

## May 2022, Dan Mills



**DAN MILLS**  
Director, Museum of Art  
Lecturer in the Humanities  
BATES COLLEGE

May Member of the Month, Dan Mills, Director of the Museum of Art and Lecturer in the Humanities at Bates College

Dan Mills, is the Director for the Museum of Art and a Lecturer in the Humanities at Bates College. Attending AAM Boston this year? You might spot Dan at the AAMG Boston Gallery Hop there! Also, Dan is a past board member and a current 2 Cents Club member for AAMG! Thank you Dan for your membership, sharing your time, and talent with us!

### What's one thing you learned in the past month?

I was reminded of the merits of having an active studio practice, of coming from the maker side of art training. The museum recently installed a significant project by artist Lesley Dill, *Wilderness: Light Sizzles Around Me*. The installation was complex conceptually and materially, and was presented as an immersive installation. As the exhibition lead, having an understanding of the work materially and the making process was instrumental to the success of the installation. As a director/curator who is an artist, it's gratifying when the artists you work with, such as Dill, Vanessa German, Agnes Denes, David Driskell, among others, recognize and appreciate this.

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Dan Mills and Lesley Dill in her exhibition *Wilderness: Light Sizzles Around Me*, January 28 – March 26, 2022.

**If you could trade places with anyone for a day, who would it be?**

OK, I watched the movie *Trading Places* for a day. Still funny, but geesh, problematic at times. And watching it for a day... You might instead suggest reading Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* to get across a similar message. Or for a slapstick variation, the *Three Stooges in Hoi Polloi*.

Wait—did I misread the question??



*Marsden Hartley: Adventurer in the Arts*, September 20 – November 19, 2021

**Coffee or Tea?**

AM & mid-day, really good strong coffee. Organic, dark roast, I grind and make it myself.

In the eve, I like to sip fruit tea.



### Book/Author suggestion?

I'm in the midst of a deep research dive for a series that abstractly visualizes the history of colonialism since the 15<sup>th</sup> century for a series of seven paintings, one per continent, + many smaller related works. So my recent reading has involved researching the history of colonialism, globally, by continent, by country, since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and extensive note- and notation-taking.

However, I'm really looking forward to reading *The Dawn of Everything, A New History of Humanity*, by the late David Graeber and David Wengrow. Soon.



Vanessa German: *Miracles and Glory Abound*, October 25, 2019 – March 13, 2020 (detail/opening reception)

### What did you want to be when you were growing up?

Not grown up, mostly. Although by the time I \*finally\* grew up, by doing things I love—being an academic art museum director/curator and artist—it turned out to be quite a good space to be in after all.

### What do you enjoy most about being a part of an academic museum?

Working with artists and art, and connecting them and their work to students on campus and off, and to audiences in the surrounding communities and well beyond.

I never tire of witnessing the exciting often transformational aha moment a student has when deeply engaging with an exhibition, artwork, or artist, and recognizing that their experience is likely the moment a significant shift in their thinking and understanding is taking place.



Dan with museum interns leading a discussion on work in the collection (L to R) Samuel Fosso, Martin Puryear, David C. Driskell, and Marc Leuthold, 2021.

## What are your hopes for our industry?

That the essential individual and collective work many in our field are doing is recognized and supported by the institutions we work in. So many in the field do amazing work that is indispensable to our campus and regional communities. We are often campus leaders developing culturally diverse programs and collections, creating topical exhibitions and projects that address compelling and difficult subjects relevant to now, leading on addressing DEAI at our institutions, whose institutions are centers of interdisciplinary education—don't get me started!



Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, Maine

A late afternoon rainbow over the Olin Arts Center and Museum of Art follows a sun shower over Lake Andrews. Photographed on Thursday, May 1, 2014, by Phyllis Graber Jensen.

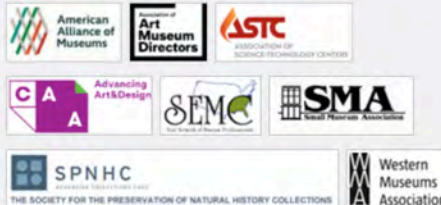
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