

*Spring 2017 Virtual Special Issue: Gateways for Understanding: Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion in Museums*

Over the last several years, the Museum Education Roundtable (MER) has been strategically moving forward to increase access to its resources, including a new website, online archive, and our first virtual issue. MER produces the Journal of Museum Education (JME), the only journal printed in the United States devoted to theory and practice in museum education. Written by museum and education professionals, JME articles explore innovations in the field of museum education, teaching strategies for use in museums and other informal learning environments, visitor research, and evaluation.

In thinking about MER's strategic goals, the upcoming 2017 AAM conference and what is relevant to museum professionals, we are excited to offer a virtual issue that highlights our past articles as it relates to the AAM conference theme "*Gateways for Understanding: Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion in Museums.*"

We write this as two museum professionals, colleagues, and MER Board members. Beyond this, we write this as two Asian-American women, children of immigrants, and both now experiencing life as new immigrants (Vivian in Japan and Naomi in Canada). The outsider experience is one that we both navigate and one that we both feel has relevance to the interrelated issues of diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion. We brought this experience forward as we made our selection of articles for this Special Issue.

As museum educators, we must also think about issues of relevance, barriers to learning, and barriers to participation and purpose. Whether or not your museum is accessible to and inclusive of you, does not mean that it is a welcoming space for someone else. Equity work is first an orientation, a critical consciousness and lens through which one begins to see and understand the world and how this will then map to one's museum's culture, pedagogical and interpretative approaches and public engagement.

In thinking about the complexity of these issues, we looked at the many articles that have been contributed to the JME. Our recent issue "Race, Dialogue and Inclusion: A Museum on the National Stage" serves as a rich resource. We have also selected a few works that we feel will assist museum professionals in thinking about these complex issues. There is no one method or process that fits all institutions. These selections are meant to enhance the dialogue of diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion within your institution, so that you and your institution may discover ways to reflect and authentically meet the needs of a wide variety of audiences.

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