



Civilizing the Museum: The Collected Writings of Elaine Heumann Gurian

By Elaine Heumann Gurian



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Written over a thirty-five year career, the essays in *Civilizing the Museum* introduce students to the powerful, sometimes contested, and often unrealized notion that museums should welcome all because they house the collective memory of all.

Drawing on her experience working in and with museums in the US and throughout the world, Author Elaine Heumann Gurian explores the possibilities for making museums more central and relevant to society.

The twenty-two essays are organized around five main themes:

- * museum definitions
- * civic responsibility and social service
- * architectural spaces
- * exhibitions
- * spirituality and rationality.

And these themes address the elements that would make museums more inclusive such as:

- * exhibition technique
- * space configurations
- * the personality of the director
- * the role of social service
- * power sharing
- * types of museums
- * the need for emotion humour and spirituality.

Without abandoning the traditional museum processes, Gurian shows how museums can honour tradition whilst embracing the new.

Enriched by her experience in groundbreaking museums, Gurian has provided a book that provokes thought, dialogue and action for students and professionals in the field to realize the inclusive potential of museums.

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Editorial Review

Review

'Reading this book is like watching a time-lapse film, probably animated, of museums as seen from the inside. Gurian has collected her essays and past speeches into five broad discussions, each spanning many years and each revealing, not just philosophy, but practical actions.' - *Journal of Management*

'[Heumann Gurian is] an indispensable and eloquent champion of aligning museum practice with museum rhetoric ... this is a rich vein of thoughtful analysis and prescription, rooted in the realities of museum practice and illuminated with telling anecdotes and lessons from Gurian's career.' - *Curator: The Museum Journal*

'[Gurian] represents the social and moral conscience of the museum community ... The book is very much an invitation to a younger generation of practitioners to reflect on where museums have been and where they might be going, with the express desire that they might pick up the mantle and continue to fight the battle. It is an invitation to which we all should respond.' - *Journal of the National Museum of Australia*

'An excellent historical review... an important museological record.' - *Visitor Studies*

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