

Claudia A. Polley

President, Arts Associates LLC

Professional Activities

Founding Partner, “Partners in Tourism: Culture and Commerce”, 1996–present

Member, National Leadership Council, Trust for Public Land, 1995–2006

Member, National Board, Trust for Public Land, 2006 – present

Member, National Advisory Council to the Black Film Center Archive, Indiana University, 1995–present

Board of Directors, Historic Cumberland Island Foundation, 2000–2004

Board of Directors, Multicultural Tourism Development Alliance, 2000–2004

Member, American Association of Museums

Member, Americans for Heritage & Recreation

Member, Association of African American Museums

Member, Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums

Member, National Trust for Historic Preservation

Member, International Council of Museums

Member, AAM-ICOM

Member, AFRICOM

Member, US-ICOMOS

Moderator, “Black Museums and the American City”, U.S. Embassy in France, 2002

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Claudia Polley is a resident of Washington DC and president of the arts consulting firm of Arts Associates LLC. A specialist in the creation of new cultural institutions, her work includes major urban revitalization projects with a cultural component nationally and internationally. Using her more than 35 years of experience with cultural development projects and land conservation organizations, she brings an in-depth understanding of the necessary mix of cultural preservation and the natural environment which ensures a project’s long-term viability.

Education

The Juilliard School, New York, NY; Diploma; 1967-1971
Stanford University; Palo Alto, CA; Masters of Arts, Performance (not completed); 1967

Selected Projects

Virginia Key Beach Park
Miami, FL

Ms. Polley was Project Manager for the team tasked with creating a museum and cultural destination out of the entire 88 acres of waterfront park land. Natural and cultural elements work as one, providing an extensive system of trails, playsites, quiet areas, swimming beaches and eating places, as well as a new \$20M museum commemorating the history of blacks in southern Florida and the Caribbean. The project was formally the site of Dade County’s “for colored only” beach and parkground circa the 1940s - 1970s.

Museum of the African Diaspora
San Francisco, CA

Ms. Polley was first hired by a private foundation then by the City of San Francisco to garner community consensus for, and then to create the founding principles of design and content for the nation’s first museum dedicated to the African diaspora. As the lead consultant to the city, Claudia authored the specific RFPs for the museum design and content consultants, while leading a private community based board through the process of discovery and definition. The museum opened to great acclaim in December 2005.

National Children’s Museum
Washington, DC

Ms. Polley first worked with the National Children’s Museum at its inception, born of the former Capital Children’s Museum. The movement to being a Congressionally-mandated museum brought NCM into partnership with the District of Columbia in selecting a primary area for development. Ms. Polley worked with the museum to determine which site was best for both the City and the museum, and continues to consult with the museum—after the selection of its L’Enfant Plaza location—in its ongoing Partnership Division.

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National Children's Museum

Washington, DC

This new museum is scheduled to open in 2012 and is designated by Congress as the nation's national children's museum. Designed by renowned architect Cesar Pelli, the 140,000 square foot museum will be located just off the National Mall in L'Enfant Plaza. Arts Associates has been retained to lead the development of international partnerships and programming that support the museum's mission and content. Especially important are alliances that offer excellent programming possibilities for the museum's Kids World component.

In 2004, while with LORD Cultural Resources, Claudia Polley was part of the team that helped to analyze its move to a new location in downtown Washington DC. As part of that move, the museum sought to better understand and position its change to the National Children's Museum. Now the museum is the anchor tenant for a new L'Enfant Plaza and Arts Associates continues to consult with them in this transition period.



The Museum of the African Diaspora

San Francisco, CA

Working first for The LEF Foundation and then the City of San Francisco, Claudia Polley developed the foundations for the museum which opened in December 2005 to much acclaim in the Yerba Buena Cultural District. Extensive community collaboration culminated in Bay Area-wide support for the museum, and the formation of a board that continues to lead the project today. A public-private initiative that combines public development dollars with traditional museum funding, MoAD is leading the way for African American museums of the 21st century.



White House Visitor Center

Washington, DC

This project is focused on the updating of the visitor experience at the White House Visitor Center, the gateway to President's Park which surrounds the White House in Washington DC. The Visitor Center is the venue where the nonticketed general public may see exhibits and items relating to the White House and the first family.



Virginia Key Beach Park

Miami, FL

The first Florida key in Biscayne Bay is Virginia Key. For years it was the only place in Miami Dade County where blacks could recreate and swim at the beach. Commemorating its historical legacy and looking forward to a future filled with the natural beauty of the key, a restoration of the recreational amenities of old, and a new cultural facility to tell the story of all, the consultant team is working with the Board of Trustees of Virginia Key Beach to create a Strategic Plan to accomplish all. Arts Associates is responsible for institutional planning as part of a team led by LORD Cultural Resources.



Constitution Hill

Johannesburg, RSA

Worked with the city of Johannesburg and the Gauteng Provincial Government in the creation of the newest cultural/retail/historic/office complex in downtown Johannesburg which is also the home of the Constitutional Court of South Africa (similar to the U.S. Supreme Court). The area covers more than 60 acres and is an amazing mix of urban redevelopment, historic preservation and open space design. Phase One opened in March 2004.