

Understanding and Implementing Inclusion in Museums: A Comprehensive Guide



Understanding and Implementing Inclusion in Museums by Stephen Griffin

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Museums have a unique role to play in promoting social justice and equity. As institutions of public trust, they have a responsibility to be welcoming and inclusive to all visitors, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or socioeconomic status.

Creating inclusive museums requires a commitment to diversity, equity, and accessibility. It means ensuring that all visitors feel welcome, respected, and valued. It also means providing physical and programmatic access to all visitors, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

The Importance of Inclusion

There are many reasons why inclusion is important in museums.

- **It is a matter of social justice.** All people have the right to access and enjoy museums, regardless of their background or circumstances.
- **It is good for business.** Inclusive museums attract a wider audience and generate more revenue.
- **It makes museums more relevant and engaging.** When museums reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, they become more relevant and engaging for all visitors.
- **It helps to build stronger communities.** Museums can play a role in building stronger communities by bringing people together from all walks of life.

How to Implement Inclusion in Museums

There are many ways to implement inclusion in museums. Here are a few key steps:

- **Start by assessing your current practices.** Take a close look at your museum's policies, programs, and physical spaces to identify areas where you can improve inclusion.
- **Develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan.** This plan should outline your museum's goals and strategies for promoting inclusion.
- **Create a welcoming and inclusive environment.** This means making sure that all visitors feel welcome and respected, regardless of their background or circumstances.
- **Provide accessible programs and services.** This means ensuring that all visitors can participate in your museum's programs and services, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

- **Market your museum to a diverse audience.** Let the public know that your museum is welcoming and inclusive to all visitors.
- **Evaluate your progress.** Regularly assess your museum's progress towards inclusion and make adjustments as needed.

Examples of Inclusive Museums

There are many museums around the world that are leading the way in inclusion. Here are a few examples:

- **The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City** has a long history of promoting inclusion. In 1968, MoMA became the first museum in the United States to appoint a curator of disability art. The museum also has a number of programs and resources for visitors with disabilities, including audio tours, tactile tours, and sensory-friendly spaces.
- **The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.** is the only national museum documenting the history, culture, and contributions of African Americans. The museum is a powerful example of how museums can promote social justice and equity.
- **The National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, Scotland** is committed to being inclusive to all visitors. The museum has a number of programs and resources for visitors with disabilities, including a sensory room, a wheelchair-accessible tour, and a sign language interpreter. The museum also has a number of programs for underserved communities, including a free admission program for low-income families.

Creating inclusive museums is a journey, not a destination. It is an ongoing process of learning, adapting, and improving. However, the rewards are great. Inclusive museums are more welcoming, more engaging, and more relevant to the communities they serve. They are also more likely to attract a wider audience and generate more revenue.

If you are looking to make your museum more inclusive, I encourage you to start by taking the steps outlined in this article. With commitment and effort, you can create a museum that is welcoming and inclusive to all visitors.

Resources

- American Alliance of Museums Center for the Future of Museums
- Smithsonian Office of Accessibility
- Museum of Disability History
- The National Archives' Inclusion Hub



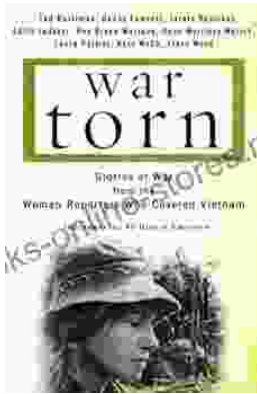
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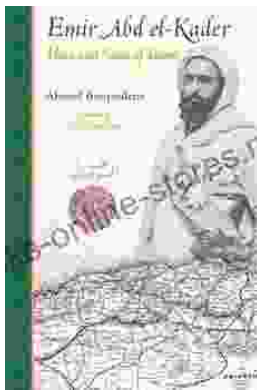
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