

The background is a mosaic of light-colored tiles. In the center is a circular mosaic of a globe. Surrounding the globe are concentric circles of Latin text. The text includes phrases like 'THE INCREASING DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE AMONG MANKIND', 'SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION', and '1846'.

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2018|2019**

**Smithsonian Office of  
International Relations**



# DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Six years ago, when I first came to the Office of International Relations (OIR), the Smithsonian was already a strong global organization, with our people and a presence in more than 140 countries.

Today, as I prepare to depart the Smithsonian and the Office of International Relations, I am thrilled to be writing my last letter introducing our Annual Report, which demonstrates the many ways the entire Smithsonian has shifted in its global mindset over the past few years—with increasingly strategic, unified goals.

We've banded together, and formed strong ties with partners that will push us all to greater heights. We've learned to be unafraid of being unapologetically ambitious, to collectively ask big questions about complex problems and collaborate to chip away at solving them. We've pushed ourselves out of our comfort zone, and in doing so, we've begun to recognize our collective responsibility to the world to take big, bold ideas and shape them into meaningful and effective change.

Our role in OIR has been to build bridges to enable those shifts to happen. And it's been brilliant to see the partnerships that have emerged as a result.

We're proud to have listened as Smithsonian leaders like Caroline Baumann and Jeff Hall shared their work with the World Economic Forum, highlighting how design thinking is driving solutions to some of the world's thorniest issues, and how smart reforestation may unlock answers to the impacts of climate change.

We're excited that the Smithsonian Year of Music has some new and unexpected voices joining in the chorus, thanks to the foreign embassies who will be sharing performers and musicians with us from all over the world.

We're inspired by the new conservation and cultural heritage professionals emerging in Iraq, who have worked shoulder-to-shoulder with Smithsonian archaeologists, museum experts, and conservators to rescue and restore a rich legacy of history that has been deeply wounded by senseless conflict.

This doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of what the people of this Institution are capable of. The Smithsonian is the largest cultural, research, and education complex in the world—and we can and must be global, as One Smithsonian, grappling with huge issues with broad relevance to people worldwide.

Now that we—all of us, across the Smithsonian—know what we can do when we work together, we're eager to shoulder this amazing responsibility. I'm so proud that we now recognize the incredible, humbling power we hold to address the world's most pressing challenges.

And we're just getting started.

Warmly,



Molly Fannon  
Outgoing Director, OIR



Office of International Relations staff.  
Photo: Grace Goulding



# 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 140 countries, we are a truly global organization, uniquely positioned to collectively harness our worldwide networks, partnerships, and influence.

The Office of International Relations works to support the Institution’s mandate by linking the deep expertise of the Smithsonian’s body of researchers and professionals with partners around the planet. It is through these relationships that the Smithsonian can most effectively address Earth’s most complex challenges—and also stimulate truly meaningful, lasting impact across the globe.

- **Coordinating Smithsonian Global Engagement**
- **Promoting Smithsonian Global Thought Leadership**
- **Supporting Smithsonian Global Programs**
- **Coordinating Smithsonian Global Operations**



Some of the highlighted international projects on OIR’s Smithsonian Global website’s interactive map.  
Photo: Smithsonian Global



# HOW IS THE SMITHSONIAN RELEVANT TO TODAY'S MOST PRESSING GLOBAL ISSUES?

In amazing ways.



**Katharyn Hanson**

Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute

**Heritage at Risk**

When ISIS razed ancient monuments in Iraq, the deep cultural loss was compounded by the illegal sale of relics looted from the sites. Archaeologist Katharyn Hanson and her colleagues have been training over 500 Iraqi heritage professionals at the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage to document and protect these sites.

**Scott Wing**

Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History

**Climate Change**

At the World Economic Forum meeting in Tianjin, China, paleoecologist Scott Wing made the case that to predict the future of a changing climate we must look backwards—specifically 56 million years in the past, mining the global fossil record for clues about life on a warmer Earth.

**Suzan Murray**

Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute

**Global Health**

The health of our environment and that of all species—human and animal—are inextricably linked and depend on a holistic understanding. Suzan Murray and her Global Health team are training professionals—vets, park rangers, conservationists—across Africa and Asia to recognize and respond to the threats of emerging pandemics. Their work is informing and building one of the world's most powerful predictive models to help avert global pandemics—protecting humans and endangered species alike.

**Gregory Ruiz**

Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

**Extinctions & Invasive Species**

On seafaring vessels, from wooden ships to modern commercial fleets, marine invasive species hitchhike across the globe. In Asia, Europe, and the Americas, Gregory Ruiz evaluates marine invasions and tests methods to rid ships of stowaways that can have devastating economic and environmental impacts.

Our scientists work to preserve the planet's biodiversity and research climate change. Our archaeologists delve into preserving cultural patrimony, and our curators work to foster cultural understanding through art, history, and heritage. OIR acts as a bridge between our experts and our network of global partners, with the goal of strengthening the connections with new and established collaborators alike.

How is the Smithsonian relevant to some of the world's most pressing issues? Take a look—these examples are just the tip of the iceberg.



# COORDINATING GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

“The worth and importance of the Institution is not to be estimated by what it accumulates within the walls of its building, but by what it sends forth to the world.”

— *Joseph Henry, first Secretary of the Smithsonian (1850)*

When we at the Smithsonian 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, OIR manages many strategic relationships with key partners and shares information across the Smithsonian about major international programs and priorities. Our goal is to open doors to new organizations to better meet our global aspirations.

## New Partnerships

OIR has been thinking globally to bring new types of partners and funders to better understand our diverse institution. In May 2018, OIR Director Molly Fannon presented the Smithsonian’s cultural heritage preservation work to the World Bank, which is interested in developing its own heritage-related projects. We’re also continuing our conversations with the World Health Organization to expand how to jointly address global health challenges.

In July, **Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute** scientist Jeff Hall and OIR Senior Global Programs Manager Matt Lutkenhouse traveled to Norway, where Jeff presented the Agua Salud project at the Oslo Forest Forum. The key idea of the initiative: to protect and restore the integrity of key resources vital to human well-being (water, soil, etc.) through creative reforestation with native plant and tree species. Inspired by his work and its applications to environmental and energy



The Agua Salud project site in Panama. Photo: Jorge Aleman

security, Norwegian partners can potentially catalyze Jeff’s work beyond the Panama Canal watershed to other parts of the country and region.

## Reimagining Museums’ Role Abroad

Museums are often thought of as the repositories of objects, something of a final destination for artifacts. But what happens when museums trace those objects back to their places of origin? What happens when voices from abroad animate our own collections?

A new concept emerges: engaging with the people at the source creates dynamic opportunities for the future of museums in those places, and richer museum experiences here at home. Inspired by this idea, OIR is now supporting the **Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art (NMAfA)** in launching a series of collaborations with new museum partners and communities in **Nigeria, Benin, and Kenya.**



## Embassy Hubs for Coordinated Engagement

As the “front door” of the Smithsonian’s international efforts, OIR has been inviting new collaborations with diplomatic entities in Washington, D.C. These connections help translate interest from embassies into multi-unit engagement to achieve numerous goals, including event sponsorship, hosted receptions, speaking opportunities, and embassy support of Smithsonian-wide initiatives like the Year of Music.

In 2018 we strengthened ties with embassies and foreign ministries from countries such as the **United Arab Emirates, China, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Guyana, Kenya** and many others to support a wide variety of unit interests and to foster mutual dialogue and learning for people in the U.S. through exchanges, research, exhibitions, and new programs and projects.

## Smithsonian Year of Music

What do whale songs, aeronautical sheet music, and James Brown have in common? They’re all part of the 2019 Smithsonian Year of Music, a 365-day celebration of the sounds and rhythms that connect the world. Taken collectively, the Smithsonian’s holdings of thousands of musical objects, recordings, and documents represent the largest museum of music in the world.

OIR coordinated a learning session for over 25 foreign embassies in Washington, D.C. and the State Department’s American Music Abroad Program to infuse international participation into this year-long initiative, resulting in a dynamic harmony: international ensembles will perform at Smithsonian museums as part of the program, and State Department-sponsored U.S. groups will perform for Smithsonian audiences following their international travels.

Smithsonian leadership and Brazilian Fulbright Students meet with Brazilian Minister of Science and Technology Marcos Pontes.  
Photo: Isabella Roden



Executive Director of the US-UK Fulbright Commission, Penny Egan CBE, announces the Smithsonian-Fulbright UK award at the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the US-UK Fulbright Program.  
Photo: US-UK Fulbright Commission

## Fulbright Partnership

Every researcher knows that to get work done, access to funding is paramount. To support expanded research opportunities at the Smithsonian, OIR worked with the Office of Fellowships and Internships (OFI) and the US-UK Fulbright Commission to establish a **new Smithsonian-Fulbright UK award** for visiting scholars. This new award builds on our successful program with Fulbright Ireland, begun in 2017. Beginning in 2019, the award will bring a British scholar to the Smithsonian to conduct research, enhancing the Institution’s tradition of synergistic cross-institutional exchange. This foundational work carries on the goal of deepening the Smithsonian’s relationship with Fulbright through collaborations across the globe.

## After Tragedy, Reviving Lost Research

After the devastating fire at Brazil’s National Museum in Rio de Janeiro in September 2018, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), the Office of Fellowships and Internships, and OIR moved swiftly to assist our Brazilian colleagues who had lost not only their museum, but the basis of much of their research. With funding from the State Department, the Brazil-U.S. Fulbright Commission, and the U.S. Embassy in Brazil, NMNH will host 14 Brazilian graduate students throughout 2019 and beyond to utilize our collections and laboratories to continue their research for their degrees.



# PROMOTING SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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With thousands of scientists, curators, researchers, historians, and scholars, the Smithsonian is a deep repository 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, OIR 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.

When we harness our potential as a unified Smithsonian and intentionally shift the way we work in the world, we have the ability to scale the impact of our work like no other institution.



*This page:* From the Bird Friendly Coffee story on the Smithsonian Global website. Photo: Justine Bowe  
*Facing page:* From the Red Siskin Initiative story on the Smithsonian Global website. Photo: South Rupununi Conservation Society



The Smithsonian Global website shares stories from across the Institution with key international partners, and features **21** projects, **11** videos, and **73** staff from across the Smithsonian.

## Smithsonian Global Website

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth a million. With a generous grant from the Smithsonian Women's Committee, OIR expanded the content and reach of our **Smithsonian Global website** by producing six new mini-documentaries to showcase the impact and breadth of the Smithsonian's international work across our units. Shot on location in Colombia, Mongolia, Greenland, Iraq, and Nigeria, the videos feature ecologists, archaeologists, wildlife biologists, anthropologists, astronomers, conservationists, museum specialists, and local community members, highlighting their impact in the field.

Visit [global.si.edu](https://global.si.edu) to see the full Smithsonian Global Video Series.



## World Economic Forum Partnership

*“How can the Smithsonian leverage a presence at the World Economic Forum for greater opportunities for Smithsonian scholars to expand their global impact?”*

That’s exactly the question we hoped to spark at the January **2019 World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland**. The meeting brought together 3,000 government leaders, heads of state, CEOs of corporations and foundations, and influential thinkers to shape agendas for the future of our planet.

In 2018, Steve Monfort, Director of the **Smithsonian’s National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute**, drew a direct line between the World Economic Forum’s goals for climate and biodiversity and the role of the Smithsonian as a collections-based research organization in addressing these challenges at

## the World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting of the New Champions in Tianjin, China.

And in Davos, Switzerland, in 2019, Director of the **Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (CHSDM)** Caroline Baumann highlighted the value of inclusive design, pointing to specific examples in a special Forum-hosted installation of *ACCESS+ABILITY*, the museum’s blockbuster exhibition with beautiful, functional, fashion-forward objects designed by and with the disabled community, curated by CHSDM Curatorial Director Cara McCarty.

Our ongoing partnership with the World Economic Forum enables the Smithsonian to showcase our thinking, writing, and research to a diverse audience of more than 100 million people engaged in-person and online.

OIR’s Liz Tunick and Aviva Rosenthal with Smithsonian Board of Regents Chair David Rubenstein at the *ACCESS+ABILITY* exhibition at Davos.  
Photo: Aviva Rosenthal



Prosthetic legs featured in the *ACCESS+ABILITY* exhibition at Davos.  
Photo: World Economic Forum / Sikarin Fon Thanachaiary



Building Bridges Symposium attendees during a brainstorming session.  
Photo: Lauren Appelbaum

## Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee

Preserving and protecting our cultural heritage is critical: it helps us remember who we are and where we came from, and ties together the legacy of all humankind. But that protection must span beyond historic and archaeological sites; it must also work to prevent the illicit trafficking and trade of antiquities around the world. This is the overarching goal of the **Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee (CHCC)**, a collective of 12 U.S. government and interagency partners coordinated by the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, including the Smithsonian.

In October 2018, OIR organized a two-day event, “Building Bridges: A Symposium

on Global Cultural Heritage Preservation,” hosted by the CHCC, to foster dialogue between CHCC member agencies and the public and private sectors. Throughout the symposium, participants shared examples of their partnerships and projects, and explored how these initiatives dovetail to support U.S. foreign policy goals.

The Smithsonian also partnered with the CHCC’s **Cultural Antiquities Task Force** to produce an online learning course, “Introduction to Preventing Trafficking of Cultural Property,” to train law enforcement officials around the world in the proper recognition, handling, and documentation of suspected stolen objects from antiquity.

### At A Glance: Building Bridges Symposium, October 23-24, 2018

- Symposium Attendees: **100+** individuals, representing **60+** organizations
- Public Panel Attendees: **300+** individuals, in-person and virtually
- Media: #CHCCBuildingBridges reached **817,000+** people



# SUPPORTING SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL PROGRAMS

Smithsonian programs literally span the globe. Through understanding unit-level priorities, OIR seeks to expand units' aspirations and opportunities in regions and countries of high importance to the Institution.

## Priority Country Strategies

The Smithsonian's scientists and scholars operate in over 140 countries. But several regions stand out as important hotspots for cultural and scientific research—areas where the Smithsonian has deep roots and a strategic, integrated approach which hold promise for greatly amplifying the impact of our work.

In 2018, OIR began working with units across the Institution to identify these priority countries. Over the last two years, **Kenya, Colombia, Brazil, Myanmar, and Gabon** emerged as key areas; for 2019, the focus will expand to **Peru, China, and Indonesia**. By matching host country interests with potential supporting funds from partners and donors, enacting these priority country and regional strategies are the first step in dramatically scaling Smithsonian research and potentially bringing multimillion-dollar proposals to new funding partners.

## Conservation Commons

The Smithsonian Conservation Commons was founded with a bold idea at its core: to link science from across the Institution to build innovative, science-based solutions to broad problems such as food production, species conservation, and sustainable uses of land and seascapes.

As a co-founder of the Commons and with four staff members on the core team, OIR plays a key role in convening experts across the Smithsonian, identifying opportunities that align with unit priorities, and recruiting international partners to support our efforts. In 2018, OIR supported the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and others in securing a \$5 million grant to support pioneering projects related to Working Land and Seascapes, a Commons initiative to understand and strengthen resilient, productive, and healthy terrestrial and marine



Above: A moment from the 2018 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Below: My Virtual Armenia app in use. Photo: My Armenia Program

ecosystems. These funds will support an Amplification and Innovation Fund designed to support Smithsonian scientists with innovative research and ideas within this thematic area.

## My Armenia Program

Since 2015, the Smithsonian has worked in Armenia through an interagency agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to strengthen its cultural sustainability through community-based tourism development, all rooted in deep research, documentation, and storytelling.

Deliberately experimental, the My Armenia program celebrated its third year by serving as an anchor of the 2018 Folklife Festival. The project also debuted the Festival's first-ever virtual reality experience, enabling attendees to explore two iconic Armenian cultural sites right from the National Mall, and allowing us to test

technology that can enrich our own exhibitions. OIR also continued providing support to the local museum sector as stewards of Armenia's rich heritage as well as supporting the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in leading an innovative applied research and artisan program in the country to strengthen the nation's cultural sector through more diverse content and sustainable tourism offerings.





## Iraq Cultural Heritage Project

OIR and the **Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute** (MCI) continue to support ongoing recovery at significant heritage sites in Iraq that were almost completely obliterated by ISIS. In 2018, our work centered on the stabilization, preservation, and recovery at the ancient city of **Nimrud**.

There, as well as in Erbil and Mosul, the Smithsonian and the **Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage** have been building training programs for and with local archaeologists and other heritage professionals. This partnership paves the way for many future programs, including working with the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative on the potential rebuilding of the Mosul Museum.

Members of the Nimrud Rescue Team, accompanied by site guards, discuss the damage to one of the Queens' Tombs at the ancient site with MCI's Brian Michael Leone (center) during a field visit in September 2018.  
Photo: Sebastian Meyer for Smithsonian



## Smithsonian Provenance Research Exchange Program

Newly located within OIR as of June 2018 is the **Smithsonian Provenance Research Exchange Program (PREP)**, a series of groundbreaking, international museum professional exchanges on Nazi-era art provenance research in Germany and the United States, and in partnership with seven major art institutions, including the Berlin State Museums (SPK). The final PREP Exchange will be hosted by the Smithsonian, October 20-26, 2019, in Washington, D.C.



24 participants hailing from 23 different countries applied their skills in a large-scale disaster simulation exercise held at the Royal Netherlands Air Force Fire Brigade Training Center.  
Photo: Maarten Van Haaf

## Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative

*After trying to save people's lives, the next thing to save is people's reason for living.*  
—Olsen Jean Julien, former Minister of Culture and Communications for Haiti

After a catastrophic event, humanitarian organizations quickly mobilize to rescue and protect people. Cultural heritage, vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters and conflict, also faces steep costs during these times.

The **Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI)**, newly housed within OIR, is leading programs to protect cultural heritage threatened or impacted by disasters and helping communities in the U.S. and internationally preserve their identities and histories.

In August 2018, SCRI, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, and the Prince Claus Fund offered a three-week First Aid for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis emergency response preparedness course in the Netherlands for 24 cultural sector professionals from 23 countries. This is the sixth year SCRI has helped build the global network of cultural first aiders, now totaling 100 individuals from more than 70 countries.



# Diplomacy Through Collections

Objects held in Smithsonian collections serve as powerful symbols of America's historically strong international bonds of friendship.



*Great and Good Friends* exhibition opening ceremony in Bangkok.  
Photo: U.S. Embassy Bangkok, Thailand



Islanders from Scotland's Isle of Islay held a memorial service on the anniversary of the sinking of the SS Tuscania.  
Photo: Island Light Photography

## Thailand Exhibition

When the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand sought out our objects for a major exhibition to commemorate 200 years of U.S.-Thai friendship, the Smithsonian dug deep into its anthropology collections for just the right envoys.

For the *Great and Good Friends* exhibition, held at the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles in Bangkok, the Smithsonian, as well as the National Archives and the Library of Congress, loaned objects and documents from official gift exchanges and correspondence between the two nations from 1818 to 2018. These artifacts offer a tangible reminder of the longstanding and deep

bonds of friendship that continue to connect Americans with Thais, and offered the U.S. Embassy a creative and engaging way to frame current bilateral relations against a backdrop of two centuries of friendship.

## Scotland Museum Loan

The sorrows of the First World War fill thick volumes on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet for the people of Scotland's Isle of Islay, the war forged a solemn bond with the United States that still endures.

After a German U-boat torpedo ripped a hole in the flank of the SS Tuscania on the evening of

February 5, 1918, more than 2,100 American soldiers and crew abandoned ship. But the attack had damaged many of the transport's lifeboats, and men were thrown into the wintry waves as they capsized.

Though many were saved by nearby British destroyers, 200 soldiers perished. Residents of nearby Islay waded into icy breakers to rescue 132 men who survived—but also to retrieve the bodies of the 183 who did not.

Still wounded by the losses of their own to the Great War, Islay resolved to bury these American soldiers with full honors—which meant

interring them under a U.S. flag they did not possess. So they made one, laboring through the night to stitch together the Stars and Stripes for the burials to come.

The flag made its way to President Woodrow Wilson, who in turn sent it to the Smithsonian, where it was displayed and then stored for the better part of the 20th century. As the 100th anniversary of the tragedy approached, OIR helped facilitate the return of the flag to Islay, where it has proved so popular and poignant a centerpiece of the island's World War I centennial commemorations that the Smithsonian has extended its loan until 2020.



# COORDINATING SMITHSONIAN GLOBAL OPERATIONS

The Smithsonian has a critical role to play in bringing our scholars and experts abroad safely while welcoming colleagues and important visitors to our Institution.

## Official and Diplomatic International Visits

The King of Nigeria, the King of Lesotho, and the First Lady of Uzbekistan were just three of the 28 high-level dignitaries who visited the Smithsonian in 2018. Last year, OIR coordinated 210 international delegation requests, representing more than 2,500 visitors from 170 countries, to 25 Smithsonian museums and units.



Thai delegation reviews Smithsonian objects loaned for *Great and Good Friends* exhibition at the Smithsonian Museum Support Center.  
Photo: Lisa Helling



*Left:* A group of U.S. State Department visitors from Kyrgyzstan hosted by the Smithsonian Science Education Center.  
*Right:* U.S. State Department Western Hemisphere Public Affairs Officers view a 3D fossil print at a Smithsonian briefing.  
Photos: Meri Price

## J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

As it has from its inception, OIR manages the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program at the Smithsonian. This visa program enables foreign researchers to travel to the Smithsonian to collaborate with our curators, scholars, scientists, and practitioners, and to gain access to our unparalleled collections and resources.

In 2018, OIR sponsored 201 J-1 exchange scholars and 10 H-1B employees, and advised on dozens of cases. We are proud to add international scholars from more than 48 different countries to the Smithsonian family.

## International Travel Task Force

Smithsonian employees, fellows, and contractors have extensive international travel year-round (over 2,000 international trips), so it naturally follows that their safety and security is a top Smithsonian priority.

To ensure their safety, OIR sits on the Smithsonian's International Travel Task Force (ITTF) to create and enhance policies, procedures, and the use of new technologies to keep people safe while abroad.





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