

Abstract from the Eighth Annual Gilder Lehrman Center International Conference  
at Yale University

## **Slavery and Public History: An International Symposium**

November 2-4, 2006  
Yale University  
New Haven, Connecticut

### *The Exhibition Visitors' History of Slavery*

Richard Rabinowitz, American History Workshop

Available online at [www.yale.edu/glc/publichistory/rabinowitz.pdf](http://www.yale.edu/glc/publichistory/rabinowitz.pdf)

Outline of the paper:

- 1. *Slavery in New York* and *New York Divided: Slavery and the Civil War***  
— summary of two exhibitions at the New-York Historical Society.
- 2. *Inputs, 1:*** Institutional goals, resources, the public and social setting of the exhibition.
- 3. *Inputs, 2:*** Historical concepts and evidences (documents, images,
- 4. *Inputs, 3:*** Shaping the exhibit by drawing upon literary techniques (narrative, characterization, climax); pedagogical strategies (constructivist learning, multiple intelligences, externalization of learning); design and media considerations (scale, color, density, sound and other sensory impacts).

5. **Outcomes:** measuring success one visitor at a time. The gallery in the visitor's mind. The visitor's experience (relations among learning, public engagement, and social processes).
6. Two visitors' responses (via the **TELLING LIVES** video capture station) to **Slavery in New York**.
7. Analysis of these two and other typical responses: the purposes of history; present politics and historical interpretation; connecting one's experience to larger narratives — the history of slavery; African American and American history; the history and contemporary character of New York City.
8. A revised view of the purposes, processes, and outcomes of public history. The "dialogic museum" (Jack Tchen).