



## Greetings!

In his contribution to an 1891 book of advice for beginning writers, author Mark Twain shared a pearl of wisdom. The “difference between the *almost right* word & the *right* word,” he said, “is really a large matter—’tis the difference between the lightning-bug and the lightning.”<sup>1</sup>

*Exhibition's* spring 2016 issue explores this “large matter” from varied angles. Led off by Carol Bossert’s “Labels Unleashed,” our first four articles touch on label writing—on novel approaches, visitor voice, the importance of brevity, and how writing, rewriting, and rewriting again can turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. They’re followed by a trio of pieces that remind us of the importance of language, and how words can make us feel welcomed, included, valued—or not. Next, our authors give us insight into institution-wide approaches to words; in Nuts & Bolts, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art shares its process for collaborative writing.

Throughout this issue, certain truisms keep popping up: that word choice should be grounded in solid interpretation. That “story” is key. And that our visitors

are pressured for time. Which brings us to a new addition to *Exhibition*: “Outside the Box.” This Q&A with experts from outside the museum field is intended to illuminate an aspect of the issue’s theme. In this issue, the Pulitzer-prize winning *New York Times* reporter Matt Richtel helps us consider the human attention span in our digital age.

We hope you enjoy our new look. I’d like to echo Wayne’s thanks to designer Charita Patamikakorn, as well as his urging to subscribe or renew if you haven’t already. Don’t miss our next issue: “Coloring Outside the Lines: Exhibitions That Cross Boundaries.”

As always, thanks to *Exhibition's* editorial advisory board, the NAME board, managing editor Liza Rawson, Exhibits Newsline editor Paul Orselli, our writers, our reviewers, and our contributors.

*Ellen Snyder-Grenier*

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Editor

<sup>1</sup> Twain is quoted in George Bainton, comp. and ed., *The Art of Authorship: Literary Reminiscences, Methods of Work, and Advice to Young Beginners, Personally Contributed by Leading Authors of the Day* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1891), 87–88.