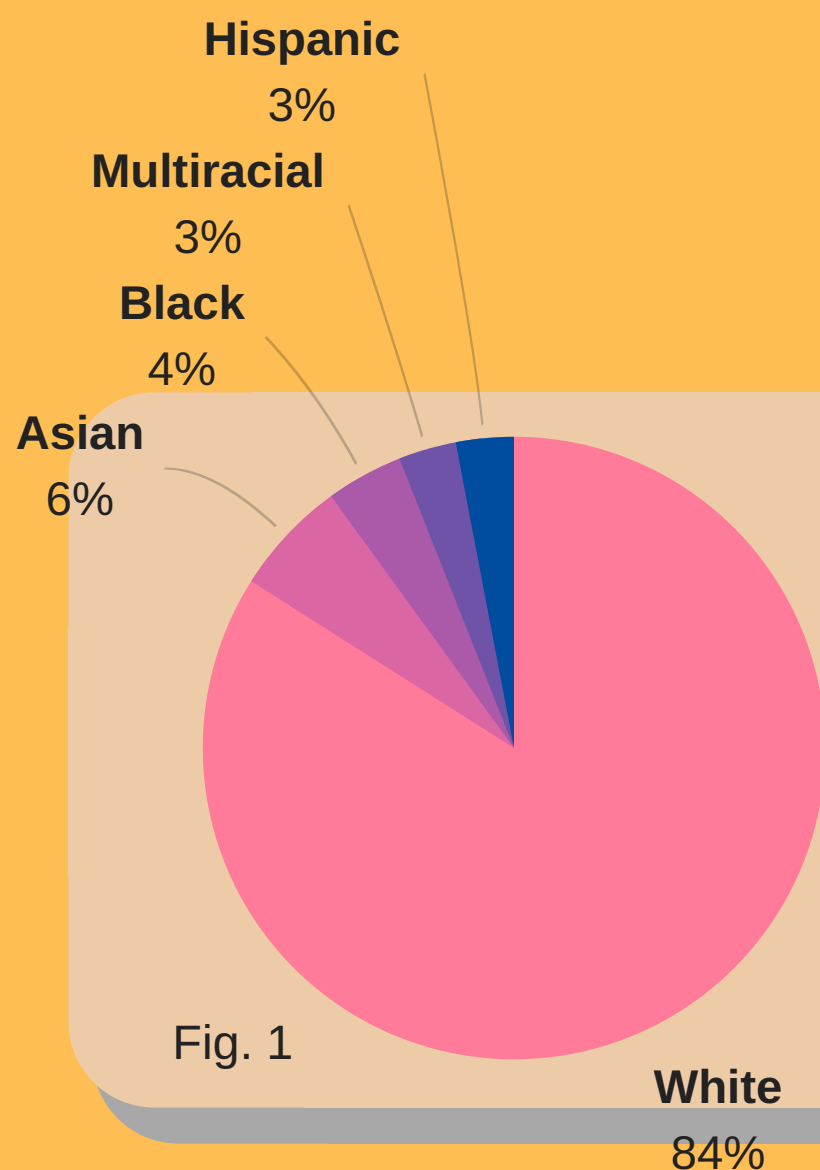


"without embracing social change, museums risk compromising their impact by serving an ever-shrinking fragment of society." Center for the Future of Museums

Achieving Museum Diversity



Who are our staff?

Museums have historically been represented by non-Hispanic White staff, a demographic that is quickly fading. A diverse staff achieves greater opportunities for informed and unified discussions of cultural heritage and institutional decisions. Diversifying staff also requires funding entry-level positions and internships to make them more accessible for emerging non-white professionals. In cultural institutions, having cultural barriers to employment should not exist.

The average North American art museum all-staff demographic: **16% non-white**
The High Museum of Art in Atlanta, GA, all-staff demographic: **35% non-white**
The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY, all-staff demographic: **84% non-white**

What are our collections?

Collections experience trends in representation where exhibitions, programs, and education could be used to enhance content and provide access to underrepresented artists. Art museums as cultural institutions should inherently represent diverse cultures accurately and fairly. Racially stigmatized language in exhibitions can also negatively represent art by Black, Asian, and Hispanic artists, such as **ethnic**, **folk**, **artifact**, and **looted**.

If a collection, exhibition, or program is too complex to understand, too stigmatized to include diverse audiences, or is too expensive to access, the museum is no longer serving a community, but an elite, biased crowd.

In one year at the High Museum of Art, 5/15 exhibitions highlighted artists of color and funded more programs for these collections as part of their goal to increase attendance of non-white audiences that are in their community.

Have we welcomed our communities?

Most North American museum audiences are non-Hispanic White Americans. But when communities surrounding museums are predominantly non-white, those museums should explore opportunities for diversity. This takes input from a **diverse staff** and highlighting non-white artists accurately by funding **diverse collections**. If a person can't see themselves represented in a museum or afford the high cost of entry, they will feel unwelcome as a visitor.

With a more diverse collection and funds to support programs, the High Museum of Art tripled its attendance of non-white visitors from 15% to 45% in two years.

"Cities are full of huge communities of people that don't necessarily feel they own the institutions." Thelma Golden, director of the Studio Museum in Harlem

Figure 1: Statistics from American Alliance of Museum Directors (AAMD) and American Association of Museums (AAM) of directors, curators, conservators, educators, and leadership. Schonfeld, R., Westermann, M., Sweeney, L. (2015, July 28). "The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey."