

## CHANGING TIMES FOR MUSEUMS EVERYWHERE

“The entire [museum] field has been having a philosophical discussion for the last 20 or 30 years,” said Garret Barmore, director of another museum at UNR, the Keck Earth Science And Mineral Engineering Museum. Some of the industry goals he listed are “to be more accessible, decolonize, directly address the racist history of museums past.”

These goals are being addressed internationally. France’s President Emmanuel Macron, for one, announced in November that a Paris museum would return 26 objects, seized by French colonizers in 1892, to the West African nation of Benin.

They’re also being addressed close to home. In 2002, the Nevada State Museum in Carson City replaced its exhibition of Native American wax mannequins and dioramas from the 1940s with a new exhibition, *Under One Sky*.

“They invited a community advisory of Native Americans,” said Barmore. “While this sounds like a no-brainer, it’s something that museums are still struggling with, to bring in the communities they’re interpreting.”



Another innovative juxtaposition contains three types of representational artworks that don’t often meet on the same gallery wall. Top left, a wooden mask by Yaqui artist Jesus Rodriguez Muñoz. Bottom left, an untitled 20th-century painting by Eddy Muma, a well known “outsider” artist—that’s an artist without formal training who’s often isolated from the national art market. Right, a 2017 acrylic by Frank Buffalo Hyde, an Onondaga-Nez Perce artist who lives in Santa Fe and often includes both Native American and consumer-culture imagery in his paintings.

In the Nevada State Museum exhibition, Barmore said, “Native people themselves are talking, telling their own stories—no mannequins.”

Changes are on the horizon for the Keck Museum, too. “The only perspective is the white, male geologist and historian,” Barmore said. “We want a more diverse story. ... I would like to have a more diverse interpretation of the Comstock and Virginia City mining. Right now, the only story told about Virginia City city is that of the rich, male miners. ... I want to bring in Native American groups to talk about how they interact with geology. There’s been ancient mining going back in Nevada for thousands of years. [I want to] tell that story.”

And at the Lilley Museum, Baker Prindle explained, one of the big questions to reexamine is: “What responsibilities and what functions do museums have in the production of knowledge? And those fundamental questions lead to a lot of other questions. We ask ourselves, ‘Who do we serve? Who are we responsible to?’”

As many people as possible, he hopes. □

The Lilley Museum is now open at UNR. It connects to Church Fine Arts via a walkway and is accessible from the Whalen parking garage. Currently, hours are Tuesdays through Thursdays 12–4 p.m., Fridays noon–8 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m.–8 p.m. A grand opening for the building, including a recital hall and other rooms, will be held at 5 p.m. on Feb 22, after which gallery hours will be expanded. To keep up to date on event dates and other news, follow The Lilley Museum on Instagram. Admission is free.

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