

Do our museums reflect us as a society?

*A look at art museums, collections and demographics around staffing and audiences*

Statistics, comparisons, inferences, data visualizations

Clare Churchouse, BA, MA

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## Abstract

Recent research is highlighting differences between who we are as a society and what the artworks are in our museums (for instance, a recent PLoS paper, “Diversity of Artists in Major U.S. Museums<sup>1</sup>,”) organizations are examining museums as institutional structures (such as “Facing Change: Insights from the American Alliance of Museums’ Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Working Group<sup>2</sup>.”) Writers, such as Anuradha Vikram in “Decolonizing Culture: Essays at the Intersection of Art and Politics<sup>3</sup>,” are investigating who is doing the framing in contemporary art and social, political and economic issues around exhibitions, and press reporters are highlighting in equities in multiple articles. In New York City, a survey was fielded in 2015 to understand the demographics of the city’s grantees, including those who work in city-funded museums. And, in addition, organizations and foundations have undertaken national surveys of art museums around, for instance, pay and staff demographics.

This study seeks to illuminate some of the inquiries about museum staffing and artwork collections in a visual investigation using publicly available data sets from NYC art museum collections, NYC museum staff data, reported data from two national art museum surveys, and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) audience data. By looking at museum audience demographics, and who the curatorial and leadership staff are, this project aims to bring the artworks and the artists who are making these works into the larger conversation around representation in contemporary art museums. Availability of open data limits possible findings to inferences, however by bringing together related sets of information, the aim is to create a richer sense of demographics, who is doing what, and, to an extent, what is changing.

Discussion with those working in the field and with one of the staff survey researchers has focused my research and steered me to resources. My central question is who do museums reflect? Museums are changing what they show and instigating projects and new initiatives. Does the make-up of audiences and staff reflect those changes? What might be useful to consider going forward? This thesis provides some background information from the available public data.

This thesis is not an overview of art museums, and is not meant to be a summary of the field, or of social and political movements of the past century. The focus of this study is data sets relating to art museums. These examples are a few of many.

## Table of Contents

### Introduction

### Part 1

#### Audiences

- National audience projections
- National audience demographics and strategies
- Museum staff surveys: NYC and national
- Funding/NYC museums/donors
- National initiatives
- Framing the problem from different perspectives

#### Artworks

- Counting numbers and protests

#### Staff

- Who heads the museums?
- Who's on the boards?
- Who's paid what in a museum?
- Who are the curators, NYC and national?
- Who works as security guards?
- Who has access to art education?

#### Other

- Money/business
- Admissions/tickets
- Socio-economic barriers
- Education

### Part 2

#### Methodology

- Including information on 3 NYC art museums
- Ideas going forward (pay, education, internships, support for art history degrees)
- Is there a need to rethink the whole idea of museums?

### Conclusion

## Introduction

“The modern idea of the museum originated in the Renaissance, with the diverse collecting of wealthy amateurs<sup>4</sup>.” Early museums were established in the 1800s in the US, built by wealthy collectors and donors, and many were modeled on a European idea of collections, reflecting values of their founders and the cultures and social structures they lived in. In the twenty-first centuries, art museums, some much more recently established, some tracing back to the 1800s with roots in colonial expansion and industrialism, and notions of democracy, preserve and interpret collections in temporary and permanent exhibitions of artworks in optimum surroundings, for the public to view. For instance, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) was founded on April 13, 1870 by a group of “civic leaders, businessmen, artists, art collectors, and philanthropists,”<sup>5</sup> led by lawyer John Jay under his presidency at the Union League Club in New York. He and a group of Americans agreed in 1866 in Paris, France, to create a “national institution and gallery of art” to bring art and art education to the American people,”<sup>6</sup> and on John Jay’s return to the U.S. he spearheaded the museum’s inauguration. Other museums were founded by rich patrons interested in the arts, usually by white and white Europeans, such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).<sup>7</sup> Brooklyn Museum developed from what seem to be more equitable origins out of the Brooklyn Apprentices’ Library in Brooklyn Heights (that was founded in 1823 by Augustus Graham,) a permanent gallery of fine arts was established in 1846<sup>8</sup> and the building was constructed in the 1890s through into the twentieth century.

The artworks on display in these museums are probably not accessible to the public elsewhere, the institutions that house them have sometimes been seen as places of almost sacred standing, places to look, experience, and reflect. The groupings of artworks are curated and contextualized, with wall text labels and narratives providing information, for instance, about the artworks’ chronology or comparing visual forms with others.

Museums are usually non-profit organizations, with specific missions, and they rely on a mixture of endowments, grant funding, gifts and often ticket admissions. They are governed by a board of directors and trustees, and run by a staff usually consisting of a director, curators, registrars, conservators, administrators, security, art handlers, and educators among others. The artworks are on display for everyone to view, public programming and educational activities are usually a part of an exhibition or collection. At their best, they are spaces that act as social hubs for their communities with interesting, challenging exhibitions.

Part 1 looks at specific data sets to give an overview of who the audiences in art museums are now, who is working in the museums, and to an extent possible, who has made the artworks in museums. This relies on the survey findings that several organizations and individuals have undertaken. Have museums become open social spaces of inclusion in the twenty-first century for all to participate in seeing art? How does this square with who audiences are and who the staff are in art museums?

## Part 1

### AUDIENCES

Do the people who visit museums reflect who we are in the US?

#### *National audience projections*

A 2015 article in *The Atlantic* was titled, “Museums Must Attract Diverse Visitors or Risk Irrelevance,” highlighting a lack of diversity that it said “is symptomatic of a national problem<sup>9</sup>.” This was not the first time that demographics of museum visitors had come to the fore. For instance, in 2008, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) released study results, “Museums & Society 2034: Trend and Potential Futures<sup>10</sup>,” that detailed the population trend forecasts for those who are over 65 and for minority populations. The big takeaway was that “By 2034, minorities are likely to comprise just under half of the population<sup>11</sup>” - but at that time were only 9% of museum visitors and about 20% of staff, at a time when the US population was “one-third minority<sup>12</sup>.” That is a big difference, and the report starkly concluded, “If museums want to remain relevant to their communities, the museum audience will have to look dramatically different as well<sup>13</sup>.”

The report discussed specific factors that could, it was assessed, shape and impact future museum trends. These included wealth divides, “The top 5% of households generate a third of all earned income in the United States and the top 0.5% (roughly 500,000 American households) generate 14% of earned income<sup>14</sup>.” According to the report, forecasts for the future around socio-economic factors are harder to predict, but it was noted that museums in 2034 would be “among the few institutions that bring together people of all economic classes. They [museums] are increasingly valued for their ability to redistribute wealth in the form of access to scientific, cultural and artistic resources, mitigating the culture gap that arises from income disparities. Museums promote global education for the nation’s children and global perspectives for all Americans. In the process, museums literally enrich America, because income is correlated with education and the ability to profit from economic globalization<sup>15</sup>.”

And yet, are these ‘public’ museum spaces open to all of us or not?

#### *National audience demographics and strategies*

The audience data in “Museums & Society 2034” led AAM to undertake an evaluation of art museum demographic trends/implications, which was presented in a 2010 publication, “Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums<sup>16</sup>.” If changing ethnic and racial US “trends continue in the current grooves, museum audiences are radically less diverse than the American public, and museums serve an ever shrinking fragment of society<sup>17</sup>,” the report assessed. The US Census Bureau’s definitions were used in this report, starting with the 2000 Census, recognizing the diversity of the American population by distinguishing ‘race’ (categorizing the largest groups as whites, blacks or African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and “some other race” with the option to chose from more than one race) and “ethnicity” (people of Hispanic origin, who can be of any race). Though the report notes that the conventional categories are not ideal, “Unfortunately, imperfect as they are, the conventional categories of white, black, Asian, Hispanic, etc. are the categories that have been used to track demographics and cultural participation in the United States<sup>18</sup>.”

In addition, total adult visits to art museums and galleries has been decreasing since 1982.

According to the 2008 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) survey, museum attendance went down “from 27 percent of adults in 2002 to 23 percent in 2008...About 26 percent of non-Hispanic whites, 15 percent of Hispanics, 12 percent of African Americans, and 23 percent of adults

in other racial/ethnic categories (largely Asian Americans and Native Americans) visited an art museum or gallery in 2008<sup>19</sup>.”

AAM was struck not just by these declining numbers but also, most importantly, by the lack of diversity in museum audiences and the decline in diversity. Their 2010 report declared, “Even more striking were the racial and ethnic disparities in cultural participation,” in the NEA’s 2008 survey results, “Non-Hispanic white Americans were over-represented among adult art museum visitors in 2008 (78.9 percent of visitors, while just 68.7 percent of the U.S. population) while Hispanics and African Americans were significantly underrepresented....It is important for museums to grapple with the demographic changes sweeping the country if they plan to be useful to more than a small segment of American society<sup>20</sup>.” As AAM pointed out, the art museum/galleries data trends do not follow the total population trends, for instance, the percent of the Hispanic US population was 9% in 1990<sup>21</sup> and 13.5% in 2008, however the percentage of adults visiting art museum/galleries who are Hispanic decreased from 17.5% in 1992 down to 14.5% in 2008<sup>22</sup>, a much larger decrease in absolute numbers that this percentage implies.

AAM’s “Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums” discussed strategies to address divides. Elizabeth E. Merritt, AAM’s VP for strategic foresight, and founding director of the Center for the Future of Museums, concluded the report with a call to action on behalf of the association<sup>23</sup>. *The Atlantic*’s 2015 article succinctly summed up the situation, “This is how the demographical discrepancy breaks down. While whites make up nearly 69 percent of the country’s population, they make up about 79 percent of all those who pass through museums’ doors. This stands in stark contrast to Latinos who make up only 9 percent of museum visitors, even though they make up 14 percent of the total population. Similarly, African-Americans, who make up 11 percent of the American population, only show up as 6 percent of all museum visitors. So what is it that keeps people of color from entering or working in museums and what can be done about it?<sup>24</sup>”

The NEA 2012 survey results showed this downward trend continuing, white non-Hispanics 76% of art museum/gallery visits attending at least once in the past 12 months despite being 66.3% of the US population in 2012, and Hispanic attendance 10.1% despite being 14.9% of the population<sup>25</sup>. The 2017 NEA report released in September 2018 did though begin to show a different story, 23.7% of the US population visited an art museum/gallery at least once in 2017, up from 21% in 2012 (but this is not up to the 2002 26.5% level<sup>26</sup>.)

Is this a continuing trend and what are the demographic percentages for 2017?

#### *Museum staff surveys: NYC and national*

An art museum staff demographic survey, developed out of a similar effort to measure the diversity of staff working in US museums conducted the previous year<sup>27</sup>, was commissioned in 2015 by New York City. The aim was to understand the demographics of the city’s then around 900 cultural grantees<sup>28</sup>. As the resulting 2016 report rightly pointed out this is a cautious investigation since, “Quantifying diversity in labor markets is an inherently fraught pursuit, in part because our techniques for recording this data, our nomenclature, our definitions must be necessarily blunt in order to reduce the richness of characteristics we use to categorize ourselves and others (race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, to name only a few) into discrete categories. In spite of this, there is still an opportunity to collect and analyze existing data for a given community in order to generate a baseline to help measure change over time<sup>29</sup>.”

Findings from the "Diversity in the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Community<sup>30</sup>" survey from Ithaka S+R and funding partner, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, had a big impact on the city’s cultural community. Not least in that, “The survey found that New York City’s cultural

work force is 61.8 percent white, 35.4 percent minority groups....while the city's residents are 33 percent white....according to the 2010 US census<sup>31</sup>." Larger organizations were found to be less diverse than smaller, and leadership less diverse than other staff positions.

Following the report, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) initiated a cultural plan for New York City, reaching out to "nearly 200,000 New York City residents, from every corner of the city<sup>32</sup>," to hear priorities, concerns, and ideas from local residents. In July 2017, the resulting plan, CreateNYC Plan<sup>33</sup> for the city's five boroughs, was released. One of the unusual actions initiated was to tie funding to diversity plans, "DCLA will introduce new diversity measures for our city's cultural organizations including collecting data from grantees about the diversity of staff and board members; asking for organizations' approaches to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI); and in FY 2019 will require DEI plans from the CIG.<sup>34</sup>" (CIG is the Cultural Institutions Group<sup>35</sup>, 33 members whose institutions are sited on city-owned property. They receive significant capital and operating support from NYC to help meet basic security, maintenance, administration and energy costs. In return for this support, these institutions operate as publicly-owned facilities whose mandate is to provide cultural services accessible to all New Yorkers.)

At the CreateNYC Plan release, Mr. de Blasio said that "the city will collect data on the makeup of the staffs and boards and require these arts organizations to submit "meaningful goals" for making their ranks more diverse. This will be a factor in funding decisions by the city going forward....Asked if he believed that certain cultural organizations were elitist, the mayor said, "I think they were." He added, "There is still the assumption among many New Yorkers about where they belong and where they don't belong<sup>36</sup>."

*artnet* pointed out that this carrot and stick approach was no small amount, "In order to continue receiving city money, art institutions will have to put forth concrete plans to increase diversity and inclusion among their staff and board members. It's no small sum. During the fiscal year of 2017, the Department of Cultural Affairs gave over \$170 million to more than 900 organizations—\$20 million more than the National Endowment for the Arts's entire budget<sup>37</sup>."

Will this change NYC grantees?

#### *Funding/NYC museums/donors*

The 33 CIG organizations include Brooklyn Museum and The Met, MoMA PS1 but not MoMA in Manhattan. Charity Navigator<sup>38</sup> shows that The Met and Brooklyn Museum contributions breakdown into 4 categories: contributions, gifts & grants; membership dues; fundraising events; and government grants. Brooklyn Museum receives the largest percentage of its revenue from government grants at 39.3% with 46.5% from contributions, gifts & grants, compared to The Met's 5.4% and 79.7% in these respective categories. MoMA (not including MoMA PS1) did not receive government grants FYE 06/2017 and received 96% of its funding from contributions, gifts & grants for the same FYE.

Thus a significant amount of funding comes from contributions and gifts, and these gifts come with tax write-offs. Some of the donations are huge, for instance, MoMA received \$100 million towards its expansion, a donation from David Geffen in 2016<sup>39</sup>.

This year has seen an unusual move, in March the National Portrait Gallery in London, UK, turned down a \$1.3 million donation from the Britain-based Sackler Trust<sup>40</sup>. The Tate has also announced it will no longer accept donations from the Sackler family<sup>41</sup>. There has also been some focus in the US on the Sacklers' donations to art institutions. Waldemar Januszczak commented in *The Times* that art donors from previous eras such as the Medici, the Borgias, "were hardly Buddhists<sup>42</sup>," but points out that social media is changing the spread of information from past decades and centuries. The

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York has announced that it too will not receive donations saying, “No contributions from the Sackler family have been received since 2015. No additional gifts are planned, and the Guggenheim does not plan to accept any gifts.”<sup>43</sup> Do museums have a responsibility to reckon with the source of a donor’s wealth?

### *National initiatives*

Art museums as a group, such as the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), and individual museums in particular, have been addressing with underlying factors that may affect the persistent disparities in museums through new initiatives and programming. There are efforts to welcome audiences especially those who have recently not visited as often. Words like equity and diversity are being used - AAM included these following definitions in their 2018 “Facing Change” report<sup>44</sup>:

“Diversity is all the ways that people are different and the same at the individual and group levels. Even when people appear the same, they are different. Organizational diversity requires examining and questioning the makeup of a group to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented. Equity is the fair and just treatment of all members of a community. Equity requires commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specified goals.

Accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings.

Inclusion refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes.

It also refers to the ways that diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community.”

The report also notes that money and time are immense barriers to inclusion. AAM lays out “a framework for the Alliance’s next set of priorities and programs<sup>45</sup>,” with 5 recommendations to its members:

1. Every museum professional must do personal work to face unconscious bias
2. Debate on definitions must not hinder progress
3. Inclusion is central to the effectiveness and sustainability of museums
4. Systemic change is vital to long-term, genuine progress
5. Empowered, inclusive leadership is essential at all levels of an organization

### *Framing the problem from different perspectives*

Using diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility framing, however, may be the wrong approach. Cyndi Suarez, Senior Editor at *Non Profit Quarterly* writes in *The Nonprofit Sector as White Space*, “it is critical for the nonprofit sector, which is caught in its own narrative loop around racial inequity, to look squarely at these underlying master narratives of white space and black space<sup>46</sup>.” She cites “The White Space”, Elijah Anderson’s article who says that, “Since the end of the Civil Rights Movement, large numbers of black people have made their way into settings previously occupied only by whites, though their reception has been mixed. Overwhelmingly white neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, restaurants, and other public spaces remain. Blacks perceive such settings as “the white space,” which they often consider to be informally “off limits” for people like them.”<sup>47</sup> Suarez discusses how white space approaches are used to addressing public space as white space saying “how core it is to our [nonprofit] sector’s approaches, including those designed to address racial inequities. It is in the very framing of racial equity work, which itself is contested—diversity,



equity, and inclusion (which has gained approval in the sector's own white space) versus racial justice, including reparations (the preferred approach of people of color)....It is in the capturing of our work and sharing out into the world with a white frame for an audience imagined as predominantly white (mostly white funders and donors)."

"We can follow this initial questioning by tapping into the counternarratives of people of color, which are subordinate in white space but very much alive in black space. This is fertile ground for nondominant approaches to the problem of white domination.<sup>48</sup>"

There is a lot to learn vis a vis museum spaces. It might be useful to undertake an examination of museum spaces by directing inquiries by those who are not associated with a white space perspective.

## ARTWORKS

What do the artworks held in the museum collections look like?

### *Counting numbers and protests*

Over many decades, people have been published articles about disparities in the art world and leading protests to highlight the numbers.

One example of those who has been counting the numbers is Howardena Pindell, artist, writer, curator. In a recent interview she tells of how, in 1967, she became the first Black female in an art curatorial position at MoMA where she worked for 12 years,<sup>49</sup> it was in this period that she began to advocate for social justice. She compiled detailed information in "Statistics, Testimony and Supporting Documentation," June 28, 1987<sup>50</sup>, where she gave a very detailed view of NYC gallery and art museum representation of artists of color.

"Why is the art world one of the last "unregulated" industries?....Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American artists are, therefore, with a few, very few, exceptions, systematically excluded. The mainstream's focus in exhibitions and publications is therefore on artists of European descent who are referred to as the "American" artists. Artists who are not Caucasian of European descent are somehow not considered to be American and are thought of as "outsiders," yet white artists from Europe or Australia are immediately brought into the fold<sup>51</sup>." Pindell notes, "Of the galleries surveyed, 36 were 100% white in 1986-1987; 13 of these galleries have closed and 4 new ones were added to the recent list; 18 of these galleries were 100% white in 1996-97<sup>52</sup>." These documents are fascinating.

At MoMA, 1980-May 1987, "Out of 242 exhibitions listed, there were 2 one-person exhibitions of works by artists of color." Brooklyn Museum statistics "for the 134 exhibitions listed for 1986-96, there were 21 exhibitions concerned with art by artists of color, or non-European cultures (including any mixed contemporary exhibitions—with one or more artists of color), or 16% of the list<sup>53</sup>." And at The Met, the second survey for 1986-96 exhibition schedules, "Out of 60 one-person exhibitions, two were by men of color (Chinese and Puerto Rican—not contemporary) and four were of work by white women. Out of 305 exhibitions, 73 were devoted to non-European cultures and artists. 75% of the program was European<sup>54</sup>."

Maurice Berger in his 1990 essay in *Art in America*, "Are Art Museums Racist?," cites Pindell's statistical findings from her 1987 Statistics, Testimony and Supporting Documentation<sup>55</sup>, and also talks about one of the groups who called themselves PESTS, "an anonymous group of New York-based African, Asian, Latino, and Native American artists organized in 1986 to "combat "art-world apartheid"<sup>56</sup>," who likewise collected statistics on NY gallery rosters.

Howardena Pindell was also one of the twenty co-founders of the feminist gallery A.I.R. in 1972<sup>57</sup>. The year before, Linda Nochlin's essay, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?"<sup>58</sup>, was published in *ARTnews*, in which she discussed institutional barriers. The National Museum of Women in the Arts was founded in 1980<sup>59</sup>, highlighting the lack of female artists in institutions, and continues updating data facts on representation.

An example of protests is the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), a New York-based group, who made a number of demands of MoMA in 1969, including that "the Museum should encourage female artists to overcome the centuries of damage done to the image of the female as an artist by establishing equal representation of the sexes in exhibitions, museum purchases and on selection committees"<sup>60</sup>. And during the 1976 *Drawing Now* exhibition, artists picketed MoMA stating the low representation of women artists, 5 out of 46, and accused the Museum of "blatant sexism in overlooking both black and white women artists." Protests were held at the 1984 exhibition *International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*, a survey of the most significant contemporary art in the world that included 14 women among its 169 artists. And out of these protest and subsequent revelations of the under-representation of women artists at other museums and galleries, the anonymous feminist activist artists, the Guerrilla Girls, was born.

When asked to design a billboard for the Public Art Fund, the Guerrilla Girls compared the number of nude males to nude females in the artworks on display at The Met and the number of artworks on display by men and by women (5% by women,) and released a poster in 1989 citing the numbers<sup>61</sup>. The group has continued such activities, targeting museums, dealers, curators and art critics, on inequalities.

Another more recent release in June 2015 featured *ARTnews* journal issue focused on women in the artworld. One of the articles was, "Taking the Measure of Sexism: Facts, Figures, and Fixes"<sup>62</sup>, in which Maura Reilly charted percentages of female v. male artists in solo exhibitions in "American Institutions," for instance, MoMA permanent exhibition displays, and Whitney Biennials.

There have been many more counting and holding protests over many decades. And the data is still worrying. For instance, in 2018, *artnet* and *Other Words* released a collaboration, "Tracing the Representation of African American Artists"<sup>63</sup>, with statistical information for instance, on auction prices and museum collecting, and a timeline of major social, political and economic events from 2008-2018<sup>64</sup>. And a 2018 study of 18 major American museum collections by artist representation, "Diversity of Artists in Major U.S. Museums," finds that 85% of artists in these collections are white<sup>65</sup>.

"Decolonizing Culture: Essays on the Intersection of Art and Politics" is a collection of writing from 2013-2017 by Anuradha Vikram about race and gender parity in the art world in which she perceptively analyzes contemporary exhibitions. "As Sturtevant's work so deftly makes clear, economic circumstances also determines whose work is deemed significant to history. As yet, no similar assessment has been made of ethnic diversity among artists represented in galleries or museums"<sup>66</sup>.

An afterword by Michelle Carlson points out that, "'Art cannot be separated from the bodies that make it-- the lives that bodies live and inhabit"<sup>67</sup>."

If audiences and artworks differ from who we are as a community, do museum staff too?

## STAFF

This section examines some art museum job types with a focus on leadership and curators.

### *Who heads the museums?*

The Met (established 1870) has never had a female director<sup>68</sup>, and has just hired the 10th white male director in a row<sup>69</sup>. MoMA leadership also has not had a female director since its more recent founding. According to MoMA's website, "three progressive and influential patrons of the arts, Miss Lillie P. Bliss, Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., perceived a need to challenge the conservative policies of traditional museums and to establish an institution devoted exclusively to modern art. They, along with additional original trustees A. Conger Goodyear, Paul Sachs, Frank Crowninshield, and Josephine Boardman Crane, created The Museum of Modern Art in 1929<sup>70</sup>."

The Brooklyn Museum is among some museums in the city that are run by women, as *The New Yorker* noted in 2015, "When [Anne] Pasternak assumes her new role in September, she will join an expanding circle of women who run major New York museums<sup>71</sup>." Museums currently include the Cooper Hewitt, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Jewish Museum, and the New Museum. The Diversity Survey of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Grantees, 2015 shows the leadership as 61% women<sup>72</sup> and 85% white non-Hispanic<sup>73</sup> in its museum discipline category. Note that 'museum' in this instance includes art museums but is not limited to them.

Turning to art museums only, on a national level, the Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey 2018 was administered to directors of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) and AAM member art museums. The 2018 survey report compared 2015 and 2018 findings to show that female positions of leadership have grown 5 percentage points more female in the past four years from 57% to 62%<sup>74</sup>.

However the percentages are very different for people of color, 11% in 2015 and 12% in 2018<sup>75</sup>. Ithaka S&R undertook the survey and note that the new hires in museum leadership since 2014 (including executive positions) and conservators have been 88% white non-Hispanic. Thus only 12% new hires were people of color for these positions in art museums<sup>76</sup>.

AAMD's 2017 report, "The Ongoing Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships," discusses trends in the field since 2014. 210 responses were received when the survey was fielded to AAMD members in 2016. "In a 2014 report, AAMD and the National Center for Arts Research (NCAR) found that a gender gap existed in art museum directorships. We found that women held less than half of directorships, that the average female director's salary lagged behind that of the average male director, and that these phenomena were most persistent in the largest museums. Three years later, despite press attention and field-wide dialogue on the topic, the gender gap persists, although trends showing incremental gains in some areas of pay and employment representation deserve recognition<sup>77</sup>."

Disparities in gender representation at larger museums are detailed – the majority of art museums with lower budgets, under \$15 million, are run by a female director, but the opposite is true for museums with larger budgets. Female representation goes down as the budget of the museum goes up – men run 70% of these larger museums. And male directors run 12 of the 13 largest budget museums.

Salary differences are also evident, women are at a salary disadvantage in absolute dollars, the difference being most apparent at museums with operating budgets of \$15 million or more. In 2016 female directors earned 75 cents on average for every dollar earned by male directors. This is an upward trend from the 2013 survey where earnings were 70 cents per one dollar earned by a man.

The numbers are different for lower budget museums with an average of 98 cents earned by female directors to each dollar, down from 2013 \$1.01 earnings per one dollar by male directors<sup>78</sup>.

### *Who's on the boards?*

In 2017, AAM and BoardSource examined museum board leadership. Museum Board Leadership 2017: A National Report revealed that nearly half (46%) of museum boards are white – compared to 30% of nonprofit boards – and that while 77% of museum directors believe expanding the racial and ethnic diversity of their boards is important or greatly important to advancing their missions, only 10% of directors indicate that their museum boards have developed a plan of action to become more inclusive<sup>79</sup>.

To do: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (NYC DCLA) grantee museum boards  
The NYC DCLA survey details individual museum staff (masked of course) by job type, one of which is 'board.' Of the 8,094 museum staff in the data set, xxx are board members, both paid and unpaid. Running the numbers with this data, those xxx board members are xxx white non-Hispanic and xxxx people of color.

The *New York Times* recently ran an article about local art museum boards. Working from information that museums had shared with them about their board make-up, they published, "It's a Diverse City, but Most Big Museum Boards Are Strikingly White." MoMA PS1 (which has a different board than MoMA) and Brooklyn Museum percentage of minorities is 24%, and The Met is 25%<sup>80</sup>. "The hardest nut to crack is going to be the boards," Mr. Finkelpearl, commissioner of NYC's Department of Cultural Affairs was quoted, adding that executives need to think about ways besides money that trustees of color can add value, namely through their art collections, personal connections or professional expertise.

Ford Foundation's president noted that "there is still the persistent problem of insularity; boards are clubs that tend to be homogeneous. "It's a challenge because trustees are limited by their own networks," Mr. Walker said. "The places they look are the places they've always looked and those places generally have very few people of color"<sup>81</sup>.

In the article, "From Interns to the Board Room, New York's Museums Need to Diversify. Here's How They Can Do It"<sup>82</sup>, Brian Boucher makes the point that, "The fact that museums typically require board members to pony up substantial donations and raise money from others—and often recruit from within their own prescribed networks—means that the historically disenfranchised have long been woefully underrepresented in cultural boardrooms." He quotes Arnold Lehman, the former director of the Brooklyn Museum, "The thorniest challenge is how to diversify institutions' boards," and Pamela Joyner, J. Paul Getty Trust's board member, and former trustee at the Art Institute of Chicago and the New York City Ballet, "when you sit in a board room, one of your biggest obligations is to recruit the next generation, and of course I know people that my board peers might not know." (Prodding museums to diversify their collections is another very important role, she adds<sup>83</sup>.)

There is increased scrutiny of who is on museum boards. This relates to funding, as has been evidenced recently, for instance, with Decolonize This Place, an activist organization, which is demanding the removal of the Whitney Museum's board vice chairman, the owner of a defense weapons manufacturer<sup>84</sup>.

### *Who's paid what in a museum?*

"The highest-paying museum gigs are director (\$293,988 average annual salary). Chief curators (\$143,412) and chief conservators (\$118,271)—two roles that require either an advanced degree, lengthy training, or both—also fall towards the top of the salary hierarchy. The lowest-paid positions are: security guard (\$33,974), education department assistant (\$37,801), and curatorial assistant (\$42,458)....Not everyone's income is growing at the same rate, according to the survey. COOs saw the largest average annual increase: 5.5%. The second fastest-growing salaried position? Curator. Curators saw their salaries rise 4.6% per year, on average, between 2011 and 2016<sup>85</sup>," reported *artnet* on AAMD 2017 Salary Survey.

### *Who are the curators, NYC and national*

Tom Finkelpearl, commissioner, noted in July 2017, "The least-white jobs are maintenance and security, and the whitest are curators. That points to some problems."<sup>86</sup> The results of a curator's work are highly visible – literally on public view for all to see. Curators put together the exhibitions in museums, reporting to the director and the board. The Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey 2015 reported that 84% of curators, conservators, educators and leadership are white non-Hispanic<sup>87</sup>. In an article discussing the curatorial numbers, Mariët Westermann, executive vice president of Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and co-author of two Art Museum Staff Demographic Surveys, noted that, "The situation was worse than in almost any sector I've seen"<sup>88</sup>. In another article, the *New York Times* (NYT) asked several national museums who their curators are and showed the results in an August 2018 article: Brooklyn Museum self-reported 39% full-time curators on staff who identify as people of color, MoMA 23%, and The Met 11%.

The two 2015 to 2018 Art Museum Staff Demographic Surveys show that the number of staff hired in art museums increased every year, from 2014 to 2018, rising from 2,216 to 4,044 over that time period. Staff hires showed a corresponding increase in representational diversity with a decrease of white non-Hispanic staff from 2014 to 2018 decreasing from 74% down to 65%. Curatorial and education departments likewise reflected this hiring: 88% down to 84% white non-Hispanic curators, and 80% down to 74% white non-Hispanic education staff. However, conservation and museum leadership including executive positions did not reflect this hiring trend as strongly, both positions only saw a one percent decrease in white non-Hispanic staff (90% down to 89% white non-Hispanic, and 89% down to 88% respectively<sup>89</sup>.)

The survey notes that "among curators and educators a notably greater share of new hires over the past four years are people of color than is the case among conservators and museum leaders....Conservation and museum leadership roles are not keeping pace with education and curatorial departments towards diversifying their ranks<sup>90</sup>."

And although women hold more curatorial positions than men, those who do not have direct reports are significantly more female (76%) while those with direct reports (Curators: Executive/Senior Officials & Managers) are 60%<sup>91</sup>. "Directorships remain majority male," the report said, "Conservation and museum leadership roles have not made this shift in hiring [people of color]. We hope that this report can inform strategy as leaders in the field work towards a more equitable and representative workforce."<sup>92</sup>

### *Who works as security guards?*

The lowest-paid positions in art museums according to the AAMD 2017 salary report<sup>93</sup>, an average of \$33,974 in 2017, and \$35,786 in the 2018 report<sup>94</sup>. Security staff among NYC DCLA grantees are 31% white non-Hispanic as compared to curators 79%<sup>95</sup>.

### *Who has access to art education?*

BFAMFAPhD published a report in 2014, *Artists Talk Back: A National Study on the Lives of Arts Graduates and Working Artists*, that found that there are 1.4 million working artists in the US, 2 million arts graduates, and working artists' median earnings is \$30,621. The report notes that 60.3% of graduates are women<sup>96</sup>. The survey "found that New York City's formally educated arts world (in this case, defined roughly as working artists and those with arts degrees) appeared to be 200% whiter than its general population<sup>97</sup>."

Related to PhD degrees and curatorial positions, an *Artsy* article noted that, "...if a museum recruits from Ph.D. programs for its most prominent curatorial positions, academia must also address the dearth of diversity in its own programs. At the university level, educators should already be promoting art as a valid career path, no matter what a student's financial or ethnic background—and offering funding, if necessary, to even the playing field.<sup>98</sup>"

## OTHER

### *Money/business*

Value in the art world is determined in part by cultural context; the work is worth what someone will pay for it. Artwork is usually made in a studio, sold through a gallery to a museum or a collector who may in time donate it to a museum or sell it through an auction. Works can be sold for huge amounts of money. A side effect of this is that institutions don't always have deep enough pockets to buy an artist's work once an artist is established as the prices are too high.

Looking at this from another angle, museums are big business. They contribute to the economy, as The Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Bureau of Economic Analysis that measures the economic activity of arts and cultural industries, stated in their "Findings for museums in the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account: For-profit and nonprofit museums together contributed \$5.3 billion to the U.S. economy in 2015<sup>99</sup>."

### *Admissions/tickets*

Many art museums in the US charge an entrance fee and The Met, MoMA, and Brooklyn Museum are no exception. The Met now charges \$25 for non-NYC residents, for NYS residents as well as NY, NJ, and CT students, the amount you pay is up to you, MoMA is \$25, free every Friday evening, and Brooklyn Museum \$16 suggested contribution amounts for general entry and is not applicable to special ticketed exhibitions; free First Saturdays 5-11pm have been going for twenty years. While these fees vary, cost of entrance is a socio-economic factor with ticket prices.

An interesting side note on The Met's out of state mandatory admissions fee is that a portion of that amount goes to the city, and NYC DCLA gave the extra funds collected out to other smaller arts organizations this year (\$2.8 million to 175 arts organizations<sup>100</sup>.)

### *Socioeconomic barriers*

NYC DCLA included a questionnaire in their 2015 grantee survey where organizations were asked to identify what barriers they face in increasing diversity in their organizations. Socioeconomic status registered as of strong concern (on a multiple choice answer, “around 80-90% of respondents selected race, ethnicity, gender, age, and socioeconomic status<sup>101</sup>.”)

### *Education programs in museums*

One of the places that does hold possibilities for change is the museum’s education department, for several reasons, not least that programming with schools in the community offers access to museums to everyone and education is training the next generation. At their best, art museum education programs can use artworks, as Sergio Bessa, Director of Curatorial Programs said, to “engage; particularly because we [The Bronx Museum of the Arts] were interested in working with young people, adolescents and even younger kids with the goal of empowering their voice, their own perspective. So we began to use art as a tool for critical thinking, language acquisition.” Emphasis is being placed on education as an opener to art, to questions and experience, to what it means to be an artist, to what it means to work in a museum and the job positions that everyone, in an ideal world, can participate in.

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## Part 2

### METHODOLOGY

#### Look at specific demographics

The visualizations take some specific, available, data that look at related demographics across staffing and composition of artworks with the aim of creating a fuller narrative about recent changes in NYC art museums.

1) 2017 NEA report released September 2018 is beginning to show a different story, 23.7% of the US population visited an art museum/gallery at least once in 2017 is up from 21% in 2012 (but has not risen to the 2002 26.5% level<sup>102</sup>.) Is this a continuing trend and what are the demographic percentages for 2017?

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) yearly audience surveys<sup>103</sup>

Demographic data NEA audience 2017 <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NADAC/>

2) Diversity Survey of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Grantees, 2015<sup>104</sup>.

3) Demographic data – new hires since 2014 - use report for data numbers “Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey 2018<sup>105</sup>,” that updates findings from its 2015 survey, greatly informs through its analysis of staff findings in US art museums.

4) Artworks are in three museum collections from the viewpoint of who has made those works. Here I examine recent discussions about art museum collections in order to contextualize the dialogues within what is in the museums and for one instance, what recent changes are being seen in the collection. Some New York City art museums have opened their databases to everyone, including

Brooklyn Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met), and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)<sup>106</sup>. All these data sets track nationality of the artist, some track gender.

The NYT article detailing board make-up in major museums also detailed the staff: here MoMA PS1 (different board than MoMA) percentage of minorities is 41%, The Met 43%, and Brooklyn Museum staff percentage of minorities staff is 66%<sup>107</sup>.

The Met's attendance in fiscal year ending June 30, 2018 was more than 7.35 million visitors at its three locations—The Met Fifth Avenue, The Met Cloisters, and The Met Breuer<sup>108</sup>, 32% of the Museum's visitors came from the five boroughs of New York City, and 34% were international. MoMA and MoMA PS1's attendance was over three million visitors, from 56 countries

Met Board - <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/03/thomas-campbell-met-director-exit>

“The Met's trustees come from New York City's wealthiest elites. According to the former administrator, the trustees have a combined net worth in excess of \$500 billion. The Met board is the ultimate Establishment perch and status symbol.

Other data sets

NYC OPEN DATA

<https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Recreation/DCLA-Cultural-Organizations/u35m-9t32>

including CIG

## Conclusion

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