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Interior rendering of the August Wilson Center for African American Culture which will begin its opening celebrations on May 30, 2009. The new facility, a fine addition to the growing Cultural District in Downtown Pittsburgh, tells the story of the development of the ongoing contributions of African Americans locally and nationally. Lord Cultural Resources completed the Master Plan in 2003. Image: Courtesy Perkins + Will, San Francisco, CA.

# Innovation: Finding Our Place

By: Ngaire Blankenberg, Senior Consultant, Lord Cultural Resources

From engineers to sculptors, car manufacturers to policy makers, and educators to techies, innovation and creativity promise to breathe new hope into our beleaguered lives and institutions.

For those of us dedicated to the arts and culture, the recognition of creativity as essential for economic growth feels like sweet victory. After all, no one knows about creativity more than us, right? Maybe.

Now that creativity has finally captured the attention of global power brokers eager to take the risk of making space for innovative thinking, it is time for us to consider carefully what our role is and could be in the creative economy.

Arts and cultural institutions are well positioned to provide the space necessary to catalyze imagination, midwife ideas and experiment with innovation. Museums, galleries and performing arts centers are public spaces that invite people with diverse experiences; museums have archives and collections that provide insight and lessons from the past; and our programming and outreach are at least partially geared to promoting inquiry and creativity.

In this issue of *Cultural Capital* we take a step back to reflect on ten innovations that have

changed cultural landscapes worldwide; we project how museums and other cultural institutions will operate in the future; we explore new technologies as part of the visitor experience; and review how innovative thinking is being applied to revenue generation and to facilities within our institutions. Finally we look at how innovation can lead to social change.

Despite these examples, it never hurts to improve better. Truly carving out our space in this new world requires all of us to consider some tough questions:

- How truly creative or innovative are we in our practice, as managers of cultural institutions, as museum curators, designers, programmers?
- How do we foster creativity and innovation among our employees, visitors, partners?
- How much creativity and innovation have we seen in our respective fields?

- Do we consider our mission to be the generation of ideas that have an impact beyond our four walls?
- In our cultural institutions, do we make as much space as we can for people from different disciplines and cultures to share ideas?
- How equipped are we to deal with the failure that inevitably precedes true innovation – particularly in these belt-tightening times?
- Do we have the proper resources in place to accommodate the next great idea? Or will that idea be squished into the way we already do things in order not to "rock the boat" too much?

Herein lies our opportunity for growth. Are we up for it? ●

Share your views at [www.lord.ca](http://www.lord.ca).



Look for Lord Cultural Resources at the **AAM's 103rd Annual Meeting and Museum Expo, "The Museum Experiment"**, Philadelphia, April 30–May 4, 2009. Ted Silberberg, Senior Principal responsible for Market and Financial Planning is leading a session on "Innovative Ideas and Practices in Revenue Generation and Cost Control". Amy Kaufman, Managing Director, US will be presenting "60 Tips in 60 Minutes: Affordable Actions You Can Take Now".

Gail Lord, President, had the pleasure of moderating an open forum entitled "Economic Challenges" at the **Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) conference** in San Diego on January 28, 2009.

Mira Goldfarb, Senior Consultant, presented a successful session, "Synagogue-Museum: Mission-Compatible?" at the **Conference of the Council of American Jewish Museums (CAJM)** in New York on February 3, 2009

Margaret May, Senior Principal, and Christian Walth, Preferred Partner, presented at the **Traditions and Transformations: Tourism, Heritage and Cultural Change in the Middle East and North Africa Region conference** in Amman, Jordan, April 4-7, 2009.

Joy Bailey, Senior Consultant, with Beverly Robertson National Civil Rights Museum Director, will be speaking at the **Association of African American Museums conference** "A Call to Home: Reimagining our Institutions", August 19-22, 2009 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Gail Lord has been appointed to the National Advisory Council for the August Wilson Center for African American Culture in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

To access current news and conference papers, visit the "News" section at [www.lord.ca](http://www.lord.ca).

## Innovation in Facilities

By: Lindsay Martin, Senior Consultant and Paul Alezraa, Vice President, Lord Cultural Resources

Museums are constantly pushing the limits of innovation in new facilities. Some examples include:

**Immersive Experiences** – Why build a replica of a rainforest when you can have a real one? The California Academy of Sciences has a new four-story rainforest complete with tropical animals and plants.

**Casual Spaces** – Let visitors have a self-directed experience and take a break from formal galleries. The Denver Art Museum's Bernadette Berger Discovery Library allows visitors to surf the museum's online resources, play dress-up or read a catalog.

**Cutting-Edge Green Technology** – Phipps Botanical Garden in Pittsburgh is the only conservatory in the

world to utilize fuel-cell technology. It is also planning its Center for Education in Sustainable Landscapes, a net zero energy and water building.

**Eco-Conscious Construction Materials** – Richard Meier is building the Jubilee Church in Rome using a new concrete that simultaneously keeps the concrete white and destroys pollutants. Architect Jacques Ferrier and French cementer Lafarge are working on a new concrete called Hypergreen for the Shanghai 2010 French Pavilion that will generate energy so that the building itself is self-sufficient.

Innovation in new facility design must provide creative space, sustainable development and economic advantages. ●

## Technology and the Visitor Experience

By: Yvonne Tang, Creative Art Director, Lord Cultural Resources

Museums have embraced a myriad of technological platforms including blogs, social networks and interactive games in order to attract and engage visitors. Technology has been a great tool for public outreach by allowing visitors to experience their museums from anywhere in the world through virtual visits or collaborate in curating exhibits through online collections.

It is necessary though to entice users to leap from their computer screen to an on-site visit. *Wikipedia Loves Art* is a worldwide photography contest among institutions aimed at illustrating Wikipedia articles. This online contest bridges the virtual/physical divide by offering prizes including tickets, private tours and memberships – incentives for visiting each institution.

Coordinating online games and on-site programming are ways that institutions can reach multiple audiences. Educational programming with school board curriculum can not only work in the classroom

but also appeal to the many households who use the internet for entertainment. The online exhibition *Brushstrokes and Wingtips* linked virtual storytelling with artifacts on display at the Canada Aviation Museum. The Museum will continue to create links between physical and online experiences through the new exhibition designed by Lord Cultural Resources *Canadian Wings: A Remarkable Century of Flight* with programming, photo essays and kiosks.

Online collections reach larger audiences and allow users to interact with previously inaccessible collections and far-off institutions. However, the transformative impact of experiencing the Mona Lisa's mysterious smile at the Musée du Louvre or questioning spatial relationships inside *Intersection II* by Richard Serra at the Museum of Modern Art should not be forgotten. What may save an institution is not giving in to the hype of high-tech experiences but using the range of this technological age to choose what is best for its visitors. ●

## Remembering Architect J. Max Bond, Jr.

By: Joy Bailey, Senior Consultant, Lord Cultural Resources



Max Bond, Kate Levin and Gail Lord at the Center for Architecture, New York in 2006.

Lord Cultural Resources celebrates the life of renowned architect J. Max Bond, Jr. (1935–09) of Davis, Brody, Bond, who passed in February. Max was a friend and inspiration to many in our firm. To

all of his projects, Max brought the expertise of an architect with greater than 50 years of experience, the patience of a master teacher comfortable enough in his knowledge to allow others room to grow their ideas and humility that a life well lived teaches us all.

Max was the spiritual leader of Freelon Adjaye Bond/Smithgroup, the partnership whose regal architectural design has been selected for the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), the last Smithsonian museum on the National Mall. Lord Cultural Resources is part of the team.

Without equivocation, the NMAAHC project is the most anticipated museum for generations of African Americans and we worked with Max on the Pre-Design and Master Facility Planning. His belief that the inner workings of the facility be seamless in function governed the team. Ever the collaborator, Max never hesitated to share the benefit of his skill but was just as quick to spend time listening to and learning from others. The

eloquence of his direction – along with co-lead architect Phil Freelon – throughout the NMAAHC planning process resulted in a multi-faceted approach to understanding the reason and implications for every space in the building.

Lord Cultural Resources also partnered with Max while completing Institutional Planning for the National September 11th Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center. In the wake of the tragedy, when the fall of the towers was still vivid in the hearts and minds of people around the world, Max's quiet dignity provided leadership for our team through the difficult project.

For these reasons and countless others, Max was admired and will be missed. ●

# Top Ten Innovations

We polled our colleagues, partners, clients and friends for their suggestions on the latest big ideas that have led to widespread change in our field.

**1. The Internet.** The rise of the internet as a means of disseminating information and enabling access to information has quite simply changed our world. Internet-related innovations include digitization, which allows all of a museum's collections (objects, photos, documents, audio, video) to be preserved, recorded and accessed by the general public; the search engine; social media has created a timeless, spaceless place for conversation and community; user-designed access to information such as podcasts; Live! labels, audio tours; virtual museums, which all work to expand the museum experience from a single interpretation to one that can be individually tailored to visitors' interests.

**2. Visible storage/"back of house".** Whether by peeking through a window into a storage area or visiting a space built specifically to invite the public into that area, more and more museums are seeking to democratize the museum experience. This idea has led to "museums without a threshold" where architects and museum planners are designing spaces that eliminate barriers between building and city, or that create spaces for performance and art everywhere.

**3. Idea Museums.** Idea Museums seek to generate tangible change in the societies in which they operate. The rise of museums such as the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in

Winnipeg and Constitution Hill in Johannesburg reveal museums as "activists" whose mission is to work for social change.

**4. The Iconic Brand.** Whether through opening branded franchises in new geographic areas (Guggenheim, Smithsonian), bringing on board a "starchitect" for expansion (Frank Gehry, Daniel Liebeskind, Zaha Hadid) or enhancing their program with works from well-known artists, performers and curators (Art Basel/ Basel Miami/Documenta), the star brand attracts attention with gusto.

**5. The emergence of art fairs, biennales and performance festivals as major aggregators for the arts.** Major events have surged in popularity, attracting movie stars, celebrities, paparazzi and people eager to be associated with the creativity of featured artists and performers. In turn, these events have encouraged cross-disciplinary collaborations leading to exciting new ideas, and the further influence of the arts in all corners of society.

**6. Mixed Use Venues: culture for urban revitalization.** For-profit and not-for-profit entities (like museums) are increasingly operating in partnerships that include shared spaces such as the shared address of the Museum of the African Diaspora and the St. Regis hotel in San Francisco. Examples abound of how "culture" is being embraced as a catalyst for economic growth and development whether as a point of pride around which communities gather, a destination for tourists, or a tool to improve the reputation and "look" of an area.

**7. Identity Politics.** Highly influenced by the identity politics of the 90s, more and more museums are being planned to address the stories of specific communities. Examples include the Museum of the American Indian and the Center for Jewish Heritage.

**8. Intangible Heritage.** In 2003 UNESCO ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which sought to protect previously marginal practices, expressions and knowledge deemed integral to the cultural heritage of communities worldwide. Oral histories are a key component of intangible heritage and gathering and archiving these personal recollections is a reminder that culture comes in many forms and that objects have stories born of a particular time and place.

**9. Repatriation of Collections.** Although the seminal *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)* was passed in the U.S. in 1990, the last ten years has seen repatriation become a hot topic in many museums. Repatriation ensures that objects held in museums are, where requested, returned to their origins. Globally, ICOM's red list identifies African archaeological cultural objects at risk of looting.

**10. Carbon Footprint.** Measuring and reducing our carbon footprint is one of the latest incarnations of environmental consciousness that is prompting changing practices and behavior. In the field of culture, this means anything from LEED buildings to recycling to environmentally friendly concerts and performances. ●

## Observations on the Recession and its Implications for Museums

By: Ted Silberberg, Senior Principal, Market and Financial Planning, Lord Cultural Resources

The current economic crisis is the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The bad news is that no one knows when it will end. The good news is that it will indeed end, hopefully sooner rather than later.

Museums are generally reporting that their greatest declines in operating revenues are from contributed income sources (donations and sponsorships). The AAM financial survey shows that the average museum in the United States generates 35% of its operating income from contributed sources compared to 31% from all earned income sources combined. Reductions of 20% in revenue from interest on endowments are also widespread.

While some museums have experienced declines in attendance, others have benefitted from the phenomenon of "substitution".

That is, people who planned vacations farther afield are taking them closer to home or paying more attention to museums and other cultural institutions in their own communities. There is a greater level of interest in revenue generation and cost control strategies.

Lord Cultural Resources President Gail Lord recently facilitated a workshop discussion at the Association of Art Museum Directors in San Diego and a session at the Canadian Museum Association conference in Toronto on the impact of the recession and strategies to address its challenges as well as its opportunities. Opportunities?

It may sound strange to refer to opportunities in a recession but for some museums the recession will lead to very favorable financial deals on construction, renovation, exhibition

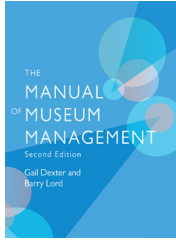
design and other needs. Lowering the cost of the project reduces the amount required to be raised against far fewer competitors.

Some museums and related institutions have decided not to proceed with planning studies. Others have recognized that when this recession ends, the flood gates will open for numerous cultural or community projects that will have deferred fundraising for expansions or new facilities.

Museums that will be able to proceed quickly to fundraising will have already completed the high quality planning studies required by government and private funders. And funders are increasingly seeking to have business plans and projections for operations completed before committing to a capital campaign. ●



# New Edition of "Museum Management" – Your Manual for Challenging Times



Managing museums has never been more challenging. This new edition of the best-selling *Manual of Museum Management* by Gail and Barry Lord addresses 21st century issues like globalization, civil society, new organizational forms, social networking, innovation and sustainability.

With 12 new case studies from Canada, the U.S., England, Singapore and France, this is a relevant reading no matter what size or type of museum you represent.

Juan Ignacio Vidarte, Director General of the Museo Guggenheim Bilbao in Spain and Chief Officer for Global Strategies of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York, read the text and comments:

"In an era of globalization and intense competition for collections, financial contributions, and new audiences,

museums need to adapt to the new trends by promoting innovations and developing strategic alliances worldwide in order to create emotionally rewarding experiences. This book provides professionals in the art field invaluable advice and guidance to define positioning of museums in the increasingly complex cultural, social, economical and technological context we live in."

Published by AltaMira Press, a division of Rowman and Littlefield Publishers in Lanham, Maryland and Plymouth, U.K., the new edition offers information on management practices to satisfy the current needs of museum professionals, fully revised from the classic 1997 first edition, which has already been translated into Chinese, Georgian, Russian and Spanish.

You can order the book at [www.altamirapress.com](http://www.altamirapress.com) for US\$49.95 (Paper) / US\$90.00 (Cloth) or from the American Association of Museums. ●

## A Portal to the Future

By: Elizabeth Merritt, Executive Director, Center for the Future of Museums

The American Association of Museums' new Center for the Future of Museums challenges museums to envision a better future for society and help make it a reality. The CFM report *Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures* examines factors that will profoundly affect our world in the next twenty-five years, and how museums may respond. It depicts a future in which

1. The dramatically older, multi-ethnic demographic of American society challenges museums to embrace universal design and become more relevant to "minority" populations.
2. Rising energy prices may force museums to prioritize sustainable design and practice, while a prolonged recession and continued stratification of wealth compel them to explore new financial models.

3. The plummeting cost of digitization creates an explosion of virtual culture, confronting museums with choices regarding what to curate and preserve, both physically and digitally. As the ubiquity of interactive gaming and Web 2.0 social networking fosters a new generation's expectation that they build their own narrative experience, museum audiences question the old paradigm of curatorial authority.

To document a wide variety of opinions on these and other topics, CFM's Voices of the Future project encourages interesting people from various fields to videotape and share their thoughts on the future of museums and society.

To read more about these and other initiatives, visit [www.futureofmuseums.org](http://www.futureofmuseums.org). ●

## News and Events

The **Lord Academy's Global Internship Program** provides valuable and practical experience for qualified students embarking on professional careers in the cultural sector. We are proud to announce the recent hiring of two former Lord Academy interns Hanyu Zhang and Ding Li to our Chinese company Sinolord in Beijing.

**Lord Cultural Recruitment** is pleased to announce that the Tourism Development and Investment Company has filled the position of Programming Manager. Sarah Knight started on January 18, 2009 at the head office in Abu Dhabi. For more information about our new recruitment service, please visit our website at [www.lordculturalrecruitment.com](http://www.lordculturalrecruitment.com).

Lord Cultural Resources would like to congratulate our clients on the following openings:

- **Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History** reopened after a 2-year closure in January 2009.

- **Canada Aviation Museum, Ottawa**, opened *Canadian Wings: A Remarkable Century of Flight* on February 23, 2009.
- **Modern Wing at the Art Institute of Chicago**, opens May 16, 2009.
- **La Maison de la Vache qui Rit**, Lons-le-Saunier, France opens May 15, 2009.
- **August Wilson Center**, Pittsburgh, opens May 30, 2009.
- **Tampa Bay History Center**, Florida, opened January 2009.
- **The Canadian Museum for Human Rights**, Winnipeg, had its groundbreaking ceremony on December 19th, 2008. The museum is expected to be open to the public in 2012. ●



(left to right) Barry Lord, Governor General Michaëlle Jean, Anthony Smyth, Director General of the Canada Aviation Museum and Vice President Maria Piacente.

## Cultural Capital

**Guest Editor**  
Ngaire Blankenberg  
[nblankenberg@lord.ca](mailto:nblankenberg@lord.ca)

**Managing Editor**  
Yvonne Tang  
[ytang@lord.ca](mailto:ytang@lord.ca)

**Production**  
Luca Vetere  
[lvetere@lord.ca](mailto:lvetere@lord.ca)

**Share your views!**  
[www.lord.ca](http://www.lord.ca)

### New York

43 West 24th Street  
10th Floor  
New York, NY  
USA 10010  
Tel: 1 (646) 375 2500  
Fax: 1 (212) 675 4763  
[info@lord.ca](mailto:info@lord.ca)

### San Francisco

66 Parker Avenue  
San Francisco, California  
USA 94118  
Tel: 1 (415) 751 2005  
Fax: 1 (415) 751 1840  
[info@lord.ca](mailto:info@lord.ca)

### Toronto

1300 Yonge Street, Suite 400  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M4T 1X3  
Tel: 1 (416) 928 9292  
Fax: 1 (416) 928 1774  
[info@lord.ca](mailto:info@lord.ca)

### Paris

36, rue du Mont Tabor  
75001 Paris, France  
Tel: +33 (1) 42 60 73 34  
Fax: +33 (1) 42 96 03 12  
[info@lordculture.com](mailto:info@lordculture.com)

### Madrid

Miguel Angel 6 (3-7)  
28010 Madrid, Spain  
Tel: +34 91 298 7470  
Fax: +34 91 298 7471  
[info@lordcultura.com](mailto:info@lordcultura.com)

### Beijing

Kaixuancheng, Suite 1701  
170 Beiyuan Road  
Chaoyang District  
Beijing 100101  
Tel: 86 (10) 5970 1040  
Fax: 86 (10) 5970 1043  
[info@lord.ca](mailto:info@lord.ca)

### Bahrain

P.O. Box 31032  
Budaiya  
Kingdom of Bahrain  
Tel: +973 39767307  
[info@lord.ca](mailto:info@lord.ca)