

Dr. Richard Kurin

Acting Director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art

As a member of the Smithsonian's senior leadership team, Kurin helps guide the Institution's national museums, preeminent research centers, and educational programs with a staff of 6,500 and annual budget of \$1.5 billion. His areas of focus are the Smithsonian's strategic direction, institutional partnerships, public representation, philanthropic support, and special initiatives. In early 2018, he took on the additional duties of serving as acting director of the Freer | Sackler following the retirement of longtime director Julian Raby. An anthropologist with a PhD from the University of Chicago, Kurin specialized in the study of South Asia and Muslim societies. He has held Fulbright and Social Science Research Council Fellowships, taught at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, and authored six books and scores of scholarly articles. He coordinated the Smithsonian's Festival of India programs in the 1980s, has collaborated closely with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silkroad Ensemble since the late 1990s, and has continued to work on a variety of projects throughout Asia over a forty-year career.



Prior to his current roles, Kurin served as the Smithsonian's acting provost and under secretary for museums and research from 2015, and from 2007 he served as under secretary for history, art, and culture. He was responsible for oversight of all of the Smithsonian's museums, scientific research, and cultural centers. For two decades before that, Kurin directed the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, overseeing the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

Kurin was appointed by successive secretaries of state to the US National Commission for UNESCO and helped draft an international treaty to safeguard living cultural heritage, now ratified by 170 nations. He led efforts to save heritage in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake and has overseen projects for saving heritage endangered by natural disaster in Nepal and the United States, and by human conflict in Mali, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. Kurin served as liaison to the US President's Committee on the

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Arts and the Humanities and the White House Historical Association, and he chairs a task group for the US Department of State Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee. He is a board member of the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH) and serves on the Visiting Committee for the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. He has been honored by Harvard University's Peabody Museum, the International Council of Museums, the American Anthropological Association, the American Folklore Society, and the Smithsonian, and he is an elected fellow of the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences.