

Steve is an award-winning exhibit developer, creative director, interpretive planner, and project manager. He has created marvelous experiences for museums and sites for more than 30 years. He founded Amplifier Experience Design with a deeply personal focus: restoring dignity to people, living and dead, by revealing their stories.

Steve comes from a background in public history and theater (set design, sound design, and directing). He leads teams and engagements in the mode of developing a show: bringing out the best of each individual in service to a coherent, expressive whole.



Select Projects

Nina Simone Childhood Home | NC

Leading a team of partners to plan the visitor experience and sustainable operations of the newly-preserved birthplace of Nina Simone, a property managed by the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

“Changing Times” Hmong Museum Traveling Exhibit | MN

Exhibit development for a traveling children’s exhibit celebrating Hmong traditions and adaptations

Ohio Village | OH

Interpretive Plan for history programs and exhibits outside the Ohio History Center in Columbus

Philando Castile Peace Garden | MN

Working with community members to envision the impacts desired and strategies for implementation for a community-led Peace Garden at the site where Philando Castile, a Black school worker, was killed by police

Hastings Black Heritage Trail | MN

Prime contractor leading a team in the development of a Black Heritage Trail in the small but significant river town of Hastings

“Journey to Freedom” Underground Railroad Traveling Exhibit | IL*

Exhibit developer with a strong group of academic and lay historians, celebrating the Underground Railroad in Illinois

James Brice House | MD

Interpretive Planning for a historic house in historic Annapolis, integrating stories of the enslaved, free Black, indentured, immigrant, and convict craftspeople who built and operated the house

Harriet Beecher Stowe House | OH

Led the development of an Interpretive Plan for the house of the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, later a lodge listed in the *The Traveler’s Green Book*

Ohio River Museum | OH

Interpretive planning for a fresh start on the Ohio River Museum: research, interviews, and workshops, engaging new voices and discovering new stories representing a variety of perspectives on the river’s significance

Thomas Jefferson’s Poplar Forest | VA*

Team lead, exhibit development, and community engagement for a Thomas Jefferson plantation; Interpretive Plan through comprehensive Schematic Design to completed exhibits focusing on the enslaved population

Old North Church | MA*

Concept for an exhibit at the site of the revolution-era “one if by land, two if by sea” lanterns from Paul Revere’s ride; separately, exhibit development for an award-winning exhibit supporting the self-guided tour of the church

Shakopee Riverfront Cultural Trail | MN

Team lead for a Visitor Experience Plan, working with city and county staff, the county historical society, and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Dakota Community to distribute stories and experiences along a newly-planned trail

Peavey Plaza | MN

Interpretive concept planning through installation of interpretive exhibits as part of mitigation for adverse effects of this NRHP-listed property during its revitalization

African American Resources, Cultural and Heritage Society (AARCH) | MD

Team lead, interpretive and exhibit planner for new museum by an established group of elders and young adults

Experience Akwesasne | NY, QB, ON*

Lead planner, Tourism Interpretive Plan for a Mohawk homeland

Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium (AAACRHSC) | AL

Team lead and exhibit planner for a collaboration among 20 historic places of worship, lodging, and civic engagement that played significant roles in the African American struggle for freedom

Cataloochee Valley, Great Smoky Mountains National Park | NC

Assessment for interpretation and exhibits about the isolated Appalachian community that thrived here before the park

Poindexter Village | OH

Team lead, interpretive planner for new community-driven museum of African American heritage, in partnership with the Ohio History Connection

Delaware Canal State Park | PA

Team lead, exhibit planner for indoor and outdoor exhibits including escape room-inspired outdoor exploration

Polish Cultural Institute and Museum | MN

Lead planner of new exhibit program for this homegrown site

Washington Crossing Historic Park | PA

Team lead, Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan for this iconic site

Flying Cloud Drive | MN*

Interpretive lead, working with four consulting Dakota tribes to interpret the results of significant recent archaeological discoveries along the Minnesota River

Hickory Run State Park | PA*

Team lead, exhibit development, generating wonder that “Nature Did This”

Nine Mile Canyon | UT

Interpretive plan making sense of a 46-mile-long driving and hiking route featuring cultural and sacred rock art and dwelling sites

Thomas Edison National Historical Park | NJ

Schematic Design for outdoor exhibits at Edison’s home and factory

Ohiopyle State Park | PA*

Team lead and exhibit development from concept through installation of indoor and outdoor exhibits connecting visitors to history and the landscape, exploration and conservation

Work Experience

Principal/Creative Director | Amplifier Experience Design, St. Paul, MN (since 2022)

Interpretation & Exhibit Design Group Manager | 106 Group, St. Paul, MN (2011-2022)

Interpretive Projects Lead | Minnesota Zoo, Apple Valley, MN (2005-2011)

Curator of Online Interpretive Projects | Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN (2001-2003)

Senior Exhibit Developer/Project Manager | Gerard Hiltferty & Associates, Athens, OH (1994-2001)

Assistant Curator & Researcher | Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN (1991-1994)

Select Publications & Presentations

- History: Essential, Urgent, Past, Future | **AASLH conference** (2025)
- Lessons from Culturally-Specific Museums: History is Essential | **AASLH conference** (2021)
- “What if reimagining museums begins by asking ‘Who do we serve?’” | **Superhelpful Letters** (2020)
- When is Historic Preservation Radical? | **AASLH conference** (2020)
- Seeking Absent Voices: Inclusion and Relevance | **AASLH conference** (2017)
- Who Is We? Authorship, Authority, and Voice | **AASLH conference** (2016)

Education

M.A. American History | Northwestern University

B.A. History | Carleton College

Select Certifications & Awards

- History Leadership Institute, American Association for State and Local History (2022)
- Master Interpretive Manager, National Association for Interpretation (2018)
- AAM Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing, for Ohiopyle State Park (2016)
- Certified Interpretive Planner (NAI)
- Meets Secretary of the Interior Standards for History