

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

ICHABOD WASHBURN YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD



THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
PRESENTS TO

NINA SIMON '03

THIS AWARD IN RECOGNITION OF
PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

NINA SIMON, while your career has taken you far from your degree in electrical engineering, you have remained true to the WPI ideal of innovation. Today we recognize you for your trailblazing work in the museum industry.

You are an internationally acclaimed expert on active community participation in cultural institutions—but that doesn't even begin to capture the scale of your work. You have been described as a "visionary" by Smithsonian magazine. Your book *The Participatory Museum*, for which you invited reader participation during the writing process, has become a manifesto for change in museums. You are also the author of *The Art of Relevance*, and your work has been shared in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, NPR, and TEDx.

You may be best known for your blog, *Museum 2.0*, which reaches approximately 16,000 weekly, where you first shared your vision for museums as centers of active participation instead of passive viewing. From this vision, you developed an impressive career as an independent consultant and exhibition designer specializing in social technology, gaming, and participatory design. At more than 100 museums and cultural centers around the world, you have created such innovative projects as an exhibition at the

University of Washington on "advice," featuring a visitor-run advice booth; the curriculum for Girls, Math and Science Partnership's technology-focused Click!, an urban science adventure camp; and a crowd-sourced 3,000-square-foot interactive gallery at The Tech Museum in San Francisco.

Today, you are the executive director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Arts and History at the McPherson Center, where you led an institutional turnaround based on grassroots community participation. You were named a Silicon Valley Business 40-under-40 in 2015 and you were the Santa Cruz County Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year in 2017.

In a WPI Journal article about your work, you said, "When you see a challenge or some intractable thing, you don't just think, 'Oh, let's talk about this a lot.' You think, 'Well, let me try to figure out how I can attack this, how I can try to solve it.'"

Nina Simon, you have used your WPI education not only to solve problems, but to reimagine museums and the cultural centers of our society, for the benefit of us all. The WPI Alumni Association is proud to recognize you today with the Ichabod Washburn Young Alumni Award for Professional Achievement.

June 2, 2018

President, WPI Alumni Association