

An Introduction To The History And Functions Of Museums: American Association

When it comes to appreciating art, science, history, and culture, museums have always played a significant role in society. These institutions not only preserve and exhibit artifacts but also educate and inspire visitors. The American Association of Museums (AAM) has been at the forefront of promoting museums and their functions, fostering professional development, and ensuring the highest standards in the field. In this article, we will delve into the rich history of museums and explore the various functions they serve.

1. A Brief History of Museums

The origin of museums can be traced back to ancient civilizations. The first recorded museum, known as the "Ennigaldi-Nanna's museum," was established in the 5th century BCE in Ur, Mesopotamia. This museum contained a collection of artifacts from the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

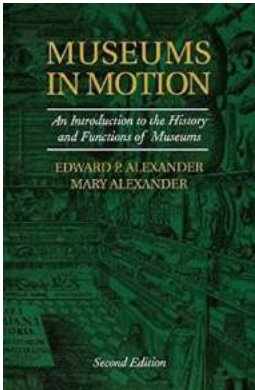
Throughout history, museums have evolved and taken on various forms depending on cultural, societal, and political influences. During the Renaissance period, private collections and cabinets of curiosity gained popularity among wealthy individuals. These collections showcased a wide range of objects, including art, natural specimens, scientific instruments, and odd curiosities.

Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums (American Association for State and Local History)

by Juilee Decker (3rd Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 56030 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 392 pages



It was during the 18th and 19th centuries that public museums began to emerge. The establishment of the Louvre Museum in Paris, France in 1793 marked a significant milestone in the democratization of museums, making art accessible to the general public. Museums continued to spread across Europe and the United States, serving as repositories of knowledge and cultural heritage.

Fast forward to the present day, museums have become diverse and multidimensional. They range from traditional art and history museums to specialized institutions focusing on science, technology, natural history, and a myriad of other subjects. Museums also serve as community centers, hosting educational programs, events, and exhibitions that cater to a wide range of interests and age groups.

2. Functions of Museums

2.1 Preserving Cultural and Natural Heritage

Museums are responsible for preserving and safeguarding important artifacts, artworks, and specimens. They take measures to ensure the longevity and conservation of these objects, protecting them for future generations to enjoy.

Through their preservation efforts, museums play a crucial role in maintaining cultural and natural heritage.

2.2 Educating and Informing

One of the primary functions of museums is to educate visitors through exhibitions, guided tours, and educational programs. Museums provide platforms for learning, promoting new ideas, and engaging with diverse perspectives. They encourage critical thinking and inspire curiosity, making them excellent resources for both formal and informal education.

2.3 Promoting Research and Study

Museums often collaborate with universities, research institutions, and scholars to support ongoing research and study. They offer access to their collections, archives, and libraries, enabling researchers to delve deeper into their areas of study. Museums contribute to expanding knowledge and fostering academic inquiry.

2.4 Stimulating Creativity and Inspiration

Museums have the power to stimulate creativity and inspire individuals of all ages. By exposing visitors to various forms of art, history, and scientific discoveries, museums help people explore different perspectives and spark their imagination. They often organize workshops, lectures, and interactive displays that encourage visitors to engage and express their creative side.

2.5 Preserving and Celebrating Diversity

Museums serve as cultural hubs that celebrate diversity and inclusivity. They exhibit artworks and artifacts from different cultures, allowing visitors to explore

and appreciate the richness of human experiences. Museums play a significant role in recognizing and preserving the heritage of marginalized communities, giving them a voice and representation.

3. The American Association of Museums

The American Association of Museums (AAM) is a prestigious organization dedicated to supporting museums across the United States. Founded in 1906, the AAM strives to enhance the value of museums to society. It provides professional development opportunities, accreditation programs, and advocacy for museums and museum professionals.

The AAM serves as a platform for museums to exchange ideas, collaborate, and stay updated with the latest trends and practices. It organizes conferences, workshops, and webinars that bring together professionals from various disciplines, fostering a robust network and knowledge-sharing environment.

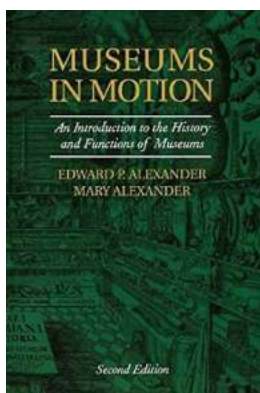
Through its accreditation process, the AAM sets standards of excellence for museums in different areas, including governance, collections management, education, and exhibition development. Accreditation serves as a benchmark for museums to measure their performance and strive for continuous improvement.

The AAM also plays an essential role in advocating for museums' interests at the federal, state, and local levels. It engages in policymaking, emphasizing the importance of funding, accessibility, and overall support for museums. The association constantly seeks to elevate the profile of museums and their contributions to society.

4.

Museums have come a long way since their inception, evolving into dynamic institutions that impact societies globally. From preserving cultural and natural heritage to educating, inspiring, and promoting diversity, museums play an integral role in shaping our collective understanding of the world.

The American Association of Museums, with its commitment to excellence and support for professionals, ensures that museums continue to thrive and fulfill their missions. As we continue to recognize the value museums provide, let us appreciate and support these vital institutions that bridge the past, present, and future.



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Here is a complete to the history of museums, types of museums, and the key roles that museums play in the twenty-first century.

Following an introductory chapter looking at what a museum is today, Part I looks at the history and types of museums:

art and design museums

natural history and anthropology museums

science museums

history museums, historic houses, interpretation centers, and heritage sites

botanical gardens and zoos

children's museums

The second part of the book explores the primary functions of museums and museum professionals:

to collect

to conserve

to exhibit

to interpret and to engage

to serve and to act

The final chapter looks at the museum profession and professional practices. Throughout, emphasis is on museums in the United States, although attention is paid to the historical framing of museums within the European context.

The new edition includes discussions of technology, access, and inclusivity woven into each chapter, a list of challenges and opportunities in each chapter, and "Museums in Motion Today," vignettes spread throughout the volume in which museum professionals provide their perspectives on where museums are now and where they are going. More than 140 images illustrate the volume.



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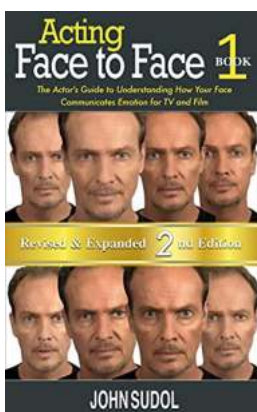
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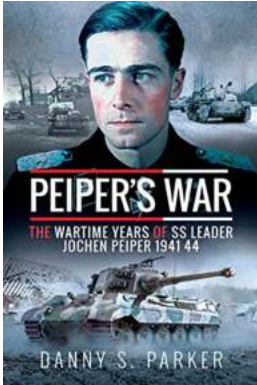
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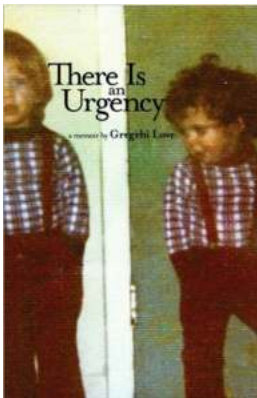
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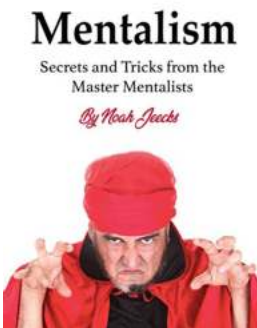
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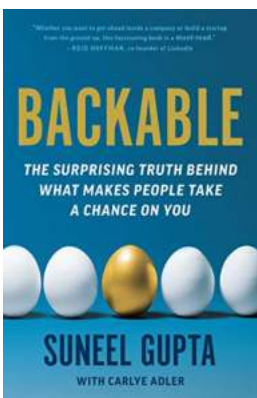
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