(Re)Presenting America: The Evolution of Culturally Specific Museums

Join an important conversation about the role of “ethnic” or “culturally specific” museums with museum directors and scholars from across the National Mall and beyond. Moderated by Ray Suarez of PBS NewsHour, the program features Wayne Clough, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; Konrad Ng, director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program; Richard Kurin, Smithsonian Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture; Claudine Brown, Smithsonian Assistant Secretary for Education and Access; and Lonnie Bunch, director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Participants also include Clement Price, professor at Rutgers University and director of the Institute on Ethnicity, Culture and the Modern Experience; David Hurst Thomas, Curator, Department of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History; Philip Kennicott, critic, The Washington Post; and Congressman Xavier Becerra. Lively panel discussions will feature David Penney, Associate Director for Museum Scholarship, National Museum of the American Indian; Lawrence Pijeaux, President & CEO, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute; Helen Samhan, Senior Outreach Advisor, Arab American National Museum; Beth Takekawa, Executive Director, Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience; and Carlos Tortolero, President, National Museum of Mexican Art.

Performance artist Kip Fulbeck engages the symposium audience with a dynamic performance exploring multiracial identity. At a reception following the symposium, artist Bunky Echo-Hawk (Pawnee/Yakama) will offer a “live art” performance during which he invites his audience to suggest themes that he incorporates into a painting that he then spontaneously creates.

DATE AND TIME
Wednesday, April 25, 2012
9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Rasmuson Theater
Reception to follow in the Museum’s Potomac Atrium, 6–8:00 p.m.

LOCATION
National Museum of the American Indian
Rasmuson Theater
4th Street and Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20024
Live webcast at http://nmai.si.edu/multimedia/webcasts/

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
To RSVP or for further information, please contact NMAI-SSP@si.edu

Cultural interpreter Zandra Wilson (Diné/Navajo) gives a tour to students visiting Our Lives: Contemporary Life and Identities, one of the inaugural exhibitions at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. Photo by R.A. Whiteside.