

Bio for Melanie Hatz Levinson

Melanie Hatz Levinson joined Kidzu in 2007 as its first Curator of Exhibits, Design and Programs, overseeing the museum's first permanent exhibition and ultimately its expansion from a 2000 to 10,000 SF facility, supervising all aspects of the design, development, fabrication and installation of permanent and temporary learning environments and complimentary programming in each of its five locations. In her current role as Creative Director she is responsible for ensuring that the creative content of all design, educational programming, grant development and fundraising efforts fully support the museum's mission and educational goals and vision. Currently, she is responsible for leading the master planning process for the museum's next phase of expansion, serving as a liaison between town planners, design consultants, building advisors, and academic and community stakeholders. Previously, Melanie worked for over a decade on the curatorial staff of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, where she worked closely with the various divisions of the Museum's Operations and Design staff, developing and installing capital and special exhibitions for the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History from the University of Michigan, and holds graduate degrees in Art History and Archaeology from Columbia University and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. After the birth of her first child, Melanie began working as an educational consultant and lecturer for Metropolitan Moms, a private Manhattan firm since acquired by Sotheby's, dedicated to making art accessible to new parents and their children. She designed and implemented their early childhood programs, transforming static museum and gallery spaces throughout the city into interactive learning environments through song, movement and educational art projects. In college, Melanie worked for both the University of Michigan Museum of Art and *ArtTrain*, a traveling exhibition that toured the Midwest aboard a train, bringing the museum experience to rural areas of the country, while celebrating diverse communities by featuring local artists and performers at each destination. She has worked in museums and galleries across the country and in Europe for over 25 years, has presented in various national and regional conferences, and has participated in numerous archaeological excavations throughout the Middle East. Melanie was born to an artist mother and engineer father who flew search and rescue for the Coast Guard, grew up primarily in New York, and spent childhood summers in New England, eventually designing and producing sets and props for a children's summer stock theatre in New Hampshire.

Melanie now resides in Chapel Hill with her husband Howie, a Reconstructive Surgeon-Scientist at Duke University, their three children, Gavin (16), Hutch (14), and Savanna (11), and their dog Tali. In addition to spending time with her family, Melanie enjoys reading, traveling, imagining, wandering, dreaming and being creative in all aspects of her life.