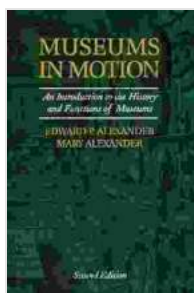


# An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums: American Association of Museums

Museums are a vital part of our society. They are places where we can learn about the past, explore different cultures, and be inspired by art and creativity. But what exactly is a museum? And what do they do? In this article, we will explore the history and functions of museums, and we will learn how the American Association of Museums (AAM) is working to ensure that museums continue to thrive in the 21st century.

## What is a Museum?

A museum is a non-profit institution that is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the human experience. Museums collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret objects, artifacts, and specimens that relate to the history, culture, and art of humanity.



## Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums (American Association for State and Local History) by Juilee Decker

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 56030 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 392 pages



Museums come in all shapes and sizes. Some museums are large, with millions of objects in their collections. Others are small, with just a few hundred objects. Some museums focus on a specific subject, such as art, history, or science. Others are more general, with collections that span a wide range of topics.

No matter what their size or focus, all museums share a common goal: to educate and inspire the public. Museums provide a place where people can learn about the past, explore different cultures, and be inspired by art and creativity.

## **The History of Museums**

The first museums were founded in Europe in the 16th century. These early museums were typically private collections of wealthy individuals. In the 18th and 19th centuries, museums began to open to the public. These early public museums were often founded by universities, scientific societies, and other institutions.

In the 20th century, museums began to grow in popularity. The AAM was founded in 1906, and it has played a major role in the development of museums in the United States. The AAM has established standards for museum accreditation, and it provides a wide range of resources and services to museums of all sizes.

Today, there are over 35,000 museums in the United States. Museums are located in every state and territory, and they attract millions of visitors each

year. Museums are an important part of our culture, and they play a vital role in our education and enjoyment.

## **The Functions of Museums**

Museums have a wide range of functions. These functions include:

- **Collecting:** Museums collect objects, artifacts, and specimens that relate to the history, culture, and art of humanity. These objects may include paintings, sculptures, furniture, clothing, tools, and scientific specimens.
- **Preserving:** Museums preserve the objects in their collections. This includes protecting the objects from damage, decay, and theft. Museums also use conservation techniques to restore damaged objects and to prevent them from deteriorating.
- **Exhibiting:** Museums exhibit their collections to the public. This includes creating exhibits that are both educational and engaging. Museums also use a variety of technologies to enhance the visitor experience, such as interactive displays and virtual reality.
- **Interpreting:** Museums interpret their collections for the public. This includes providing information about the objects in the collection, as well as the context in which they were created. Museums also use a variety of programs and activities to help visitors learn about the history and culture of humanity.

Museums play a vital role in our society. They are places where we can learn about the past, explore different cultures, and be inspired by art and creativity. Museums are also important for preserving our cultural heritage and for promoting understanding and tolerance.

## **The American Association of Museums**

The American Association of Museums (AAM) is a non-profit organization that represents museums in the United States. The AAM was founded in 1906, and it has over 35,000 members. The AAM's mission is to promote the public's understanding of museums and to ensure that museums continue to thrive in the 21st century.

The AAM provides a wide range of resources and services to museums of all sizes. These resources and services include:

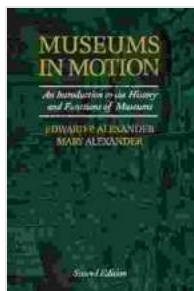
- **Accreditation:** The AAM's accreditation program helps museums to meet high standards of professionalism and accountability.
- **Advocacy:** The AAM advocates for museums at the local, state, and federal levels. The AAM works to ensure that museums have the resources they need to continue to serve their communities.
- **Education:** The AAM provides a wide range of educational programs and resources for museum professionals. The AAM also works to promote public understanding of museums.
- **Publications:** The AAM publishes a variety of books, journals, and other publications on museum topics. The AAM's publications help to inform museum professionals and the general public about the latest trends and developments in the museum field.

The AAM is a vital resource for museums of all sizes. The AAM's resources and services help museums to meet high standards of professionalism and accountability, to advocate for their needs, to educate their staff and the public, and to publish their research.

Museums are an important part of our society. They are places where we can learn about the past, explore different cultures, and be inspired by art and creativity. The American Association of Museums (AAM) is a non-profit organization that represents museums in the United States. The AAM provides a wide range of resources and services to museums of all sizes, and it works to ensure that museums continue to thrive in the 21st century.

## Additional Resources

- American Association of Museums
- Museum Studies
- Museums in the United States



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