



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

**Smithsonian Institution
Office of Global Affairs**

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Since its founding, the Smithsonian Institution (SI) has been an inherently global organization. Today, our international reach includes research, programs, partnerships, and knowledge exchange in and with over 100 countries around the globe. We welcome hundreds of foreign research fellows, interns, delegations, and other professionals to our museums and research centers each year, enriching our community with a diversity of perspectives and building our vast global network of expert colleagues and partners. Historically, the Office of International Relations has shepherded our institutional global strategy, established internal policy, and stewarded key engagements and activities while supporting Smithsonian-wide and unit level international projects, programs, and outreach efforts.

Given the Smithsonian's increasingly complex and important global footprint, our office's role within the Institution and the support it provides to units has evolved significantly over the last few years to include identifying partnership and sponsorship opportunities from around the globe; supporting and streamlining global operations; and integrating SI thought leadership into critical global convenings – it's time for a rebrand. This new name will better reflect the office's current purpose and align it with counterpart offices with our peer and partner organizations. We're now the *Office of Global Affairs (OGA)* and we're excited to continue to highlight the global work of the Smithsonian.

Our new name reflects the scope of the meaningful global work and impact contained in this report. You'll read about our African Museology Exchange, funded by the State Department and in partnership with the National Museum of African Art, which brought a select cohort of cultural practitioners from eight different countries to the Smithsonian for two weeks of learning, conversation, discovery, and comparing of ways of working. In the months since they have departed, their influence has been enormous in helping us rethink how we engage communities, catalogue our collections, and interpret objects for the public through different perspectives.

I can say the same about our collaborations with the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism, a multi-year exchange that includes knowledge tours and mentorship programs. An initial cohort of this program came to Washington to partner with our Smithsonian Office of Visitor Services to focus on new practices to engage visitors; they left us recharged and inspired by their own ideas.

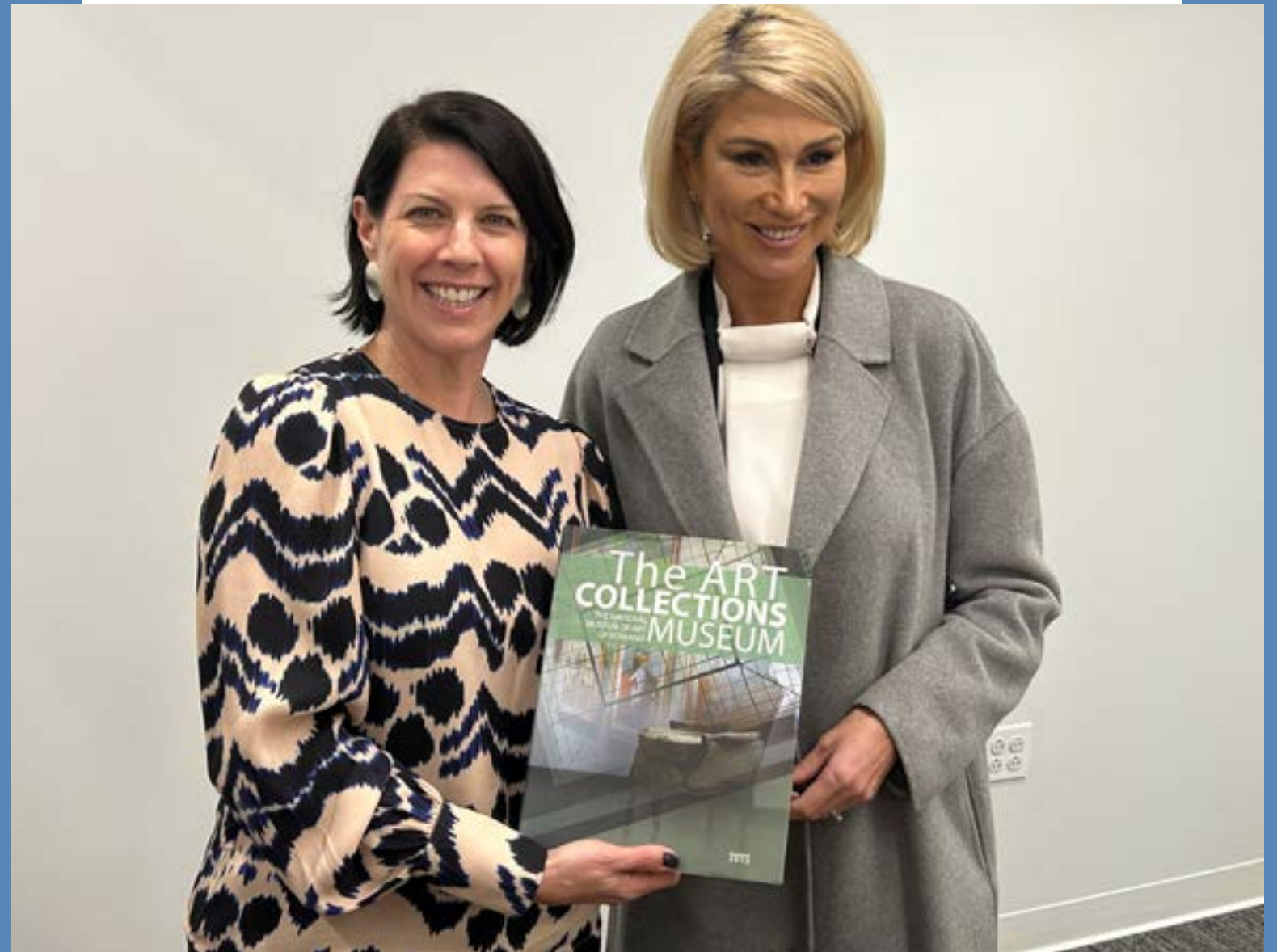
In science, we are in the second year of a focused strategy for the Smithsonian to be more intentional in our approaches to major global fora, with delegations attending the Our Ocean Conference in Panama and the UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP 28) where we launched our Life on a Sustainable Planet initiative. We've used these opportunities to further work with key partners, donors, and foreign governments, all in alignment alongside US government climate change and oceans strategies.

We ended 2023 with the signing of a milestone agreement with the US Department of State with Secretary Bunch signing alongside Secretary Blinken. It was an inspiring day that will create a wealth of new opportunities for collaboration, exchange, and amplification of the Smithsonian's unparalleled expertise globally.

Warmly,

Aviva Rosenthal

Director, Office of Global Affairs



This page: Aviva Rosenthal, Director of the Office of Global Affairs, meets Raluca Turcan, Minister of Culture of Romania, to discuss mutual priorities and opportunities for collaboration. *Photo:* OGA.

Cover image: View of the Smithsonian Castle through the window of the National Museum of African Art upon its opening in 1987. *Photo:* SI Archives.

OUR MISSION + VISION

Greater Reach. Greater Relevance. Profound Impact.

These ideas guide the Smithsonian in its ambitious mission to pursue “the increase and diffusion of knowledge” for all people. Working on all seven continents and in more than 100 countries, we are a truly global organization uniquely positioned to harness the collective power of the world’s knowledge, creativity, and innovation.

The **Office of Global Affairs (OGA)** works to support the Institution’s mandate by linking the deep expertise of the Smithsonian’s body of researchers, curators, educators, and professionals with partners and colleagues around the planet. It is through our collections, research, and strategic partnerships that the Smithsonian can most effectively address our world’s increasingly complex challenges—and also stimulate meaningful, lasting impact both at home and across the globe.

OGA works to fulfill its mission in four priority areas:

- ✿ Optimizing Smithsonian Global Engagement
- ✿ Promoting Smithsonian Global Thought Leadership
- ✿ Supporting Smithsonian Global Programs
- ✿ Coordinating Smithsonian Global Operations



Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III speaks at the signing ceremony of a new agreement between the Smithsonian and the Department of State; Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy Elizabeth Allen and Secretary of State Antony Blinken look on. *Photo: Chuck Kennedy/Department of State.*

OPTIMIZING SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

“As the world’s largest museum, research, and education complex, we have a responsibility to engage on the pressing global challenges of our time – from climate change and public health, to economic disparities and issues of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion – the solutions to which require an international vision and perspective.”

- *Lonnie G. Bunch III, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution*

When we at the Smithsonian Institution (SI) join together with our colleagues at home and abroad, we collectively transform big ideas into bold action and deeper impact. To advance our mission of forging and strengthening international partnerships, OGA serves as the central convener and coordinator of global activity at the Smithsonian, helping our global partners navigate the Institution and helping our own colleagues maximize their international networks and impact.

Building a Diverse and Inclusive Culture of Remembrance (DAICOR)

In July, OGA convened a discussion with the **National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC)** for participants of the DAICOR program, a transatlantic exchange program bringing together professionals from Germany and the US to explore how diversity, equity, and inclusion are being implemented in cultural spaces in both countries, jointly funded by the **Transatlantic Program of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action**, the **Heirch Boell Foundation**, and the **US Embassy in Berlin**. The discussion, lead by NMAAHC Curator Mary Elliott, covered the museum’s place in American remembrance culture, why the museum is vital to the US historical narrative, and the societal challenges the museum faced in throughout its development.

Where Culture Breathes: Smithsonian and the Republic of Korea

In April, the Smithsonian signed a new pan-Institutional memorandum of understanding with the **Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of the Republic of Korea**. First Lady of Korea Kim Keon-hee attended the celebratory signing ceremony, held at the **National Museum of Asian Art**, where she spoke to the immense value of museums as spaces for culture to live, breathe, and speak. The new agreement, signed by Smithsonian Deputy Secretary Meroë Park and Korean Minister Park Bo-gyoon, establishes a framework for cooperation for the Smithsonian and the national museums of Korea to explore collaborative research, exhibitions, events, and professional and academic exchanges.

The agreement has already launched multiple new engagements between Smithsonian units and museums and cultural institutions in Korea. In April 2024, the National Museum of Asian Art will unveil a special edition sculpture by contemporary Korean artist Do Ho Suh. The museum is also currently collaborating with the **National Museum of Korea** to become the first venue in the US to host a major exhibition of works from the acclaimed collection of Lee Kun-hee.

Kim Kon-hee, First Lady of the Republic of Korea, tours the Korean art collection of the National Museum of Asian Art before delivering remarks at a signing ceremony between SI and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism.
Photo: Embassy of the Republic of Korea.



Smithsonian and the State Department Team Up for Global Impact

The Smithsonian has long worked in tandem with the **US Department of State** on programs and projects of critical importance to our mutual priorities, include climate resilience and biodiversity conservation, the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, and the reciprocal exchange of knowledge and expertise with our peers and allies around the world. Working closely with State allows the Smithsonian to connect its research and knowledge to policymakers and communities around the world, and working with the Smithsonian ensures that State's outreach and engagement efforts are underpinned by meaningful expertise and understanding across the sciences, arts, and education.

To strengthen that ongoing partnership, the Smithsonian and State signed a new memorandum of understanding in December of 2023, establishing a clear framework for collaboration and outlining actionable goals for impact. At the signing ceremony, held in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room at the Department of State, Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch spoke to the critical importance of working with and through partners to deliver impact globally: "Ultimately, the Smithsonian can better serve the public—in DC, across the United States, and around the world—when we don't go it alone. Unleashing our full potential to do good in the world requires that we work with other non-profits, communities, and governments. The State Department makes that possible."

The new agreement has already laid the foundations for novel forms of collaboration: Smithsonian experts can now participate in State's Embassy Science Fellows Program which places scientists in short-term fellowships at US embassies around the world to tackle local challenges with global importance. State's Cultural Heritage Center is working with OGA to develop and implement new cohort-based capacity-exchange programs that bring cultural heritage and museum professionals around the world to the Smithsonian to share and exchange perspectives and insights on topics of critical importance to the global museum field, such as the engagement of communities in discussions of ethical stewardship of collections.



Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III and Secretary of State Antony Blinken celebrate the signing of a new agreement between the two organizations. *Photo: Chuck Kennedy/Department of State.*

Secretary of State Antony Blinken made clear that the scope of the Smithsonian's work is inherently global: "The biggest challenges of our era – from the warming climate and rising inequality to food insecurity and democratic backsliding – are fundamentally global in nature; unconstrained by national borders or geographic boundaries." He agreed with Secretary Bunch on the value of scientific and cultural exchange: "By bringing together experts – scientists, historians, artists, and researchers – from across the globe, we can swap solutions, team up to develop new ones, and share the benefits of what we learn with people worldwide."



Ambassador of Ukraine Oksana Markarova (fourth from left) celebrates the signing of a new agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Smithsonian Science Education Center. *Photo: OGA.*

A Commitment to Educating Youth in Ukraine

On June 15, OGA was pleased to support the **Smithsonian Science Education Center (SSEC)** for the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Smithsonian and the **Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine** at the **Embassy of Ukraine**. The MOU is the result of several discussions following a 2021 visit to the Smithsonian from then-Deputy Director of the **Junior Academy of Sciences Ukraine (JASU)**, Yevhen Kudriavets, and JASU Director, Oksen Lisovyi. OGA introduced the pair to the Smithsonian's premiere education initiatives (including SSEC, **Spark!Lab**, and **Q?rius**) to explore ways to engage visitors and students in scientific learning. JASU's former Director and Deputy Director, now the Minister and First Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, respectively, were especially excited to initiate a partnership with SSEC. **Under Secretary for Education Monique Chism** and Deputy Minister Yevhen Kudriavets signed the MOU with **Ukrainian Ambassador Oksana Markarova** as host, affirming our shared commitment to educate youth in Ukraine using content developed by SSEC.

Ukraine in Focus: Convening Support Across Sectors

The Smithsonian remains committed to supporting the people of Ukraine in their efforts to preserve, protect, and celebrate their national identity and cultural heritage in a time of crisis. In the second year of the Russia-Ukraine war, OGA continued its collaborative discussions with the **US Department of State** to strategize new modes of support for the arts and culture in Ukraine. This collaboration included OGA's coordination of outreach to the **US Embassy in Kyiv** to learn about on-the-ground cultural preservation efforts and how the Smithsonian could best integrate support and expertise; OGA also represented the Smithsonian at a convening of arts and culture leaders spearheaded by **Lee Satterfield, Assistant Secretary of Educational and Cultural Affairs**, to brainstorm collaborative approaches to bolster Ukraine's own cultural resilience. And in May, OGA Director Aviva Rosenthal participated in a workshop hosted by the **National Academies of Science** to, alongside leaders from across the US government and nonprofits, discuss the current state and future challenges to science, research, education, and museum collections care in Ukraine.

Science Diplomacy in Action: Meeting Science Officers Where They Are

In June and September, OGA coordinated briefings for a new class of **Environment, Science, Technology, and Health (ESTH) Officers** with the Department of State's **Foreign Service Institute** on SI's global science work. Experts from the Smithsonian's **National Museum of Natural History (NMNH)** and the **Smithsonian Science Education Center** presented on both unit-led and pan-Institutional science initiatives of interest to the group, which represented staff from over 20 posts around the world.

James Whatton of the National Museum of Natural History introduces the latest cohort of ESTH officers to the work of NMNH's birdstrike and feather identification lab. *Photo: OGA.*



PROMOTING SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

With thousands of scientists, curators, researchers, historians, and scholars, the Smithsonian is a deep repository and generator of knowledge. Our world-class professionals are a trusted source of expertise, inspiration, and innovation.

That reputation enables us, as an institution, to stimulate discussions around the big questions that affect us all. Working closely with Smithsonian leadership, OGA facilitates conversations on these critical issues between our experts and partners around the globe, with the aim of multiplying success, enacting sustainable change, and turning ideas into reality.

OGA brings Smithsonian expertise to critical platforms and global stages where we can move the needle on issues as diverse as climate change, accessibility, biodiversity conservation, and cultural heritage protection.

Sara Snyder (left) of the Office of Digital Transformation speaks on a panel at an international workshop in London on the applications of AI and machine learning in museums. *Photo: OGA.*



Leveraging Innovation in the Protection of Cultural Heritage

The Smithsonian, represented by OGA Director Aviva Rosenthal, Ambassador-at-Large Richard Kurin, and Director of Digital Programs Sara Snyder of the **Office of Digital Transformation**, attended the first-ever *International Workshop on Technology Solutions to Disrupt Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property* in London. Global leaders from technology, law enforcement, and cultural heritage sectors convened to explore key strategies and tactics on using emerging technologies to combat trafficking in art, antiquities, and other cultural property. In particular, the international cohort of experts explored the potential for artificial intelligence to aid law enforcement, inform museum acquisition policies, and support academic research.

US-Brazil Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality (JAPER)

Ahead of the bicentennial of US-Brazil relations in 2024, the Smithsonian joined two JAPER convenings which brought together government and civil society leaders from both nations to inform actionable plans to fight racism and its global effects. The Smithsonian's **National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC)** has a rich history of collaboration in and with Brazil, most notably in untangling and amplifying the histories and legacies of enslaved African people who arrived in the new world via the Brazilian coast. OGA joined NMAAHC's Paul Gardullo, curator of the forthcoming exhibition *In Slavery's Wake*, in representing the Smithsonian's work in and with Brazil to the JAPER dialogue as one model of integrating community engagement into historical interpretation.

International Protocol in the Spotlight

Beyond its technical and subject matter expertise, the Smithsonian aims to deliver meaningful global impact by integrating into professional communities to advance best practice in the fields of international relations and cultural diplomacy administration. In 2023, OGA participated in two conference panels on the administrative, legal, and operational infrastructure that underpins our global work: in February, Director Aviva Rosenthal represented SI on the *Law and Governance of Cultural Heritage* panel at the **Fletcher Initiative on Religion, Law, and Diplomacy Conference** at **Tufts University**, speaking to the legal frameworks that inform the Smithsonian's cultural diplomacy efforts. And in September, OGA Manager of Special Projects Samantha Peterson joined a panel hosted by the Atlantic Council on the value of international protocol expertise for cultural institutions.

Elevating and Activating Smithsonian Science: Thought Leadership on the Global Stage

This past year, OGA continued to support pan-Institutional efforts to share global thought leadership and promote science-based solutions at major global convenings including the **Our Ocean Conference** in Panama. OGA also continued to represent the Smithsonian as the Co-Chair of the **Consortium of Scientific Partners for Biodiversity**, a network of mostly national-level scientific and technical agencies with globally relevant contributions to the **UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**. In this capacity, OGA has been appointed as a member of the CBD Informal Advisory Group for Scientific and Technical Cooperation tasked with offering strategic advice on practical measures, tools, and opportunities to promote and facilitate the evidence-based implementation of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**. This appointment underscores the Smithsonian’s commitment to the diffusion of knowledge and its pivotal role in driving positive change in environmental conservation.

In late 2023, OGA worked with the Smithsonian’s **Under Secretary for Science and Research** and relevant science units to develop and execute the Institution’s strategy for the

UN’s climate change conference **COP28** in Dubai. As members of the US and Panama country delegations, Smithsonian principals hosted four side events and presented ***Life on a Sustainable Planet***, the Institution’s global science strategy, as well as current and emerging unit-led initiatives in more than six panels and roundtables to advance SI priorities including: (a) Highlighting the pivotal role that science plays in shaping our understanding and application of nature-based solutions to climate and biodiversity; (b) Empowering diverse voices, amplifying community-led success stories for adaptation and resilience, and emphasizing the importance of a just, inclusive, and equitable transition; and (c) Elevating science education as a key strategy for inspiring climate action and empowering the next generation.

The Smithsonian delegation leveraged the momentum of this global convening to jointly develop cross-institutional strategies and continued to build inclusive, trans-disciplinary alliances for science-based climate and biodiversity action. The following Smithsonian initiatives were announced at COP28:

- **GEO-TREES**: the world’s first ground-based, equitably developed forest biomass reference system. This effort will help inform and de-risk forest carbon markets, leading to increases in investment in nature-based solutions.
- ***Life on a Sustainable Planet - Resilient Ocean***: a new Institutional strategy which will expand our ocean research and marine collections, increase education and outreach via our museums and public programs, and foster inclusive, interdisciplinary, and use-inspired science through the **Adrienne Arsht Resilience-Based Solutions Initiative**.
- **Energy!**, a new community research guide from the Smithsonian Science for Global Goals project for students aged 11 to 18, and a new Youth Ambassadors Program, showcasing youth-driven climate actions as part of its “Life on a Sustainable Planet” initiative.

Watch Smithsonian experts speak on the COP28 stage:

- » [From Ground to Space: The Future of Forest Carbon](#)
- » [Empowering People and Nature: Supporting Resilient Solutions for Our Ocean](#)

Left: Representatives from across the Smithsonian participate in UNFCCC COP28. Photo: OGA.
Right: Under Secretary for Science and Research Ellen Stofan and Director of the Smithsonian Science Education Center Carol O’Donnell celebrate the launch of the **Energy!** community guide. Photo: Holly Glover/SSEC.



SUPPORTING SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL PROGRAMS

Through understanding the priorities of our museums and research centers, OGA aims to expand institutional opportunities and engagement in relevant regions and countries.

OGA partners with units across the Institution to craft successful strategies and proposals for new initiatives and programs, and to secure new opportunities to amplify our impact in the world. We cultivate new ideas and ways of working and engage across the SI community to address the most pressing challenges of our time.

Global Museum Capacity Building and Exchange

Leveraging the strengths of the entire Institution to build the capacity of global museum colleagues and support global museum exchange is a critical effort OGA leads. This work begins by sharing and examining Smithsonian practices, which leads to dialogue and exchanging ideas, and ultimately leads to practical applications in locally appropriate ways. This year, OGA led three programs that supported capacity building and exchange related to all aspects of museum operations and cultural heritage programming.

As part of a multi-year exchange program with museums and sites within the portfolio of the **Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi**, Smithsonian colleagues across the Institution have engaged in mentorships, meetings, and more sustained dialogues on topics ranging from visitor services to public programming, and from strategic planning to festival management.



Members of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi visit Washington, DC in September for a knowledge tour focused on best practices in visitor services. *Photo: OGA.*

Another example was the virtual exchange series “*Museums in the Forever Business: Collections Management and Preventive Conservation Exchange*” with several colleagues from the **Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities**. This program, supported by twelve Smithsonian colleagues, used a series of topic-focused sessions, office-hour style meetings, and targeted check-in sessions to help the cohort dive into topics related to preventive conservation and collections management. And in Morocco, OGA continued to work with the staff at the **Tangier American Legation**, housed in the only US historic site outside the country, to implement new interpretive and exhibition strategies aimed at better reaching audiences to share the dynamic story of the historic US-Morocco relationship.

Each of these programs supports participants as they create initiatives or projects based on the learning exchange to improve their own activities and have a stronger impact in their local communities.

Fostering New Perspectives on Museology

As communities and museums around the world engage in the growing conversations of ethical stewardship, OGA launched two new programs in 2023 that explore evolving museum practice through culturally-informed dialogue and exchange. The *African Museology International Exchange* is a collaborative program between the **National Museum of African Art (NMAfA)**, the Office of Global Affairs, and the **Cultural Heritage Center at the US Department of State** alongside cultural heritage practitioners from eight African Nations. Through virtual dialogues, pilot projects, and a two-week visit to Washington, where the cohort met with eleven units across SI, the exchange aims to re-center African knowledge in museum practice to inform documentation, interpretation, collections care, and more. Building on the success of the African Museology Exchange Program, OGA was proud to launch *Cultural Heritage Forward* – a program aimed at promoting collaboration among US museums and their counterpart institutions and communities around the world. For this pan-institutional program, the Office of Global Affairs will be working closely with NMAfA, the **National Museum of the American Indian** and the **Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage** to engage more than 20 colleagues from Peru, Chile, Nigeria, Cameroon, New Zealand, and Vietnam as we work together to discuss, develop, and begin to implement more inclusive museum practices, such as ethical returns and new modes of stewardship.

Participants in the African Museology Exchange speak with Joanne Hyppolite, Curator of the African Diaspora at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, about building trust with communities when building collections. Photo: OGA.



Connecting Classrooms for Sustainable Communities

OGA has been pleased to work alongside the **Smithsonian Science Education Center** to foster cross-cultural connections and increase scientific knowledge among youth. **Smithsonian in France** entered its third iteration thanks to support from US Embassy Paris. To date, the exchange has connected educators and nearly 2,000 students in France, the US, and French Overseas Territories on topics related to sustainable communities and biodiversity. Each round of the program invites students to design projects in their own communities; in March 2023 ten student groups, made up of 66 total students, presented final projects on topics ranging from waste management to the impact of urbanization on the Everglades to introducing biodiversity to elementary school students. The **Smithsonian Youth STEM Exchange**, a two-year program supported by the **Stevens Initiative**, launched in the fall and invites high school students and their educators from Iraq and the United States to investigate issues of sustainability in their own communities and at a global level.

Smithsonian and Iraq

OGA continues to work with several Smithsonian units to build the capacity of colleagues in Iraq as they work to preserve, protect, and promote cultural heritage. Early in the year, with support from the **Getty Foundation**, OGA worked with the Smithsonian's **Museum Conservation Institute (MCI)** to finalize and deliver a suite of videos in English, Kurdish, and Arabic that provide fundamental knowledge and skills in global heritage conservation to prepare students to protect and promote Iraqi museum collections, heritage buildings, and archaeological sites. Smithsonian, Iraqi, and Kurdish colleagues developed content, using prior in-person classroom material as a starting point.

Elsewhere in Iraq, OGA supported the Smithsonian's **Museum Conservation Institute** work advising Iraqi colleagues on the recovery and stabilization of the archaeological site of **Nimrud**. And the Smithsonian's first exhibition partnership with the **Iraq Museum in Baghdad** continued to develop as OGA, MCI, and the **National Museum of Asian Art** held nineteen virtual convenings to advance content development around writing, religion, sculpture, and music. This content development has been a collaborative process with the Iraq Museum team to engage audiences across Iraq, the US, and the world about the museum's unparalleled collection of Iraqi cultural heritage, including objects that have never before been available to view online.

COORDINATING SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL OPERATIONS

The Office of Global Affairs plays a critical role in safely sending our scholars and experts abroad while welcoming international colleagues and visitors to our Institution in order to foster the exchange of ideas, practice, and perspectives across disciplines.

In collaboration with operations teams all over the Smithsonian, we work to ensure a nimble and responsive infrastructure that allows our colleagues and partners to deliver impactful programming all over the world.

Official and Diplomatic International Visits

The Smithsonian was once again pleased to welcome foreign dignitaries and delegations to exchange perspectives and lay the groundwork for scientific, cultural, and educational collaboration. 2023 saw a substantial number of VIP delegations and diplomatic visits to SI facilitated by OGA, including the **Ministers of Culture of Spain, Ecuador, and Romania**; the **Prime Minister of Ethiopia**; the **Minister of Science of Portugal**; and the **Ambassadors of Yemen, Mali, and Thailand**, among many more. In addition, OGA helped the Smithsonian welcome specialized international delegations visiting the US to meet and learn from museums on a wide variety of topics: leadership from **Parks Canada**, the equivalent of our National Parks Service, spoke with Smithsonian experts on public programming, retail revenue, visitor services, and accessibility. And in May, a group representing the **Jakarta Regional People's Representative Council of Indonesia** met with OGA and **National Museum of Asian Art** colleagues to discuss best practices around fundraising in the museum and library sectors.

Welcoming the Next Generation of Global Leaders

OGA continued its collaboration with the Department of State's **International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)** by welcoming delegations of current and future global leaders to engage with Smithsonian colleagues. In 2023, OGA facilitated visits for more than **42** in-person international delegations. Over **548** visitors from **140** countries participated in meetings and tours with **26** Smithsonian units. Topics ranged from using the arts for social change to empowering women leaders in STEM. Highlights included:

- A delegation of cultural heritage professionals from **Iraq** who met with the **Museum Conservation Institute**, the **Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative**, and the **National Museum of Asian Art** for a series of conversations, behind the scenes tours, and demonstrations. Several of the participants had collaborated previously with SI on cultural heritage protection and preservation efforts in Iraq and so were able to build upon existing trusted relationships to make the most of their visit to Washington.
- A July delegation comprised of participants from **Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Tunisia** who met with colleagues from the **Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute** in Front Royal, Virginia for a program focused on environmental protection and wildlife conservation. The group also visited the **Anacostia Community Museum** to learn more about the newly-launched **Center for Environmental Justice** and tour the exhibit *To Live and Breathe: Women and Environmental Justice in Washington, DC*.

An IVLP delegation visits the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, Virginia.
Photo: OGA.



J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

OGA manages the Smithsonian's **J-1 Exchange Visitor Program**, a visa program that enables foreign researchers to travel to the Smithsonian to collaborate with our curators, scholars, scientists, and practitioners. In Fiscal Year 2023, **187 J-1 Scholars** representing **over 50 countries** participated in programs sponsored by the Smithsonian. The variety and breadth of Exchange Visitor Programs includes post-doctoral fellowships, artist residencies, internships, participants in symposia, and many more.

The accomplishments of J-1 scholars at the Smithsonian are as impressive as they are diverse. Two 2023 J-1 scholar co-presented papers at the 71st ASMS Conference on Mass Spectrometry and Allied Topics held in Houston, Texas. Two others saw their paper, *Comprehensive phenotypic phylogenetic analysis supports the monophyly of stromateiform fishes*, honored with an award from the **Brazilian Society of Zoology** as the best taxonomic study published in the 2019-2021 timeframe. Finally, [Newsweek](#) covered the work of a Smithsonian J-1 scholar who collaborated with a curator at the **National Museum of Natural History** on the discovery and description of a new species based on an uncatalogued fossilized tooth in the museum's paleobiology collection. The enigmatic tooth belonged to a *Desmostylus*, a bizarre group of hippo-like marine mammals that lived more than 20 million years ago.



Heatmap of the Smithsonian's 2023 Global Activity Profile submissions. *Image: OGA.*

Analyzing Smithsonian Global Activity Data

In 2021, Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch launched the Institution's first ever **International Strategic Framework**, offering guidance for the Smithsonian's global endeavors to align with a set of clear values, goals, objectives, and strategic areas of work. The launch of the Framework accompanied an operational culture shift within the Institution that embraced acting nimbly as **One Smithsonian** and pan-Institutional information-sharing for a more collaborative and streamlined approach.

One outcome of that shift was the launch of the **Global Activities Committee (GAC)**, an internal brain trust chaired by OGA that reviews, coordinates insight on, and catalogues proposed collaborations with international partners and sponsors. The goal of the GAC's reporting policy is to centralize knowledge, streamline implementation, and avoid the reduplication of effort as SI's international activities are conceived, proposed, and activated. The data received through the Global Activities Tracking Process offers invaluable insight to the Smithsonian community on its international ambitions, helping to shape priorities and policies accordingly.

In 2023, the GAC received **115 Global Activity Profiles (GAPs)**, representing activities in **67 countries** and on **all seven continents**. This data reflects an interesting subset of SI's global engagement: not necessarily where SI experts are currently working, but where they anticipate building or strengthening relationships in the future. Taking a centralized, data-driven approach to the Smithsonian's international objectives allows the Institution to craft policies and priorities that better reflect the global focus of its curators, educators, scientists, and museum experts, and ultimately deliver the most meaningful global impact.

International exchange: by the numbers

187 International J-1 Scholars from over **50** countries

42 in-person International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) delegations

548 IVLP visitors from over **140** countries

26 Smithsonian units engaged



7 continents

100+ countries

Programs as diverse as our planet

Learn more at:
global.si.edu

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