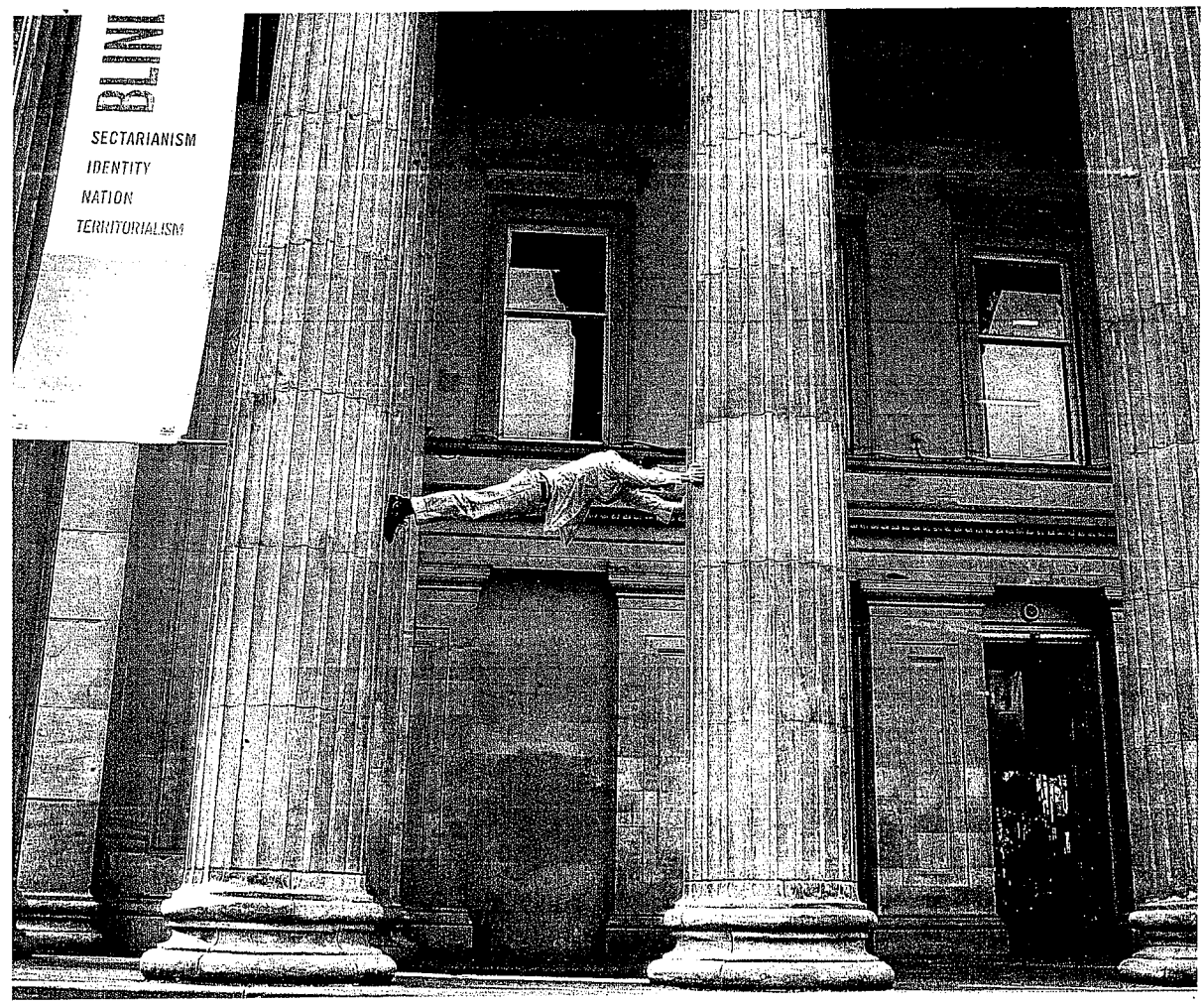


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The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics

Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First-Century Museum



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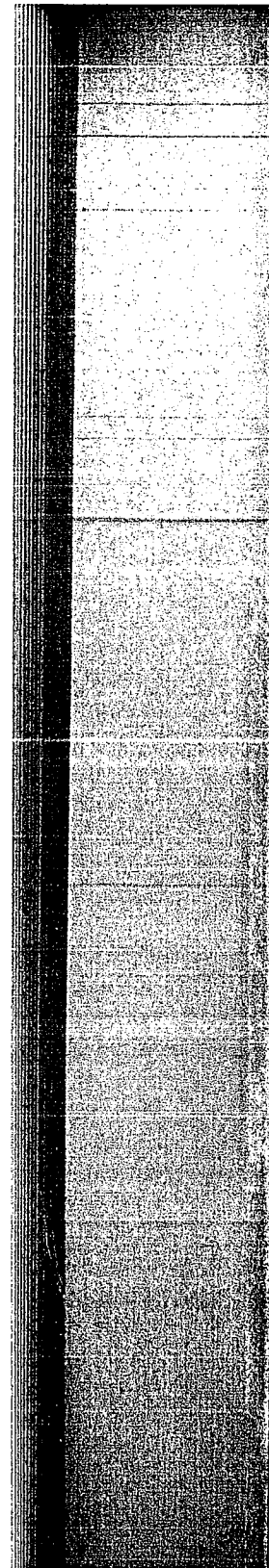
Edited by Janet Marstine

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO MUSEUM ETHICS

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3

Good Work in museums today ... and tomorrow

Celka Straughn and Howard Gardner

Published discussions of museum ethics in America first appear in connection with the 1917 *Proceedings of the American Association of Museums*. Referring to current museum policy discussions, L. Earle Rowe, then Director of the Rhode Island School of Design, finds that these emphasize “the need of proving the value of ... [museum] work.”¹ Rowe characterizes such work primarily in terms of museum relationships with other institutions, dealers, members, scholars and staff, relationships that he places under the “head of museum ethics.” Although Rowe does not explicitly link his articulation of museum ethics with establishing the value of museum work, his brief article suggests a connection between efforts to legitimize and professionalize museum work and efforts to develop a museum ethics.² As such, his article raises the question, how does thinking about ethics shape museum work and museum workers?

Although museum ethics had become a topic for discussion at least by 1917, the American Association of Museums (AAM) did not adopt its first code of ethics until its twentieth annual meeting in 1925. In this first *Code of Ethics for Museum Workers*, the main relationship stressed is one that Rowe does not particularly address – the relationship to the public. As the opening lines declare, the value of museums “is in direct portion to the service they render the emotional and intellectual life of the people.” Therefore, “[th]e life of the museum worker, whether he be a humble laborer or a responsible trustee, is essentially one of service.”³ The *Code* continues that the museum worker’s “conduct rests on a threefold ethical basis” consisting of devotion, faith and honor. Performing one’s ethical duties of public service, the museum worker “approximates most fully the ideals and purposes for which the museum stands.”⁴ As Hilde Hein explains in her historical analysis of museum ethics in America, this first code belonged to a context of “community betterment” with its emphasis on public service and “the dissemination of knowledge.”⁵ Nearly a century later, museum work constitutes a well-established profession with a large number of professional categories that range from educators and conservation scientists to exhibition designers and collections managers.⁶ How do we perceive the value of museum work in the 21st century? And, why museum ethics today?

The most recent AAM *Code of Ethics for Museums* (2000) reaffirms the first Code's commitment to public service as an enduring and widely shared value; it further posits public service as an ethic to frame the new code.⁷ Yet what does public service mean today? According to the new code, public service appears intertwined with the notion of public trust, with museums in the role as stewards of their collections and information for the benefit of their publics. "Their collections and/or the objects they borrow or fabricate are the basis for research, exhibits, and programs that invite public participation."⁸ While the current Code outlines major areas of museum work, such as governance, collections and programs, it makes no specific mention of the roles of museum workers and their relationship to the public.⁹ Rather, in addition to AAM's general museum Code, there now also exist today multiple codes of ethics and practice developed by AAM Professional Committees and other professional organizations, such as the Registrars Committee (RC-AAM) or the Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC).¹⁰ Each of these codes attempts to respond to the changing professional landscape of museums and museum workers. The ways in which museums and museum workers perform their public service present one of the major changes and challenges to good work in museums today.

In this chapter we draw on the perspectives and findings of the GoodWork Project,[®] a large-scale social scientific research project investigating the ways leading professionals in a variety of domains perform good work. Ethics forms an integral component of good work. As the Project has come to view it, good work is comprised of three elements that begin with the letter E: It is technically Excellent, personally meaningful or Engaging, and conducted in an Ethical manner. In addition to examining questions of museum ethics through the lens of the GoodWork Project, we focus here on recent museum transformations and meanings of public service, directing particular attention to the changing roles, responsibilities and relationships of museum curators and educators.

The concept of GoodWork

The GoodWork Project[®] originated in 1995 under the direction of psychologists Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, William Damon and Howard Gardner. As the Project evolved, it sought to identify, understand and educate about what constitutes good work and what characterizes those who seek to practice it at time of powerful market forces, globalization and technological change. Over the ensuing decade Project researchers conducted more than 1200 interviews with leading members of different professions in America that included, among others, journalism, genetics, higher education and theater. This research has produced a rich collection of data on professional values, goals, responsibilities, strategies and struggles. Publications derived from the study and its concepts continue, as do various associated projects and practical initiatives that seek to encourage good work.¹¹

According to findings from the Project, good work is likely to occur when four key forces align:

- 1 The individual beliefs and values of the worker.
- 2 The domain of work (long-standing values of the profession).

- 3 The current professional field (comprised of organizations, gatekeepers, etc.).
- 4 The wider societal reward system.¹²

Reflecting these four forces are four principal elements, or controls on behavior, that the GoodWork Project identifies as impacting good work (Figure 3.1):¹³

- 1 Individual standards.
- 2 Cultural controls of a domain (including leadership, missions, professional codes, traditions, etc.).
- 3 Social controls (such as trust, community needs, ethics boards).
- 4 External or outcome controls (e.g. power, prestige, extrinsic benefits).

Each of these four components influences or controls behaviors that impact good work; individual standards are also often shaped by social and cultural controls as professionals often internalize the requirements and codes of their domain and field.

Rephrased with examples more specific to museums, the quartet of forces and their controls would include, respectively: (1) the value system held by an individual conservator, collections manager or educator; (2) longstanding values of collection, preservation, education, and public service; (3) the particular museum, professional associations like AAM and AAMC, along with donors and critics; (4) the current priorities of the nation and the world. Consensus of what constitutes good work needs to be negotiated, mediated and revisited frequently among these different forces.

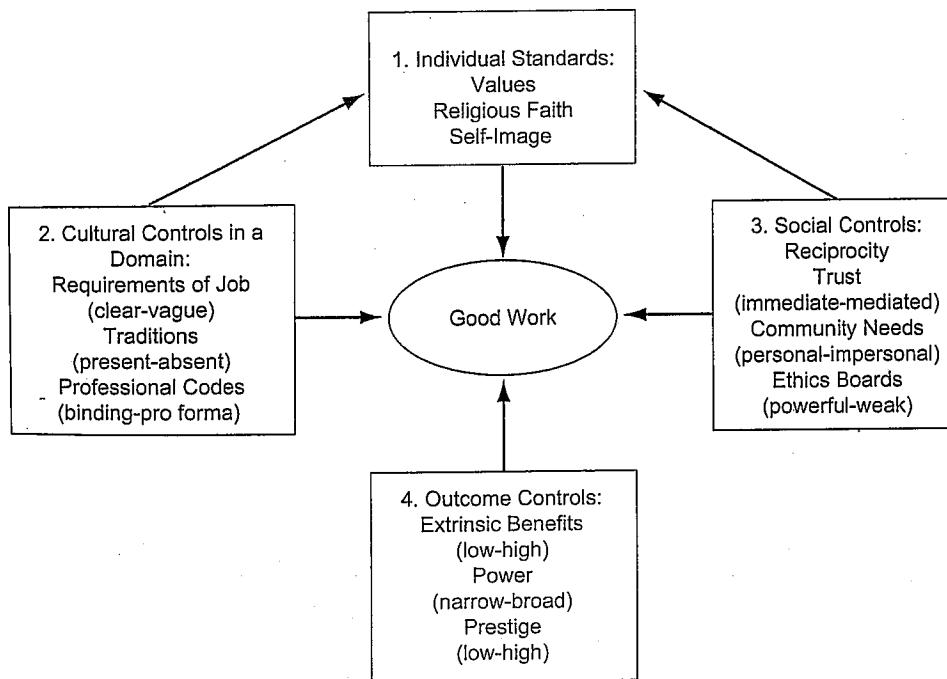


Figure 3.1 A Graphic Rendition of the Principal Elements of GoodWork, Courtesy of The

Creating conditions for good work among these different elements requires a strong support structure that makes clear professional needs and expectations, educates the public about the nature of the profession and allows for an open expression of individual values. Factors facilitating the emergence of good work include early training, mentors and colleagues, as well as an openness and flexibility of work and the domain to change.¹⁴ Good work further entails a set of established core values with clear and strong standards that are constructed and enforced by the professional community and internalized by its individual members.¹⁵ Drawing on its extensive research, the GoodWork Project locates characteristics of ethical work under two conditions:

- 1 Workers attempt to operate according to the longstanding values of their domain, even if these values clash with self-interest.
- 2 Workers recognize issues of moral complexity, take the time to think them through, seek advice and guidance and reflect on past actions and future consequences.¹⁶

One of the most important findings of the GoodWork Project is the concept of alignment as a major factor facilitating good work. "In alignment, all of the various interest groups basically call for the same kinds of performance; in contrast, when a profession is misaligned, the various interest groups emerge as being at cross-purposes with one another."¹⁷ That is, to use an example of museum professionals, a curator is most likely to practice good work if the curator's own goals coincide with those of the professional role of the curator, with the expectations of colleagues, and with the attitude of the wider society toward work in general and museum work in particular. The relationship of alignment to good work is complex. While alignment helps to achieve good work, it may also complicate it by desensitizing workers to potential problems. Conversely, some workers are actually stimulated by the *lack* of alignment.¹⁸ Moreover, both alignments and misalignments are temporary, necessitating continued reflection and adjustment.

Mission statements – and mutual adherence to missions by the relevant parties – can help promote alignment, but they may also come into conflict with competing purposes. In interviews with various professionals GoodWork Project researchers find that the highest form of responsibility to good work derives from a sense of duty "as defined by the traditions and current standards of the particular activity in which they [workers] are engaged."¹⁹ This responsibility extends both to enhancing the status of the profession within the field and to society at large by enhancing the lives of those who are served, directly or indirectly, by the profession. In the museum field, these values, standards and responsibilities are frequently articulated in museum mission statements and further delineated in the various codes of ethics and practice, both for the museum field generally, as well as for different constituent professional groups. How the responsibilities to fulfill the mission are delegated and shared among museum workers impacts their abilities to uphold core values and standards. A fundamental GoodWork finding is that workers "feel comfortable with whom they are and have time and opportunity to reflect on their mission and to determine whether they are progressing toward its realization."²⁰ As noted, when the values, standards, and responsibilities as expressed by missions and professional

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codes misalign or come into conflict with each other and/or with the forces of the individual worker, institutions, professional societies or wider society, such conditions complicate the ability to practice good work and achieve ethical decisions.

Museum transformations and public service

Particularly with reference to the United States, numerous publications have characterized museums' relationship with the public dimension as their most significant transformation at the end of the twentieth century. This view is exemplified by AAM's report, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (1992), which takes as its premise that all activities contribute to a museum's public dimension and its provision of public service.²¹ In his essay "The Museum and the Public" Stephen Weil proposes that "the relationship between the museum and the public must be understood as a revolution in process ... The museum's role will have been transformed from one of mastery to one of service."²² Museums, according to this proposed process, have shifted from inward, collection-oriented institutions that disseminate knowledge to outward, audience-oriented sites that offer educational resources, and, increasingly, experiences, which engage the public in their own knowledge making.²³ As Mary Ellen Munley and Randy Roberts recently state: "The once familiar 'collect, preserve, and interpret' mission that dominated twentieth-century museums shifted toward a new audience-centered focus. Across the field, museums have increasingly identified themselves as community-oriented, outwardly focused centers of education dedicated to reflecting and serving broad and diverse audiences."²⁴ Such transformations not only raise questions about the purposes and priorities of museums; they also throw into question the existing roles, responsibilities and relationships of museum workers, as well as established hierarchies, authorities and value systems. These questions may help generate change, but they may also generate points of conflict and/or confusion.

Many current museum mission statements reflect the recent turn to the public dimension, articulating a commitment to enhance public understanding and appreciation of the natural world and human creativity, or to serve and engage individuals and society through activities, exhibitions, programs, collections, research and publications. But museum missions are also shaped according to the particularities of their institutions' resources and values. Interpretations of a duty to public service, or to the notion of public trust, vary, depending on how museums respond to a myriad of different challenges. Glenn Lowry, Director of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), draws attention to "the challenges of increased competition, changing social values, and diminished financial resources." He argues that these forces "have compelled them [museums] to stretch the boundaries of acceptable museological practice."²⁵

Lowry's statements come from a collection of essays by leading art museum directors, *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust*, which attempts to retain the art object as the focus of art museums' public purpose. In contrast to Munley and Roberts's above-cited claim of a transformed mission, James Cuno, in his main essay for *Whose Muse?*, asserts: "Acquiring, preserving, and providing access to

foundation of the trust that authorizes that contract."²⁶ Similarly Philippe de Montebello questions the shift in museums from "repositories, primarily, to being activity centers" that cede attention from the work of art to the public, and are driven more by market than by mission forces.²⁷ De Montebello precedes these comments with a critique of AAM's *Excellence and Equity* report as "fanciful" in its emphasis on educational experience and global citizenship.²⁸ Whether or not one chooses to critique the essays that comprise *Whose Muse?* as elite art museum voices steeped in the values of connoisseurship, they present an influential perspective of contemporary museum transformations. They further indicate a significant area of tension regarding museums and their service to the public, one that in many ways coalesces around the responsibilities of curators and educators within museum work.

Indeed, many conflicts experienced within the museum workplace concern the status of audiences and the role of education. Hein contends that "the concept of education" constitutes "the most significant change" in museums during the later decades of the twentieth century.²⁹ In her insightful volume, *The Museum in Transition*, she articulates contemporary museum conflicts:

Today's museums perform their public service by offering themselves as resources and educational institutions, but it remains a matter of debate whether the goods they offer are to be valued as cultural treasures and means of education, or, especially in the case of artworks, whether these are sources of original experience. ... Is the designated experience of the object exclusively for its own sake, or does the object serve as occasional stimulus for a broader, more encompassing experience? The answer to this question determines whether we think of museums as "object-centered" or "story-centered." ... These concerns lie at the heart of the many 'culture wars' and political confrontations that currently rage inside the professional museum community and also subject it to attacks from outside.³⁰

Challenging Hein's notion of "story-centered," we would claim that objects *always* evince stories, and that the argument concerns whose story, whether an historical or personal narrative or some other epistemological perspective, based on, for example, an object's materials, method of creation, or formal characteristics. Hein's distinction, then, might be recast as a conflict between object-centered and audience-centered. This conflict points to a common source of misalignment within museums, one frequently manifested in the relationship between curatorial and education departments.

Museums and the challenges of GoodWork today: the case of curators and educators

Tensions between curatorial and education work are well known, particularly within art museum settings. However, they do not appear to have been specifically examined within an ethical framework. As noted earlier in the introduction, the current AAM *Code of Ethics for Museums* does not directly address the roles and

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relationships of museum workers. Although AAM's *Museum Education Principles and Standards*, developed by the Committee on Education, emphasizes shared responsibility and "stresses the importance of interdepartmental teamwork in the achievement of the museum's education mission," neither it nor the recent *Code of Ethics for Curators*, developed by the Curators Committee, includes coworker relationships as noteworthy areas of ethical significance.³¹ Yet when professional values and standards of practice come into conflict, compromising the ability to practice good work, workers are confronted with the dilemmas that merit the descriptor "ethical."

The Curator and Education Committee codes and standards, in addition to the AAMC *Professional Practices for Art Museum Curators*, outline the core values and responsibilities for the practice of each profession. These include, for curators, "the interpretation, study, care and development of the collection, and the materials, concepts, exhibitions and other programs central to the identity of their museum."³² The recent ethics code for curators lists the interpretation of objects among their responsibilities, "with a respect for the needs of all potential patrons," as well as "to an object's creator(s) and culture of origin."³³ With a focus on objects and the collection, a primary duty of a curator remains scholarship, and, at least for art curators, their "responsibilities must be balanced with the ethics of their scholarly disciplines."³⁴ On the other hand, museum educators "serve as audience advocates and work to provide meaningful and lasting learning experiences for a diverse public."³⁵ Part of accomplishing these responsibilities entails that educators "develop interpretation with specific educational goals by integrating content and learning objectives for targeted audiences."³⁶ Broadly speaking, curators attend to the collections and educators to the public; with the reconceived public dimension of museums, both also attend to interpretation.

According to museum training manuals, curators are ascribed the intellectual and academic interpretation of the collection.³⁷ The AAMC guide to *Professional Practices* assigns curators the role of providing "information and expertise on the collections and exhibitions to educators," while "[e]ducators in turn provide curators with pedagogical strategies to fulfill public interests and needs."³⁸ Museum educators are, according to the *Museum Education Principles and Standards*, "specialists who help museums fulfill their educational mission." They "shape content and interpretation toward relevant issues and create a broad dialogue," as well as "develop interpretation with specific educational goals."³⁹ Acknowledging curators as "traditionally responsible" for interpretation based on their scholarly expertise, Lisa Roberts claims that it now is "the business of every member of the team," with educators presenting "views about the meanings of collections that will resonate with museum audiences."⁴⁰ This real, if subtle, shift brings into question the value and role of expertise, and as various scholars have noted, museum shifts toward audience views and voices have challenged curatorial voices and hierarchies of meaning.⁴¹ Roberts argues that "[i]nterpretation is in part an act of negotiation – between the values and knowledge upheld by museums and those which are brought in by visitors."⁴² How responsibility for interpretation is conceived and carried out matters significantly and may have ethical consequences.⁴³ For, as Lowry characterizes the art museum, it is a "mission-driven educational institution devoted to the display and interpretation

A recent job posting for the Director of Interpretation and Research at MoMA, a position within the Education Department, states: "MoMA's founding mission to 'help people to understand and enjoy modern art' is fulfilled through collaboration between curators and the interpretation and research staff. Curators bring deep knowledge and innovative perspectives on works of art and education and research staff bring knowledge of how visitors engage and learn within a museum context. The field of interpretation and research has been recognized as an essential priority for museums to achieve their public mission to engage audiences with art."⁴⁵ While MoMA's posting stresses collaboration – and curators and educators may work well together and with other museum workers on interdepartmental teams – as Roberts and others recount, questions of interpretive authority as well as of priority to collection or audience needs remain sources of potential conflict.⁴⁶ The roles and responsibilities assigned to museum curators and educators today, in particular with regard to interpretation, may in certain ways place them at cross purposes in carrying out the museum's mission and, accordingly, pose ethical dilemmas.

What are the ethical dimensions inherent in museum worker relationships, such as those that involve cooperation between curators and educators? Three scenarios highlight potential conflicts and how they may impact the conditions for good work, with attention to core values, professional standards and alignment across the four forces of workers, the domain, the field and society. In the first example, a classic about didactic interpretations, the professional values of the educator and curator clash, complicating effective collaboration. Conflicting values with regard to collections and audiences also challenge curators and educators in the second scenario. With the third example curators and educators contend with media (both old and new) and market forces, and they negotiate a means to remain true to both their core values.

- 1 An educator requests that a curator change a text label that the curator has written for an exhibition. The educator claims the text is "too academic" as it introduces and defines terms that the public might not know, limiting its accessibility. The curator argues that, at some level, interpretation involves learning new terms and concepts, and that not all academic language is inaccessible, especially when explained. The curator also maintains a sense of a duty to bring a certain amount of scholarly knowledge to the production of exhibition texts. For her part, the educator believes that expressing the text in technical terms compromises her responsibility to communicate to an audience that deserves the clearest and least obfuscatory information. Both find themselves challenged as to how to adhere to their personal and professional values and responsibilities as well as to support the museum's mission.
- 2 Staff at a museum have completed work on a small touring contemporary art exhibition – everything is ready to go. At the last minute, the first venue suffers a problem with the climate-control system; this abrupt turn of events means that staff conservators cannot approve the display of several works in the show. Essays and other materials have already been published that include these works. For multiple reasons, it is not possible to reschedule or cancel the show.

In order to maintain key aspects of the exhibition's concept, curatorial staff propose illustrated captions for each of the removed works, in addition to a clear explanation of why they are missing from this venue of the show. For curators, this seems the professional course of action and is sufficient for public interpretation purposes. Educators, on the other hand, disagree. The proposed solution conflicts with their professional responsibility to engage diverse audiences in dynamic learning experiences; they wish to have large-scale reproductions or facsimiles created in order to make an impact similar to that of the removed pieces. Curators agree that the texts with their small-scale illustrations do not approximate the power of the actual objects, and cite the importance of showing original works rather than reproductions. For them, as stewards of the collection and with their professional obligations as curators who value original objects, it is crucial to uphold the integrity of the works of art and the artists.

- 3 The producers of a popular television program offer a museum the opportunity to buy into its next season. In each show five aspiring artists create new works of art. A group of celebrities critiques each piece and the audience gets to vote for each episode's winner. Select winning works are acquired by the supporting museum, as stipulated by the contract. The museum would receive publicity in every episode and its pick of six of the program's winning works of art. The educators advocate for participation. They argue that it not only provides publicity outreach, but it also enables the museum to be directly involved with a widely shared public art experience, one that allows the audience the role to play an active role in the selection of works of art. The curators, however, take issue with the stipulation to acquire the works of art, particularly ones that they do not find of sufficient quality; to do so would violate their responsibility to professional collection practices.

After discussion, the curators and educators agree that the artworks do not fit the museum's standards for acquisition and decline the program's offer. Through their discussion they also develop the idea of presenting new acquisitions in a special interactive section of the museum website that shares elements of the museum's process and justification for the new works; it also encourages visitors to contribute their own evaluation of the works' qualities and benefits for the museum.

As these scenarios reveal, curators and educators may face ethical choices when their respective core values and professional standards do not align. Ethical minefields may erupt between collections' care and interpretation. Museum workers – be they curators, educators, collections managers or exhibition designers – need to assess the long-standing values of their domains and field, as well as the expectations and demands of society; to recognize and reflect upon areas of conflict; to seek ways to share the responsibility for both the collections and the public; and to stretch to achieve alignment. The scenarios described above portray three of the multiple kinds of dilemmas that arise, while offering a solution to one that appears to uphold the core values of all the participating

Values of GoodWork today and tomorrow

Returning to our earlier question of the value of museum work today, we may ask: what are the core values, standards, responsibilities and goals of museum work and museum workers? How do museum workers share the responsibility for the public trust? Where does the public dimension fit in? Whose values and voices take priority, and for what purpose?

The challenges posed by museum transformations impact the four forces identified by the GoodWork Project – the worker's individual beliefs and values, the longstanding values of the domain, the influences at work in the current professional field and the priorities of wider society – and, in particular, the roles, responsibilities and relationships of museum workers, as we have seen in the case of curators and educators. When the values, standards and purposes of these four forces align, it facilitates the ability to achieve meaningful, high-quality and ethical work. Good work is more likely to occur when workers have opportunities to participate in the "three Es": excellent, engaging and ethical work.

While the principles of good work are quite constant, they must continually be rethought as voices, values, authorities, responsibilities, standards and practices are challenged and transformed. The preservational priorities of elite institutions a century ago are now complemented, if not overwhelmed, by the public service priorities of a far more democratic era. The professionals working in today's museums cannot ignore this shift, but, by the same token, they need to be vigilantly reflective about how best to realize core values in a changed – and continually changing – environment – one that now prominently includes the Internet, among other new technologies. Making ethical conflicts public can be uncomfortable; engaging in serious discussion and debate about them is time consuming. But in a democratic society, these are the most promising, and quite possibly the only, means to bring about the best possible work.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 L. E. Rowe, "Museum Ethics," *Proceedings of the American Association of Museums*, II, 1917, pp. 137–43. Reprinted in H. H. Genoways and M. A. Andrei (eds.) *Museum Origins: Readings in Early Museum History and Philosophy*, Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2008, p. 147.
- 2 Robert Macdonald, specifically referring to the first American museum code of ethics in 1925, claims: "The promulgation of ethical values by museum workers early in their organizational history makes clear that they viewed themselves as belonging to a profession willing to formalize principles that would inform individual and collective activities."

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- 3 Committee of the American Association of Museums, *Code of Ethics for Museum Workers*, New York: American Association of Museums, 1925, p. 2.
 - 4 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
 - 5 H. S. Hein, *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*, Washington, DC, and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000, p. 93.
 - 6 A response to the establishment of the museum profession is the growth of museum studies and various training programs, as well as more practically oriented publications on museum careers. For example, see G. Edson, *International Directory of Museum Training*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995; Glaser and Zenetou, *Museums: A Place to Work*.
 - 7 American Association of Museums, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, 2000. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/ethics/coe.cfm> (accessed 16 December 2009).
 - 8 *Ibid.*
 - 9 This shift in emphasis from museum workers to museum work is reflected in the change of titles from a code "for museum workers" to one simply "for museums," indicating a transformation from earlier attempts to establish a generalized museum profession to the particularization of today's more specialized professional roles.
 - 10 See, for example, Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums, *A Code of Ethics for Registrars*, 1984. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.rcaam.org/pdf/Part3-Appendix.pdf> (accessed 13 November 2009); Association of Art Museum Curators, *Professional Practices for Art Museum Curators*, New York: Association of Art Museum Curators, 2007.
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 - 12 GoodWork Project® Team, *The GoodWork Project:® An Overview*, 2008, p. 19. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.goodworkproject.org/docs/papers/GW%20Overview%204_08.pdf (accessed 12 November 2008).
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 - 16 Gardner, "Introduction," in Gardner (ed.) *Responsibility at Work*, p. 13.
 - 17 GoodWork Project® Team, *GoodWork Project Overview*, p. 28.
 - 18 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
 - 19 M. Csikszentmihalyi and J. Nakamura, "Creativity and Responsibility," in Gardner (ed.) *Responsibility at Work*, pp. 64-80, quote p. 67.
 - 20 GoodWork Project® Team, *GoodWork Project Overview*, p. 42.
 - 21 American Association of Museums, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, Washington, DC: the Association, 1992. This report, prepared by the AAM Task Force on Education, is frequently cited as fundamental in numerous museum education publications.
 - 22 S. E. Weil, "The Museum and the Public," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 16: 3, 1997, pp. 257-71, quote p. 257.

- 23 For example, Weil calls for museums to provide more "stimulating, interactive, visitor-centered, and cross-disciplinary experiences." S. E. Weil, "Foreword," in J. S. Hirsch and L. H. Silverman (eds.) *Transforming Practice: Selections from the "Journal of Museum Education," 1992-1999*, Washington, DC: Museum Education Roundtable, 2000, pp. 11-13, quote p. 11. More recently, educators at the Detroit Institute of Arts claim that the "new institutional priorities" for interpretation are to "facilitate dynamic, dialogic experiences that will ignite visitors' imaginations, ideas, and emotions and encourage self-reflection and social engagement." J. W. Czajkowski and S. H. Hill, "Transformation and Interpretation: What is the Museum Educator's Role?" *Journal of Museum Education* 33: 3, 2008, pp. 255-264, quote p. 256.
- 24 M. E. Munley and R. Roberts, "Are Museum Educators Still Necessary?" *Journal of Museum Education* 31: 1, 2006, pp. 29-39, quote p. 31.
- 25 G. Lowry, "A Deontological Approach to Art Museums and the Public Trust," in J. Cuno (ed.) *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press and Harvard University Art Museums, 2004, pp. 129-49, quote p. 145.
- 26 Cuno continues: "The museum ... is also a center of a very special kind of research and education ... research and teaching are object-based: prompted by the object, engaged with the object, and offered up by the particular way objects are experienced as physical things ... " J. Cuno, "The Object of Art Museums," in Cuno (ed.) *Whose Muse?* pp. 49-75, quote p. 52. Similarly advancing these familiar goals, AAMC's guide opens: "Members of the Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC) believe that the core mission of art museums is to collect, preserve, study, interpret, and display works of art for the benefit of the public." Association of Art Museum Curators, *Professional Practices*, p. 6.
- 27 P. de Montebello, "Art Museums, Inspiring Public Trust," in Cuno (ed.) *Whose Muse?* pp. 151-69, quote p. 157.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 156.
- 29 Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, p. 116.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 7. Hein herself questions whether the "displacement of objects by experiences ... risks compromising the uniqueness of the museum's educational agency," p. 109.
- 31 Committee on Education, *Excellence in Practice: Museum Education Principles and Standards*, American Association of Museums, 2002, p. 2. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.edcom.org/Files/Admin/EdComBookletFinalApril805.pdf> (accessed 13 November 2009); American Association of Museums Curators Committee, *A Code of Ethics for Curators*, 2009. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.curcom.org/_pdf/code_ethics2009.pdf (accessed 13 November 2009).
- 32 American Association of Museums Curators Committee, *Code of Ethics for Curators*, p. 3.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 34 Association of Art Museum Curators, *Professional Practices*, p. 6.
- 35 Committee on Education, *Excellence in Practice*, p. 6.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 37 Edson, *Museum Training*, p. 40; Glaser and Zenetou, *Museums: A Place to Work*, p. 81. "Although curators have many duties and responsibilities, their primary value to the museum lies in their specific expertise. Curators are historians engaged in scholarship with a special emphasis on physical objects." Association of Art Museum Curators, *Professional Practices*, p. 6.
- 38 Association of Art Museum Curators, *Professional Practices*, p. 12.
- 39 Committee on Education, *Excellence in Practice*, pp. 6, 8.
- 40 L. C. Roberts, "Educators on Exhibit Teams: A New Role, a New Era," in Hirsch and Silverman (eds.) *Transforming Practice* (essay originally appeared 1994), pp. 89-97, quote p. 93.
- 41 Munley and Roberts, "Are Museum Educators Still Necessary?" p. 30; L. C. Roberts, *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum*, Washington, DC, and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997, p. 159. Jennifer Wild Czajkowski and Shiralee Hudson Hill, seeking to establish the educator's role today, find "the future of museum educators in interpretation" as one of challenging and resisting museum hierarchies, particularly those of the curator and a focus on art historical content. Czajkowski and Hill, "Transformation and Interpretation," pp. 259, 261. In contrast, de Montebello

criticizes the diminishment of the curator and calls for a public premium on expertise, the primary value of curatorial practice. Acknowledging the public as "key to the precious colloquy engaged by the principal players on the museum stage: the art, the curator, and the visitor," he urges public "confidence in the critical framework curators use in the selection of the art on view." De Montebello, "Art Museums, Inspiring Public Trust," in Cuno (ed.) *Whose Muse?* pp. 167, 168, 155.

- 42 Roberts, "Educators on Exhibit Teams," p. 99.
- 43 Responding to the tensions arising from the changing roles of curators and educators in the late 1980s, Danielle Rice locates their differences in ethical terms. She claims a special significance in the "moral duty" of the educator. "For the task that falls to the educator is to navigate through institutional contradictions in order to bridge the gaps between the value systems of the scholars who collect and exhibit art and those of the individual visitors who come to the museum to look at, and perhaps to learn about art." Following Roberts, we would argue that museums workers *together* "bridge the gaps" between different value systems. D. Rice, "On the Ethics of Museum Education," *Museum News* 65: 5, 1987, pp. 13-19, quote p. 17.
- 44 Lowry, "A Deontological Approach," p. 129.
- 45 Museum of Modern Art, "Director of Interpretation and Research," posted 19 October 2009. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.jobtarget.com/c/job.cfm?site_id=8712&jb=6328540 (accessed 21 October 2009).
- 46 Roberts, *From Knowledge to Narrative*, p. 151. Acknowledging the "turf battles" between curators and educators, Jeanette Toohey and Inez Wolins claim: "Turf battles arise when staff members from different departments lack shared goals or values or lose sight of complementary skills or expertise and when divisions of labor create barriers to cooperation. The most notorious turf battles arise between curators and educators when both claim the interpretation and presentation of collections as major aspects of their job responsibilities." Their article outlines ideas to develop "effective partnerships" as a means to achieve a museum's commitment to the public through shared responsibility for audiences. J. M. Toohey and I. S. Wolins, "Beyond the Turf Battles: Creating Effective Curator-Educator Partnerships," in Hirsch and Silverman (eds.) *Transforming Practice* (essay originally appeared 1993), pp. 98-103, quote p. 98. In contrast, Hein observes that "the endeavor to achieve pluralism has a flattening effect that diminishes individual accountability. Nowhere is this more evident than in the demotion of curatorship to bureaucratic status. Denied their traditional authority and devoid of the passionate connoisseurship of the independent amateur, curators must now be client-oriented team players, harnessed to exhibition teams as 'resource persons.'" Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, pp. 142-3.