



Chair's Corner

Before Elizabeth Merritt became founder of AAM's Center for the Future of Museums (CFM) I had never met a futurist. Naively, I had a few misconceptions about the profession, namely that while one may not need to exhibit soothsayer-like qualities exactly, the crux of the job description was really about making predictions. But something Elizabeth said years ago stuck with me—futurology is less about *predicting* the future and more about *inventing* it. I liked that idea a lot.

Now, with the launch of [AAM's Education Future Fiction Challenge](#), we're asked to put this idea into practice by conceiving of a future we want to see for K-12 education, one in which museums play a starring role. Check out CFM's [Future of Education website](#) and discover how you can share your vision through submitting a short story. These stories will illuminate solutions to the issues that frustrate us most about the current educational system, as well as seed the work of the new [Ford W. Bell Fellow for Museums & P-12 Education](#). Join the contest and help shape an educational future that acknowledges what museum educators have always known—our institutions are significant assets to the learning landscape.



[Sarah Jesse](#)
Chair, EdCom

What Are You Reading?

*Each month we ask luminaries in the field what's on their nightstand. This newsletter features **Sarah Cooper**, Public Programs Specialist at the J. Paul Getty Museum.*

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Calendar

February, 2016:

EdCom elections are opened

February 11, 2016:

[Sensory Morning](#) at the Walters Art Museum

February 17, 2016:

[Using Research to Build Arts Audiences Webinar](#)

February 22, 2016:

Deadline for [Marketplace of Ideas](#)

February 22-23, 2016:

[Museums Advocacy Day](#)

February 29, 2016:

Deadline for [Future Fiction Challenge](#)

March 9, 2016:

[Attracting the Tourist Audience Webinar](#)



This past fall, through the J. Paul Getty Museum Education Department, my colleagues and I organized an installation of raised garden beds growing a variety of vegetables and salad greens on the museum grounds. On the surface, this rather quotidian collection of seeds and soil appears utterly

disconnected from any relevant setting an educator might use to inspire visitors to engage with masterworks of art history. However, that's exactly what the garden became – a surface, or a platform, rather, for encounters between visitors, artists, gardeners, cooks, museum staff, and works of art.

In devising this program, one text became a touchstone: *Speculations* (“The future is _____”) published by the Brooklyn-based collective Triple Canopy, which exemplified how a simple rubric could stand as reason to pull together a seemingly unconnected and endless variety of thinkers, including artists, writers, technologists, economists, academics, activists, and ecologists. The book is a compendium of essays, interviews, and fiction on topics related to “The Internet”, “Health”, “The Apocalypse”, “Food,” and “Memory” that grew out of a series of education programs held in 2013 at MoMA PS1.

Somewhere in the middle of the text the point is reached – fascinating content pulls from both the real and imagined, as all art does. It shows that often the best way to think about art or its potential is without the language of art, but that of anything else: science, economics, politics, lifestyle, even comedy. It's a project that inspired me to find new and surprising points of entry for visitors as they approach an artwork, and ones that can relate to anything in their lives, even cooking, eating, and growing plants. Perhaps by just making evident that the whimsical can be smart, the visitor could carry forth a new habit of imaginative looking.

It is from this point that we at the Getty envisioned a simple garden as the facilitator of open-ended happenings. From publishing writings, creating short films, and holding conversations, events, and film screenings, we positioned the garden as a place of exchange between artists, architects, writers, scientists, farmers, cooks, and visitors alike, exposing the interconnectedness of the rich and astonishing world around us and reflected in art.

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EdCom Awards for Excellence

EdCom has recognized outstanding contributions to museum education since 1983. Over the course of four newsletters we are highlighting the accomplishments of this year's award winners.

Excellence in Resources

Phoenix Art Museum, “I'm Here Gallery Guide Series”

Accepted by Christian Adame, Associate Curator for Education

Nominated by Kathryn Blake, The Gerry Grout Education Director

Each of these three visitor guides (*I'm here...with kids; I'm here...for the first time; I'm here...on a date*) introducing the museum's collections evolved from known motivations for visiting the Phoenix Art Museum using survey data and the work of John Falk, and on-site behaviors gleaned from museum visitor studies. Judges were struck also by the method of content production for these guides, using an innovative education department staff retreat known as a "sprint," where educators worked intently on one project off-site to complete it in a day's time. Visitors have consistently commented on them, especially in social media posts, and the demand has exceeded their original print run. As of July 2015, more than 4,000 guides have been printed and picked up by visitors to Phoenix Art Museum.



Marketplace of Ideas

EdCom will be hosting a Marketplace of Ideas session at AAM's [2016 Annual Meeting](#) in Washington DC on Friday, May 27 from 3-5 pm.

EdCom is seeking [proposals](#) from individuals or pairs to lead two 20-minute roundtable discussions in the EdCom Marketplace of Ideas. We are using a roundtable format where educators will be able to engage in facilitated discussions about programs and ideas that exemplify "next and best" practices. For this year's Marketplace of Ideas, we ask how museums can be responsive to the intersection of our many different overlapping identities.

Interested in being a facilitator at the EdCom Marketplace of Ideas? Visit the [website](#) for more details and find the [proposal form](#). The form should be returned to the Issues Committee Chair-Elect, Jason Yoon (jyoon@QueensMuseum.org) by February 22nd.

Professional Development Opportunities

Join colleagues at these exciting upcoming professional development programs in February:

Sensory Morning: Examining Accessible Museum Programming @ The Walters Art Museum

Thursday, February 11, 2016 (10am-3:30pm ET)

A part of the EdCom series, "One Good Thing" ([For More Info and to Register](#))

Taking out the Guesswork: Using Research to Build Arts Audiences - Live 90-minute webinar

Wednesday, February 17, 2016 (2-3pm ET) ([For More Info and to Register](#))

PRAM (the [Public Relations and Marketing Professional Network of AAM](#)) and CARE (the [Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation Professional Network of AAM](#))

And mark your calendars for:

Museums Advocacy Day in Washington, DC

February 22-23, 2016 ([For Info about Participating](#))

Attracting the Tourist Audience: Local, Regional, Global

Live 90-minute webinar

Wednesday, March 9, 2016 (2-3pm ET) ([For More Info and to Register](#))

PRAM (the [Public Relations and Marketing Professional Network of AAM](#))

Exhibition Label Writing and Audience Engagement - Full-day workshop

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

The George Washington University Museum/The Textile Museum

Washington, DC ([For more information and to register](#))

NOTE: Registration deadline is February 19!

CurCom ([Curators Committee](#) Professional Network of AAM)

One Good Thing

Bullock Texas State History Museum

Talkin' Ship at the Bullock



Talkin' Ship was a live web broadcast produced at the Bullock Texas State History Museum during the run of the exhibition *La Belle: The Ship That Changed History*. This innovative exhibition featured conservators reassembling a 300-year-old shipwreck in full view of the public—both for visitors in the gallery and for those across the world via an Internet live stream. Talkin' Ship played into the novel nature of the exhibition by involving the public outside of the Bullock. Twice a month from November 2014 to April 2015, a Museum educator joined one of the conservators or a special guest to update viewers about the progress of *La Belle's* reconstruction, discuss reproduction artifacts, and answer questions from Twitter users with #LaBelleShip.

Museum members, individuals, and educators from across the state tuned in, including schools that were preparing for field trips to see La Belle in person.

Talkin' Ship combined an in-gallery experience with remote users, expanding both the program's audience and its capacity for interpretation. With Twitter users able to steer the direction of the conversation, Talkin' Ship was a dynamic, responsive program. A seventeenth-century shipwreck story and a twenty-first century technology platform united to provide virtual visitors with a personalized experience.

Mark Your Calendar

2016 *Journal of Folklore and Education* Call for Submissions

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* is a peer-reviewed, multimedia, open-access K-16 journal published annually by Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education. Local Learning links folk culture specialists and educators around the world, advocating for inclusion of folk and traditional arts and culture in education. As a digital publication, the *Journal of Folklore and Education* provides a forum for interdisciplinary, multimedia approaches to community-based teaching, learning, and cultural stewardship.

The 2016 *Journal of Folklore and Education* issue is dedicated to exploring the intersection of folklore and museum education. This theme creates an opportunity to think deeply about museums in multiple contexts. Submissions may include best practices for museum strategies for learning and engagement that connect meaningfully with communities, preparing students to visit museums, critical reflections on visual literacy and object-centered lessons, submissions that explore curating exhibits in the classroom, and other applications of the theme in light of critical Folklore in Education practice. *We welcome submissions of articles, model projects, multimedia products, teaching applications, and student work accompanied by critical writing that connects to the larger frameworks of this theme.*

Contact editors [Paddy Bowman](#) or [Lisa Rathje](#) with ideas for stories, features, lessons, and media productions. Initial drafts of submissions are due April 30, 2016. Please share this announcement with colleagues, museum professionals, and educators in your community. This endeavor is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

EdCom Elections

Election season is almost upon us! Each year, EdCom leadership puts forward a slate of candidates for open committee chair-elect positions. These candidates are selected from EdCom's volunteer pool, and serve a three-year term: one year as committee chair-elect, and two years as committee chair. In February 2016, we will put forward a slate for four open positions: Communications chair-elect, Membership chair-elect, Annual Conference committee chair-elect and Secretary. You can learn more about each of these committees [here](#).

Want to get involved in EdCom's leadership? Become a volunteer first! Sign up to volunteer [here](#). We're currently looking for some additional volunteers for Communications and the Annual Conference committee to assist us through the spring of 2016—please use the form linked above to express your interest in helping out.

Stay tuned for a separate elections email in February.



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