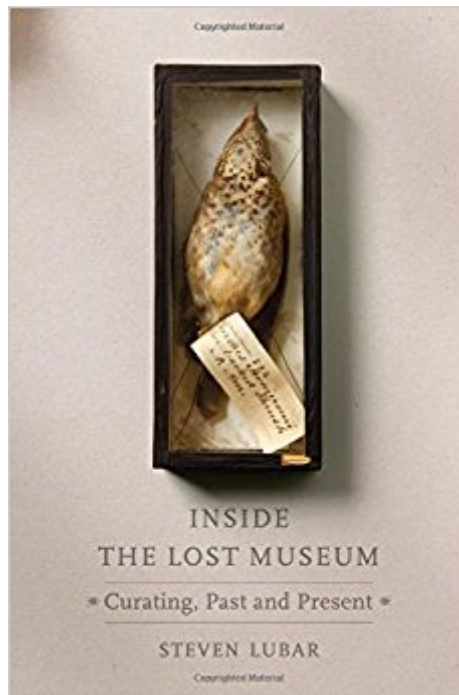




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Inside The Lost Museum: Curating, Past And Present



Synopsis

Curators make many decisions when they build collections or design exhibitions, plotting a passage of discovery that also tells an essential story. Collecting captures the past in a way useful to the present and the future. Exhibits play to our senses and orchestrate our impressions, balancing presentation and preservation, information and emotion. Curators consider visitors' interactions with objects and with one another, how our bodies move through displays, how our eyes grasp objects, how we learn and how we feel. *Inside the Lost Museum* documents the work museums do and suggests ways these institutions can enrich the educational and aesthetic experience of their visitors. Woven throughout *Inside the Lost Museum* is the story of the Jenks Museum at Brown University, a nineteenth-century display of natural history, anthropology, and curiosities that disappeared a century ago. The Jenks Museum's past, and a recent effort by artist Mark Dion, Steven Lubar, and their students to reimagine it as art and history, serve as a framework for exploring the long record of museums' usefulness and service. Museum lovers know that energy and mystery run through every collection and exhibition. Lubar explains work behind the scenes—collecting, preserving, displaying, and using art and artifacts in teaching, research, and community-building—through historical and contemporary examples. *Inside the Lost Museum* speaks to the hunt, the find, and the reveal that make curating and visiting exhibitions and using collections such a rewarding and vital pursuit.

Book Information

Hardcover: 416 pages

Publisher: Harvard University Press (August 7, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0674971043

ISBN-13: 978-0674971042

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.2 x 9.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item

Best Sellers Rank: #81,858 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Museums #16 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Museum Studies & Museology #431 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > History

Customer Reviews

Steven Lubar has written a wonderfully comprehensive and intriguing assessment of the impact and importance of museums by unearthing both the history of these cultural institutions and the contemporary challenges that face the field. Featuring an insider's knowledge and a scholar's curiosity, *Inside the Lost Museum* is a must-read for those who want to understand how museums shape America's memories and its national identity. (Lonnie G. Bunch III, Director, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution) In this volume, Steven Lubar, among the most thoughtful scholars and professionals in the field, turns "museum" into a verb, taking us behind the scenes to show how collecting, exhibiting, and programming are conceived and organized. His clear, straightforward, and insightful account provides case studies as well as a larger framework for understanding museological practices, choices, historical trends, controversies, and possible futures. The treatment of art, science, and history museums and occupational roles from director and curator to exhibition designer and educator make this required reading for everyone in the museum field. (Richard Kurin, Acting Provost and Under Secretary for Museums and Research, Smithsonian Institution) *Inside the Lost Museum* ably demonstrates that Steven Lubar is among the most perceptive historians thinking and writing about the American museum today. Equipped with intimate knowledge from years at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, Lubar connects the history of early museums to what currently transpires behind the scenes, as staff debate ideas for exhibitions, wrestle with ethical dilemmas, and attempt to foster greater public participation than ever before. (Kym Rice, Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, George Washington University)

Steven Lubar, a former museum curator and director, is Professor of American Studies at Brown University.

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