



Western  
Museums  
Association

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2019**



Founded in 1935, the **Western Museums Association** (WMA) hosted the first Annual Meeting in Santa Barbara. Over the years, our name has changed and we have called ourselves a conference, a league, and now an association. Regardless of our name at any particular time, we have always championed lifelong learning and the role museums play in creating educated citizens and a better society. WMA's convenings have long focused on themes relating to critical issues facing museums, particularly multicultural, leadership, and planning issues.

The Western region is quite geographically and culturally diverse. Since the 1990's when Annual Meetings took place in Hawaii and Alaska, WMA has garnered participants from outside the region including Canada, Mexico, Asia, and other Pacific Rim and Island nations, as well as strongly encouraging the participation of indigenous peoples. As such, we are constantly examining and questioning the makeup of our group to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented, and that there is a sense of inclusion amongst members, staff, and board.

## ABOUT THE Western Museums Association

### Mission Statement

Transforming the museum field through collaboration.

### Vision

Dynamic museums connecting with thriving communities.

The Western Museums Association (WMA) is a nonprofit, membership organization dedicated to serving museums, museum professionals, as well as the related organizations and individuals, by providing vision, enrichment, intellectual challenge, and a forum for communication and interaction. The WMA is primarily comprised of members across the Western states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, the Western provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and the Pacific Islands, among others.

The WMA sustains itself through memberships, the Annual Meeting, and partnerships.

### Providing professional development to museum professionals since 1935



“This is an **amazing opportunity** to meet colleagues from other museums and learn how we’re doing our jobs differently.”

–WMA 2019 Annual Meeting Attendee

**400** ATTENDEES  
**40** SESSIONS  
**14** SCHOLARSHIP  
RECIPIENTS  
**142** PRESENTERS  
**4** EVENING EVENTS  
**5** AFFINITY  
GATHERINGS  
**7** PRECONFERENCE  
TOURS AND  
WORKSHOPS  
**2** GENERAL  
SESSIONS



## WESTERN MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

# 2019 Annual Meeting

The Western Museums Association's 2019 Annual Meeting was held in Boise, Idaho on October 4-7, where we proudly welcomed 400 museum professionals. The theme of the 2019 Annual Meeting was ENGAGE and focused on the ways in which museums engage with their communities, staff and other institutions. The innovative sessions, engaging discussions and inspiring takeaways that took place at this year's Annual Meeting mirrored the vibrant spirit of Boise.

The 2019 Program provided a multitude of perspectives representative of today's museum landscape and continued the WMA's rich tradition of provocative programming and educational opportunities. In addition to our adventurous pre-conference tours, hands-on workshops and inspiring sessions, we were delighted to kick off WMA 2019 with our Keynote Speaker, Sina Bahram.

Sina Bahram is an accessibility consultant, researcher, speaker and entrepreneur. In 2012, Sina founded Prime Access Consulting (PAC), an inclusive design firm that helps design and implement accessible solutions that make knowledge, culture, and technology available to the widest possible audience. A recognized expert in accessibility and user experience (UX), Sina collaborates with museums to weave the notion of inclusion into the fabric of an organization, helping to define accessibility standards. As Keynote, Sina challenged us to consider "disability" versus "accessibility," and demonstrated how museums can better provide accessibility to its audiences through exhibition design.

Each year, the WMA recognizes achievements of western museum professionals by presenting recipients with the Charles Redd Award, the Impact Award and the Leadership Award. The Charles Redd Center for Western Studies Award for Museum Exhibition Excellence honors an exhibition that furthers the study and understanding of the American West. This award is vital to the success of the Annual Meeting as it represents an opportunity for museums to be recognized for their exhibitions. The 2019 Charles Redd Award was presented to the High Desert Museum for its exhibition Desert Reflections: Water Shapes the West.

“Attending WMA feels like returning to summer camp each year—you see old friends, make new connections, and learn useful skills. **It truly is a joy.**”

—WMA 2019 Annual Meeting Attendee



The Leadership Award celebrates outstanding achievement in the museum field by a professional whose career has had a sustained, considerable and lasting impact on museum practices. The 2019 Leadership Award was presented to Janet Gallimore, the Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer at the Idaho State Historical Society. The Impact Award celebrates a mid-career museum professional who's leadership has had a positive effect on their museum, the surrounding community, or the museum field. The 2019 WMA Impact Award was presented to Tricia Canaday, the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer and SHPO Administrator of the Idaho State Historical Society.

The 2019 conference wrapped up with our annual General Session and Panel where museum industry leaders shared their approaches to institutional change and dug deep into the ways museums can ENGAGE with their communities, staff and with one another. This year we welcomed panelists Maren Dougherty (EVP of Communication and Visitor Experience, Autry Museum of the American West), Seema Rao (Senior Experience Officer, Akron Art Museum), Adam Rozan (Director of Programs and Audience Development, National Museum of American History), and Philip Thompson (Executive Director/Board President, Idaho Black History Museum), with moderator Scott Stulen (Director and President of the Philbrook Museum of Art).

**THANK YOU** to all attendees, sponsors, volunteers, Program and Host Committee members, staff and the WMA Board members for making WMA 2019 a huge success! We look forward to seeing you next fall at WMA 2020 in Portland, Oregon.



“One of the best museum conferences! Engaging, helpful, and inspiring. Highly recommended.”

—WMA 2019 Annual Meeting Attendee



“I learned something **new** at each session, and usually more than one thing.”  
—WMA 2019 Annual Meeting Attendee



**8,388**  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
CONNECTIONS  
**1,859** TOTAL  
MEMBERS

**A YEAR IN  
REVIEW**



# A Special Thanks to Our 2019 Annual Meeting Sponsors



Gallagher & Associates



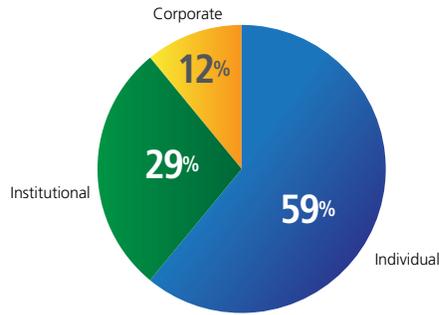
“This was my first time and I felt **truly welcomed** in this conference. It was very immersive. I loved it!”

—WMA 2019 Annual Meeting Attendee

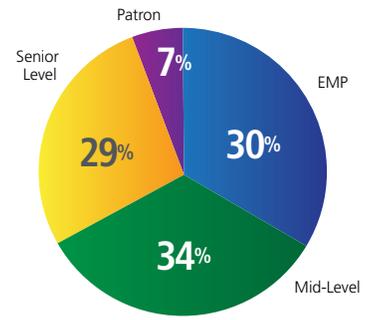
WMA BY THE NUMBERS IN 2019

# Membership

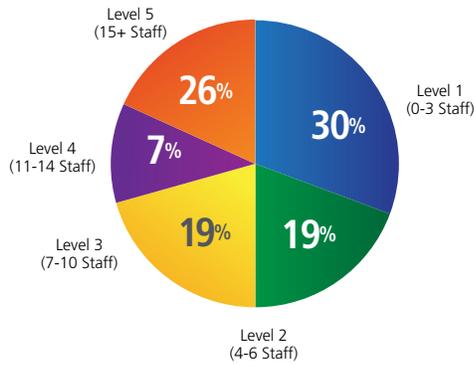
MEMBERSHIP: All Levels



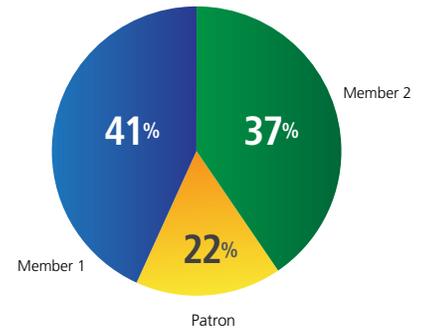
MEMBERSHIP: Individual



MEMBERSHIP: Institutional

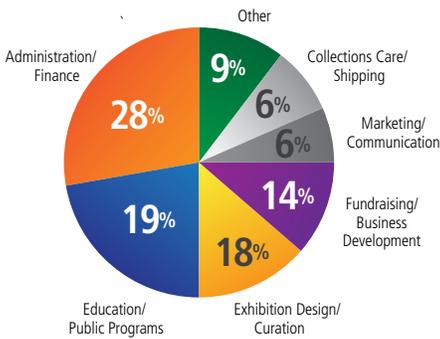


MEMBERSHIP: Corporate

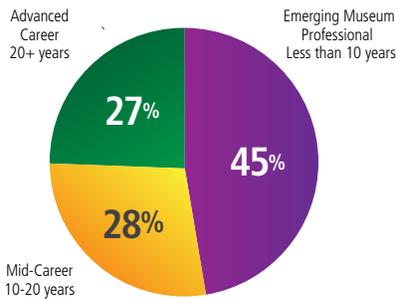


# Attendees

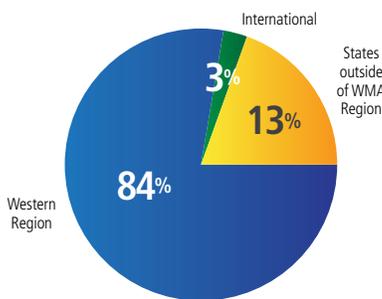
ATTENDEES: Work Area



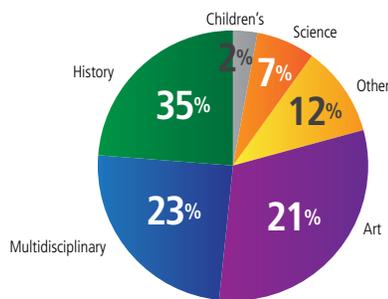
ATTENDEES: Career Stage



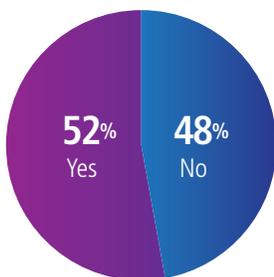
ATTENDEES: By Location



ATTENDEES: Museum Type



ATTENDEES: First Time



ATTENDEES: Registration Rate



“Networking, developing professional skills, and sparking ideas for our institution were the highlights.”

—WMA 2019 Annual Meeting Attendee

# WMA Board of Directors



## OFFICERS

### President:

Anne Rowe, *Director of Collections and Exhibitions, Sunnylands Center*

### Vice President, Marketing & Communications:

Dana Whitelaw, *President, High Desert Museum*

### Vice President, Membership and Development:

Keni S. Sturgeon, *Executive Director, Wenatchee Valley Museum*

### Vice President, Programs:

Lorie Millward, *Vice President of Possibilities, Thanksgiving Point*

### Treasurer:

Scot Jaffe, *Director of Facilities and Operations, Oakland Museum of California*

### Secretary:

Michael Fiegenschuh, *Principal, EDX Exhibits*

### Immediate Past President:

Lisa Sasaki, *Director, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center*

## MEMBERS

Eowyn Bates, *Vice President of Institutional Advancement, San Diego Natural History Museum*

Sarah Bloom, *Associate Director of Education, Seattle Art Museum*

W. James Burns, Ph.D., *Executive Director, Arizona Historical Society*

Steve Comba, *Associate Director/Registrar, Pomona College Museum of Art*

Laurie Egan-Hedley, *Director and Curator, Barona Cultural Center & Museum*

Melanie Fales, *Executive Director, Boise Art Museum*

Katherine Hough, *Chief Curator (retired), Palm Springs Art Museum*

Noelle Kahanu, *Assistant Specialist, Public Humanities and Native Hawaiian Programs, University of Hawai'i at Monoa*

Dafna Kaplan, *Chief Executive Officer, CASSETTE*

Jonathan Katz, *CEO, Cinnabar Inc*

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Sonja Lunde, *Deputy Director of Planning and Programs, Utah Museum of Fine Arts*

Carlos Ortega, *Curator of Creative Engagement*

Micah Parzen, *Chief Executive Officer, San Diego Museum of Man*

Carla Roth, *Principal, Roth Projects LLC*

Rosanna Sharpe, *Executive Director, REACH Museum*

Moya Waters, *Associate Director, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia*

Jeanette Woodburn, *Lifecycle Marketing Manager, HopSkipDrive*

## WMA STAFF

Jason B. Jones, *Executive Director*

Jessica Noyes, *Communications Coordinator*

Melanie Coffee, *Program Coordinator*



# FORWARD

**OCTOBER 8-11**

WESTERN MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL MEETING  
in partnership with the  
Oregon Museums Association

PORTLAND  
WMA 2020