

Steven Conn

Museums of Ethnic Specificity and National Narrative in the United States

BIO

Steven Conn is an Ohio State University professor of American History and Director of the Public History Project. Graduate of Yale and University of Pennsylvania, Steven Conn is a public intellectual himself (more precisely he calls himself *a public historian*). Author of six books, several dozens of scholarly articles, hundreds of newspaper op-ed, reviews and critical assessment of politics and culture pieces. Conn is a great public speaker in urban centers of America and abroad. Two of his recent books are about museums and American intellectual history: *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* and *Museums and American Intellectual Life 1876 - 1926*. Steven Conn taught also a course on the American City at the ASC (UW) last year.

His lecture will deal with the difficulties of creating national narrative in various institutions of culture in the United States, the most heterogeneous ethnically and culturally of modern states. In tune with his general interest in "how ideas are given physical form" he will talk about the inherent contradiction between the missions of the particularistic ethnic museums and the idea that the nation as a unity which should be represented in some one grand common story perhaps in the Museum of American History and outside the academy.