



NYCMER 2025 Annual Conference

Welcome: Museums in Community

Schedule and Program



Monday, May 19, 2025

Teachers College, Columbia University

#NYCMER2025

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Schedule	3
Registration, Coffee & Pastries, 8:30 am–9:15 am	3
Welcome & Keynote, 9:30 am–10:30 am	3
Block I, 10:45 am–11:45 am	3
Lunch, 11:45 am–1:00 pm	3
Poster Sessions, 1:00 pm–1:45 pm	4
Block II, 2:00 pm–3:00 pm	4
Block III, 3:15 pm–4:15 pm	5
Closing Remarks, 4:15 pm–4:45 pm	5
Afterparty, 5 pm–7 pm	5
Conference Map at a Glance	6
Session Descriptions & Presenter Bios	7
Welcome & Keynote with Q&A, 9:30 am–10:30 am	7
Block I, 10:45 am–11:45 am	8
Poster Sessions, 1:00 pm–1:45 pm	12
Block II, 2:00 pm–3:00 pm	16
Block III, 3:15 pm–4:15 pm	21
2024-25 NYCMER Board	28
2025 Conference Committee	29
2024-25 NYCMER Peer Group Leaders	31

Schedule

Registration, Coffee & Pastries, 8:30 am–9:15 am

Horace Mann Entrance ([map link](#))

Horace Mann 140

Welcome & Keynote, 9:30 am–10:30 am

Cowin Center Auditorium

Horace Mann 147

- Leah Golubchick (she/her), President, NYCMER
- Emily Edmonds-Langham (she/her), Vice President, NYCMER
- Keynote: Ben Garcia (he/him) and Kimaada Le Gendre (she/her)

Block I, 10:45 am–11:45 am

Horace Mann

Connecting Mission to Civic Learning: Practical Tools for Museum Educators	HM 152
Decolonizing Museum Education & Mentorship as Cultural Stewardship	HM 150
Maintaining Ties Beyond Walls: Welcoming Communities Beyond the Premises Through Online and Offsite Museum Opportunities	HM 138
Museums are a Drag, Right?	HM 147
The Ubuntu Museum	HM 433
Supporting Identity In Museum Programming For Older Adults With Dementia And Their Care Partners	HM 431
Community, Curators, and Community Curation: Insights from the Brooklyn Museum Education Fellows	HM 438

Lunch, 11:45 am–1:00 pm

Offsite & HM 140, HM 144, HM 148

Peer Group Leaders, Conference Committee members, and members of the NYCMER Board will gather outside Horace Mann to lead small groups to lunch locations for networking and community.

Certain classrooms on the first floor will remain open for lunch, should you choose to bring your own or return to Teachers College to eat food purchased elsewhere.

Dining Near Teachers College

Takeout Lunches

Appletree Market
Coffee/Deli/Grocery
1225 Amsterdam Avenue
Between 120th and 121st Streets

Sub Conscious
Coffee/Salads/Sandwiches/Soups
1213 Amsterdam Avenue
Between 119th and 120th Streets

Milano Market Westside
Sandwiches/Soups/Salads
2892 Broadway
Between 112th and 113th Streets

American/Fast Food

Shake Shack
Hamburgers and Hot Dogs
2957 Broadway
Near 116th Street

Tom's
Diner
2880 Broadway
Near 112th Street

Vegetarian/Vegan

Sweetgreen
Salads, Vegan/Vegetarian
2937 Broadway
Near 116th Street

Wu and Nussbaum
Salad/Sandwiches, Vegetarian
2897 Broadway
Near 113th Street

Asian Cuisine

Junzi Kitchen
Chinese Chun Bing & Noodles
2896 Broadway

Nikko
Modern Asian fusion
1280 Amsterdam Avenue
Near 123rd Street

Thai Market
Thai
960 Amsterdam Avenue
Near 107th Street

Mediterranean/North African Cuisine

Max Caffè
Italian Cafe
1262 Amsterdam Avenue
Near 122nd Street

Massawa
Sit down lunch, Ethiopian/Moroccan, Vegetarian
1239 Amsterdam Avenue
Near 121st Street

Food Trucks

Various
2990 Broadway
Near 118th Street

Poster Sessions, 1:00 pm–1:45 pm

Horace Mann

HM150, HM152, HM138

Building Community, Creating Space: Family Engagement in Neighborhood Museums	HM 150
Help NYCMER Shape our Strategic Plan	HM 150
It's the Little Things: Welcoming LGBTQ+ Community in Museums	HM 150
Reinventing Museum Experiences: A Gamified Self-Tour Guide to Engage Young Adults with Abstract Art	HM 150
Rooted in Tech: Growing a Culture of Welcome at NYBG	HM 150
Structural Barriers to DEAI in the Arts	HM 152
Students First: Making the Guggenheim a Destination for Local Students & Faculty	HM 152
Teaching Design History in Higher Ed: Facilitating Learner Agency Through Museum Collections and Digital Archives	HM 152
Tell Us About Your Community	HM 152
Animals Send Valentines Too: Creating a Children's Book	HM 152
NYCMER Peer Groups	HM 138

Block II, 2:00 pm–3:00 pm

Belonging at the Library: James Baldwin and Teen Programming	HM 150
¡Bienvenidos! 欢迎! Welcome! Interdisciplinary Approaches to Bilingual Engagement in the Museum	HM 147
Creating Space for Science and Community at the Pub	HM 433
Don't Judge a Book Club by Its Cover: Reimagining Museums as Places to Cultivate Community	HM 431
Engaging Environments: A Practical Guide to Site-Specific Walking Tours	HM 138
Partnerships in Practice: Museums & Educators Co-Designing STEM Learning	HM 152
Please Touch: Fostering Student Confidence Through Simulated Archival Processing	HM 438

Block III, 3:15 pm–4:15 pm

Horace Mann

A New Way of Seeing Things: Welcoming Adult Language and Literacy Programs to the Museum	HM 152
A Sense of Belonging: Crafting Meaningful Experiences for College Interns	HM 140
DeafBlind Tours: Touch, Communication, Connection	HM 138
Developing the STEM Backpack Toolkit: Learning from and with our community	HM 432
Getting Out of the Museum: Bringing Museum Programming into Library Spaces	HM 431
Measuring Belonging: Using Student Work to Understand Learning	HM 438
Roots of Resilience: Celebrating the Strengths and Stories of Immigrant Communities	HM 150
Talk of the Town: Artist-in-Residence with Indigenous and Endangered Language Communities	HM 433

Closing Remarks, 4:15 pm–4:45 pm

Cowin Center Auditorium

Horace Mann 147

- Leah Golubchick, President, NYCMER
- Emily Edmonds-Langham, Vice President, NYCMER

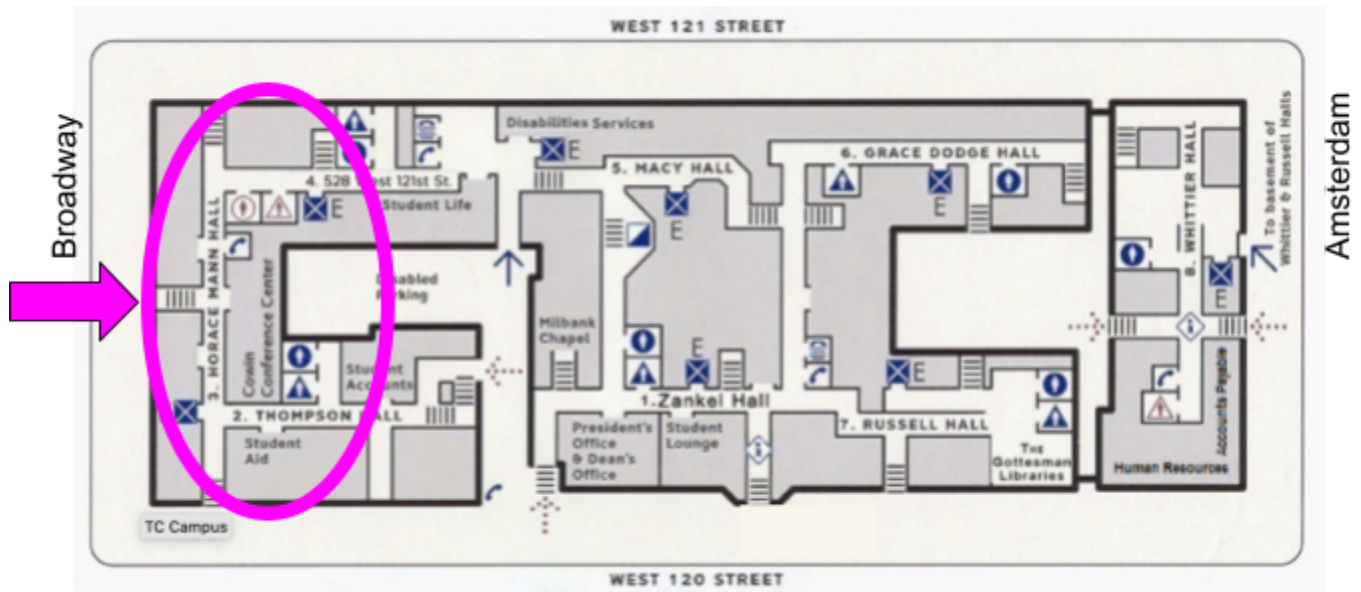
Afterparty, 5 pm–7 pm

Amity Hall Uptown

982 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10025

Join us at Amity Hall Uptown, where you can continue mingling with peers. Please wear your nametag so we know who you are! Take the downtown M4 or M104 buses from Broadway and W 122nd street or take a 15-minute walk.

Conference Map at a Glance



Use the entrance on Broadway between W120th and W121st Streets (pink arrow above)

[Horace Mann Floor Maps](#)

[All Gender Restroom and Lactation Rooms](#)

[Wheelchair Route Planner | Maps | Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities | Teachers College, Columbia University](#)

The Art and Art Education Program at Teachers College Columbia University is honored to welcome our museum education colleagues and friends back to Teachers College for the 2025 NYCMER Annual Conference.



Session Descriptions & Presenter Bios

Welcome & Keynote with Q&A, 9:30 am–10:30 am

Cowin Education Center Auditorium

HM147



Ben Garcia (he/him) has worked for 20 years to help museums become places of welcome and belonging for all people. He started as a gallery guide and educator, moved on to exhibition development, and then served in middle- and upper-management administrative roles, before joining the American LGBTQ+ Museum as Executive Director. He has presented and published regularly on creating structural equity in museums through transparency, accountability, fair labor practices, and by adding missing voices and perspectives. Ben graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Boston with a B.A. in Art and from Bank Street College of Education with an M.S. Ed. in Museum Leadership.



Kimaada Le Gendre (she/her) is the Director of Education & Community Engagement at the Queens Museum, where she curates innovative educational, cultural, and public programs rooted in social justice, accessibility, and culturally sustaining pedagogy. She is also a strategic lead in developing a new

children's museum, overseeing strategic planning, content creation, and research to enhance intergenerational and culturally responsive educational experiences.

During her tenure, she created the Queens Teens Institute for Art and Social Justice, envisioning a brave space for BIPOC and marginalized teens from Queens to engage in art, leadership, community service, and professional development. A former history and environmental studies teacher, Kimaada is also a best-selling author of 19 children's books highlighting cultural diversity, empowerment, and environmental issues. She co-authored the official curriculum guide for the critically acclaimed movie *Till* (2022).

Kimaada holds a Bachelor's degree in English from Hunter College and a Master's in Environmental Law & Policy from Vermont Law School. Recognized as a 2023 and 2024 Power Player in Education by Politics NY and AM Metro NY, she serves as a board member of the Museum Education Roundtable, is a 2024 Women InPower Fellow, and participated in NYFA's Incubator for Executive Leaders of Color. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) with a focus on educational leadership and organizational innovation.

Block I, 10:45 am–11:45 am

Session 1

Connecting Mission to Civic Learning: Practical Tools for Museum Educators

Museums play a vital role in fostering civic learning, acting as both community spaces and stewards of our shared history. This interactive session will provide strategies to integrate civic education into institutional missions. Featuring case studies from the Intrepid Museum's *Exploring Civics Through Historic Spaces* toolkit for K-5 and the Museum of the City of New York's *Civics in the City* project for 6-8, attendees will explore practical applications of the Educating for American Democracy (EAD) Roadmap. Participants will actively apply frameworks, strategies, and tools to their own contexts, ensuring meaningful and impactful civic engagement for learners of all ages.

- **Alex Tronolone** is a special educator with over a decade building history learning experiences with archival primary sources. Currently he leads the Teaching with the Library's Primary Sources publications at the New York Public Library's Center for Educators and Schools. Previously, he was Manager of Teaching & Learning at Brooklyn Historical Society (now the Center for Brooklyn History at Brooklyn Public Library), where he was the project lead for the Muslims in Brooklyn curriculum. He is a board member of Sundog Theatre, a Staten Island based arts-in-education organization. He was a trustee-at-large of the NYCMER from 2014-2017, and a Steering Committee member of the Museum, Arts, and Culture Access Consortium (MAC) from 2019-2021.
 - alextronolone@nypl.org
- **Maeve Montalvo** is the Director of the Frederick A.O. Schwarz Education Center at the Museum of the City of New York, where she leads a team dedicated to engaging learners in examining New York City's past so that they may better understand its present and envision their role in shaping its future. With over 15 years in the field, she is committed to mentoring the next generation of museum education professionals. She is currently co-curating an exhibition with Lenape

communities. She holds an MS in Museum Leadership from Bank Street College and a BA in American Studies from Smith College.

- mmontalvo@mcny.org
- **Ruby Stricker** is a Museum Educator at the Intrepid Museum. An early career professional, she is dedicated to expanding the stories told in historic spaces. Her work is focused on civic education and highlighting underrepresented voices in the ship's history. With her team, she has developed a toolkit for museum educators wanting to tell more expansive stories at their institutions. At *Intrepid*, she works to incorporate those stories into K-12 and teacher programming. Ruby holds a BS in Anthropology from Dickinson College.
 - rstricker@intrepidmuseum.org
- **Brook Gesser** is a museum educator and civics advocate. At Every Museum a Civic Museum, she helps museums deepen their public engagement and expand their community impact. She also serves as an exhibitions educator at the Center for Educators and Schools at the New York Public Library and has worked as an educator at the Tenement Museum. A career changer, Brook's commitment to civics is shaped by more than a decade serving as a senior advisor to U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Brook holds an MEd in Museum Education from Bank Street, a JD from Fordham School of Law, and a BA from Vassar College.
 - brook@civicmuseums.org

Session 2

Decolonizing Museum Education & Mentorship as Cultural Stewardship

This session will explore how museums can decolonize educational practices by integrating the arts and centering diverse epistemologies. Facilitated by artist-educators and museum practitioners, this session models mentorship as an act of cultural stewardship and transformation. This conversational session will examine how museums can disrupt hierarchical mentorship norms and cultivate welcoming, inclusive environments that amplify lived experience and communal knowledge. Through storytelling, reflection, and embodied practice, participants will leave with actionable tools and radical hope for reshaping mentorship and education within their institutions.

- **Matthew Villarreal** is an artist, community advocate, and educator from El Paso, TX with over 17 years of experience working with students of color and first-generation college students. Matthew is currently an Assistant Professor and an Assistant Dean for Art and Design Education at Parsons School of Design. Before joining Parsons in 2019, Matthew worked as a high school teacher and college-access administrator in various Title I schools. His creative practice blends pedagogy, artmaking, and activism with the aim of building space for whole communities to deepen community confidence and creative capacity via workshops, exhibitions, and exchanges.
 - villarm@newschool.edu
- **Dr. Jacqueline M. Cofield** is an educator, cultural producer, and arts consultant specializing in museum education, arts integration, and interdisciplinary pedagogy. She has worked with institutions including The Whitney Museum of American Art, CUNY, and The Institute for Anti-Racist Education. Her research explores how artists and educators engage communities through interdisciplinary creative practices that bridge visual art, education, and social impact. She is the founder of Cultured Arts Consulting and host of the Beyond Beauty podcast. Dr. Cofield holds a doctorate from Columbia University, where her award-winning dissertation examined Black women artists' epistemologies and aesthetic praxes as tools for resistance and liberation.
 - jmc2413@tc.columbia.edu

Session 3

Maintaining Ties Beyond Walls: Welcoming Communities Beyond the Premises Through Online and Offsite Museum Opportunities

As museums emerge from the challenges of the pandemic, many are prioritizing the return of in-person visitors. Should digital and offsite programming take a back seat? Absolutely not! This workshop explores how museums can effectively balance onsite experiences with dynamic online, hybrid, and in-school programming to serve diverse audiences, including those who face barriers to physically visiting museums. The workshop will provide strategies for incorporating digital educational resources, expanding classroom outreach, as well as fostering an inclusive learning environment.

- **John Sapida** received a Bachelor's Degree in International Studies from Ramapo College of New Jersey and a Master's Degree in Museum Studies from CUNY School of Professional Studies. His experience ranges from working in higher education administration, digital and social media, media advocacy, human rights education, documentary film production, public history and museum education and administration. John is currently the Manager of Digital Initiatives for the Urban Advantage program at the American Museum of Natural History and a Citizenship Educator at The New York Historical.
 - jsapida@amnh.org
- **Jacqueline Smith** is the Manager of Curriculum Development & Education at the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art. At the onset of her career, she taught Social and Emotional Learning in NYC public schools. Jacqueline is deeply committed to integrating Social and Emotional Learning and Museum Education. Jacqueline previously served as Manager of Gallery Education at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, Assistant Manager of School Programs at the Morgan Library & Museum, and as an Educator at the New-York Historical Society. She holds a Bachelor's degree in History from Barnard College and a Master's degree in Museum Education from Bank Street.
 - jdsmith@rubinmuseum.org

Session 4

Museums are a Drag, Right?

What is drag? Who's so worried about it? Does it belong in museums?

Part-lecture, part-spectacular, this session examines the interconnected history of drag, activism, and its place in museums. After establishing a shared understanding of drag, we'll examine how museums have embraced or excluded the form as the topic has been thrust into our current political conscience.

We'll discuss where drag and museums have collided or clashed, and empathetically examine the real-world consequences for both sides. Ultimately, we'll identify ways for museum educators to bridge their institutions with the predominant art form of the NYC LGBTQ advocacy and nightlife scenes.

- **Anthony DeRita (aka Miss Shock)** is a creative producer who creates interactive and linear media for museums, with a background in hands-on curriculum development in the creative arts. A drag

performer for over a decade as “Miss Shock,” Anthony has developed one-woman cabaret shows, celebrity impersonations, and shows centered around fundraising and activism for the queer community. Miss Shock has twice represented New York City at the National Miss Comedy Queen pageant, and seeks to bridge the gap between the worlds of nightlife, art, and museums.

- anthony.j.derita@gmail.com

Session 5

The Ubuntu Museum

Using the philosophy of Ubuntu, museums can create and maintain family place programming that promote community building as well as intergenerational learning. From art making in the galleries, to maintaining relationships between different departments, there are many different ways that Ubuntu can be utilized within museums.

- Museum educator and historical artist **Lillian Young** is the Family Programs coordinator of the Brooklyn Museum. Lillian’s education philosophy centers around intersectionality, the Montessori Method, and the African philosophy of Ubuntu. Lillian received her BFA in Studio Art from Texas Christian University in 2018 and her MFA in Studio Art with a certification in Museum Studies Spring of 2022 from Michigan State University. Lillian has worked at the Kimbell Art Museum, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, The National Portrait Gallery, the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, and the Art Institute of Chicago.
 - lillian.young@brooklynmuseum.org

Session 6

Supporting Identity In Museum Programming For Older Adults With Dementia And Their Care Partners

Living with Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia is often challenging to one’s self image. Family caregivers may be similarly challenged as relationships are impacted. How can museum programming support identity for those affected by memory loss? Whether you are a seasoned pro at creating programs for people with dementia or entirely new to the practice, this workshop will bring a new perspective.

- With 25 years’ experience as a museum educator and a strong belief in the power of museums to promote individual and community well-being, **Carolyn Halpin-Healy** founded Arts & Minds with neurologist James M. Noble MD, to provide museum-based experiences for people with dementia and their care partners at the Studio Museum in Harlem. She facilitates access programs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and provides professional development for cultural organizations and dementia care facilities in the Arts & Minds approach.
 - chalpinhealy@artsandminds.org
- **Shanta Lawson** is a museum education professional and arts and cultural leader with more than 20 years of experience in the field. She has an established record of visioning, developing and sustaining a range of programs that engage broad audiences, including 13 years of programming for adults living with memory loss. Her practice is focused on a commitment to developing ways in which museums are accessible spaces that inspire progressive, person-centered engagement.

Session 7

Community, Curators, and Community Curation: Insights from the Brooklyn Museum Education Fellows

This session presents the research of the Brooklyn Museum's 2024-25 cohort of Museum Education Fellows: Trinity Lee, Emily Cigarroa, Kaylin Dodson, and Henry Wahlenmayer. After introducing the Brooklyn Museum Education Fellowship Program, each fellow will present on their individual research projects, which explore a variety of approaches to community engagement in museum displays, education, and interdepartmental collaboration. Each fellow will demonstrate concrete ways to incorporate their research findings into educational programs and exhibition processes at your institution. The workshop will conclude with a short Q&A session.

- **Henry Wahlenmayer** is a writer and educator living in Queens, NY. He graduated from Oberlin College in 2023 with a B.A. in Arts, Media, and Culture and a concentration in Public Humanities. He has held previous positions at the Allen Memorial Art Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
 - henry.wahlenmayer@brooklynmuseum.org
- **Trinity Lee** (she/her/hers) is a native of Fort Worth, Texas and a recent graduate of the University of Southern California where she studied Law, History, and Culture and Art History. She is passionate about exploring and realizing the liberatory potential of nature of art and pop culture in community contexts.
 - trinity.lee@brooklynmuseum.org
- **Emily Cigarroa** is a recent graduate from Brown University with a degree in Anthropology and Archaeology. She is interested in repatriation, provenance, and public programs in the arts. She is the current Public Programs Museum Education Fellow at the Brooklyn Museum.
 - emily.cigarroa@brooklynmuseum.org
- **Kaylin Dodson** (she/they) is a journalist, storyteller, and equity-driven researcher. Currently, as a Teen Programs Museum Education Fellow at the Brooklyn Museum, her research focuses on the relationship between curatorial aesthetics and museum educator pedagogies. Previously, she was a Senior Researcher at Brown University where her work focused on mis- and disinformation targeting Black and Brown communities. Her work and contributions can be found on the Rita Allen Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Vox, The Guardian, and more.

Poster Sessions, 1:00 pm–1:45 pm

Building Community, Creating Space: Family Engagement in Neighborhood Museums

Learn about the development and results of weekend family engagement activities at the South Street Seaport Museum—how they help foster community, build hyper-local relationships, and create repeat visitorship. What does an institution gain from creating space for community-based engagement?

- **Kristi LiCausi** is a licensed master social work (LMSW) with six years of experience in museum education and public programming. Kristi is super passionate about accessible museum engagement and pursued disability access and disability justice through the lens of community-led museum programming in my MSW program. At the Seaport Museum, she works on a small team to plan, train, and execute our family programs.
 - klicausi@seany.org
- **Esme Levitch** comes from a Critical Museum Studies background, prior to joining the team at the Seaport. My work here bridges planning and facilitation, office-based and front-facing. Public programming and engagement is vitally important in my current roles, as they offer paths to broaden the scope of the Museum's mission in unexpected and unconventional ways.
 - elevitch@seany.org

It's the Little Things: Welcoming LGBTQ+ Community in Museums

Learn about "the little things" museum educators have done and can do to welcome LGBTQ+ community members. NYCMER members will share anecdotes focusing on LGBTQ+ museum staff, visitors, and students. This poster board is meant as a reminder to museum leadership and management to support such staff-driven, community-building initiatives.

- **Roberto Chavez** (he/him) is a museum educator, poet, and LGBTQ advocate. He is an educator for Children and Family Learning at the American Museum of Natural History. He has previously worked at the Intrepid Museum, King Manor Museum, The New York Historical, the New York Transit Museum, and the Tenement Museum. Since 2020, Roberto has been a NYCMER Peer Group Coordinator for Queer Peers. He is serving on the NYCMER Conference Committee for the first time. In 2024, Roberto was a recipient of the Nancy Hanks Award for Rising Stars by the American Alliance of Museums.
 - rchavez@amnh.org
- As the Education and Program Coordinator at King Manor Museum, **Jane Sheedy** (she/her) oversees school tours, Hands on History programs, and workshops of King Manor and Queens. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English and Art History from the University of Michigan. Jane has worked at The New-York Historical, the Intrepid Museum, and the Children's Museum of Manhattan. Once a week, Jane works at the Intrepid Museum to assist facilitation during access programs or to teach Cultural After School Adventures (CASA) programs across New York City. She lives in Queens with her partner and three cats.
 - janesheedy98@gmail.com

Reinventing Museum Experiences: A Gamified Self-Tour Guide to Engage Young Adults with Abstract Art

This poster presents Yutong Chloe Wu's master thesis, a gamified self-tour guide designed to enhance young adults' engagement with abstract art in museums. Integrating Live Action Role-Playing (LARP), narrative-driven prompts, and mindfulness techniques, this intervention fosters immersive, self-directed exploration.

- **Yutong Chloe Wu** is an art educator and multimedia artist from China, currently based in New York. She is pursuing an MA in Art and Art Education with a concentration in museum education at Teachers College, Columbia University. She holds a BS in Art Education for K-12 teaching, with a minor in Art History. Passionate about the transformative role of museums, she envisions them as dynamic third places that foster humanity, mindfulness, and poetic engagement with life. Committed to accessibility

and inclusion, she strives to make museums more welcoming and meaningful for diverse communities.

- cw3522@tc.columbia.edu

Rooted in Tech: Growing a Culture of Welcome at NYBG

This poster showcases how NYBG leverages technology to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment. From digital onboarding tools to interactive wayfinding and AI-driven learning experiences, we explore how technology enhances engagement, accessibility, and community-building in the Garden's workforce and visitor experience.

- **Jade Johnson** is the Manager for Volunteer Services at The New York Botanical Garden. She has worked at NYBG since 2018, serving multiple roles in the Children's Education Department and has worked in Volunteer Services since 2021. Prior to NYBG, she worked and volunteered for many other cultural institutions throughout NYC including the Prospect Park Zoo and American Museum of Natural History. She holds a Masters in Environmental Interpretation from SUNY Environmental Sciences and Forestry (ESF).
 - jjohnson@nybg.org
- **Sujay Pandit, PhD** is a leader in Learning & Development, an instructional designer, and an educator. He specializes in using technology to enhance engagement and inclusion. As the Director of Learning & Development at NYBG, he designs training programs, onboarding experiences, and initiatives for professional growth. Sujay has presented on topics such as AI literacy, instructional design, and workforce training at various institutions, including Harvard University, Yale University, NYU, and NYBG. Sujay's work combines technology with human-centered learning to foster connections, accessibility, and professional growth across diverse organizations and institutions.
 - spandit@nybg.org

Structural Barriers to DEAI in the Arts

This session examines the structural barriers that hinder the implementation of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) in arts museums. Based on qualitative research with arts administrators from major institutions, it reveals how funding constraints, siloed departmental structures, and definitional ambiguity contribute to recurring structural barriers—highlighting patterns that reinforce inequity.

- **Alex Syrenova** Alex Syrenova's work is rooted in lived experience and institutional critique. Positioned both inside and outside the systems they study, Alex investigates how arts organizations implement—or resist—structural change through DEAI practices. Their research is informed by their own experiences navigating access work, institutional power, and survival within marginalizing structures. They approach DEAI through a reflexive, qualitative lens, examining how institutions replicate the very exclusions they claim to dismantle.
 - as7056@tc.columbia.edu

Students First: Making the Guggenheim a Destination for Local Students & Faculty

As museums strive to meet the evolving needs of the next generation, the Guggenheim's Academic Engagement team has developed three strategies to foster community, career mentorship, and experiential pedagogy for students and faculty. This poster presents the evaluation results and implementation of new programs to deepen engagement with CUNY communities.

- **Isabella Caporuscio** (she/her) was born and raised in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is an arts administrator, educator, and museum worker. Currently, she is the Manager of Academic Engagement at the Guggenheim Museum, and in that role, she oversees the internship program and partnerships with local universities. She holds a Master's degree in Visual Arts Administration from New York University and a Bachelor's degree in International Studies and Arts Management from The University of New Mexico. Her graduate research focused on social practice art, and she continues to explore the topic in her work at the Guggenheim through academic collaborations with artists, faculty, and students.
- **Zoe Whelan** is an artist and current Visual Art Administration graduate student at the New York University studying the ways nonprofit arts and culture institutions can best meet the needs of their communities. Whelan's capstone research focuses on university and college students and their relationship to art museums as a place of community, inspiration, and academic exploration. Whelan has programmed two community activations for the Ukrainian Museum, serving 2100 visitors and is currently serving as the Academic Engagement Intern at the Guggenheim Museum.

Teaching Design History in Higher Ed: Facilitating Learner Agency Through Museum Collections and Digital Archives

This workshop invites participants to experience a curriculum the author has taught to graduate students in higher education titled, *Approaches to Design History*, in which students followed thematic prompts to investigate design histories using global museum collections and archives as their primary source. The culmination of the class was a unique portfolio of writings around each core theme –wearing, moving, sheltering, seating, communicating, and futuring – which, in aggregate, offered each cohort a pluriversal view of design history. Students were given complete autonomy to choose an artifact, learn its historical and cultural context, and present a thoughtful, creative reflection in writing.

- **Jennifer Rittner** is Assistant Professor, Strategic Design and Management and Assistant Dean, Curriculum and Learning at Parsons. She has design history, design research, and thesis. Her publications as editor include *Crafted Kinship* (2024), *The Black Experience in Design* (2022), and the *Policing* issue of *Design Museum Everywhere* (2021). At the American Federation of Arts in the 1990s, Jennifer led Art Access II, an initiative designed to increase museum attendance among under-served communities. She earned her M.Ed. in Communication and Education at Teachers College with her thesis, "Space, Time, and Objects" on equity and access in the history curriculum.
 - rittnerj@newschool.edu

Tell Us About Your Community

Make community a permanent part of your museum! Learn how our "Tell Us About Your Community" exhibit creates an inviting space.

- **Sam Ginsberg** is a museum educator at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York Museum and Learning Center. Their work includes managing museum operations, leading museum visits, and creating educational resources. They hold a B.A. in history from Fordham University, a M.A. in Public History from St John's University, and certification in Museum Studies from Northwestern University.

Animals Send Valentines Too: Creating a Children's Book

Creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit can lead to fun outcomes! Learn about how we turned an idea into a physical children's book. Check out *Animals Send Valentines Too*, a nonfiction book about animals interesting mating rituals told in rhyme.

- **Christina Kamerow** Museum Educator (American Museum of Natural History) | Children's Book Author | Responsive Classroom Teacher
 - ckamerow@amnh.org
- **Eli Kamerow**, Co-author of *Animals Send Valentines Too*. Currently leading Darwinbox's US expansion. Eli helps companies grow, has worked with over 100 people as a career coach, and writes children's books with Tina (more on the way!).

Help NYCMER Shape our Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is a roadmap for NYCMER's future, setting the direction for our programs, events, and initiatives. The NYCMER Board is excited to share initial findings from our Strategic Plan survey, and is still seeking your input. Your feedback will play a crucial role in shaping our goals over the next few years.

Whether you're a longtime member or a new face in the community, your voice matters. This is your chance to help guide the direction of our organization and ensure that we are focused on what truly matters to our members. Your feedback will help us create a plan that aligns with your needs and vision for the community. Stop by the table to learn more and consider filling out [the survey](#).

Block II, 2:00 pm–3:00 pm

Session 1

Belonging at the Library: James Baldwin and Teen Programming

This year, The New York Public Library has featured items from James Baldwin's personal archive in two exhibitions. But who has access to these exhibitions? Baldwin was an avid library user as a young person and several departments at NYPL joined forces to intentionally broaden access to these special collections to diverse young people in New York City. Join this session to learn about our creative contest, interactive tours for high school students as well as arts programming in branch libraries alongside targeted outreach initiatives—all working to show teens that Baldwin, the Library, and its collections are for them.

- **Rachel Roseberry** is the Associate Director of Young Adult Programs and Services at The New York Public Library where she oversees a portfolio including NYPL's signature Teen Ambassadors employment program, College & Career Pathways programs, teen voice programming, and more. With a Master's in Reading Education and a passion for informal learning, she has worked in both public libraries and non-profits with a focus on literacy and holistically supporting kids and teens in grades K-12 for the past 14 years.
 - rachelroseberry@nypl.org
- **Arielle Saber** is the Manager of Teen Voice at The New York Public Library, where she supports all aspects of Young Adult programming to enrich teens' experiences, amplify their interests, and showcase their creative work. Arielle manages the publication of teen writing and art in both print and digital formats. With a background in education, she has previously taught middle school English and

supported NYPL's teen employment program, furthering her commitment to providing meaningful and empowering opportunities for youth.

- ariellesaber@nypl.org
- **Liz Billy** is the manager of the Exhibitions Education for The New York Public Library's Center for Educators and Schools. In 2021, she launched the Field Trip Program for the new permanent exhibition at the main branch. She has facilitated collections-based programs at NYPL for over 10 years, using branch and research collections for students of all ages. Before her work at the Library, she worked as a museum educator at the New York Transit Museum and the Morris Museum. She received an MS in Education from Bank Street College, concentrating in Museum Education. She has presented at ALA, NYCC's Professional Day for Librarians and Educators, and NYCMER.
 - educators@nypl.org
- Before coming to The New York Public Library, **Lorraine Mcfarlane** was a NYC public school high school teacher of English for 23 years in the Bronx. During her tenure as a teacher she developed curriculum units for AP Seminar, Shakespeare, writing workshops, Regents preparation, poetry, and a lunchtime book club. She is passionate about acquiring knowledge and sharing ideas and enjoys reading, journal writing, and music (currently learning to play the piano). She holds a BA in Literature from CUNY Baccalaureate Program and an MA in English Education from New York University.
 - lorrainemcfarlane@nypl.org
- **Andrea Lockhart** is the Lead Young Adult Librarian at the 125th Street Library, bringing over a decade of experience in library services and a strong commitment to empowering teens through education, mentorship, and community engagement. With a background in program development, college and career readiness, and outreach services, Andrea creates inclusive, dynamic spaces where young people feel seen, supported, and inspired. She is especially passionate about equity in access to resources and fostering meaningful connections between libraries and the communities they serve. Andrea holds a Master of Science in Library and Information Science from CUNY Queens College and a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from John Jay College.
- **Neyssa Marin** began her journey working with youth as a school counseling intern at the Deutsche Schule in Medellín, Colombia. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of San Buenaventura in Medellín and brings a deep commitment to mental wellness and youth empowerment into her work. As the Teen Librarian Trainee at the Morris Park Library and a current MLS student at Queens College, Neyssa creates inclusive spaces where teens can express themselves through art, journaling, and conversation. She believes in the power of creativity to heal, connect, and inspire. In her free time, she enjoys journaling, collage art, embroidery, and exploring the city's cultural spaces.

Session 2

¡Bienvenidos! 欢迎! Welcome! Interdisciplinary Approaches to Bilingual Engagement in the Museum

NYC Public Schools boast 180 world languages spoken by its students. Are we ready to receive them? Hear how educators from four different museums have built and adapted their bilingual programming to suit the needs of their respective audiences: MCNY's K-12 field trips (Spanish-English); MOCA's public gallery tours (Mandarin); MoMA's family tours *Arte en Familia* (Spanish-English), *Family Art Adventures* (Mandarin), and community partnership programs (Spanish); and NYSCI's *Families Learning Together* (Spanish-English) multi-day parent education program. Leave with a greater awareness of the needs of bilingual and multilingual audiences and concrete strategies for your own teaching practice or informal learning environment.

- At the Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA), **Lauren Nechamkin** has spent the last ten years designing and facilitating programs which chronicle the American experience through a Chinese American lens. Lauren started her museum career at the New York Hall of Science, as an Explainer in their Science Career Ladder program, which cemented her fondness for unconventional education.

She earned her B.S. in Social Studies Education from NYU's Steinhardt School of Education and an initial certification for teaching social studies to grades 5-12. She is a Jackson Heights native and harbors an immense pride for Queens, the World's Borough.

- Lnechamkin@mocanyc.org
- **Delia Meza** is a leader in community-driven STEM education for over 20 years, dedicated to fostering meaningful connections between museums and diverse families. As Director of Family Learning and Community Partnerships at the New York Hall of Science, she leads inclusive, culturally responsive initiatives that empower families to co-create impactful learning experiences. A recognized advocate for equity in informal learning, she is an ACM Diversity in Action Fellow and an ASTC Diversity and Leadership Fellow. Delia holds an MA in Leadership in Museum Education from Bank Street College of Education.
 - dmeza@nysci.org
- **Valentina Pellegrino** is the first Bilingual Educator at the Museum of the City of New York and has helped in pioneering the bilingual experiences offered by the museum since 2024. She recently made a career transition, coming from an academic background with a focus on work with Indigenous communities of Colombia, her native country. She holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of The Andes (Colombia) and a B.A. in History from the National University of Colombia.
 - vpellegrino@mcny.org
- **Siyao Lyu** is currently a part-time museum educator at the Museum of Chinese in American and an Ed.D. student at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she studies civic education in museums. Siyao got her Ed.M. in Arts in Education from Harvard University (2019) and MA in International and Comparative Education from Columbia University (2018). In the past, Siyao was associated with several museums, including Harvard Art Museums, Harvard Museums of Natural History, Children's Museum of the Arts in New York, and Today Art Museum in Beijing.
 - slyu@mocanyc.org
- **Priya Blair** currently works at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) as the Landau Fellow in Family Programs. Before joining MoMA, she graduated from New York University with an M.A. in Museum Studies and has a B.A. in History from Cornell University. Priya has worked for a number of museums across New York and Washington D.C. and is passionate about increasing museum accessibility through engaging educational programs and resources for families.
 - priya_blair@moma.org
- **Carolina Malagamba** is a Mexican-German Teaching Artist and Museum Educator with a background in Fine Arts and Translation. Passionate about creating welcoming museum experiences, she strives to challenge the notion that museums are unapproachable or dull. Her work focuses on community engagement and exploring the many languages—both literal and artistic—used in museum and art spaces. She is dedicated to empowering bilingual individuals, third-culture kids, and the Latinx community, helping them recognize the strength of navigating multiple cultures. Through education, she aims to provide the guidance she once sought growing up.
 - carolina_malagamba@moma.org

Session 3

Creating Space for Science and Community at the Pub

Astronomy on Tap started in 2012 in NYC, expanded across the globe, and brings science to pubs, libraries, museums, and other leisure and informal spaces. Spurring Biology on Tap and other series, the monthly events aim to tap into local scientific communities and provide low-barrier venues for public outreach. Events are interactive, featuring creative presentations, extended Q&A, trivia and

more, while creating connections between attendees and the science happening in their community and backyards. Join us as we discuss and demonstrate several of our techniques and help us create an interactive activity for the conference after-party!

- **Brian Levine** is the Program Director for STEMteachersNYC and longtime host/producer for Astronomy on TapNYC. He holds a Masters of Science Education in Free-Choice Learning, and has been a NYCMER member and/or trustee for over a decade. He is a lifelong Brooklynite who grew up in museums and has worked for over two decades with youth and adults in informal and formal education settings.
 - brian.levine@gmail.com
- **Kate Schmidt** is a NYCMER Board member and an early childhood educator at AMNH. She has worked in the museum field for a decade, specializing in astronomy programming and curriculum development. She often describes her job as teaching astrophysics to 8 year olds. In her free time, she hosts and produces two monthly science communication events, Astronomy and Biology on Tap.
 - kaitlin.schmidt32@gmail.com

Session 4

Don't Judge a Book Club by Its Cover: Reimagining Museums as Places to Cultivate Community

At a time when 1-in-3 Americans struggle with loneliness and isolation, museums have unique opportunities to act as “Third Places,” fostering connection and creating community - particularly for marginalized communities. This session explores how literature-inspired programming added an unexpected yet meaningful community dimension in two museum settings. Discover how the Whaling Museum’s “Beyond the Book” program helped a new adult audience grow while creatively showcasing the museum’s historic collection in novel and inclusive contexts. Explore how the American LGBTQ+ Museum’s “Lavender Literary Society” became a space for intergenerational community and connection where reading and reflecting together is an act of empowerment. Staff will share cross-disciplinary content ideas, successes, challenges, and lessons learned as inspiration for your own literary-based public programming.

- **Brenna McCormick-Thompson** is the Curator of Education at the Whaling Museum & Education Center in Cold Spring Harbor, NY where she delights in developing exciting and unexpected programs that engage museum visitors with Long Island's maritime past. With more than 15 years of experience in museum education, Brenna's previous work includes roles at Historic Hudson Valley, the New-York Historical Society, the Westchester Children's Museum, and the South Street Seaport Museum.
 - bmccormickthompson@cshwhalingmuseum.org
- **Suhaly Bautista-Carolina** (she/they/we/us) is an arts educator, community organizer, and cultural leader who believes in the transformative potential of museums. She joined the American LGBTQ+ Museum in 2023 after serving as Senior Managing Educator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Suhaly has contributed to organizations like the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, Creative Time, and the Brooklyn Museum, and collaborated on exhibitions and programs across NYC. She is featured in *We Are Here: Visionaries of Color Transforming the Art World* and serves on the executive boards of Weeksville Heritage Center and ArtTable.
 - suhaly@americanlgbtgmuseum.org

Session 5

Engaging Environments: A Practical Guide to Site-Specific Walking Tours

This session will explore the inception, production, and implementation of walking tours for adults outside of traditional institutional spaces. How can walking tours provide opportunities for education and immersive storytelling, as well as strengthen connections in surrounding communities - making these spaces more dynamic and accessible? Join representatives from three NYC historical institutions to hear about the advantages and challenges in engaging audiences with site-specific historical spaces and external environments. Gain practical knowledge in navigating urban space and how to produce a walking tour from start to finish.

- **Amy Raffel** is currently the Public Programs Manager at the NY Transit Museum. She has worked in several art, museum, and educational institutions for the past 17 years in various roles related to research, writing, interpretation, and public engagement. She has a Ph.D. in art history and has published on Keith Haring and the downtown scene.
 - amy.raffel@nyct.com
- **Derya Mergin** is the Senior Manager of Public Programs at the Green-Wood Cemetery. She oversees more than 300 public tours and events annually, working to connect audiences with the Cemetery's rich history and landscape. She has a master's degree in history and has worked in cultural and educational institutions in roles related to research, development, and public engagement.
 - dmergin@green-wood.com
- **Kat Lloyd** is an educator and content developer, currently exploring the relationship between digital and place-based storytelling.
 - KLloyd@tenement.org

Session 6

Partnerships in Practice: Museums & Educators Co-Designing STEM Learning

At Urban Advantage, our goal is to support participating schools through school community professional learning at our eight partner institutions. Community comes first in everything we do. Working with partners at different institutions and teachers from across New York City strengthens all of our programming. In this session, we will discuss our collaborative planning model, how we build relationships with teachers and elementary schools, and how we all help each other connect to the broader communities of New York City. You will generate ideas on co-designing experiences at institutions to strengthen reach in communities and walk away with actionable next steps.

- **Bridget Hidalgo** is the Urban Advantage Elementary Program Manager at the American Museum of Natural History. She manages the elementary portion of Urban Advantage. She works with a team of partners and teachers to co-design professional learning experiences in New York City. Bridget taught fifth grade in Dallas, Texas, for five years before joining Urban Advantage. As a teacher, she loved partnering with community members and the local science museum to provide enriching experiences for her school and students.
 - bhidalgo@amnh.org
- **Kate Maschak** is a Senior Science Instructor for the Urban Advantage Elementary Program at The New York Hall of Science. She is an experienced instructor in both formal and informal education settings. Prior to joining NYSCI, Kate worked for 10 years in an elementary school teaching kindergarten through sixth grade in a variety of special education settings. In her current role at NYSCI, Kate is responsible for co-designing professional learning experiences for teachers, engaging and standards aligned experiences students, and co-learning opportunities for families across New York City.
 - KMaschak@nysci.org
- **Judith Hutton** is the Manager of Teacher Education and Urban Advantage Elementary at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG). She has 25 years of experience in environmental and museum education. Judith's previous positions include roles at Wave Hill, The New York Botanical Garden, and the New York Hall of Science. In her current role, she oversees the development, implementation, and assessment of professional learning opportunities for pre-service and in-service educators, including the Urban Advantage Elementary partnership.
 - jhutton@bbg.org
- **Caryn Hummell** (she/her) is the Urban Advantage Coordinator at the New York Botanical Garden. She has been an informal educator for eight years, working directly with teachers for almost three of those. She encourages teachers and students to strengthen their connection to the natural world and their local place.
 - chummell@hybg.org
- **Laura Magaw** grew up in New Jersey with a big garden in the backyard so she truly grew up in "The

Garden State”. She attended The College of New Jersey where she studied Sociology and Elementary Education and later on got a masters in Curriculum and Instruction focusing on Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages. After graduating Laura taught Kindergarten at the American School of Madrid and Dubai American Academy. Eventually her love of New York City brought her home to the east coast. Laura loves teaching Science because she believes in hands-on learning that leads to new discoveries.

- Imagaw@communityroots.org

Session 7

Please Touch: Fostering Student Confidence Through Simulated Archival Processing

Bringing a public library ideology of open access information to a landmark Romanesque Revival building is no easy feat. Giving students the tools to navigate these spaces can be even harder. Working across departments, The Center for Brooklyn History piloted a new program to teach students archival research skills while highlighting their belonging in academic institutions and the borough at large. This session will use this activity as a case study on creating inclusive safe spaces for students to explore and feel ownership over. This session will discuss creating access to historically exclusive spaces through hands-on learning.

- An educator and Brooklynite, **Sonya Ochshorn** holds a MEd in Museum Education from Bank Street College of Education and a multidisciplinary BA in art, anthropology, and media from CUNY BA. Sonya is interested in the intersection of education and social justice and how cultural spaces can be used as a place to encourage social change.
 - sochshorn@bklynlibrary.org
- **Kevina Tidwell** is the Special Collections and Outreach Librarian at CBH. In this role she provides reference services and teaches classes on archival research to groups ranging from primary school to college to older adults. She previously worked as an archival producer for documentary films and television. She holds an MLIS from the Pratt School of Information and a BA in American History from Arizona State University.
 - ktidwell@bklynlibrary.org

Block III, 3:15 pm–4:15 pm

Session 1

A New Way of Seeing Things: Welcoming Adult Language and Literacy Programs to the Museum

Literacy is a social justice issue, impacting individuals’ ability to navigate school, healthcare, job opportunities, housing, and avenues for civic participation. In New York City, there are over 2.2 million adults with limited English language proficiency or without a high school diploma, and chronic underfunding means programs cannot serve all those who desire services. How can museums help support providers seeking innovative ways to infuse their curricula? Using the Adult Literacy Program at the Brooklyn Museum as a case study, this presentation brings together a museum educator and two adult literacy professionals from Literacy Assistance Center and the CUNY Language Immersion Program to share insight about working with adult literacy practitioners and to offer some best practices.

- **Christina Marinelli** is the Associate Manager of Adult Learning at the Brooklyn Museum, where she oversees the Museum’s Adult Literacy Program, the A.R.T. Guide Program, and select partnerships for older adults. She is interested in how museums can support adult literacy and basic education

students and professionals, and incorporate Indigenous perspectives and voices in teaching. Christina previously worked at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. She holds a B.A. in Classical Archaeology from Hunter College and an M.A. in Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology from Bryn Mawr College.

- christina.marinelli@brooklynmuseum.org
- **Lizelena Iglesiaas** is the Director of Adult Literacy Professional Development Services at the Literacy Assistance Center. Currently, Lizelena provides training and coaching for adult and youth educators in best practices in adult basic education and high school equivalency instruction. Lizelena has developed curricula for the Queens Public Library TASC Transition Curriculum project, the Foundations of Adult Education certificate course and the Culturally Responsive Adult Education Institute at the Literacy Assistance Center. She has presented at national, state, and regional conferences and is an active member of the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA) and the International Literacy Association (ILA). Lizelena is also a national trainer and the science community moderator for the national LINCS project.
 - lizelenai@lacnyc.org
- **Kristin Winkler** (she/they) is a professional and curriculum developer for the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), a pre-matriculation intensive English language program for immigrant students (currently at 9 CUNY campuses). In this role, Kristin trains and coaches new teachers and helps to support all faculty with curricula, resources, and professional learning opportunities. Previously Kristin taught both English language and adult literacy/basic education classes around NYC, including at Bronx Community College CLIP, Brooklyn College Adult Literacy Program, and Riverside Language Program. Interests include LGBTQIA+-inclusive teaching, translanguaging pedagogies, and incorporating creative writing, art, and science into course themes/curricula.
 - kristin.winkler@cuny.edu

Session 2

A Sense of Belonging: Crafting Meaningful Experiences for College Interns

What does it take to create and maintain an undergraduate internship program that creates a sense of belonging for students while simultaneously engaging their creativity and providing opportunities for practical skill building that will take them forward in their careers? This panel, composed of internship program managers and current interns, will present and discuss two case studies of museum internship programs: the American Folk Art Museum's Museum Career Internship Program, a partnership with LaGuardia Community College, and the New York Historical's college internship program. Presenters will share program structures, lessons learned, and best practices.

- **Natalie Beall** is a visual artist and educator. Currently she is Senior Educator and Manager of Student Engagement at the American Folk Art Museum, where she has managed the Museum Career Internship Program and the Youth Art Connection Program since 2015. Prior to working at the American Folk Art Museum, her experiences mentoring youth were shaped via the Artist-Teacher program at the Joan Mitchell Foundation. Natalie earned her BFA from the University of Georgia and her MFA from Columbia University. She has exhibited nationally and participated in residencies at The Women's Studio Workshop (Rosendale, NY), the Lighthouse Works (Fishers Island, NY); and the Lower East Side Printshop (NY) among others. In 2017, she was awarded a NYSCA/NYFA Fellowship in Printmaking/Drawing/Book Arts.
 - nbeall@folkartmuseum.org
- **Kionah Tucker** (she/her) is an educator, historian, and proud Museum professional in the New York City area. Currently, she serves as the Manager of Learning and Engagement at The New York

Historical. A graduate of St. John's University, she has worked in several Museums across New York City. A Virginia native, she credits her love of history to growing up in the "Historic Triangle." Through her work, she aims to make history education fun, engaging, and accessible to all, and entice more people into museum careers.

- kionah.tucker@nyhistory.org

Session 3

DeafBlind Tours: Touch, Communication, Connection

In 2024, The Jewish Museum and the Brooklyn Museum each hosted a DeafBlind Tour, a program rarely featured at other US art museums. In collaboration with members of the Deaf and DeafBlind communities, each museum designed tactile, conversational experiences, taught by Deaf staff and facilitated by ProTactile interpreters. Join us to hear about the experiences from participants and to reflect on lessons learned. Session attendees will come away with insights and guidelines for working with the DeafBlind community.

- **Allison Day** has been a part of the Education team at the Brooklyn Museum since 1996. She formally entered the access field in 2016 when access programs became part of the Family & Community Programs department. Since 2019, Allison has been coordinating the Brooklyn Museum's access programs.
 - allison.day@brooklynmuseum.org
- **Joyce Hom** is a museum educator, and consultant for ASL-only programs at several museums in NYC, including the Whitney Museum, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Queens Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and The Drawing Center. She is also the Senior ASL Programs Coordinator at the Jewish Museum, and is the co-founder of the organization LoLoLook. She received her BFA in Illustration from Savannah College of Art and Design.
- **Samantha Schott** oversees programs for visitors with disabilities, school partnerships, and resources to ensure museum accessibility at the Jewish Museum. Prior to this, Samantha was the Manager of Access and Community Education at El Museo del Barrio, where she developed bilingual and culturally conscious museum programs for visitors with disabilities, and oversaw school and community partnerships. Her practice is rooted in personal and community empowerment, and she has taught classes on social justice and art and Museum of the City of New York and El Museo.
 - sschott@thejm.org
- **Svetlana Rosenblatt** is a proud member of the DeafBlind and low-vision communities, and she is an advocate for accessibility, inclusion, and DeafBlind culture. She uses her lived DeafBlind and low-vision experience to support others through education and outreach, and promote accessible technology and services. Svetlana believes art is a powerful tool for advocacy, and it can express ideas that words sometimes cannot. She is passionate about building bridges between communities and making space for DeafBlind stories in creative spaces.
 - deafblindtour@gmail.com

Session 4

Developing the STEM Backpack Toolkit: Learning from and with our community

The New York Hall of Science (NYSCI) developed the STEM Backpack Toolkit to be a caregiver-friendly, culturally responsive at-home learning resource. To ensure accessibility and relevance, NYSCI collaborated with local caregivers during the Toolkit's development. Participants in

this session will explore the collaborative development process, and investigate the Toolkit and its contents. Participants will reflect on how the principles behind the STEM Backpack Toolkit can be adapted to support the goals of their own institutions. One lucky participant will go home with a STEM Backpack Toolkit of their own!

- **Sarah Ketani** is the Family Learning Coordinator at the New York Hall of Science, creating and teaching programs for local community members. She studied Neurobiology and Spanish as an undergraduate at Cornell University, then, after discovering her love for informal education, obtained a Master's Degree in Museum Education at Bank Street College. With over 10 years of experience working at cultural institutions throughout New York City, Sarah loves to share her passion for learning and STEM, inspiring young and old alike to find new wonder in their everyday lives.
 - sketani@nysci.org
- **Alyssa Whu** is the Manager of Family Learning and Community Partnerships at the New York Hall of Science. She has a background in early childhood education, professional development, and family and community engagement. Alyssa works with colleagues and community partners to create STEM learning programs that meet families' needs and bring people together through hands-on experiences. Before joining NYSCI, she worked at the Wildlife Conservation Society, helping connect people with wildlife through education and engagement.
 - awhu@nysci.org

Session 5

Getting Out of the Museum: Bringing Museum Programming into Library Spaces

What happens when a museum collaborates with non-museum educators, empowering them to facilitate museum-based programs independently within their own community spaces? Join Brooklyn Children's Museum (BCM) and Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) as they reflect on three years (and counting!) of radical partnership that brings BCM's collections and object-based pedagogical approach into BPL branches. Participants will gain insights into how to support non-museum educators in museum-type programming, ways in which this can be tailored to serve specific communities, and the impact of a museum partnering with already embedded community organizations to expand their scope of impact.

- **Kate Mirand Calleri** is an educator and artist. She is currently director of education at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, where she oversees the museum's entire educational ecosystem. Calleri has an MFA in photography from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She was named a 2021 American Alliance of Museum Meeting Scholar, a 2023 Women inPower Fellow with the 92Y Belfer Center for Innovation and Social Impact, 2024 National Art Education Association School for Art Leader at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and is a 2024-2025 dedicated mentor for the New Museum's New INC. incubator program.
 - kcalleri@brooklynkids.org
- **Kiani Kodama** is the Collections and Research Supervisor at Brooklyn Children's Museum (BCM) and the Collections Connections Coordinator at Brooklyn Public Library (BPL). They manage Brooklyn Children's Museum's archive of over 30,000 objects and support BCM's collections-based exhibitions, programming, scholarly research, and community partnerships. Kodama researched, curated, and contributed writing for all 24 Collections Connections Museum-on-the-Go cases and is the point person for over 20 BPL branches participating in the program. Kodama earned a BFA from the Cooper

Union (New York, NY) and has received numerous grants and awards for their studio practice locally and internationally.

- kkodama@brooklynkids.org
- **Louisa Lebwohl** is the Assistant Branch Manager at the DeKalb branch of the Brooklyn Public Library and was previously a children's librarian at the Washington Irving branch. She holds a MLIS from Syracuse University and a bachelor's degree from Hampshire College. Before working at Brooklyn Public Library, she worked at other libraries and cultural institutions including Queens Public Library, La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club Archives, the Lee Library, and the Stockbridge Library Museums and Archives.
 - LLebwohl@bklynlibrary.org

Session 6

Measuring Belonging: Using Student Work to Understand Learning

We strive to foster a sense of belonging in our institutions, but, how do we know when our students feel seen in, represented by, and connected to a place? In partnership with AMNH's Research & Evaluation team, the Beyond Elementary Explorations in Science (BEES) program uses a variety of models to attempt to measure student science learning and belonging during a week-long museum residency. In this workshop, participants will learn about the BEES program, engage with a variety of student work, and reflect on practices of evaluation in their own institutions.

- **Margaret Hoffman** (she/her) is a Manager of School Groups, Residencies, and Teacher Learning at the American Museum of Natural History. Over the past decade, she has worked in family, school, and teacher programming at a variety of cultural institutions from Sculpture Parks to Children's Museums. With a foundation as an early childhood educator, Margaret is passionate about connecting young learners to the natural world and fostering belonging in third spaces. Currently, she does this work via the Beyond Elementary Explorations in Science program at AMNH - a week-long Residency for 3rd - 5th grade public school students at the Museum.
 - mhoffman@amnh.org
- **Jake Sienko** (he/him) is a Manager of School Groups, Residencies, and Teacher Learning at the American Museum of Natural History, in charge of developing learning experiences that blend formal and informal education for students and teachers throughout New York City. Prior to AMNH, Jake worked as a High School Chemistry and a Middle School Science Teacher and earned his Ed.M. in Science Teacher Education from Teachers College at Columbia University. Currently, Jake is a lead manager of the Beyond Elementary Explorations in Science program at the American Museum of Natural History.
 - jsienko@amnh.org
- **Alexis Mayfield** is a Manager of Evaluation and Data Collection at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). She focuses on equitable educational research by studying different programs at AMNH and visitor learning. Before AMNH, Alexis managed several large-scale public health-based research projects across the US that focused on solutions to major problems in schools and communities. These projects included research studies on a teenage pregnancy prevention program in schools, a mentorship program aimed at raising graduation rates for at-risk youth, and a science-education enrichment program that aimed to raise self-efficacy in STEM for minority students.
 - amayfield@amnh.org

Session 7

Roots of Resilience: Celebrating the Strengths and Stories of Immigrant Communities

Building a strong community means bringing people together and fostering a genuine sense of belonging. In our increasingly interconnected world, immigrant communities serve as vital catalysts for transformation, blending rich cultural traditions with unique narratives of resilience. This presentation aims to illuminate how fostering a genuine sense of belonging and community among immigrants not only empowers them to navigate new environments but also enriches society and museums.

- **Valentín Concha-Núñez** is an art historian with extensive knowledge of Latin America and its visual history. Through his research, he clarifies the blending of Indigenous and European styles, subjects, and motifs from the Spanish-speaking Americas, making them accessible to a broad audience, from scholars to diverse students. As a museum educator, he has spent a decade connecting the Latinx community with various museum and cultural settings where he has worked, including MoMA, The Museum of the City of New York, The Brooklyn Museum, The High Line, and El Museo del Barrio. He has studied and worked in the United States, Spain, Mexico, Peru, France, and Russia. He holds a B.A. in Art History from SUNY Purchase and an M.A. in Hispanic Studies from the Universidad de Burgos, Spain.
- **Angela Garcia** is an art historian, museum educator, and lecturer with over 20 years of experience in the arts and culture sector. As the founder of *Arthistorianone Consulting* and co-founder of *Pairings*, Angela bridges art and community, offering expertise in art partnerships, consulting, project management, and curatorial services. Her deep commitment to social justice and contemporary art is evident in her work at top institutions in New York and the Dominican Republic. Currently, as a Bilingual Museum Educator, Angela leads programs for audiences of all ages and abilities at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.
- **Heather Reyes-Duke** is a manager with MTA Arts & Design, working on new commissions throughout the New York City transit system and railroads. Prior to joining the MTA, she was a special projects and exhibition manager at the Queens Museum, where she oversaw the production of six public art projects by artists such as Fred Wilson and Virginia Overton at the new Delta Terminal at LaGuardia Airport. Reyes-Duke has also worked in exhibition management at El Museo del Barrio, The Shed, The Museum of Modern Art, and The Bronx Museum of the Arts. Her work on Ecuadorian painter Camilo Egas was published in 2018 by The New School in a compendium of essays devoted to the institution's permanent collection. A Queens, NY native, Reyes-Duke is an MA candidate in Art History at Hunter College; she holds a BA in Art History and Spanish from Fordham University.

Session 8

Talk of the Town: Artist-in-Residence with Indigenous and Endangered Language Communities

This session explores *Talk of the Town: Engaging with Indigenous and Endangered Language Communities*, a community engagement initiative by El Museo del Barrio in partnership with NYC's Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. The program connected Indigenous language-speaking immigrant communities with artists, museum resources, and creative workshops, fostering cultural exchange and identity affirmation. Participants will gain insights into developing inclusive programs that amplify underrepresented voices, create accessible art-making spaces, and strengthen museum-community relationships. Join us to discuss strategies for meaningful engagement and the role of museums in supporting linguistic and cultural diversity.

- **Andrea Lucio Aragundy** is a cultural researcher and project manager specializing in multicultural education and community engagement. She earned an M.A. in Latin American and Caribbean Studies from NYU (2023) with a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship in Quechua. In 2017, she founded Carishina, a project promoting cultural education through environmental sustainability,

ancestral nourishment, and self-discovery. Her work fosters empathy, identity, and shared knowledge. With expertise in team and community building, strategic thinking, and process-oriented management, Andrea is dedicated to creating inclusive educational initiatives that enhance cultural awareness and accessibility.

- **Radhiyah Ayobami** is a writer and teacher, collaborated with the African Services Committee in Harlem. With community participation, Ayobami created a guidebook that highlights elements of immigrant survival, including places of worship, restaurants, community organizations and alliances.
- **Emily Goldberg-Hall**, Ed.D, is the Director of Health Initiatives at African Services Committee, overseeing HIV, STI and TB testing and prevention, behavioral health services, and women's health programming. Prior to joining ASC in 2017, Emily was a Doctoral Fellow at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research focused on sexual and reproductive health in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where she also previously supported technical assistance for women and girls' health and safety in refugee and IDP camps as a consultant for the Women's Refugee Commission and the International Rescue Committee. She also serves as an adjunct lecturer in Sexuality, Gender, Health and Human Rights in the Sociomedical Sciences department of Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, since 2020.
- **Cinthya Santos Briones**, a Nahua Indigenous visual artist and educator based in New York, blends Ethnohistory and Anthropology with participatory art and collective storytelling. With a decade of research at Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History, her work explores Indigenous migration, codices, and textiles. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing and Photography from Ithaca-Cornell University and has been a guest artist at Columbia, Rutgers, and the Institute of American Indian Arts. Cinthya's work has been exhibited at El Museo del Barrio, ICP, and the Museum of the City of New York, among others. A recipient of fellowships from the Magnum Foundation, National Geographic, and NYU's Hemispheric Institute, her work has been featured in The New York Times, The Nation, and BuzzFeed. She is also a writer, community organizer, and advocate for immigrant rights, working closely with pro-immigrant organizations and serving as a guardian for unaccompanied migrant children.

2024-25 NYCMER Board

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2025 Conference Committee

NYCMER would like to thank the following individuals for participating in this year's conference committee. Thank you for dedicating your time, insights, and passion!

Chair & VP: **Emily Edmonds-Langham** - Director of Education, *Teatown Lake Reservation*

Intern: **Yutong (Chloe) Wu** - Graduate Student in Art and Art Education, concentrating in Museum Education, *Teachers College*

Arline Lee Manager, Field Trip Experiences, *Museum of the City of New York*

Ben Gurin Senior Manager of Visitor Experience & Engagement, *Center for Jewish History*

Brook Gesser Exhibitions Educator, *The New York Public Library*

Cary Hardwick Graduate Student, *NYU*

Chanel Ren Head Teacher, *The Weekday School at Riverside Church*

Danielle Hillanbrand Freelance Producer, Museum Professional

Danielle Mink-Bellizzi Program Manager, *New York Academy of Sciences*

Deanna Novak Nature Educator, *Lewisboro Land Trust*

Donna de Ville

Ellen R. Peiser Senior Museum Educator for Access Programs, *The Intrepid Museum*

Joanna Seifter Program Administrator, *Hebrew Union College*; art critic, *The Brooklyn Rail*

Jonathan Milard-Manager of School Groups, Residencies and Teacher Learning, *American Museum of Natural History*

Karina Filipowski Associate Curator of Education and Community Engagement, *Macculloch Hall Historical Museum*

Kimberly Pedraza Admin Aide, *NYU*

Kristen Olson Senior Manager of Curriculum and the Living Collection, *American Museum of Natural History*

Melissa Lauer Education & Public Programs Manager, *Fraunces Tavern Museum*

Michelle Leidecker Bilingual Museum Educator, *Museum of the City of New York*

Noé Gaytán Associate Manager of Art-Making Initiatives, *Brooklyn Museum*

Roberto Chavez Educator for Children and Family Learning, *American Museum of Natural History*

Sofia Turner Bilingual Museum Educator

Suan Mar Landau

Xiaoxiao Yang Graduate Student in Art, Education, and Community Practice, *New York University*

Yuning Gao

About the Conference Committee

The Conference Committee provides a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, network, discuss best practices in the field, and, most importantly, help plan the Annual Conference. At the end of each summer, we put out a call for NYCMER members at all career levels to contribute their knowledge, experience, and time to this important professional development event.

Conference Committee members:

- identify and discuss key issues and trends in the field
- participate in one conference sub-committee (i.e. design, evaluation, editorial)
- review and select proposals

NYCMER 2025 Conference - *Welcome: Museums in Community*

- liaise with conference session chairs
- ensure that the conference runs smoothly

Interested in being on the 2026 committee? Have questions?

Email vicepresident@nycmer.org

2024-25 NYCMER Peer Group Leaders

Peer Groups are a NYCMER membership benefit and meet throughout the year. We invite non-members to attend one peer group meeting to learn more about NYCMER. A schedule of upcoming meetings can be found on our event calendar on our website. To find out more information about peer groups or to join their email lists, log into the member zone and select "Peer Groups." To propose a new group, email the Secretary and Peer Groups Liaison at info@nycmer.org.

Adult Programs

Kristin McCool & Francesca D'Alessio

Artist/Educators

Vera Sheehan

Digital Media and Technologies

John Sapida

Docent, Intern, and Volunteer Supervisors

Barbara Cohen-Stratyner & Jade Johnson

Early Childhood

Laura Kujo

Exhibitions and Interpretation

Christa May

Historic Sites

Maggie Weber & Scott Brevda

K-12 and Family Programming

Julia Butterfield

Neurodivergent Educators

Christine Quigley

Queer Peers

Roberto Chavez

Looking for an opportunity to get involved with the Peer Groups?

We are looking for interested NYCMER members to fill these roles.

Peer Groups Seeking New Leadership

- Access
- English Language Learners & Cultural Diversity
- Evaluation
- Managers
- #NYCMERReads Book Club
- Outdoor Education
- Teen Programs

Regional Meet Up Coordinators

We are seeking interested members to create informal gatherings for networking and exploration of cultural institutions in the NYC

Metro Area in:

Queens

Brooklyn

Bronx

Manhattan

Staten Island

New Jersey



**Thinking about a NYC MER Membership?
Here's what to expect:**

Deepen Your Scholarship and Refine Your Practice

- Attend **Monthly Professional Development events**, free to NYC MER members, that promote best practices and innovative strategies
- Receive **Discounted Attendance to the Annual Conference** with keynote conversations led by leaders in the field, practical workshops and informative panels, poster sessions, and a networking reception
- Receive **Discounted Attendance to Cultural Events** shared through the NYC MER event listserv
- Access to our **Online Resources Archive** with best practices for serving diverse audiences, evaluation, pedagogy, career management, and more

Expand Your Professional Network

- Connect with **Peer Groups** for deeper conversation, support, and collaboration
- Attend **Annual Networking Events** including the **Meet & Greet** and **Holiday Party**
- Utilize our **Membership Directory** to connect with over 1,000 mentors and colleagues
- Engage in city-wide and national conversations through **Social Media**

Invest in Your Career Development

- Receive exclusive **Job E-Blasts** as soon as jobs are posted to the NYC MER website
- Serve as a **Paid Intern on the Board of Trustees**
- Receive an **Annual Conference Scholarship**
- Develop as a leader through serving on the **Conference Committee**, coordinating a **Peer Group**, or being nominated to shape the future of NYC MER as a **Board Trustee**

Want to get more involved in NYC MER, let us know HERE: <https://forms.gle/xUxyL7NzwYc3cU5WA>