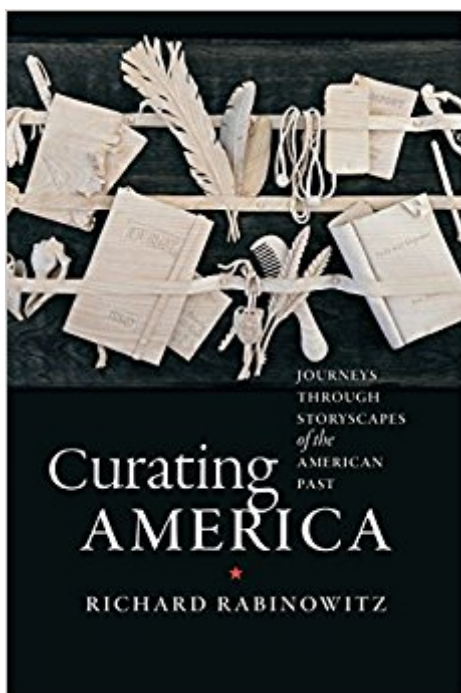


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Curating America: Journeys Through Storyscapes Of The American Past



Synopsis

How do history museums and historic sites tell the richly diverse stories of the American people? What fascinates us most about American history? To help answer these questions, noted public historian Richard Rabinowitz examines the evolution of public history over the last half-century and highlights the new ways we have come to engage with our past. At the heart of this endeavor is what Rabinowitz calls "storyscapes--landscapes of engagement where individuals actively encounter stories of past lives. As storyscapes, museums become processes of narrative interplay rather than moribund storage bins of strange relics. Storyscapes bring to life even the most obscure people--making their skills of hands and minds "touchable," making their voices heard despite their absence from traditional archives, and making the dilemmas and triumphs of their lives accessible to us today. Rabinowitz's wealth of professional experience--creating over 500 history museums, exhibitions, and educational programs across the nation--shapes and informs the narrative. By weaving insights from learning theory, anthropology and geography, politics and finance, collections and preservation policy, and interpretive media, Rabinowitz reveals how the nation's best museums and historic sites allow visitors to confront their sense of time and place, memories of family and community, and definitions of self and the world while expanding their idea of where they stand in the flow of history.

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Customer Reviews

If you don't think writing and reading about history is urgent political business, . . . [Curating America] will change your mind.--The Scholarly Kitchen

Richard Rabinowitz takes us on a fascinating journey through the recent past, offering lively anecdotes and vivid illustrations to illuminate the making of public history as a profession and the development of many of the most celebrated historical exhibits of the last three decades. A wonderful, intellectually stimulating book.--Robert Gross, University of Connecticut

Richard Rabinowitz is a brilliant pioneer, the most creative designer of history museum exhibits in the United States, and a superlative writer. This book, which distills his incredible forty-year career into one volume, is a must-read for anyone interested in the evolution of the museum as an interactive place, understanding how we now engage with our past, and learning about the man who helped orchestrate the rise of public history.--David Thelen, Indiana University, Bloomington

Rabinowitz is clear in his direction of how to curate and to keep the music going - one might say. This is a definite read for all persons in museum or curating work.

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