



# RACE

A new traveling exhibition connecting you with your diverse community

**It's a simple truth.** People are different. Throughout history, these differences have been a source of community strength and personal identity. They have also been the basis for discrimination and oppression.

The idea of “race” has been used historically to describe these differences and justify mistreatment of people and even genocide. Today, contemporary scientific understanding of human variation is beginning to challenge “racial” differences, and even question the very concept of race.

*RACE*, developed by the American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota, is the first national exhibition to tell the stories of race from the biological, cultural, and historical points of view. Combining these perspectives offers an unprecedented look at race and racism in the United States.



“ **[Racism] is not about how you look,**  
it is about how people assign meaning  
to how you look. ”

—Robin D.G. Kelley, Historian


## The Exhibit Experience

*RACE* brings together the everyday experience of living with race, its history as an idea, the role of science in that history, and the findings of contemporary science that are challenging its foundations. It is an exhibit with three themes:

### *The Science of Human Biological Variation*

This area offers visitors the contemporary synthesis of genetics, biology, and anthropology that reveals our human history and explains our differences and similarities. Visitors can explore

our common human ancestry, learn about the continuum of human variation, question common notions of race as discrete biological groups, and investigate the past and current science behind human variation.



**“The increasing visibility of ‘mixed race’ or multiracial individuals changes popularly held notions of race, racial classification, and racial identity, and renders them suspect.”**


—Michael Omi, Sociologist

### ***The History of the Idea of Race***

This area details the history of race in the United States as a set of beliefs and social practices that were taken up by law and science, and then developed into a system that justified slavery and unequal treatment of others. Through a set of historical vignettes, *RACE* will explore how this belief system in its various forms has shaped the history of this country and society.

### ***Race in Contemporary Life***

Although the concept of race may be biologically questionable, in the United States race and racism are an everyday reality. *RACE* will explore social and personal experiences of race in familiar contexts such as our communities, schools, doctor's offices, the legal system, and marketplaces. The exhibition's components will probe not only how race affects nearly every social institution in our lives, but also how these social settings frame our personal experiences of race.

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's eye. The eye is light-colored, possibly hazel or light brown, and is looking directly at the camera. The skin around the eye is fair and has a natural texture. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the details of the eyelashes and the iris. The background is out of focus, showing more of the person's face and hair.


**“ A fully functional multiracial society cannot be achieved without a sense of history and open, honest dialogue. ”**

—Cornel West, Theologian

## Supporting the Conversation

In a sense, the story of race is the story of the United States. Every community, every state, every person in this country is part of a system in which race has played a key role.

Even a half-century after civil rights pioneers began the national conversation about race, there is still no other topic more visceral and more vital. This is why *RACE* is so important right now. As credible local institutions, museums and science centers can offer their community members a safe space in which to explore the natural and social science perspectives of race.



“**If you ask a black person their story, being black—race—comes up continuously.** Ask a white person, ‘Tell me about your life,’ and being white never comes up. That is the root of inequality. Some privilege allows us to live our whole life and never think about race. Yet our society is built on it.”


—Jonathan Odell, Author

## Connecting with Communities

*RACE* will open at the Science Museum of Minnesota in January, 2007. Following this premiere, the exhibit will embark on a U.S. tour of museums and science centers beginning in May, 2007.

*RACE* can be a significant catalyst for connecting with our communities. It offers museums the opportunity to be at the center of this important social dialogue.

We invite you to join with your community in this conversation.

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's eye, looking directly at the camera. The eye is brown and has a small, white, rectangular object (possibly a contact lens or a small piece of tape) on the iris. The skin around the eye is smooth and has a warm, golden-brown tone. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the texture of the skin and the details of the eye.

“ **Why after 50 years of civil rights, are our schools still segregated?** Why is our housing market still segregated? Why are our jobs still segregated? I think that most people—white, Black, Latino, and otherwise—would like to see something different. ”

—john a. powell, Legal Scholar

## Let's Talk About It

Race and human variation can be challenging topics. For this reason, *RACE* extends beyond the exhibit, offering museum and science center professionals an array of tools to help them spark conversations and explore this topic further.

### Resources include:

- A comprehensive web site with interactive tools
- Educational materials for teachers, students, and families
- A flexible outreach and promotions toolkit
- Conferences, speakers, events, and related activities

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's face, focusing on the right eye and the bridge of the nose. The skin is dark brown with visible texture and pores. The eye is light brown and looking slightly to the left. The lighting is soft, highlighting the contours of the face.

“

**Science Museum of Minnesota is pleased to help develop, host, and tour *RACE*** because it places us at the center of our community's efforts to build understanding and promote civic discourse.

”

—Dr. Eric J. Jolly, President, Science Museum of Minnesota

## For More Information

### Contact:


Bill Maloney, Director, Traveling Exhibition Program  
Science Museum of Minnesota

651-221-4737

[bmaloney@smm.org](mailto:bmaloney@smm.org)

Book your opportunity now!

## Connect to your community.



“Through this exhibit, anthropology contributes a better understanding of one of the most complex topics of the 21st century to help shape the national and global conversations on race.”

—Yolanda Moses, Chair, American  
Anthropological Association Advisory Board,  
Understanding Race and Human Variation Project



FORD FOUNDATION

RACE is produced by the American Anthropological Association with assistance from the Science Museum of Minnesota. The exhibit was made possible by generous funding from the National Science Foundation and the Ford Foundation.