**Interview 33**

Allison S: So to get us started, do you mind just introducing yourself to me and telling me a little bit about who you are, where you're from, and maybe a brief summary of your education and employment background?

Participant 33: Sure, I’m Participant 33, 48 years old. I have a BFA from Cornell and some post-grad work in Art Education at Arizona State University. Um, I have a decade worth of experience as a museum professional both in exhibitions and education, and I recently resigned during… Ah just right after Covid, this beginning of this year.

Allison S: Gotcha. Can you tell me a little bit more about the role that you were in, and what you did day-to-day?

Participant 33: Sure, I was the Director of Education. I designed all educational programming from preschool to adult in terms of on-site programming at the museum, in the gallery, during school visits, or museum visits. I gave tours. I wrote curriculum for any school programs that we would offer. I often taught classes, or hired other educators to teach classes, and consulted on different committees in the community, specifically for Penn State University through their Medical center. I was on quite a few committees for selecting artwork that was research-based, that would be beneficial for patients and families in the clinical environment, and I also worked quite a bit with medical professionals in catering visits in how to use art as a sort of self-preservation, self-knowledge, communication, tool, also for honing their clinical skills as well.

Allison S: Wow, it sounds like you were responsible for a lot of different things.

Participant 33: With a very small staff. Yes, a lots of different, a wide range of responsibilities. But yeah,

Allison S: About how many people work there, in total?

Participant 33: Four full-time employees and a few handful of part-time employees, and then mostly volunteer based.

Allison S: Gotcha. How did you feel about your job overall like? What did you like about it? What did you dislike? And if you could rate it on a scale from one to ten. What would you have given it?

Participant 33: I would rate it as an eight. It was very high, because it allowed me to use my education in my everyday career, and working with people around artwork was always the motivating factor. Um, I think that it, although it had its challenges. I feel like I was seeing the benefit of the work that I was doing during visits, during my work, I could see that I was making a difference in the community, and with a lot of students that were coming through. So that was very rewarding.

Allison S: Gotcha. And was there anything that you would change?

Participant 33: The work environment was less than optimal, I would say, and I think it the challenges of working for a nonprofit often got in the way, because that we were always looking for funding. I never operated on a on a consistent budget. I was constantly having to design programs that would sustain themselves, which educational programs rarely do. So that was very frustrating and challenging to know that you could make even more of a difference if you had more resources, and they weren't always available to us because the arts were so somewhat harder to raise money than for say other health-related causes or basic needs for students. Those seem to come first. Um, even though there were certain areas that I thought our work were really beneficial, especially when you take into consideration some of the mental health and social challenges that were beginning to become a much more serious effort during the pandemic.

Allison S: Right, right. when you say work environment, is that what you're talking about mostly the funding and the lack of resources? Or did you need something else by that?

Participant 33: I think it was challenging. I think the specific people that I worked with, and the fact that it was so small made it harder than some jobs to not let daily sort of social challenges amongst the people that you work with to get in the way. It was a very small environment and closed environment, and when you had interpersonal issues, they often had a drastic effect on what you were doing, and at times they could have potentially an effect on whether a certain program would get approved or not, or supported.

Allison S: Oh, right, yeah. Can you tell me a little bit more about the people you were with and about the culture or atmosphere?

Participant 33: Sure, they were… We were considered, we considered, ourselves fairly diverse. It was three women, one man. The man’s identified as gay and our boss was, I’d say, late sixties, but my two coworkers were early twenties or maybe mid twenties when we started, so I was sort of in the middle in my forties, so I was really the only one in my I’m sort of stage of life, certainly. My other two coworkers that I did a lot of program development and shared staff duties with were much younger. They didn't have a family to take care of, and they're unmarried. My boss was married and had children, so we shared some of those experiences, but generally we were very… We had a very collegiate culture. We supported our, we supported all of our different programs, especially in the public eye, to make sure that people understood that it was a very well run and cooperative environment. I didn't always feel that that was the case behind the scenes. (laughs)

Allison S: Sure.

Participant 33: I felt like the, I felt like the energy was… I think we tried at the beginning of that sort of almost ten-year relationship, to be very social outside of work, and that wasn't always easy to maintain. And so, once the social relationship kind of drifted to just professional, I think it became much more challenging.

Allison S: Hmm, interesting. What… Like how often did you have to interact with your coworkers? And did you also interact a lot with clients and volunteers? And in what capacity?

Participant 33: I certainly had daily involvement with staff. I often… We had staff meetings weekly, and other than that, most of my daily interactions was with either students or volunteers, visitors. I was much more stationed in the museum as opposed to back in an office somewhere. So, my daily responsibilities kept me very comfortably interacting with the public, and not necessarily um all day sitting in an office with coworkers.

Allison S: Sure, sure. Did you feel like you could be yourself at work, or did you find that you had to act a certain way?

Participant 33: I definitely did not act the way that I would consider myself to be. I definitely… I could, I could maintain a humorous um… Again, a very superficial a relationship. But I went through a really long divorce, and I would say once I started that process, that was not something that people really wanted to be a part of, and that ended a lot of the sort of personal interactions. Then it became um very uncomfortable for everybody, I think, to… No one could really relate. And therefore people stopped asking personal questions, and it became quite a division between “this is my professional environment, and this is my personal environment,” and some of that was very appropriate. But I was going through obviously quite a lot of emotional stress, and there was very few opportunities to really express that or not that I asked for special attention, but I certainly kept that completely out of that environment.

Allison S: Was that difficult to do? Did you find that it was like taxing in addition to the stress that you were already experiencing to try to keep that hidden?

Participant 33: Yes, I stopped maintaining any…I really had to throw up a wall, and I had to just make sure not to share a lot of what might be going on, and that was different. I think that was different, because I think people often knew what everybody had going on in their lives. And once it became very emotionally taxing, that was, that was more than what people really wanted to know about, so I very much turned all of that off, and then it became sort of work talk only.

Allison S: Gotcha. Did your colleagues ever vent or complain to you about their personal lives, or about anything?

Participant 33: Yes, all the time.

Allison S: But you didn't necessarily feel comfortable complaining or venting about personal stuff back to them?

Participant 33: Uh, I think I try to when I would complain or vent it. It sort of took a much more professional thing. It was something in the workplace that was bothering me, and I tried…Maybe I would mention something that was going on, but I would not dwell on the personal stuff certainly.

Allison S: Sure, sure. What kinds of things did your colleagues talk about when they when they were, you know, ask you to listen?

Participant 33: I'd say the number one thing was cost of living versus what the money we were making. I think that really was a huge challenge for the younger folks. They um… We're finding it hard to have their own place manage all the things that they needed to do on the salaries that we were making, and I was, um, you know, married or going through the divorce. So, I think there was this feeling like I didn't really need the salary that I was getting as much as they did.

Allison S: You don’t think that’s how you felt or that’s how you felt? (...)

Participant 33: I think that's how they felt. So, I mean, I think we all could agree that we all were not getting paid what we were worth. But that's for me, I'd had lots of experience working in nonprofit art museums, and I did not necessarily expect to have yearly cost of living raises, things that a lot of work environments seem to consider low and easy things that you would expect. Working in a nonprofit you were lucky if you were getting a benefits or a decent salary with a slight increase. My expectations, financially from the organization were far different than what they were for the young younger folks.

Allison S: Sure, sure, that makes sense. Um, can you tell me a little more about the race, and like ethnicity of your colleagues?

Participant 33: They were all Caucasian. I was the only person who did not identify as full Caucasian. I’m biracial, so and I’m first generation. My dad was Filipino. He's now deceased. But he came over in the 50s and married my mom, who's white. My mom is still living, and I… For a long time, I thought that my ethnicity did not get in the way of things. I did not feel that by the time that I had left.

Allison S: Really? So what change do you think?

Participant 33: Not exactly sure. Um, my… When I started working, we got a new boss, the boss that I had when I left. We had another employee, who was female and black, and my boss and that employee did not get along very well, and I've never felt that we never had a lot of friction. But I was a very aware, through the black employee, that there was she felt, a sense of unfair racist treatment from my boss. When she quit, I felt that tension. I felt like I was taking on that tension. As soon as that employee left, I felt like my boss had a much shorter temper with me. I felt like she said things that I did not feel like she would ever say or I had ever heard her say to other employees, things that were as little as short or short-tempered to brusque. Just sometimes quite hostile, and I started to think once that the black employee left, I started to think, “am I the only one who's getting this kind of hostility and lack of patience?” Um, I felt like my ideas were not given the same kind of attention. So that was when I really perceived that I might be being treated differently than my white counterparts.

Allison S: Sure, do you have any examples that come to mind of these sort of interactions?

Participant 33: Um, (...) I’m trying to think of. (...) I’m trying to think of specifics. It was nothing gross, or grossly obvious, or obviously stated, because we were very sensitive to not necessarily call attention out to that. I think it was more a feeling of… I definitely felt like she felt she had to explain and defend herself to me more than the others. If without me saying “I don't understand what you're talking about.” Simple things: I am the only one that had…we all had art in our educational backgrounds. But I’m the only one that had professional experiences in a museum setting, including my boss, and I often felt like that experience was diminished, and I had to be… had people explain to me led by my boss of “why maybe an idea of mine would not work out because it wouldn't work out in a museum setting,” and I did not feel like that they had that understanding or experience to be explaining things to me that way, so I often felt like I was being treated kind of like a child, or having things repeated to me. Um I often… If a program was failing, for example, if there were not a lot of students signing up for a kids’ class, I was being held responsible for drumming up students or participants, so there was often a lot of frustration, If a program was not making a profit. And I felt like exhibitions weren't making a profit. The other educational program that my male co-worker was doing was not turning a profit. But for some reason my educational programs were expected to not only sustain themselves, but to now all of a sudden have some great profit that was going to make the museum more sustainable. (laughs) Um, there seemed to be a lot of expectations and a lot of disappointment and hostility if some tiny program wasn't sustaining the museum on a large-scale basis, and I felt like those expectations on me were placed on me, and they weren't placed on the other two employees. I did not ever experience any of them, having to justify things that they wanted to purchase for their programs or not being able to bring money or sponsors into the museum.

Allison S: Interesting. Yeah, um, that sounds like it would be really frustrating. Um, did you, did you ever feel like particularly emotional at work? Is there any time that you can think of?

Participant 33: Yes.

Allison S: Okay, can you share any of those stories?

Participant 33: Um, there were times I would say it was cyclical where I would explain it away in my head, and my frustrations would sort of I would find something to focus on and just say, “well, I’m just going to throw myself into this work or this project, or whatever.” I’m not going to really let it, this be something that bothers me. But there were times where I felt like something had a change, so I would be in lieu of regular employee reviews. I was often the employee that would say, “I need to have a meeting and talk about my happiness here, my ability to thrive here, whether I’m working out,” and that would often stimulate “oh, we should all get employee reviews.” So many times, I would say at least three meetings I initiated with my employer, where I would take a certain approach. One might be um, you know, I’m not feeling like I’m being supported. I’m not feeling like the programs that I want to bring are receiving the same kind of attention. Or another time I would say, “look, I have a lot of personal things going on in my life,” and I’m concerned if you, as my boss, think that perhaps they're getting in the way of my job, you know. Is there something that you need to say to me that might clear the air that we could talk about, so that we could potentially stop having these kind of friction-based conversations, and I would get reassurance that it was important that I was there. I would get some kind of personal... I would be invited to share something that was going on in my life personally, and she would listen, and then she would suggest that I seek some sort of self-care maybe take some time off, or something like that. And basically, they placate me and or flatter me, say things that weren't normally said, like, “I really value your input it's very important. The things that you bring to the table and to the staff,” and it was just things that were never said to me unless I was in a meeting, where I was very close to quitting um.

So, when I finally quit it was, I think, it was viewed as one of those meetings I had to initiate the conversation, and then I had to actually say no. I’m actually quitting at this time, and I had to find a way to verbalize that it wasn't because the job was disappointing me. I had to say that the environment was not something that I felt was healthy, that, you know, in terms of my work balance. I was having lots of wonderful, happy things going on in my life at this point, and that work and the work environment was the worst thing in my life, and and something I could not escape. I was very upset, having to go to work and upset leaving work and spending time during my out of work time, being upset about work, and I was, I think, for the first time ah, quite emotional. I was, I was certainly holding back tears. I was definitely um showing a lot of emotion because I had been there for ten years um, through really hard but professional times, and it was a very difficult decision to make, so I was able to show that this was something that I was really grappling with, but I still was asked to (…) write an essay on what I thought was going wrong, what I thought could go better. I had to come back after being written that day and re-evaluate that conversation, and I was having to just sort of say, “No, it's not. I don't want to go back and do more mundane schoolwork to explain this.” I’m trying to tell you that this is an unsatisfying experience.

I think the lynchpin of why I left was that there was a certain program that the museum had on had taken, where we partnered with a charter school nearby, and we were going to provide this charter school, which was kindergarten through second grade, six classes. We were going to provide them with all of their art instruction in the museum setting um, and on paper. I understood as a community partner, I understood the benefits of these things, but the whole time I was saying I can't be the one to write the curriculum and teach these kids because I already have a job, a full-time job. And this is at least a part-time job, if not a full-time job, and I knew that they wouldn't be paying me additionally for this relationship. So, I had told them in advance, you have to…. We have to be looking for people. We interviewed people and um. They were never happy with anybody that was coming up, and I realized it was because it would be a lot cheaper for the museum if I taught that program. If I created the work or created the curriculum and the instruction, and took time out of my normal job to do this, and I despite me time and time again saying, “this is not an appropriate use of my time,” you know, “we need to pay for this.” They knew that it would start to dwindle the amount of money that the school was paying the museum, and they were not willing to spend that money. So, the more times I told them that it wasn't working, that this was a problematic relationship, that I didn't think the kids were getting anything, but they needed that they weren't getting enough, I was not heard. And even after I quitted, I knew the longer that I offered to stay there to work. I knew I would be teaching in that program, even though they knew that was the major reason why I was leaving. So, even after I had quit, they did not seriously take my complaints in being in that program, and being fully responsible for that program, they did not take that seriously, and I knew that's what made it easier for me to quit was that I knew as long as I was there, they were going to take advantage of me specifically in that program. But throughout the whole, they were going to take what I was offering to them, and nothing would change. Nothing was going to change. I was never going to not be teaching those in that program. Um and that was a very high stress scenario, where we were taking on… I was taking on many of the daily stresses of a brick-and-mortar teacher within the museum setting, in addition to my full-time museum job.

Allison S: Right.

Participant 33: And that was really the I think the end of it. Again, I could have understood if that someone had explained to me this is the reasons why we need to do this. You know, it’s keeping the museum afloat, or whatever you know. But it really was it was a very low yielding program that maybe had programming partnership potential, but not in the way that would cost a ten-year employee, I think

Allison S: Right. Did you feel like there were other times when you were taken advantage of in a similar way? Or was this kind of the one big time?

Participant 33: This was the most obvious time. I think arguably the whole other staff might have complained that we all were being used more than what we were being compensated for, but (…) I would say my job required a lot of out of work time that I don't think the other employees were having to do. Like I was writing curriculum, or I was, you know, creating, you know, pre-pairing slot um supplies for things. So, I was doing things at home that would be considered doing things for work that I don't believe that other employees were doing, and (...) But yeah, I never felt like… Again because of the expectations I had of working in a nonprofit environment, I never felt like it was important for me to say, hey, I’m working much more than say they are. I should be making this much more money, whereas I think I think that was being said on their part. Um, so it was, I mean there was a culture of having to do more than what your job entailed. We'd all have to clean a bathroom or pick up, you know, puke from a kid or something, and that was… it seemed like over the top of what we were being expected to do. We all sort of had some threshold for that, but I felt like at first, I felt maybe it was because I was sort of like the mom on the staff. I was getting a lot of things that um other people didn't have to deal with. So yeah.

Allison S: So, do you feel like that had to do with your age and your gender? Or did you feel like there were like some of it had to do with race, or did you feel like it was mostly just because you had more experience or more training?

Participant 33: I think some of it had to do with age at first, especially the type of work that I was doing. Many of the programs were addressing (...) all around me .

Allison S: Sorry you froze for a little bit. Can you back up a little bit and tell me again you were saying a lot of the programs we're addressing?

Participant 33: Race, unconscious bias, upstanding in the workplace. So, this was something that I was always passionately working on in my professional um facility. So I think people were very, very careful how they addressed me in terms of unfair or their own unconscious bias. I think people were very, very conscious when I was included. To be very cautious, and how they approach things. I felt like my boss in particular would have been surprised if, when I quit, I said I felt like you had an unconscious bias against me because of my race, I think she would have been extremely surprised to hear that. Um, even though I do feel like that, that it played a role in it. Um, I think um, at one point, I was writing, I was designing a program where we were using art to talk about unconscious bias and upstanding in the clinical environment for the hospital. And my boss had said, “do you think it's a good idea if you deliver whatever it is you're thinking about to the museum and at us as a staff first, before you get to deliver it to them?” And I said, “I did not think that that was going to be a good idea, because they were such a small.” I mean the hospital had thousands of employees, and they had recently done a study of their employees of color and realized that they were perceiving problems based on race. For us to talk about race, it would have been me instructing the rest of my white peers on how they have unconscious bias. It would be making this assumption that I don't have any. I’m now addressing them personally to you in a very professional manner. So, it was a, it was a very awkward conversation, because I think she was trying to um check something off like for her to be able to say that we had gone through some sort of training, but it was putting me in a position as the only non-white person on the staff of four to educate everybody on that. Um, I think it would have created a lot of animosity and hard feelings to the rest of the staff if I came out trying to instruct them how not to be, especially since we had not had conversations that were open and organic amongst a very close and intimate staff. Does anybody feel like, for example, does anyone feel like, you know, they're being unfairly treated? We didn't have that kind of conversation, so it would have been a very strange and oddly professional way of handling that topic.

Allison S: Sure, sure.

Participant 33: Again, it would have been very difficult, because they know that a lot of the stuff that I was doing was coming from a very personal and passion impassioned place, and one which they could not really speak to.

Allison S: Right. Did you ever get any sort of like stereotyping or racial comments made? Or was everything very under the table, and subtle?

Participant 33: Mostly subtle. I don't think I ever really got it over the top obvious thing. But I think it was harder when my other co-worker, who was black, was there. I think we were often asked to, you know, did you… Sometimes we'd be put on the spot like, do you guys feel that that type of thing is happening? So. But most of the hostility was very veiled and very disguised, and under the table I would not think, and it may be very unconscious, I mean I was willing to kind of say that perhaps any hostility or unfair treatment was coming from a very unconscious place because, like I said, I think that they fancied themselves to be very open-minded and progressive people.

Allison S: Sure.

Participant 33: It's right very clear that they had never really truly experienced anything in their own lives that would give them some ability to understand it, other than being rather empathetic.

Allison S: Right? Um, are there well… First of all, do you consider yourself to be an emotional person? And Are you usually open about it, or do you feel like you tend to keep it reserved or private?

Participant 33: I would say, as a as a person, I’m extremely sensitive and emotional. Yes, I’m very expressive if I’m feeling a certain way. Um, and especially in the latter half of my professional career, there was a real distrust of my coworkers, and I would not, I would distinctly not show emotion in front of them, whereas I would show it in front of, for example, a tour of, say, adults, or something. If I were emotional about a certain piece, or a certain artist, or a certain movement, I would be fine with sharing my emotions in front of a group of people that I didn't know to show them how art might affect me. Um, I would have no problem sharing personal, somewhat personal, um just general emotional information with them. Whereas I would not necessarily trust my coworkers in any environment to tell them, not even if we were out like at a restaurant over drinks or something. I might tell them in a very matter of fact, kind of way. Something like this was happening, but I would withhold my emotions for sure.

Allison S: That's interesting. So, it was easier to be yourself in front of Strangers and people who were visiting the museum than it was with your co-workers?

Participant 33: Absolutely, because we would often have museum or visitors have emotional experiences because you were talking about things like race and trauma and war. There the emotional impact of many of the pieces that we would be talking about would affect visitors in all sorts of emotional ways, and they would affect us in emotional ways. But I always felt like that was a beneficial experience to have. If you were speaking and about artwork to students or to a group of professionals. If somebody was feeling emotional, to know that this was a safe place for them to come, and that's why it was very ironic that on a professional basis. This was not a safe space for me to show emotions

Allison S: Can you think of any examples of times when you felt emotional and shared that during the… with visitors?

Participant 33: Uh, most recently we had a piece of that featured an image of a geisha, and it was a contemporary piece, so that the geisha was engaging in a sort of presexual act. Uh, she was ripping a condom open with her mouth, her teeth. And um, I had a very visceral repulsion to this work. My coworker… It was a beautiful piece in terms of technically, and it was a large piece, and my coworker, who was installing the show it in a very high-profile place, which I had expressed to her would be very difficult for me, yes, personally, but even more challenging, because I would often have to bring groups of children through the museum. And so, if we had put it in a place that was a little harder to get to, I could more easily direct children around it, and not have to avert their gaze um or their attention. So, I had already talked to her about that piece, and she did not, she did not honor any requests of mine personally, and so I was, I was forced to avoid taking tours of children in that gallery. But number two, I was forced to include that piece on tours when I was with adults, so it was something that I would have to explain that I had personal feelings about it. The piece was made in the 80s, and it was the intent was to make this the sex worker a heroine, because she was protecting herself by using condoms. But what I felt like it was doing was using a sexualized trope of Asian women in a very visually attractive way, so that if somebody wasn't on a tour with me where I could talk to them about how that piece made me feel the general consensus was “I really enjoy this piece.” “It's a very attractive piece.” “I like it.” “I would hang it in my house,” and I felt the piece was very ah, it was, It was extremely upsetting for me, and so I made sure to include it on age-appropriate tours, so that we could enter a discussion as to perhaps how people are affected by imagery, and you aren't um. So, it became a very open conversation in all of my adult tours or older children tours, as to how the imagery made me feel, even though I knew what the intent was, and how uncomfortable I was, just having to stand in a professional facility in front of this image, and have people sexualize perhaps me, and who I am. And it became a very um interesting and engaging topic. We always felt like there was very interesting exchanges that would come out of that. I never felt like somebody, a visitor was hostile to what I was saying. They were very understanding and empathetic of how that image made me feel on a daily basis in my work, whereas my coworkers, they were completely lost on them. It's a you know, and I think that they, their refusal to be or act sensitive to it was even more upsetting, you know. If we had, I once put it in the terms of if we had a black employee and a piece of artwork that was attractively representing, like a jockey, you know, like a jockey statue where that image holds a sort of pejorative trope. Would we insist that they that it takes such a huge part of their professional job every day to talk about it? I thought that was a really difficult time, or I did not feel like my work environment had any sense of desire to understand how it made me feel, whereas every museum visitor that I would talk about it would understand on some level why it might bother me.

Allison S: Yeah, but did you find that cathartic? Or did you find it just really taxes to have to talk about it every time you did a tour?

Participant 33: I found it cathartic for me personally, but I felt like it raised the level of resentment in the workplace because it was constantly showing the environment as being one that was not conducive to my understanding or healing from it. Um, for me, the ability to talk about it over and over again with new visitors and new perspectives was very cathartic, but it just raised my awareness that this was not something that anybody was going to really entertain in terms of work. And even again, if you took the racist or racial reaction away, and I just sort of put it in terms of “hey, my job is also to bring kids through here and you made it very difficult for me to do my job, because we're not going to necessarily put kids in front of this image.” They were very insensitive to that.

Allison S: Yeah, yeah, that makes sense. What was different during the pandemic with your job? Did anything change dramatically in terms of the work dynamic?

Participant 33: Yes. Well, the amount of visitors dropped, and we were closed for a good bit of time. But certainly the school trips stopped for years. So, part of the purpose for me being there immediately disappeared, and like many teachers, I was really pushed into creating digital content, which was, you know, was not necessarily my strength. So, I was having to teach myself. I had to research a free platform for us to do that. I had to create the content and then install the content and then maintain it. And then I was also expected to drive audiences to that content. If it were a program that had some sort of budget that was initially, I was all I was doing it real time. So a rotating exhibition would maybe last twelve weeks, so I would at least need at least many weeks ahead of the opening of an exhibition, in order to have digital content ready from when it was open, so many times there would be a lag where I was still creating the digital content after the exhibition had been open. And if the digital access to the exhibition was the only way people could see it. If I was essentially delaying the opening, because people couldn't come in necessarily to see the work, and this was the only way that they could see it. So there was, I felt like I was being set up where everybody was kind of impatient with me, and I was working extremely hard to teach myself how to do this, and to put that content together in an age-appropriate, you know, um educational way that teachers would find it relevant. It wasn't just like “here's a slideshow of all the artwork.” It was like, you know, “here's different um activities. Or here's a lesson plan that might go with it.” And again maintaining it on a platform I had never used before. It was like a travel platform that were that we're letting museums use it for that purpose, because they knew our stuff.

So the pandemic, really, as we were… Well, when the pandemic first hit, I voluntarily furloughed myself because I knew we were not getting visitors or school visitors in. So, there's a huge part of my daily job that was being affected, and I felt like it was… the museum was not taking that income in, and it was going to be taxing to be able to pay all of my salary. So, as soon as the pandemic hit and we had to go down and lock down, I furloughed myself, and that was… Nobody else did it. Um, I took. I think it was what ended up being a month without pay, but the board felt that gave a very dangerous and diminished view of how we were faring as an organization. They did not like that, so as fast as they could they tried to get me back on the payroll. I think there were maybe a few piece, a few key board members who are afraid that I would not come back and wanted to retain me, but they, all of them, surely did not want the impression was that we were laying off people or firing people, and so I was not able to stay furloughed as long as I thought that I would be willing to do it in order for the museum to not have to pay me when I wasn't fulfilling that aspect of my job.

Allison S: Yes, that seems like a lot.

Participant 33: Well, and it, you know again, I really think that came out of me having experience in the nonprofit sector, specifically during like 2008, and that um economic sort of depression that we went through… We ended up as a staff in a previous museum. We all had to take, you know, furlough Mondays. We all had to furloughing was something that we all had to do to get through that period of time. But we all, and in that environment we all did it, as a thing. So my reaction when this came up again was we've got to stop spending right away, because we don't know how long we're going to be close to the public. So this was something that in my perspective I knew it was an inevitability. And because I knew that the change in my job was the only one that was very tangible, I volunteered to do it. But I think as well, it impacted the ability for us to receive certain relief money, if we were laying people off. And I think that also was a concern.

Allison S: That's it. And yeah, well, we're coming up on time, and I want to be mindful of your time. These were most of my questions but thank you so much for sharing all of your stories. I know that some of that probably wasn't easy. So, I really appreciate that. Um, I have a few demographic questions for you that may have come up already. Can you tell me again where you're located?

Participant 33: Harrisburg Pennsylvania.

Allison S: Okay, and um is that where you were born and grew up?

Participant 33: No, I grew up in Maryland, on the eastern shore of Maryland.

Allison S: Gotcha. Can you remind me again of your age?

Participant 33: 48.

Allison S: And your ethnic background is, you would say, half Filipino?

Participant 33: Yea.

Allison S: Okay, cool. Your education background: so you had a BFA, and then you went back to school to get a Master in Education? Or was it another bachelor's? Or it was a…?

Participant 33: It was a baccalaureate certification program. So you could be working and get certified to teach.

Allison S: I see. A teaching certificate, a certification program. Gotcha. I did one of those two. Okay, cool. And then your gender pronouns?

Participant 33: She, her.

Allison S: I see. Gotcha. Okay, I think that's it. In terms of those questions.