

FUTURE MUSEUM SYMPOSIUM 2023

February 23 - 26

Technology is changing museums inside and out. From collections to marketing to exhibitions; from research to community engagement and security. Nothing of the traditional museum has been untouched and the change is still underway. The industry regularly offers new opportunities, the audiences have fresh expectations, and museum professionals do their best to adopt and adapt. This massive iterative process to bring museums into the 21st century is redefining what a museum is and, perhaps, what it should be.

All of us, one way or another, are participating in the real-time transformation of the museum enterprise as makers, users, and consumers. Disruption, innovation, and transformation is the accepted lexicon of the last few decades. After a time of experimentation and investment in technology pursued to discover and build the museum(s) of the future, we now should ask— Are we making better experiences, better civic amenities, better institutions to serve and help our communities?

Funded by the Shanghai Bureau of Education, and hosted by the Future Museum Studio at the Institute for Cultural and Creative Industry, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, **The Future Museum Symposium 2023** is a series of writings and public discussions that invite a select group of leading thinkers and practitioners in design, curation, technology, art, and museum administration from around the world to bring their ideas, projects, critiques, and questions, and help us gauge the state of the museum as it is being actively transformed into the museum of the future.*

This symposium emphasizes discussion. We hope that through discussions, we will find a set of insights that outline broad institutional goals for the future of museums. Discussions are transcribed and documented, with the intention of distilling these conversations to inform future discussions that workshop strategies to achieve discovered goals.

Participants are asked to write brief position papers on topics critical to the museum today. These accounts become the basis for the panel discussions in which experts, from different vantagepoints, think-tank, analyze, and propose ways forward. The international discussions will be held virtually, via the Tencent video chat platform, and will be live translated (English/Chinese), and live streamed to an audience of thousands in China and around the world. Discussions and position papers will be transcribed, translated in dual English/Chinese text, and shared through the FMS website along with summaries and analysis created by the graduate student researchers at FMS in Shanghai.

Through these proceedings, we hope to make our discussions more profound and create connections of communication and thought between different silos and disciplines of museum practice for the future.

PANELS & DISCUSSION TOPICS

Each topic centers on a different locus of the museum: the 'backroom' where an institution's structure and administration are maintained, the 'front-room' where experiences are created for

* Our 2022 series of lectures and discussions, *Imagining Future Museum: What? How? Who?*, featured Låth Carlson from the Museum of the Future in Dubai, Todd Palmer, Director of Diversity in Design (Chicago), exhibition designers Olga Subirós and Mona Kim (Barcelona and Paris), Sacha Mitrofanoff, the Director of Exhibitions at the Museum of Natural History Paris, and Songhao Huang, co-founder of Raiden Institute, a Shanghai leader in innovative metaverse curation.

museum audiences, and the 'outside' where the presence of the museum is projected via publications and promotion. To each area we apply a different lens for examination, and predictions of the future.

FUTURE MUSEUM SYMPOSIUM 2023 - SCHEDULE

Future Museum **COLLECTIONS & CONTENT** – *Backroom problems and solutions*

EST / NEW YORK – Thursday February 23 rd , 6-8:30am
GMT / LONDON - Thursday February 23 rd , 11am-1:30pm
CHINA / SHANGHAI - Thursday February 23 rd , 7-9:30pm

International live-streaming: <https://meeting.tencent.com/l/ACvCvZ9zYJec>

Future Museum **EXPERIENCE** – *Front-room audiences, causes and effects*

EST / NEW YORK – Friday February 24 th , 8-10:30pm
CHINA / SHANGHAI - Saturday February 25 th , 9-11:30am

International live-streaming: <https://meeting.tencent.com/l/99Qd5ThJKkeo>

Future Museum **TECHNOLOGY** – *Outside the museum, the present and future*

EST / NEW YORK – Saturday February 25 th , 8-10:30pm
CHINA / SHANGHAI - Sunday February 26 th , 9-11:30am

International live-streaming: <https://meeting.tencent.com/l/0QpwkaGgCAPk>

DISCUSSION PANELS

Special invitee:

- o **Lonnie Bunch**, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution

The Secretary will deliver a short, video-recorded statement on the future of museums to introduce the symposium. ([link](#))

Discussion: Future Museum **COLLECTIONS & CONTENT** – *Backroom problems and solutions*

Historically, collections have been central to museums. But innovations in digitization, remote presence, and virtual exhibitions have disrupted the paradigm of a permanent physical collection. We should ask the questions: What is the purpose of collections? Have the concepts of access and preservation been transformed by technology? How must the institutional structure of the museum change?

During the pandemic lockdowns, many museums used technology to solve immediate problems. Yet, these technologies have raised new problems and questions. What solutions can we imagine?

Moderator: Alan Rhodes

Discussants

- **Prof. Robert Bickers**, University of Bristol, Director of the Historical Photographs of China virtual archive.
- **Cristiano Bianchi**, Director, Keepthinking, museum software and design consultancy
- **Professor Emma Duester**, Author of the upcoming book, [Digitization and Culture in Vietnam](#).
- **Dr. Frances Liddell**, Research fellow, Art & Antiquities, Blockchain Consortium, UK.

Discussion: Future Museum **EXPERIENCE** – *Front-room audiences, causes and effects*

Around the world, visitors seek out the 'museum experience'. Institutions innovate ways to grow and diversify popular audience experiences and to meet expectations that are created by other museums as well as other public venues. Yet new technologies can disrupt the experience of public space, authenticity, and reverence. Will museum experiences be transformed in the future? How can we preserve what is good, while still innovating and growing?

In exhibitions, 'immersion' is a popular term for describing the desired effect, which can be pursued through elaborate innovations. We can ask: What effects do we want these immersive innovations to have on the audience? Specifically, what causes those effects?

Moderator: John Russick

Discussants:

- **Kate Haley Goldman**, Director of HG&Co., Exhibition planning and evaluation.
- **Benjamin Filene**, Head of Curatorial Affairs, National Museum of American History.
- **Joy Bivins**, Director, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.
- **Koven Smith**, Knight Foundation, Senior Director Arts.

Discussion: Future Museum **TECHNOLOGY** – *Outside the museum, the present and future*

Over the last several decades, museums have innovated in the use of new technologies to display historical media, interactive exhibits, contextual information, and extensive publications online. In the past few years, virtual reality and metaverse productions have been especially important. These changes have disrupted the traditional identity of the museum; we are

confronted with the ontological question: Where does the museum begin and end? Have the boundaries of the museum been permanently transformed?

Predicting the future is unreliable—how many of us would have predicted these early 2020s? But we can take stock of imminent changes, and what vectors can be traced pointing to future practices.

Moderator: Jack Ludden

Discussants:

- **Josh Goldblum**, Founder & CEO, Blue Cadet
- **Liz Neely**, Curator of Digital Experience, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum
- **Nikhil Trivedi**, Director of Engineering, Art Institute of Chicago.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

Alan Rhodes & Future Museum Media Innovation Studio

The Future Museum Media Innovation Studio (FMS) within the Institute for Cultural and Creative Industry at Shanghai Jiao Tong University is a long-term research initiative to create, in partnership with museums and archives, media experiences of history—especially Shanghai history. Research initiatives include advancing the imagination of future museums, connecting new audiences with historical media, developing new methods and technologies for sharing VR and AR media, and the promotion of Shanghai's unique cosmopolitan history.

Over the last decade, the project leader, Geoffrey Alan Rhodes, has produced augmented reality and virtual reality experiences with a number of institutions and artists in the USA, including the long-term collaboration with the Chicago History Museum, called the *Chicago 00 Project* (chicago00.org). In 2021, FMS received funding from the Shanghai Education Bureau to support a series of lectures, symposia, and projects to advance our imagination of the future museum. FMS is currently developing projects that innovate the use of new media for virtual history experiences, including new viewing technologies, and new imagistic content telling Shanghai's stories.

John Russick

John Russick has held positions at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, and the Chicago History Museum. His digital initiative, the Chicago 00 Project, won a MUSE award in 2018 from the American Alliance of Museums and a Chicago Innovation award in 2019. In 2014, he forged an international collaboration between the Chicago History Museum and the Polish History Museum in Warsaw to develop an exhibition on the history of the Polish diaspora. In 1999, he designed the exhibitions for the Gordion Museum, near Polatli, Turkey, which was a finalist for the Museum of Europe award that year. His most recent articles, "Evaluating the Impact of Augmented and Virtual Reality" (2021) and "The Museum Inside Out" (2020) were featured in *Museum*, the magazine of the American Alliance of Museums. He is currently the Visiting Director of International Projects

at FMS, and the Interim President & CEO of the Levine Museum of the New South, in Charlotte, NC.

Jack Ludden

Jack Ludden is a cultural heritage expert who builds open and collaborative work environments by bridging experts from different fields of interest. Jack has been a leader in the cultural heritage community for more than 25 years as a digital advocate, communications specialist, and a user-experience expert at organizations such as the Getty, Disney, and the Shoah Visual History Foundation. Jack is an active board member of the Sandor Family Foundation, The Book Truck, Northwestern's Alumni Association, and he is a past chair of American Alliance of Museums Professional Network. Jack works with Balboa Park Online Collaborative (BPOC) as a technology, innovation expert.

ICCI

USC-SJTU Institute of Cultural and Creative Industry (ICCI) was jointly established by Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) and the University of Southern California (USC) in 2015. ICCI aims to develop international collaboration in the creative cultural industries and innovate new relationships between industry, cultural institutions, art, technology, and business. Shanghai Jiao Tong University is China's top research university in multiple disciplines, and is located in the city of Shanghai, China's economic and cultural center.

DISCUSSANTS

Lonnie Bunch, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution

Lonnie G. Bunch III is the 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian. He assumed his position June 16, 2019. As Secretary, he oversees 21 museums, 21 libraries, the National Zoo, numerous research centers and several education units and centers. Two new museums—the National Museum of the American Latino and the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum—are in development.

Previously, Bunch was the director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. When he started as director in July 2005, he had one staff member, no collections, no funding and no site for a museum. Driven by optimism, determination and a commitment to build "a place that would make America better," Bunch transformed a vision into a bold reality. The museum has welcomed more than 8 million visitors since it opened in September 2016 and has compiled a collection of 40,000 objects that are housed in the first "green building" on the National Mall. In 2019, the creation of the museum became the first Smithsonian effort to be the topic of a *Harvard Business Review* case study.

Prof. Robert Bickers, University of Bristol, Director, Historical Photographs of China.

Professor Bickers specializes in the history of colonialism, and in particular of the British empire and its relations with China and the history of Shanghai (1843-1950s), and modern Chinese history. His book, *Out of China: How the Chinese ended the era of Western Domination* (Allen Lane, and Harvard University Press, 2017), was shortlisted for the 2018 Wolfson Prize for History. This is available as a Penguin Books paperback in the UK. He is interested in experimenting with how we tell histories, and in thinking about what stories we tell, and has been collaborating with colleagues in a 'Creative Histories' initiative.

His earlier work includes *Britain in China* (1999), and three books published by Allen Lane/Penguin: *Empire Made Me: An Englishman adrift in Shanghai* (2003), *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914* (2011) and *Getting Stuck in for Shanghai: Putting the Kibosh on the Kaiser from the Bund* (Penguin, 2014).

Bickers directs the [Hong Kong History Project](#), and the [Historical Photographs of China](#) digitisation initiative. He also ran an AHRC-funded project on the history of the [Chinese Maritime Customs Service](#), was Director and Co-Director of the [British Inter-university China Centre](#), a Co-Director of the AHRC-funded [REACT Knowledge Exchange Hub](#), and led an ESRC-funded project, 'Colonialism in comparative perspective: Tianjin under nine flags' (2008-11).

Cristiano Bianchi, Director, Keepthinking, museum software and design consultancy.

Cristiano Bianchi has degrees in architecture from University of Florence and in Virtual Architecture from University College London. He lectured extensively on both subjects, as well as in interactive design and software development. In 2001 he started Keepthinking, converting from the design of physical architecture to the design of information spaces. Keepthinking works exclusively with museums, archives, libraries and other cultural organisations, helping them manage and present their information in a beautiful, accessible and sustainable way.

Prof. Emma Duester, [Digitization and Culture in Vietnam](#) (upcoming publication).

Emma Duester has served as Lecturer in the School of Communication and Design at RMIT University. Emma is principal investigator of a research project exploring the digitization of the art and culture sector in Hanoi, Vietnam. Emma received a PhD in Media and Communications from Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2017. She is the author of 'The Politics of Migration and Mobility in the Art World: Transnational Baltic Artistic Practices Across Europe,' published by Intellect in 2021. She has also been Associate Lecturer at the University of Roehampton, the University of the Arts London and Goldsmiths, University of London. Her areas of research interest include the creative industries, art and culture sector, digital technologies, and transnational communication.

Dr. Frances Liddell, Research fellow, Art & Antiquities, Blockchain Consortium, UK / Lecturer in Cultural Practices, University of Manchester.

Frances Liddell is a researcher, writer, advisor, and lecturer working at the intersection of museum practice and web3 technologies. Her PhD research was one of the first pieces of empirical research done on museum theory and NFTs. In partnership with National Museums Liverpool, it explored how this technology might challenge our understanding of ownership,

authority, authenticity, and social value. Her current research focuses primarily on the themes of value, shared guardianship, and psychological ownership. Frances is currently a part-time lecturer at University of Manchester teaching Arts Management and Business Strategies. In addition, she is a research fellow at the Arts & Antiquities Blockchain Consortium. She also works on a part-time basis with Iconic Moments, a web3 platform dedicated to cultural and heritage institutions

Kate Haley Goldman, Director of HG&Co., Exhibition planning and evaluation.

Kate Haley Goldman is a planner, strategist, and evaluator focusing on strategic goal setting, community engagement, and stakeholder feedback and impact evaluation. Her clients say she has a talent for taking in information from a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders and distilling that information coherent next-steps and calls to action. Kate is passionate about using evidence, connecting the dots between impact and outcomes, and ensuring that future goals and aspirations of the organization are realized.

She works with a broad range of museums, libraries, historical societies, large science centers, small nature centers, amateur clubs, organizations, and other like-minded institutions. With experience in interpretive planning, prototyping, exhibition evaluation, projects, and complex content, she has deep expertise in the field of informal learning. She has directed projects on visitor journeys, interpretive plans, exhibitions, data visualization systems, and digital storytelling.

Benjamin Filene, Head of Curatorial Affairs, National Museum of American History.

Filene is Head of Curatorial Affairs at the National Museum of American History. He joined the museum from the North Carolina Museum of History, where he served as the chief curator, responsible for shaping the museum's exhibition program and collections development. Before that, he was the director of public history and a professor of history at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, where he initiated projects that brought together students and community partners to collaborate on projects designed to engage the public with historical issues that had contemporary resonance. He served as the senior exhibition developer at the Minnesota History Center, one of the nation's largest state history museums. Filene gained a global perspective from Fulbright Fellowship work with the Helsinki City Museum and the University of Helsinki, which further developed his goals to re-envision national museums to foster collective identity. He holds a PhD in American Studies from Yale University.

Joy Bivins, Director, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

Joy Bivins is Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture—a division of the New York Public Library and the world's premier repository for archival materials related to African, African diaspora and African American life, history, and culture. Before joining the staff of the Schomburg Center in 2020 as Associate Director of Collections and Research Services, Bivins was Chief Curator of the forthcoming International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina. From 2002-2018, she was on staff at the Chicago History Museum where she served as Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs. Ms. Bivins holds degrees from the University of Michigan and Cornell University.

Koven Smith, Knight Foundation, Senior Director Arts.

Koven Smith has 20 years of experience leading digital initiatives at the intersection of art, technology and institutional strategy. He is the Senior Director of Arts at the Knight Foundation.

Prior to joining Knight, Smith oversaw digital teams at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Denver Art Museum, the Blanton Museum of Art and the Indianapolis Museum of Art. As a consultant, his work included engagements with the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, CultureSource and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, among others.

Smith has also taught museum digital strategy at NYU and Johns Hopkins and has performed research on behalf of the Museum Computer Network, the Texas Association of Museums, the Kress Foundation and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. He currently serves on the education committee of the National Women's History Museum and the boards of the American Composers Forum and the Western Museums Association.

Josh Goldblum, Founder & CEO, Blue Cadet

Josh Goldblum is an award-winning experience designer and the founding principal of Bluecadet.

Bluecadet's interdisciplinary work with museums and technology unites revolutionary innovations with a sense of human craftsmanship. He has overseen the design and development of interactive experiences and strategies for clients such as MoMA, Google, Bloomberg, Doctors Without Borders, National Geographic, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

As a pioneer in the technological transformation of the cultural sector, Josh is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and symposia, has appeared on CNN, CBS News, and NPR, and his work has been featured in publications including *The New Yorker*, *USA Today*, *HOW* magazine, *Communication Arts*, and *People* magazine. His work has been widely recognized with top awards including an Emmy from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, as well as honors from the American Alliance of Museums, the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, The American Institute of Graphic Arts, and South by Southwest.

Liz Neely, Curator of Digital Experience, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

Liz Neely is a human-centered digital strategist focused on developing inclusive experiences supported by sustainable organizational workflows. As the Curator of Digital Experience at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, she is the product lead for *Linking O'Keeffe*, which publishes information from art, archive, library, and historic home collections as open access linked data. In her role as a curator, she has developed an innovative partnership with the digital entertainment company Electric Playhouse to create an interactive immersive experience called 'Music for the Eyes' attracting new audiences to the story of Georgia O'Keeffe. Neely has previously held positions at the Art Institute of Chicago, the American Alliance of Museums, and as board chair for the MCN professional network. She participates in fieldwide explorations such as the 2021 Cooper-Hewitt's *Transforming Museum Experience* program which culminated in a toolkit for being a change-agent within museums. Neely holds an M.B.A. from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

Nikhil Trivedi, Director of Engineering, Art Institute of Chicago.

Nikhil Trivedi is the Director of Engineering at the Art Institute of Chicago as well as a facilitator, educator, and community builder. His experience planning and executing complex web projects has also brought him to work with institutions to create concrete plans around the healing and accountability from historic traumas like colonialism, slavery, genocide, and war. He's a regular contributor at The Inluseum and is a project advisor for MASS Action. His writing has been featured in the Journal for Museum Education, Fwd: Museums, and Model View Culture.

Trivedi holds a BS in Human-Computer Interaction from DePaul University and was the recipient of the Gender Equality Award by United Nations Women in 2016.