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# Civilizing The Museum: The Collected Writings Of Elaine Heumann Gurian



## Synopsis

Written over a thirty-five year career, the essays in *Civilizing the Museum* introduce students to the powerful, sometimes contested, and often unrealized notion that museums should welcome all because they house the collective memory of all. Drawing on her experience working in and with museums in the US and throughout the world, Author Elaine Heumann Gurian explores the possibilities for making museums more central and relevant to society. The twenty-two essays are organized around five main themes: \* museum definitions\* civic responsibility and social service\* architectural spaces\* exhibitions\* spirituality and rationality. And these themes address the elements that would make museums more inclusive such as: \* exhibition technique\* space configurations\* the personality of the director\* the role of social service\* power sharing\* types of museums\* the need for emotion humour and spirituality. Without abandoning the traditional museum processes, Gurian shows how museums can honour tradition whilst embracing the new. Enriched by her experience in groundbreaking museums, Gurian has provided a book that provokes thought, dialogue and action for students and professionals in the field to realize the inclusive potential of museums.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Civilizing the Museum" is an important book that looks at the ways in which the public and museums interact with each other in the historical and contemporary moment. Gurian looks critically at what museums are and what they could and should be. Her call for free admission to museums is

one which points the way to a more participatory sense of what it means to be a public institution. Gurian has been at the forefront of the critical conversation around the evolving role of public museums for many years, offering much insight, analysis and advice to those both working in these institutions and those frequenting them. An invaluable book that provides rich food for thought.

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