

# Museums and Costa Rica

Gatekeepers & Canon Makers

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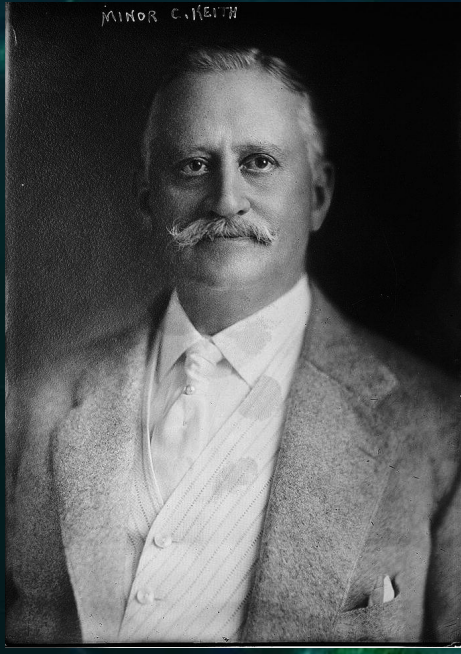


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How many artifacts were just returned to Costa Rica by the Brooklyn Museum?

Who was responsible for removing, selling and then “donating” them?

**1,300** Costa Rican artifacts have returned to the National Museum of Costa Rica



Minor Cooper Keith (1848-1929)  
"Minor Cooper Keith" by Library of Congress is in the Public Domain

Minor Cooper Keith was a railroad tycoon and a banana plantation owner. He was able to dominate the banana trade in Central America and Columbia. He also pursued the gold mines located in C.R.



By exploiting the local inhabitants and using their labor, he was able to move artifacts out of the country. By the time of his passing, over **16,000** artifacts had been exported to the United States.

# The results



## Accessibility

**There is currently (December 2022) very limited access to Costa Rican art and artifacts in Costa Rica.**

- Museum websites are not extensive and are not regularly updated. (This takes funding!)
- Consequently, the best (and sometimes only) way to see this art is to travel, which is also largely inaccessible.

**From our computers, what do we have access to?**

- We have “virtual travel” access to some of the most famous museums online via the internet:
  - Smithsonian, Louvre, The Met, National Gallery (England)



*Something to consider...*

Museums hold power,  
directly and indirectly.

Let's consider who controls what goes into a museum.

- Board members, donors (both of artifacts/money) and curators are all players *in deciding what the public sees and how we see it.*

# Smithsonian Museum- Washington DC, USA

## Board Members:

- Dennis Keller- **Chair**
- Michele J Hooper- **Vice**
- Jorge G. Puente- **Vice**
- Fredericka Stevenson- **Vice**

## Amount of visitors per year:

3.15 Million

## Smithsonian Museum Donors

20 Million

Lilly  
Endowment,  
INC

Robert  
Frederick  
Smith

**The Oprah  
Winfrey**  
Charitable  
Foundation

10 Million

**AMERICAN  
EXPRESS**

**Bill & Melinda  
Gates**  
Foundation

David M.  
Rubenstein

Source: [Smithsonian Institute](#)

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# Louvre Museum - Paris, France

## Board Members

- Laurence des Cars- **Chairman**, President director Musee du Louvre
- Lionel Sauvage- former President of Capital Group Europe
- Laurence Parisot- President of Citibank France
- Bruno Crémel: General Partner at Partech
- Kim Pham: Managing director of the Musee du Louvre
- Marie Lacambre: Financial, Legal and resources director of the Musee du Louvre

Visitors per year: **9 Million**

## Louvre Donors (American Friends of Louvre)

*\*note: these are donors to American Friends of the Louvre. Regular donors are not available to public on the French website.*

Christopher Babcock

Victoria Bjorklund

Elizabeth and Stanislas Debreu

Virginia Barbato

Ildiko & Gilbert Butler

Emilia Pirro-Mandel and Mark Mandel

# The Metropolitan Museum of Art- New York, USA

## Board members (trustee):

- Candace K. Beinecke- Co-Chair
- Hamilton E. James- Co-Chair
- Richard L. Chilton Jr.- Vice Chair

Visitors per year:  
1.9 Million (as of 2021)

## The MET Donors

Morgan Stanley

MetLife

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CONDE NAST

LV



# National Gallery- London, England

## Board members (trustee):

- John Booth- Chairman
- Diana Berry
- Catherine Goodman LVO
- Katrin Henkel
- Sir John Kingman KCB FRS

Visitors per year:  
2.1 Million

National Gallery Donors

Bloomberg  
Philanthropies

ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

Howard  
and  
Roberta  
Ahmanson

The Aldama Foundation

Source: [The National Gallery, Board of Trustees, Annual report](#)



# Things to consider...

- ★ We were able to easily get information on donors, board members and museum attendance on the internet for four of the biggest museums worldwide.
- ★ Access to donor information and exhibit information is limited when looking at Costa Rican museums.
- ★ Who really holds the power and say when it comes to what gets displayed or not displayed?

## **Discussion Activity**

- **Split up into 2 groups:  
Pros and Cons**
- **Discuss the following  
questions:**

1. Where should art remain? In its home or in major museums worldwide that have searchable websites and welcome millions of visitors a year?
2. What are the pros and cons of returning art to where it is pillaged from?
3. Is it productive for museums to have more than European Art?