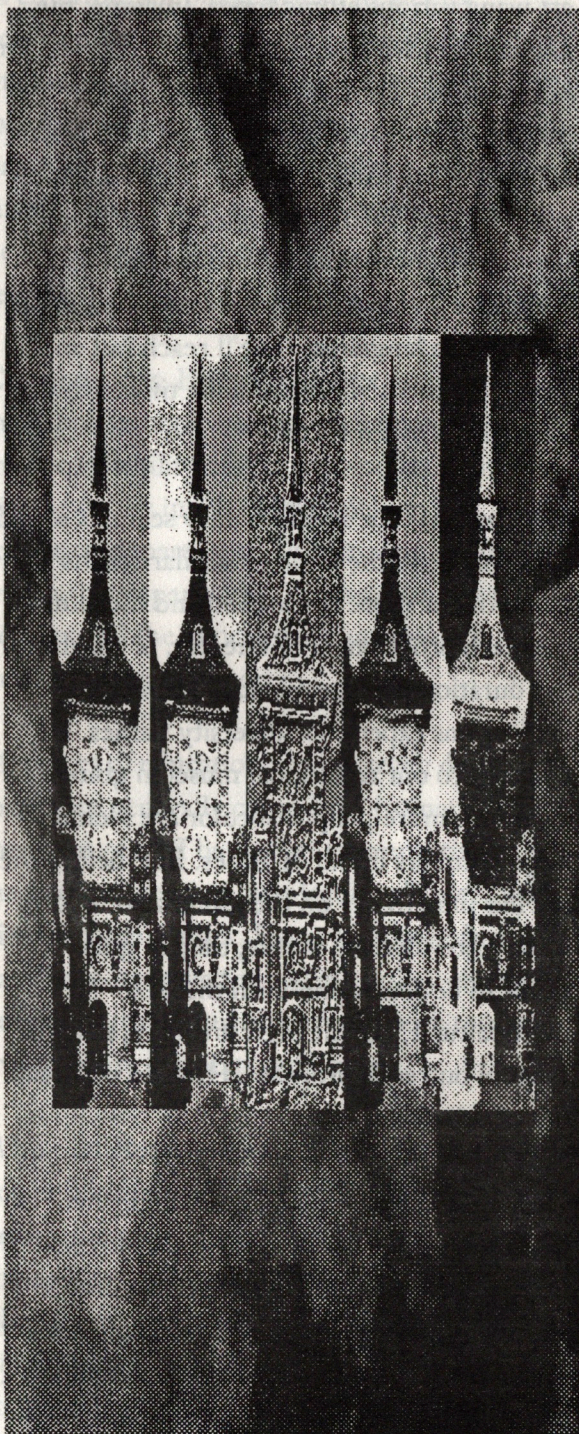


MESC EDLINE



A Quarterly Publication of Museum Educators of Southern California November, 1992



From the Board

President's Column

by Carla Fantozzi

As I write this column many of us are considering the choices we must face this fall—who to vote for in the presidential and local elections? What programs will require cut backs with the current county and state budgetary shortfalls? Recently, the MESC Board had to address whether or not and how to develop a new Long Range Plan (LRP). Several options were considered, as well as the financial status of MESC. finally, the Board came to an agreement to make amendments and modifications to our current plan rather than embarking on a completely new plan. We hope that the strength of our past plan will serve us well and with setting new action plans and timelines, MESC will have a road map for the next three years. By that time, hopefully, the economic climate will have improved and MESC coffers can afford to finance a more elaborate plan.

If you are interested in participating in the Long Range Plan Committee, call me at (213) 485-4581, Kim Kanatani at (213) 621-2766, or Jennifer Bevington at (213)-744-3519. We will be glad to inform you of the time commitment necessary and other details.

The 1992/1993 season for MESC promises to be as informative as our past programs. We begin with "Making a Difference" by Claudine Brown on November 13. In January, model programs for historic sites and museums will be the topic of discussion, followed by Cooperative Learning in March, Curriculum Connections in April and the biennial Management Seminar in July.

This year MESC also plans to publish a membership directory for your convenience. In addition, we are working on a Museum Passport program that will develop links between MESC member museums.

This is also an election year for MESC, so if you have a little time and a lot of energy, start thinking about how you can contribute to the MESC Board. More about this in future issues!

Outreach Strategies: Beyond Targeted Audiences by Regina Woods

From Outreach to Partnerships—A Scenario

Public finders: Programs based on cultural diversity are our fundamental priorities. We will fund those exhibitions and projects that display a sincere commitment to the ideals of multiculturalism.

Museum Executives: We need the funds, therefore diversity is the way to go. Education, do your job and insure that we receive those funds. Excuse us, what we mean to say is, let's embrace diversity! Roll out the red carpet! We'll show the communities (funding agencies) that "mi casa es tu casa!" Programs!

We need more programs!

How about a Multicultural Eatable Art Festival!? We'll have multicultural artists from all corners of the city recreate fine works of art using various ethnic foods. Imagine, the Mona Lisa with sushi rolls as eyes; chit'lins for her dress, lox for the smile, all on a background of soy sauce and dreamed with tamales, matzo balls and hot links! This could really be big! We'll get busses to get "them" here; send out invitations in 90 different languages and hire temporary coordinators to speak those languages. We'll reach out and get all of "them" in at the same time! How's Cinco de Mayo for a date?

As absurd as this 'scenario' may seem, it would probably yield the same or similar results as many of our more researched and meaningful outreach programs. For one day, or maybe for the duration of a specific exhibition, our institutions experience diversity flashes. In addition to our traditional museum going audience, more people of color are seen in large numbers in our facilities. But, before the ink has time to dry on the attendance figures stating how diverse we are, they're gone, never to be seen again until the next multicultural, double digit diversity, se hable espanol outreach program. How do we break out of this cycle?

On June 19, 1992, the UCLA Wight Art Gallery hosted a forum entitled "Outreach Strategies: Beyond Targeted Audiences" to address the issues around developing meaningful and lasting community partnerships. C. (Scotti) Scott-Erdmann, long time museum educator and community activist, opened the

session by illuminating some of the common short-comings of outreach programming. Using the AAM Task Force on Museum Education's 1992 report, Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension as criterion, she suggested strategies for confronting the challenges posed by developing meaningful community relationships. Her talk focused on evaluating the host organization's internal commitment to diversity and interacting with the communities that the organization has committed itself to serving.

Currently, Ms. Erdmann points out, many museums and cultural establishments relegate the responsibility of creating and retaining diverse public involvement solely to the education department. Unfortunately, it is not within this department that organizational policies and the allocation of operational funds are decided upon.

Members of education and outreach departments are generally committed (sometimes to the point of staff burn-out) to innovative methods of creating long lasting alliances with diverse communities. However, they often have little leverage for making policy changes needed to make the institutions more responsive to the needs of its publics.

Who participates in making policies? Are the power brokers also involved in making the institution more diverse? Often times there is a contradiction between the internal structure (sharing of power, allocation of funds, hiring of full time staff, etc.) and the policy or commitment of the institution to cultural equity. According to Erdmann, without

complete institutional commitment—shared responsibility and participation, a clear mission statement regarding cultural equity, staff diversification, and committed funds—the most innovative and sincere efforts result in "taco and egg roll" programming. When the tacos and egg rolls are gone, so are the targeted audiences and the commitment to their communities. The need for organizations to start analyzing their internal structure is an important first step in developing more meaningful community partnerships.

The following are different stages of institutional commitment highlighted during the forum:

- 1) An additive approach such as bussing, special/ethnic/multicultural programs
- 2) Diversification of staff, token representation, community advisory board—some diverse ethnic representation on Board of Directors. However, many times these representatives share the same socioeconomic backgrounds and have similar values as those more traditional board members who are many times opposed to change.
- 3) Museum administration establishes the policy, allocates funding, enlists more participation from Community Advisor Board. Unfortunately, the advisory board has no substantial impact on policy.
- 4) Establish relationship with community.
- 5) Museum and community become totally integrated into a real partnership. At this

stage, the institution is an integral part of the community's life (e.g. Weeksville House, Brooklyn, N.Y.)

Once we've made changes to our existing internal structure, allocated more funds, and added more than token "ethnic minorities" to our staffs, will our outreach efforts produce more substantial long-lasting community relationships? Well, not quite yet. According to Erdmann, there is a semantic change that is important to consider. She recommends that the term "outreach" be discarded because of its reinforcement of an "us-them" mentality and be replaced by the term "partnership," which connotes a sharing of power and resources between museums and the communities they serve. In developing community partnerships, Erdmann advises that museums start "courting" community groups. Get out into the community! Do the foot work! This process will enable the museum to more thoroughly assess the community's needs/interests and more adequately attempt to address them. If you are a visual arts museum, what role does visual "art" play in various communities in Los Angeles? Can the activities associated with creating experiencing, seeing "art" in various communities be accomplished at your institution? Are there any joint ventures that both the museum and community members can accomplish together and equally share in decision making? In the process of doing the footwork to get to know the communities, we will begin to recognize our common denominator(s). It is from a common foundation that we will be able to better establish long-lasting meaningful community partnerships.

Regina Woods is Outreach Coordinator, UCLA Wight Art Gallery

Craft and Folk Art Museum

The Center for the Study of Art and Culture (CSAC) is a research institute within the Craft and Folk Art Museum committed to supporting programs which foster cultural diversity as a positive value in the arts. In March, 1993, CSAC will sponsor "Ways of Knowing," the first in a series of three-day workshops for professionals interested in issues of cultural interpretation. The initial workshop will be designed by and for museum professionals in art and cultural history institutions who bear responsibility for the presentation and interpretation of material from one culture to another. In the workshop participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the current level of cultural diversity throughout their institutions (in collections, staff, visitors, and programs) and to develop a realizable action plan for increasing diversity. Participation will be limited to fifty; preference will be given to institutions sending teams of participants representing two or more departments. If you would like to find out more about the series, please call Nancy Downes-Le Guin, Monday through Wednesday at (213)-934-9684.

Los Angeles Zoo Earns Award

The Los Angeles Zoo was honored recently by the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA) for the best zoo and aquarium education program in 1992. The award was presented during the group's

Annual Conference meeting in Toronto in September.

The winning program was the Zoo Discovery Kit designed to enhance field trip experiences for students in preschool through second grade. A team of Los Angeles Zoo educators and classroom teachers collaborated to develop the 40 canvas bags that turn teachers into tour guides for nine Zoo exhibits. The Kits are packed with hands-on materials such as flamingo feathers, elephant hair and a model of an alligator egg as well as bilingual activity cards. In preparation for using the Kits, teachers attend a free, two-hour workshop led by Zoo staff and volunteer docents. In the program's first year of operation more than 500 teachers have been trained to use the kits with their students.

Edline Focus

**Gene Autry Western
Heritage Museum**
by Cynthia Harnisch

The fall, the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum opened a permanent children's gallery, funded by The Los Angeles Times and the Times Mirror Foundation. This first exhibit in the gallery is titled "Portrait of a Family" and tell the story of a Mexican-American ranching family.

The exhibit encourages children and adults to discover the history of the family by exploring

a re-created portion of their ranch, by visiting a reproduction of the family's attic, and by seeing a display of family artifacts. The exhibit is completely hands-on, except for the artifacts on display.

The exhibit has been warmly received by both the public and our museum colleagues, and it has been visited by 12,000 people in its first five weeks. One reason for its appeal is that it used an approach that is unique for children's exhibits: the exhibit is not based on a fictional family, invented to convey pre-selected historical information, but on a real one, whose story unfolds in all its richness of detail.

The decision to use a case study approach was based on our efforts to avoid stereotypes by focusing on historical accuracy. Stereotypes can so easily erode projects, especially when an exhibit deals with a culture other than the primary culture of the exhibit's curators. To further avoid stereotypes and generalities, the family chosen for our exhibit is that of a key member of our exhibit team. The family was selected after first determining that there was adequate documentation and that the family would cooperate with the extensive research that was essential to the project.

Great attention was given to historical detail in the exhibit presentation. Two years of research was necessary to document the family's history. This primary research was used to determine the overall exhibit development outline, but in addition, audience and classroom testing and surveys deeply affected some of our original key concepts.

After analysis of hundreds of tests and surveys, we began to understand that the exhibit needed to encourage our visitors to explore their own family histories and traditions, and that visitors needed to share that information with us. In fact, the process of sharing might be more important than information they receive from us on ways to research and record their family histories.

Most adults and children we interviewed began by telling us that they had no family traditions, but as we questioned them further, a wealth of memories poured out. They seemed to feel a compelling urge to share with us. Once we realized that this was a pattern, the exhibit design was changed to ad areas that gave our visitors an environment that encouraged them to share their family stories. We also changed the way our gallery teachers worked with the public. They still need to explain and answer questions, but now they are primarily interested in sharing and listening. Our professional and volunteer teachers are a strong multicultural presence in the gallery and the key to its successful operation.

Now that the gallery has been open for a few weeks and we are preparing for formal evaluations, we have observed some consistent visitor behavior. The introductory video which is disguised as a video letter to Mr. P.R. Ruelas, and shows actual footage of the last ranch owned by the family, has become something that people come back and watch repeatedly, as they realize that we have recreated parts of the actual ranch house and corral in the exhibit.

We have also seen that since the children's gallery appears to be part of our normal museum exhibit space, people are very hesitant to touch objects until they are invited to do so. Once they begin to explore, the adults seem just as curious as the children and enjoy the interactive aspects of the gallery.

We are currently experiencing an unusually high percentage of return visits from children bringing their parents to the gallery following school field trips. The children delight in telling and showing their family what they have learned. Even our usually reserved high school audience has been highly enthusiastic. One particular class comes to mind, when the gallery teachers went to greet this high school group, we found them drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes in the plaza. They were quite embarrassed to be on a field trip to a museum, especially to a children's gallery. However, as they entered the exhibit and began to learn more about the Ruelas family, they started asking lots of questions and sharing information about their own families, many of whom had roots in Hispanic ranching traditions. The students decided that the exhibit was great and one student thought that he would like to have us do an exhibit about his family next. They were all clearly surprised to learn that a museum would tell the story of a family who was neither famous nor rich and that it could be so interesting to them.

Cynthia Harnisch is Director of Education at the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum

Fowler Museum of Cultural History

The Fowler Museum of Cultural History at UCLA, home to one of the nation's leading collections of African, Oceanic and Native American art and material culture, opened to the public on September 30, 1992. The three-story, \$22 million structure is just west of Royce Hall on the UCLA campus.

Inaugural exhibitions at the Fowler Museum focus on the elephant in African culture, Maya dress of the 1960's, ancient Peruvian ceramics and the Fowler collection of English, European and American silver. The Fowler exhibit, "Reflecting Culture: The Francis E. Fowler, Jr. Collection of Silver" was co-curated by MESC member and former president Betsy Quick.

Considered one of the four leading university-based anthropological museums in the United States, the Fowler Museum of Cultural History has a permanent collection of more than 750,000 artifacts representing a broad range of world cultures. Its African, Oceanic and textile collections are among the most outstanding in the world, and it has major collections from Latin America, including folk art and pre-Columbian artifacts.

"Our collections represent the artistic traditions of the world and include some of the finest examples found anywhere," said Christopher B. Donnan, director of the Fowler Museum. "The new building will increase the museum's profile within the University and Southern California community, and enhance its ability to conduct research, produce publications, and attract more visitors to

exhibitions and related programs."

Four exhibitions galleries on the first floor open onto a central courtyard surrounded by an arcaded galeria. Additional space inside the museum is reserved for the Center for the Study of Regional Dress, a facility for the study of clothing and textiles. The museum also contains a state-of-the-art, 326-seat auditorium; a library; collections-processing and conservation laboratories; three seminar rooms; an outdoor amphitheater; and expandable storage spaces with light, temperature and humidity controls.

"Collections, research and teaching facilities come together here in a beautiful way," Donnan said. "From the very beginning, our intention was to create a building that would be a catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration, and for bringing together all of the visual and performing arts." As a result, according to Donnan, visitors will be able to appreciate a culture by viewing its art, hearing its music, and attending a seminar or dance performance, all through programs offered in the new Fowler Museum facility.

To supplement its ongoing series of exhibitions, the museum offers a road range of educational programs to serve the community. Among these are lectures and gallery tours for the general public, weekend festivals for families, on-site programs for elementary and high school students and curricular-development offerings for elementary and secondary-school educators.

Of the four exhibitions, only the Fowler silver exhibit will be on permanent display. "Re-

flecting Culture" comprises 251 objects representing 16th- through 19th-century Europe, Great Britain and the United States. Curators Betsy D. Quick, director of education, and Henrietta B. Cosentino, senior editor at the museum, have organized the exhibitions, with the goal of interpreting silver in its social contexts. They were assisted in research by anthropology graduate student Patrick Dowdey.

"Our intention is to demonstrate how silver functioned in individuals' lives and in the larger society during periods represented in the collection," Quick said. "Silver reflected the lives of many—those who commissioned the works, made them in their workshops and used or displayed the pieces in their homes." Through objects and photographs, "Reflecting Culture" explores the techniques and business aspects of silver production, the use of silver as a luxury and gift metal, the interrelationships among drinking customs and the use of silver vessels, the role of silver in the history of Western dining customs and varying silver design styles in Ireland, Russia and Colonial America. Each of these five sections highlights the social contexts in which the displayed objects were designed, manufactured and used.

"Reflecting Culture" is accompanied by a color-illustrated catalogue edited by Timothy B. Shroder. The exhibition will be on view in the Francis E. Fowler, Jr. Gallery during regular museum hours: Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.; Thursday until 8 p.m. Admission is free; parking on campus is \$5. For further information, call (310) 825-4361.

In the Community

Workman and Temple Homestead

15415 E. Don Julian Rd,
City of Industry,
(818) 968-8492

The Homestead Museum invites you to travel back in time and explore a century of changing California Christmas traditions from December 8-January 7, 1993. The exhibit will take visitors back in time to discover how southern Californians transformed Christmas from a religious feast day in the 1840's to a highly commercialized holiday season in the 1920's. "A 1920's Electrical Christmas" featuring holiday activities, music, refreshments, and guided tours will take place on December 5 and 6. Tickets are for sale beginning November 1 and advance purchase is highly recommended.

Armory Center for the Arts

145 N. Raymond Ave, Pasadena
(818) 792-5101

The Gallery at the Armory offers regular exhibitions of contemporary art. These provide excellent opportunities for students to see and discuss the techniques used in the art, and to take workshops with the artists themselves when offered. This fall, "Transformed From Clay," curated by Jay Belloli, will be presented from Oct. 11-Dec. 23. Sculpture by the ten emerging artists represented ranges from small to large scale. Special activities will be held concurrently with the exhibition, including lectures, conversations with the artists and

workshops. Gallery Tours are available free of charge for groups of 10-20 people, Thurs-Sun at 12:30 pm. Reservations are required.

Natural History Museum

900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles
(213) 744-3534

Internationally renowned Canadian artist and naturalist Robert Bateman will present a slide-lecture and discuss his artwork and conservation activities on Sat., Nov. 21, 11 a.m. The lecture is offered in conjunction with the exhibition "Natural Visions: The Art of Robert Bateman" at the Museum from Nov. 22-Mar. 28, 1993. Cost is \$5 for members and \$7 for nonmembers.

Palm Springs Desert Museum

101 Museum Drive,
Palm Springs, 92263
(619) 325-7186

A local architecture tour with Dr. Janice Lyle (MESC Board Member) to view examples of Albert Frey's designs, including an introduction and walk-through of the exhibit "Albert Frey: Modern Architect" will take place on Nov. 21 from 10 am-1 pm. Albert Frey is an important architect who has lived and worked in Palm Springs since 1934. He has produced over 200 building designs, including such local landmarks as Palm Springs City Hall and the Aerial Tramway Valley Station.

MESClassifieds

Curatorial Intern

The Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum is seeking an intern to work under the general supervision of the Homestead Museum Curator. The intern will assist the Curator in areas of collections care, site management, and registration. Qualifications for the position include a bachelors degree in history, art history, museum studies, or equivalent; excellent writing, speaking, and organizational skills; and the ability to work effectively with professional colleagues and the public. Knowledge of and experience with one of more of the following are highly desirable: museum procedures, collections care and registration, computer hardware (PC) and word processing software.

\$9.00 Per Hour

Up to 30 Hours per week

6 Months Position (January - June)

Please mail or FAX resume, letter of interest, and three references to:

Carol Crilly, Curator

The Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum

15415 East Don Julian Road

City of Industry, CA 91745-1029

(818) 968.8492 FAX: (818) 968.2048

Assistant Curator

The Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum is seeking an Assistant Curator to work under the direct supervision of the Museum Curator. The Assistant Curator assists with all aspects of museum registration (e.g., object accessioning, object care and handling, storage, photography, condition records), collections care (e.g., basic cleaning and handling, storage management, simple conservation), site maintenance, volunteer training and supervision, and occasional public programs. Duties also include the supervision of data entry into a computerized collections management system for a collection of over 4,000 objects.

Qualifications include a bachelors degree in history, American studies, art, museum studies, or a closely related field plus two to three years experience in collections care and management; excellent writing and speaking skills; and the ability to work effectively with professional colleagues and the public. Knowledge of and experience with artifact handling, storage procedures, and computerized collections management systems are desirable.

Bilingual Outreach Coordinator

The Museum of Contemporary Art is seeking a Spanish speaking educator for a newly established outreach program, first Visit & Beyond. Required: knowledge of contemporary art history & education; excellent communication and administrative skills; proven teaching abilities; and knowledge of Los

Angeles' diverse communities. \$10/hr., 10/hrs/week. Send resume and related materials to MOCA, first Visit & Beyond, 250 S. Grand Ave. L.A., CA 90012. MOCA is an equal opportunity employer.

Assistant Curator of Education

The Los Angeles Zoo is looking for someone with a Bachelor's degree in education of life science and two years zoo or aquarium education experience preferred. A background in teaching, working with volunteers, supervising education staff and program development is recommended. Position will develop, organize and co-teach the Zoo Camp program and educational classes for all ages and serve as the liaison with the Magnet High School program located on Zoo Grounds.

Education Specialist - Program Coordinator

Requires a Bachelor's degree in education of life science and two years zoo or aquarium education experience. Applicants should have experience in working with a large volunteer staff and the extensive docent programs, support their educational efforts, assist with program updates and evaluation and aide in the development of expanded in-Zoo and outreach activities.

To apply for these positions, send a resume to Education Department, Los Angeles Zoo, 5333 Zoo Drive, Los Angeles, CA. 90027. No phone calls please.

Program Administrator

Very Special Arts Festival

The Music Center of Los Angeles County's Department of Education is seeking a successful applicant to be responsible for producing two key projects of the Music Center Education Division, the *Very Special Arts Festival* and the *Bravo Award*. The Music Center Education Division has sponsored the Very Special Arts Festival for 13 years. The Music Center's event is among the largest festivals in the United States. The successful applicant will be responsible for planning and producing all aspects of the event: selecting artists, contacting celebrities, contract negotiations, production details and working with area schools to promote the event.

The BRAVO Award

The BRAVO Award is the "Academy Award" of Arts education, recognizing and honoring teachers for achievement in the arts. Duties include managing the application and judging process and producing an awards ceremony at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. The Program Administrator will be the public spokesperson for programs.

Qualifications

Incumbent should have a background in arts education and experience in production. The successful candidate will be detail-oriented with strong organizational skills. He/she should have good oral and written communication abilities and must be sensitive to the needs of special children. These projects are coordinated in partnership with Los Angeles City and county Schools, with invaluable assistance of a large corps of volunteers. The ability to work

well with people is essential.

To apply

Submit cover letter and current resume to Joan Boyett, Vice President for Education, The Music Center of Los Angeles County, 135 N. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA, 90012. For further information, call (213) 972.7359.

From the Editors

The next issue of *Edline* will probably be published in April or May, depending on our schedule and dates of future MESC meetings. We ask that all articles be submitted on computer disc along with a hard copy. We prefer Macintosh Microsoft Word, but we can also transfer from IBM disks that are done in WordPerfect or Microsoft. This format will enable us to produce the newsletter more rapidly.

An issue to explore in the next issue will be what we actually do day to day as "museum educators." We ask that people submit short articles which describe their responsibilities and duties. Humor is permitted. Deadline for submissions is the beginning of April. Send articles to Adele Lander Burke, MESC Newsletter, HUC Skirball Museum, 3077 University Avenue, Los Angeles, CA. 90035.

MESC
c/o HUC Skirball Museum
3077 University Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90007

MUSEUM EDUCATORS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Categories

Institutional: Allows a museum to be represented by an open number of attendants at any regular meeting; includes memberships sponsored by institutions and/or their support groups.

Individual: Valid only for the person in whose name the membership is held.

Student: Open to individuals with valid student identification.

Annual dues (check one)

☐ Institutional.....\$35.00

☐ Individual.....\$15.00

☐ Student.....\$10.00

☐ Renewal

☐ New Membership

Name _____

Title _____

Institution _____

Address _____

City and Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ (eve) _____

Amount enclosed _____

Date _____

Make checks payable to: MESC

Mail to: MESC, c/o Palm Springs Desert Museum, P.O. Box 2288, Palm Springs, CA 92263