



# Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival

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Since its origins in 1967, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival has gained worldwide recognition as a model for the research and public presentation of living cultural heritage and the advocacy of cultural democracy. Festival curators play a major role in interpreting the Festival's principles and shaping its practices.

*Curatorial Conversations* brings together for the first time in one volume the combined expertise of the Festival's curatorial staff—past and present—in examining the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage's representation practices and their critical implications for issues of intangible cultural heritage policy, competing globalisms, cultural tourism, sustainable development and environment, and cultural pluralism and identity.

In the volume, edited by the staff curators Olivia Cadaval, Sojin Kim, and Diana Baird N'Diaye, contributors examine how Festival principles, philosophical underpinnings, and claims have evolved, and address broader debates on cultural representation from their own experience. This book represents the first concerted project by Smithsonian staff curators to examine systematically the Festival's institutional values as they have evolved over time and to address broader debates on cultural representation based on their own experiences at the Festival.

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