoid taking action to welcome audiences from all races and ethnicities.

Further, in Portland, a city with widespread misunderstandings regarding race and ethnicity, as I will show in this thesis, museums have the potential to bring race and ethnicity issues to light and play a role in helping to alleviate them. When Portland museums use minority perspectives to reveal a more complete understanding of the museum's subject, they no longer enable visitors to construct racist or ethnocentric narratives that marginalize people of color. In addition, when museums address issues that have relevance to visitors' lives or choose to use a non-dominant perspective, they build stronger connections with their visitors. The issue should also be of paramount importance to the museum field because if museums do not believe that being able to reach the entire community is important, it is ultimately a tacit admission that our work is not important: if museums do make a difference in our lives, what could be more important than ensuring that they have the ability to reach as many people as possible, rather than a single group?

Several research questions guided my exploration of the subject. This thesis explores the level of awareness about the need to include diverse audiences

and commitment to doing so. This thesis also asks what Portland museums do to welcome minority audiences and how this work is supported organizationally. Finally, this thesis asks what practices and models are most successful in transforming museums into inclusive spaces.

This thesis uses three methodologies to explore these questions. First, a literature review explores how the field as a whole approaches inclusion, from early museums' racism and exclusivity to current inclusive practices that are recommended for other museums to follow. The literature review also introduces what Lois Silverman (2010) calls a movement among museums to take on social justice causes. Finally, this chapter explores race and ethnicity in Portland generally.

The findings of this thesis use 15 interviews and a case study of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry to determine how Portland museums approach inclusion. These findings show a gap in the level of awareness about the need for active inclusion between larger and smaller institutions and a corresponding difference in the level of action taken. The findings further show that while Portland museums conceptualize inclusion along the same lines as the literature, they tend to prioritize one of three major methods of inclusion—financial accessibility, cultural relevance and organizational initiatives—rather than combining them.

In the final chapter of this thesis, I conclude that though many are making commendable efforts to include minority audiences, Portland museums must make changes in order to become spaces that truly welcome all audiences. In addition to small institutions educating themselves on this issue, Portland museums need to use multiple approaches to inclusion and institutionalize these practices. In this chapter, I suggest a model for change as museums transform themselves into inclusive spaces, as well as making recommendations to the field about how to implement the changes I suggest.

I believe that museums still have a long way to go before they can overcome their racialized identity as white spaces. They must learn to use multiple approaches to inclusion simultaneously, and they must integrate these into organizational systems so that inclusion becomes a continuous, ongoing effort. This thesis asserts that museums must prioritize the eradication of racism within their walls, not least because doing so will allow them to have a greater impact in their greater communities. As the following chapter describes, I used three research methodologies in order to learn how museums have made efforts to do just that.

Glossary of Terms

Ethnicity: An identity that relies on a shared culture or heritage.

Dominant: Used in the sociological sense of the group with most power; used in this thesis to refer to the white population.

Institutionalized: Fully integrated into an organization's systems; these practices continue because structural elements of the organization ensure it operates this way.

Minority: Used in the sociological sense of an identity which faces oppression or prejudice, a group that is not constructed as normative. Used here in the sense of racial and ethnic groups but also refers to gender, orientation, class, ability, etc.

Portland: Used in this thesis as a shorthand to mean the greater Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area as defined by the US Census Bureau. Residents of this area are referred to as Portlanders in this thesis, though it should be noted that many would refer to themselves as residents of their particular area within the region.

Race: A socially constructed identity that refers to shared characteristics of appearance, especially skin color; it makes a significant difference in lived experience.

Standpoint: The worldview that comes from the intersection of a person's identities. Further defined and discussed in the Literature Review.

Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to explore ways for museums to foster closer connections with the communities they serve by becoming inclusive organizations, capable of serving audiences of all races and ethnicities. This thesis focuses on the museums of Portland, Oregon; Portland's well-known progressivism does not extend to race issues, and the city's museums could play an important role in raising awareness.

I use three methodologies to explore how Portland-area museums can create culturally competent organizations that welcome historically excluded racial and ethnic groups, and to imagine a future for museums as institutions that address issues that are central to the lives of Portlanders. The first methodology this thesis uses is a review of the literature of the field; the second, a series of interviews with Portland museum directors; and the third, a case study of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), a leader in addressing race and ethnicity as issues of concern for the whole organization.

The literature review investigates the museum field's understanding of the issues at play when museums take steps to become more culturally competent. This methodology provided an understanding of what practices museums use, and have used, in creating relevant content and becoming physically accessible to minority audiences. This literature review also examines the role of organizational leadership in museums' inclusion efforts. This methodology was

not limited to the Portland area, but focuses largely on U.S. institutions, as they follow a similar organizational model.

I used the JFKU libraries and online databases, specifically ProQuest, Wilson Omnifile and LexisNexis Academic, to find sources. To find online sources, I used the search terms race, ethnicity, minority and color, intending to bring up works that reference audiences of color, visitors of color and similar usages, in conjunction with the word museum. I also used ProQuest-generated categories as search terms. Finally, I used sources I have read in the course of my studies at JFKU where they are appropriate for this topic.

From this review, this thesis gained insight into successful methods of creating welcoming spaces for visitors of color and the importance of doing so on an ongoing, long-term basis. Literature in the business field supports this section, including works that discuss leadership and models for organizational change. The literature review also explores the ways that inclusion supports the future of museums; scholarly works that envision the future suggest ways to build stronger connections with audiences so that museums are maximally valuable to the public.

Finally, this thesis' literature review explores race and ethnicity in the Portland metropolitan area. The primary resources for this section of the literature review are newspaper articles tagged with keywords race, minority and ethnicity from the Portland newspapers *The Oregonian*, including *The*

Oregonian's Race Blog, and *The Portland Tribune*. These articles about Portland's communities of color illuminate the varied experiences of minority communities with racism and ethnocentrism. They also reveal local white attitudes about these issues. This portion of the literature review demonstrates the need for Portland museums to address racism and ethnocentrism in their activities. It also includes theoretical works on race in the United States in order to contextualize race issues.

My second methodology was interviews with executive directors and other museum leaders at institutions in the Portland metropolitan area. This thesis includes art, history, science and children's museums, historic houses and other history sites that have scheduled public open hours and are intended to be visited by a general audience. I contacted the relevant museums in the Portland metropolitan area listed on the Oregon Museums Association website, which includes both member and non-member institutions.

I interviewed executive directors in order to determine what organizational infrastructure museums have constructed in order to be inclusive. Specifically, I inquired about funding structures and the existence of policies that promote inclusion. Museum administrators were an appropriate source for this information, as they create museums' policies and procedures. Museum leaders also heavily influence organizational culture at the institutions they head. I requested all interviews by e-mail and conducted all interviews by telephone.

These interviews were conducted in the last two weeks of February and throughout March, 2011.

I conducted one deep case study of OMSI as my final research method. I selected OMSI because the museum provides an example of successful inclusion of Latino audiences and a well-developed program of inclusion of other minority audiences. In order to learn about OMSI's model of inclusion, I interviewed four employees at the organization. I initially spoke with Dr. Marcie Benne, OMSI's Evaluation and Visitor Studies Manager and facilitator of OMSI's Diversity Workgroup, and I also interviewed OMSI's Senior Vice President, another member of the Diversity Workgroup and one other employee in the visitor studies department.

In addition, I reviewed some of OMSI's relevant internal policies, including their statement of commitment to diversity and their strategic plan, as well as evaluations of OMSI's programs and exhibits. I visited OMSI on February 12, 2011, during which I reviewed OMSI's current exhibitions. I also read OMSI's postings on exhibitfiles.org and summaries of OMSI's Visitor Studies Association presentation regarding their methods of inclusion. Finally, I used external sources, primarily newspaper articles from *The Oregonian* and *The Portland Tribune,* to gain further insight into OMSI's relationship with the community.

These sources demonstrate how OMSI has found success and established best practices. Specifically, these sources show how OMSI's structure supports inclusion and relevance; how hiring and keeping bilingual employees matters; and how the success of OMSI's efforts is measured.

The information gathered through these three methodologies will be synthesized to determine ways that Portland museums can build on the field's and on each other's successful inclusion practices.

Limitations of Methodology

This thesis will explore ways that museums in Portland, Oregon, can make themselves relevant to minority audiences. The focus of this thesis is museums directed at the general public; so-called "minority museums" like the Oregon Jewish Museum and the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center fall outside the scope of my research because they have different needs in their community relationships. Corporate and other privately owned museums are also excluded because they do not have the same obligation or need as public museums to engage the community. In addition, museums that do not have regularly scheduled hours during which they are open to the public are excluded from this research, though it does include two museums that are temporarily without a gallery space.

This thesis is also limited by the writer's experience as a middle-class white woman; some race issues may be less apparent to me as a white person. In addition, it should be noted that I have experience working or volunteering at three of the institutions represented in this thesis.

The research presented is limited to the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area and is not meant to be representative of other locations. This thesis uses the United States Census Bureau's definition of the Portland metropolitan area; the area includes Multnomah, Yamhill, Washington, Clackamas and Columbia Counties in Oregon and Clark and Skamania Counties in Washington. Similarly,

this research is limited by sample size and is meant only to reflect the opinions of the interviewees named. The case study of OMSI describes only that museum.

This thesis will not detail the specific subjects of programs or exhibits that have been used successfully by a museum to attract a single new constituency, but will instead explore the underlying principles of such exhibits and programs that are common to museums' efforts with many audiences.

Literature Review

This literature review uses scholarly works from the museum field, periodicals from Portland and writings by business thinkers to explore the subject of this thesis: how museums can better welcome minority audiences. Each museum has a different relationship with the various communities that make up its audience, or potential audience. Each audience's relationship is defined by different issues. Many Native American groups struggle with natural history and anthropological museums that keep their ancestors' or relatives' remains; Asian, African and Native American art is often segregated in art museums; and African-Americans' experience is marginalized by museums that deny the realities of slavery, to name a few examples. Despite the myriad ways each minority group and its association with museums is different, there are underlying commonalities that emerge as important considerations for all museums working to be more relevant to audiences of color, beginning with museums' history of exclusivity.

Exclusivity in Museum History

If museums are to become more inclusive places, they must overcome their past as elite, Eurocentric institutions. Early U.S. institutions' purpose, like their British counterparts, was ostensibly to "elevate" the masses by educating them in elite tastes (Karp, 1992; McClellan, 2008; Schwarzer, 2006; Weil, 2002). In spite of their professed intentions of serving the working class, an elite class made up the preponderance of museum visitors (Schwarzer, 2006; McClellan,

2008). Working-class people of color were not the only people of color excluded, however; many museums were segregated spaces that allowed whites only (Schwarzer, 2006).

While working-class audiences and audiences of color were not welcome in museums, objects that represented people of color were frequently collected and displayed, especially in natural history and anthropological museums (Weil, 2002). These museums operated using a racist and colonial interpretive framework (Mesa-Bains, 2004): museums displayed objects from conquered lands with the express purpose of demonstrating that the people of colonized regions were unlike and less human than white museumgoers (Karp, 1992; Hooper-Greenhill, 1997).

Not only did museums exoticize displayed objects, they sometimes used actual people. In the early 19th century, Sarah Baartman, a Khoi woman often called "The Hottentot Venus," was brought to Paris, where she was displayed at society functions so that Parisians could marvel at her buttocks and genitalia. After her death at age 25, Baartman's body was dissected in order to scientifically demonstrate her inferiority and her remains put on exhibit at the Memoires du Museum d'Histoire Naturelle (Bryce, 2001; Collins, 2005). Her remains were finally repatriated to South Africa in 2002 after repeated requests from the government (Collins, 2005). In 1911, the University of California exhibited a Native American man named Ishi as the last of the Yahi tribe. Ishi lived at the

museum as a janitor and living exhibit until his death in 1916, when his brain was removed and sent to the Smithsonian (Smithsonian, n.d.). Ishi's brain was repatriated to the Yana people in 2000 as a result of public pressure to do so (Smithsonian, n.d.).

In cases where museums did not frame people of color as exotic others, they left them out entirely (McClellan, 2008). This was particularly an issue in history museums, which defined history as the activities of the elite until a new discipline within history—social history—arose and a push to include non-dominant narratives in the 1970s and '80s began (Eichstadt & Small, 2002; Sandell, 2002). People of color were also excluded from galleries in art museums, which did not consider art produced by people of color or of different ethnicities to be real art (Mesa-Bains, 2004). Protests throughout the late '60s and early '70s over shows like the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1969 exhibit "Harlem on My Mind," which was organized without input from the African-American community and deliberately excluded the work of Black artists, forced art museums to display new kinds of artists (McClellan, 2008).

This same period saw the proliferation of so-called minority museums. These institutions, born out of frustration with mainstream museums, were developed by members of minority communities to tell the story of their particular racial or ethnic group (McClellan, 2008). The Portland area has three such museums, representing Greek, Japanese and Jewish cultures, and while they fulfill

an important role, a separate museum for each ethnic and racial group does not represent a solution to the institutionalized racism of mainstream museums (Fisher, 2010).

Though the 1990s saw a push within the museum field to increase minority visitorship (AAM, 1992; Gurian, 2006; Lufkin, 2009), and though museums today do a better job of including objects created or used by people of color, museum visitorship in the United States is still disproportionately white (Gurian, 2006; Janes, 2009; Lufkin, 2009). Noted museum scholar Elaine Gurian (2006) writes that if museums wish to actually change the demographics of museum visitors, they must take action; museum visitorship will not change on its own. Gurian's assertion is evidenced by the fact that children of color who visit museums with their schools do not become museumgoers later in life (Minz, 1998), and many people of color avoid museums because they have become racialized spaces associated with whiteness (Gurian, 2006; Karp, 1992). Museums have become a part of white culture, and museum visitation is seen as both a performance of whiteness and of middle-class status due to museums' history of exclusivity (Karp, 1992; Shepherd, 2004; Hooper-Greenhill, 1997), as well as because museums are "largely white institutions, collectively interpreting and displaying artefacts which reflect white society, thought and history" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1997, p. 33).

Race and Ethnicity in Portland

Many authors have written about the need for inclusion for the benefit of audiences of color, many of whom would like to see themselves represented in museums as the important part of U.S. culture that they are (Gurian, 2006; Mesa-Bains, 2004; Hooper-Greenhill, 1997). In Portland, people of color are often excluded from government: city employees are disproportionately white and only 0.1% of contract funding goes to businesses owned by minorities (Curry-Stevens, Cross-Hemmer, & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2010). Elected officials at the City and County levels are also not representative; no African-Americans have served on the Portland City Council since 1992, for example (Curry-Stevens, et al., 2010; Law, 2009), and in Oregon, only three of a 90-member state legislature are people of color (Hannah-Jones, 2010). Residents of color, particularly African-Americans, have been pushed from their historic community in North Portland by gentrification supported by city policy (Anderson, 2010, July 1; Curry-Stevens, et al., 2010; Law, 2009; Yardley, 2008). In this environment, museums form a part of civil society that need not be so exclusionary.

Despite the widespread perception that Portland is a virtually all-white city reported by Perry (2009), there are many Portlanders of color, and their presence should not be dismissed. In the Portland metropolitan area, 77.4% of people identify as non-Hispanic white; 10.6% are Latino, 5.4% are Asian, 2.7% are Black and .9% are Native American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). It must be noted, however, that the Coalition of Communities of Color in Portland believes

these numbers undercount local minority groups (Curry-Stevens, et al., 2010). Twelve percent of the Portland area population is foreign-born, with 22.7% of those born outside the U.S. having been born in Europe (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Many Portlanders—16.8%—speak a language other than English at home, and 7.7% of Portlanders "speak English less than 'very well'" (by comparison, national averages are 19.6% and 8.6% respectively) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Within city limits some minority populations are more concentrated; in Portland proper, 12.3% of residents are Black and 13.3% of the population is foreign-born, more than the national average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). In the Portland Public School District, one-third of students are English Language Learners (Anderson, 2010, November 11), and 45% are minorities (Anderson, 2010, July 1). Nationally, only 8.7% are English Language Learners, while 46.3% are minorities (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

These numbers are expected to increase in the future; the Pew Research Center estimates that in 40 years, white Americans will be a numerical minority in the United States. By 2050, the American Latino and Asian populations will have tripled, and the Black population will have increased by half, while the white population will have grown by only four percent (Passel and Cohn, 2008, p. 15). In Portland and throughout the United States, making museums a welcoming place for audiences of color is given new urgency by this relative growth in minority populations.

This demographic shift means not only is it important for minority audiences to be included in museums for their own sake, as a number of writers state, it is increasingly important for white Portlanders to be educated about race and ethnicity (Anderson, 2010, July 1; Hannah-Jones, 2010; Curry-Stevens, et al., 2010). Though the city is known for its progressivism, many local writers show that Portland is surprisingly ignorant of race issues (Hannah-Jones, 2010; Anderson, 2010, July 1; Randall, 2010); Yardley (2008) writes that white Portlanders seemingly do not care to include race and ethnicity issues in their social justice interests. Like every city, Portland has its share of residents who espouse racist attitudes, as even the most cursory review of the comments on *The Oregonian*'s website shows; such comments are evident accompanying all the articles cited here. Many more Portlanders hold more subtly prejudiced views (Anderson, 2010, July 1; Hannah-Jones, 2010; Randall, Yardley, 2008).

In a place like Portland, in which race issues are rarely discussed (Curry-Stevens, et al., 2010), colorblind racism thrives. Race scholar Patricia Hill Collins defines colorblindness as a newer form of prejudice that has largely replaced the idea that whites are biologically superior to all others with the idea that race makes no difference; racialized social problems are then blamed on individuals (Collins, 2000; Collins, 2005).

The Coalition of Communities of Color writes that because of both institutionalized racism and racist attitudes such as colorblindness the lived

experience of Portland minorities is different than that of whites. Further, the quality of life for many minority populations is worse in Portland than in other cities (Curry-Stevens, et al., 2010). Average income for people of color is just 50% of that of whites in Portland's urban Multnomah County, and despite nationally having slightly higher incomes than whites, Asian populations also have incomes in this range; educational attainment and achievement are lower among communities of color; unemployment is 37.5% higher among minority populations than whites; Latino residents are twice as likely to be homicide victims; Oregonian African-Americans disproportionately rank very low on all quality-of-life indicators; and AIDS deaths are three times as high among Native Americans as among whites (Curry-Stevens, et. al, 2010; Hannah-Jones, 2010). Minority communities in Portland face many serious issues, and museum scholars are beginning to imagine that the future of museums could lie in addressing such subjects.

Building a Future Through Community Connections

In 1971, museum thinker Duncan Cameron penned an essay in which he argued that museums could be a forum, deeply involved in the lives of the community (Cameron, 2004). Decades later, Stephen Weil (2002) writes that in order to survive in a rapidly changing world, museums *need* to be forums, addressing issues that are most pressing in their visitors' lives. As AAM's *Excellence and Equity* argues, the museum should not be "adjunct to" people's

lives, but rather an integral part of them (1992, p. 15). Many scholars believe that museums can make deep connections with their visitors if they address larger social issues that are important in the community's lives; in Portland, as discussed above, race and ethnicity represents one such issue. Janes (2009) and Sandell (2002) argue that museums are an appropriate place for both inclusion and education, being uniquely able to address difficult issues as public sites.

Many authors—so many that Lois Silverman identifies the sentiment as a movement within the museum community—agree that museums have the potential to pursue social justice issues, and argue that they should do so (AAM, 1992; AAM, 2002; Gaither, 2004; Gurian, 2006; Janes, 2009; Sandell, 2002; Silverman, 2010; Weil, 2002). Each author makes a convincing case for museums' connecting to the community through involvement in social issues, but Weil makes the most powerful argument of all: what good are museums, he asks, if they do not solve real problems? If museums are incapable of making discernible differences in our lives, why should they exist (Weil, 2002)?

Many authors agree that if museums are to be community sites dedicated to real change, they must reject positivism—the name for our current model of social and scientific inquiry—as an interpretive framework. Positivism places an emphasis on objectivity that manifests itself in the field as the very popular notion that museums must not take a stance on issues or else risk a "slippery slope" of unsubstantiated or wild opinion; Robert Janes (2009) terms this the "fallacy of

authoritative neutrality" (59). What proponents of this argument fail to realize is that museums, as products of the society around them, are inherently non-neutral (Gurian, 2006; Harding, 2004; Janes, 2009; Silverman, 2010). The issue of neutrality is especially important for museum professionals to understand if museums are to be inclusive spaces; what passes for objective reality is often in fact a specifically white worldview (Gurian, 2006; Mesa-Bains, 2004). An illuminating example comes from Southern plantation museums, which often strive for the appearance of neutrality by exhibiting the stories of a few notable enslaved persons, representing some as abhorring slavery and some as admiring their masters and enjoying their positions. At such sites, no mention is made of the overwhelming likelihood that these positive opinions were disingenuous. In addition, while every member of the white family of the plantation will be given names and identities, as much as 90% of the plantation's population—those who were enslaved—will be reduced to the identities of a few: Eichstedt and Small (2002) write that such exhibits are racist, not neutral.

If museums are necessarily offering a specific viewpoint in all of their educational work, how are we to know when to trust them and when they have fallen victim to the slippery slope? Many museum thinkers suggest that there is no correct viewpoint, and museums, like the people who visit them, could offer an infinite number of correct interpretations (Gurian, 2006; Janes, 2009; Silverman, 2010; Weil, 2002). Again, plantation museums demonstrate the problem with this

argument; it is clear that the 55% of plantation museums whose tours mention slavery three times or less are not offering an even approximately correct version of events (Eichstedt & Small, 2002). Here, the museum field can look to intersection theory to provide guidance.

Intersection theory holds that each person has many social identities (Collins, 2000; Harding, 2004). Race, class, gender, age, ability and sexual orientation are all examples of these identities, and each has its own hierarchical power structure that works to oppress people not part of the dominant identity (Collins, 2000; Harding, 2004). These systems of oppression "interlock"; one may face multiple oppressions at the same time, and each one shapes the experience of the others (Collins, 2000; Collins, 2005; Harding, 2004). Members of non-dominant identities have wider knowledge, since they know their own perspective as well as the dominant one, whereas dominant group members only know the dominant perspective (Collins, 2000; Harding, 2004). Using the perspective of the salient minority identity then reveals a more complete understanding of an issue, constituting "strong objectivity" (Harding, 2004). Because this stronger objective perspective is revealed by taking the perspective of those with the least power in a situation, this concept can also be expanded beyond issues of identity to reveal a proper museum stance on other important topics.

It is important that the museum's voice take a non-dominant standpoint as suggested by strong objectivity. Many museum thinkers suggest that the way to include diversity in the galleries is to include many points of view, often opinions of non-experts alongside curators (AAM, 1992; Janes, 2009), but the multiple-voice approach is problematic as it still constructs whiteness as normative by equating the museum's stance with a dominant, white perspective. Eichstedt and Small write that such an "add and stir" mindset does not represent a significant change in museum interpretation (2002).

Using an appropriate standpoint will help museums build stronger relationships with visitors, giving museums an increased capacity to address race and other important issues by presenting a broader and therefore more accurate perspective (Harding, 2004). If museums succeed in attracting a more diverse audience, the very ability for Portlanders from different races and ethnicities to occupy the same physical space—which does not happen often in such a segregated city—helps people overcome prejudices (Silverman, 2010). Museums can begin to engage with new issues through traditional museum methods, such as exhibiting information about an issue or marginalized group. Museums have also begun to use more innovative techniques and identify strategies for systematic inclusion.

Strategies for Inclusion

Many museum scholars, including Elaine Gurian (2006) and Robert Janes (2009), write that museums have not prioritized inclusion, but, though it sounds self-evident when explicitly stated, museums cannot achieve their educational goals if they are only able to communicate with a portion of the population (Hooper-Greenhill, 1997). Some museums have been actively resistant to change, perhaps because many museums are attached to traditional museum practices or are reluctant to leave behind an older museum model that sees the collection as the purpose of the museum in favor of an audience-centered approach (Janes, 2009; Weil, 2002). (It must be noted, however, that a museum can hardly have a representative collection if it cannot connect with people of color.) Nevertheless, many museums have taken steps to be more inclusive of minority audiences.

A large body of literature in the museum studies field offers guidance to museums that seek to take similar action. Three hierarchical levels of inclusion appear in the literature. The most basic level is usually termed outreach, and primarily focuses on eliminating physical barriers to participation for low-income minority groups, such as cost and lack of transportation (Wallace-Reader, 1998; Spitz & Thom, 2003). The second involves creating exhibits and programs that are relevant to audiences of color, making the museum psychologically and socially accessible (Hooper-Greenhill, 1997; Modlin, 2008). The third level is organizational; the museum not only includes minority audiences in its interpretation in the galleries, but takes steps to be inclusive as a whole

organization, such as hiring staff of color. Each approach recognizes and attempts to solve different barriers to participation for audiences of color. The solutions offered in the literature span these levels.

Marketing is one such example. While much of the museum literature discusses marketing as an important part of inclusion efforts, museums engage with the concept at different levels. An outreach approach to engaging audiences of color advocates advertising through community organizations that already serve the target audience, though these organizations may feel that the museum does not put a high enough priority on their constituents' participation to market these initiatives themselves (Mintz, et al., 1998). Granting access—through free days, for example—primarily serves internal audience diversity desires, and the assumption that people of color should be clamoring to visit museums that do not include them is patronizing at best; partnerships that are limited to this superficial level are unlikely to foster long-term interest in the museum (AAM, 2002; Gurian, 2006; Karp, 1992; Spitz & Thom, 2003). It should be noted that though outreach alone doesn't make a museum relevant to new audiences, this kind of outreach is necessary as the museum makes changes so that audiences are apprised of new developments (Reader-Wallace, 1998). Further, museum literature almost universally recommends partnership with community organizations both as an effective way to become more relevant to minority audiences and as a way to make a real difference on social issues.

These partnerships range from museums using organizations as points of access to minority communities they wish to reach, as discussed above, to equal relationships in which each member contributes value to the community through shared offerings (AAM, 2002, Spitz & Thom, 2003). Successful partnerships occur when the museum offers its assets to give back to the community in a way that makes a significant difference in the lives of community residents (AAM, 2002; Janes, 2009), such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization's partnership with local First Nations groups. These groups advise the museum on how to include and display objects that represent First Nations, and in return the museum provides a variety of resources such as space to hold Native language classes and advice on reclaiming ancestral land (Karp, 1992).

Some authors disagree on the balance of power in an ideal partnership (AAM, 2002; Karp, 1992; Spitz & Thom, 2003). The consortium of museums featured in *Urban Network* argue that museums will likely be the more powerful partner, and when community organizations object to the museum's aim to "reflect and sustain the dominant culture," it is acceptable for museums to disregard these objections and make no changes (Spitz & Thom, 2003, 32). According to many authors, this attitude ultimately dooms the museums' efforts to be inclusive. While it is true that attracting audiences of color is not as simple as "if you build it, they will come," (Spitz & Thom, 2003, p. 29) a key part of making museums relevant to minority audiences is, in fact, building exhibits and

creating content that reflects the experiences of the target demographic (AAM, 2002; Hooper-Greenhill, 1997; Reader-Wallace, 1998).

Museum literature recommends partnership as a step to including people of color in gallery narratives. In these partnerships, museums ask leaders of these organizations to represent the opinions of their racial or ethnic group in order to ensure that the museum knows what the audience is interested in seeing and how to treat issues relating to the community (Hooper-Greenhill, 1997; Reader-Wallace, 1998; Spitz & Thom, 2003), which should never be assumed by outsiders (Mintz, et al., 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1997, Reader-Wallace, 1998).

Because museums cannot assume they know what a historically excluded audience wants to see, nor, as mentioned earlier, can they simply add objects that represent people of color and be finished, building relevant exhibits is not always easy. The way objects are organized and presented in museums is a key part of interpretation (Mesa-Bains, 2004, Wilson, 2000); the common separation in art museums, including the Portland Art Museum, between art and art by minority cultures clearly implies that the latter is not "real" art (Mesa-Bains, 2004). Less obvious perhaps are the ways that disciplinary groupings uphold a dominant interpretation. Fred Wilson's rearrangement of objects at Maryland Historical Society demonstrates that this is indeed so; his work placed implements of slavery next to fine art in order to show, as he stated, that "one was made possible by the subjugation enforced by the other," a fact that typical museum arrangements

obscure (Schwarzer, 2006). Finally, a study of Native American museum visitors reveals that the very way museums expect audiences to read exhibits is culturally located—instead of viewing the exhibit as composed of discrete objects, participants read across the exhibit and viewed objects as related to others nearby (Wilson, 2000).

In addition to the organization and presentation of objects, the language used in an exhibition is an important part of interpretation. A choice as small as museums' use of passive voice makes an enormous difference: in many museums, passive voice is used to conceal who performed actions that make white visitors uncomfortable, such as slaves' role in maintaining elite white lifestyles (Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Hooper-Greenhill, 1997). For example, Eichstedt and Small report that docents at plantation museums frequently state that elegant meals were served to the plantation owners, using the passive voice to avoid mentioning that enslaved people were the servers.

Though museum leadership is not typically involved in gallery decisions like what language to use, leaders are essential to inclusion efforts. If a museum's leadership does not actively promote initiatives to welcome historically excluded audiences, individual departments and museum professionals may or may not choose to take action to make an institution more inclusive (AAM, 2002; Eichstedt & Small, 2002). Given that the majority of museum staff people are white and hold a dominant standpoint (Gurian, 2006; Hooper-Greenhill, 1997;

McClellan, 2008), as discussed above, leaving the choice up to individuals is not an effective way to address the issue of inclusion (Eichstedt & Small, 2002). Furthermore, the inclusion of people of color only on occasion is not appreciated within minority groups (AAM, 2002).

It is also important to note that institutions may be discriminatory despite the best intentions of the staff who work there (Eichstedt & Small, 2002). Because racism is institutionalized in long-standing policies and a part of many traditional museum practices, it is essential that leadership prioritize and take action to create inclusive operational methods; keeping the status-quo in most museums allows institutionalized racism to continue (AAM, 2002).

Having museum leadership committed to inclusion is essential, but museum leaders cannot be the only ones involved. Museum thinkers are in agreement that commitment to inclusive action throughout the whole organization is necessary for a museum to be a truly welcoming space that visitors of color return to again and again (AAM. 1992; AAM, 2002; Gurian, 2006; Hooper-Greenhill, 1998; Sandell, 2002; Wallace-Reader, 1998). Many museums do not prioritize this issue, though ostensibly the professionals that staff them find merit in the concept of inclusion (Gurian, 2006; Janes, 2009). How then do the museum staff members who want to see positive changes get "buy-in" from others? The business world can offer insight.

Many authors imagine the process of getting staff buy-in as a top-down system, in which leaders propose innovative ideas and then convince subordinates that their ideas are worthy of pursuit (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998). Different strategies are offered to help leaders persuade employees: Spitz and Thom suggest that leaders should explain how a project fits the museum's mission and present a cost-benefit analysis to win support, while Goleman theorizes that leadership needs to help staff become emotionally attuned to the proposed goals (Spitz & Thom, 2003; Goleman, et al., 2002). While these strategies would undoubtedly help convince staff members that a project is all very well, they hardly seem likely to inspire the level of commitment needed to make a museum an inclusive space, which is an undertaking that requires continuous effort on all levels of the organization (Lufkin, 2009, Mintz; 1998).

Author Jim Collins offers a different model based on his study of companies that found unusually long-term success. Rather than a top-down approach that requires leaders to propose an idea and ask others to support it, Collins suggests simply taking action on a small scale (2001). If a plan is successful, it will generate support and excitement by virtue of its success (Collins, 2001). While some resources are required to use Collins' model, museum professionals need not be executive directors to put his ideas into practice: a weekly science class at the American Museum of Natural History

began as a small program for a largely new, low-income audience of color, but as it became clear that the program had a real affect on participants, museum staff were engaged and inspired to help the program succeed further. The museum allocated more resources, and the program expanded (Spitz & Thom, 2003, p. 64).

For staff to have this reaction, it must be noted, they must be passionate about their work; Collins (2001) writes that a key part of this model is having "the right people on the bus" (41). Museum literature identifies diversity as an identifying feature of the "right" group of staff, as well as an important step to increasing audience diversity (AAM, 1992; Sandell, 2002; Shepherd, 2004); there is evidence that in order for staff demographics to affect audience, people of color must fill leadership positions within the organization (Lufkin, 2009). Minority staff people can help make museums a more welcoming place by their very presence, which indicates that the museum is a legitimate space for people of color, and by specific skills they may bring to the organization—in Portland, where one-third of Portland Public School children are English Language Learners, bilingual staff are needed (Anderson, 2010, November 11). Staff people of color are important not only for the comfort of minority audiences, but also potentially bring new viewpoints into the organization that serve to strengthen it (Dychtwald et al., 2006; Shepherd, 2004; Spitz & Thom, 2003).

When mounting an exhibition about a minority community, much of the literature recommends hiring a temporary staff person: a liaison who is a member

of the same race or ethnicity (Hooper-Greenhill, 1997, Spitz & Thom, 2003). Such liaisons understand the issues their community faces and so are more able to navigate them, generating interest and support more easily than an institution perceived as white would be able to do (Hooper-Greenhill, 1997). Museums that use community liaisons seem to do so only in a project-based manner that does not allow the museum to build a long-term relationship with the targeted community, something museums should be wary of, as minority groups are slow to trust museums that have not kept up the relationship in the past (Gurian, 2006; Spitz & Thom, 2003). The much-advocated community advisory council serves a similar, but more permanent, function (AAM, 1992; AAM, 2002; Hooper-Greenhill, 1997; Spitz & Thom, 2003).

With the exception of such community liaisons, at present, museum staff nationwide "is still mostly white" (McClellan, 2008, p. 4). If museums are committed to hiring staff people of color, they must encourage people of color to enter the field (AAM, 1992; Sandell, 2002). Institutionalized racism means that people of color are disproportionately working class, disproportionately likely to remain so and disproportionately likely to become so even if they are born wealthy (Collins, 2000; Wade, 2011); in Portland, as mentioned previously, people of color earn far less than white residents (Curry-Stevens, et. al, 2010). Though as long ago as 1992, *Excellence and Equity* recommended that museums sponsor scholarships and offer paid internships to make it easier for minority

students to enter the profession, museum staffs remain predominantly white (Gurian, 2006; Lufkin, 2009). The U.K. instituted program similar to AAM's suggestion, as museums recognized both the importance of bringing in people with different cultural knowledge and the difficulties that people of color face in pursuing higher education, particularly in a field identified with whiteness. A program called Diversify offers scholarships to minority students to earn museum studies degrees in order to help them overcome these barriers to entering the field (Shepherd, 2004). Some Canadian museums have taken a different approach, similar to AAM's recommendation to recruit staff people of color from non-academic settings (AAM, 1992), electing to consider inherited cultural knowledge of First Nations tribes as equivalent to a masters degree (Janes, 2009).

Many of museums' attempts to be more relevant to minority audiences can be described in organizational terms, as they are here, and business thinkers can offer important insights that can help museums manage change. Stephen Weil (2002) suggests that museums need to distance themselves, however, from the for-profit framework for measuring success if they are to succeed in becoming inclusive spaces that address difficult issues. As they have had to rely increasingly on earned revenue and demonstrate fiscal responsibility (Schwarzer, 2006) museums have begun to mimic the business world's emphasis on finances as the measurement of success or failure (Weil, 2002; Janes, 2009). There is little financial benefit to museums working to welcome the disproportionate number of

low-income people of color, who often cannot afford to enter the museum without subsidized admission (Reader-Wallace, 1998). Worse, there is financial incentive for museums to continue to reinforce normative white culture.

Authors who write about museums that address particularly uncomfortable topics for white visitors, especially slavery, conclude that museums' ability to honestly discuss the issue at hand is hindered by a market approach (Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Evans, 2006; Janes, 2009). White Portlanders may be similarly uncomfortable with discussions of current race issues because of the attitudes toward race and ethnicity discussed above. One of the reasons visitors go to museums is as a form of entertainment, and these visitors seek an undemanding experience that reaffirms what they already know (Modlin, 2008; Weil 2002). Museums that evaluate their success based on their bottom line not only have no incentive to discomfort visitors who already attend in favor of potential new audiences, but often actively take a marketing approach to content, catering to current white audiences' tastes (Evans, 2006; Weil, 2002). White Americans trust museums to educate them (AAM, 2002; Sandell 2002); if museums only pander to their prejudices, they fail in this respect. Museums have an obligation to present accurate information (Gurian, 2006; Sandell, 2002).

Authors Weil (2002) and Sandell (2002) agree that, as mission-driven organizations, museums must evaluate their success in terms of effectiveness instead of using a bottom-line approach. If museums set out to become more

relevant to minority audiences, they must devise a way of measuring whether or not they have accomplished this goal. This is a difficult assessment to make without assuming that audience demographics are a pure reflection of the museum's inclusiveness (which is not necessarily a fair assumption given museums' association with performing whiteness), but museums even have trouble assessing the racial and ethnic makeup of their audiences (Lufkin, 2009; Spitz & Thom, 2003).

Beyond such internal measures as determining audience demographics, museums must assess their external impact (Weil, 2002; Sandell, 2002). If museums wish to address social issues, then their effect on these issues should be the determinant of success, not financial solvency or survival, which methods assume that the museum is doing good work without evidence (Weil, 2002).

Content suffers when museums use the bottom line to determine success, and so can the organization as a whole. When development strategies focus on the wealthiest (who are predominantly white), they may exclude those who are most passionate, or groups with many individuals able to make smaller donations, to say nothing of those who are unable to donate at all (Lufkin, 2009; Mintz, et al., 1998). As Elaine Gurian (2006) writes, museums that "remain oriented toward their paying customers will not . . . organize themselves as the more general resource they can become" (132).

Discussing issues that are relevant to visitors' lives will build strong bonds between museums and the communities they serve. In Portland, where racism is largely ignored, it is important for museums to address the issue. In order to do so, museums must overcome a history of misrepresenting and excluding people of color and build relevant, culturally competent organizations that serve all people. Partnerships, committed leadership, diverse staff, measures of success that focus on impact and inclusive interpretation all help museums become more inclusive places. Even if such efforts fail to attract new audiences, museums that are relevant to people of color will also educate white visitors. In the next chapter I will explore what museums in Portland are accomplishing in this regard.

Findings

In order to research how Portland museums welcome audiences of color and from diverse ethnicities, I spoke to 14 executive directors and museum administrators and one newspaper reporter in the Portland metropolitan area. I also conducted a case study of a museum that prioritizes this issue, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI); I interviewed four employees and reviewed internal and external documents relevant to the museum's efforts to be inclusive. Appendix A lists the interview questions I used. For a complete list of interviewees and their institutions, please see Appendix B.

These findings confirm that many of the themes raised in the literature represent issues that Portland museums experience in reality. Further, these findings show a marked difference between larger and more professional institutions and small organizations with fewer resources: many small museums stated that they did not make special efforts to welcome minority audiences. Larger institutions with professional staff were aware of many of the issues that surround engaging and representing minority groups and made an effort to address these issues, though they were not always able to do so to their own satisfaction due to various organizational challenges, and most often focused on a single method of inclusion. Among these findings was a wide variety of opinion as to how museums should address minority audiences, from some small institutions' notion that no targeted efforts should be made, to some larger

institutions' idea that museums must conceptualize accessibility as their ultimate goal in all of their activities.

Organizational Awareness and Commitment

There was a wide variety of responses from interviewees to the question of whether or not their museums did anything to welcome minority audiences. Most small organizations initially answered that they did not, but that people of all backgrounds were certainly welcome to visit (Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2011; E. Butler, personal communication, February 27, 2011; M. Rose, personal communication, March 7, 2011; M. Bones, personal communication, February 28, 2011; Freund, personal communication, February 27, 2011; T. Mysinger, personal communication, March 4, 2011). Four interviewees said that, as leaders of small organizations struggling just to remain open, they had not previously thought about the issue, but two added that they would be interested to learn more (D. Douglas & U. Kerr, personal communication, March 10, 2011; K. Freund, personal communication, February 27, 2011; E. Butler, personal communication, February 27, 2011; T. Mysinger, personal communication, March 4, 2011). Elaine Butler, executive director of the pioneer museum Philip Foster Farm, also stated that she feels there is a resistance to the idea that the Farm should do anything different for different audiences, and indeed many small institutions seemed to share the idea that treating all visitors exactly the same was the best way to support their attitude that all people were

welcome to visit (E. Butler, personal communication, February 27, 2011; Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2011; M. Rose, personal communication, March 7, 2011; D. Douglas & U. Kerr, personal communication, March 10, 2011).

Many interviewees, particularly at small institutions, expressed hesitation about taking proactive measures to welcome diverse audiences because they did not want to inadvertently cause offense. Butler reported that the Farm had once had a mannequin that represented a historical African-American Farm resident, but that it had been removed and not replaced because the Farm did not want to expose visitors, particularly children, to the period documents that tell her story due to the racism they express. "We want to represent real relationships without repeating the offense," Butler said (personal communication, February 27, 2011). Two institutions also reported that they were hesitant to target minority groups because they did not want to reduce complex personal identities to race or ethnicity, nor did they want to assume that people would be interested only in seeing exhibits and programs that represent people from the same minority group (T. Mysinger, personal communication, March 4, 2011; M. Bones, personal communication, February 28, 2011). Portland Children's Museum Education Director Ingrid Anderson was the only interviewee at a large institution to bring up this hesitant attitude, commenting that many museums are unsure how to

approach and make an "authentic" connection with members of a target community (personal communication, November 30, 2010).

Another interviewee at a larger museum also mentioned a related hesitant attitude on the part of staff at a previous organization; staff had been afraid that focusing on becoming relevant to one minority group first would offend members of other minority groups (Anonymous portion of personal communication, 2011). Two interviewees shared this opinion (Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2011; Anonymous portion of personal communication, 2011). One of these directors stated her further belief that any action to welcome specific audiences of color would have to be taken very carefully in order to maintain non-profit status. "Focusing on one group would be against our 501(c)3," the director explained (Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2011).

The strategy of OMSI contrasts with this attitude, and this willingness to reach out to specific minority groups was one reason the museum was selected as a case study for this thesis. OMSI is a large museum, with about 300 staff members, 500 volunteers and 700,000 visitors per year (M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010). Its mission is simple—"OMSI seeks to inspire wonder"—but the museum's activities are anything but. OMSI is a "scientific, educational, and cultural resource center dedicated to improving the public's understanding of science and technology. OMSI makes science exciting and relevant through exhibits, programs, and experiences that are presented in an

entertaining and participatory fashion" (OMSI, n.d.). In addition to these activities, the museum works to engage audiences of color. OMSI chose to focus its efforts on reaching out to the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in the Portland area: the Latino population (P. Carlson, personal communication, March 17, 2011; M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010). Though other interviewees were less explicit about their targeting a single audience, most at larger museums mentioned particularly close ties with individual communities (C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011; S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011; G. Vogt, personal communication, February 23, 2011). Across all interviewees, broader efforts to attract audiences of color were largely those directed at including a low-income audience.

Like OMSI, other larger institutions supported action to welcome diverse audiences, and these museums echoed the literature's emphasis on commitment as essential. "I think it's an attitude," Architectural Heritage Center Executive Director Cathy Galbraith said, stating that everyone in her organization shares an understanding that including perspectives and narratives of communities of color is important (personal communication, March 9, 2011). Former Museum of Contemporary Craft Executive Director David Cohen agreed, arguing further that inclusion must be part of an organization's mission and values. "If it's not part of the mission and values, its not going to be there no matter what infrastructure there is," Cohen stated, emphasizing that all museums should focus on

accessibility (personal communication, March 11, 2011). Dr. Gary Hartshorn, executive director of the World Forestry Center, added that museums must reach out if they expect to engage diverse audiences. "Be proactive," Hartshorn said. "Look for opportunities to engage with minority communities" (personal communication, March 3, 2011).

Similarly, OMSI interviewees discussed sustained commitment as the key ingredient to success. Senior Vice President Paul Carlson described inclusion efforts as a continuum that the organization needs to work on at all times. "Diversity isn't something you will accomplish at some point," Carlson said. "It's an ongoing effort" (personal communication, March 17, 2011). OMSI's statement of accessibility (2010) echoes this sentiment, stating that "accessibility requires an on-going and multifaceted commitment." Dr. Marcie Benne, head of the Visitor Studies Department, elaborated that at OMSI, all staff see themselves as "inclusion advocates." Their efforts are successful in part because employees "actually have real conversations and communicate, even about this sensitive issue." Benne characterized this openness as part of having a healthy organization (personal communication, December 10, 2010). Outreach and Diversity Workgroup Member Tim Hecox and Benne also spoke about the importance of researching the issue as an important part of OMSI's commitment to welcoming diverse audiences; OMSI was the only organization to mention they were taking steps to further their knowledge on the subject. Participants in the

case study discussed both reading relevant literature and asking professional organizations for guidance, in particular the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) (M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010; T. Hecox, personal communication, March 12, 2011).

Fostering Cultural Relevance and Eliminating Physical Barriers

Many museum representatives stated that their efforts to be inclusive incorporated exhibits or programs about a particular minority community. Board President Michael Wong stated that for the Beaverton Historical Society, which opened the doors to the newly established Beaverton History Center just nine months before we spoke, exhibits and programs will be the primary avenue for inclusion; the organization felt that the center's first exhibit, which details the lives of the Atfalati tribe, the area's first people, is an appropriate initial exhibit to open the center. Wong would eventually like to see a permanent exhibit acknowledging the beginnings of all the cultures that helped populate the city of Beaverton (personal communication, March 15, 2011). Other museums described similar exhibits and programs that focused on a particular minority group, including subjects such as African-American murals, African-American neighborhoods and Native American perspectives on the Lewis and Clark expedition (G. Vogt, personal communication, February 23, 2011; C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011; S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011). The Oregon Historical Society (OHS) and several small

museums had done programs highlighting the history of local Japanese Americans, in particular stories of internment, and OMSI described targeted programs including a Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) education program series for girls and Salmon Camp for Native American youth (K. Freund, personal communication, February 27, 2011; T. Mysinger, personal communication, March 4, 2011; M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010).

Others did not produce exhibits or programs about a single minority group, but felt that they included stories about people of color as part of larger narratives where they were appropriate, such as the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame's inclusion of athletes of color, and the inclusion of the story of a family friend who was Chinook at the historic Zimmerman House (T. Mysinger, personal communication, March 4, 2011; M. Rose, personal communication, March 7, 2011). Similarly, Anderson reported that the Portland Children's Museum, being experiential rather than content-driven, included people of color by representing them in gallery images (personal communication, November 30, 2010); a site visit to OMSI showed that they did the same.

A few museum representatives also mentioned their collection as part of inclusion efforts, noting collections of Native American baskets and other artifacts, African-American photography and archives from African-American organizations and objects from Japanese-American–owned berry farms (G. Vogt,

personal communication, February 23, 2011; S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011; D. Douglas & U. Kerr, personal communication, March 10, 2011; K. Freund, personal communication, February 27, 2011; T. Mysinger, personal communication, March 4, 2011).

Partnerships, emphasized in the literature as a key strategy for museums that wish to become more relevant to diverse audiences, were mentioned in the context of creating programs and exhibits that included minority perspectives. Some organizations stated that they collaborated with community groups as the literature suggested, such as Executive Director Susan Tissot's description of the Clark County Historical Society's partnership with the NAACP, but three also reported that they collaborated with other museums in order to bring inclusive programming to their institutions (S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011; G. Vogt, personal communication, February 23, 2011; I. Anderson, personal communication, November 30, 2010; G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011). Oregon Historical Society (OHS) Executive Director Dr. George Vogt also mentioned that forming partnerships has been a learning experience; a few years ago OHS hosted a traveling exhibition about the art of interned Japanese-Americans and did not think to involve the local Japanese cultural center—the Nikkei Legacy Center—until late in the process. The staff at the Center were disappointed not to have been consulted earlier, and Vogt commented that if the organizations had had more time to work together, OHS'

exhibit-related programming would have been stronger (personal communication, February 23, 2011).

When asked about next steps they hoped to see their organizations take with regard to inclusion, interviewees at larger institutions with professionally trained staff commented that they would like to expand their existing programs, demonstrating that these leaders felt their organizations were moving in the right direction, even if they had not been able to implement all their plans (C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011; P. Carlson, personal communication, March 17, 2011; T. Hecox, personal communication, March 12, 2011). Two interviewees mentioned further expanding their audiences to include new groups (G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011; S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011). Hartshorn, Tissot and Vogt all also agreed that they would like to see a greater depth and breadth of programming generally so that more audiences could find something of interest (G. Vogt, personal communication, February 23, 2011; G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011; S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011).

Though many museum representatives acknowledged that, in addition to inclusive programs and exhibits, translations are an important part of ensuring that museums are culturally relevant, most museums reported that they were unable to have gallery text or other materials translated. Museum representatives did not

name challenges that specifically prevented them from providing translations; Galbraith, however, added that while the Architectural Heritage Center is not able to provide translations, to her knowledge the Center has never had translations requested (personal communication, March 9, 2011). Another museum said that while they do not have bilingual staff, they host field trip groups that work with museum staff to provide their own translations (Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2011). The Gresham Historical Society was the only small museum to say that they have been able to provide some Spanish translations of their information (D. Douglas & U. Kerr, personal communication, March 10, 2011). Hartshorn reported that the World Forestry Center has several bilingual employees, including himself; talks and tours are frequently conducted in Spanish, and translation handouts are available in five languages (G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011).

OMSI also prioritizes translating its exhibit materials into Spanish. All OMSI interviewees discussed the institution's translation efforts, and OMSI's internal documents state that the organization is "committed to increasing Hispanic community participation through the adoption of practices that promote bilingual and bicultural accessibility." Though they have not yet been able to translate everything—Carlson named membership materials as one thing the organization is still working on—OMSI has Spanish language exhibit guides,

way-finding materials and other resources available (personal communication, March 17, 2011).

Two OMSI interviewees commented that the organization's ability to translate materials has grown as it has developed an infrastructure to support these efforts (P. Carlson, personal communication, March 17, 2011; M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010). A large part of this was to institute policies and hire bilingual staff, as discussed below; having bilingual reviewers for both text and content, as well as ethnically Latino employees to manage cultural accessibility, were important parts of developing bilingual exhibitions (Olney, 2010; Pattison, 2010). OMSI also created a Spanish style guide, parallel to its style guide for English copy, so that any materials produced could be easily translated (M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010; P. Carlson, personal communication, March 17, 2011). Now that the infrastructure is in place, Carlson concluded that translating is a selling point for the traveling exhibits OMSI creates (personal communication, March 17, 2011).

Though many museums struggled with some aspects of cultural relevance, all organizations offered some form of financial accessibility. For the largest institutions, regular free or reduced admission days were common and two museums shared a subsidized membership program (P. Carlson, personal communication, March 17, 2011; I. Anderson, personal communication, November 30, 2010; G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011),

whereas most smaller institutions were free or had nominal admission prices at all times. The Architectural Heritage Center typically charges for its programs, but uniquely does so according to what audience the Center is trying to attract; programs targeted toward populations that tend to be more limited in income are offered at a lower price. Galbraith further stated that all museum admission is subsidized to some degree—admission revenue rarely covers the entire cost of operating a museum—so the matter is really about how much to subsidize and for whom (personal communication, March 9, 2011). Three directors emphasized free admission as the primary way their organization caters to audiences of color (D. Cohen, personal communication, March 11, 2011; I. Anderson, personal communication, November 30, 2010; G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011), and Vogt also voiced his satisfaction over a recent levy that would allow OHS to offer free admission to Multnomah County residents, increasing accessibility (personal communication, February 23, 2011).

A few brought up other important issues in eliminating physical barriers and becoming culturally relevant, such as proximity to public transportation (I. Anderson, personal communication, November 30, 2010), allowing outside food so that the experience does not have to be expensive (Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2011), and the importance of speaking to organizations and people of color to learn how museums can best serve them "in a way that really matters to them" (Anonymous portion of personal communication, 2011; G.

Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011). Butler commented that museums need to show that Oregon history is the story of a diverse group, even narratives that are typically associated with whiteness, such as pioneer histories (E. Butler, personal communication, February 27, 2011).

Organizational Diversity Initiatives

Outside of OMSI, all interviewees imagined their primary avenues of inclusion as cultural and physical accessibility; OMSI was the only organization to see organizational measures as their primary method of inclusion. Interviewees did, however, discuss organizational diversity initiatives in response to more targeted questions. Several museums discussed the role of marketing in attracting diverse audiences. Three small museums discussed the importance of marketing, including word-of-mouth advertising, to their organizations (M. Bones, personal communication, February 28, 2011, T. Mysinger, personal communication, March 4, 2011, Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2011). Executive Director Marta Bones stated that Pittock Mansion's advertising was targeted toward interest groups rather than by race or ethnicity; Mysinger said the same, but added that targeted marketing could be a valuable way to reach minority communities. "We would really like to find out more," Mysinger stated (personal communication, March 4, 2011; M. Bones, personal communication, February 28, 2011).

Vogt also discussed general advertising initiatives as important, as well as more targeted methods such as advertising in ethnic newspapers and partnering with the Coalition of Communities of Color, a Portland-based advocacy group. "Eventually, I hope that people [from underserved communities] will just think about OHS as part of their sphere," he said. In addition to advertising the museum's overall activities, Vogt stressed the importance of telling others what inclusive efforts a museum is making. Though OHS has a long history of collecting Native American and African-American artifacts, Vogt had recently discovered that these communities were not necessarily aware of that; publicity would both help the collection serve as a historical resource for these groups and help the organization build awareness among underserved groups that OHS is a possible place to donate items of historical significance (personal communication, February 23, 2011).

Though OMSI's efforts to be inclusive, from its creation of bilingual exhibits to its diverse board of directors, have been noted in many newspaper articles (Ashton, 2010; Camou, 2010; House, 2011; Portland Tribune, 2009), OMSI's strategy differs from Vogt's. When asked, Carlson said that this coverage may be due to OMSI staff discussing these efforts, but that such discussions are not part of a strategy to advertise OMSI's practices. "Nobody has gone to marketing and said, 'You do this,'" Carlson stated. "[These discussions] need to be organic" (personal communication, March 17, 2011).

OMSI does let people know about its efforts in other ways, however. OMSI has presented its strategies for hiring bilingual employees as a model for other museums at the annual Visitor Studies Association conference (M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010); OMSI employees post about the organization's processes, including making exhibits culturally and linguistically accessible to the Latino population, on websites such as exhibitfiles.org (Pattison, 2010); and OMSI's own website features many reports generated by its visitor studies department. OMSI also shares its work with the communities it seeks to impact in creative ways: one diversity workgroup member developed an ambassador program, in which his contacts from four minority communities come to OMSI periodically to learn about special events and spread the word through their own contacts within the community.

Interviewees discussed funding along with marketing as part of organizational inclusion efforts. While the literature suggests that many museums use grant funding to support community outreach, Anderson said that there are few grant-making agencies in Portland. Grant funding is highly competitive, therefore, and museums tend to rely more on corporate gifts and earned revenue than on grant support, she stated (personal communication, November 30, 2010). This seemed to be largely the case: while some institutions did mention grants as a source of income, much more emphasis was placed on earned income. Hartshorn stated that the World Forestry Center has a 75% earned income ratio

and that the museum's operating budget sustains its programs for low-income residents, for example (personal communication, March 3, 2011).

Though OMSI interviewees said that the organization does use grant funding to support its efforts to be inclusive, the organization also raised different issues than did the literature. Benne named organizational communication as essential to financial management; while OMSI's funding structure is no longer as project-oriented, some of its programs continue to be grant-funded, and it is important for the development department to understand the need for continuous funding for inclusion projects. Benne reiterated a point that surfaced in the literature review: that if grant-funded, targeted programs disappear, audiences are reluctant to trust the organization again. In addition, OMSI uses a triple bottom line that forces the organization to think about financial, environmental and social impact in order to ensure it stays true to its mission (M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010).

Butler and Cohen referred to understanding audience demographics as key to securing grant funding; Cohen suggested that in fact most grant makers would like to see some kind of demographic data (E. Butler, personal communication, February 27, 2011; D. Cohen, personal communication, March 11, 2011). Though he stressed that "it's important to know who's coming though the door," Cohen also stated that many museums, especially small and mid-sized institutions, do not prioritize measuring demographics. He further suggested that

most organizations lack adequate resources to measure, which was confirmed by the many directors who stated that their organizations were unable to collect this data (personal communication, March 11, 2011). Vogt agreed that measuring demographic data would be very helpful, especially for exhibits and programs that focus on the history of a particular minority group (personal communication, February 23, 2011).

When asked whether they were able to measure the demographics of their audiences, most interviewees answered that they did not track the race or ethnicity of their visitors. Mike Rose reported that at the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame, staff "do not pay attention" to audience demographics (personal communication, March 7, 2011). Three small museums reported capturing ZIP code data through visitors' books and sign-in sheets (E. Butler, personal communication, February 27, 2011, Mysinger, D. Douglas & U. Kerr, personal communication, March 10, 2011). Vogt also reported collecting ZIP code data (personal communication, February 23, 2011). Two interviewees stated that they could not measure race or ethnicity because they would not want to make assumptions about how visitors would identify themselves (Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2011; E. Butler, personal communication, February 27, 2011). In contrast, two interviewees reported that, though they lack formal evaluation tools, they perform what Cohen calls the "eyeball test," recording approximate numbers based on staff assessment; both noted that they used this method to learn about many types

of audience diversity, not solely race and ethnicity (C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011; D. Cohen, personal communication, March 11, 2011). Only Hartshorn at the World Forestry Center stated that his organization was able to conduct regular survey work to learn about its audience makeup, though Tissot also reported asking for race and ethnicity data whenever CCHS has conducted evaluations. Anderson, Cohen, Galbraith, and Hartshorn—all representatives of larger museums—stated that, based on the measuring they were able to do, their audiences were diverse in many ways; the latter three, Tissot and Butler reported that their audiences were racially and ethnically diverse for their area (I. Anderson, personal communication, November 30, 2010; D. Cohen, personal communication, March 11, 2011; C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011; G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011; S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011; E. Butler, personal communication, February 27, 2011).

When asked about the organizational infrastructure that supported inclusion efforts, most interviewees mentioned having a staff person that addressed the issue in the course of their duties. Positions discussed included an event committee, volunteers who present at schools, marketing staff and programming staff; having a professionally trained staff that included bilingual members was also mentioned (M. Wong, personal communication, March 15, 2011; D. Douglas & U. Kerr, personal communication, March 10, 2011; M.

Bones, personal communication, February 28, 2011; G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011). Two organizations also commented that they lacked a position dedicated solely to this issue (M. Wong, personal communication, March 15, 2011; G. Vogt, personal communication, February 23, 2011). Three interviewees also mentioned the number of staff as a limiting factor when asked what challenges prevented the organization from taking action (C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011; S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011; M. Wong, personal communication, March 15, 2011); small numbers of staff and a lack of volunteers with relevant interests were mentioned by many small museums in response to other questions, however.

Though OMSI is an organization with a large number of staff and volunteers, Carlson described "keeping it in the forefront when everyone is busy with other things" as a challenge; though OMSI has departments that are heavily involved in inclusion efforts, managing these efforts is not a dedicated staff position, just as other organizations reported (personal communication, March 17, 2011). Instead, OMSI has created an interdepartmental "diversity workgroup" that has members from outreach, education, registration, marketing, human resources and visitor studies (T. Hecox, personal communication, March 12, 2011). The workgroup acts as a "burr under the saddle," ensuring that diversity initiatives are continually discussed and that the organization maintains its energy

for pursuing inclusive actions (P. Carlson personal communication, March 17, 2011).

Hecox said that though the diversity workgroup's position in OMSI's organizational structure is still under discussion as the group solidifies its purpose—the group is approximately a year old as of this writing—the workgroup acts as a resource and support for other staff members who are interested in implementing inclusive initiatives. This allows all staff to be involved in inclusion and facilitates communication between departments, including senior management. Hecox stated that this immediate ability to elicit the opinion of many departments means that any practices that are implemented reflect the mission and values of the entire organization rather than those of a single person or department (personal communication, March 12, 2011).

While staffing and how it is structured within the organization are essential to implementing initiatives that make museums more relevant to minority audiences, the literature suggests that who is on the staff also matters. Interviewees generally agreed with this idea: George Vogt stated, "Sometimes you just need to hold the position open until you can find a qualified minority candidate," because doing so helps the community to trust the museum (personal communication, February 23, 2011). "You hire a person from the community, and they tell all their friends, and the friends tell all their friends, and pretty soon

the community knows," OMSI's Nelda Reyes added (personal communication, March 27, 2011).

Though only two museums reported having formal policies that require board or staff diversity, several museums mentioned their commitment to increasing staff diversity (C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011; G. Vogt, personal communication, February 23, 2011; D. Cohen, personal communication, March 11, 2011; S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011; M. Wong, personal communication, March 15, 2011). This informal method seems to be working well for some institutions: Vogt thought that after the next election to the board, OHS' board would approximate the percentage of people of color in the Portland area (personal communication, February 23, 2011). A very similar approach did not result in a diverse staff for others: though Rose also answered that the Sports Hall of Fame's most important infrastructure was an attitude that the organization was open to anyone who wanted to come, with no policies encouraging board or staff diversity and a stated intent to hire the best people based solely on talent, the organization appears to have a 100% white staff and board from photographs on the museum's website (personal communication, March 7, 2011; OSHF, 2009).

Interviewees also touched on two more policy-oriented methods to increase staff and board diversity. One museum director mentioned that AAM accreditation requirements had allowed the museum to overcome some resistance

from within the organization to implementing hiring strategies that encourage diversity (Anonymous portion of personal communication, 2011), while a second stated that they were an equal opportunity employer with the "typical stuff that any responsible organization has" (S. Tissot, personal communication, March 15, 2011). OMSI, which prioritizes hiring diverse staff, as evidenced by the fact that OMSI interviewees brought up the subject without being specifically asked, also uses this kind of policy-guided approach. OMSI's affirmative action plan helps the organization stay true to its stated goal of creating "community relationships that are inclusive and foster diversity in our audiences and workforce" (OMSI, 2011, p.1).

OMSI's efforts to create a diverse staff do not end there, however; fostering board and staff diversity is one of the central pieces of OMSI's inclusion strategy. The organization's statement of accessibility says that "OMSI has a value of accessibility which is characterized by 'proactive practices to increase employee and volunteer diversity'" among other initiatives (OMSI, 2010). In addition to its affirmative action plan, OMSI developed procedures over the course of 10 years for hiring bilingual staff, contractors and volunteers (M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010; Benne & Montiel, n.d.). Included in these procedures are linguistic skill profiles that assess fluency level based on reading, writing and oral skills in both languages (Benne & Montiel, n.d.). Three of OMSI's six-member visitor studies department are now fluent

Spanish speakers; because these "staff members interact with audience members to build relationships, we want to make sure we clearly understand and respect the messages being exchanged" (M. Benne, personal communication, December 10, 2010; Benne & Montiel, n.d.). Carlson also named an open hiring policy as a continuing goal (personal communication, March 17, 2011). Benne further commented that establishing a diverse staff rather than hiring token representatives is important as she has noticed that sharing an ethnicity with other staff members helps make a workplace more comfortable (personal communication, December 10, 2010).

Apart from OMSI, only the World Forestry Center had a formal written policy promoting board and staff diversity; like OMSI, the Forestry Center incorporated its support for board and staff diversity into its strategic plan (G. Hartshorn, personal communication, March 3, 2011). Two interviewees mentioned increasing board diversity as a next step for their organizations, however; Tissot's board of directors had been seriously considering the issue and what action would be appropriate (personal communication, March 15, 2011), and Wong said that as the BHS board grows from its five current members to the 12 he envisions, he would like to see a policy instituted that ensures that the board remains representative of community diversity (personal communication, March 15, 2011).

The Importance of Context

Galbraith also spoke about the attitudes of Portlanders toward race, citing many of the facts discussed in the literature review of this thesis, especially the lack of diversity in Portland's government. Galbraith added that the same people of color are called upon time and again to represent the views of entire communities, and that tokenism, rather than genuine inclusion efforts, is typical in Portland politics (personal communication, March 9, 2011). She and Nikole Hannah-Jones, a reporter who covers race and demographics for Portland's largest newspaper, *The Oregonian,* also commented on the gentrification of Portland's historic African-American neighborhoods, related discriminatory city policies and the worsening situation of those who have been displaced. Both also spoke about what Galbraith termed Portland's "veneer of open-mindedness." The two agreed that despite Portland's reputation as a progressive city, race issues are largely ignored, and indeed some interviewees stated that the diversity they attempt to court is not racial or ethnic, but is primarily about age, interest or other factors (C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011; M. Bones, personal communication, February 28, 2011; N. Hannah-Jones, personal communication, December 14, 2010; I. Anderson, personal communication, November 30, 2010; M. Rose, personal communication, March 7, 2011). Portland is a very segregated city, Hannah-Jones commented, so that white Portlanders rarely have to confront their own racism: "we are so behind . . .

elsewhere, people know better," Hannah-Jones said (personal communication, December 14, 2010).

In Portland, large museums and small museums have different levels of awareness about the issues involved in welcoming diverse audiences, and the level of action they take is accordingly very different. Like the literature review, the findings of this thesis show that museums use three methods of inclusion. Some favor broad financial accessibility as their primary way of welcoming audiences of color, knowing that, especially in Portland, low-income people tend to be disproportionately people of color and ethnic minorities. Some favor cultural relevance through exhibits and programs that represent specific groups as their principal avenue of inclusion. Though museum representatives recognized the importance of supporting organizational infrastructure when asked, only OMSI used organizational measures as a primary way of welcoming diverse audiences. Though Portland may not be a progressive city on race and ethnicity issues, the willingness of directors and administrators to discuss these issues was encouraging.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Three broad methods of inclusion became evident through the research presented here: cultural relevance, physical accessibility and organizational systems. It is clear from all three research methodologies that each fulfills a different important function. Using all three methods of welcoming audiences of color together was not a strategy explicitly discussed in either the literature or the interviews and case study. Ideally, however, museums will use all three, and the organization's internal systems and structure will both further the museum's inclusion efforts and support financial and cultural accessibility initiatives.

Within each method, some basic best practices for inclusive organizations emerged. Financial accessibility programs help museums to welcome all people of color, including those who are low-income, just as translations allow those who speak other languages to be comfortable in museums. Cultural accessibility also includes choosing relevant exhibit and program topics, arranging exhibits appropriately and carefully crafting text. Organizationally, the literature and findings suggest that museums should collaborate with other institutions that serve minority audiences, as well as welcoming people of color and from diverse ethnicities as staff and board members. In all of these areas, it is essential that the entire museum be committed to making a continuous, long-term effort. Many

museums have some way to go before they fulfill their potential as inclusive spaces.

Raising Awareness among Portland Museum Workers

Many small organizations expressed some form of the idea that the best way to approach race and ethnicity issues in museums is to treat all people in exactly the same way. A fear of inadvertently offending or of somehow perpetuating racism by acknowledging it as a real issue was a common reason for this attitude, which in fact has the very effect these museums wanted to avoid. What these organizations fail to realize, and what is clear from the literature, is that this stance represents colorblind racism. Colorblind racism is characterized by ignoring racialized issues in favor of individual agency—in museums' case, this means treating the disproportionately white audience of museums as an unwillingness to visit on the part of individuals of color, rather than a problem with the museum, which can be fixed.

It is important to note, however, that though much museum literature addresses race, it does not address colorblindness. In fact, museum education research, which acts as a cornerstone to the field, often supports a colorblind racist viewpoint by asserting that, as a corollary to visitors being motivated to go to museums by their desire to learn, those who do not visit have no desire to learn. It is perhaps not surprising that organizations that consistently reported staff shortages as an issue would not be familiar with literature outside the field. It is

critical that museums have access to this literature, however; for the most part, museum leaders who stated that their organizations treated all people the same seemed to want to do what was best for the community, including community members of color.

In addition to not being aware of literature outside the field, many seemed unaware of literature *within* the field, which can help museums familiarize themselves with relevant issues and strategies as they begin to make connections with local communities of color. It may be that for small institutions that do not have staff professionally trained in museum studies, there is little access to the necessary literature. Professional organizations can play an important role here: while it may not be appropriate for many small Portland museums to apply for membership in the national professional organizations that were mentioned, such as AAM, many of the small institutions interviewed were members of the Oregon Museums Association (OMA). OMA should make materials available to their membership or on their website if they wish to have an even wider impact.

Alternatively, partnerships with university libraries could provide access to literature; though Portland does not have any museum studies programs, Portland State University's public history program would have many relevant works. Any literature provided to Portland museums should include both essays on race from outside the field and articles on museum best practices: for the former, I recommend Patricia Hill Collins and Sandra Harding's works listed in

this bibliography; for the latter, Elaine Gurian's collected writings, Eileen Hooper-Greenhill's book and AAM's older but still visionary *Excellence and Equity*, also in this bibliography.

This thesis examined ways that Portland museums welcome diverse audiences, rather than focusing on the needs of specific audiences that museums could fulfill. In the course of my investigation, however, it became clear that further research needs to be undertaken on the subject of community needs. The literature makes clear that museum professionals should not make assumptions about what audiences of color would like to see in the galleries, and indeed several interviewees expressed in some form that they did not know exactly how minority audiences would like to be welcomed. As seen throughout the course of my studies, much of museum literature focuses on how to serve audiences that already come to the museum; those who elect not to come may be asked about this choice by individual museums in the course of their outreach programs, but formal studies and theoretical frameworks examining why people do not visit are generally lacking in the field. In addition to this general research, Portland museums must discover the particular needs of Portlanders who do not visit museums, which may be specific to the area. OMA may be able to assist Portland-area museums with this research as it relates to minority groups by conducting a study themselves and publishing the results in their newsletter, annual membership meeting or their semi-annual regional meetings.

Equally importantly, a framework for future research about the needs of minority audiences should be developed. As the case study, interviews and literature suggest, inclusion is not a destination, but a continuous process. Audience needs are constantly changing, including the needs of communities of color. Though an initial study conducted by the OMA would prove beneficial, especially to raise awareness of the basic issues involved among small institutions, research into minority audience needs cannot end there; museums need to develop processes that allow them to continue to canvass audiences in their particular area of interest or geographic location. It is in determining best practices for museums' audience research that more work must be done: typical museum practices suggest that institutions should solicit opinions about community needs from leaders of organizations that already serve target groups, but in Portland, this practice may too closely resemble the political tokenism prevalent in the area. These community leaders may be instrumental in helping museums determine possible methods to reach target groups, however, with surveys, focus groups, or other wide-reaching instruments. A research framework would help interviewees who were unsure how to make a genuine, non-patronizing connection begin the process. Once museums are able to do this, they can begin to implement and institutionalize procedures that promote inclusion through accessibility, relevance and organizational systems and structures.

Institutionalizing Methods for Inclusion

In Portland, as in other cities in the United States, racism is institutionalized through unequal public education, lack of support for businesses in predominantly minority neighborhoods and other discriminatory practices, as the literature review and interviewees' comments make clear. As the literature indicates, racism is institutionalized within museums as well (Eichstedt & Small, 2002). It is important for museums, then, to implement and similarly institutionalize policies that encourage diversity; as the literature makes clear, personal commitment to addressing race issues is commendable, but it is not enough to ensure progress for the whole organization on a continuing basis. Creating a truly inclusive museum involves the whole organization, which includes both people—leaders as well as other staff—and processes and policies. Inclusion must be built into the organizational systems and operating procedures of museums so that as the organization changes, its practices remain constant.

Museums can quickly become beholden to major donors, as David Cohen, former executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Craft, points out, and the museum will be organized for their benefit and that of other existing stakeholders, rather than for the benefit of the community at large (personal communication, March 11, 2011). As an organization's practices become established, it becomes harder for them to change. It is essential, therefore, for organizations to institutionalize not only their policies but the values behind these

policies, placing them at the heart of the organization in mission statements. If an organization's commitment to inclusivity is not institutionalized, it is easy for other values to take priority.

This is not to say that personal commitment to the idea is no longer necessary in organizations that have institutionalized inclusion practices. Cohen called one museum with accessibility in its mission "the least accessible" in Portland (personal communication, March 11, 2011). Leadership and staff are still essential to ensure that inclusion practices happen in reality, and institutionalizing such values helps ensure that committed staff have the ability to implement them by making them a priority. Many interviewees suggested that museums could do more to welcome historically excluded audiences than they currently do if they imagined the issue as a higher priority. "Museums don't do a good job," Cohen said. "It's mostly lip service, and nobody does much" (personal communication, March 11, 2011). While many reported that financial restraints held them back from accomplishing all they would like to, becoming relevant to a broader audience and connecting on a deeper level by exploring salient issues has the effect of increasing visitor numbers and widening the pool of potential donors. As OMSI found once they established supportive infrastructure, translation efforts were not a drain on the organization's finances, but rather helped to sell it in new circles (P. Carlson, personal communication, March 17, 2011). Even if the initial

infrastructure requires investment, if museums really do important work, what could be a higher priority than ensuring that the community has access to it?

Most Portland museums that take action to welcome diverse audiences do not have their inclusive measures fully institutionalized. Organizations can institutionalize inclusion in the ways suggested by interviewees, including through policies, strategic plans, mission and vision documents and organizational structure. Museums seem to have an easier time institutionalizing some methods: organizational measures are often institutionalized, and financial accessibility was often accomplished through deeply integrated programs if not actually policy. Though OMSI institutionalized translation in exhibits, no museum in the literature or in my Portland research reported policies that ensure that exhibition and program content is chosen because of its relevance or standpoint.

Though some museums, such as OMSI, were successful at institutionalizing organizational inclusiveness—including structural support for inclusion efforts in the form of its diversity work group and hiring and translation policies—many museums still had some way to go; most did not have policies that encourage hiring a more diverse staff or a diverse board of directors, for example, though many recognized the importance of such practices. It is not enough to hire based on talent, or with the intention of making race a non-issue ("I don't care if they're purple!" one interviewee declared [anonymous portion of personal communication, 2011]). In the short term, a conventional solution in the

form of community advisory groups suggested by the literature provide a first step toward involving minority audiences in running the museum. However, such groups generally exist outside the organization's structure and lack any real power to implement changes. In order for organizations to be welcoming in the long term, the functions of an advisory group must be transferred in-house to museum staff and board members; both groups are part of organizational systems and structure and are thus able to effect change. It is only possible for museum staff to take on the role of a community advisory council if the staff is one that is both diverse and well-versed in the needs of various community groups. For institutions that can do so, a more comprehensive approach to creating a diverse staff could involve following OMSI's example and instituting a formal affirmative action plan. OMSI's is an effective but complex short-term solution; for smaller organizations, less cumbersome policies about diverse staff could be similarly effective. Despite some Portland museums' ability to hire diverse staff and build diverse boards because leadership is committed to inclusion, institutionalizing such efforts through policy is necessary: some organizations without policies were not successful in hiring diverse staff. In addition, as the literature suggests, new leaders many have a different level of personal commitment to this issue, so the commitment must be on the part of the organization rather than the individual.

Museums' institutional policies regarding hiring also need to address complex issues that exist outside the organization, as suggested by the literature; both the literature and my research show that few American museums—including those in Portland—follow suggestions to encourage people of color to enter the field as they must if they expect to be able to hire representative staff. Cathy Galbraith reported that her institution always pays community collaborators that other organizations would ask to volunteer their time, calling them "equal participants with different professional credentials." "We all just have different types of information," Galbraith said (C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011). More institutions must adopt this approach of considering cultural knowledge to be equal to academic knowledge if museums wish the museum field to be less associated with whiteness. As museums choose exhibits that include narratives of communities of color, they will have an increasing need to access this type of cultural information and to follow Galbraith's example. This need should inspire museums to follow the advice of the literature, which offers a clear set of recommendations to increase minority participation in the field in the long term. In addition to the above method, these include offering internships and scholarships that target people from historically excluded groups and providing professional development opportunities for those who work in entry-level positions in the field.

Hiring an ethnically diverse staff may also help museums obtain the necessary skill sets to complete another inclusive step: translating text. Translations should include both information in the galleries and other types of materials such as signs and way-finding guides, membership information, and donation materials so that people from diverse ethnic backgrounds can be fully included in all of the organization's activities. As the literature shows, many Portlanders' first language is not English—with many primarily speaking Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian or Cantonese—and available translations make museums accessible to these audiences. As OMSI's Nelda Reyes states, it is important not only for translations to be available, but for them to be fully integrated into visitors' experience so that they feel welcome (personal communication, March 27, 2011). Despite the importance of having translated materials—and Portland museums' recognition of this importance, as demonstrated in interviews—few Portland museums are able to provide them. Portland museum directors must prioritize translation, which can be done in several ways. In the short term, museums must allocate funds to contract translation work. In the long term, all Portland museums, large and small, must follow OMSI's example and build organizational infrastructure that gives museums the capacity to make translation an integral part of operations; instituting staff and volunteer bilingual assessments at hiring will allow museums

to do this. Museums should also consider forming partnerships with each other in order to share the cost of hiring permanent staff to assist in translating.

Translation from one language to another is not the only translation issue a diverse staff can assist with: museums must also present information in a way that is culturally accessible to people from diverse ethnicities. The literature showed that many of the ways museums organize and present information are Eurocentric rather than neutral.

In addition to presenting information in ways that are not readily accessible to all cultures, the literature shows that museums often present narratives that exclude people of color. In cases where Portland museums did so, it was because they feared the museum would inadvertently cause offense. In order to learn how to accurately represent people of color in their galleries, museums must develop relationships with communities, though, as discussed above, they may not be sure how to do so. Museums should also read available literature. Further research in the field as recommended above will aid sensitive and accurate representation in the galleries. The idea expressed by a few interviewees that some minority groups would be offended because a museum makes an effort to begin to reach to out a single group is bizarre, not least because of its construction of whiteness as normative: when a dominant standpoint is used to interpret content, only the dominant group is included. Including another group makes the narrative more inclusive absolutely even if it does not expand it to

include everyone. Visitors of color are not likely to prefer visiting a museum that is only about white people to visiting a museum that includes white people and another group that is not their own. Further, the importance of using exhibits that include people of color to educate white people about other experiences can hardly be overstated in a city that lacks both racial equality and an awareness of existing racism. For museums that primarily offer physical accessibility to historically excluded groups, raising awareness about the importance of cultural relevance is necessary.

While there is much museum literature that discusses the importance of museums addressing issues that make a difference in people's lives in order to foster deeper connections with audiences and have a more significant impact on their communities, the Portland museum representatives interviewed for this thesis did not discuss activism as such, nor did they mention strategies to engage audiences in exploring issues that affect their daily life; selecting a viewpoint through which to interpret exhibitions was also never brought up as an issue. Museum scholar Lois Silverman's assertion that there is a movement to address topical issues in museums seems premature, then, in the Portland area. As much as the literature discusses this as a conscious movement, interviewees did not. Several Portland museum leaders did, however, mention programming that fits this description as part of their efforts to include minority audiences. One compelling example is the Architectural Heritage Center's focus on Portland's

historical African-American neighborhoods that have recently gentrified, forcing original residents out. African-American visitors "were thrilled that neighborhood sites were recognized as important," while other visitors reported that they learned a great deal about the African-American community (C. Galbraith, personal communication, March 9, 2011): the gentrification of North Portland has been a highly politicized issue and has been a source of tension in the city. Exhibits like this one that take on urgent issues and present the least powerful perspective, as the literature suggests, have the potential to make a real difference.

Museums address such issues, however, largely because organizational leaders are committed to relevance and inclusion; the next step is for these museums to institutionalize these practices by implementing policies that call for criteria in selecting exhibit and program content, so that they consistently address pressing issues and take the perspective of the least powerful, as suggested by standpoint theory (Harding, 2004). A good example of how using a standpoint framework makes a difference is the Clark County Historical Society's participation in a national celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The museum mounted a three-part exhibition from the perspective of local Native Americans, including a section on the contemporary effects of the expedition for the tribes, versus using a dominant white standpoint. The museum was thanked by the community "for giving the exhibit the right

voice," which Executive Director Susan Tissot considered "the highest compliment" (personal communication, March 15, 2011). Institutionalizing such efforts to use an appropriate non-dominant standpoint through policy ensures that the organization stays committed to inclusion, since, as the literature and interviewees stated, inclusion is a continuous process with no endpoint. Museums further need to take this issue one step beyond policy and re-imagine their work as outcome-oriented rather than project-oriented; museums' activities should be guided by their anticipated impact so that, instead of viewing exhibits as discrete projects that cease to matter after they close, all exhibit and programming activities lead to larger, long-term outcomes. This re-imagining makes success harder to define, however. It is easy to determine whether a museum put on an exhibit about gentrification or Native American perspectives on Lewis and Clark, but it is much more difficult to tell if the museum assuaged tensions or changed attitudes that surround these issues.

Appropriately, in the literature, a part of this discussion about impact centered around evaluation and determining success. This is an area in which the field needs to expand; for all the discussion of the importance of assessing impact, no practical means to do so were suggested. While assuming that the proportion of visitors of color is a direct measure of the organization's relevance and accessibility is suspect, the lack of demographic data collection reported by organizations is also troubling, especially in the absence of more sophisticated

evaluation techniques. Indeed, most organizations reported that infrastructure is already in place that would help them collect race and ethnicity data: small museums collect ZIP code data, and collecting race and ethnicity data at the same time should be fairly simple. For larger organizations, following the example of OMSI and including race and ethnicity demographic questions on evaluation surveys would be a simple way to begin to determine audience makeup without using additional resources.

Museums must also institutionalize practices that make galleries financially accessible. (This is not, of course, to imply that all people of color are low-income, only that if museums are to be welcoming spaces for people of color, they cannot exclude the many who are.) Though all Portland museums were financially accessible through special admission programs, free days or free and low-cost regular admission, these programs were not always fully integrated into the organization. Even in cases where free admission is one of the organization's driving values, this can change when not fully integrated into the organization, as was the case at the Museum of Contemporary Craft (D. Cohen, personal communication, March 11, 2011). Though the literature and Portland museum leaders regarded financial accessibility as important, the emphasis that museums place on revenue as a measure of success means that this value is not prioritized as it needs to be. OMSI's use of a multiple-measure bottom line that includes both financial and social benefit provides a model that other museums should

follow. If museums use such a double bottom line, programs such as free admission are more likely to remain even in the face of financial difficulties.

A Model for Institutional Change

Like museums in other cities, Portland museums must make many changes before they reach their full potential as inclusive organizations. Most of the literature and most interviewees suggested the same top-down model of change to envision how museums could make themselves more relevant to diverse audiences. The literature did contain a another option, however, in Jim Collins' (2001) idea that making change and demonstrating success should come before seeking buy-in from colleagues. When combined with the leadership-driven theory of organizational change presented by others, a powerful model emerges. Because inclusion is an ongoing process, this combined model should be understood as an evolving process that may be repeated many times. As interviewees suggested, first leaders at any level of the organization become aware of the need to specifically welcome audiences of color and people from diverse ethnicities, either through professional museum education, personal experiences or another avenue. Leaders then make a commitment to change their organization's practices and adjust their work to be more inclusive. When these efforts are successful, others in the organization will recognize and want to join in creating further successes, as the literature shows. When inclusive practices have caught on in an organization, or even in a part of an organization, they can be

institutionalized; when staff is committed and inclusive practices are deeply embedded in the fabric of an organization, long-term inclusion is possible, and indeed likely, to continue in spite of inevitable changes in the organization. Finally, museums must measure the impact of their efforts in order to determine whether they are successful. In cases where an initiative is less than a complete solution, this evaluation reveals additional inclusion issues and the cycle of change begins again so that institutions are constantly making small changes in order to become more inclusive.

Both large and small museums in Portland can use this model of change, though they enter it at different points: while larger museums are at the point of inclusion practices spreading throughout the organization and are beginning to institutionalize them, interviews showed that many small museums have not had the chance to take the first step of becoming aware of the need to take action in order for minority audiences to feel welcome. In order to implement this model of change, museum workers must have access to materials that can provide information on the need to actively reach out to minority audiences, such as literature, conferences, professional workshops or communications with museums which have successfully implemented inclusive practices, such as OMSI. They must also have the ability to practice what business literature terms "double loop learning," which is the ability to think about tasks in a larger context, so that employees are able to see where processes and goals need improvement.

Museum employees also need a degree of flexibility in order to actually implement the changes that they determine will assist inclusion. These latter needs represent serious challenges for Portland museums, who reported staff and budget shortages as some of their biggest obstacles in making inclusive change.

In response to open-ended interview questions, many small museums initially stated that they did not take special action to welcome people from diverse backgrounds. On answering further questions, however, many museums revealed that in fact they had some existing assets that would assist them in welcoming historically excluded groups, such as collections that represent communities of color and extensive marketing capabilities. These museums need to visualize these assets as the basis for a coherent strategy of inclusion; they already have small initial successes, as this change model indicates are necessary. Again, the field needs to raise awareness among these museum workers that inclusion is an issue, as well as about what organizational elements will best assist museums in their efforts to be inclusive. From this research, it appears that there are many: in addition to marketing ability and collections, which interviewees named as essential, the literature shows that the ability to collaborate, strong leadership and being mission-oriented are valuable assets. These assets are common in many Portland museums.

Similarly, larger museums can use these assets as well as their existing inclusion practices as starting points to establish more comprehensive efforts that use all three avenues of welcoming minority audiences.

Reclaiming a Racialized Space

The literature describes the racism of early museums; they implied—and sometimes explicitly stated—that they were places for whites only. Moreover, the content of many museums either was limited to white activities or included people of color only with the aim of exoticizing them in order to prove white superiority. Only one Portland director directly mentioned overcoming museums' racist past, and another spoke of the need to overcome the racialization of the museum space (D. Cohen, personal communication, March 11, 2011; G. Vogt, personal communication, February 23, 2011). This relative lack of discussion on the ground about museums' past is not troubling, however: the issue is well represented in the literature, and all of museums' efforts to be inclusive are in effect efforts to overcome an unenlightened history even if they are not overtly stated to be so. If museums learn about the necessity of taking inclusive action, prioritize the issue and institutionalize the changes they make, someday museums will lose their identity as white spaces. In the meantime, museums that make themselves inclusive spaces help educate white Portlanders about Portlanders of color. In a segregated metropolitan area like Portland, showing white residents

the diversity of their city helps bring people and issues to their attention that are otherwise largely ignored.

Museum scholars imagine that the future of museums lies in addressing these social issues that affect daily life. This interpretive framework will help museums become culturally accessible institutions; free and low-cost programming will ensure that museums are financially accessible institutions for diverse audiences regardless of income; and organizational systems will help make museums truly welcoming spaces for all people.

Product Description

From the wealth of literature that exists, it is clear that the challenge in raising awareness among museums about the existence of this issue, and about what practices are most effective, is not a lack of resources. Access to these resources may be limited, and some museums simply may not realize that there is more to learn about welcoming historically excluded groups. I propose to assemble a committee of Portland museum leaders, members from minority communities in the area and organizations that serve these communities to help raise awareness and offer museums support as they institute inclusive practices. This committee will act as an accessible and visible resource, raising awareness through its existence and providing assistance to museums that request it.

This committee will function similarly to OMSI's diversity workgroup, acting as a resource for those who wish to make inclusive changes but are not sure where to begin or how to navigate the process. OMSI's model is effective, but an internal group of experts is not practical for small museums with few staff members; a city-wide initiative solves this problem and promotes the kind of collaboration that is recognized as an important avenue to inclusion.

This committee would be made up of several groups of people. First, Portland-area museum professionals with successful inclusion programs should be on the committee in order to share their expertise with other museums. Organizations such as OMSI, the Oregon Historical Society, the World Forestry

Center, the Architectural Heritage Center and the Clark County Historical Society should each elect a staff member to serve on the committee. Various institutional sizes and disciplines need to be represented so that committee members have a better understanding of how to tailor inclusive practices to the needs of specific organizations.

The committee needs to also include members from minority communities and leaders from organizations that serve minority populations in Portland, including museums and cultural centers such as the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center and the Hellenic-American Cultural Center & Museum. Institutions such as the Oregon African American Museum, which is not located in Portland but aims to cover the whole state, should also be included. The City of Portland's Office of Human Relations should send a delegate, as their mission is to promote racial and ethnic harmony, and they have considerable experience doing so, even if it is not in the museum field. Similarly, the Coalition of Communities of Color should participate, as should the Portland-based Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs.

Finally, the Oregon Museums Association should participate, as it has additional means of promoting the committee as a resource and of distributing information to a large number of local museums, helping to further the committee's aim of raising awareness and making best practices known.

These members will be able to share their expertise about ways to reach minority groups in the Portland area. They also might be able to provide preliminary information about the needs of various groups and, more importantly in the long term, suggestions about how museums can research community needs. This committee should eventually go one step further and facilitate collaborative research into audience needs.

The committee should meet quarterly and publish their meeting minutes publicly. Between meetings, museum workers who wish to request assistance should be able to e-mail the committee to request information or ideas about how to implement inclusive practices; committee members should be able to individually answer requests as well as discuss them at meetings in order to bring multiple areas of expertise to the issue.

As the committee helps museums to understand that action is needed in order to make museums welcoming places and helps to give museums the tools necessary to build relationships with minority groups, Portland museums will be more able to make connections with audiences of all races and ethnicities.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Does your museum do anything special to welcome diverse ethnic groups and people of color?

> Are you able to have translations available of any of your gallery or membership and donation materials?
>
> Do you have free days or programs that let groups come for free?

How do you fund your efforts to welcome diverse ethnic groups and people of color?

Are you able to measure your audience demographics?

What organizational infrastructure exists to help you welcome audiences of all races and ethnicities?

> Do you have formal policies encouraging board or staff diversity?

Are there next steps you would like to see your organization take with regard to this issue, if you had the resources?

Does your organization face challenges when it considers taking action on these issues?

In your experience, what are the most important practices a museum can follow in welcoming diverse audiences?

Is there anything I didn't ask about that I should know about this topic?

Additional Interview Questions for OMSI Case Study

What role does visitor studies/the diversity workgroup play at OMSI?

> How does it influence organizational practices?

How does visitor studies/the workgroup fit into OMSI's organizational structure?

Who is part of the diversity workgroup?

I've noticed in the newspaper articles I've read about OMSI that your efforts to be a space for diverse audiences are often mentioned. Is it part of your strategy to highlight your efforts in your public relations?

Appendix B

Interviews

All interviews were conducted by telephone.

Anonymous
Executive Director
10:30 a.m. March 5, 2011

Ingrid Anderson
Director of Education
Portland Children's Museum
4:00 p.m. November 30, 2010

Marta Bones
Executive Director
Pittock Mansion
11:00 a.m. February 28, 2011

Elaine Butler
Executive Director
Philip Foster Farm
2:00 p.m. February 27, 2011

David Cohen
Former Executive Director
Museum of Contemporary Craft
Executive Director
Tryon Creek Nature Center
4:00 p.m. March 11, 2011

Dorothy Douglas and Utahna Kerr
Board President and Director of Community Outreach
Gresham Historical Society
1:00 p.m. March 10, 2011

Kathie Freund
Co-Director
Crown Point Country Historical Society
4:30 p.m. February 27, 2011

Cathy Galbraith
Executive Director
Architectural Heritage Center
4:00 p.m. March 9, 2011

Nikole Hannah-Jones
Reporter
The Oregonian
11:30 a.m. December 14, 2010

Dr. Gary Hartshorn
Executive Director
World Forestry Center
10:00 a.m. March 3, 2011

Twila Mysinger
Board Secretary
Fairview-Rockwood-Wilkes Historical Society
2:30 p.m. March 4, 2011

Mike Rose
Executive Director
Oregon Sports Hall of Fame & Museum
11:00 a.m. March 7, 2011

Susan Tissot
Executive Director
Clark County Historical Society and Museum
2:30 p.m. March 15, 2011

Dr. George Vogt
Executive Director
Oregon Historical Society
10:00 a.m. February 23, 2011

Michael Wong
Board President
Beaverton Historical Society
4:30 p.m. March 15, 2011

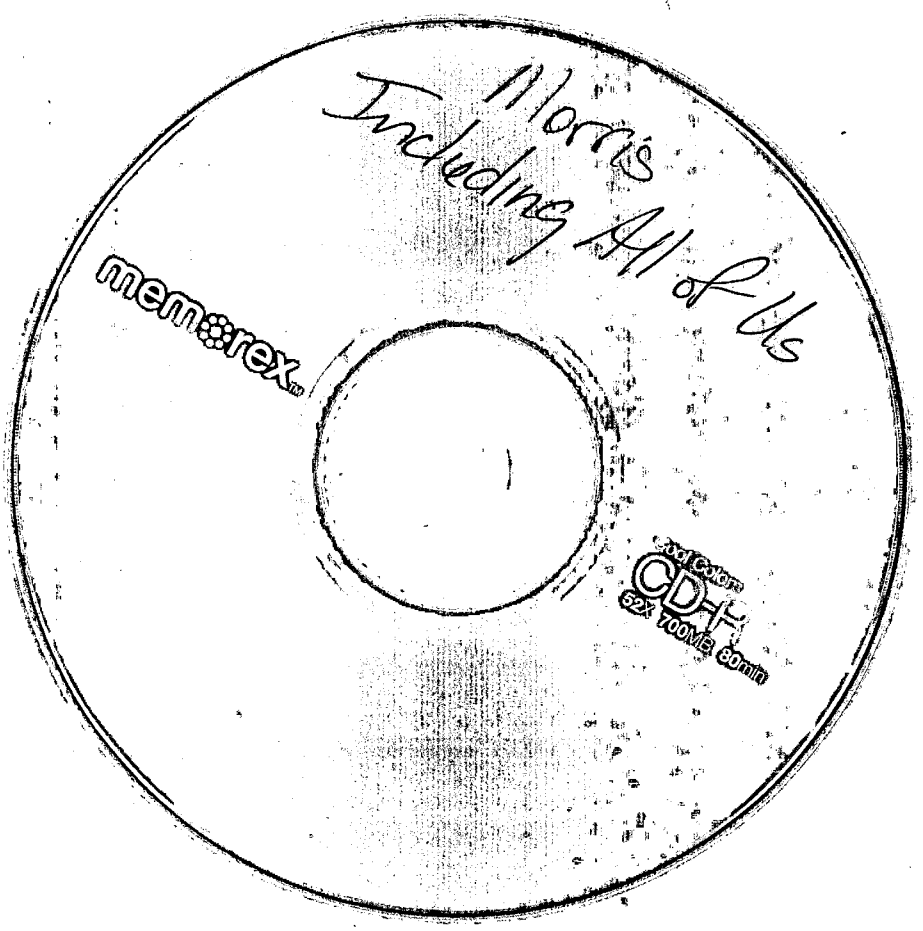
Case Study Interviews
Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

Dr. Marcie Benne
Evaluation and Visitor Studies Manager
11:00 a.m. December 10, 2010

Paul Carlson
Senior Vice President
3:00 p.m. March 17, 2011

Tim Hecox
Outreach Educator
12:00 p.m. March 12, 2011

Nelda Reyes
Evaluation and Visitor Studies Associate
5:00 p.m. March 27, 2011


Morris
Including All of Us
memorex
52X 700MB 80min