

BARBARA HENRY + ASSOCIATES

transforming museums

BARBARA HENRY

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal, Barbara Henry & Associates

February 2013 – present

Principal for consulting practice focused on transforming museums into welcoming and thriving cultural places embraced by their communities. Provide services related to advancing public and community engagement and institutional change, partnerships, visitor-centered strategies, public programming, and related cross-departmental practices. Design and facilitate professional development customized labs and workshops. Coach staff in developing a dynamic organizational culture supporting museum transformations.

Visiting Faculty, TyPA Lab on Museum Management, TyPA Fundación (Theory and Practice in the Arts), Buenos Aires

August 2013 – Present

Conduct presentations and workshops for Latin American museum professionals who participate in the TyPA (Theory and Practice in the Arts) leadership program. Design and facilitate sessions related to organizational change, cross-functional teams, visitor-centered and prototyping practices, and community engagement. Serve as coach and mentor for participants' Lab projects as needed.

Interim Director, Education and Public Engagement, di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art

August 2015 - January 2017

Member of senior executive team overseeing department strategies, activities, and staff for a renewed commitment of public and civic engagement, including new programmatic initiatives. Advanced volunteer council activities to re-engage volunteers and support institutional change. Directed the development of annual department budget.

Center Director, the Lab, Oakland Museum of California

July 2011 – January 2013

Directed new interdisciplinary center integrating functions of curatorial, visitor experience, and evaluation research. Following a major museum reorganization, developed an annual budget and monitoring system, new exhibition development processes, evaluation research activities, staff assignments, interpretive projects, and various project teams to support Lab functions. Directed Lab activities for cultivating innovation and interdisciplinary projects and new programmatic vision. Coached staff in innovative practices for experimenting with new ways to engage diverse audiences and sustain contemporary relevancy. Managed, supervised, and evaluated staff. Member of the museum's Executive Team.

Chief Curator of Education, Oakland Museum of California

February 1988 – June 2011

Directed OMCA's Education Department with a budget of up to \$1.4 million and serving more than 60,000 visitors annually through school, family, and public programs; community collaborations; large-scale events; and exhibition interpretation activities. Member of the museum's Senior Management Team. Responsibilities included: developing and managing the department's annual budget; deepening visitor experience practices; managing community advisory councils, partnerships, and collaborations and the Docent Council program of 400+ volunteers; advancing new interpretive practices for exhibitions and gallery renovations; and directing teacher training and curriculum development and online educational resources. Designed and facilitated staff development activities and supervised, and evaluated staff. Directed and developed major projects and initiatives for ensuring the department remained vibrant and relevant during times of change. Developed grant proposals.

Directed major projects that included:

- *James Irvine Innovation Project (2007–2010)*. Developed new interpretive strategies with related visitor research that transformed the museum's art gallery into a welcoming and lively place for diverse audiences. An experimental research project that provided the foundation for the interpretive strategies and visitor experiences incorporated into the museum's galleries, exhibitions, and other areas of the museum campus. Project generated the publication, *How Visitors Changed Our Museum: Transforming the Gallery of California Art at the Oakland Museum of California*.
- Major experimental docent training program to transform history tours as "Partners in Discovery" experiences that incorporated new methods for visitor-centered tours. Project generated the publication *Partners in Discovery: Visitor-Centered Tours for*

History Gallery School Tours at the Oakland Museum of California by Schott Thiele and Janet Hatano. Oakland Museum of California. 2011.

- *Advancing Our Multicultural Commitment (2005–2008)*. Institution-wide initiative for staff development in cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. Received IMLS support.
- *Annual Days of the Dead exhibition and celebration project (1994–2005, founding director)*. The museum's largest community-based project involving more than 800 community members annually in the planning and implementation of various activities. Evolved project as a laboratory for experimenting with new interpretive, program, and exhibition strategies informed through community engagement. Project generated the publication, *El Corazón de la Muerte: Altars and Offerings for the Days of the Dead* - Heyday Press. 2005.
- *James Irvine Family Learning Research Project (1999–2002)*. Focus on visitor research and evaluation for strengthening family programs and resources. Project resulted in doubling and diversifying attendance by families.
- *Latino History Project: A Pilot Youth Program for Collecting Community History (1998–2003)*. Advisory committees and youth included in conducting original research on 20th century history in their communities. This interdisciplinary project resulted in exhibits, programs, online resources, and publications. Evaluation report identified program impact on youth. Featured in *Urban Network: Museums Embracing Communities*. Project generated a case study, noted under publications below, and the following: *Life Stories: Voices from the East Bay Latino Community* and *Collecting Community History: A Training Handbook for Educators*. Received IMLS support.
- *Myth & Reality: The California Gold Rush and Its Legacy*. A NEH-funded statewide interdisciplinary project extending the teaching of this global event across four grade levels. In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the California Gold Rush, project included a statewide education advisory committee, teacher-generated curricula, and a trainer-of-trainer program to disseminate new materials across the state. Project followed by online teacher resource, *Picture This: California Perspectives on American History*, making the museum's extensive collections more accessible and relevant to educators. Teachers advised and contributed to developing relevant curricula connections for site activities and content. *Picture This* became most visited OMCA museum site. <http://museumca.org/picturethis>.

Interpretive Specialist, The Oakland Museum

June 1980 – January 1988

Developed and implemented a wide range of new arts and educational programs, including theme tours, conferences, festivals, classes, lectures, and outreach activities for children and adults. Designed and conducted training sessions for the museum's volunteer docents. Prepared gallery guides, educational materials, and grant proposals.

Regional Director, Smithsonian Bay Area Regional Conference, The Oakland Museum/Smithsonian Institution

February 1983 – November 1987

Directed two regional conferences for teachers from the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties. Supervised and coordinated project committees, vendors, staff, and volunteers. Managed the promotional campaign, edited all program materials, and designed and conducted classes and opening sessions. Developed local support for the program from more than 30 cultural organizations in two counties. Administered and managed the conference budget. Served as regional liaison to the Smithsonian Institution.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member, The Museum Group, <http://www.museumgroup.com/>, a consortium of museum consultants with senior leadership experience, 2015 - present (Vice President 2017-2018 and President 2018-2020.)

Panel Reviewer, National Science Foundation, 2017

Panel Reviewer, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2012

Panel Reviewer, Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2011

Board Member, California Studies Association, 2000 — 2003

Member, Urban Network: Museums Embracing Communities Consortium, 2003

Board Member, California Alliance for Art Education, 1998 — 2000

Member, Chabot Observatory and Science Center Advisory Committee, 1995 – 1997

Co-Chair, Art and Education Task Force, Oakland Strategic Planning Committee for Cultural Development, 1988 – 1991

Panel Member, Schools in the Larger Community, Commission for Positive Change in the Oakland Public Schools, 1990 – June 1990

Member, Visual Literacy Project, Oakland City Assets Committee, 1989

Member, Implementation Committee, City Sites Project, 1988 – 1989

Member, Marketing Operations Task Force, City of Oakland Strategic Planning Committee for Cultural Development, 1987 – 1988

Executive Board Member, Cultural Connections, Consortium of Northern California Museums, 1980 – 1984

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Presenter, *Museum Transformers: More Than Meets the Eye for Sustained Community Engagement*, American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting, 2019

Presenter, *Labs, Salons, and Experiments for Creative Museum Change*, American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting, 2019

Presenter, *Power Shift: Advancing New Leadership Roles for Education*, American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting, 2016

Presenter/co-facilitator, *How to Initiate Change in Small and Medium Museums*, and *Cross-educational Programs in Museums*, Reimagining the Museum, Conference of the Americas, 2015

Presenter, *Museums Co Creating with Communities*, MALBA – The Latin American Art Museum of Buenos Aires, 2015

Course Instructor, *Community Engagement: Applications for Abu Dhabi Museums* and *Building Connections with Schools: Applications for Abu Dhabi Museums*, Abu Dhabi Tourism and Cultural Authority, 2014.

Presenter, *Museum Organizational Change*, Leadership in Museum Education Program, Bank Street College, 2014

Presenter, *PROTOTYPING Workshop: Designing Innovative Experiences in Museums*, TyPA (Theory and Practice in the Arts) Fundación, Buenos Aires, 2014

Panelist, *Museum as Prototype, Creative Community*, American Association of Museums Annual Meeting, 2011

Panelist, *Blurring Borders Inside Museums: A Formative Process in Organizational Change*, American Association of Museums Annual Meeting, 2010

Panelist, *The Risky Business of Audience Development: A Transformation for the 20th Century*, American Association of Museums Annual Meeting, 2010

Panelist, *The Debate Over Authenticity in Museums* and *Engaging and Sustaining Audiences in Museums*, Western Museums Association Annual Meeting, 2007

Panelist, *Displaying and Containing Controversy: Practical Strategies*, Western Museums Association Annual Meeting, 2005

Panelist, *From Cabinet of Curiosities to the Den of Disney*, Commonwealth Club, 2005

Panelist, *Practicing Civic Engagement: Major Challenges and Innovative Approaches*, Western Museums Association Annual Meeting, 2004

Panelist, *Community Programs: Where's the Vision?* National Art Education Association, Pre-Conference Meeting, 2004

Panelist, *Museum Educators and Their Evolving Roles in Exhibition Development*, AAM, 2003

Panelist, *Dispelling Stereotypes: What Is the Museum's Role?* AAM, 2002

Panelist, *IMLS and the 21st Century Learner*, Western Museums Association Annual Meeting, 2002

Guest Speaker, *Programming Perspectives*, Principles in Museum Programming class, J.F.K. University, 1999

Panelist, *How to Create & Sustain Advisory Committees*, Cultural Connections Program, 1999

Panelist, *Finding Primary Sources at the Source*, California Council for Social Studies Conference, 1999

Keynote Speaker, *Golden Opportunities: Collaborating on a Curriculum — A Practical Model*, Museum Educators of Southern California, 1998

Panelist, *Exploring New Perspectives: Connecting with the Community*, AAM, 1998

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

How Visitors Changed Our Museum: Transforming the Gallery of California Art at the Oakland Museum of California. Co-editor with Kathleen McLean. Oakland, CA: Oakland Museum of California. 2010.

“What’s Going On? Making Sense of the Vietnam Era” in *Visitor Voices in Museum Exhibitions* (pages 87–94). Edited by Kathleen McLean and Wendy Pollock. Washington, DC: Association of Science-Technology Centers. 2007.

“The Educator at the Crossroads of Institutional Change” in *Journal of Museum Education*, Volume 31, No. 3 (pages 223–232). Edited by Elsa B. Bailey. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc. Fall 2006.

“Latino History Project” in *Urban Network: Museums Embracing Communities* (pages 114–121). Edited by Jennifer Amdur Spitz and Margaret Thom of Amdur Spitz & Associates. Chicago: The Field Museum. 2003.

Latino History Project: A Pilot Youth Program for Collecting Community History — Case Study: Recommendations for Project Directors. Oakland, CA: Oakland Museum of California. 2003.

EDUCATION

MAT Museum Education, George Washington University

Internship at the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

BA Art History, University of California, Berkeley