

Saving Culture & Art in Crisis Today

Dr. Richard Kurin

Saturday 4 May 2024 at 11:30 am

National Building Museum, Washington, D.C.

Smithsonian Distinguished Scholar and Ambassador-at-large and founder of the Smithsonian's Cultural Rescue Initiative, Dr. Richard Kurin, will discuss the Institution's fascinating efforts to help save cultural heritage threatened by war and disaster around the world in Haiti, the Caribbean, Iraq and Ukraine. Daring collaborations with local, U.S. and international organizations stem looting and trafficking of art and antiquities, exploit satellite imagery to document possible war crimes and train the next generation of *Monuments Men and Women* with the U.S. Army.

\$50 event price *includes* Smithsonian Craft Show admission (\$20) and Light lunch.

Purchase tickets online at <https://smithsonianinstitution.ticketspice.com/smithsonian-craft-show?t=W>



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In countries like war-ravaged Ukraine and Iraq and in others shattered by natural disaster, the awful cost in human life and personal and public property extends to an immeasurable toll on cultural sites – monuments, museums and galleries, archives and libraries, religious institutions, historic buildings and archaeological sites and other places of social significance.

The Smithsonian Institution is at the forefront of U.S. and international efforts to save them.

The Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative has deployed teams to Haiti, Nepal, and The Bahamas, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands in the wake of earthquakes and catastrophic hurricanes. It has worked for years to recover and protect cultural sites and antiquities in Iraq attacked by ISIS and those in Afghanistan threatened by the Taliban. For the past two years the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative has sought to safeguard collections that embody Ukrainian history and identity amid the war with Russia. In his talk, Dr. Kurin also examines methods of monitoring cultural war crimes via satellite, the process of tracking looted art, and collaborations with the State Department, Homeland Security, FEMA and the FBI, as well as re-establishing the “Monuments Men and Women” with the U.S. Army and other work with the Department of Defense.



Over his 47-year career, Kurin has served as the Smithsonian's long time Under Secretary, overseeing all of the Institution's national museums, scientific research centers, and educational programs and as Director of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage overseeing the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall and the Grammy-winning Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. He serves on the U.S. intergovernmental Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee, the Federal Interagency Panel for World Heritage and is a founding board member of ALIPH—the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage. He has been Smithsonian liaison to the White House Historical Association and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and a member of the U.S. Commission for UNESCO. He received his PhD in anthropology from the University of Chicago, is the author of six books and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.