

## **Museum Engagement and Applied Anthropology - Call for Papers**

**Date** : August 31, 2010

Call for Papers: Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting

Seattle, Washington (March 30 - April 2, 2011)

Session Title: Museum Engagement and Applied Anthropology

Session Organizer: Robert P. Connolly (University of Memphis)

The session is conceptually framed around *The Participatory Museum* by Nina Simon and the contribution that applied anthropologists bring to the discussion. Simon (2010:ii-iii) defines a participatory institution as:

a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content. Create means that visitors contribute their own ideas, objects, and creative expression to the institution and to each other. Share means that people discuss, take home, remix, and redistribute both what they see and what they make during their visit. Connect means that visitors socialize with other people—staff and visitors—who share their particular interests. Around content means that visitors' conversations and creations focus on the evidence, objects, and ideas most important to the institution in question.

The session aims to discuss the building of sustained and engaged relationships in museums along with the methodological and theoretic contributions of applied anthropology to the process. Relevant questions session papers may address include:

- As cultural institutions how do museums demonstrate their value and relevance in the 21st Century?
- Can museums serve as “third places” for social engagement?
- What is the relevancy of shifting population demographics and inclusivity to community engagement through museums?
- How do theoretic orientations, such as the constructivist approach and free-choice learning, inform on the Participatory Museum.
- How does the Participatory Museum influence the authority of voice in both content and function of cultural institutions?
- What can applied anthropologists add to the discussion of Participatory Museums?
- How can museums function as dynamic venues for sustained and engaged relationships with a diversity of communities.

Although papers are not required to remain within the parameters of Simon’s discourse, for reference, her book is available at:

<http://www.participatorymuseum.org/>

If you are interested in participating, please send a brief summary of your proposed contribution to Robert Connolly at [rcnnolly@memphis.edu](mailto:rcnnolly@memphis.edu) by September 1, or before.