
THE GW ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT PRESENTS
A SPECIAL COLLOQUIUM

Cultural Democracy and Cultural Heritage Policy at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Michael Atwood Mason

Director, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

**Monday, February 23, 2015, 11:00-12:30
Hortense Amsterdam House (2110 G St.) 202**

The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH) has represented cultural traditions to millions of visitors since 1967 through the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. It shares traditional American and world music through Smithsonian Folkways Recordings and played a significant role in drafting UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The idea of cultural democracy unites all these activities. Cultural democracy supports the right to define one's own cultural life. It embraces the idea of cultural action, encouraging people to use art forms as tools to seek their own interests and cultural values to chart their course into the future. It celebrates cultural diversity and nurtures participation in cultural life. As CFCH approaches its sixth decade, it has renewed its commitment to this orientation toward people and their desire for self-expression and self-determination.



A 20-year veteran of the Smithsonian, Michael Mason is known for developing innovative community-based exhibitions and projects that link researchers, collections, and compelling stories that excite visitors. He is a leader in the Smithsonian's Recovering Voices Initiative, part of the Consortia for Understanding the American Experience and World Cultures.