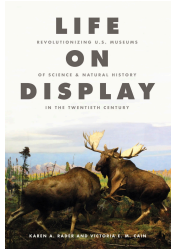




Natural History Network

Recommended Reading

This list of recommended reading, curated by ASTC staff and members of the Natural History Network, covers museum history, ethics, collections stewardship, public engagement, and future-focused practice. Each title offers practical insights for professionals working in natural history museums today.

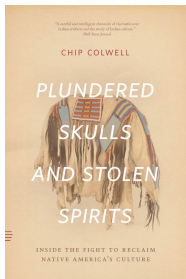


Life on Display: Revolutionizing U.S. Museums of Science and Natural History in the Twentieth Century

Karen A. Rader & Victoria E. M. Cain

University of Chicago Press, 2014

Rader and Cain trace the evolution of American science and natural history museums from the early twentieth century through the rise of interactive exhibits and blockbuster exhibitions. The book examines the development of dioramas, educational programming, public engagement strategies, and exhibition design. This long history sets the stage for why museums look and operate the way they do today, including the tensions between scientific research, education, visitor expectations, and financial sustainability.



Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits: Inside the Fight to Reclaim Native America's Culture

Chip Colwell

University of Chicago Press, 2017

Written by a former museum curator, this book examines historical and contemporary museum practices related to Native American cultural objects and human remains. Colwell explores the impact of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the ethical questions surrounding ownership, stewardship, and cultural heritage. The book offers a nuanced understanding of how museums can balance scientific, legal, and cultural responsibilities while building respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.



The Future of Natural History Museums

Eric Dorfman, editor

Routledge, 2017

This edited volume brings together museum leaders and experts to examine challenges and opportunities facing natural history museums in the twenty-first century. Topics include collections, biodiversity, research, exhibitions, education, technology, ethics, security, and organizational sustainability. It is particularly useful for professionals thinking about strategic planning and the evolving role of museums in their community.

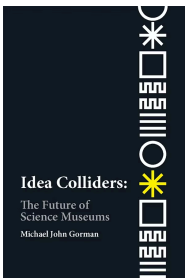


Towards Fourth-Generation Science Museums: Changing Goals, Changing Roles

Erminia Pedretti & Ana Maria Navas Iannini

Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (Vol. 20, No. 4), 2020

This influential article traces the evolution of our field from first-generation, collections-centered museums; to second-generation, education and communication museums; to third-generation, interactive science centers. The authors argue that institutions now need to evolve into fourth-generation museums focused on participation, citizenship, and social responsibility.

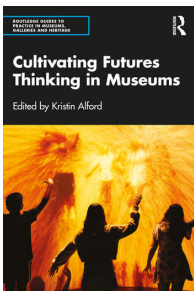


Idea Colliders: The Future of Science Museums

Michael John Gorman

MIT Press, 2020

Gorman argues that museums should move beyond simply transmitting knowledge and instead become *idea colliders*: spaces where scientists, artists, designers, policymakers, and communities collaborate. This book helps readers think about new participatory models for engagement and how museums can cultivate dialogue and innovation to address complex issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental justice.



Cultivating Futures Thinking in Museums

Kristin Alford, editor

Routledge, 2024

This collection explores how museums can help communities imagine and bring about the future they want to see. Through international case studies, contributors demonstrate methods for incorporating foresight, scenario planning, participatory design, and imagination into museum practice. This book is especially valuable for natural history museum professionals looking for practical and inspirational examples of how to turn their institution's gaze from the past towards the future.