FIVE OAKS MUSEUM

SOCIAL MEDIA TAKEOVER:
MIKE MURAWSKI

DECEMBER 6, 2021

DAY 1

Hey there everyone! My name is Mike Murawski, and I am honored to be taking over the Five Oaks Museum's Instagram feed this week.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself to kick things off. I am originally from St. Louis, Missouri, and now live with my family here in Portland, Oregon. After working in museums for about 15 years, I am now an independent consultant, educator, designer, and illustrator.

I am currently co-producer of the #MuseumsAreNotNeutral initiative, and my first book "Museums as Agents of Change: A Guide to Becoming a Changemaker" was published earlier this year as part of the @aamersofficial book series. I'm passionate about transforming museums, cultural institutions, and nonprofits to become more equitable and community-centered.

In addition to my work with museums, I am also co-founder of @supernatureadventures, a place-based learning and creative design agency that @bryna.campbell and I launched back in 2016. I really enjoy this work focused on helping kids, families, and people of all ages build a stronger connection to the natural world around us.

I am excited to share more of my work with you this week, and think collectively about how we can all be agents of change to build a better future.

☆☆☆☆

You are welcome to follow me at @murawski27 where I post a little about museums & my illustration work but mostly about trail running, one of my other passions.

DECEMBER 6, 2021

DAY 1 - Continued

Hey all, Mike Murawski here again – excited to share more about my work and some meaningful ways you can advocate for museums as agents of social change in our communities.

Since 2017, I have been fortunate to collaborate with curator & cultural organizer @artstuffmatters to co-produce Museums Are Not Neutral, a global advocacy initiative that we created to expose the myth of museum neutrality and demand transformation across institutions.

White supremacy, colonialism, and other forms of oppression thrive within the tyranny of the neutral, the universal, the apolitical, the "fair and balanced," and the objective. Acknowledging that museums are not neutral is a meaningful and urgent step toward gaining awareness of the powerful role that these forces play within these institutions. It is a crucial step toward recognizing one's own role in questioning it, interrupting it, and being a part of taking transformative action to replace it.

Museums Are Not Neutral began in August 2017 through an online t-shirt campaign and social media hashtag #MuseumsAreNotNeutral. During its first 4 years, the initiative has raised more than $30,000 for social justice organizations and relief funds supporting museum workers, especially those furloughed and laid off by museums since the pandemic began.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED: Join the conversation by using the hashtag #MuseumsAreNotNeutral on social media platforms. Wear and share the message by purchasing an item from the Museums Are Not Neutral store on Bonfire.com. Funds currently go to support @seedingsovereignty and the Indigenous Impact Community Care Initiative.

The Museums Are Not Neutral movement continues to grow, bring people together, and demand change happen now.

Learn more at MuseumsAreNotNeutral.com

DECEMBER 7, 2021

DAY 2

When #MuseumsAreNotNeutral, they directly engage in issues that matter to local communities.

The exhibition “Promise, Witness, Remembrance” at the @speedartmuseum earlier this year reflected on the life of Breonna Taylor, her killing in 2020, and the protests that followed. The curator Allison Glenn worked closely with Tamika Palmer, Taylor’s mother, as well as a larger national & local advisory group. This exhibition featured a powerful portrait of Breonna Taylor by artist Amy Sherald.

When #MuseumsAreNotNeutral, they take direct action to support & care for their local neighborhood residents.

During the ongoing pandemic, the @smithsonianacm (among many programs) provided more than 500 meals to community members through a partnership with @feed_the_fridge.

They also created the exhibit “Food for the People” focusing on issues of food insecurity.

Learn more in today’s Stories, including links to these important projects.

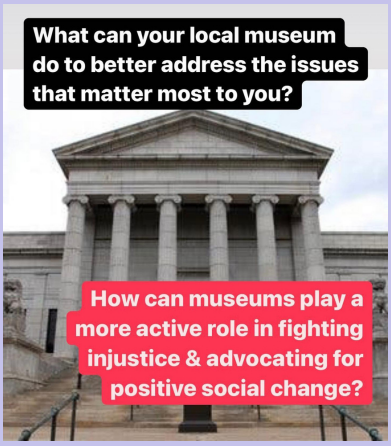
WHAT DO YOU THINK:
What can your local museum do to better address the issues that matter most to you?

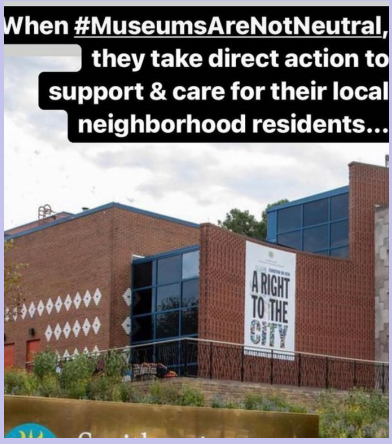
Is your local museum engaged in direct actions that care for & support local residents?

What would it look like if museums worked together with local communities to build a more equitable future?

Share your thoughts, and any examples of other museums doing great community-centered work that matters to you.

Part of #FiveOaksMuseum Instagram takeover via @murawski27 ✨✨





DECEMBER 9, 2021

DAY 3

Today, for my continued Instagram takeover, I wanted to share a bit more about some of my own museum experiences that have shaped my current work and ideas about the future of museums. I realized that when artists do Instagram takeovers, they often share their past work and discuss how it influenced their current practice. So here is a series of posts reflecting on my own “past work.”

In my previous position as Director of Learning and Community Partnerships at the @portlandartmuseum I was fortunate enough to work with a great team of educators to advance equity, accessibility, and community involvement through so many meaningful programs. Today, I am sharing just a few highlights as I reflect back on how these programs have shaped my current work with museums and communities.

This photograph shows me along with visitors standing amidst a large-scale installation titled "14,719" by artist @hankwillisthomas that served as a memorial to gun violence in our country. Large dark blue fabric panels that resemble American flags hang down from the ceiling, with white stars embroidered on them. I remember leading tours of this immersive installation for community members who are blind or partially sighted. We had a special opportunity to physically interact with the large fabric panels that made up this installation, and share our own connections with this work.

I am grateful for working with Becky Emmert, the museum’s Head of Accessibility, and members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, who taught me a great deal about accessibility and disability justice. Experiences like these have made me a strong advocate for accessibility in museums, as I believe that access to museums is a human right that should be prioritized and invested in.

#FiveOaksMuseum #Access #accessibility #accessibilityforall #accessibilitymatters #thefutureisaccessible #accessislove

DECEMBER 10, 2021

DAY 4

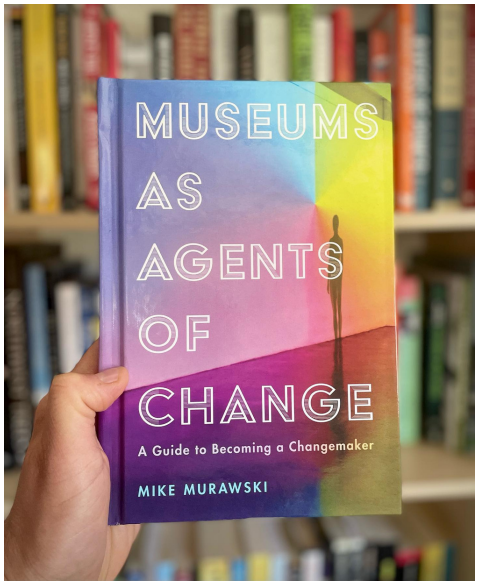
Continuing to share a few of my own museum experiences that have shaped my current work with museums and communities...

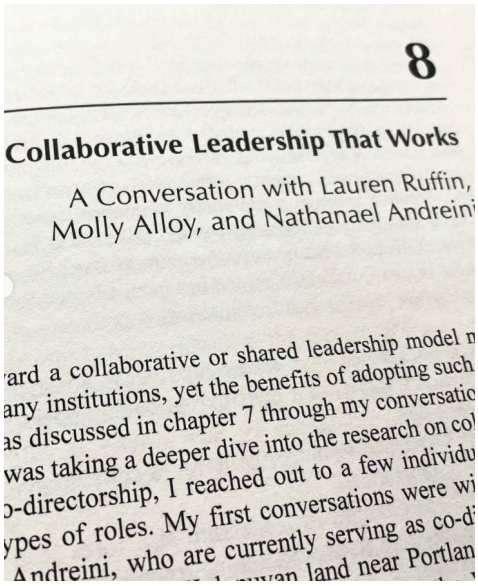
In May 2017, the @portlandartmuseum hosted the Upstanders Festival, a day of spoken word performances, music, interactive workshops, and art making in support of social justice activism and positive community change. Produced by the @monica_muses (shown here in this photograph kicking off the festival) and @museumofimpact in partnership with @dontshootpdx, the festival was part of a series of programs I helped develop to expand community ownership and bring communities of color into the work of co-creating programs at the museum. The festival happened the day after the horrific attack on the MAX Train.

Rather than cancelling the festival in light of this traumatic event, we were more committed than ever to open the museum as a place for people to come together as a community and to engage with the arts in ways that celebrate difference and build empathy, dialogue, and understanding. The art, music, and energy of the Upstanders Festival brought hundreds of people together at the museum that day to stand together against hate, discrimination, and violence.

Events and partnerships like the Upstanders Festival helped me experience the potential of a museum being a space for healing and an agent of positive change, acting upon the inequalities within and outside our local communities as well as contributing to a more just, equitable, and connected world.

DECEMBER 12, 2021





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Collaborative Leadership That Works

A Conversation with Lauren Ruffin, Molly Alloy, and Nathanael Andreini

ard a collaborative or shared leadership model
any institutions, yet the benefits of adopting such
as discussed in chapter 7 through my conversatio
was taking a deeper dive into the research on co
o-directorship, I reached out to a few individu
ypes of roles. My first conversations were wi
Andreini, who are currently serving as co-d
land near Portlan

DAY 5

As I wrap up my Instagram takeover week via @fiveoaksmuseum, I wanted to say how grateful I am to have connected with this amazing museum here in the Portland area. Since coming under the co-leadership of Molly Alloy and Nathanael Andreini, the museum had made some radical changes to become a much more human-centered and community-centered institution. I look to the Five Oaks Museum as a living proof that museums can change and be agents of change. So it has been an honor to have my own work featured this week.

I actually first connected with Molly and Nathanael when I was writing my book "Museums as Agents of Change: A Guide to Becoming a Changemaker." I was writing a chapter about the need for alternative models of leadership in museums (such as co-directors), and I invited them into a conversation about the effectiveness of collaborative leadership.

Ever since my book was released earlier this year (yay!), I've been sharing the work of the Five Oaks Museum with museum professionals across the world as I lead workshops and present about the ways museums can be more caring, more equitable, and more human-centered. The museum's decision to have community guest curators, the work on decolonizing initiatives, their dedication to keep and pay staff during the pandemic, establishing core values, budgeting based on those core values, being transparent about their budget (via Instagram!), and so much more – this all shows that change is possible, we just need to step up as the changemakers we are and make it happen.

I'm proud to support the Five Oaks Museum, their incredible leadership duo, and the entire team. You show us what the future of museums looks like!

@murawski27 signing off