

Smith College Museum of Art
Susan Jahoda and Nathan Ford

Project: "The Inherent Quality of the Object," *Picturing Northampton*, 2004

Questions for Museum Director Suzanne Fabing

- As its director, how would you describe the mission of the Smith College Museum of Art?
- How does the museum shape the idea of an audience or a public?
- Who are the audiences for your exhibitions?
- What are the criteria for accepting a donation to the museum, and on what grounds would you reject something?
- How are objects categorized within the collection, and do these categories change over time or with new museum leadership?
- Many cultural institutions house objects that some people believe should be re-patriated. What are your views on this subject?
- Artifacts frequently undergo re-contextualizations. For example, they can be acquired by collectors as trophies, displayed in collections as ethnographic evidence, or curated into special exhibitions as aesthetic objects. How is it possible, or impossible, for the museum to make these complex histories and trajectories available to its public when displaying these artifacts?